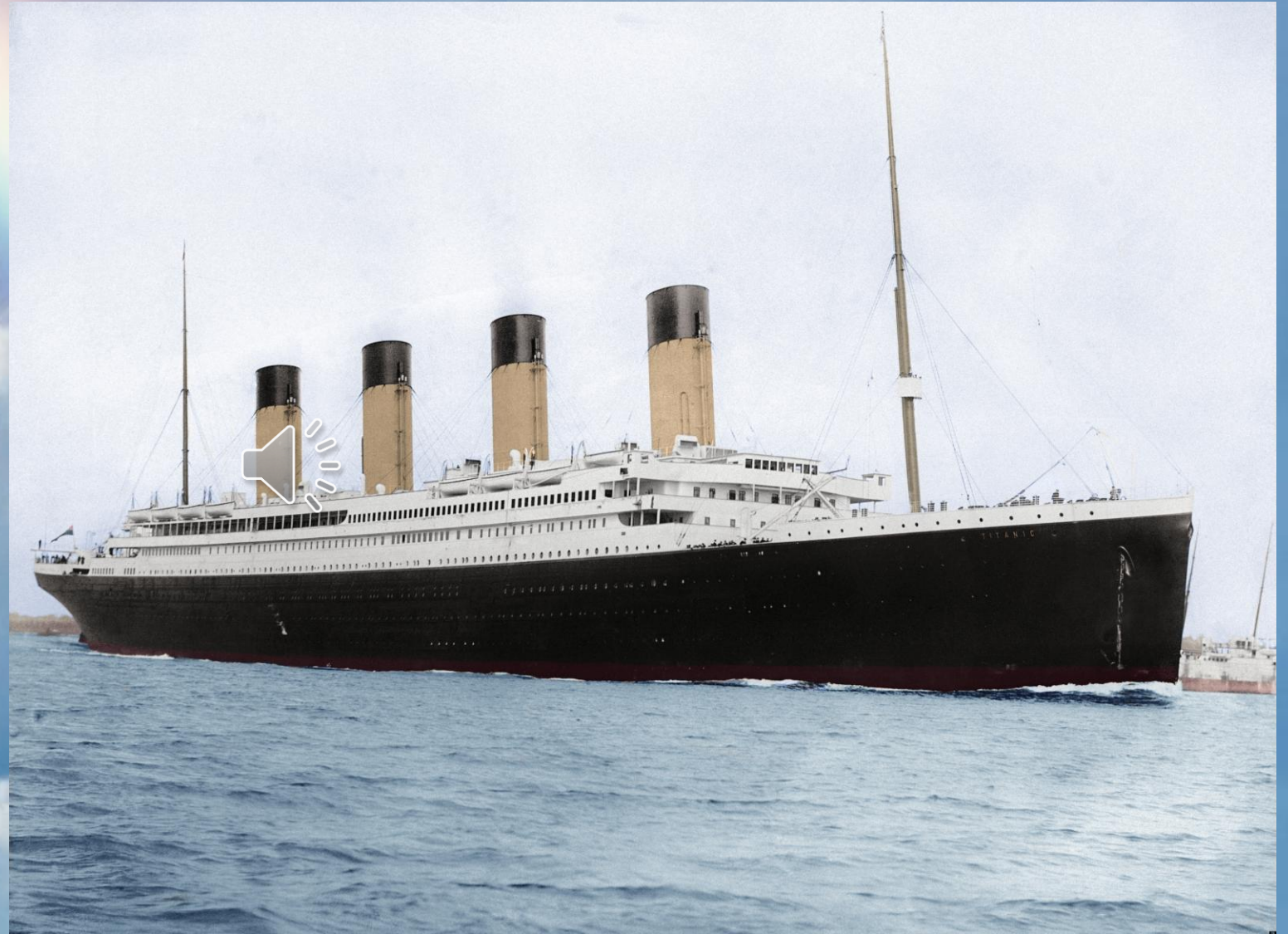
