



Sample Pages from
Upon A Sea of Dreams: A Journey on the
Titanic

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UPON A SEA OF DREAMS: A JOURNEY ON THE TITANIC

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Kathleen Donnelly



Upon A Sea of Dreams: A Journey on the Titanic
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Characters

EMMA McELROY

Fifteen. The oldest of four children of an Irish family on their way to America

MILLY McELROY

Fourteen. Emma's sister. Impulsive and energetic.

SARAH McELROY

Ten. The youngest girl in the family.

MATT

Sixteen. An American boy.

STEWARDESS

Mid-Sixties. A gruff woman.

Set

A third-class cabin on the cruise ship Titanic.

Bunk beds are at each side of the cabin. A bureau and chair are at the down left corner. The door to the corridor is right. Outside the cabin (down right) is a suggestion of intersecting corridors, with a small bench.

At far left is a locked gate upon which hangs a sign reading, "No Third-Class Passengers Beyond This Point."

Sounds of the steam engines, voices, and movement ebb and flow from off, creating the overall atmosphere of the ship.

Music

Sheet music for *The Fairy on the Hill* can be downloaded at:
<http://tfolk.me/p116>

Dedication

To my students at Rogers.

Upon a Sea of Dreams: A Journey on The Titanic was first produced as a staged reading by Saltworks Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on November 13, 2003.

It was directed by Julia Beardsley with the following cast:

Taylor Couch as Emma

Anna Rued as Milly

Sarah Carson as Sarah

Chad Gerbe as Matt

and

Therése Parks as the Stewardess

It is moments before midnight, the night of April 14th, 1912. EMMA attempts to quiet Jacob, her 4-month-old infant brother, while MILLY and SARAH play dress up — too excited to sleep and full of anticipation about reaching New York in less than two days. Underneath can be heard faintly the steady hum of the engines. As lights come up in the cabin, Jacob lets out a yowl.

EMMA: Shush, little Jacob, what's the matter with ya, you'll wake the boat.

MILLY: Emma! How many times do I have to tell you — ship, the greatest, largest, most magnificent ship ever built. You'd be hopeless as a first class passenger.

EMMA: Ship, boat, I don't care, I just want Jacob to quiet down. And you — why can't you pitch in and help instead of playing all the time.

MILLY: But I could never do as good a job as you, Emma — keep up the good work.

To SARAH, adjusting a blanket on her shoulders as if it were a stole.

Now Sarah, you must look your finest when we speak to the Captain. Remember: stand up straight and tall, then give a little curtsy, like this.

She addresses the bedpost, which is costumed to play the part of the Captain.

“Why, Captain, we'd be delighted to dine with you this evening. Wouldn't we, Lady Sarah?”

SARAH: “Delighted, Captain.”

MILLY: Now give him your hand, but make sure you keep your chin up and don't look at him directly.

SARAH does this.

Keep your nose in the air, more like this. See?

SARAH copies this, too.

That's fine — if you had in mind a chicken strutting through the barnyard.

SARAH: I don't know how to do it!

MILLY: All right then, if the Captain does ask us to dinner, I'll do the talking.

EMMA: Ha!

MILLY: Stranger things have happened.

EMMA: Nothing stranger than the two of you actually settling down and getting to bed. Five minutes more to play, that's all.

MILLY: But—

EMMA: Five, that's final.

MILLY: Then we'll have to gulp down our food. You know that's very bad manners.

EMMA: If it's manners you're worried about, don't forget to use your napkin.

Tosses a diaper over MILLY's head.

MILLY: You didn't dare—!

Recovering her poise.

Don't mind the servant girl, Lady Sarah. You know how hard it is to find good help these days. By the way, Emma, you look the part perfect.

EMMA: I should! All the practice I have looking after your royal self.

MILLY: You can play, too, if you want.

EMMA: Me? I'm afraid I'd say something to offend your new friends. You go ahead. Ya got three minutes left.

MILLY: (to SARAH) Quick then, we're at dinner, eating with all the upper class folk. But then, the boat — ship — gets knocked about a bit.

SARAH: Why?

MILLY: I don't know — there's a storm brewing or something. And I say, "Why, Captain, is there nothing you can do about this dreadful rocking. My sister is very delicate." Now, you be delicate.

SARAH: What's that mean?

MILLY: You know, faint or something.

SARAH: I don't know how to faint.

MILLY: Ah, you'll never be a first-class passenger if you can't complain about the slightest thing and then follow it up with a good faint. Like this.

MILLY throws her hand upon her head and falls down with a loud "ahh." She sits up abruptly as Jacob lets out another cry.

Emma! That nasty stewardess is going to have us up at the Captain's for real if you don't quiet him down.

EMMA: Sure there's no rule against a crying child. But I don't know what's wrong, he absolutely refuses to sleep.

