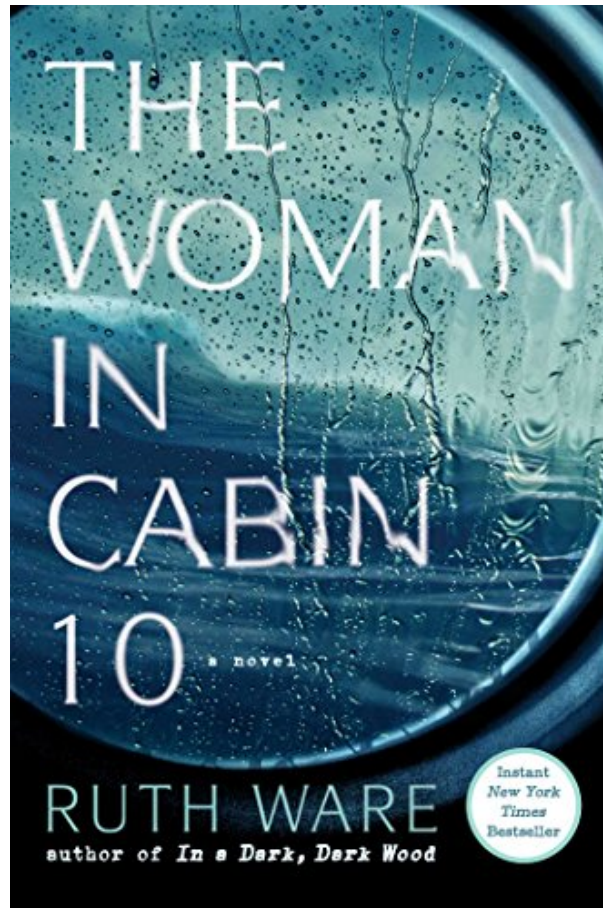
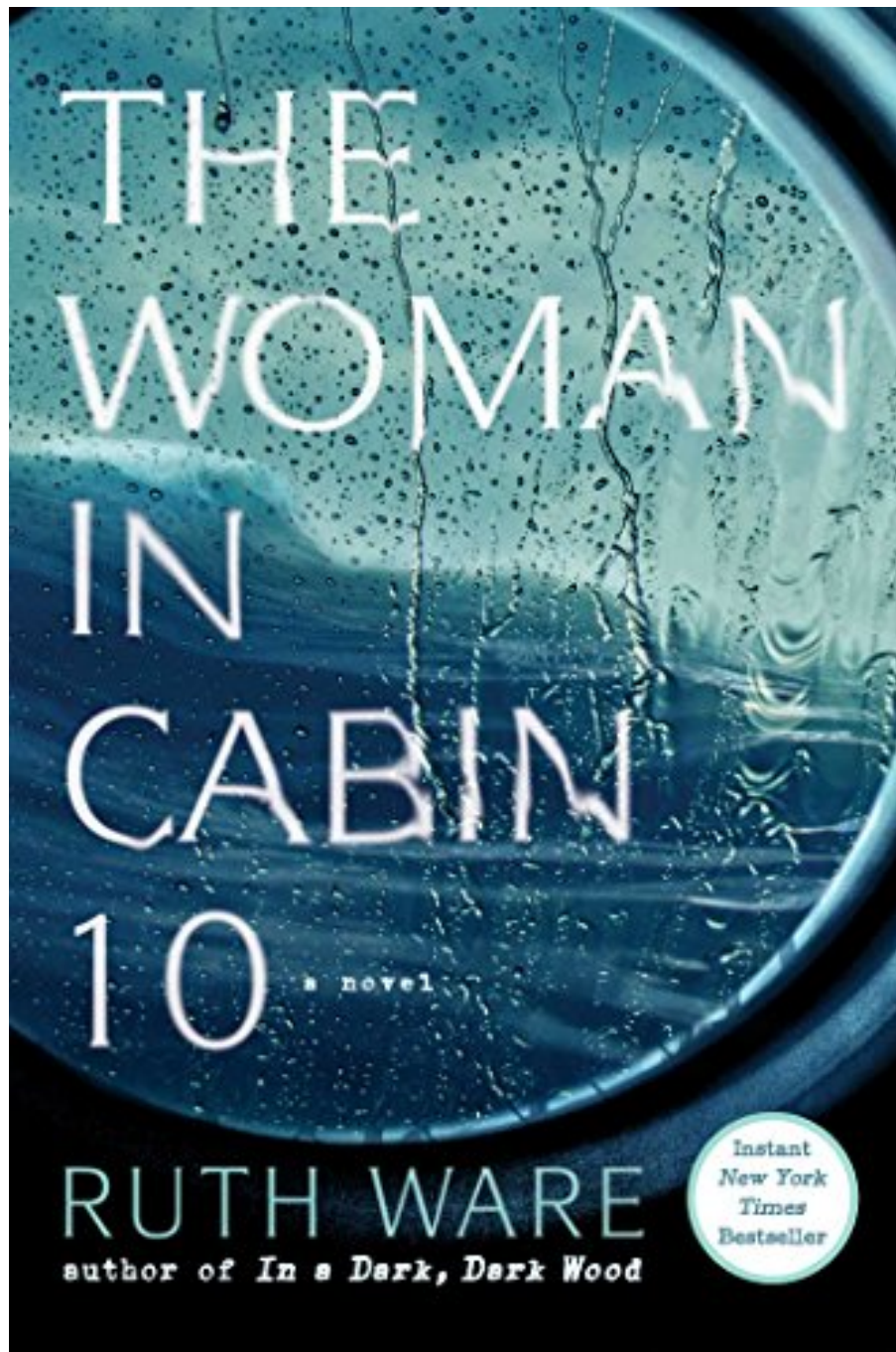


