

Excerpt:

“All hands to stations. Code blue and 114 on levels C, D, and F. Passengers, remain in your cabins and secure your emergency devices should we encounter a need, which is unlikely at this moment.”

Marguerite snorted. “If this isn’t an emergency, I would hate to see what is!” Then a beat later she cried, “Our parachutes! Outil, we left them in the room!” Marguerite couldn’t believe she forgot them.

“We will be able to secure some ahead.”

The ship swayed and rocked; more screaming could be heard ahead, closer now. They came to the first bunk door. Marguerite was surprised to see the red outline of huddled bodies beyond the entrance, yet the door was closed. “I can see them!”

“Yes, the goggles are fitted with heat-seeking displays; you should be able to see persons in red and inanimate objects in pink, no matter their location. The closer a person is, the brighter they will appear.”

Marguerite twisted the knob and pushed inside. A fresh chorus of screams awaited her.

“Calm yourselves!” She realized then that the women were hiding in pitch-black and had just had their door thrust in upon them. “It’s me, Marguerite Vadnay. I’m here to help you.”

The room was much smaller than her bedroom above. Two sets of bunk beds lined either wall with a stack of small trunks, half the size of her own, in the center. A small bureau by the door was crowned by a mirror, now hanging askew on its nail.

“Oh lovely, the princess herself is here to save us,” a strange voice cried out in the dark.

“Outil, there is nowhere to lay Vivienne, we have to try another room.” She ignored the hateful words and pressed back out the door.

Glancing through the walls, she could see that every bottom bunk was full. She stepped over fallen timbers and finally came to a room that was devoid of red glow.

“Here, Outil!” She opened the door and quickly realized it was a storage room filled with linens and towels. She made quick work of a large pile of blankets, spreading them out on the floor.

BOOM!

Another tremor knocked her to her knees, but she pushed on, signaling for Outil to lay Vivienne down on the makeshift bed.