



TITANIC

19

12

Learning Objective:
To gather evidence to back up opinions.



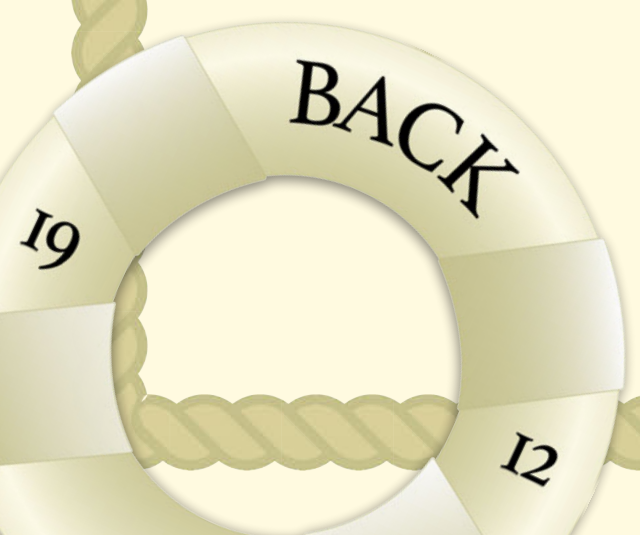
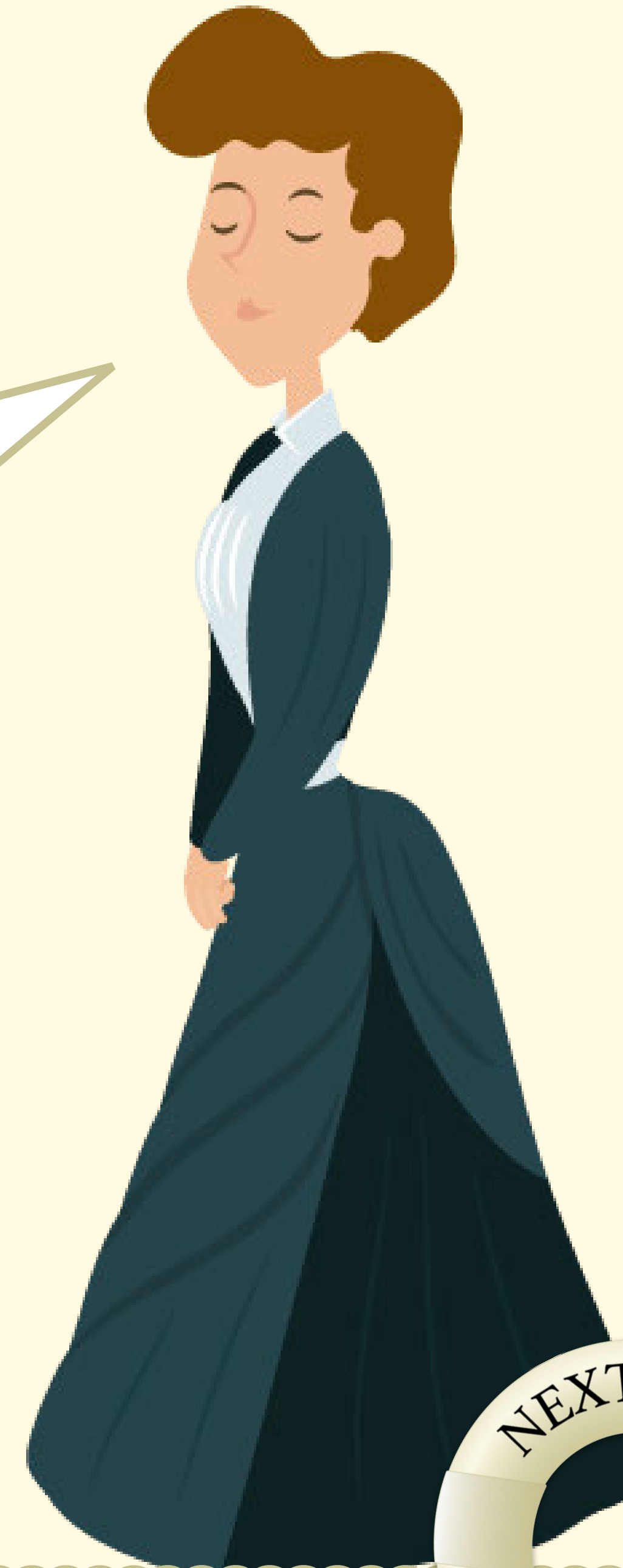
NEXT

12

19

Think, pair, share...

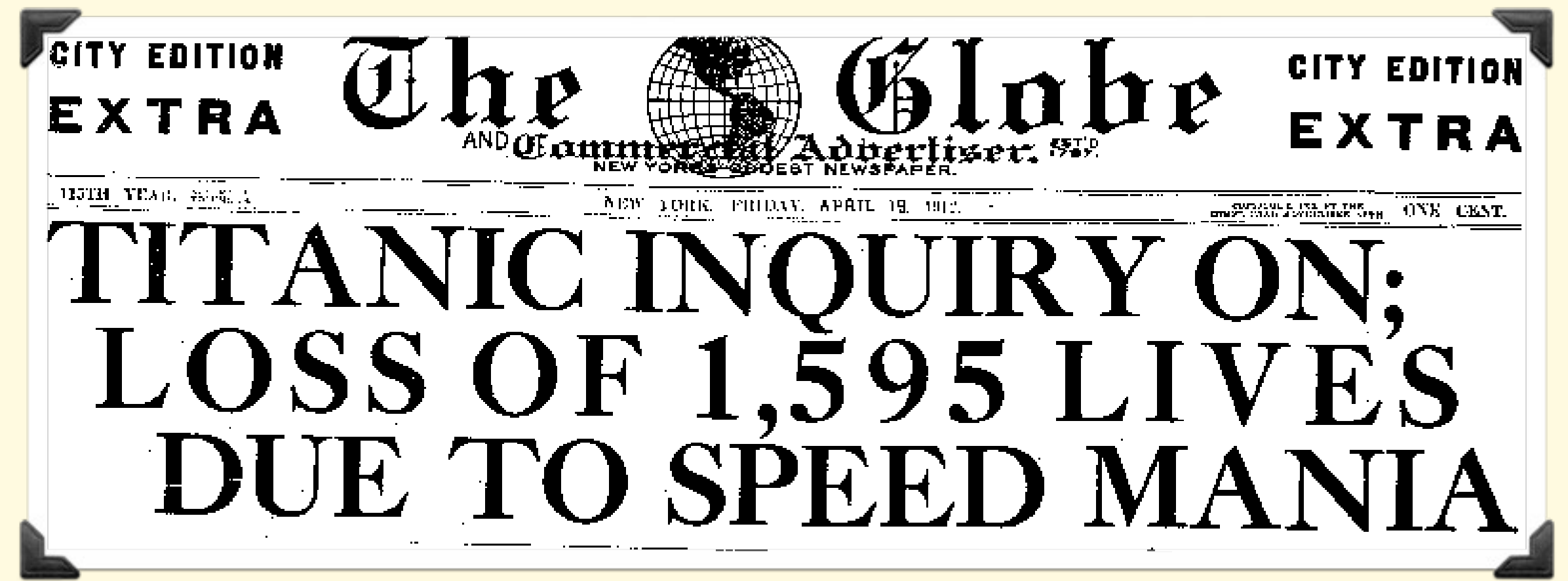
Why were so
many lives lost on
the 'unsinkable'
Titanic?