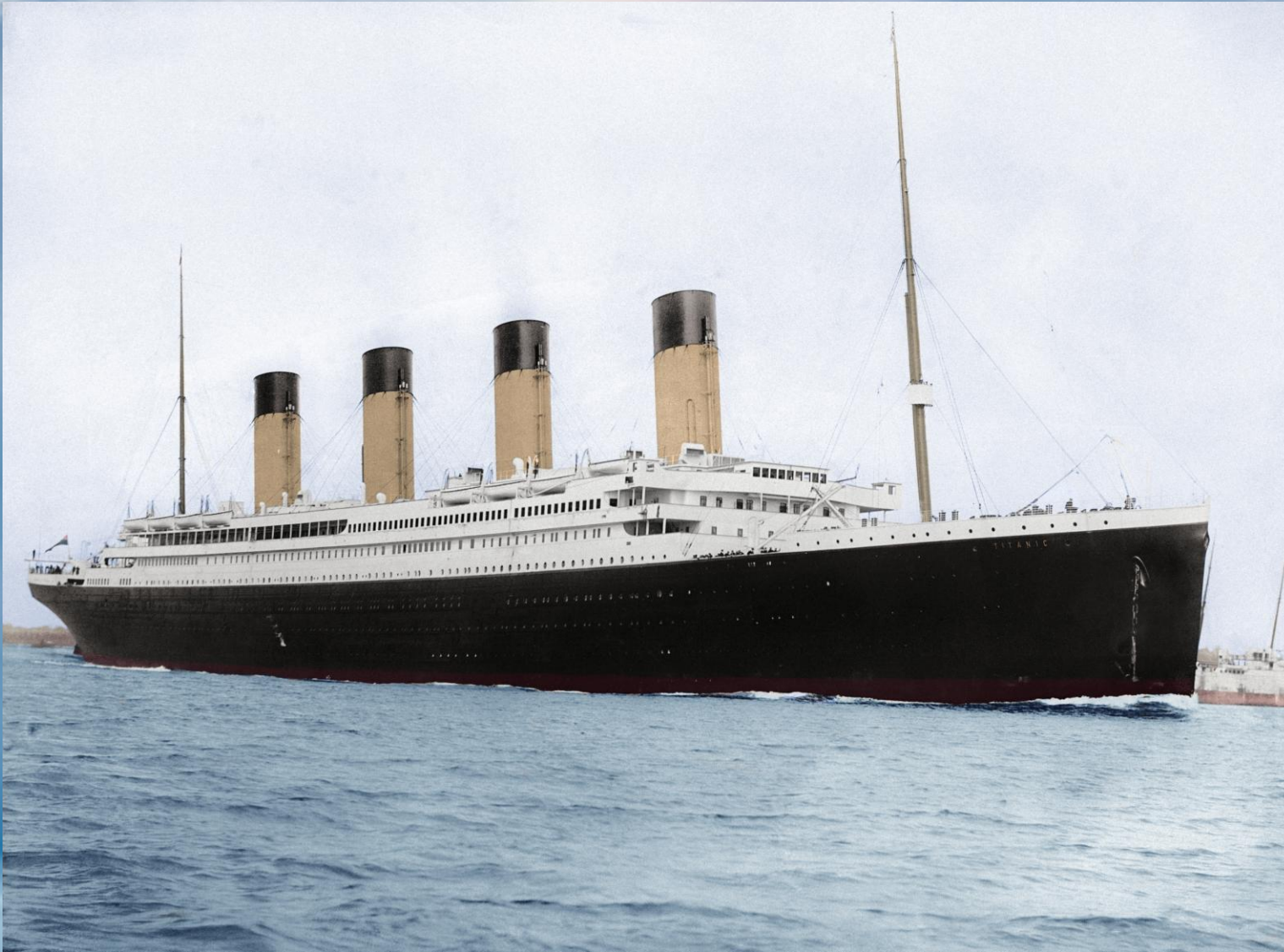


