

FLIGHT OF
DREAMS



ARIEL
LAWHON

A NOVEL

Well, it's a page turner, I must admit. This story of romance and mystery takes place on board the zeppelin Hindenburg during its ill-fated flight to America in 1937. Author Ariel Lawhon has fun putting her characters into motion, all based loosely on people actually on board, though of course she has taken liberties with what happens during the flight, especially in her explanation of why it burst into flames when landing. Each chapter is told from the perspective of a character, such as the only female member of the crew, the navigator she has fallen in love with but has yet to tell she plans to stay in America, the heiress, the American (who has some revenge planned, though against whom and why we don't know), the affable cabin boy, the female journalist and so on. It has the feel of an all-star movie (*Murder On The Orient Express*) and has a pleasant rhythm, with full credit to Lawhon for juggling timelines and letting some scenes end after the next one begins, creating an internal tension that might have been lacking otherwise. However, the overall vibe is of a disaster movie from the 1970s (*The Towering Inferno*) where we wait to see who survives, who is brave and who sacrifices themselves for another. Silly fun and while I determined to stop once or twice, I didn't, because damnit the pages kept turning. However, I'm docking it a notch or two because of a cheat of a framing device that begins the book and misleads us unnecessarily. (And rather annoyingly; i went back and reread the beginning, wondering if I'd just been dense. Nope; she tricked us.) Think the film *Saving Private Ryan* and you'll see what I'm suggesting. It's not a fatal flaw and most of it has energy and a Jeffrey Archer-like flair; I look forward to the movie, as long as they don't trick us too. -- Michael Giltz