# THE WOMAN IN CABIN 10 BY RUTH WARE



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## Review

"A classic "paranoid woman" story with a modern twist in this tense, claustrophobic mystery...The cast of characters, their conversations, and the luxurious but confining setting all echo classic Agatha Christie; in fact, the structure of the mystery itself is an old one: a woman insists murder has occurred, everyone else says she's crazy. But Lo is no wallflower; she is a strong and determined modern heroine who refuses to doubt the evidence of her own instincts." (Kirkus Reviews)

"Ware's follow-up to her best-selling debut, *In a Dark, Dark Wood*, is a gripping maritime psychological thriller that will keep readers spellbound. The intense final chapters just might induce heart palpitations." (Library Journal, Starred Review)

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"A fantasy trip aboard a luxury liner turns nightmarish for a young journalist in *The Woman in Cabin 10*, the pulse-quickening new novel by Ruth Ware, author of *In a Dark, Dark Wood*." (O Magazine)

"[A] snappy thriller set on the high seas... The first chapter will grab your attention, force it against a wall and hold it there until the end." (Associated Press)

"Ruth Ware's *The Woman in Cabin 10* is an atmospheric thriller as twisty and tension-filled as her 2015 debut, *In a Dark, Dark Wood*... The novel's tone is dark and claustrophobic as Lo continues her search for the woman even though someone is trying to stop her — maybe even kill her." (The Washington Post)

"If you're a fan of Agatha Christie, get ready to curl up with this suspenseful mystery." (Bustle)

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#### About the Author

Ruth Ware grew up in Sussex, on the south coast of England. After graduating from Manchester University she moved to Paris, before returning to the UK. She has worked as a waitress, a bookseller, a teacher of English as a foreign language, and a press officer. She now lives in London with her husband and two small children. She is the author of the New York Times bestsellers *In a Dark, Dark Wood* and *The Woman in Cabin 10*.

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*The Woman in Cabin 10*

- CHAPTER 1 -

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

The first inkling that something was wrong was waking in darkness to find the cat pawing at my face. I must have forgotten to shut the kitchen door last night. Punishment for coming home drunk.

“Go away,” I groaned. Delilah mewed and butted me with her head. I tried to bury my face in the pillow but she continued rubbing herself against my ear, and eventually I rolled over and heartlessly pushed her off the bed.

She thumped to the floor with an indignant little meep and I pulled the duvet over my head, but even through

the covers I could hear her scratching at the bottom of the door, rattling it in its frame.