Jenny, the Titanic Cat





We Remember a “Night to Remember,” one of the early books about the Titanic by Walter Lord. The story of Jenny the Titanic Cat originated from survivors like Violet Jessup. Jenny’s story has survived as vividly as the Titanic’s story. Some versions say she and her kittens stayed on the Titanic and sank with it. Other version say she carried her kittens off the ship. She will tell you which one she favors.



I am Jenny, a mackerel tabby cat. Since I am a mackerel tabby, and I like to hunt rats and mice, it is only logical that I live on a ship. People believe that I bring them good luck and I do. I also brought myself and my babies good luck. Let me tell you how I did it.



“Wait a minute, cats don’t talk,” you are saying. Some people don’t believe that cats can talk, but we have our ways. We stare at you and you know exactly what we are thinking. We have a vocabulary of meows that we use to let you know what we want. And we have purring songs that we sing to you to let you know we love you.





So, when I tell you my story of how I knew that the iceberg was going to sink the Titanic, you can believe I hightailed my four babies off that ship!



How did I know? My third great-grandmother Skemet was an Egyptian cat, and she had the magic eyes. I don't mean evil eyes that some silly people believed cats used to hurt people



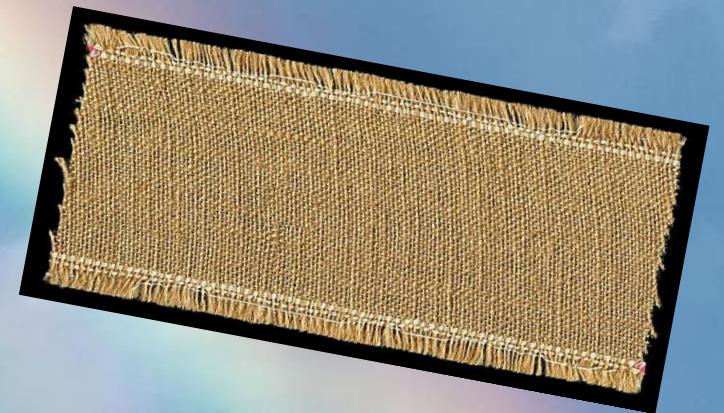
I mean she could look at something like a house or a person or a mouse or a ship and map their life. She passed her talent to her children, and they passed it on down the line to me. She had a mouse catching formula that she passed down to me.

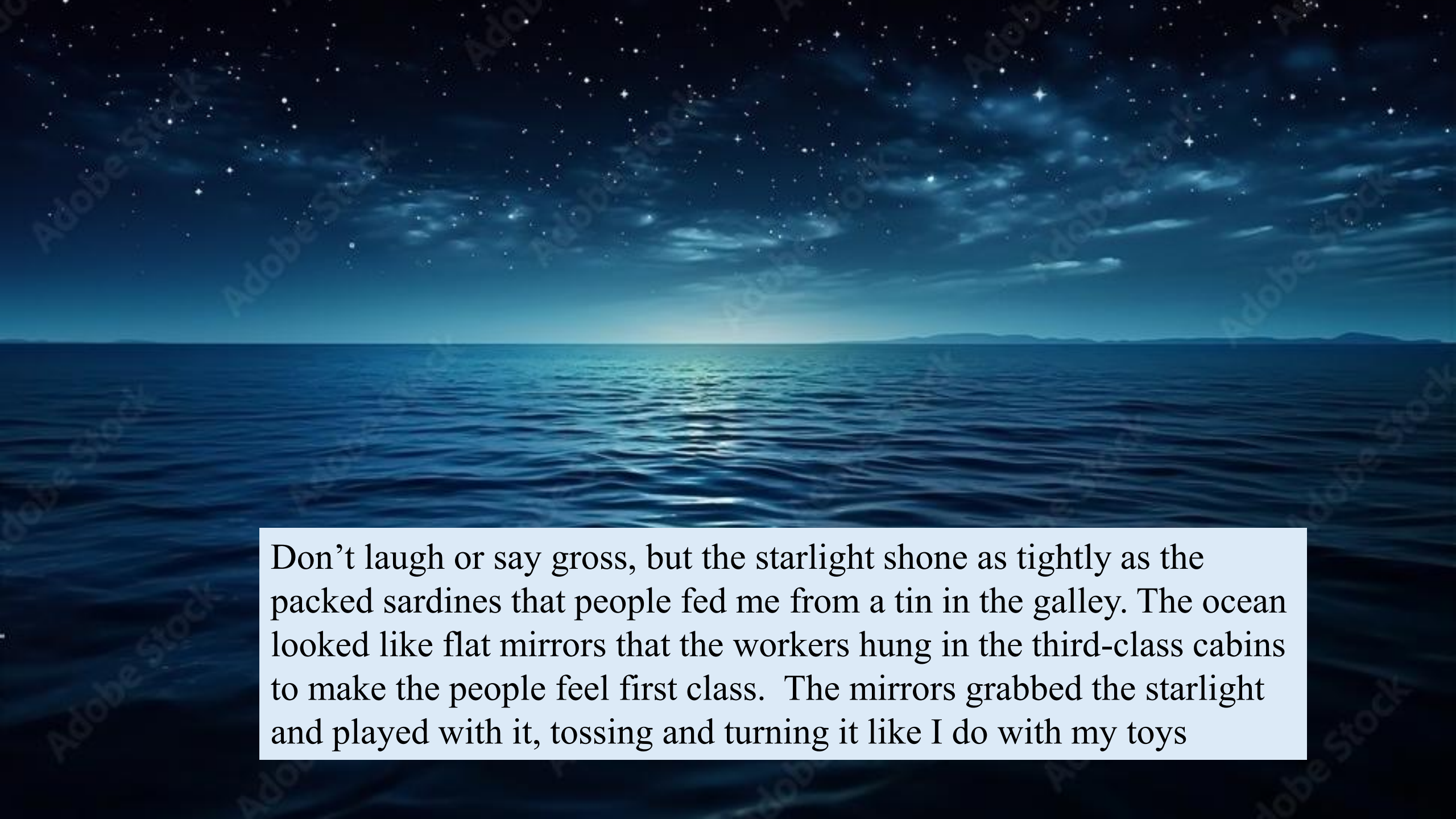


The Titanic is as busy as a cat on a cat gym. We are moored at Southampton, getting ready to sail across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. I have not been here very long, just five days out of my nine lives, but the Titanic has many mice and rats, and I caught enough to win a promotion to galley cat, where the rats and mice hang out in cupboards and bins. My husband Alley Cat ran away so I must take care of my four babies as well as patrolling the galley. Alley Cat disappeared down the gangplank, not even giving the babies a welcome meow. We never saw him again.



