

to see it. Then, around 9:00 P.M., the captain excused himself and went up to the bridge. He and his officers talked about how difficult it was to spot icebergs on a calm, clear, moonless night like this with no wind to kick up white surf around them. Before going to bed, the captain ordered
180 the lookouts to keep a sharp watch for ice.

After trading travel stories with Milton Long, Jack Thayer put on his coat and walked around the deck. “It had become very much colder,” he said later. “It was a brilliant, starry night. There was no moon, and I have never seen the stars shine brighter . . . sparkling like diamonds. . . . It was the kind of night that made one feel glad to be alive.” At eleven o’clock, he went below to his cabin, put on his pajamas, and got ready for bed. ❶

In the radio room, Harold Bride was exhausted. The two operators were expected to keep the radio working twenty-four hours a day, and Bride lay down to take a much-needed nap. Phillips was so busy with
190 the passenger messages that he actually brushed off the final ice warning of the night. It was from the *Californian*. Trapped in a field of ice, she had stopped for the night about nineteen miles north of the *Titanic*. She was so close that the message literally blasted in Phillips’s ears. Annoyed by the loud interruption, he cut off the *Californian*’s radio operator with the words, “Shut up, shut up. I’m busy.”

The radio room had received a total of seven ice warning messages in one day. It was quite clear that floating icebergs lay ahead of the *Titanic*. ❷

High up in the crow’s nest on the forward mast, Fred Fleet had passed a quiet watch. It was now 11:40 P.M., and he and his fellow lookout were
200 waiting to be relieved so they could head below, perhaps for a hot drink before hopping into their warm bunks. The sea was dead calm. The air was bitterly cold.

Suddenly, Fleet saw something. A huge, dark shape loomed out of the night directly ahead of the *Titanic*. An iceberg! He quickly sounded the alarm bell three times and picked up the telephone.

Illustration by Ken Marschall © 1992 from *Titanic: An Illustrated History*. Hyperion/Madison Press Books.



❶ NARRATIVE NONFICTION

How does the inclusion of **primary source material**—Jack Thayer’s firsthand observation—help you better understand what it must have been like on the ship that night?

❷ SUSPENSE

Reread lines 187–197. What details in these lines create a sense of worry and dread?