

Titanic

The Characters

Thomas Andrews – naval architect in charge of the plans for RMS Titanic. Born and brought up in Belfast he worked his way up through Harland and Wolff. Died aged 39 when the ship went down but could be played older. Usually the voice of reason during the show – tries to solve problems and he is the one who realises very quickly that the ship will sink and there aren't enough lifeboats to save everyone. By all accounts he behaved heroically, searching the ship for passengers and urging them to take lifebelts into the water.

J. Bruce Ismay – Chairman of the White Star Line – a position which he inherited from his father. Aged 50 when the ship sank. The highest ranking White Star official to survive. He was keen for Titanic to get to New York as quickly as possible. In this show he is the villain of the piece, often seen urging Captain Smith and Thomas Andrews to go faster. He was vilified in the press and branded a coward for having survived the sinking.

Captain Edward J Smith – long time ship's master with the White Star Line. He went down with his ship aged 62. He is portrayed as a man who radiates authority and confidence by speaking with a quiet voice. He has flashes of irritation with Ismay's need for speed and interference on the bridge and takes this out on his crew. Titanic's maiden voyage was to be his last before retirement. He takes his responsibility seriously but admits he has never been involved in a shipwreck before.

First Officer William Murdoch – portrayed as the youngest man in the White Star Line to qualify for his master's papers, Murdoch was at the helm when the liner struck the iceberg. He says that he has never actually commanded a ship because he questions his ability to handle the responsibility. He was 39 (but could be played as older) when he went down with the ship. There were reports that he shot himself and this is his story (off stage) in this version.

Stoker Frederick Barrett - Frederick Barrett was a lead stoker working in boiler room 6, the site of the impact when Titanic struck the iceberg. He was 29. A working crewman, first introduced saying farewell to his girlfriend before he embarks, he is a part of the romantic interest in the show – he steals up to the radio room to propose to his sweetheart using the ship's telegraphist, Bride, to send his message in Morse code. The real life Barrett survived; the fictional one does not thus highlighting the romantic proposal. He gives up his place in a lifeboat to a 3rd Class passenger.

Radioman Harold Bride – was a junior radioman with the Marconi company and was responsible for sending and receiving messages from other ships about weather conditions, icebergs etc. He was also responsible for sending the CQD (Come Quick. Danger) message which was later changed to SOS – a new message which was apparently easier to read and used for the first time on Titanic. Bride survived, having been thrown into the water, injuring his feet and ankles quite badly in the fall. He was dragged into a life boat. On board the Carpathia he continued to help sending messages despite being badly injured. He was 22

Lookout Frederick Fleet - was the first to see the iceberg and message 'Iceberg – right ahead' Apparently it was difficult to spot because there was no moon and the sea was calm therefore there were no visible waves breaking on the base of the iceberg. He was 25 and survived by being instructed to get into a lifeboat full of women and children in order to row.

First Class Steward Henry Etches - was 44 (but could be played older or younger) at the time. Songs are wordy. He is an experienced 1st Class steward, looking after his ladies and gentlemen with style and calm. Able to pre-empt their requirements and totally aware of the niceties of travelling in each of the classes. We see the different ways each class of passenger was treated through his eyes and he did his best to ensure that all his passengers were wearing their life

belts correctly. He survived, having been put in charge of one of the lifeboats. He has a line at the end which always 'gets' me: 'All fifty bellboys perished, none more than fifteen years old, went to their deaths without a whimper'.

Bandmaster Mr Wallace Hartley – was 34 when he died on board Titanic. He was Lancashire born and regarded as a hero, keeping up the spirits of the passengers by organising his band to keep playing as the ship went down. He is essentially a singer – his solo 'Autumn' refers to one of the last songs heard playing on the ship.