MILLY: (*crossing to Jacob and taking him up*) He's just too excited about seeing his Da for the very first time. Isn't that right, Jacob?

He cries again.

Baa-baa! You want to sing, do you? (*singing*) Baa-baa black sheep have you any wool; Yes, yes sir, three bags full. One for the master, one for the dame, and one for the little boy who lives down the lane. (*Jacob yowls again*) Hey, I'm not that bad a singer! Here, Sarah, sing him your fairy song — maybe they can get the little devil to sleep. (*gives Jacob to SARAH*)

SARAH: Okay, Jacob, here we go.

SARAH rocks Jacob and sings.

The Fairy on the hill sat late, awaiting for the morn,
To dance and see her lovely mate upon the wildy shore.
Hee-ho the moon it crossed the sky; the sun began to rise.
The fairy slept and missed her date; she never saw him more.
She never saw him more.

MILLY joins in the singing and grabs EMMA's hands to dance with her.

Hee-ho don't wait, she cried she cried,

EMMA: Get away with ya.

MILLY and SARAH: Hee-ho don't wait for morn.

EMMA: We've got to straighten up.

MILLY and SARAH:

Dance all night long, hee-ho hee-ho,
Dance whether there's sun or no.
Dance whether there's sun or no.

MILLY and EMMA tumble down, tripping over the bedclothes scattered across the floor. Jacob yowls again and SARAH continues singing to him softly.

EMMA: Are you happy now?

MILLY: Sure and I was happy before.

EMMA: And look at the mess you've made. There's barely room in here to breathe, let alone prancing about like society girls, which you and none of us will ever be.

MILLY: Don't say it! We're going to a whole new world — where they have trolley cars going right down the middle of the streets with no horses pulling them at all. And people, more people than you can even imagine. And no more farms and mud and cleaning up after sheep and chickens and starvin'. Ah, there's going to be more to do and to be — I tell ya, I am going to be rich and spoiled, just like that mister — what's his name?

EMMA: What mister?

MILLY: You know, that American they say is the richest man in the entire world, who is on this very ship.

EMMA: You mean Mr. Ast—

MILLY: Astor, that's it!

Crosses to door, opens it and yells out.

Do you hear me, Mr. Astor! Better make room for me on top of that pile of money of yours.

VOICE: *(from off)* Quiet down there!

EMMA: Milly! Close that door! And you talking about Jacob bringing attention to ourselves. Two days more on this boat —

MILLY: Ship!

EMMA: — two days more then I can hand you over to Da, let him worry about your behaving. Not one second too soon will it come.

MILLY: But how can you not be bursting? I can't believe that we're here, rubbing elbows with the wealthiest man in the entire world.

EMMA: You call this rubbing elbows? Four decks below on a ship with over two thousand passengers. I guess if we actually set eyes on him we'll be related.

MILLY: Stranger things have happened. I tell ya, I am going to marry the richest man and live in the finest house on Millionaire's Row or my name isn't Millicent Maria Elizabeth McConnell.

EMMA: It's not.

MILLY: Shh, I'm practicing what a wealthy girl's name would be. Millicent Maria Elizabeth — or maybe Grace — McConnell, no McFarber... McWilliams —

EMMA: McDreamer.

MILLY: And what's wrong with that?

EMMA: Nothing, Matilda Mary McElroy — except you're forgetting what's really waiting for us in America. Work. You shouldn't be too worried about protecting your delicate hands just yet.

MILLY: Oh, let's dream about all the "work" we can do. That's fun, it is.

EMMA: Fun or not, it's what's waiting for us, and the sooner you get used to the idea, the better.

MILLY: Shh. Do you feel that?

EMMA: What?

MILLY: I don't think we're moving anymore. And it's so quiet.

EMMA: It's night time, if you haven't noticed, and people are asleep.

MILLY: But what about that blast?

EMMA: I never heard it, you're making it up. Now, put these things away, then get to bed. Sarah, did you get Jacob settled?

SARAH: (*whispering*) Yes. It was the song. He likes it when the fairies visit.

EMMA: Then I say you are officially in charge of singing to Jacob every time he fusses. Now to bed.

Lifting SARAH onto the bunk.

And sweet dreams.

SARAH: You too, Emma. (*beat*) Emma, how come you never talk of what you wish for when we get to America?

EMMA: I'm just so excited to see father, I don't know what comes after.

MILLY: But haven't you just imagined?

EMMA: All right, if I tell ya, will you both promise to finally give us some peace?

MILLY and SARAH: Promise.

EMMA: Well — don't you dare laugh — I think it would be nice to work in one of those grand hotels. But not like a cook or a washer woman, but one of those maids in a proper uniform, with the bonnet and a pretty apron and all the ruffles and lace.

MILLY: All the way to America to end up a maid? You're daff!

