

Chapter One

The *Titanic* was the biggest thing Grace had ever seen in her life. She stood by the harbour with her Auntie Nora, the two of them looking up at it.

“Well, this is where we’ll have to say goodbye,” said Auntie Nora.

They were near the bottom of some steps that had been placed against the side of the ship. Many people were climbing the steps to an open door halfway up.

Grace could see tears in Auntie Nora’s eyes. This was hard for them both. Auntie Nora was Grace’s mother’s big sister, and she had taken Grace in at the age of five, after Grace’s parents had died. She had been a mother to Grace, and they were very close.



Auntie Nora was always worrying about Grace's future. That's why she had decided Grace should go to live in New York City with Uncle Patrick.

"Things are much better over in America than here in old Ireland," Auntie Nora had said. "There are certainly more jobs. A clever girl like you will do well there."

Grace had argued, of course. The thought of being sent to a different country, far away from Auntie Nora, was terrifying. But Auntie Nora wouldn't change her mind. She had written to Uncle Patrick, and he'd written back to say it was a "grand idea!" So here they were, a week later, in a place called Queenstown. They had come by train from Dublin so that Grace could board the ship that would take her away forever.



Now Grace's eyes were filling with tears too, and she hugged Auntie Nora tight.

"Goodbye, Auntie," she whispered. "I won't forget you, I promise."

"Nonsense," said Auntie Nora with a sad smile. "You won't give me a thought once you're on that ship, and so you shouldn't. It's a wonder, all right."

"I don't care how amazing it is," said Grace. "I'll be thinking about you."



But Grace had to admit she was a little excited about going on the ship. The *Titanic* had been built in Belfast, in the north of Ireland, and this was its first voyage. The whole world seemed to be talking about its size and speed and how it would never sink, whatever happened.

"Ah, Grace, you're a sweet girl," said Auntie Nora, kissing her. "You're too nice for your own good sometimes. Just take care of yourself."

They parted at last, and Grace went up the steps with everybody else. She turned at the top and waved to Auntie Nora in the crowd far below.

Then she boarded the enormous ship.