What reasons did you come up with?



After the loss of the Titanic, news of the tragedy spread across the world. Many people were incredibly upset about the huge loss of life in the disaster and were looking for reasons why so few people survived and were looking for someone to blame.



Even today, people are studying, researching and questioning different parts of Titanic's story in order to understand what went wrong.



“TITANIC” DISASTER
—
REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE
UNITED STATES SENATE



In the months and years following the disaster, official inquiries and reports were made, investigating what had happened.

Survivors, both crew and passengers alike, were questioned about the events in the lead-up to and during the Titanic sinking. Official reports were made to outline their findings. This picture is a sketch of Cosmo Duff-Gordon (husband of famous fashion designer Lady Duff-Gordon) giving his testimony during the inquiry.



BACK

NEXT

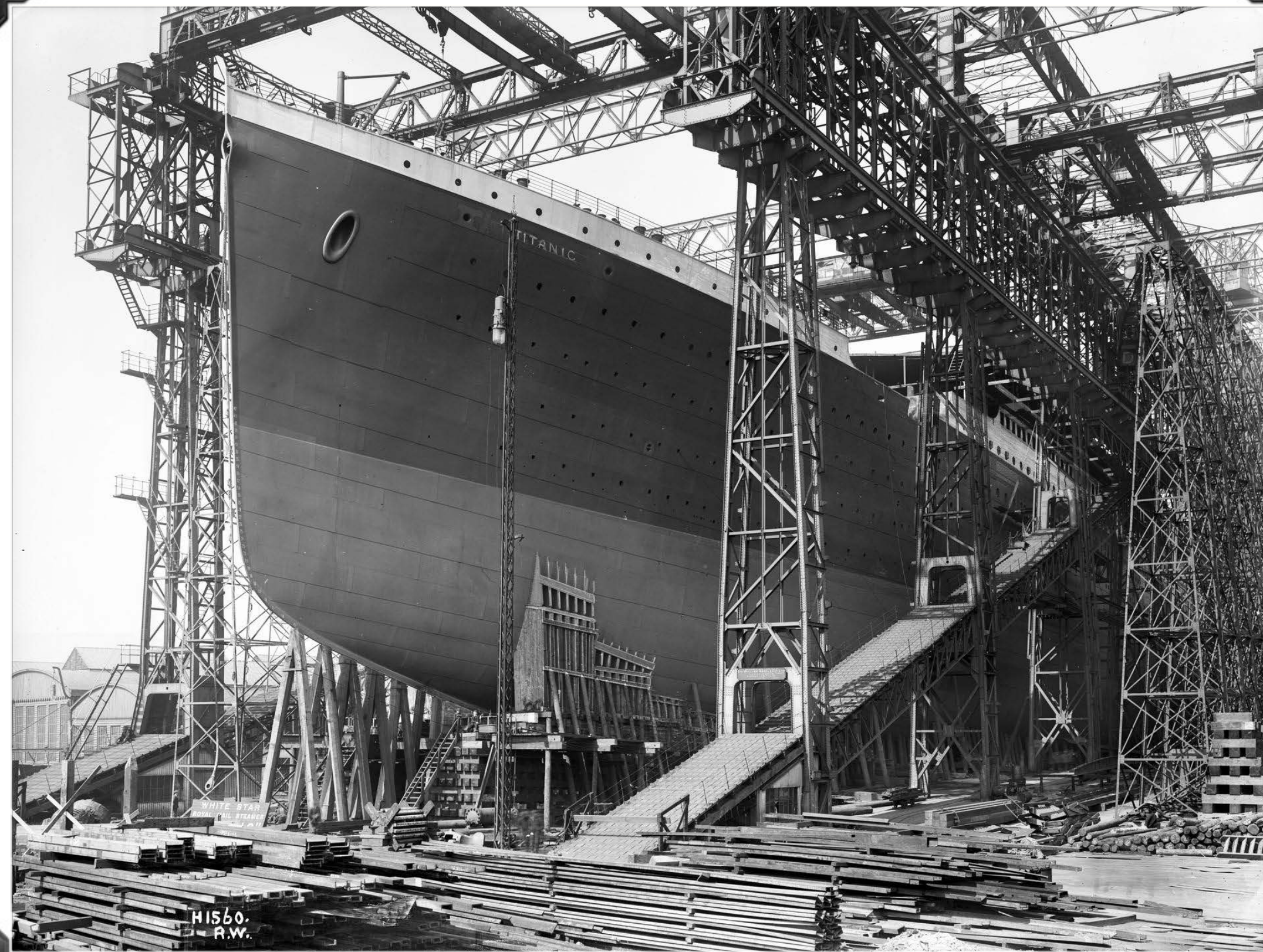
Bruce
Ismay
giving
evidence
at the US
inquiry



Listening to survivors' stories gave valuable insight into events, people's actions and their attitudes on the night of the sinking. Collecting evidence proved tricky as survivors' stories were hard to prove unless they matched up with other stories. In the chaos of the sinking, many people couldn't be quite sure what they saw, or were unwilling to talk about it.

Why might someone lie, be unwilling to talk about or withhold the truth when being asked about their story aboard the Titanic?