The door was closed.

I sat up, my heart suddenly thumping, and Delilah leaped onto my bed with a glad little chirrup, but I snatched her to my chest, stilling her movements, listening.

I might well have forgotten to shut the kitchen door, or I could even have knocked it to without closing it properly. But my bedroom door opened outward—a quirk of the weird layout of my flat. There was no way Delilah could have shut herself inside. Someone must have closed it.

I sat, frozen, holding Delilah's warm, panting body against my chest and trying to listen.

Nothing.

And then, with a gush of relief, it occurred to me—she'd probably been hiding under my bed and I'd shut her inside with me when I came home. I didn't remember closing my bedroom door, but I might have swung it absently shut behind me when I came in. To be honest, everything from the tube station onwards was a bit of a blur. The headache had started to set in on the journey home, and now that my panic was wearing off, I could feel it starting up again in the base of my skull. I really needed to stop drinking midweek. It had been okay in my twenties, but I just couldn't shake off the hangovers like I used to.

Delilah began squirming uneasily in my arms, digging her claws into my forearm, and I let her go while I reached for my dressing gown and belted it around myself. Then I scooped her up, ready to sling her out into the kitchen.

But when I opened the bedroom door, there was a man standing there.

There's no point in wondering what he looked like, because, believe me, I went over it about twenty-five times with the police. "Not even a bit of skin around his wrists?" they kept saying. No, no, and no. He had a hoodie on, and a bandanna around his nose and mouth, and everything else was in shadow. Except for his hands.

On these he was wearing latex gloves. It was that detail that scared the shit out of me. Those gloves said, "I know what I'm doing." They said, "I've come prepared." They said, "I might be after more than your money."

We stood there for a long second, facing each other, his shining eyes locked on to mine.

About a thousand thoughts raced through my mind: Where the hell is my phone? Why did I drink so much last night? I would have heard him come in if I'd been sober. Oh Christ, I wish Judah was here.

And most of all—those gloves. Oh my God, those gloves. They were so professional. So clinical.

I didn't speak. I didn't move. I just stood there, my ratty dressing gown gaping, and I shook. Delilah wriggled out of my unresisting hands and shot away up the hallway to the kitchen, and I just stood there, shaking.

Please, I thought. Please don't hurt me.

Oh God, where was my phone?

Then I saw something in the man's hands. My handbag—my new Burberry handbag, although that detail seemed monumentally unimportant. There was only one thing that mattered about that bag. My mobile was inside.

His eyes crinkled in a way that made me think he might be smiling beneath the bandanna, and I felt the blood drain from my head and my fingers, pooling in the core of my body, ready to fight or flee, whichever it had to be.

He took a step forwards.

“No . . .” I said. I wanted it to sound like a command, but it came out like a plea—my voice small and squeaky and quavering pathetically with fear. “N—”

But I didn't even get to finish. He slammed the bedroom door in my face, hitting my cheek.

For a long moment I stood, frozen, holding my hand to my face, speechless with the shock and pain. My fingers felt ice-cold, but there was something warm and wet on my face, and it took a moment for me to realize it was blood, that the molding on the door had cut my cheek.

I wanted to run back to bed, to shove my head under the pillows and cry and cry. But a small, ugly voice in my skull kept saying, He's still out there. What if he comes back? What if he comes back for you?

There was a sound from out in the hall, something falling, and I felt a rush of fear that should have galvanized me but instead paralyzed me. Don't come back. Don't come back. I realized I was holding my breath, and I made myself exhale, long and shuddering, and then slowly, slowly, I forced my hand out towards the door.

There was another crash in the hallway outside, breaking glass, and with a rush I grabbed the knob and braced myself, my bare toes dug into the old, gappy floorboards, ready to hold the door closed as long as I could. I crouched there, against the door, hunched over with my knees to my chest, and I tried to muffle my sobs with my dressing gown while I listened to him ransacking the flat and hoped to God that Delilah had run out into the garden, out of harm's way.

At last, after a long time, I heard the front door open and shut, and I sat there, crying into my knees and unable to believe he'd really gone. That he wasn't coming back to hurt me. My hands felt numb and painfully stiff, but I didn't dare let go of the handle.

