



NOTES:

UNIT: I (prose-ii)

SINKING OF THE TITANIC

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Introduction: The sinking of the Titanic is one of the greatest tragedies in human history. The following is a very exciting account of the night on which that tragedy occurred.

Summary – The Titanic was the biggest and safest vessel ever built by man. It was a very large ship. It was called leviathan, which is the biggest sea creature. Everyone believed that it was unsinkable. It was also called ‘the queen of the sea’. People all over the world desired to enjoy its comforts. It became a magnet for several billionaires. She was a masterpiece in every respect- in comfort, in beauty, in equipment etc. It had a swimming pool, a Parisian café, a large dining hall, squash racket court, library, sun parlours and a huge ball room. On the 15th April 1912, she was on a journey from Southampton to New York, America. It was her first journey. There were 2200 souls on board including a crew of nearly 900 and around 100 children. Among the passengers there were many millionaires and high ranking persons. Of these people only about 700 were survived and able to see land again. And the rest perished in the sea.

The night was very cold. But the surface of the ocean was quite and calm. There were no indications to occur any unwanted accidents like storm or tempest or anything. Though the passengers were on board for four days they were in high spirits. Their minds were filled with thrill and excitement at the thought of a rousing welcome in New York. Every passenger was enjoying each comfort given by the ship. Everything goes smoothly.

But all of a sudden at around 11.40pm. a huge iceberg was noticed by the two look-out man on the crow’s nest. The gong sound of danger filled the air. The officers and the crewman tried their best to change the direction of the ship. But all their efforts turned out to be of no use. The titanic received a death blow. The sharp iceberg made six holes

on the ship's watertight compartments. The ship's keel and her sides were torn. It was sure that the unsinkable ship would sink sooner or later during that night.

All the crewmen on the ship including the sailors, officers, engineers tried their best to save the passengers and also to repair the ship but it was of no use. They performed their duty honestly, sincerely and with generosity. The chief wireless operator sent out SOS signal continuously. Distress rockets were sent up in the sky as a signal to the nearby ships that they were in danger. Captain Smith and his co-workers thought that their SOS message would surely be picked up by some passing ships and came to rescue them but no rescue ship came.

In the beginning most of the passengers could not understand why there were so much of worry all around. They did not believe that the ship would sink. But the moment the roar of the escaping steam ceased, the passengers were filled with apprehension. They now realized that there was danger. Meanwhile, the sailors shouted to put on the life belts. Still some passengers thought that nothing would happen and it was just a precaution for the time being. But it was a false sense of security. Minute by minute the water was creeping up and the ship going down. All the crewman performed their duty very quietly and efficiently. Even the bandsman played lively tunes to console the worried passengers. As there were not enough lifeboats all the passengers were not given chance to be in the life boat. It was women and children only who were given first priority. However, many tried to board on the lifeboats as they also wanted to survive. There were sounds of quarrel and rebuke among them. So the boats were partially filled and lowered down the sea so as not to create any unwanted incident. On the other side of the ship SOS signals were being sent giving the position of the ship. Now a number of ships such as the Olympic, the Carpathian responded saying that they were on the way to rescue the passengers.

The lifeboats were rowed away one after the other loaded fully with women and children. However, hundreds of passengers were still left behind. Many women refused to board on the life boat saying they would better die with their menfolk other than being separated at that critical moment. Major Butt an A.D.C. to the American president helped women and children to safety. When the water was lapping around his ankle he bade them farewell and did not see him any longer.

The bandsmen played their tune from light music to hymn tunes. Many of them thought that their end was near. Even unto the last moment the bandsmen played their music. They were really courageous.

The Titanic was tilting at 45° angle. Many passengers dived into the ice-cold sea in the hope that they might float on the piece of wreckage. It was good for those lucky swimmers but for the unlucky ones there were no chance to survive. Suddenly all the lights of the ship went out and soon the unsinkable ship was to be gone from the sight.

The Titanic sank completely at around 2.10am i.e. 2 and half hours after it hit the iceberg. And it was only at dawn i.e. on April 16 the ship the Carpathian could arrive. It rescued every living soul surviving from the ship.

Word notes: distress- sorrow Catastrophic- terrible even causing great suffering Leviathan- a large sea animal Doom- destruction Icefield- expanse of ice Ripped- torn Tinfoil- thin plates of tin fangs- long sharp teeth iceberg- mass of floating ice on the sea masterpiece- outstanding fascinating- attractive ruffled- disturbed bridge-platform over and across the deck of the ship liners- ship indiscernible- that cannot be seen hum- continuous low sound reverberated- resounded gongs- sounds of bells astern- rear of the ship jagged- having sharp points bulk- mass chart room- room full of charts and maps scantily- not sufficiently bellowing- making a deep loud roar boilers- machineries or apparatus for boiling water futile- useless streaked- to move very fast band- band party joker's cry- not serious evade- avoid following the low promptly- immediately stern words- hard words glanced rebuke- a rebuke given through looks sufficed- made sufficient discredit- loss of reputation quest- search Cunard – a shipping company perished- died stoics- people who accept pain slanting- sloping succor- relief