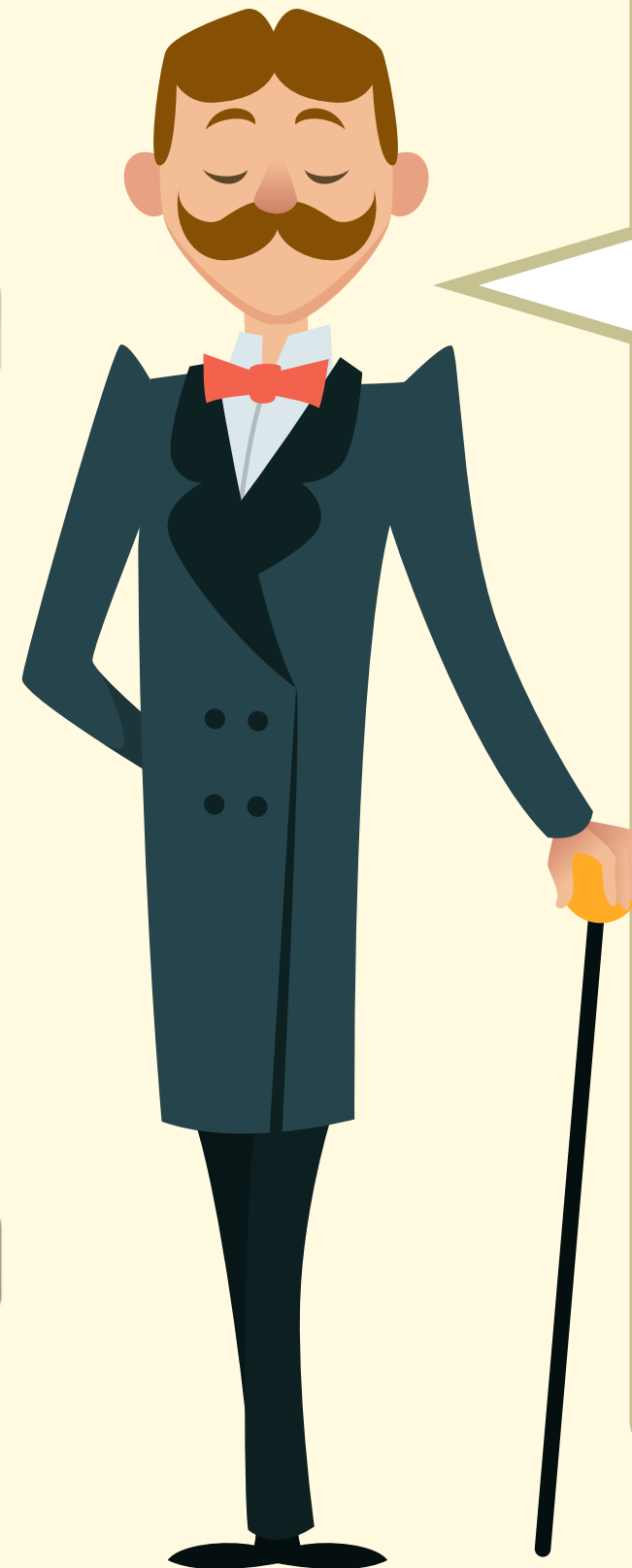
Many theories and aspects of the Titanic's story, crew and passengers have been brought forward as being the reason so many people lost their lives, beginning with how she was built by the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast.



As you hear the different reasons, make a decision for yourself what you think the main reason was for the huge loss of life when the Titanic sank.

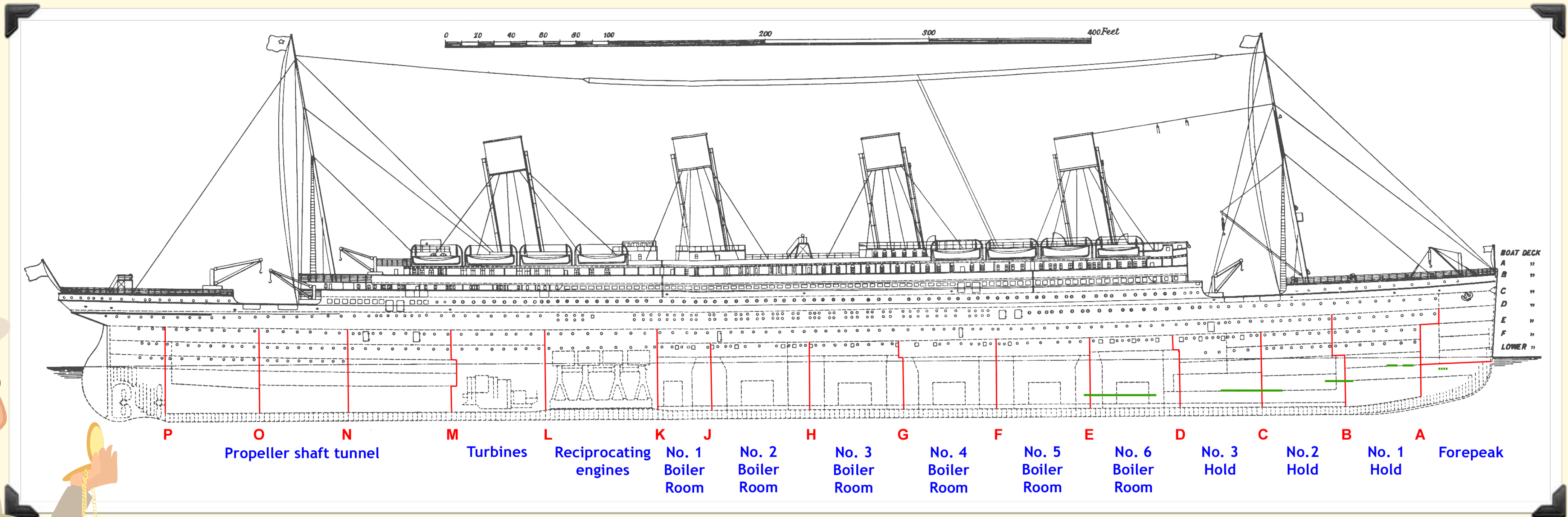


The Titanic needed three million rivets to hold the sheets of steel that made ship together. The sheer number of rivets needed to build the Titanic and her sister ships meant that the shipbuilders struggled to get the number needed.



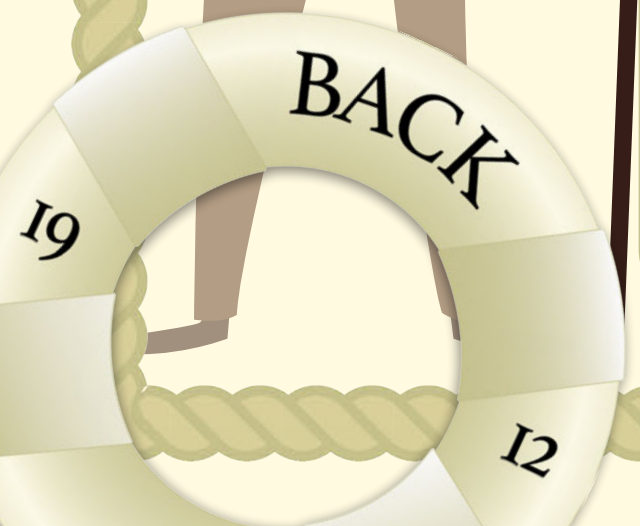
Upon investigation (and the inspection of the rivets recovered from the wreck of the Titanic), it was found that the ship-builder had used cheaper rivets, which were slightly weaker and of lower quality than the rivets other ships had used at the time. This meant that the impact of the iceberg and the freezing temperatures were enough to force the brittle rivets to break, opening the hull and letting in water. Many have speculated that stronger rivets could have reduced the damage done and allowed the Titanic to remain afloat for longer, meaning more lives could have been saved.