EMMA: Well, Miss High and Mighty, you'll be whatever your father needs you to be. What this family needs you to be. If that means cleaning out sculleries for a living then that's what you'll do!

MILLY: And what are you telling me what I'll be doing? Who died and left you in charge, anyway? (*gasping*) Jesus Mary and Joseph, what have I said?

She springs out of bed she kneels and crosses herself.

Oh Mum, please forgive me. I meant no disrespect. To you or to Emma. Please, please forgive my thoughtless words.

EMMA: Milly, we all know you speak without thinking — Mum most of all. She's only been gone a couple of months — I don't think she's forgotten how silly you can be.

MILLY: I wish you would just tell me to shut up when I go on like I do. I don't know how you put up with me.

EMMA: It's a trial, but we manage.

MILLY: I'm useless!

She buries her head in a pillow and cries.

EMMA: Don't say such things. And anyhow, we know somebody else who likes to put up with you. Don't we, Sarah?

SARAH: Oh — yes we do.

MILLY: Who?

EMMA and SARAH: (*in unison*) Matthew.

MILLY: What are you talking?

EMMA: He fancies you more than any other girl in third class.

MILLY: He doesn't.

EMMA: Then why's he always asking about you?

MILLY: What's he ask?

SARAH: Like, how old are you.

MILLY: You told him I was fifteen, yeah?

EMMA: No — we said you're fourteen, like you are.

MILLY: What! Now he'll think I'm too young!

EMMA: Yeah, since he's all of sixteen himself.

MILLY: That's not too much younger, eh? What else?

SARAH: Did you leave any boyfriends behind.

MILLY: He didn't!

EMMA: Did.

MILLY: What did you say? Did you tell him about Charlie and Sean?

SARAH: And Peter, too.

MILLY: Peter, too! Good thinking, Sarah.

EMMA: Too bad you can't marry him, though.

MILLY: Why can't I?

EMMA: He's not filthy rich.

MILLY: Oh... (*brightening*) But he could be one day! He comes from a very fine family, you know. They own their very own house in New York, in a very fine neighbourhood, it's called the Bowery.

EMMA: So he tells you. You've known him for two days, barely.

MILLY: He has no reason to lie to me.

EMMA: Oh no — no Irish boy has ever stretched the truth to impress a girl, oh no.

MILLY: He's not Irish, he's American.

EMMA: And where did his father come from and his mother? And who's he been looking after in Dublin but his Grama.

MILLY: That's exactly right! His Da sent him to Ireland because he's the responsible one in the family. And his Da should know — he's a policeman. He is so well respected, says Matt, that everyone in

their neighbourhood pays tribute to him, every single week. How about that!

EMMA: Listen to ya. If I didn't know you were saving your heart for regular royalty, I'd say you were in love.

MILLY: I am not!

EMMA: Denying it — then it must be true! Milly's in love. Milly's in love with Matty.

SARAH joins in.

Milly's in love with Matty—

MILLY: (*flinging herself onto her bed*) Shut it the both of you!

EMMA: If you're going to serve it up, you have to learn how to take it, too.

MILLY: You shouldn't tease a person about something serious like that! It's just mean! Especially when you do really like a boy, but then he goes off dancing with another girl while you're sitting right there all alone by yourself.

EMMA: After how many boys you danced with while he was sitting right there all alone by himself?

MILLY: It was only four, and they didn't mean nothing to me.

EMMA: Look, I'm not saying I believe everything that comes out of that boy's mouth, but I think he likes you, sure. He even wants to introduce you to his family when we get to New York. Only he's afraid to ask ya.

MILLY: Why?

EMMA: I don't know — could it have anything to do with seeing you mooning over the first-class passengers and all their furs and diamonds and gowns? He's probably worried he's not good enough for your highness.

MILLY: (*as if to leave*) Oh no, I have to tell him those things don't matter to me.

MATTHEW and STEWARDESS enter at right corridor.

EMMA: (*stopping her and steering her back to bed*) Tomorrow's soon enough.

*MATT and STEWARDESS are at the cabin door.
MATT raises his hand to knock on the door.*

STEWARDESS: You knock before you enter your own cabin?

MATT: *(in an exaggerated Irish brogue)* It's a great act of politeness to be knockin' on a closed door, don't you know?

STEWARDESS: Oh, get out of the way.

STEWARDESS knocks. EMMA and MILLY jump, startled.

EMMA: *(whispering to MILLY)* Shh. Sarah, see to Jacob.

Crosses to door, opens it just a crack.

Who's there?

STEWARDESS: It's the stewardess, now open up.

MATT: *(pushing past STEWARDESS)* Hey, Sis. Sorry I stayed out so late.

EMMA: Matthew?

MATT: Especially since Sarah can never sleep without her big brother around. Isn't that right?

STEWARDESS: He's your brother, then?

MILLY: Of course he is. Matthew! Ma's been climbing the walls. Just because you're the oldest, you think you can go running off whenever you please.

