

Escaping the void



Two months before I boarded the ship, I was sitting, trying to relax, on the veranda of a hotel, in Cairo accompanied by my friend William Sloper. A rather odd looking little man approached me; and with meaningful words he cautioned my subsequent journey's traveled by boat as he explained that in a dream he had seen me afloat on an open boat. He tried to assure me that I was to lose everything except my life. I was bemused and seemed to doubt the little mans words, I handed him a small amount of coins then sat, gazing at him as he proceeded and disappeared into the teeming crowd.

Until the 10th April I thought nothing more of the peculiar man until I realized that today I was embarking on a journey across the water to New York, 4 days before the ship began its' decent to the depths below, we were all so unaware. Looking at the sheer beauty of the vast body we were boarding, the man's words passed through my head, I only thought to myself, " Don't be stupid, the Titanic is made so it is unsinkable" and ensue to join my parents on the ship. I had been given just one cabins, C - 23 which was occupied by myself, and my father. He had helped design the ship. When the Titanic struck the iceberg, he held himself responsible.

Many beautiful decorations covered the room giving it it's glory; so perfect and precise with great space and luxury.

As the ship set sail on her maiden voyage, at noon to New York, you could hear the cheers from the crowd below. We stood waving, leaning over the banisters lining the ship, calling to anyone we saw. Smiles lined our faces and our eyes gleamed, we were all ecstatic, pleased that we had our place on the pride of the ocean.

Impressive gold banisters lined the marble stairs leading into the enormous ballroom; chandeliers hung covering the ceiling with their light and sparkle. We were jolly and pleased to be where we were. We loved the relaxation everyday and the fun we had all night, even on that terrible night, we were spinning around the dance floor until the ship suddenly shuddered greatly and slowed to a stop. Nobody was worried, the ship could not sink, but the aged mans' words continued to flow through my head, worried thoughts began in my mind and showed on my face, " I will lose everything but my life".

I stood still thinking just before my brother grabbed me and spun me round the dance floor, a fake smile showed on my face but it was only to please. My father had left to ask what had happened and overheard Captain Smith ordering the watertight doors to be shut to " prevent any more damage and determine the destruction already through". Mr. Andrews had left with fear on his face as soon as it had happened and turned up by my fathers' side with what looked like plans to my father. They proceeded to disappear into a small room accompanied by the Captain.

My father returned to reveal all, he told us to gather ourselves together. He was not a stern man by nature; but he was now. He was also a very sensible man. We were to stay where we were as he needed us to be ready quickly. I hurried below deck to retrieve his and my own warm coat. I was now becoming petrified, the others on board were still calm, and everyone else on the ship was continuing as if nothing had happened. Though of course, they weren't privileged with the knowledge that I had.

My father returned again his face was rather pale, following him were many of the ships crewmembers who proceeded to hand out life jackets and tell everyone to put them on and also warm clothes, I took mine and correctly placed it over her head and tied the long straps around my waist. One of the crew spoke, " there is nothing to worry about just Captains precautions". A massive bang went off, which I later found out was a distress signal he continued, " Make sure warm clothing is worn and that people begin to make their way outside". Others made many complaints around me but we did as we were told, no arguments or conversation.

It was cold outside, and ice was scattered over the deck. I rubbed my hands together, my father grabbed them and rubbed them for warmth, " stay calm, everything will be fine", I smiled shyly as a tear left my eye, was this what the man meant, I was going to lose myfamily. I was now very scared for all the bellow and holler of voices, the bang of the distress signals, and the screeching of boats as they were prepared for lowering. The crew thought that this was pointless, they shared the feeling of false security that nothing was going to happen. However, soon children and female members of the passengers aboard were being asked to climb into the boats and were lowered out to sea. Crying began as families were split up, I held onto my father knowing that this would happen to us, my fathers would be made to stay. Though deep down, I knew that he intended to go down with the ship.

We snuggled together for warmth as the noise continued around us, hardly uttering words to one another, just trying to keep warm. Time had past, I am not sure how long. Many lifeboats had now been lowered and were moving away from the ship, and now we were being ushered onto one, lifeboat 10.

My father hugged me, and we whispered our goodbyes; he assured me that he would be there to see me when we found our way across the sea. I knew this was not to be true. My eyes were stinging trying to hold back the forceful tears; I could not stop thinking of the brave men and boys who were to be left behind. As the boat was lowered I called, " I love you" him as he disappeared from view, my last memory was of him shaking hands with Mr. Andrews, both standing in their white life jackets. My head was aching, the false smile flew from my face. Around me, families were huddled together, trying to keep warm. There were emotional mothers, wailing for their husbands and sons.

The boat was rowed away from the ship, I gasped at the sight, the ship was already tilting. Many windows were disappearing from view. I thought for the first time of the other passengers. Hundreds of people lined the decks. The last lifeboat had left. As I glanced around, searching for the other boats, disgust filled my thoughts. Rich, prominent women were in lifeboats, which were purposely half-filled. As they had material wealth, they needn't care about the sacrifice of others. I felt compelled to stand up and say something, though the cowardice within me kept me silent. I turned away staring into the dark sky lit by many tiny white stars.

More hours passed, I wouldn't turn around; more boats were surrounding us as we moved further away, my eyes were red and sore yet the tears still flowed, yet I was no-longer sad but now angry. Why should I live and everyone else die? I longed to be by my father's side, but I knew that he was gone. The sound grew, crashes and explosions. The cries grew louder but I never turned, I would not see it go down. I was too scared, too pathetic. I

forced my self to turn just as the boat crashed down to the depths below. There were bodies everywhere, strewn around the wake of the ship.

We never returned, another ship, the Carpathia arrived at the scene taking the surviving people on board. I remember little, around me, mothers frantically calling for their families, their children weeping heavily. They knew they were lost. I did not cry anymore. I shivered not only from the cold, but of the fright. That man new this was to happen. How? I was too tired to sleep, too confused to think.

As we arrived finally in New York I realised that I was to meet my fiancée, the crowd all wept. Many were greeting relatives, asking helplessly if we had seen their loved ones. Keith stood in the crowd. I saw him, my face lit instantly but only for a second. I ran towards him and just let him hold me for a while; he knew not to speak yet.

I never forget the event, I think about what I should have done, I should have made them go for survivors or stayed with my father. I regret many things but my family was always there to bring me hope through the hard times.