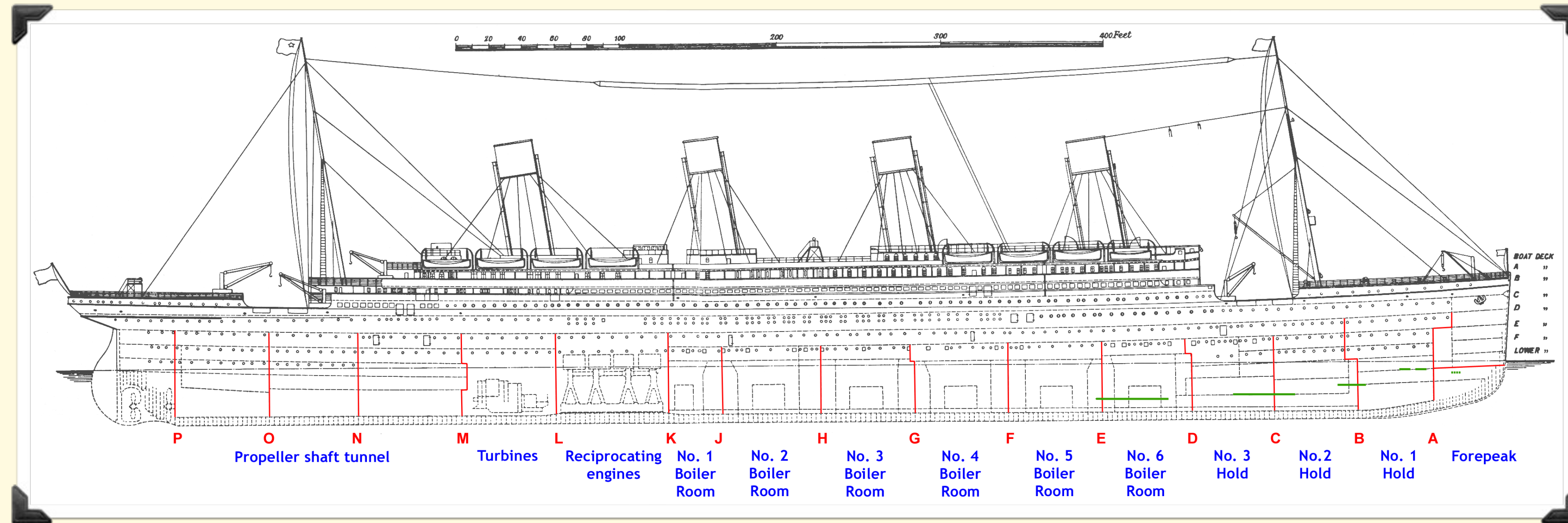




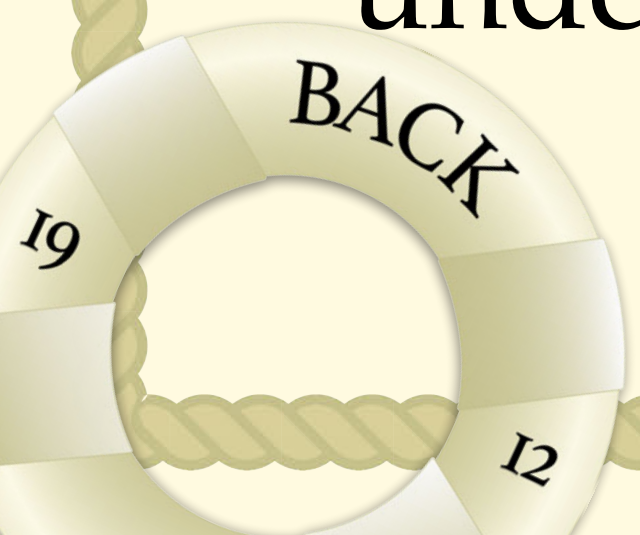
The red lines show the compartment sections. The green lines indicate where the ship's hull split after the collision.

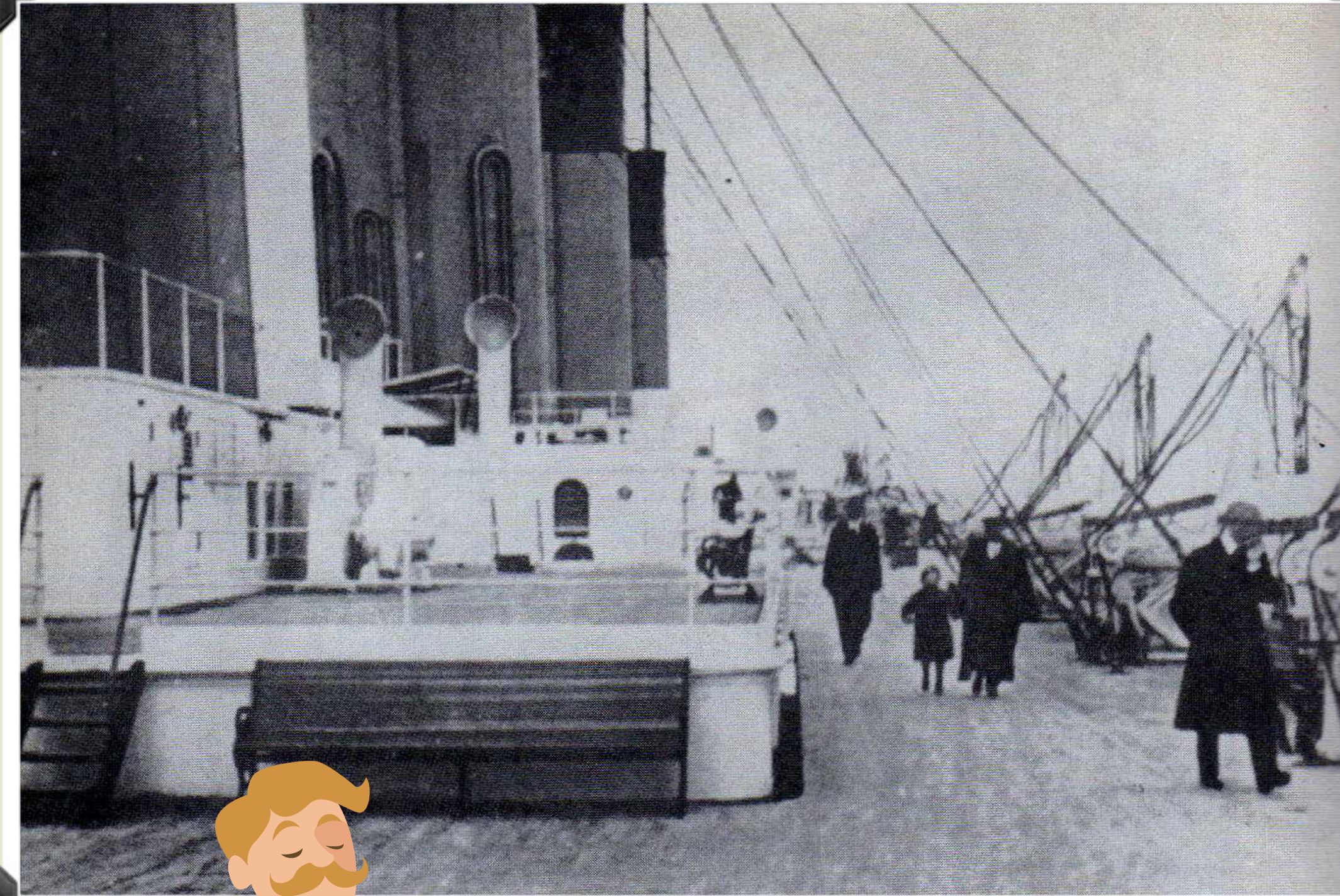
The ship's architect, Thomas Andrews, designed watertight compartments in the ship's hull. This was part of the reason the 'unsinkable' rumour sparked interest. The shipbuilders had described the ship in a brochure as 'practically unsinkable'.





