



# ABC CLARION

High school students are welcome to send articles or comics to [clarionabc@gmail.com](mailto:clarionabc@gmail.com)

## The Sister Ships

by Adam Deng

There was a grand ship, crafted over 5 years and finally finished. It was the best in the world, and nothing could rival it. In fact, it was so awesome it was rumored that some crew member declared, "We defy God to sink this ship!" This one had 16 compartments, and if any 4 were accidentally holed, the ship could survive. But on its maiden voyage, the great liner sank because an iceberg opened up 6 compartments. The irony lied in its "unsinkable" claim- and its actual sinking just 5 days into the journey.

Everyone's heard of the Titanic, right? (I couldn't mask it after the first 2 sentences; the ship is so obvious because of its notoriety!) It was the White Star Line ship that tragically sunk on April 14-15, 1912 because of an iceberg, but 1500 people died with it because there weren't enough lifeboats, and they couldn't fit half the people (1178 only)! Commemorating its 100th anniversary in 2012, the Titanic had drawn great films and even many live animations. It's probably the most memorable ship of all time.

Meanwhile, another ship is nearing its own posthumous 100th year. With veracity, this ship happened to be reinforced after the Titanic sunk: to prevent

what had happened, it was built with a "double hull". This meant that if another iceberg scraped the side of the hull, water wouldn't even get to the inside of the ship! The compartments were raised to B-deck level, 3 decks above the Titanic's E-deck level. Such a revision provided possibility for 6 compartments to be flooded, because water could easily slosh over from one compartment to the next if they were too low. And there were 48 lifeboats, with davits that easily swung from port (left) to starboard (right).

That ship fared much better than the Titanic, until it reached its 6th voyage. The period of time was World War I.

As it turned out, the aforementioned ship was sailing to its Grecian destination and almost reached it, when suddenly the ship hit a mine (or torpedo- it's uncertain). After just 55 minutes, that ship sank.

If you thought the one condition of the Titanic was ironic- it was said to be unsinkable- there are many more ironies of this other ship! First, the mine blasted a gigantic hole through the ship in the forward starboard, and the double hull didn't work. Rather, when water flooded in, even though two compartments contained the flooding (remember, these were higher), the

double hull didn't contain any compartments, and the ship tilted starboard all because of the extra water near the hull! Thus portholes along the waterline were dragged down, and open ones expedited the sink time. Second, the ship only contained 1066 passengers (Titanic had 2206), so most of the lifeboats were far from full or unused, which is ironic: since there was no order, people just went into a lifeboat, unlike the Titanic where there were actually officers controlling the ship. There was supposed to be improvement after 4 years! Third, the mine blast was so severe that the ship's watertight doors were disabled, so 6 compartments flooded! Finally, the unexpected part. Are you ready? The

captain, Mr. Bartlett, tried to beach the ship to shore 7 miles away, and somehow two lifeboats were randomly sucked into the propellers when they were around 150 feet away with life preservers and oars, a clear retrogression.

The tragic ship is called the Britannic, and sunk on November 21, 1916. Perhaps its 100th anniversary should crown it as the extremely ironic ship, with a live animation, documentaries, and this time, an oath from the world never to use double hulls, higher bulkheads, and 48 lifeboats again. I wonder how you'll interpret that last statement.

## Promises

by Nicole Cheng

Of course the thought of checking you into a home has crossed my mind. It would make my life, as well as your family's life, easier. It would be safer for you. You could even get a little bit better. But you wouldn't be happy. And maybe you wouldn't even be able to distinguish between different emotions and feelings, but I know you would be happier in the comfort of our home instead of in a strange place, in which you'll wake up every morning, wondering where the hell you were and why I wasn't there. And I don't mind doing this for you. I know, everyone tells me that these burdens are just too much for me, but I'm strong -- I can deal with it. Because forty-three years ago, on the happiest day of my life, I was surer of myself than I had ever been in my entire life. That day, I committed myself to you. Everything was crystal clear. In sickness and in health, for better and for worse, I was and am going to stay by your side through it all. I would not let you miss me even for a minute. I am yours.

That night, we made so many legendary memories. Sometimes I can barely remember my own name, but when a memory involves you, I can recite every nitty gritty detail. One of my favorite recollections of you is from freshman year of uni: in philosophy 101, room 305 in Stanner Hall. You sat 2 rows behind me. Gosh, I still remember that ridiculous outfit that you insisted on wearing at least once every week because you were so proud of the color coordination: a bright cobalt blue plaid shirt, paired with royal blue cordu-

roy pants, with navy blue oxfords, your fake non-prescription translucent blue poindexter glasses, and your big blue overcoat for chillier days. That's what you wore to the first day of class, and I recall thinking to myself, wow, who in their right mind has the guts to wear something like that? And then the following week, the outfit came back. And the week after that, and the week after that, and so on and so forth. Still, over forty years later, you refuse to even move those articles into storage, because you "need" that outfit to be accessible for days when you feel blue.

And I just love you so much. It hurts me so much to watch your grasp of reality slip away. It is so heartbreaking when it takes you half an hour to recognize who I am and remember our history. My heart sinks to my stomach every time you're in the middle of a joyful moment and suddenly forget all of the short-term, leaving you oblivious and clueless again. I love you so much and I just don't understand how it's possible for an illness to strip away your very being. We live through our memories. You are losing all of your memories, while all I have left are the memories of our story. And we've had a remarkable one -- one that people can only dream of having. So all I can do is be grateful for our time together, be reminded by you every day of our legacy, and just try to make you half as happy as you have made me.

## Parrot Chatter

by Sydney Peng

I had nobody to talk to anymore after my parrot died, and I thought that I would buy a new one, but she wasn't the same. She was as sullenly silent as her counterpart had been companionable, and the days dragged by, the only sound being the flap of wings and unfurling of feathers as I typed and typed and typed and never said a single word.

I didn't know how much I relied on my parrot. I never knew how often I spoke my mind to it honestly, without worrying (much) that it would repeat what I said or judge me for it; I never knew how often I could share things without instantly calculating whether it affected my reputation or not, whether there were any repercussions. I could admit to hating someone or enjoying an embarrassingly lurid book or disliking a party without an opinion hanging over my own like a guillotine.

I hadn't even been much for talking before, but now that a monasterial silence had accidentally befallen my apartment

like the feathers blanketing Santa Monica II's new cage, I was itching to do so. Even turning up the radio or the TV left me feeling worse than ever, and in the end I was left to an old player piano running on continuous loop. I had always regarded television as a team effort: simply watching the show on my own was all well and good, but it was more enjoyable when I could keep a running commentary and hear laughter or shouts or cheers besides my own, and when we could bet on outcomes and trade theories and mock stupid decisions as a couch-bound critic board.

Even birds had closer relationships than I did, I thought during one particularly bad mood. Sparrows had their thousand-strong murmurations; pigeons and crows came in flocks; ducks paddled one after another in the pond. Meanwhile, I sat at home at an empty table and had all the cutlery to myself.

What if I could be a parrot myself? At least then I could find someone to stay with for life.

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