I saw again those strong hands in the pale latex gloves.

I don't know what would have happened next. Maybe I would have stayed there all night, unable to move. But then I heard Delilah outside, mewling and scratching at the other side of the door.

“Delilah,” I said hoarsely. My voice was trembling so much I hardly sounded like myself. “Oh, Delilah.”

Through the door I heard her purr, the familiar, deep, chainsaw rasp, and it was like a spell had been broken.

I let my cramped fingers loosen from the doorknob, flexing them painfully, and then stood up, trying to

steady my trembling legs, and turned the door handle.

It turned. In fact it turned too easily, twisting without resistance under my hand, without moving the latch an inch. He'd removed the spindle from the other side.

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

I was trapped.

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**The Woman In Cabin 10 By Ruth Ware.** Exactly what are you doing when having spare time? Chatting or scanning? Why do not you aim to check out some e-book? Why should be reviewing? Checking out is among enjoyable as well as pleasurable activity to do in your downtime. By checking out from lots of sources, you could discover new details as well as experience. Guides The Woman In Cabin 10 By Ruth Ware to review will certainly be numerous beginning from scientific publications to the fiction books. It implies that you can check out guides based upon the requirement that you really want to take. Naturally, it will be various and you can check out all publication kinds whenever. As here, we will certainly reveal you a publication ought to be read. This publication The Woman In Cabin 10 By Ruth Ware is the selection.

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# THE WOMAN IN CABIN 10 BY RUTH WARE PDF

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES AND USA TODAY BESTSELLER

FROM THE AUTHOR OF IN A DARK, DARK WOOD

Featured in TheSkimm

An Entertainment Weekly “Summer Must List” Pick

A New York Post “Summer Must-Read” Pick

Included in Summer Book Guides from Bustle, Oprah.com, PureWow, and USA TODAY

From New York Times bestselling author of the “twisty-mystery” (Vulture) novel *In a Dark, Dark Wood*, comes *The Woman in Cabin 10*, an equally suspenseful and haunting novel from Ruth Ware—this time, set at sea.

In this tightly wound, enthralling story reminiscent of Agatha Christie’s works, Lo Blacklock, a journalist who writes for a travel magazine, has just been given the assignment of a lifetime: a week on a luxury cruise with only a handful of cabins. The sky is clear, the waters calm, and the veneered, select guests jovial as the exclusive cruise ship, the *Aurora*, begins her voyage in the picturesque North Sea. At first, Lo’s stay is nothing but pleasant: the cabins are plush, the dinner parties are sparkling, and the guests are elegant. But as the week wears on, frigid winds whip the deck, gray skies fall, and Lo witnesses what she can only describe as a dark and terrifying nightmare: a woman being thrown overboard. The problem? All passengers remain accounted for—and so, the ship sails on as if nothing has happened, despite Lo’s desperate attempts to convey that something (or someone) has gone terribly, terribly wrong...

With surprising twists, spine-tingling turns, and a setting that proves as uncomfortably claustrophobic as it is eerily beautiful, Ruth Ware offers up another taut and intense read in *The Woman in Cabin 10*—one that will leave even the most sure-footed reader restlessly uneasy long after the last page is turned.

- Sales Rank: #271 in Books
- Published on: 2016-07-19
- Released on: 2016-07-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.00" w x 6.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 352 pages

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The Woman in Cabin 10

- CHAPTER 1 -

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On these he was wearing latex gloves. It was that detail that scared the shit out of me. Those gloves said, "I know what I'm doing." They said, "I've come prepared." They said, "I might be after more than your money."

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fingers felt ice-cold, but there was something warm and wet on my face, and it took a moment for me to realize it was blood, that the molding on the door had cut my cheek.

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Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

I was trapped.

Most helpful customer reviews

337 of 361 people found the following review helpful.

Imagine you have a friend...