The idea behind the design was that if up to four compartments flooded, the watertight bulkheads (walls) would prevent more compartments from taking on water, keeping the ship afloat to wait for assistance. However the bulkheads were not sealed at the top, allowing one compartment after another to flood as they became full, slowly bringing the bow of the ship underwater. This design flaw was another reason blamed for the sinking of the 'unsinkable' Titanic.

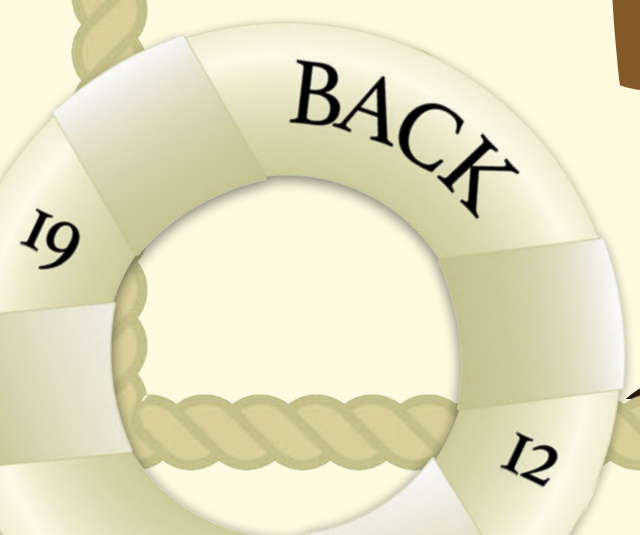




In his early designs, Thomas Andrews had included 46 lifeboats to be aboard the Titanic. This was reduced to 20 lifeboats (enough to accommodate one third of the passengers on board).



The reduction of lifeboats was authorised by Bruce Ismay, the ship's owner, to make room for the passengers to use the decks for leisure activities. The 20 lifeboats provided were still perfectly within legal limits, as the number was derived from the ship's tonnage rather than passenger capacity.

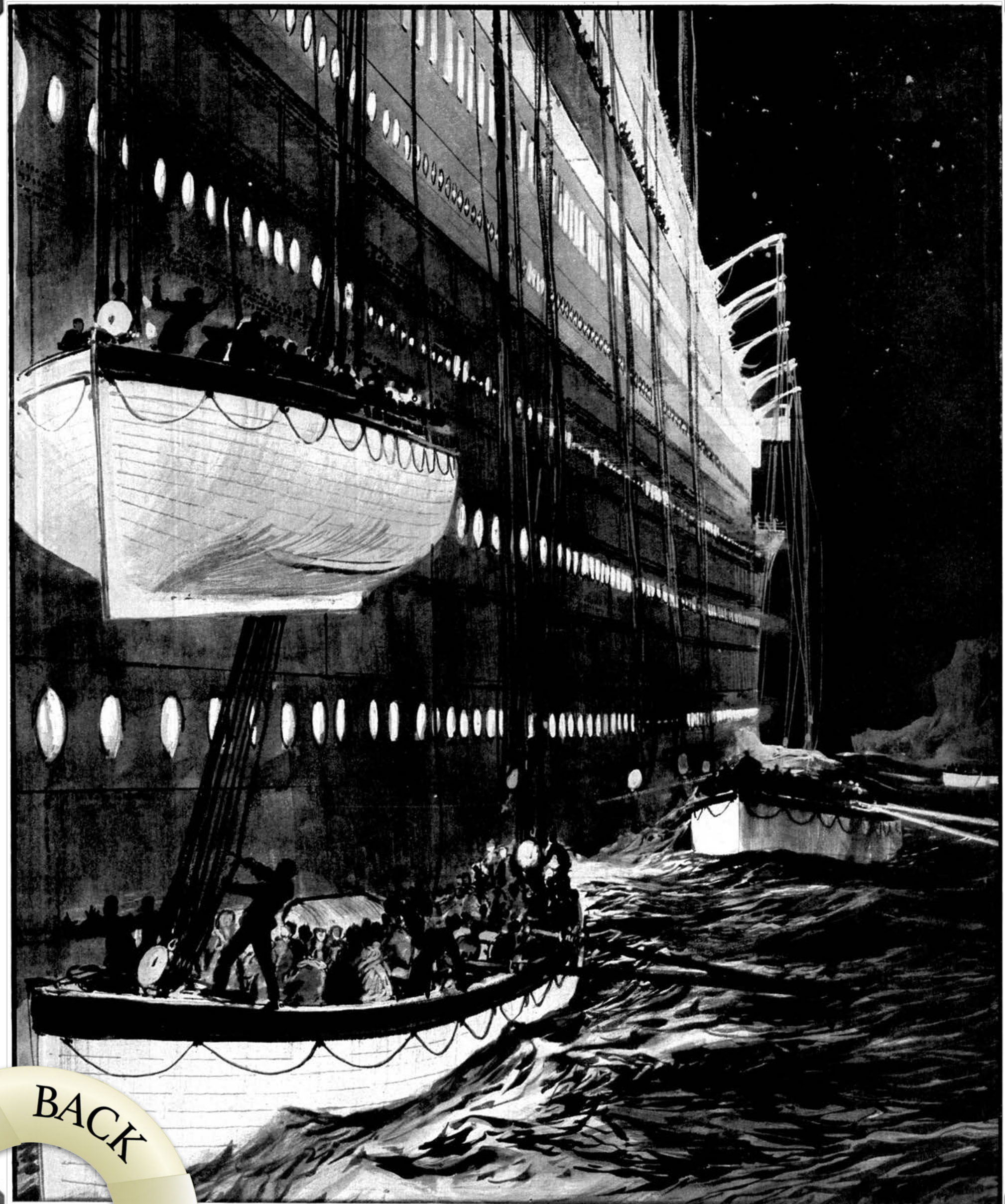


White Star Line never thought that all the Titanic's passengers would have to be evacuated at once. The lifeboats were thought to be vessels to transport passengers from the Titanic to a nearby rescue ship if needed and White Star didn't think that the boats would be the only source of relative safety for the survivors.

Have you ever participated in a fire drill? This is so that you, and people who look after you, can practise and know what to do in an emergency.