STEWARDESS: *(to EMMA)* Is that right, young lady? Is this rapsallion your brother?

EMMA: Um... yes. *(MILLY elbows her)* Can't you see the resemblance?

STEWARDESS: You'll have to show me your tickets, then, because the passenger list has cabin E419 occupied by the McElroy family. Three children and one adult. Right now, I see four children and no adults.

EMMA: Well, you see, our father's in New York.

STEWARDESS: And your mother?

EMMA: Um — gone to the privy, Ma'am.

MILLY: Yeah, you know, when you got to go...

MATT joins in.

You got to go.

STEWARDESS: Is that so? Then if I go down to the common room I won't find her dancing, probably drinking, while her children are left unattended to do who knows what?

MATT: Hey, there's no call for speakin' disrespectful of Mrs. McElroy.

STEWARDESS: Mrs. McElroy, not "mother." Good, you're not a stowaway but you're not one of the family, either. Where's your cabin?

MATT: Down on Deck F.

STEWARDESS: Then I suggest you go there and stay for the night.

MATT: The only rule I know is you can't go past third class and I haven't. There's no rule against visiting friends. You can't tell me I have to leave.

STEWARDESS: Is that what you think? Now listen, you might do as you please over in New York, or wherever it is you're from. But here, it's Captain's rules. And you can think of me as your Captain, 'cause I'm as close to him as you'll ever get. Now go back to your own cabin and stay put for the night.

EMMA: You better leave, Matthew. We don't want any trouble when Ma gets back.

STEWARDESS: It's good to see one of you has some sense. I don't want to find you here when I come round again. Am I understood?

EMMA: Matthew.

MATTHEW: Yes, ma'am.

STEWARDESS: Good. (*holds door open*) You're coming then?

MATT: Yeah. Goodnight, Sarah. Emma... Milly.

MILLY: Goodnight, Matt. See you at breakfast, yeah?

MATT: Yeah — it'll be our last day but one.

MILLY: I know, can you believe it?

MATT: Yeah, I almost kinda wish we could stay out here a little while longer, you know?

MILLY: I know. Well, goodnight.

STEWARDESS: (*pushing MATT through the door*) Yeah, yeah, goodnight and sweet dreams, now get along with ya.

MATT: (*calling out then exiting down right*) Bye.

STEWARDESS: And you, I don't want any more racket coming from down here. I've received complaints, mind you.

MILLY: How do you know it was us making noise? It could've been anybody.

STEWARDESS: You're the only cabin tucked away back here. It was you or a leprechaun and I stopped believing in them years ago.

MILLY: That's it! 'Twas the leprechaun. He must have snuck on before we left Queenstown.

STEWARDESS: Now don't you think I'm fooling! I'll have you reported to the Captain easy as I breathe. Step out of line just one more time and it'll be the authorities waitin' for you when we get to New York, and not your loving family. Am I understood?

EMMA: Yes, Ma'am.

STEWARDESS: Now keep yourselves quiet.

STEWARDESS exits right.

MILLY: Goodnight. (*MILLY closes door*) And horrible dreams to you. "Am I understood?"

EMMA: Shh. Milly! She came that close to finding Jacob.

MILLY: Oh, what are they going to do? Turn around and take us back to Queenstown?

EMMA: All the same — can't you act just a little bit like the lady you're always pretending to be?

MILLY: You want me to be proper. I can be proper. (*again, play acting*) "How do you do, Mr. Astor. Pleased to make your acquaintance. What's that? Marry your nephew. I'm sorry, Mr. Astor, but I can't. You see, there's a fine young American boy I have my eyes on now."

EMMA: You must be burning up with fever — turning down a rich boy even in your playing. I can't believe it.

MILLY: Stranger things have happened. I don't know what this feeling is — I wonder, is it love?

EMMA: I don't know either, but the wedding plans will have to wait till morning. Now off to bed with ya.

The ringing of bells, like a warning alarm, is heard faintly off in the distance.

MILLY: There it goes again.

EMMA: What?

MILLY: Those bells. And I swear we're not moving. Something's up, I tell ya.

EMMA: It's nothing.

MILLY: Shh, listen!

They sit silently for a few beats and nothing is heard.

EMMA: You see, there's nothing—

Suddenly, alarm bells blare through the corridor. The unusual silence of just moments before is broken intermittently now with a murmuring of voices and footfalls in the distance. Inside the cabin, Jacob begins to cry anew. SARAH stands and screams, huddles with MILLY, who has put her hands to her ears. EMMA tries to keep the peace.

EMMA: Quiet. Quiet! Oh, Jacob — not that again! Milly! Sarah! Calm down! The bells could be nothing more than the Captain's found a rat in the Astor's bedroom. For goodness sakes, there's nothing to go screaming about.