By Basketball\_Jones

Your friend-- let's call her Debbie Downer-- is a claustrophobic, alcoholic, neurotic insomniac. She's also a total screwup at her job, and honestly, not very bright. Her house was just broken into so you're trying to cut her a break, but her nonstop complaining— it's too hot, it's too cold, the ceilings are too low, the room's too

small, my clothes smell, I'm too sleepy, I'm too hungry, I'm not hungry, I'm hungover, etc.— is getting to you. Plus there's the counting to herself (One, Two, Three...!) and the constant, random weeping. She's a hot mess.

Would you want to spend a lot of time hanging around her? Well, if you can stand to spend 352 pages with her, then you'll love Lo Blacklock, the protagonist of this book.

I won't go into a plot synopsis, others have done that already. I managed to solve the "mystery" 66% into the book (I'm on a Kindle), so kudos to the author for making the plot two-thirds difficult. As a reader it's no fun being more clever than the protagonist. The only mystery to me was how the author was going to fill the other 33% of the book.

Some weird things in this book:

-In an early chapter, which I can only guess is used as a plot device by the author to introduce the boyfriend, Lo has a nonsensical argument with him on par with:

"You did it"

"No you did it"

"No you"

"No you"

"I love you"

and breaks up with him. I sat there thinking "What the hell did I just read?"

- At another point, during the cruise Lo locks herself in her cabin and spends a number of chapters trying to figure out how to get out. Ok, I made that up, but if it had happened, it wouldn't have been out of place.

- Throughout, there was an absolute lack of modern communication on the luxury cruise Lo was on. No phone, no internet, like it's a pirate ship from 1633. I'm no expert on Wifi at sea, but come on. The Bushmen in the Kalahari have iPhones at this point. It felt like a ruse to support the plot.

- And finally, the casual, illogical, loss of the evidence. It's like Hercule Poirot saying, "Hey, I think I'll leave the murder weapon right here, in this house full of suspects. Yeah, it'll be here tomorrow when I come back for it. Not. worried. at. all."

I know I'm being really hard on the author, but that's because the critics' reviews heightened my expectations by making the book out to be on par with *The Usual Suspects*, in terms of plot twists. It's not. And that's not the author's fault. The book is a straight up mildly entertaining mystery, and not badly written, but there's not a lot here to hang your hat on.

213 of 226 people found the following review helpful.

Boring, whining, drunk heroine should have been killed in the story to end the readers misery.

By George

I should have read the reviews. How did this book get on the best sellers list? Is every heroine from the UK a drunken, whining, "unreliable" witness? The author even goes so far to tell us numerous times that her heroine is a drunken unreliable witness as if we couldn't figure this out by ourselves. There are so many things wrong with this book, and yet to my own frustration it becomes a best seller. Are we as readers so numb to bad writing that we accept the rave reviews by the publisher?

The protagonist whines, drinks heavy, and mixes it with anti-depressants. She is a confused woman; one moment she is in love and the next she is breaking up. She repeats herself often, giving the reader no credit and a headache. She repeats herself...oh, I already said that. She curses for drama. The F bomb is used often as a one word sentence. She breathes and proves to us that she can count, one...two...three...breathe.

The entire first portion of the book is long and drawn out about how she really doesn't deserve being on a cruise to write a review. She's right, Lo doesn't deserve to be on this ship. She is a complete idiot. Most of her vocabulary is "Um...I...uh..." This is not the type of story that gets my heart pounding.

Once we ride over the hump of someone being murdered, the story DOES become somewhat readable. I remember thinking, here we go! But the story never produces anything more than a snore. For the remainder of the book we are led to believe that anyone on the cruise could have murdered someone that we don't even know other than the woman in cabin 10. The characters are flat. Each one of the characters kind of mesh together as the same. There is no emotional attachment to any of them. There is little show and all tell. Lo explains throughout the book who did what and why, but we as a reader are never really shown the characters because they are too busy getting a massage or taking a tour of the bridge. On a small boat, there is little to no interaction with any of the passengers. The little interaction we have is down below with the crew when Lo checks to see if she can recognize any of them as the woman in cabin 10. Of course, none of these people actually have anything to do with the murder and are a waste of time for the reader. It could have been shortened and replaced with the characters we never really know that are supposed to be so integral to the story.

