



Pushing the Limits of Connection Featured Author and Book

Connecting with each other and our histories is an important part of being human. In your groups, consider the common threads of family and societal connections, and how our interactions have changed over time with our ever-expanding ability to remain connected.

Erik Larson

- What do you think of Erik Larson? Was he as you imagined him?
- Larson mentions how Marconi's new technology undermined Crippen's almost perfect crime. Can you think of modern examples of how a new technology has been used to stop or detect a crime? How does this dovetail with the theme of connection?
- Oliver Lodge tried to study the supernatural using science. At that point in time, there were many unknowns regarding things such as light waves, sound waves, and other invisible things that we've since found ways to measure. Do you think the idea of "life waves" seemed very different? Are there other examples of things that we used to think existed that turned out to be false? Or things we thought didn't exist or couldn't exist, and turned out to be real?
- Larson talks about texting his daughter to stay connected. Do you see modern means of communication changing this in any way? Does using technology help you feel connected?

Thunderstruck

In *Thunderstruck*, Erik Larson creates compelling characters and murderous twists, while tracing Guglielmo Marconi's struggle to generate enough electricity for a reliable trans-Atlantic transmission. Painstaking research and technological history combine in this suspenseful story about pushing the limits of inter-continental connection.

Larson intertwines this narrative with the true-life search for one of Britain's most notorious serial killers. Amazingly, Marconi's newly-launched successful technology allowed people on both sides of the pond to listen-in as Scotland Yard tracked and captured the villain.

- Why do you think Larson gave this book the title *Thunderstruck*? How does the term apply to Marconi and Crippen?
- Did you feel the book recreated life at the beginning of the twentieth century?
- Marconi's invention of the radio changed the world and the way people communicated with each other. Have you ever thought about what it was like living in a world without telecommunication? Do you feel we are experiencing something comparable today?
- In what ways does touch on the theme of connection? Consider technological and interpersonal connections.