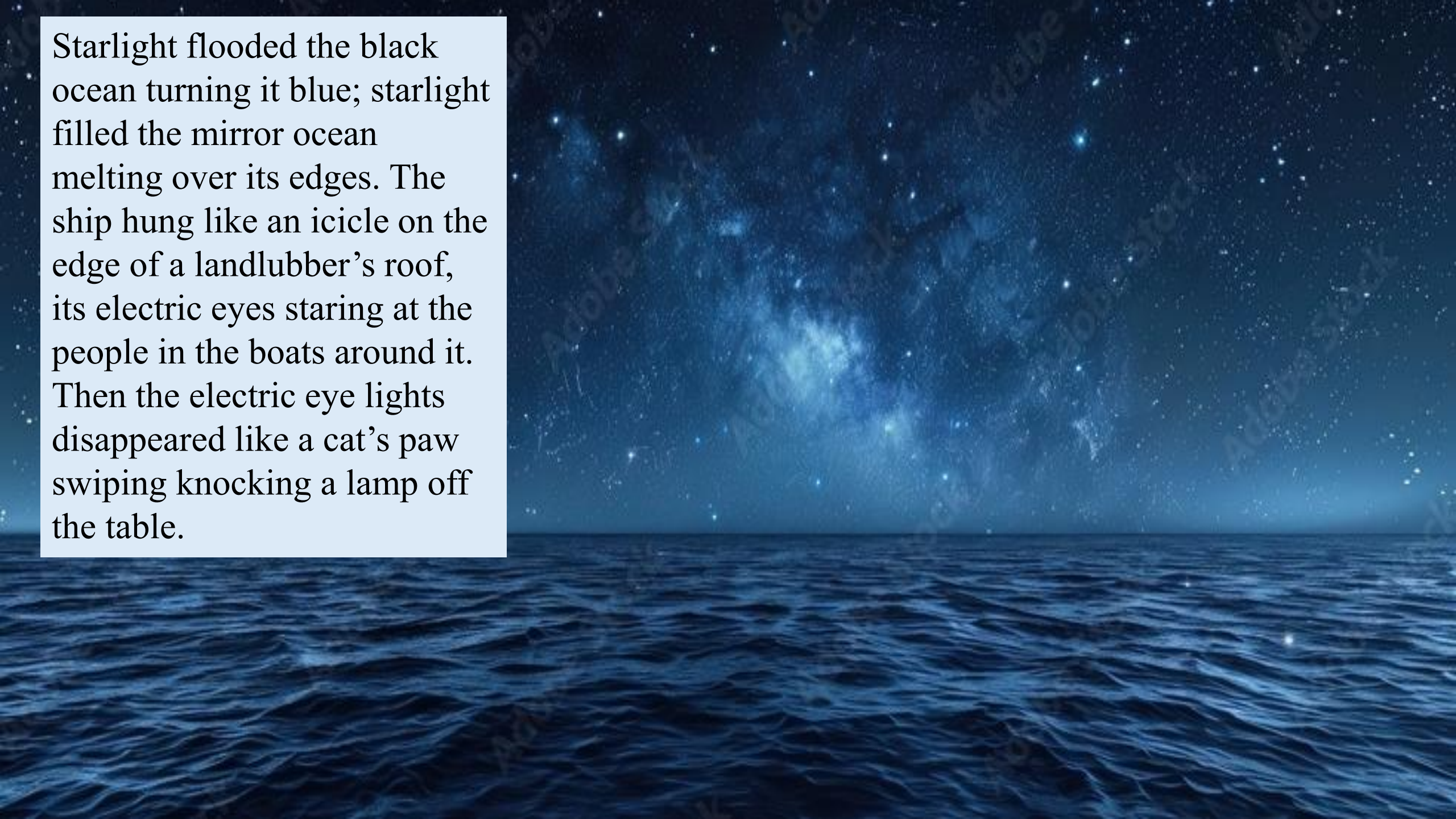
I felt contented on the Titanic with my babies and rats and mice until I started having bad dreams, things you people call nightmares. I saw it all! I saw hundreds of people walking up the gangplank to cabins on the Titanic. I saw the Titanic leaving Southampton and sailing into an ocean that rolled out like an endless carpet, the kind I scratched and rolled in on the Titanic. The kind of carpet I taught my babies to roll around on and scratch.