Once we are told who the murderer is, the story goes as flat as the thin paper that its written on. In fact, a terrible part of the book is that we never actually have any type of dialogue or interaction with the murderer. NONE!

\*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\*

The opening of the book starts with a break-in to the apartment of Lo. She is a clumsy person and the attacker slams the door into her face: another example of why I ask if every protagonist from the UK has to be a drunken idiot. She walks around for the remainder of the book with a bruise on her face reminding us as readers that we are fools for giving a book like this anything above 2 stars. This part of the book did intrigue me however and I could see why people picked up the book with interest wondering who and why the attacker broke into Lo's apartment. But that part never materializes. The break-in to Lo's apartment has absolutely nothing to do with the book, other than giving her the anxiety that we have beaten into our heads of being attacked.

The other issue is that we never have any real interaction with the murderer, Richard. It could have been a much better book if we actually had a thriller with Richard chasing Lo maybe with a knife and beating the hell out of her. Wouldn't that be exciting? Instead we are told how she feels bad for the woman in cabin 10 who locked her up in a cell for countless boring chapters of all the same. We never have any, and I repeat, any real interaction with Richard other than the hot tub and a brief encounter while Lo is drunk. There I go again. Lo was drunk. The only information we are told about Richard is that he is like Richard Branson; funny how the author didn't even change the first name obviously referencing the famous billionaire in real life. We are later told how dangerous he is, though we never see any of that. It could have been more interesting if Richard had planned the break-in to Lo's apartment in the beginning. That was my guess. It would have been more sinister. Richard the conniving bastard had the entire murder planned and broke into Lo's apartment to set her up as the murderer. But alas, the break-in meant absolutely nothing and we never really meet Richard other than a couple of brief encounters because he is too busy running his large

corporate world.

I have always felt the opening line of a book should give us a hint to what a story is about.

"The first inking that something was wrong was waking in the darkness to find the cat pawing at my face. I must have forgotten to shut the kitchen door last night. Punishment for coming home drunk."

This has to be one of the least driving opening statements in a book, but it is telling. She tells us she is drunk. She uses the word was twice in the opening sentence.

I give her one star for being published. Hey, she made it as a published author and a best seller. That's better than I can say, but I'm still giving it a bad review because she put me through the torture of forcing myself to read such a boring book. Will someone please tell me there are agents and publishers out there who really enjoy a good book and not the same old crap they keep publishing about a drunken unreliable witness? I'm tired of it and you as a reader should be too.

60 of 65 people found the following review helpful.

Weak weak weak

By Lisa

Great premise but I could see the cracks early with the main character. She was weak, insecure, angry and not able to even stay awake most of the time during her ordeal that followed (seriously, do not take a shot every time the word sleep shows up in this novel - you will die of alcohol poisoning). I get so let down when authors want you to believe in characters like this. It's like those old movies where you scream: "Don't look in the basement!" She was unbelievably naive in every situation so the thriller effect was totally lost on me. I'd like my money back ;)

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## THE WOMAN IN CABIN 10 BY RUTH WARE PDF

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### Review

"A classic "paranoid woman" story with a modern twist in this tense, claustrophobic mystery...The cast of characters, their conversations, and the luxurious but confining setting all echo classic Agatha Christie; in fact, the structure of the mystery itself is an old one: a woman insists murder has occurred, everyone else says she's crazy. But Lo is no wallflower; she is a strong and determined modern heroine who refuses to doubt the evidence of her own instincts." (Kirkus Reviews)

"Ware's follow-up to her best-selling debut, *In a Dark, Dark Wood*, is a gripping maritime psychological thriller that will keep readers spellbound. The intense final chapters just might induce heart palpitations." (Library Journal, Starred Review)

"Ruth Ware is back with her second hair-on-the-back-of-your-neck-tingling tale." (Marie Claire)

"[The Woman in Cabin 10] generate[s] a dark, desperate tension that will appeal to Ware's and Gillian Flynn's many fans. This is the perfect summer read for those seeking a shadowy counter to the sunshine." (Booklist, Starred Review)