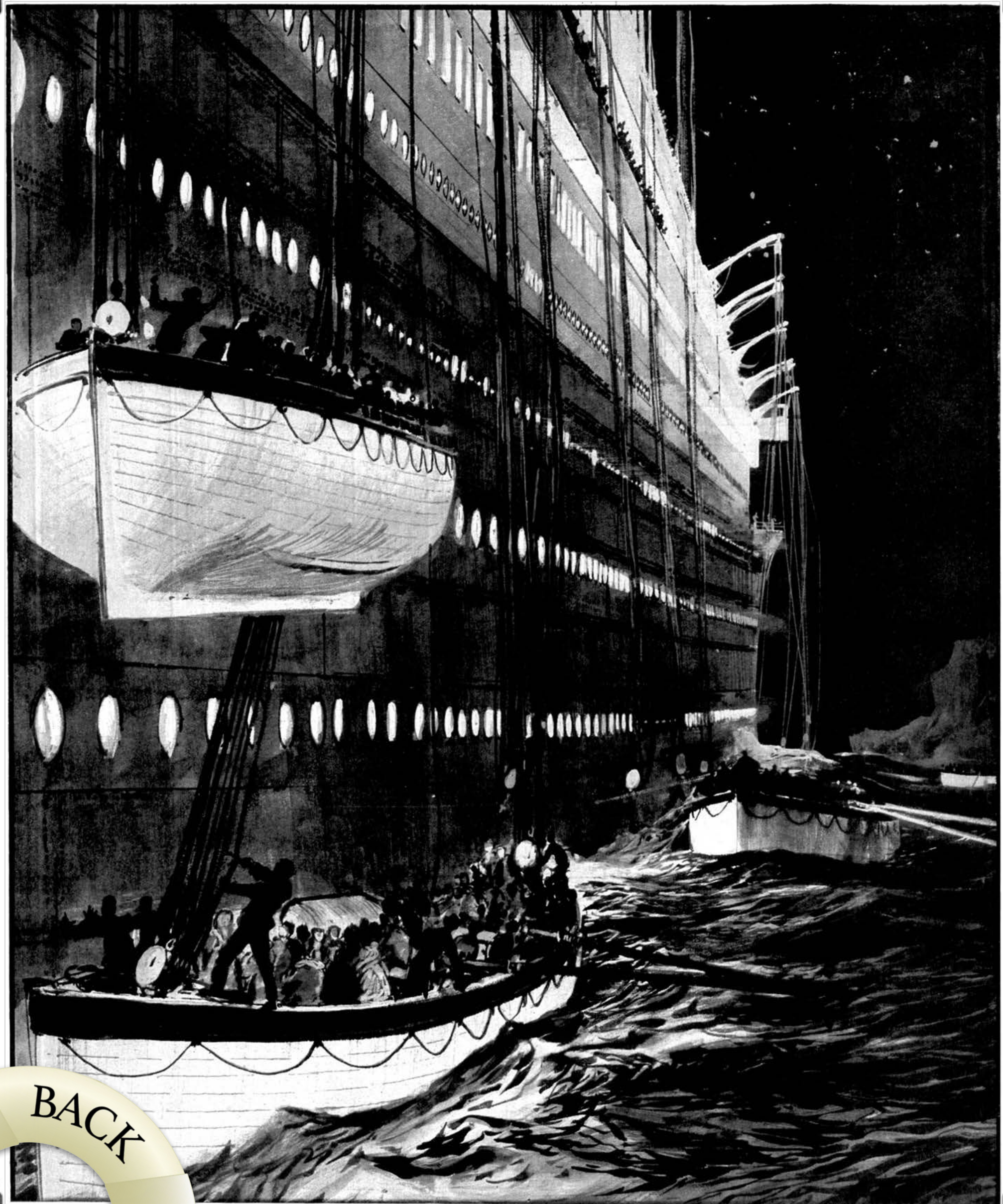
The crew members had only ever had one lifeboat drill to practise what to do. It is thought that a drill was scheduled for the morning before the ship sank, but Captain Edward Smith cancelled it for unknown reasons. The poorly prepared crew caused confusion during the evacuation, meaning many lifeboats were launched half full, leaving many on board the Titanic to perish.





According to many survivors' stories, even once evacuation had been ordered by the captain, many passengers were reluctant to leave the Titanic. They truly believed that the ship was unsinkable and felt safer on the ship than they did in a little lifeboat. Others refused to leave loved ones aboard or were worried about being labelled a coward if they boarded a lifeboat before all the women and children had escaped.



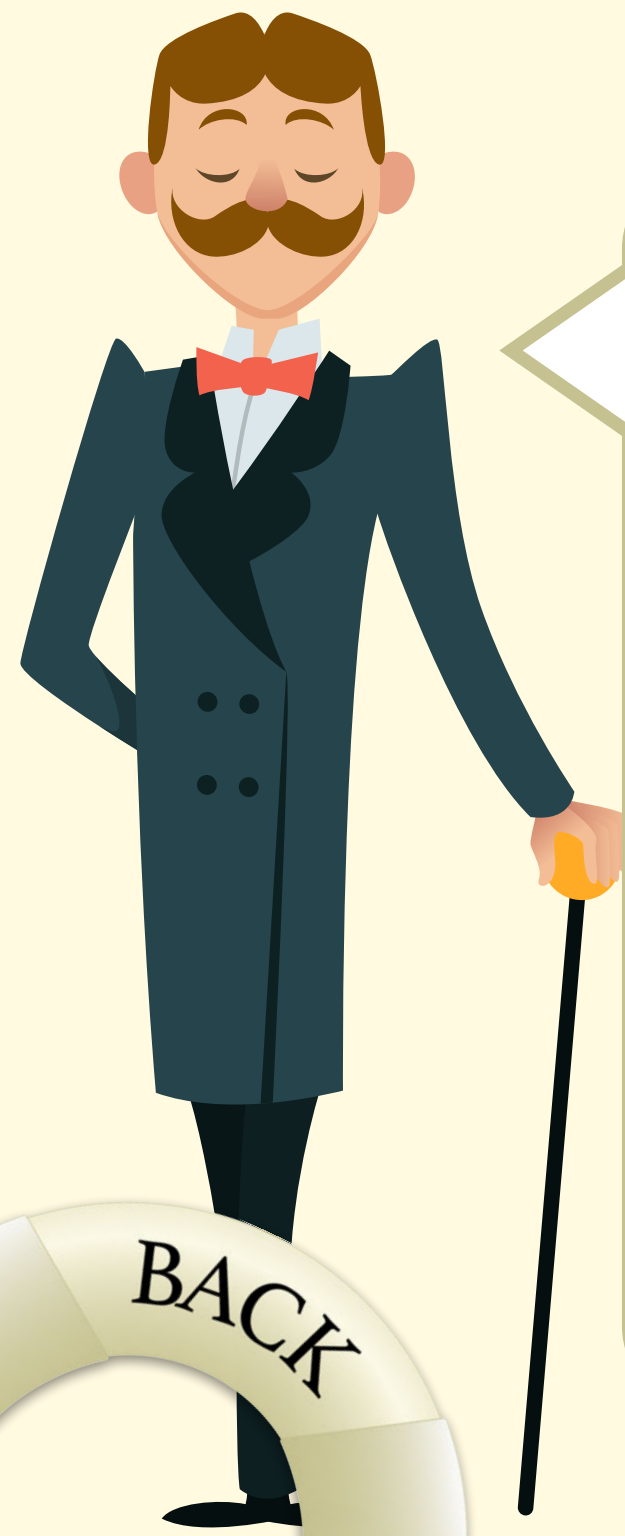


The first-class cabins were positioned near the boat deck of the ship. First-class passengers could reach the lifeboats more easily and were given priority for spaces aboard them. Third-class passengers however, were positioned in the ship's lower decks and had the difficult task of making it all the way to the ship's upper decks to escape. Passengers even found that some of the gates which were used to separate third-class areas from the other classes remained locked and unattended by the ship's stewards during the evacuation. Passengers who didn't speak English became confused and did not understand the situation or the instructions being given to them.