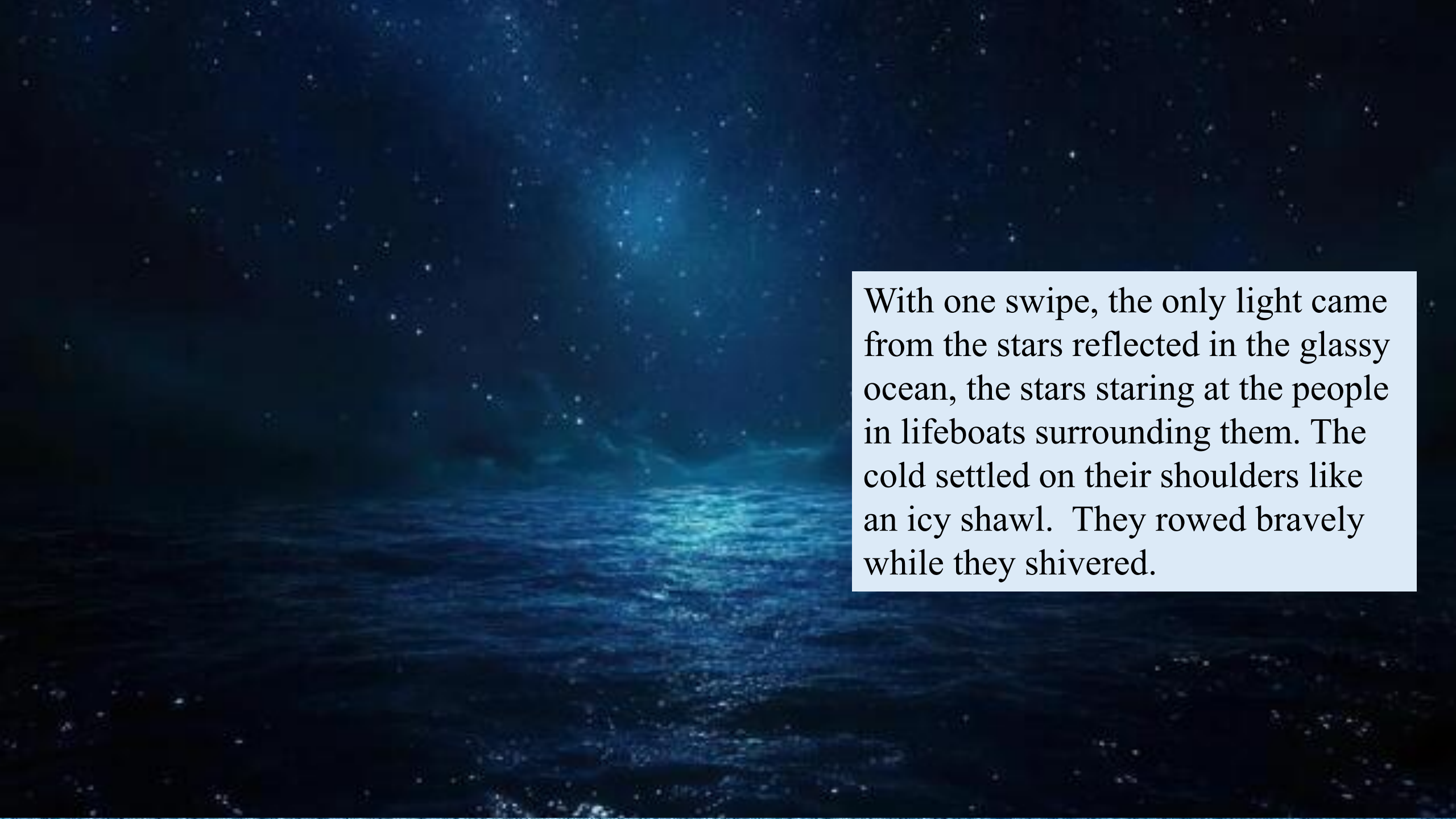




Don't laugh or say gross, but the starlight shone as tightly as the packed sardines that people fed me from a tin in the galley. The ocean looked like flat mirrors that the workers hung in the third-class cabins to make the people feel first class. The mirrors grabbed the starlight and played with it, tossing and turning it like I do with my toys

Starlight flooded the black ocean turning it blue; starlight filled the mirror ocean melting over its edges. The ship hung like an icicle on the edge of a landlubber's roof, its electric eyes staring at the people in the boats around it. Then the electric eye lights disappeared like a cat's paw swiping knocking a lamp off the table.





With one swipe, the only light came from the stars reflected in the glassy ocean, the stars staring at the people in lifeboats surrounding them. The cold settled on their shoulders like an icy shawl. They rowed bravely while they shivered.



I snuggled closer in my blanket dreaming about my vacation days lying in the warm sunlight. The cold woke me up. Shivering, I got up and stretched and then lay back down and groomed myself into comfort. After all, it had only been a nightmare. But it wouldn't go away. The same nightmare came back every night. I couldn't scratch or shake or groom it away.

