

# JOOLA, Africa's Titanic: True Story from One of the Worst Maritime Disasters in History

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## LE JOOLA'S Death Roll into the Sea

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Squalls were common this time of year--the crew had been through them before. This time, however, everything was adding up wrong. The boat listing to port was testimony to the fact that something was out of order with either cargo loading or ballast. Having only one running engine compounded the problem, and limited the crew's options to respond to an emergency. What happened next was unexpected.

It was 11pm when LE JOOLA capsized 17 miles off the African coast--trapping most of the 2000 men women and children inside. The majority of passengers had retired for the night, some in first and second-class cabins, but most in the lower level third class compartments. A large contingency of university students were singing and dancing in the restaurant when the ship suddenly lurched high to one side and began its death roll into the sea.

The LE JOOLA began listing further and further onto her side. There was no warning from the crew...no one saw, heard, or felt anything...other than the terrifying sensation of the deck slipping out from under them. At first, when passengers felt the steep incline of the deck, they thought it was a rolling motion from the waves-praying the ship would roll back.

Passengers near the cargo deck heard the rumble of vehicles sliding and crashing onto the port bulkheads. The LE JOOLA continued to heel...higher and higher...exposing her flat bottom hull to the surging waves.

Of hundreds that managed to escape only 64 survived. What caused this disaster that was worse than the Titanic? Why weren't lifeboats or life rafts launched? Why was it late the following day before rescue craft arrived at the scene? The author of this heartrending story traveled throughout the country in search of answers to these questions and reveals the harrowing stories of the survivors and the shameful actions of those responsible for the tragedy.



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