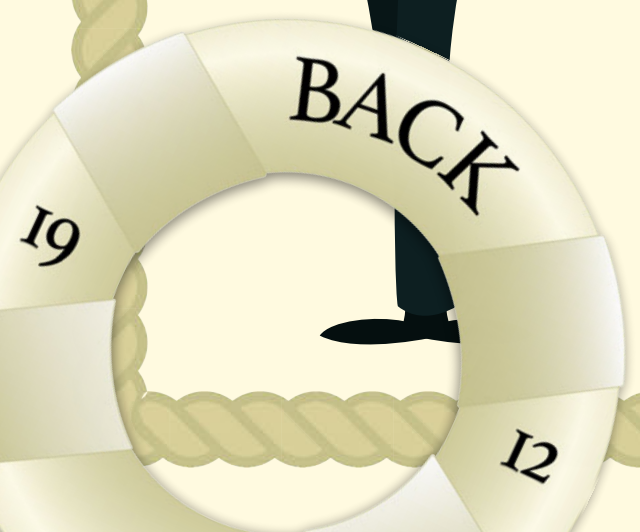
BACK

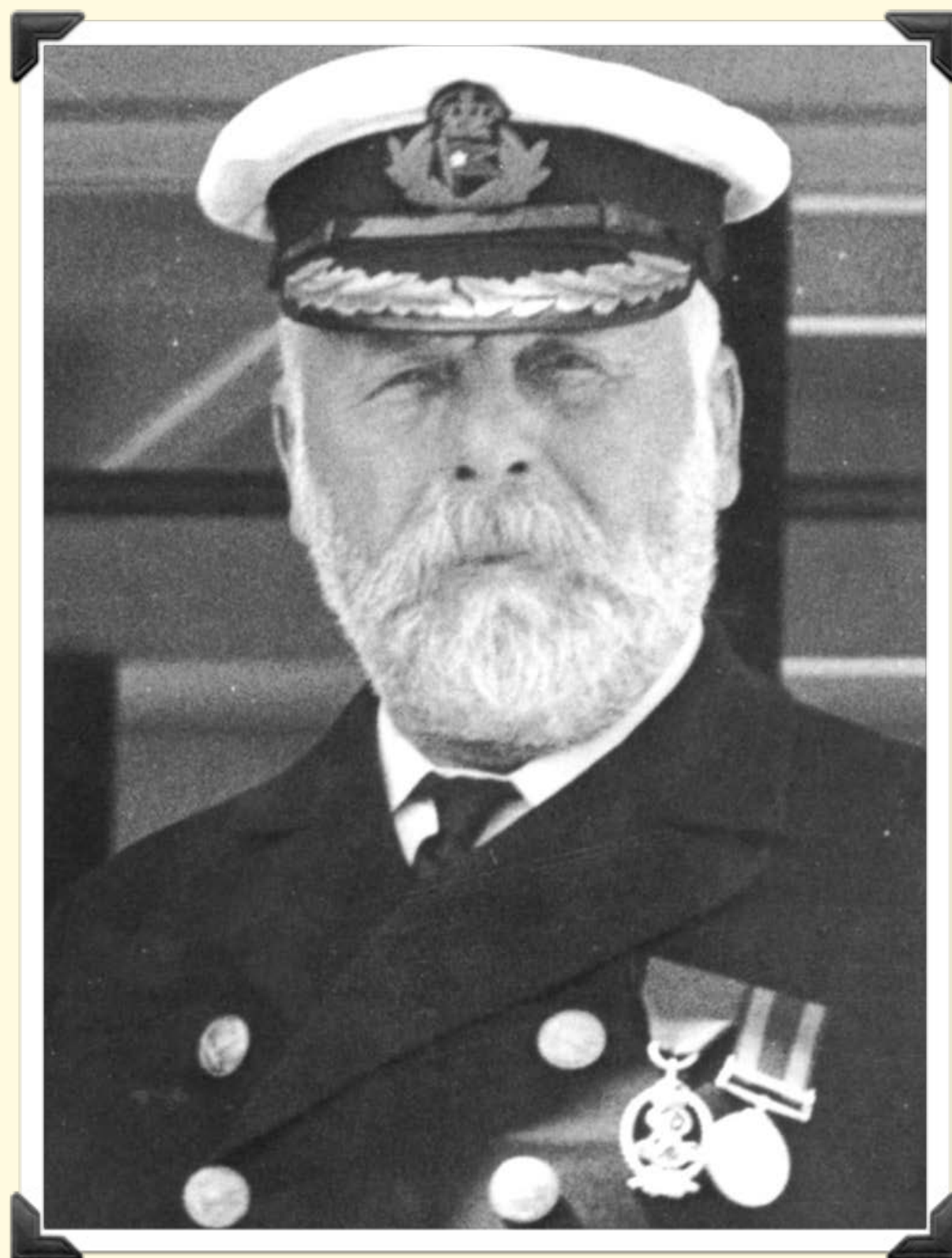
NEXT

As the ship sank, unlucky passengers found themselves in the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Many lifeboats considered going back to help those in the water but only two lifeboats went back to the wreck, the others being too far away or scared that their boat would be overturned by the people in the water trying to climb aboard.



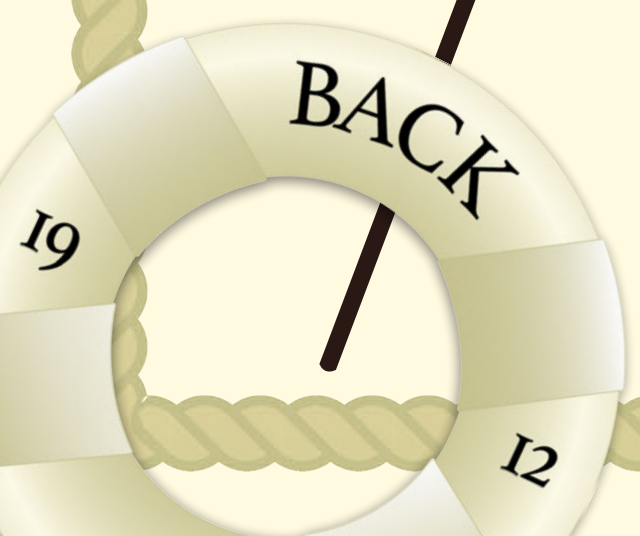
Unfortunately, those who had been exposed to the freezing water succumbed to the cold quickly, and only a few people were retrieved from the water successfully.

