Titanic

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“The millionaires' special", "the wonder ship”, "the last word in luxury”, and “the unsinkable ship”…these were some of the nicknames given to the grandest, most magnificent ship of its time—The *Titanic*. Whether you were a first, second, or third class passenger, being aboard the *Titanic* was a dream come true. This dream, however, quickly turned into a nightmare for 2,200 passengers aboard and the tragedy will forever be etched in maritime history.

**Attention Getter**

The *RMS Titanic* began its maiden voyage traveling from Southampton, England, to New York, at noon on Wednesday, April 10, 1912. Traveling on board were some of the wealthiest people in the world, including Isador Straus and his wife who made their fortune from Macy’s department store; John Jacob Astor and his second wife, Madeline who were considered to be the wealthiest passengers on the ship; and probably the most well-known passenger—the “Unsinkable” Molly Brown –who came from a poor immigrant family but whose husband struck it rich. *Titanic* also housed second- and third- class passengers who were hoping for a new start in America.

**Description of Disaster**

Although the maiden voyage of the *Titanic* began smoothly, halfway through the trip as many as seven iceberg warnings started coming in from surrounding ships. Despite the warnings, the *Titanic* continued full speed ahead. At 11:40 p.m. on April 14, 1912, the *Titanic* tried to avoid collision with an iceberg. With little to no time to react, the iceberg scraped the side of the ship causing a gash. After the ship’s builder assessed the damage, all hope was lost. The unsinkable ship would last only a matter of hours. The closest ship—the *Californian*—didn’t acknowledge the distress signals sent by the *Titanic* as a call for help. Even with the wireless operators sending out SOS, the closest ship to respond to the distress couldn’t get to the ship until it was too late. By 2:05 a.m. on April 15, 1912, the *Titanic* plunged to its death in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean along with over half of the passengers still on board. Of the 2,200 passengers on board, only 705 survived. Two days after the disastrous sinking, a small ship was chartered to look for the dead bodies. After two weeks of searching, 398 bodies were recovered and given proper burials.

After researching this tragedy, I have concluded the disaster of the *Titanic* occurred because of natural conditions, such as the icebergs, but was also a direct result of human error.

**Description Continued**

**Evaluation**

To begin with, the publicity the *Titanic* received prior to the maiden voyage helped to build a false sense of safety and security. The nicknames “Unsinkable” and “Invincible” were partly to blame for the sinking of the great ship. Although much advancement had been made to enhance the safety of the *Titanic*, many precautions were ignored. To begin with, the hull of the *Titanic* was made up of two coats of steel with 16 water-tight compartments. Because of these enhancements, the Captain felt safe cruising through the Atlantic at high speeds, despite the numerous ice berg warnings. In addition to ignoring the warnings, the builder of the *Titanic* did not include enough lifeboats to carry all of the passengers to safety because it made the grand ship look cramped and less spacious. The *Titanic* carried only the required number of lifeboats to pass the safety inspection. No one expected the ship to sink, so it didn’t seem to be a problem at the time. Customarily, ships conducted lifeboats drills, but for some reason the Captain decided against it. Perhaps he believed life boat preparation wasn’t necessary.

Once the impact occurred and the sinking was inevitable, not practicing the lifeboat drill made for more confusion when trying to load the boats. Not to mention, the passengers didn’t think for a moment that the giant ship would actually sink. People were hesitant to leave the ship which caused many lifeboats to be hoisted into the Atlantic half full.

The press covered the tragedy closely because people wanted to know how this could happen. Americans were outraged and immediately following the sinking, the U.S. Senate began a thorough investigation surrounding the events that led up to such a horrifying disaster. After a month-long investigation, surviving passengers and crew were questioned. In the end, it was determined that the captain was overconfident and indifferent to danger, lifeboats drills should have been conducted, they lacked adequate supplies and compasses, and 3rd class passengers weren’t informed of the disaster quickly enough. Because of all of these findings, new laws regarding lifeboats, safe speeds, and communication systems, were created to protect passengers. An International Ice Patrol was formed to spot icebergs.

On April 15, 1912, the world learned that nothing is infallible. Fortunately, many precautions are now in place to prevent such a horrible tragedy from occurring in the future.

**Evaluation (cont.)**

**Conclusion**