

## Additional Resources – Guided Reading

### The Unsinkable Giant

Read the text on the next page and answer the questions.

1. Who is writing the diary?

2. What features tell you that this text is a diary?

3. In the extract 'April 14th 1912, 11:45pm', what signs tell us that something is wrong?

4. What language feature is used in the phrase '*...we found a wall of people...*'?

5. Which words or phrases indicate a sense of urgency?

6. Read the extract 'April 15th 1912, 1:45am'. What impression do you get of Kieron?

7. Which word in the extract 'April 15th 1912, 1:15am' is a synonym of bravery?

8. What date did Sally and Annie plead with Kieron?

9. What does Annie's pleading tell us about the situation?

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#### April 14<sup>th</sup> 1914

It has been two years since that horrendous night, and yet I still have nightmares. Two years since I was trapped on Deck D of the RMS Titanic by those cold, unforgiving iron gates!

#### April 11<sup>th</sup> 1912, 2pm

Today I stood on the open deck of the wondrous Titanic. As I waved to the people around the port, they waved back, looking like thousands of ants scrambling to take one last glimpse of a loved one. Before long, we were sailing from Queenstown, Ireland across the Atlantic Ocean to a brand-new life. As the people faded from view, I slowly made my way to my cabin. Never before had I seen such extravagance. I thought I had made a wrong turn! The two cabins had electric lights and running water; we even had mattresses! Surely this was not for me – not on a steerage ticket?

I was soon joined by a young woman and her two children. They, too, were hoping for a new life in America. Sally and her son Patrick, 3, and daughter Bridget, 5, were joining her cousin in New York who had found work there. I introduced myself as Annie and explained that I was travelling for the same reason. We soon settled into what was to be our home for the next week; Patrick desperate to run around and explore the labyrinth of corridors, Bridget content to gaze in awe at the magnitude of everything around her.

#### April 14<sup>th</sup> 1912, 11:45pm

I was abruptly awoken by the lights turning on and a steward shouting, “Everybody up! Get your lifejackets on!”

I couldn't quite comprehend what was going on. What did they mean, lifejackets? Why were we being woken up at such a late hour? I could hear the same thing being said throughout the corridor as I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes. Voices were getting louder as people began talking and asking what was going on. However, the stewards would not answer us.

They just kept saying, “Everybody up! Get your lifejackets on!”

They were in such an awful hurry and the look on their faces told me something was wrong. Something was very wrong! I quickly got dressed and began to follow the crowd towards the exit, but we found a wall of people and could go no further. In the distance, I could hear a steward telling people to stand back and wait. There were angry passengers telling the steward to open the gate and let us through, but the steward would not. He said that we had to wait until it was our turn. I was now a sardine being pressed against the passengers in front of me. Voices were becoming angrier and louder, wanting to know what was going on. I began to feel more and more suffocated as other passengers moved forward, squashing me even more.

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It was at that point I knew I had to move or become trapped, so I pushed with all my strength and began to shout, “MOVE! MOVE ! LET ME OUT!” I kept on shouting until I felt an arm grab hold of me and pull me out of the way before I got hurt.

It was Kieron, a lad from Dublin, whom I had met the first day I boarded the Titanic.

“There you are lass – you’ll not get out that way. Come on, I know a short cut.”

April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912, 11:45pm

Before I even had a chance to say thank you, Kieron was pulling me along corridor after corridor, back towards my cabin. As we were running, we found Sally and her two children. Little Bridget was crying and Patrick wanted to go get his toy boat.

“What on earth is going on?” asked Sally.

“We have to get to the top deck,” explained Kieron.

He picked up Patrick and began to run. Sally and I followed behind him for what seemed like an eternity until we came to a ladder. He told us to climb up and not stop until he said so. Kieron was in front with Patrick clinging onto him for dear life. Sally was in front of me, trying to keep little Bridget calm. I was even more scared than before; the lights were flickering on and off now. Eventually, we reached the top. Kieron pushed open a large hatch using his shoulder while Patrick still clung to the front of him. It brought us out on the very top deck amidst pandemonium.

April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912, 1:45am

As Sally and I emerged from the vertical stairway, I looked to my right to see the bow of the ship flooding. Sea water was rushing over both sides, pulling us down.

“We have to get to a lifeboat NOW!” cried Kieron.

I knew he was right. I could see in the distance a single lifeboat, but there were so many people waiting to get on. Everybody was panicking and screaming as the lifeboat began to list further and further forward into the ice-cold sea. Kieron handed Patrick to me, and then he grabbed Sally and pushed her into the lifeboat before anyone could object. I followed quickly. Kieron helped the men lower the lifeboat into the water, knowing we had minutes – maybe only seconds – until the water caught up to us. We were the last ones in that lifeboat; there was no more room.

“Let him in!” we cried, reaching for Kieron. “Let him in, we can make room! Kieron jump in now! JUMP!”.

But he didn’t. Instead, he continued to lower the lifeboat down, like some guardian angel who was making sure Sally, the children and I would get off the boat alive.

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I couldn't take my eyes off Kieron. I was still pleading with him to save himself, but as the lifeboat finally hit the water and we began to row away, I could see him helping other people. Never before had I witnessed such valour and resolve to help other people in such a horrifying time of need.

#### April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912, 2:20am

As we rowed away, the ship began sinking faster and faster: going down by her head, before it broke into two. Then, within minutes, RMS Titanic was gone! In the distance, I could hear the chilling sound of people calling frantically for help. The sounds were loud at first, until they eventually began to quieten and then disappear altogether. I will never forget those harrowing sounds as long as I live.

#### April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912, 4:30am

The sea was a smooth sheet of glass, the stars casting an eerie illumination on its surface. I sat there shivering and holding on to Patrick, trying to keep him warm. I wondered if we would ever be rescued. On the horizon, a looming black figure came into view. It was a ship! Finally, thankfully, a ship! We were saved! Suddenly, I found the strength to row again. I made my fingers and hands work. I grasped the oars once more and awoke the others, telling them to row to the ship. It took time to get everyone off the lifeboats. We had to climb rope nets as there were no gangplanks for us to walk up like we had when boarding the Titanic five days earlier. Many people struggled to use the ropes with their numb hands, feet and bodies. When I finally managed to plant my feet on that solid deck, I sat down and thanked God that Sally, the children and I had survived. I then prayed for Kieron, hoping that somehow he had found his way to a lifeboat as well.