From off and heard indistinctly at first, the STEWARDESS is knocking on doors, telling people to stay in their cabins.

SARAH: How do you know?

EMMA: I don't. But I'll find out if you'll take care of Jacob. You see, he can't understand that all this racket's probably a to-do over nothing. You take care of him, I'll go see what's happening.

Two more blasts of the alarm ring out. SARAH begins crying again.

All right, so maybe there were two rats they found.

EMMA speaks aside to MILLY.

Calm yourself and settle her down, too, right? I'll be back.

EMMA exits the cabin and sees the STEWARDESS hurrying through the corridor at right.

STEWARDESS: (*announcing*) Stay in your cabins. All passengers are to stay in your cabins.

EMMA: Ma'am! Pardon, Ma'am?

STEWARDESS: Didn't you hear me? Get back to your cabin.

EMMA: But — my mother sent me to ask what the bells are for.

STEWARDESS: We've hit... an ice field, that's all. Nothing to speak of, only slowing us up. Tell her that. Tell her you are to stay in your cabin 'til further notice. Am I understood?

EMMA: Yes, thanks.

STEWARDESS: What's that you say?

EMMA: Thank you, Ma'am.

STEWARDESS: Now get out of my way, I've important things to see to.

STEWARDESS exits out right, continuing her announcement to passengers. EMMA returns to the cabin.

MILLY: What is it? What's going on?

EMMA: It's just like I said, nothing.

MILLY: Get on with ya, then what's all the noise?

EMMA: Milly. If you would just sit for once, let me get two words in, I can tell you what the bells be blaring for.

MILLY: Tell us!

EMMA: I'm not speaking 'til you settle.

MILLY: But—

EMMA: Not a word.

The girls quiet themselves.

Like I said. It is nothing. Only some ice, so the boat — the ship is having to slow down.

MILLY: All that racket for some ice! Why would they worry about that?

EMMA: I don't know. Maybe it makes it too cold for the engines to work.

MILLY: Or maybe, it's because they don't want us to — hit it!

MILLY surprise attacks EMMA with a pillow.

EMMA: You didn't dare — Matilda Mary McElroy, you're going to learn your lesson yet!

EMMA grabs a pillow and pops MILLY with it. SARAH joins in as MATT rushes to the cabin from right and enters.

MATT: Milly! Girls! Stop playing around and get dressed.

MILLY: *(suddenly embarrassed)* Matthew? We weren't playing. We were just... plumping the pillows so we could get some sleep.

MATT: *(grabbing piles of clothes and handing them out)* Never mind that now. You need to get dressed. Wear your coats, anything warm you have.

EMMA: Matthew, what's the matter?

MATT: You haven't heard?

MILLY: *(suddenly serious)* Matt, you're scaring me — you look as though you've seen a ghost.

MATT: They say we've hit an iceberg.

MILLY: What's that mean?

MATT: It means we're taking on water. I couldn't even get back to my cabin. G Deck's already flooded. It's coming in fast. Real fast. We gotta get up to the boat deck.

MILLY: That's what the bells are for! I knew something was wrong.

EMMA: If this is your idea of a practical joke, Matthew, I think you should see that none of us are laughing.

MATT: I'm not joking. They're not saying so yet, but by the looks of it, we're sinking.

EMMA: Sinking? That's ridiculous. The Titanic can't sink.

MATT: Why? 'Cause some newspaper said so? Listen to me, we're in real trouble here. They'll start loading lifeboats real soon, if they haven't already. If we don't get upstairs now, there won't be room

left for us. So get your clothes on, the warmest you have. We have to get up to the boat deck — now.

MILLY starts to dress.

EMMA: Wait. The stewardess was just here. She didn't say anything about lifeboats and sinking. She said there's some ice, we had to slow down, that's all.

MATT: That's what she told you? Those people — look, you can be sure that old biddy was told not to say what's really going on. She's gonna follow her orders and save her own hide.

EMMA: But to lie to us outright. What reason could she have?

MATT: What reason? Pick one. Maybe 'cause there ain't enough lifeboats for everyone and she knows that. Maybe she wants to save a spot for herself instead of you. Maybe she just doesn't like you. Pick whichever reason you want. She's not here to help you, and you can take that to the bank.

SARAH is suddenly heard crying.

EMMA: Sarah...?

SARAH: Are we... are we going to die?

EMMA: Oh Sarah, no.

SARAH: But... if we're sinking.

EMMA: Nothing bad's going to happen. Remember, Mum's up in heaven looking down on us. She'll make sure we're safe and fine and...

MATT: (*picking up on EMMA's hesitation*) That's right, Sarah. And we're going to help her, by getting dressed — right now — and getting up to the boat deck. That's how we'll help your mum take care of you. Isn't that right, Miss Emma?

MILLY: Yes, Emma, isn't that what we'll do?

