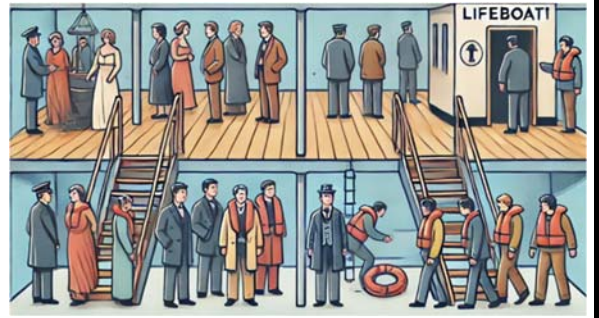


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## Surviving the Titanic: Does Class Matter?

On April 10, 1912, the Titanic set sail on its first and final journey. It was the largest and most luxurious ship of its time, often called "the unsinkable ship." But just four days into its voyage, the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank into the icy waters of the North Atlantic. Over 1,500 lives were lost, and only about 700 people survived. Many factors influenced who lived and who didn't, but one surprising factor was class.



The Titanic was divided into three classes: first, second, and third. First-class passengers paid for the finest experience money could buy. They stayed in grand rooms, ate gourmet meals, and had access to the best parts of the ship. Second-class passengers lived more simply but still comfortably. Third-class passengers, also known as steerage passengers, were mostly immigrants hoping to start a new life in America. They stayed in crowded, small rooms below deck.

When the Titanic hit the iceberg late at night on April 14, chaos quickly followed. Passengers were told to head to the lifeboats, but there was a problem. The ship had only 20 lifeboats—enough for just over half the people on board. And the way people boarded the lifeboats wasn't exactly fair.

The rule was "women and children first," but first-class passengers had an advantage. They were already near the lifeboats, as their rooms were on the upper decks. Crew members also gave them special attention. Second-class passengers had to wait their turn, and third-class passengers faced the most challenges. Many didn't even know how to get to the lifeboats. Locked gates kept them from reaching the upper decks, and few crew members were there to guide them. Some never made it to the lifeboats at all.

Statistics show how much class mattered. About 62% of first-class passengers survived, compared to 42% of second-class passengers and only 25% of third-class passengers. The difference is even more striking when you look at men. Only about 20% of men in first class survived, but for third-class men, it was just 13%. These numbers show that having a first-class ticket could be a matter of life and death.

The tragedy of the Titanic taught the world many lessons, and one of the biggest was about fairness. After the disaster, laws were passed to ensure all ships had enough lifeboats for everyone. People also started to question class divisions and how they affected life-and survival. The Titanic remains a powerful reminder of the impact of class, even in the face of disaster.