

The Titanic

(- 27 student version)

-by C. Deering, written cooperatively with her students

Characters

1. Daily Review - Reporter 1
2. Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 2
3. Daily Review - Reporter 3
4. Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 4
5. Daily Review - Reporter 5
6. Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 6
7. Daily Review – Reporter 7
8. Harold Bride
9. Captain Smith
10. William McMaster Murdoch
11. Thomas Andrews
12. Mr. Bruce Ismay
13. Charles Turvey
14. Giovanni Basilico
15. Ida Strauss
16. JJ Astor
17. Jack Phillips
18. Frederick Fleet
19. Bert Pitman
20. Robert Hichens
21. Margaret Brown
22. Bertha Mayne
23. Marie Spencer
24. Leila Meyer
25. Eugenie Lurette
26. Marjorie Newell
27. Madeleine Newell

Drowning Person Voices for Scene 5

Group 1:

Harold Bride
Capt. Smith
William McMaster Murdoch

Group 2:

Thomas Andrews
Bruce Ismay
Charles Turvey

Group 3:

Giovanni Basilico
Ida Strauss
J.J. Astor

Group 4:

Jack Phillips
Bert Pitman

The Last Voice:

Harold Bride

Scene 1 – The Titanic Departs
(3 min)

Setting: The docks at Southampton, England. Reporters set the stage for the reputation of the Titanic – the Unsinkable Ship! Reporters are musing aloud on stage as they jot notes for their newspaper stories after having witnessed the Titanic’s departure.

Ships horn sounds in the distance

Daily Review - Reporter 1:

Room for 2 500 passengers...

Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 2:

...as tall as an eleven story building!

Daily Review – Reporter 3:

...and 22 school buses long!

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 4:

With a swimming pool and gymnasium...

Daily Review – Reporter 5:

...It’s a veritable floating palace!

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 6:

The biggest ship in the world...

Daily Review - Reporter 7:

With a double bottom and 16 safety compartments, it’s unsinkable!

Daily Review - Reporter 1:

The Titanic!

[The beginning of “The Ship Titanic” song is sung by all as they leave the stage and the curtain opens on the next scene]

All Sing: *Allegretto – quick and lively tempo*

Oh they built the ship Titanic, to sail the ocean blue...

Scene 2 – News of Ice – Sunday April 14, 1912
(5 min)

Setting: The bridge deck. Captain Smith and William McMaster Murdoch are both on stage, in tableau, until Harold Bride enters.

Reporters are stationed around the perimeter of the stage. Whenever the reporters speak the other actors are in a frozen tableau and whenever the other actors are speaking, the reporters are in a frozen tableau.

Rat – a – tat – tat, rat-a-tat-tat (sound of a telegraph tapping)

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 2:

By dawn on April 14, Captain Smith had received several warnings of icy waters in his path. He was on the bridge deck when Harold Bride, the junior wireless operator arrived.

[Enter: Harold Bride to the bridge deck and speaking with some urgency]

Harod Bride:

Captain Smith, we just received another warning of icy waters in our path.

Captain Smith:

What’s all the fuss about, Mr. Bride? There is often ice in the sea lanes between England and America this time of year.

Harod Bride:

Aye aye Captain. Sorry to bother you.

[Exit: Harold Bride]

Daily Review – Reporter 3:

By 2:00 pm, after receiving 4 more ice warnings, Captain Smith took greater notice

Captain Smith:

We’ve received some more ice warnings – we’d better change to a more southerly course, just in case.

William McMaster Murdoch (First Mate):

Aye, aye Captain.

Captain Smith:

And tell the lookouts to call the bridge at the first sign of ice.

William McMaster Murdoch (First Mate):

Shall we slow down Captain?

Captain Smith:

[frowning and thinking for a moment] Only if we see ice. Full speed ahead!

[Exit: Captain Smith]

William McMaster Murdoch (First Mate):

Aye, aye Captain.

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 4:

At 7:30pm the assistant wireless operator heard a warning sent to another ship regarding 3 large icebergs in the area

[Enter: Harold Bride]

Harold Bride:

I have a message for the Captain.