MILLY and EMMA stare down each other. MILLY wins.

EMMA: All right. We'll go ahead and get dressed in our best, our warmest clothes. Just in case. And won't we feel silly when we have to take them back off as soon as all this ruckus dies down. If you'll excuse us, Matthew.

MATT: Don't take too long.

MATT exits to the corridor and crosses to the locked gate, testing its strength. The girls quickly throw clothes on over their night dresses. SARAH hesitates, then holds out her doll.

SARAH: Can I take Ginnie with me?

MILLY: There's no time for dolls now, Sarah, put it away.

SARAH: But it's the last thing Mum ever gave me... .

EMMA: I'm sure we can find — here, we'll use Mum's shawl. Wrap you up tight like this, and tuck her in. Now you can keep her right close to your heart and not worry about losing her at all. It's going to be all right now, ya hear?

EMMA wraps SARAH in a big hug. Catching MILLY's eye, the girls come to a truce and MILLY joins in, the three sisters holding onto each other in a tight embrace. The lights fail for a few beats.

MATT: (*entering cabin*) That's probably the engines flooding. They can't hang on much longer. Let's go.

EMMA: This is happening too fast. I don't know what to do.

MATT: Emma — I understand, it's your job to take care of your family — 'cause you're the oldest. But it's my job now, too, and I'm older than you, by a whole year. (*to MILLY*) You know what I mean, Milly. I haven't gone five minutes not thinking about you since I laid eyes on you. And in a year or two — okay maybe three, I'm hoping we can — well, you know, if you'll have me. I'm not gonna let anything bad happen to you tonight, or ever. So you gotta listen to me — all of you — we have to leave now. It's our only chance.

EMMA: But what about the gates?

MILLY: What gates?

EMMA: The gates that keep us lowly steerage passengers separate from them up there. Sure we can make our way through third class easy as we like, but there's no getting past the locked gates, is there? How are you going to solve that problem? Will you tell Milly about that?

MATT: I haven't figured it out yet—

MILLY: But if we're sinking, sure they'll let us through.

EMMA: Not if what he says is true. Think! There's over two thousand people on this ship. If everyone goes off every which way, it'll be madness. They must have a plan. That's why the stewardess said to stay here and wait. They'll call us up when they're ready for us.

MILLY: Why would you believe anything that woman said? What kindness has she shown us? And what did everyone say about her? Don't let her know about your mother, they said. She's the meanest one on board and she'll report you to the Captain as soon as lift a hand to help ya. Why would you trust her now?

EMMA: Because if we go off with Matthew, we could miss our chance when she comes back for us, and then where would we be? Matthew, I see you have the best intentions but you don't know anything about this ship. You'll take us off on a wild goose chase. We'll wait — right here, and be ready when they come to get us, just like we were told.

MATT: Just like you were told the ship's not sinking, just slowing down a bit?

The lights flicker.

MILLY: Emma, that stewardess is not going to come back for us. I don't think we'll see her face again. She's probably already sitting on a lifeboat, laughing at us in her heart. We have to go now! (*A beat, while EMMA doesn't respond*) Come on!

EMMA: Mum left me in charge and I say we stay.

A blast is heard from far off, the last gasp of the dying engines.

MILLY: You stubborn, pigheaded — I'm not going to wait here to die! You do what you want but if there's a chance, I'm going to take it!

EMMA: Milly, you stay right where you are.

MILLY: (*grabbing coat and putting it on*) I'm going with Matthew!

EMMA: Milly, don't you dare leave.

MILLY: (*calling back as MATT pulls her away*) Sarah, you mind your sister, right? And tell Jacob...

MATT: Come on.

MILLY: (*running out with MATT*) I have to go!

They run out right, leaving the cabin door ajar as they do.

EMMA: Milly, you come back here right now!

SARAH (*overlapping*) Milly, don't go!

EMMA is stunned for a moment, then shakes it off and returns to SARAH.

EMMA: All right, Sarah. You have to help me take care of Jacob now. Can you do that?

SARAH: What about Milly?

EMMA: Don't you worry about Milly. We'll see her again, for sure. And father'll have something to say to that young girl, her breaking it off with us like that. So we can pray that — we can pray that he's not too hard on her.

SARAH: Emma?

EMMA: Yes, Sarah? Go ahead, ask it.

SARAH: Is the ship really sinking?

EMMA: I suppose it could be.

STEWARDESS enters at right with life jackets.

SARAH: But why... why would God let that happen?

EMMA: I don't know, Sarah. Bad things happen sometimes.

SARAH: You mean, like when Mum died?

EMMA: Yes, like when Mum died.

STEWARDESS: (*entering the cabin*) And where is your mother?

EMMA: She...

STEWARDESS: Oh, I heard you plain enough. Children traveling unescorted on the Titanic. If I'd known that, I wouldn't have had you in my quarters.

