Year 6 A Standard Historical Recount Letter

The Sinking of the RMS Titanic

New York City, USA

19 April 1912

Dear Aunt Margaret,

I hope this letter reaches you quickly and brings you some comfort, although I fear the news I carry is far from comforting. I am writing to you from New York after surviving the sinking of the RMS Titanic. Even now, my hands tremble when I remember everything that happened. Only a few days ago, I boarded what was believed to be the finest ship ever built. Never did I imagine that I would be writing to you as one of the disaster's survivors.

The voyage began like a dream. The Titanic was a floating palace, grander than anything I had ever seen. Gleaming chandeliers sparkled overhead, and the magnificent Grand Staircase seemed to stretch endlessly above us. Everywhere I looked, there was elegance and luxury. During the afternoons, Mother and I strolled along the promenade deck while the salty breeze lifted my hair and the ship glided smoothly across the ocean. Laughter drifted through the air, musicians played cheerful melodies, and I felt certain that we were on an "unsinkable" ship. For four wonderful days, life aboard the Titanic seemed perfect.

The day before the disaster, nothing seemed unusual. Passengers continued to enjoy the ship, and I remember thinking how fortunate I was to be travelling on such a magnificent vessel. The ocean stretched calmly around us, and there was little to suggest the danger that lay ahead. That evening, I went to bed expecting another peaceful day at sea. I had no idea that it would be my last night aboard the Titanic.

Then came the night of 14 April. Just after 11:40 pm, I was awakened by a sudden shudder that rippled through the ship. It felt as though the mighty vessel had stumbled in its sleep. At first, I could not understand what had happened, but soon I heard worried voices in the corridors. Passengers began leaving their cabins, and a strange uneasiness spread through the ship. Although the crew tried to remain calm, their serious expressions told me that something was wrong. When we were told to put on our life jackets and report to the boat deck, fear tightened its grip on me. Only hours earlier, the ship had been filled with laughter. Now families clung to one another in silence.

When we reached the deck, the night air felt like a blade of ice against my face. Above us, the stars glittered in the black sky, but their beauty offered little comfort. Lifeboats were being lowered into the freezing water, and many were leaving only partly filled. I could not understand why there were empty seats when so many people remained behind. Mother and I were eventually placed into a lifeboat. As we were lowered towards the water, I looked back at the Titanic. Her lights glowed against the darkness, and the ship that had seemed so strong only days before suddenly looked helpless.

As our lifeboat drifted farther away, we watched in horror. The bow sank deeper into the ocean while frightened passengers crowded the decks. Then, in a moment I shall never forget, the great ship lifted high into the air before breaking apart. The Atlantic swallowed the Titanic, and the shrill cries of those left in the water pierced the darkness. I wanted to

help them, but there was nothing I could do. Those desperate voices will remain with me for the rest of my life.

For hours we waited in the freezing darkness. My body was cold and stiff, and every splash in the water made me turn towards the sound, hoping another survivor had been found. We wrapped ourselves in blankets and huddled together, afraid to speak about what we had witnessed. At last, lights appeared on the horizon. The RMS Carpathia had come to rescue us. I have never felt such relief. We were pulled aboard and cared for by the crew, who showed us remarkable kindness.

Yesterday, the Carpathia arrived in New York. As we approached the harbour, thousands of lights sparkled along the shoreline. Crowds gathered at the docks, anxiously waiting for news of their loved ones. Some people were reunited with family and friends, while others learned that those they cherished had been lost at sea. I felt grateful to be alive, but my heart ached for those who never made it home.

This experience has changed the way I think about the ocean and about life. Before the voyage, I saw the sea as beautiful and full of adventure. Now I can't look at it without remembering the darkness, the cold and the desperate voices calling for help. I have learned how quickly life can change, and I know I will never again take a peaceful day for granted.

Please do not worry about Mother and I. We are safe, although our spirits remain heavy with grief. I look forward to returning home and seeing you again soon.

Your loving niece,

Elizabeth Thompson