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Very little was ever written about the third-class passengers of the Titanic, but here a Titanic survivor recounts her story of the luxury liner's sinking.

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Titanic Survivor I Going Down with the Titanic in Third Class
Excerpt from "Going Down with the Titanic in Third Class,"
Yankee Magazine, September 1987.

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Very little was ever written about the third-class passengers of the Titanic; reporters, the United States Senate investigation, and the British investigation never bothered to interview any of the third-class survivors. Most of those in third class spoke very little English. But for some, like Titanic survivor Elin Hakkarainen, the memory lingered long enough for her English to catch up....

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We could hardly believe that in two more days we would be landing in America. Originally, my husband and I planned on making the trip on board the *Mauretania*, but we decided to wait a few months so we could make the crossing aboard the luxury liner *Titanic*. Married just a few months, Pekko and I decided to leave Finland and start a new life in America. Although we were booked as third class, we still enjoyed many "extras" on board and had quite a time in our little group. After a couple of days at sea we settled into a routine: attending church services after breakfast, strolling the decks, and during the evening playing games in the third-class general room.

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We would leave the game room very late in the evening, and the night of April 14th was no exception. Just after we returned to our cabin and settled in, Pekko reached to turn out the light when we heard a scraping sound and felt the ship shudder. A few moments later the throb of the engines stopped. Pekko jumped out of bed, slipped into his clothes, and said, "I'm going to see what has happened." Not thinking too much of all this, I dozed off. But after an hour or so, the murmuring of other passengers in the hall awakened me. I noticed Pekko was still gone, and when I tried to step out of

- the bed, the cabin was tilted at an angle.
- 8 Soon there was a hard and very fast knock at the door, and one of my friends from Finland dashed in to say the ship had struck something and was sinking. “Where is Pekko?” she asked. “He went to see why the ship had stopped. I don’t know where he is now.” “How did he get out of the passageway?” she continued. “All the doors are locked!” I was confused; I didn’t know what to do next. After a few moments I grabbed my purse and life jacket and ran out to the passageway. The door was locked! All of the doors were locked.
- 9 Finally a ship’s steward came and gathered a small group of us together and guided us, “Come, there is another way to get to the upper deck.” On the upper deck, it was rather quiet — almost eerie. The deck on the ship’s bow was already under water, and the loud sound of the steam escaping from the funnels had settled down. The lifeboats were guarded by the ship’s officers standing in semicircles around each one. Soon I was motioned aboard a lifeboat, but I still was scanning the listing deck looking for my husband.
- 10 We rowed away quickly, watching our ship slide beneath the surface of the water. The screams of those in the water were horrible — I remember calling over and over, “Pekko, Pekko, I am here; come this way.” It was cold on the lifeboat, and I wasn’t wearing warm clothes. I didn’t know if I was falling asleep or freezing to death, but I drifted into unconsciousness.
- 11 Soon after, it was daylight, and we could see a ship in the distance — we would be rescued...and made warm. Once aboard the *Carpathia*, the passengers and crew did their best to console us. We were given clothes, food, and hot coffee. But with all we were given, I was still lacking. I slowly realized the last words I might ever hear from my husband were, “I’m going to see what has happened.” I remember standing at the railing for hours, looking out to the open sea and hoping upon hope that I would discover just one more lifeboat.
- 12 *Ed. note: Mrs. Hakkarainen’s monetary compensation for the loss of her luggage, belongings, and her beloved husband was \$125.*