EMMA: But... look— (*scrambling, pulling tickets out from a bag*) we bought passage for all of us. You see, here's her ticket. But she died. We were all going to America — to join our father. But — she died. There was nothing else for us to do.

STEWARDESS: And now, when I have hundreds of passengers to see to, you think I'll have time left to take special care of you? Oh no, they don't pay me enough for that.

EMMA: We've been no extra burden on you all this time. You needn't trouble yourself about us now. I'll take care of my family, don't you worry.

STEWARDESS: See that you do.

Notices SARAH taking a golden barrette out of her doll's hair.

You there! Come here! What's that you have?

SARAH cautiously moves toward the STEWARDESS with her doll.

Where'd you get this barrette? That's nothing a steerage passenger would be sportin'. Admit you found it lying in a passage and there'll be no trouble.

EMMA: She'll do no such thing. That barrette belongs — belonged to my mother.

STEWARDESS: And where would she get something as pricey as that?

EMMA: From a lady she did sewing for. It's the most precious thing we own. And too precious for playing with, Sarah, you should know better.

STEWARDESS: I'll take your word on it for now, but if I hear of anything gone missing, I'll know where to look. Meantime, keep it safe. It'll fetch a good price once you get to New York.

EMMA: We would never sell it.

STEWARDESS: Never's a long time. After a few months of starvin' on the streets, you'll see if you can afford to keep it.

EMMA: We're not going to starve once we get to America. We have a new life ahead for us, a better life and good.

STEWARDESS: Big dreams ya have, huh? Well, let me tell you something. Those and a lame ass will get you maybe to the end of the block. Now it's Captain's orders I'm here to tell ya: you're to put on life jackets and wait to be called up. They're loading lifeboats. You'll be called when they're ready for ya.

EMMA: Will you tell us — is it true? Is the Titanic sinking?

STEWARDESS: What d'ya think? You're not being invited upstairs to a tea party.

STEWARDESS exits cabin, leaving the door open, and in a moment of fatigue, sits at bench at right; she can't escape overhearing the girls in the cabin.

SARAH: What did she mean, Emma?

EMMA: She means, we need to do as she says — it's not play time. So, let's get ready. I can't believe Milly would leave like that. And I can't believe you would play with Mum's barrette when I've told you before, it's not a toy. Give it to me. Is there nothing sacred to ya?

SARAH: (*fighting back tears*) I'm sorry —

EMMA: There's no time for crying. We've got to see to Jacob. Now finish getting dressed.

SARAH: It's my fault, isn't it?

EMMA: What are you talking, your fault?

SARAH: That we're going to sink. It's because Mum's mad at me, isn't she? Because sometimes I forget to be sad that she's gone. And I go ahead and laugh and play and I shouldn't be happy like that.

EMMA: Oh Sarah — no! No! Forgive my yelling at you. You're so young, and you've had to grow up far past your years. Mum's not angry at you, ever! Look, I promise you something.

SARAH: What?

EMMA: Every single time you laugh, it reaches all the way up to heaven and makes Mum laugh, too.

SARAH: You think so?

EMMA: I know it. And believe me if she ever sees you crying she wants it to be because you're laughing so hard your sides are splittin'.

SARAH: Really?

EMMA: Of course. She wants you to be happy — more than anything. Remember her saying how much she wished you could go to school so you could learn everything she never got a chance to? And how she wanted Milly to grow up into a fine and proper young lady — but between you and me I don't think Milly has a proper bone in her body. But Jacob does, and he will grow up into the finest and handsomest young man.

SARAH: And you — you'll get your job in a fancy hotel so Mum can see you in your ruffles and lace.

EMMA: Oh that. Well... can I tell you another secret?

SARAH: Tell me.

EMMA: I don't really want to be a maid. I just say that because... I'm too shy to say what I'd really like. But I'll tell you, if you promise to keep it secret.

SARAH: I promise.

EMMA: All right, then — I know it's crazy, but I want to go to school, too, just like you and Jacob. And then maybe — goodness I sound like a loon saying it out loud —

SARAH: Say it!

EMMA: I wish that I could be a nurse one day.

STEWARDESS, overhearing, has moved quietly to the cabin door.

SARAH: A nurse? I thought wishing was for fancy things like living in a big castle and having beautiful clothes and more money than you could ever spend.

EMMA: Those things aren't real. Not to me, anyhow. Not after Mum... You see, I've been wondering — why should having a baby be so hard? And with no one there to help, until it was too late. So, I got to thinking that maybe if I could be a nurse, nobody I love would ever suffer like that again. But I might as well be wishing for a castle, I don't think it could ever really happen.

SARAH: Yes it could! You'd be a really good nurse.

EMMA: D'ya think?

SARAH: Sure — remember when Thomas was sick. You took care of him as good as Doc Hanlon ever did.