Isidor Straus – 1st Class passenger. Very wealthy, German born Jewish American businessman, aged 67, who co-owned Macy's in New York. He was travelling on Titanic with his wife Ida to whom he had been married for 41 years. They were a devoted couple who were both offered places in a lifeboat but he refused, insisting that younger men should leave before him. He did not survive.

Charles Clarke – was a 2nd Class passenger on board Titanic who did not survive. He was travelling with his wife who did survive. In the musical he is portrayed as the son of a green grocer from Maida Vale, who is running away to America with Lady Caroline Neville whose father will not sanction their marriage because of the class difference. Part of the romantic interest used to highlight the class system. Can be played 25 – 40. Needs to be paired with Caroline.

Edgar Beane – 2nd Class passenger who has taken his wife, Alice, on a world tour. In reality, Edward Beane was a young man honeymooning with his wife, Ethel. In the musical world he is an American, small town hardware store owner. Part of another couple who highlight the class difference. He is happy with his lot; she is not. Their relationship provides some comic relief in the show until the end when they are parted. She survives; he does not. Not very young he is married with children and age will depend on being paired with Alice.

James (Jim) Farrell – 3rd Class passenger. Age 26 from County Longford, Ireland. Whilst aboard it appears he was acquainted with several others from Co Longford amongst them Kate Gilnagh and Kate Mullin. On the night of the sinking, James and his Longford compatriots stayed together during the evacuation. When the women in the group were attempting to cross a barrier to a higher deck a crewmen prevented them from doing so. James intervened, shouting "For God's sake man, let the girls past to the boats, at least!" The threat of an altercation from the burly Irishman made the crewman comply and the group passed through, James giving his cap to Kate Gilnagh. Kate never forgot the actions of James Farrell and later referred to him as her guardian angel. James died in the disaster. Paired with Kate McGowan, they lead the 3rd Class aspirations to build a better life in America.

Lady Caroline Neville – 2nd Class passenger. Although historically there has been a 'Lady Caroline Nevill' (an early English photographer) in the musical she is a fictional character based on Charles Clarke's wife Ada. Romantic interest highlighting the class system and the aspiration to escape from it in America. Quite feisty and independent, she would normally have been travelling 1st Class but is eloping to marry Charles and 2nd Class is all that he can afford. Can be played 25 – 40 as long as she and Charles match.

Kate McGowan – 3rd Class passenger. Irish girl travelling to America in search of a better life by becoming a ladies' maid. Another character highlighting the class difference. Her character is based on Kate Gilnagh. She and two other Irish girls named Kate manage to escape from 3rd Class and get to the lifeboats. Kate McGowan, who it transpires is pregnant, gets into a lifeboat and her love interest, Jim Farrell gets a place, too because stoker Barrett gives up his place. They both survive. Fictional character, although there was a Catherine McGowan who did not survive. Young woman.

Kate Murphey - 3rd Class passenger. Young Irish girl travelling to America intending to become a governess. In reality she shared a compartment with 2 other Kates, one of which was Kate

Mullins. They all survived by working their way up to the boat deck with Jim Farrell. In the show it is not shown that she does.

Kate Mullins - 3rd Class passenger. Young Irish girl travelling to America intending to become a sewing girl. In reality she shared a compartment with 2 other Kates, one of which was Kate Murphey. They all survived by working their way up to the boat deck with Jim Farrell. In the show it is not shown that she does.

Alice Beane – 2nd Class passenger who wants more from her life in small town America. Songs are wordy – she often describes what she sees so that the audience see the 1st Class passengers through her eyes. She is described as a social climber but the audience must be able to sympathise with her. She is a source of frustration for her husband, Edgar who owns and runs a hardware store and is very happy with his lot. She is married with children and sits, age-wise, between the Kates and Ida Strauss. She survives.

Ida Straus – 1st Class passenger, aged 63. She was travelling with her husband, Isidor, to whom she had been married for 41 years. He tried to persuade her into a lifeboat but she refused, preferring to stay with him. A devoted couple, by choice they died together.