William McMaster Murdoch (First Mate):

He’s in the dining hall. Leave it here and he’ll get it when he’s finished.

Harold Bride:

Aye aye, sir.

[Harold Bride turns to leave and then freezes in tableau]

Daily Review – Reporter 5:

But the Captain never did get that message...

All Sing: *Allegretto with a ritardando:*

And they thought they had a ship that the water wouldn't go through...

**Scene 3 – Dining in Danger – Sunday April 14, 1912
(10 Min)**

Setting: First Class Dining Room. Margaret Brown, Bruce Ismay, JJ Astor and Thomas Andrews are sitting at a dining room table.

[Sounds of laughter and conversation are heard and then fade as we hear some of the passengers' conversations]

Margaret Brown:

This is such a nice ship, Mr. Andrews.

Ida Strauss:

Yes, I quite agree. It's exceeded all of my expectations.

Thomas Andrews:

Why thank you Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Strauss.

[Enter Giovanni Basilico with a serving tray]

Giovanni Basilico: At your service

[Moves away from table and stands off to the side of the stage]

Thomas Andrews:

Tell me Mrs. Strauss, how is your husband's department store doing? Macy's is it?

Ida Strauss:

Yes, Macy's is the name. It's doing very well, thank you. We will be visiting the chain in New York.

Bruce Ismay:

I was hoping to see your husband tonight Mrs. Strauss.

Ida Strauss:

Well, he still had some work to do and with our anticipated early arrival in New York, he decided to take dinner in our cabin and get a little work done before we take a walk on deck and retire for the evening.

Margaret Brown:

Yes, I'd heard that we may get to New York a little early.

Bruce Ismay: I certainly hope so. Here comes the Captain now – perhaps we can get an update on our schedule.

[enter: Captain Smith]

Capt. Smith: Hello fine sirs and ladies. How is your evening?

[all nod]

Bruce Ismay: It is wonderful Captain but would be even better if we knew we'd be getting to New York early.

[enter Charles Turvey]

Charles Turvey: Captain Smith, I have an urgent message for you.

Captain: *[reads paper and then stuffs it in his pocket]* Oh this again. It's nothing. Thank you Button Turvey.

[Charles Turvey turns to leave but is called back]

JJAstor: Oh, sir... Button Turvey, is it?:

Charles Turvey: Yes sir, at your service.

JJAstor: Could you please send this message for me? It's urgent. I'd like to make sure my niece remembers to feed Fluffy.

Charles Turvey: Yes sir. *[aside]* Yes, really urgent!

[Charles Turvey moves away from the table, but pauses beside Giovanni Basilico for a moment before leaving to send message]

Captain: Back to your question, Mr. Ismay. Yes, I do believe we'll arrive ahead of schedule. I've commanded the ship to run at full speed as we often do in the middle of the Ocean.

Bruce Ismay:

Dandy! Just what I wanted to hear.

JJ Astor:

Tell me Mr. Andrews, why do they say that the Titanic is unsinkable?

Charles Turvey:

[aside, to Giovanni Basilico] That's what I'd like to know. It's made of metal you know!

Thomas Andrews:

Well, she has a double hull and sixteen air tight safety compartments. I can't imagine anything strong enough to sink her.

Bruce Ismay:

[arrogantly] Yes, the White Star Lines hires the finest engineers and we have the finest fleet in the world. I'm hoping to break a speed record on this trip.

Giovanni Basilico:

[aside, to Charles Turvey] I've seen the Captain get a lot of messages and he just stuffs them in his pocket! What are they all about?

Charles Turvey:

We've had a whole bunch of ice warnings and he doesn't seem to think it's a big deal!

Giovanni Basilico:

What if we hit some ice? What would become of us, the crew?

Charles Turvey:

I've noticed that there are not enough life boats for all of us. It wouldn't look good, that's for sure. *[pauses a moment as the thought sinks in]* Well, I'd better deliver this *urgent* message for Mr. Astor.

[exit Charles Turvey]

Giovanni Basilico:

[aside, to audience] What could possibly be more urgent than ice warnings?

