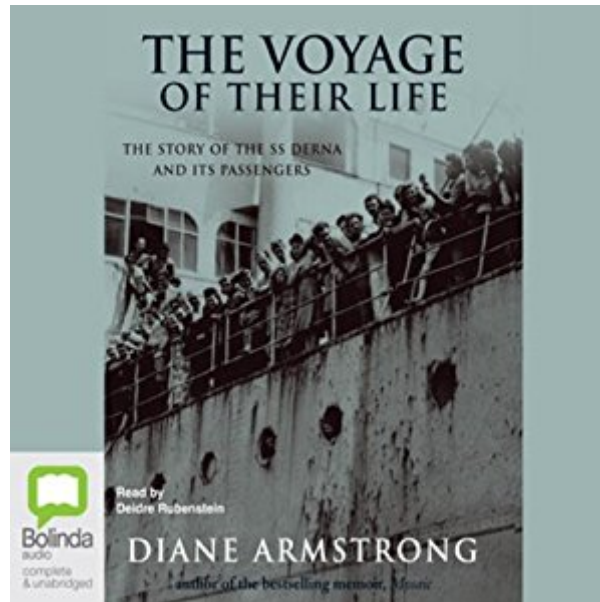




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The Voyage Of Their Life



Synopsis

In August 1948, 545 passengers boarded an overcrowded, clapped-out vessel in Marseilles to face an uncertain future in Australia and New Zealand. They came from displaced persons camps in Germany, death camps in Poland, labour camps in Hungary, gulags in Siberia and stony Aegean islands. There were those who had been hunted by the Nazis and those who had welcomed them; those who had followed the Communists and those who had fled them. Diane Armstrong set sail on the Derna with her parents when she was nine years old. Like a detective searching for clues, she has located over a hundred of the passengers. Through their recollections and memorabilia, as well as archival documents, she has recreated the voyage and traced what became of their hopes and dreams. The result is the unique portrayal of a migrant ship and its passengers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What an impressive work is this book. It starts in 1948, by gathering together, and explaining the circumstance, of numerous people for whom WW 11 had been a prolonged wakeful nightmare, such as many readers will struggle to credit; but their stories are true. Most of the characters are assisted passengers on a chartered emigrant ship bound from the Mediterranean to Australia, but the captain and some members of the crew are included, as are escorts. The first part of the book, which I initially took to be the entire story, covers the voyage with its considerable hardships and acrimonious encounters between former enemies and suspect allies. This part alone would have been a good read, but there is much more, for the author, herself a child passenger on that ship, has done an amazing job of following up what became of many of the passengers in the

subsequent decades.. At times this book reads more like a novel than a documentary, and it takes the occasional personal input from the author to remind one that these stories are true - that the people were real., the events actually happened

Very highly recommended firstly for Australians of European origin, who, or whose parents, migrated to Australia after the second world war, and secondly for all interested in the background to post-war European migration, in the difficulties faced and largely overcome by migrants in that era, or in the recent history of our country and of the people who helped to make it what it is today. This reviewer is in the first category, having arrived as a child from Europe in the 1950s, later than the subjects of Diane Armstrong's well-researched narrative. For me, apart from the rare opportunity to learn more of the experiences of migrants before me, the book provided memories of places, customs and events I and my parents, or my in-laws actually experienced. My in-laws actually departed for Australia on a similar unseaworthy boat from Marseilles a few months before the Derna sailed, and the privations and difficulties described in "The Voyage of Their Life" are very similar in many ways to their experiences. The rating of 4 stars, or even 4 1/2 if it were available, is given for the amount of research undertaken by the author and for the social and historical significance of the data, which would otherwise have been lost, had Diane Armstrong not recorded it.

I first saw this book in the residence of people exhibiting their garden to the public. It looked well used and a quick thumb through aroused my interest. Having now read about half I find I can't put it down easily but the demands for my time dictate. I would suggest to all those interested in the plight of civilians caught up in world war two should read it.

Enjoyed the read. But found it difficult to keep up with all the names & families.

I enjoyed this book and felt that I knew the characters. Enjoyed the first half but not so much the second.

Complete and unabridged, *The Voyage Of Their Life* is an uplifting work of nonfiction superbly narrated by Deidre Rubenstein. In August of 1948, 545 passengers who had survived displaced person camps in Germany, death camps in Poland, labor camps in Hungary, and gulags in Siberia or the Aegean islands sailed upon an overcrowded vessel toward an unknown future in Australia

and New Zeland. The Voyage Of Their Life draws upon recollections, memorabilia, archival documents, and much more to recreate these brave individuals' lives and dreams. Author Diane Armstrong, winner of the GeorgeMunster Award for independent journalism, was herself a child who sailed upon the "Derna" with her parents. A heart-wrenching yet ultimately optimisitic true story of finding the strength to survive and rebuild in the wake of devastation.

For me this was fascinating as my family also came to Aus. by ship though I think a slightlybetter one than this. A spotlight on the early post-war immigration and the ignorance ofGovt. regards putting people of different backgrounds and political persuasions togetheron a crowded vessel.

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