EMMA: But Thomas is a sheep!

SARAH: Still, you made him all better. You'd be the best nurse ever — I know you would.

EMMA: I hope you're right.

STEWARDESS: (pushing through the open door) Listen you.

EMMA: Are we to leave now?

STEWARDESS: No. They're loading the boats, but only women and children first.

EMMA: Then we should go.

STEWARDESS: But only first and second class passengers so far.

EMMA: And after that, they'll call for us, yes?

STEWARDESS: Yes, if there's time.

EMMA: If?

STEWARDESS: Tell me, where's that other sister of yours?

EMMA: She's — she went away. With that American boy.

STEWARDESS: Will she be back?

EMMA: (*fighting back tears*) I don't think so. Because she said she didn't believe you'd come back for us. I told her that wasn't true.

STEWARDESS: You did? Well — it won't be easy but I think I can find a way to get you up on deck. But not more than two of ya.

EMMA: It's just the two of us now.

SARAH: But Emma—!

EMMA: Sarah, it's just the two of us, now hush.

STEWARDESS: We'll have to be quick about it and quiet. I'll be back. Be ready to leave when I am.

STEWARDESS exits down the right corridor.

SARAH: Emma — you didn't tell her about Jacob.

EMMA: She doesn't need to know about Jacob.

SARAH: We can't leave him behind.

EMMA: We're not going to leave him behind, silly. She said two and that's what we'll be. Here, help me find another shawl.

EMMA rummages through her bag while SARAH unwraps her cloak, takes off the shawl and holds it out to EMMA.

SARAH: Emma — here.

EMMA: Where'd you find—? (*seeing the doll unwrapped*) Your doll... Mum would be so proud of you.

EMMA makes a sling with the shawl and nestles Jacob into it.

EMMA: There we go. Look at him, Sarah, how peaceful he is now. You see, he knows everything's going to be all right. And we'll see if we can't sneak your doll past, too.

SARAH: I don't care about that, just as long as we have Jacob.

EMMA: Good girl.

EMMA completes her layers, putting her jacket overtop all.

There. All done. (SARAH giggles) What are you laughing at?

SARAH: You.

EMMA: What?

SARAH: You look like you've eaten nothing but lard and potatoes your whole life. You're big as a house!

EMMA: Maybe I've heard that's the way American boys like their girls — nice and plumpy. When I step off the ship, they'll all be fighting each other to catch me first.

EMMA pretends to walk down the gangplank like a princess.

SARAH: Me too, me too!

EMMA: Wait — you need more padding.

EMMA stuffs a pillow under SARAH's coat.

I might be big as a house, but you're at least as big as a horse!

SARAH and EMMA erupt in laughter as MILLY timidly steps into the doorway.

MILLY: Emma?

EMMA: (gasping, running to her) Milly!

SARAH: You've come back!

MILLY: I'm so sorry, Emma.

EMMA: Oh Milly, you're back. I don't know if I should strangle you or hug you so hard I'll never let you go!

MILLY: Oh Emma, it was terrible. Just like you said. We'd no sooner got up to D deck when there was a terrible crowd and fighting and yelling. The gates were locked. A steward was there with a gun, holding everyone back. They aren't letting us out, Em. Matt,

he and this group, they tried to charge through and one of the officers got hold of Matt and was taking him away. He broke loose and went running off. I yelled after him but I don't think he heard me. They have guns, Em. They aren't letting us out. Would they really keep us down here, trapped like rats?

EMMA: Shh, it's all right.

MILLY: I didn't even get to say goodbye. I'm afraid I'll never see him again.

EMMA: Milly, listen — I have a feeling, maybe it was meant for Matt to go off like that alone. Maybe, because like you said, he is so responsible and with you he'd be too worried about keeping you safe. But on his own, he'll find his way out all right. And you will see him when the night's over. But you must promise, you'll not go off and leave us again.

MILLY: I swear it, on a stack of bibles bigger than... your belly? What's happened to you?

EMMA: Oh, allow me to introduce — (*reveals Jacob underneath the shawl*) your brother.

MILLY: What's he doing there?

EMMA: The stewardess did come for us. I told you she would. She's going to get us up on deck. Only, she doesn't know there's a baby and she's not going to know if I can help it.

SARAH: But Emma! The stewardess — she said she could only take two of us!

EMMA: Oh. Oh but once she sees Milly, she'll take us all, she'll have to.

MILLY: But if she can't, I lost my chance. The two of you should—

EMMA: No! We're sticking together from this point on. Don't you think we're not. When she comes back I'll make sure... she'll take us all. You just get everything you need and everything you can carry.

The STEWARDESS enters from right holding an extra staff coat and maid's cap. She raps on door.

STEWARDESS: It's time. Let's go.

EMMA pushes through door to meet STEWARDESS alone in the corridor.

EMMA: Ma'am —



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