When my babies, that you humans call kittens, came, I knew I had to keep them safe. I had to provide a safe home for us all and my nightmares told me that the Titanic wasn't a safe place to live. So, I found a safe place behind a post on the dock where the Titanic was moored. I dragged some straw over to make a soft nest for my kittens, and I hurried up the gangplank, weaving back and forth between the feet of the steady streams of people that were coming aboard.





The Titanic was scheduled to leave at noon, and the whistle of a tug announced that noon was coming up fast. I grabbed Banty, my first born and smallest kitten, His coat is a blend of black and brown, and I had named him Banty because he looked and often acted like Banty, a hen that I met in the cargo hold. Banty didn't approve of the trip, but he did not argue. I am bigger than he is.



His brother Stoker was a CATastrophe. Stoker is growing a body like a human coal shoveler, and he thinks he is my boss. I grabbed him in my mouth like I had Banty, but he twisted free and ran. I had to chase him between passenger legs and suitcases. When I caught him, he twisted again and this time he landed on a passenger's back. You can imagine the rest of the story.





I finally caught him and dragged him down the gangplank to our new home behind the wooden pillar. The ship and the dock heard him CATerwauling! Get it? So did my human friend Arthur. He frowned. “Are you certain that you don’t want to sail with us?”

Arthur is the man standing on the right. He and his friends are sitting and standing by the Titanic’s anchor chain.

I frowned back at him. “Please don’t get on that ship! I am going to turn in my CATSport, (yes, cats on crew had passports, and I am a crew cat) and never set foot on it again. “

“But I am already working on the ship, I have shoveled coal for all five days we have been here.” Alfred said.

“Stay ashore with me, think about it while I fetch Sunflower and Skemet from the Titanic and turn in my passport,” I told him.

Passport Jenny the Cat

Dob 4/14, 1906

Gender Female

Species Mackerel Cat



When I slid my ship's CATSport on the purser's desk he didn't even look up. He just stamped it and opened a filing cabinet drawer. "It rains more cats than it thunders dogs," he said as he slammed the file draw shut. I knew he meant he would find someone to take my place right away, but I did not care.

Titanic cooks prepared over 6,000 meals each day. I protected those meals from the rats and mice.



I woke up Sunflower and Skemet from their CATnaps and they followed me down the gangplank or at least I thought they had. I slid through the crowd of people moving up the gangplank like a school of fish, but they were not behind me. I had lost them!