Margaret Brown:

Captain Smith, I know that the Titanic is reputed to be unsinkable, but what would happen if she *were* to sink.

Captain: Well, *[thinking a moment]* I suppose we would load the lifeboats with women and children first.

JJ Astor: Starting with first class passengers?

Captain: Why of course Mr. Astor, of course.

[all on stage hold a tableau while others sing]

All Sing: *moderato with a ritardando:*

But her maiden trip to sea was a total tragedy.....

**Scene 4 – Total Tragedy – Sunday April 14, 1912
(10 Min)**

Setting: The wireless office

Rat – a – tat – tat, rat-a-tat-tat (sound of a telegraph tapping)

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 6:

At 9:30pm there was another ice message. Jack Phillips, the head telegraph operator received it in the wireless office.

Jack Phillips:

[Writing while hearing the rat – a – tat- tats]

Great -- number --of—large-- icebergs --in --Titanic’s—path.

[showing frustration]

It’s the same old message. Don’t they know we’ve already heard about the ice? I have so many passenger messages to send I wish they would stop interrupting me with these blasted ice messages!

[setting the ice message aside, Jack Phillips gets back to “work”]

Daily Review - Reporter 7:

At 10:55 pm one last ice message was received from another boat.

Jack Phillips:

[reading the message slip he had just recorded]

“We are stopped and surrounded by ice.”

[totally angered by the inconvenient interruption]

That’s it. I’ve had it. I’m going to send my own message back.

“Shut-- up,-- shut--- up,--- I ---am ---busy!”

There. That should keep them quiet for a while!

Daily Review - Reporter 1:

Just before 11:40 pm one of the lookouts, Frederick Fleet, saw a large dark shape sticking out of the sea.... directly in the Titanic’s path.

Frederick Fleet, the Lookout:

[standing on a raised platform, pulls on a thick rope and rings warning bell three times]

Ring, ring, ring

[picks up phone to bridge]

Iceberg right ahead!

Bert Pitman:

[as he hangs up the phone receiver he issues a command]

Tell the men in the engine room to slow the ship as quickly as they can.

I’ll turn the wheel as far as it will go [he turns the wheel]

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 2:

At first it looked like the Titanic might avoid the iceberg.....

Ker-thunk....scraaaaape....tear [the sound of tearing metal]

...but at 11:40pm on April 14, 1912, the Titanic struck an iceberg which tore at its metal hull. Less than 3 hours later, the Titanic had sunk completely.

[As the curtain is drawn, the tail end of "The Ship Titanic" song is sung.]

All Sing:

It was sad when the great ship went down.

**Scene 5 - Lifeboat Number 6 - 12:45 am Monday April 15, 1912
(15 min)**

Setting: Lifeboat #6 in the Atlantic Ocean, not far from the Titanic
[sound of calm water lapping up against lifeboat]

Margaret Brown:

Look, look at the current. We've just landed in the ocean and now it looks like we'll get sucked down with the ship.

Bertha Mayne:

Margaret's right. Look at the suction! Shouldn't you deck hands row?

Robert Hichens (Quartermaster):

No need to row. We're all done in for. Sit back and relax.

Frederick Fleet (Lookout):

Maybe the ladies are right Robert. We ought to do our duty to the end.

Robert Hichens (Quartermaster):

[angry and unstable] We're done for, Freddie. Didn't you hear me?

Frederick Fleet (Lookout):

No need to get violent Robert... I think you should calm down.

Robert Hichens (Quartermaster):

There's no need to be calm. There's no hope of rescue!

Margaret Brown:

Quartermaster Hichens. You keep quiet and calm down or I will personally throw you overboard.

Ladies – everyone who is near an oar, grab hold and start to row. We must get out of the suction. The Titanic is going down fast. I've got an oar. Call out your name if you have one *[begins to row]*

Bertha Mayne:

Bertha here. I've got one *[begins to row]*

Marie Spencer:

Marie here. I've got another *[begins to row]*

Leila Meyer:

Leila here. Yes, I've got one too *[begins to row]*

Eugenie Lurette:

Eugenie. Me too. *[begins to row]*

Marjorie Newell:

Marjorie here. I'm rowing *[begins to row]*

Madeleine Newell:

Madeleine here. Let me know when you get tired and I'll take over *[the women row hard for several minutes]*

Robert Hichens (Quartermaster):

Yer wastin' yer efforts ladies. We're as good as dead.

