

A STRIKING OCCURRENCE SAMPLE

BOY

The bell! Nineteen hours!

LIBRARIAN

1912. By the stroke of the clock. And here it is.

BOY

By a stroke of luck.

WOMAN

The luck of the clock.

LIBRARIAN

Predictable.

BOY

Like clockwork.

(The LIBRARIAN reads from the microfiche.)

LIBRARIAN

“Mr. Hoyt, a young man of Los Angeles, was one of the passengers on the ill-fated steamship, *Titanic*.”

WOMAN

I knew Mr. Hoyt!

BOY

The ill-fated Mr. Hoyt.

WOMAN

He was worth more words than that. His mother, Mrs. Hoyt, came from Smithburg. Her father married into the White family. That ill-fated Mr. Hoyt's first name was Whit. Whit Hoyt. His great-uncle--the famous one--was Whit White. Captain of the *Titanic*, but on shore leave when the ill-fated steamship sank. He was visiting his cousin, Hetty Hoyt, who had earlier married Mr. Getty.

LIBRARIAN

Fortunate Whit White to be visiting Hetty Getty!

BOY

Ill-fated Whit Hoyt!

LIBRARIAN

There's more. “Mr. Hoyt was a friend of the Smiths of Smithfield....”

WOMAN

There, you see?

LIBRARIAN

“...and he jumped overboard in a life jacket and swam away from the sinking ship. He was in the water for two hours before being rescued by a trawler.”

WOMAN

Not the Mr. Hoyt I knew. He perished in the Greenland Sea.

BOY

Labrador Sea.

LIBRARIAN

Celtic Sea.

WOMAN

Hudson Bay.

BOY

Baffin Bay.

LIBRARIAN

Dingle Bay.

WOMAN

Perished.

BOY

Utterly.

LIBRARIAN

Without a trace.

WOMAN

It must have been a different Mr. Hoyt.

(The BOY strikes a pose, and clears his throat.)

BOY

“The *Titanic*”: A Poem.

The keel went down.

The hull went down.

The deck went down.

The chairs went down.

The band went down.
The bridge went down.
The captain went down.
The funnels went down.
The smoke went up.

Imagine that! WOMAN

Imagine that! LIBRARIAN

Imagine that! BOY

(They now mime being passengers in a stateroom on the *Titanic* and take the following positions:

The BOY lies down on the floor, curled up asleep, as though in a bunk.

The WOMAN stands in front of an imaginary mirror, wiping off make-up, letting down her hair, as though starting to get ready for bed.

The LIBRARIAN takes the chair off to one side, unbuckles his belt, drops his pants down around his ankles, and sits, as though on the john, and starts working an imaginary crossword puzzle.

LIBRARIAN
Nursemaid. Five letters beginning with N.

(After a moment, they all, in synchrony, give a sudden jolt, as though the ship had hit something.)

The BOY wakes up with a start.)

BOY

Nanny!

WOMAN

Nanny's dancing, Fauntleroy. Go to sleep.

LIBRARIAN

(Not looking up from his puzzle.)

Go to sleep, Fauntleroy, Nanny's dancing.

BOY

What was that bump?

WOMAN

Nothing.

BOY

Nanny!

LIBRARIAN

Not a thing.

WOMAN

Just a dream.

LIBRARIAN

A nightmare.

(The bell starts tolling.)

BOY

Ship's bells!

LIBRARIAN

Hell's bells! How can I get five across at a ten-degree angle?

(He lists to one side.)

BOY

Nanny!

(The woman's head tilts to one side, as though the mirror had slipped on an angle. She straightens the mirror. It slips. Her head tilts. She straightens the mirror. It slips..... She repeats the sequence like a wind-up doll.)

WOMAN

How can I remove my rouge at a 15-degree angle?

(She lists to one side.)

BOY

Nanny!

WOMAN

She's dancing.

LIBRARIAN

With the Bo 'sun. At a 20-degree angle.

(He lists further.)

WOMAN

With the first mate. At a 30 degree angle.

(She lists further.)

LIBRARIAN

With the captain. How can I adjust my person at a 40 degree angle?

(He lists further, mimes wiping and flushing, pulls up his trousers, and walks lopsidedly to the others, as though across a steeply slanting floor.

The BOY rolls out of his bunk and tries to crawl up the sloping floor to the WOMAN, but gravity pulls him back toward the bunk, again, and again and again....)

BOY

My feet are cold! The water! Nanny!

(The WOMAN calls to an imaginary small dog.)

WOMAN

Here, Fifi! Here Fifi!

(She gathers the dog in her arms.)

There, there, Fifi, precious, it's all right.

(The LIBRARIAN goes to the door and tries to pull it open.)

It's jammed! Purser!

LIBRARIAN

(He hammers on the door, tries to open it, can't, yells "Purser!" and repeats the sequence over and over.)

The BOY, now on his stomach, makes his way up the sloping floor to the WOMAN's ankles, which he grabs hold of for dear life.)

I'm cold! The water!

BOY