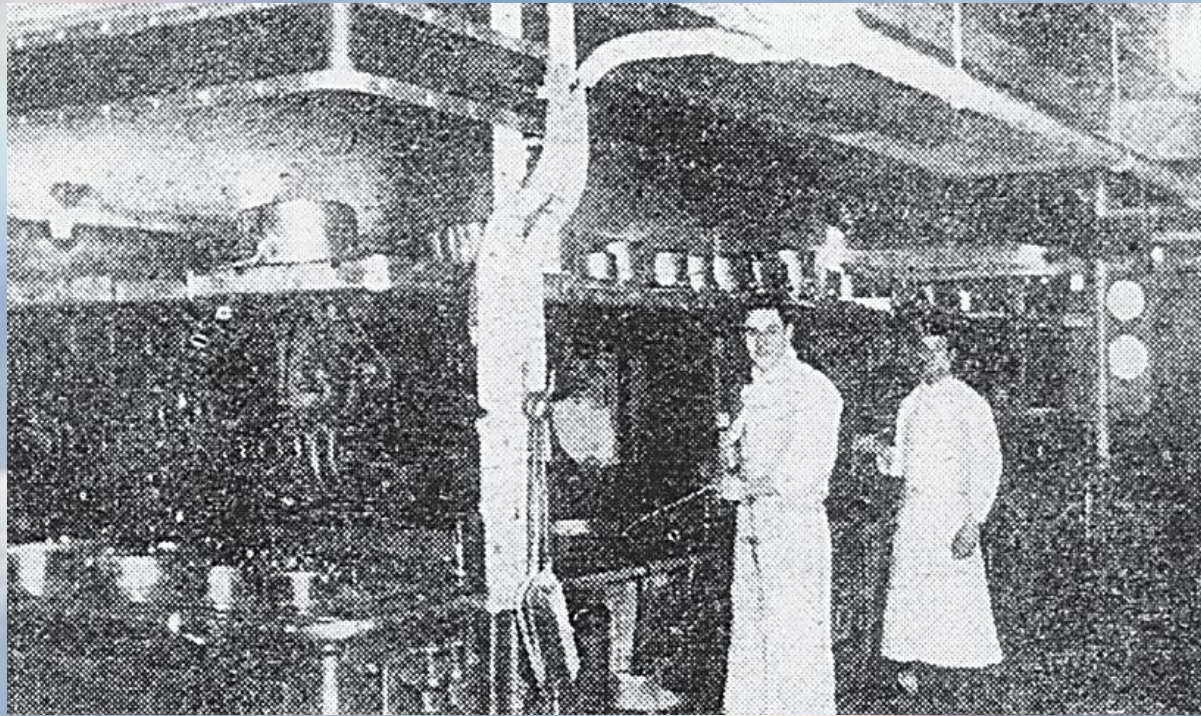


I ran back and forth meowing their songs. Each one of them had a song that I meowed when I wanted them. Sunflower's song was "You Are My Sunshine," and Skemets was Everybody Wants to be a Cat!

Neither one of them answered. I had to find them quickly, so I broke one of the most important cat crew training rules- Don't bother the passengers! I jumped on a lady's hobble skirt- it kept the lady from walking- and I rode it while she screamed.

Hobble skirts were a fad between about 1908 and 1914, but you can see why ladies did not like them much.





Her screams scared my runaway daughters because they both ran back to me and Skemet hid under my right front paw and Sunflower under my left front paw.

“Let’s get out of here,” I said.

“I am not going to miss this Titanic galley at all.”

The lady shook her skirt shouting,
“SCAT Cats!”

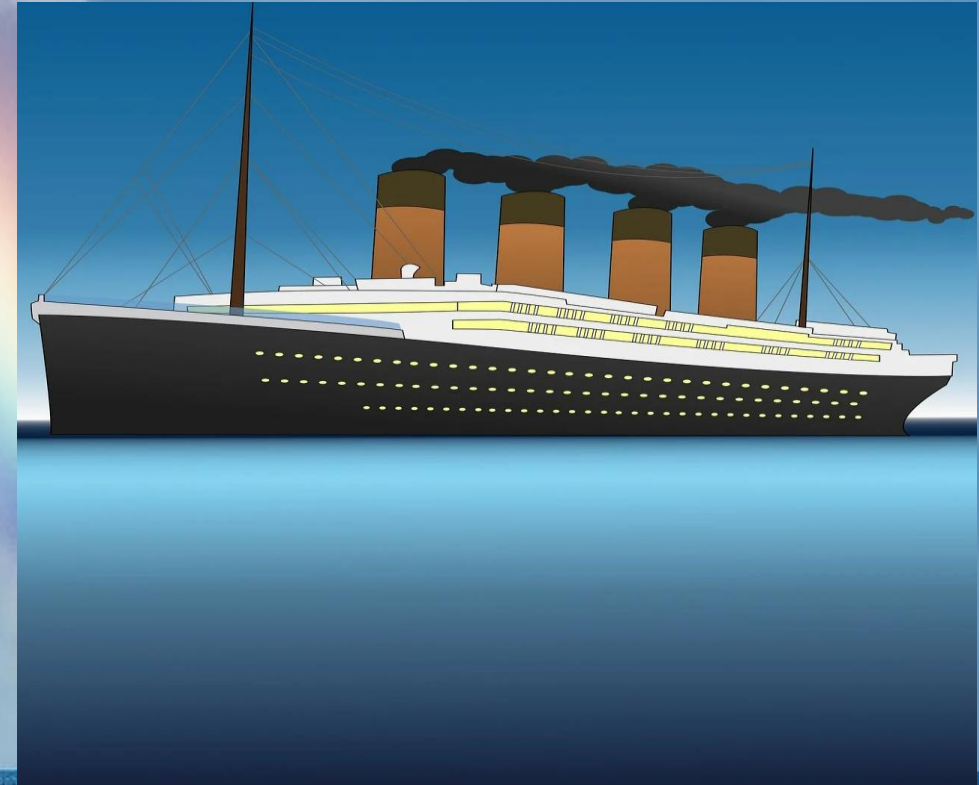
We scatted. My daughters and I ran
down that gangplank so fast that we
showered splinters.

Sunshine and Skemet plopped
down next to Banty and Stoker. I
scratched the wooden pillar trying
to calm down. “They didn’t CATch
us,” I said.



Arthur stood in the same place he had when I left with my CATSport. “It’s time for me to go aboard, Jenny.”

“Don’t go,” Banty, and Stoker, and Sunflower and Skemet meowed in unison. Arthur took a step toward the Titanic.