Margaret Brown:

You shush or I'll throw you overboard. Ladies, keep it up.

[after a few moments]

Looks like we've made our way clear of the suction.

Bertha Mayne:

What happened to Ida? I thought she was coming with us.

Marie Spencer:

Ida Strauss? The wife of the Macy's department store owner? Yes, I thought she was coming too.

Leila Meyer:

Did you hear her refuse? It was beautiful. What did she say again?

Eugenie Lurette:

She said, "We have lived together for many years. Where you go, I go."

Marjorie Newell:

I think she also wanted to make room for some of us younger women.

Madeleine Newell:

Look, there she sits with her husband. They're on the deck.

Margaret Brown:

Listen, listen to the band on the Titanic – it plays to cheer us all.

[All stop to listen to the string quartet playing, "Nearer, my God, to thee" and watch the Titanic sinking]

The whole thing has been swallowed up by the sea.

Bertha Mayne:

All those people....washed into the sea.

Marie Spencer:

It's so dark.

Leila Meyer:

..and cold.

Eugenie Lurette:

... and quiet

Marjorie Newell:

...except for their calls. Can you hear them?

Group 1: Drowning person voices

[each voice calls out, "Help" in fairly rapid succession]

Help!

Group 2: Drowning person voices

[each voice calls out, "Help" in gradually slowing succession]

Help!

Group 3: Drowning person voices

[each voice calls out, "Help" slowly, one after another]

Help!

Group 4: Drowning person voices

[after a long pause, voices call out almost together, in a gasp]

Help!

Madeleine Newell:

It's pathetic. I can't stand it!

The Last Voice:

[after another pause, the last voices call out with their dying breaths]

Help!

Margaret Brown:

[after another pause] Listen. *[all listen in silence for a few moments]* They've stopped.

[Lifeboat #6 passengers freeze in tableau]

[Drowning voices singing. Grave tempo.]

Oh it was sad-----

(so sad)

Oh it was sad-----

(so sad)

It was sad when the great ship went down,

To the bottom of the sea -----

(husbands and wives, little children lost their lives)

It was sad when the great ship went down.

Daily Review - Reporter 3:

Just over an hour later, the passenger ship, Carpathia, reached the Titanic survivors, rescued them and delivered them safely to New York City.

Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 4:

As a result of the Titanic tragedy shipping rules were changed.

Daily Review - Reporter 5:

Every seagoing vessel must have more than enough lifeboats for everyone on board.

Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 6:

Every seagoing vessel must carry out lifeboat drills with their passengers.

Daily Review - Reporter 7:

Ships that travel through the Atlantic Ocean travel farther south in the winter and spring.

Daily Review - Reporter 1:

Radios must be kept on AND monitored at all times

Trenton Evening Times - Reporter 2:

These shipping rules make the industry safer... but there are even more important lessons that, had they been learned by those in charge, would have prevented the Titanic disaster altogether.

Daily Review - Reporter 3:

Yes, I do agree. Had the Captain heeded the advice of his colleagues, and not succumbed to his pride in wanting to break a speed record for crossing the Atlantic, he would have paid more attention to the ice warnings and decreased the speed of the ship enough to avert the collision.

Trenton Evening Times – Reporter 4:

Exactly mate. And, had Bruce Ismay and the White Star Lines listened to Thomas Andrews who had recommended a full compliment of lifeboats, then even after the collision, there would have been enough capacity to rescue all who were on board.

Daily Review – Reporter 5:

I guess you might say that pride comes before a fall... or in this case, a plunge.

[Enter: Entire cast gathers on stage to sing the Titanic song and take a bow]

[Reporters strike a tableau and lights go out]

THE END

References

Passenger data retrieved from: <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/>

Osborne, W., Osborne, M.P. (2002). Magic tree house fact tracker: Titanic. New York, USA. Random House Inc.