

# TITANIC RECALLED

When you come to see *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition*, say “good day” to our *Titanic* enactors. Four professional actors are spending their days in the exhibition, bringing a personal perspective to this timeless story. Mary Jane Bradbury and Michael Parker play first-class passengers Edith Bowerman Chibnall and George Rosenshine. Katherine Linstrom portrays second-class passenger Lutie Parrish. In this special interview, you will get to know first-class stewardess Mary J. Sloan, as she is portrayed in character by Misha Johnson.

## How did you end up working on *Titanic*?

I decided to help my widowed mother and choose a career for myself so that I could send her money. So I did apply to the White Star Line in my hometown of Belfast, and I’ve been working for the White Star Line for three years.

## What are some of your duties?

I’m on the same deck as Violet Jessup and Evelyn Marsden. And we tend to over 300 passengers, including the Astors. So we bring them tea; if they need help buttoning up their dresses or their gloves, we help with that as well. We work 16 hours a day. I do take the night shift, and go to bed at about 2 in the morning.

## How did you become the first stewardess to find out about the collision?

I was working the late-night shift. Dr. O’Laughlin and Dr. Simpson came up in the hallway and said the mails were afloat. We had heard the collisions; we heard a big stop in the engines. Thomas Andrews (the ship’s builder) walked by, and I could tell by the look on his face what was going on. Then we saw the crew members walking by, but they told us not to get our passengers up, it was just a false alarm. I didn’t believe them, and I woke my passengers up anyway.

## How did the passengers react?

Most of the passengers did not believe me. And others dressed to their finest, with their nicest gowns on, their nicest furs, and then did go up with their life jackets over them.

## And was it fairly orderly or did it become chaotic?

It was quite orderly, everyone was quite calm and the orchestra was playing. No one was worried, and plus, the doctor brought myself and Evelyn into his room and gave us a bit of whiskey and water, he did, to help calm us. He asked me if I was scared, and I told him I was not.

## After you helped passengers into the lifeboats, what did you do?

I was helping everyone, and Thomas Andrews told me I needed to get into a lifeboat, and I told him no because all of my friends were staying aboard. I said that would be mean. He said, “Mary Sloan, it would be mean for you not to go aboard.” And so then he put me into the lifeboat as it was going down, Lifeboat 16. That was the last one to leave the port side, right before it started to go down.

## What else do you remember?

There was a baby that was handed to Violet Jessup, who did get into Lifeboat 16. We didn’t know who it was, there was no mother attached to the baby. Some baby got lost and poor Violet had to hold him the whole entire time.

## Did that break your heart?

It did, it did indeed.



Above from left: Misha Johnson as Mary J. Sloan, Michael Parker as George Rosenshine, and Mary Jane Bradbury as Edith Bowerman Chibnall.



TITANIC: THE ARTIFACT EXHIBITION is open Sunday–Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., and Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Advance reservations are recommended. Visit [www.dmns.org](http://www.dmns.org) for information.