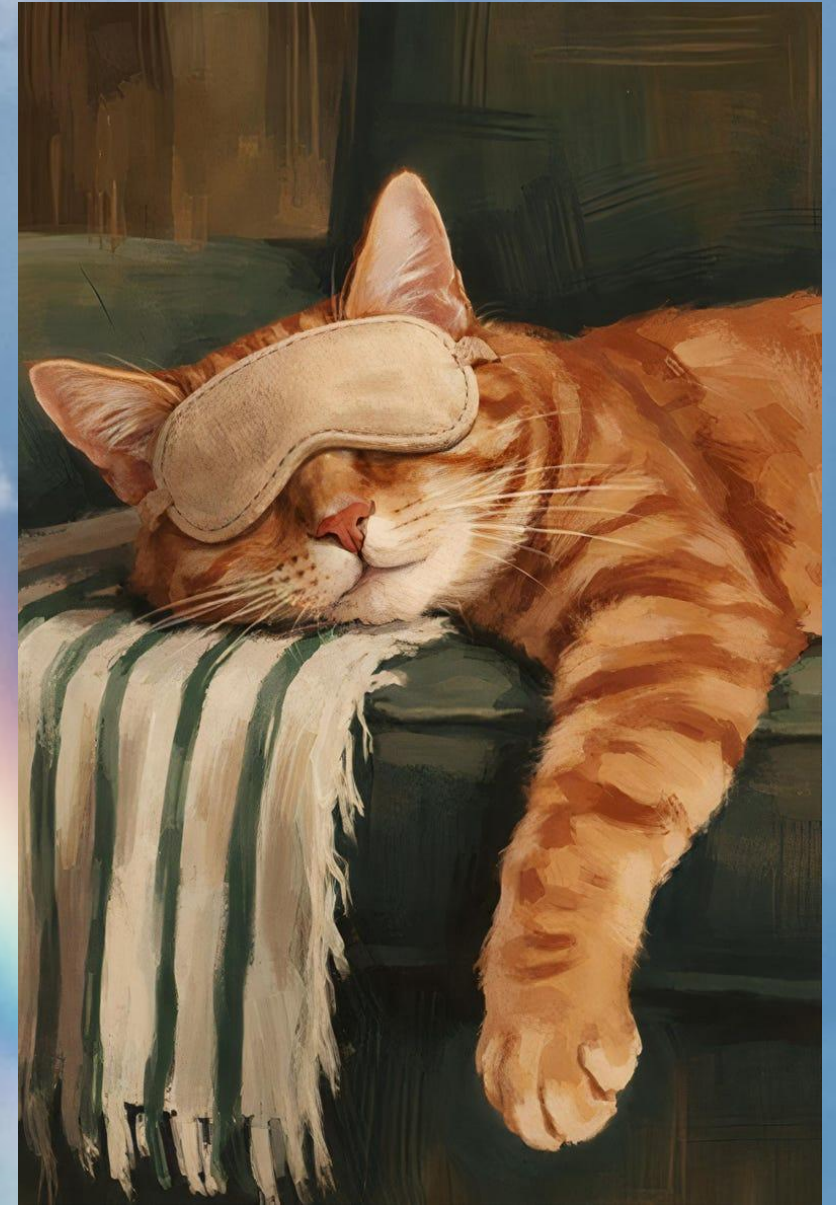
I ran in front of him and threw myself flat on his feet. I had to convince Arthur to stay off that ship. I rubbed against his legs, purring. He knelt to pet me, and I whispered in his ear. “Think of all the centuries we have purred our love to you, thanked you by blinking at you, slept in your beds, lay by your firesides, helped you hunt and brought our gifts of game to you. Remember that black rat I brought you just last week?”



“ The rat has twelve children, 400 relatives and 800 friends. Your kittens scratched furniture and chewed my slippers, and they have terrible bedtime habits. They all want to sleep in the same spot and with the same person, ME!”



I felt Arthur's stubborn mouth twitch.
I kept talking. "Remember how cats carry
dreams in their eyes and hope in their lives and
bring them into your life? Can you live without
dreams and hope?"





Arthur didn't board the Titanic. We live in a PURFECT cottage, in Southampton, Arthur, my kittens and me. I have not forgotten them, the people and fellow creatures of the Titanic. When the ripples escape from the arms of any icy lake, I think of that cold starry night.



When the spring sun beams dance on the windows, I think of the passengers - their excitement, anticipation, hope of a safe journey and a better future. When summer heat carries smells of chocolate chip scented clouds, I am once again in the galley. When the fall leaves dance in the air, I leap high in the hold, catching rats and mice.

We remember them, my kittens and me. Remembering is keeping our hearts and lives touching them like I rub my chin against Arthur's hand. I remember them with everyone of my nine lives and so do Banty, Stoker, Sunflower and Skemet and so will their children. Will you remember that history isn't long ago people, it is today people like you? Listen to my stories or I will sit on your front steps and yowl!

Soon, I will tell you the story of Anna Sofia Turja, a Titanic survivor who came to Ashtabula and had Conneaut connections as well. She is an important part of my remembering.