"A fantasy trip aboard a luxury liner turns nightmarish for a young journalist in *The Woman in Cabin 10*, the pulse-quickenning new novel by Ruth Ware, author of *In a Dark, Dark Wood*." (O Magazine)

"[A] snappy thriller set on the high seas... The first chapter will grab your attention, force it against a wall and hold it there until the end." (Associated Press)

"Ruth Ware's *The Woman in Cabin 10* is an atmospheric thriller as twisty and tension-filled as her 2015 debut, *In a Dark, Dark Wood*... The novel's tone is dark and claustrophobic as Lo continues her search for the woman even though someone is trying to stop her — maybe even kill her." (The Washington Post)

"If you're a fan of Agatha Christie, get ready to curl up with this suspenseful mystery." (Bustle)

"Haunting and absurdly suspenseful." (PureWow)

"A great modern whodunit!" (New York Post)

"Ruth Ware's thrilling suspense novel captivates." (US Weekly)

"The Woman in Cabin 10 bucks the trend of disappointing follow-ups, and is every bit as taut and provocative as the earlier book." (Independent)

"With a flawed but likeable heroine, and a fast moving plot, it makes for a stylish thriller." (Sunday Mirror)

"A twisted and suspenseful mystery that entangles friendship, identity and memory with a possible murder.... Subtly tips its hat to authors such as Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers" (Metro)

"With a churning plot worthy of Agatha Christie, and fresh on the heels of her bestselling thriller In a Dark, Dark Wood, Ruth Ware twists the wire on readers' nerves once again. "Cabin 10" just may do to cruise vacations what "Jaws" did to ocean swimming. You'll be afraid to go out on the water." (StarTribune)

"This beach read thriller has sun, suspense, and goes well with SPF." (TheSkimm)

"Ware does something more than write the next Gone Girl or The Girl on the Train, even if she writes in that wheelhouse. Ware puts her own stamp on the genre... The Woman in Cabin 10 is good: it's creepy, it's frustrating, and it's interesting. It brings elements of our current fixations into the realm of the thriller/mystery in the best possible way." (Electric Literature)

"With a churning plot worthy of Agatha Christie, and fresh on the heels of her bestselling thriller In a Dark, Dark Wood, Ruth Ware twists the wire on readers' nerves once again. "Cabin 10" just may do to cruise vacations what "Jaws" did to ocean swimming." (Minneapolis Star Tribune)

"Ware's propulsive prose keeps readers on the hook and refuses to let anyone off until all has been revealed." (Shelf Awareness)

#### About the Author

Ruth Ware grew up in Sussex, on the south coast of England. After graduating from Manchester University she moved to Paris, before returning to the UK. She has worked as a waitress, a bookseller, a teacher of English as a foreign language, and a press officer. She now lives in London with her husband and two small children. She is the author of the New York Times bestsellers In a Dark, Dark Wood and The Woman in Cabin 10.

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The Woman in Cabin 10

- CHAPTER 1 -

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

The first inkling that something was wrong was waking in darkness to find the cat pawing at my face. I must have forgotten to shut the kitchen door last night. Punishment for coming home drunk.

"Go away," I groaned. Delilah mewed and butted me with her head. I tried to bury my face in the pillow but she continued rubbing herself against my ear, and eventually I rolled over and heartlessly pushed her off the bed.

She thumped to the floor with an indignant little meep and I pulled the duvet over my head, but even through the covers I could hear her scratching at the bottom of the door, rattling it in its frame.

The door was closed.

I sat up, my heart suddenly thumping, and Delilah leaped onto my bed with a glad little chirrup, but I snatched her to my chest, stilling her movements, listening.

I might well have forgotten to shut the kitchen door, or I could even have knocked it to without closing it properly. But my bedroom door opened outward—a quirk of the weird layout of my flat. There was no way Delilah could have shut herself inside. Someone must have closed it.

I sat, frozen, holding Delilah's warm, panting body against my chest and trying to listen.

Nothing.

And then, with a gush of relief, it occurred to me—she'd probably been hiding under my bed and I'd shut her inside with me when I came home. I didn't remember closing my bedroom door, but I might have swung it absently shut behind me when I came in. To be honest, everything from the tube station onwards was a bit of a blur. The headache had started to set in on the journey home, and now that my panic was wearing off, I could feel it starting up again in the base of my skull. I really needed to stop drinking midweek. It had been okay in my twenties, but I just couldn't shake off the hangovers like I used to.