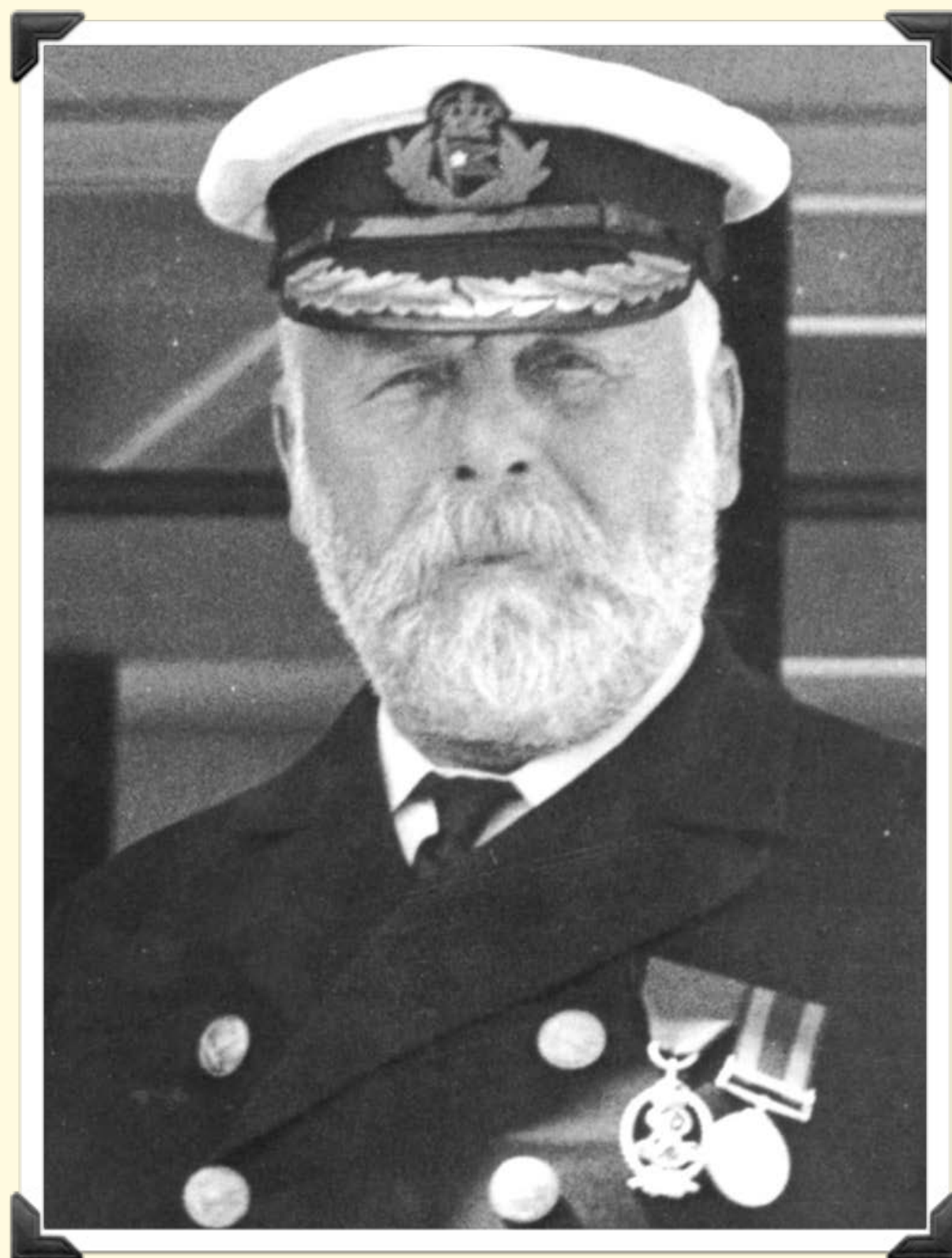




As the person in command of the Titanic, Captain Edward Smith's actions have been carefully investigated to determine his role in the disaster.

Captain Smith was aware of the icy conditions on the Titanic's planned route. The wireless operator, Jack Phillips, had received several iceberg warnings from other ships in the days leading-up to the Titanic sinking which he made the captain aware of.

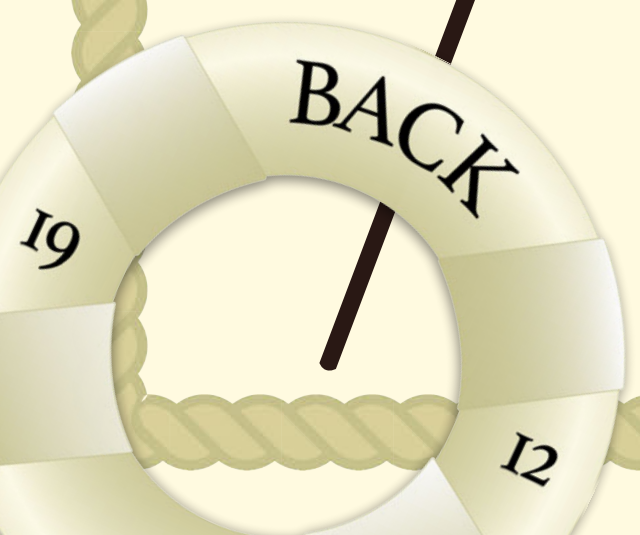




The Captain adjusted the ship's course to take her further south than planned in order to avoid the iceberg fields reported to him. However the ship's speed was unaltered and she was kept at almost full speed. This was considered a reckless decision after the sinking, but many other captains confirmed that they would have done the same in this situation.



Once the iceberg had been spotted the short notice and the ship's speed meant that she couldn't turn in time to avoid it.



The ship's wireless operator, Jack Phillips, was working the night the Titanic struck the iceberg. He received several more iceberg warnings that night, but failed to send these final warning messages to the ship's bridge and the captain. Upon receiving another warning from the nearby HMS Californian (which had stopped because they were surrounded by ice 20 miles away), he told them to 'Shut up' as he was sending passengers' messages to Cape Race wireless station to be forwarded to New York. The Californian's wireless officer gave up shortly after and went to bed for the night.

The fourth message was sent to the *Titanic* at 9.05 p. m. New York time, on Sunday, the 14th of April, approximately an hour before the accident occurred. The message reads as follows:

We are stopped and surrounded by ice.

To this the operator of the *Titanic* replied:

Shut up. I am busy I am working Cape Race.

The US disaster report on the Titanic quoting the messages received by both ships.

Had the Californian's wireless equipment been manned for longer, they would have picked up the Titanic's distress signals a few hours later. These were unfortunately not picked up until the morning.

Other crew members aboard the Californian had spotted the distress flares that the Titanic had signalled. Whilst reported to the captain of the Californian, they were not reported as distress flares and were not responded to. Many people believe that if the Californian (as the ship nearest to the Titanic) had been able to receive the distress signals and responded, many more lives could have been saved.



How do you feel
about the Titanic's fate?
Could it have been
avoided?



Why were so
many lives lost on
the 'unsinkable'
Titanic?

Is there a simple answer to this?
Was there anyone to blame for what happened?