Delilah began squirming uneasily in my arms, digging her claws into my forearm, and I let her go while I reached for my dressing gown and belted it around myself. Then I scooped her up, ready to sling her out into the kitchen.

But when I opened the bedroom door, there was a man standing there.

There's no point in wondering what he looked like, because, believe me, I went over it about twenty-five times with the police. "Not even a bit of skin around his wrists?" they kept saying. No, no, and no. He had a hoodie on, and a bandanna around his nose and mouth, and everything else was in shadow. Except for his hands.

On these he was wearing latex gloves. It was that detail that scared the shit out of me. Those gloves said, "I know what I'm doing." They said, "I've come prepared." They said, "I might be after more than your money."

We stood there for a long second, facing each other, his shining eyes locked on to mine.

About a thousand thoughts raced through my mind: Where the hell is my phone? Why did I drink so much last night? I would have heard him come in if I'd been sober. Oh Christ, I wish Judah was here.

And most of all—those gloves. Oh my God, those gloves. They were so professional. So clinical.

I didn't speak. I didn't move. I just stood there, my ratty dressing gown gaping, and I shook. Delilah wriggled out of my unresisting hands and shot away up the hallway to the kitchen, and I just stood there, shaking.

Please, I thought. Please don't hurt me.

Oh God, where was my phone?

Then I saw something in the man's hands. My handbag—my new Burberry handbag, although that detail seemed monumentally unimportant. There was only one thing that mattered about that bag. My mobile was inside.

His eyes crinkled in a way that made me think he might be smiling beneath the bandanna, and I felt the blood drain from my head and my fingers, pooling in the core of my body, ready to fight or flee, whichever it had to be.

He took a step forwards.

“No . . .” I said. I wanted it to sound like a command, but it came out like a plea—my voice small and squeaky and quavering pathetically with fear. “N—”

But I didn't even get to finish. He slammed the bedroom door in my face, hitting my cheek.

For a long moment I stood, frozen, holding my hand to my face, speechless with the shock and pain. My fingers felt ice-cold, but there was something warm and wet on my face, and it took a moment for me to realize it was blood, that the molding on the door had cut my cheek.

I wanted to run back to bed, to shove my head under the pillows and cry and cry. But a small, ugly voice in my skull kept saying, He's still out there. What if he comes back? What if he comes back for you?

There was a sound from out in the hall, something falling, and I felt a rush of fear that should have galvanized me but instead paralyzed me. Don't come back. Don't come back. I realized I was holding my breath, and I made myself exhale, long and shuddering, and then slowly, slowly, I forced my hand out towards the door.

There was another crash in the hallway outside, breaking glass, and with a rush I grabbed the knob and braced myself, my bare toes dug into the old, gappy floorboards, ready to hold the door closed as long as I could. I crouched there, against the door, hunched over with my knees to my chest, and I tried to muffle my sobs with my dressing gown while I listened to him ransacking the flat and hoped to God that Delilah had run out into the garden, out of harm's way.

At last, after a long time, I heard the front door open and shut, and I sat there, crying into my knees and unable to believe he'd really gone. That he wasn't coming back to hurt me. My hands felt numb and painfully stiff, but I didn't dare let go of the handle.

I saw again those strong hands in the pale latex gloves.

I don't know what would have happened next. Maybe I would have stayed there all night, unable to move. But then I heard Delilah outside, mewling and scratching at the other side of the door.

“Delilah,” I said hoarsely. My voice was trembling so much I hardly sounded like myself. “Oh, Delilah.”

Through the door I heard her purr, the familiar, deep, chainsaw rasp, and it was like a spell had been broken.

I let my cramped fingers loosen from the doorknob, flexing them painfully, and then stood up, trying to steady my trembling legs, and turned the door handle.

It turned. In fact it turned too easily, twisting without resistance under my hand, without moving the latch an inch. He'd removed the spindle from the other side.

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

I was trapped.

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