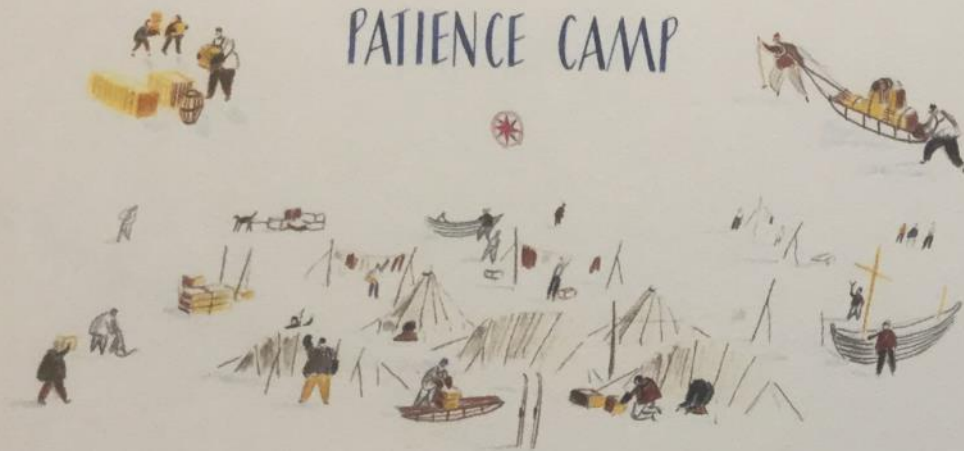


PATIENCE CAMP



Patience Camp would be the crew's new base for the next three and a half months. Time passed slowly. Parties were sent out daily in search of seals and penguins, because rations were now running low. A cooking igloo was constructed for Green, and he did extremely well in the tight conditions. The other men spent the time reading from the Encyclopaedia Britannica and testing each other. However, the camp was not without its problems. Contrary to Shackleton's wishes, Orde-Lees would go on solo ski hunts in search of food. Shackleton needed to ensure the safety of all his crew, so ordered Worsley to keep an eye on him.



Even though supplies were low, Shackleton made an effort to celebrate the leap year, giving the men a boost they all needed. Out of nowhere, a ferocious **sea leopard** ambushed one of the men, but luckily Wild was on hand with his trusty rifle. Upon preparing the animal for cooking, they found that the belly of the beast was full of undigested fish!

Due to the rapidly worsening condition of the men, and the drifting of the ice floe, Shackleton made plans to head for land in the boats. Sadly this meant that the few remaining dogs had to be shot, as there would be neither food nor space for them onboard.



ESCAPING THE ICE

After six months on the ice, Shackleton and his men were now balancing precariously on a raft of ice that was beginning to break up. They had to move.



Sailing was dangerous, as fast, foamy water hurled blocks of ice to and fro, while waves cast 60-foot sprays of icy cold water.



As light faded, camp was pitched on a large, flat floe. That very night, the ice split and Holness fell into the dark water. Luckily, Shackleton was nearby to rescue him.



Shackleton and Wild captained the James Caird, Worsley directed the Dudley Docker, and Hudson and Crean were in charge of the Stancomb Wills.



But the three boats had to push on as far as they could. Their lives depended on reaching land as their supplies were now limited by the size of the boats.



When Shackleton asked if Holness was alright, he replied, "Yes, Boss, only thing I'm thinking about is my baccy (tobacco) I'd left in the bag."



After taking refuge in their boats and having little sleep, the crew set out again at 6 am, heading west. They stopped early, having been at the oars for over 36 hours.



Despite the bitter days and nights, Wild remained as cheery as ever, steering the boat on towards the warm prospect of breakfast.



Progress was slow, and Shackleton now decided to tether the boats together for security. The Stancomb Wills had to be towed by the James Caird, as she could not keep up.



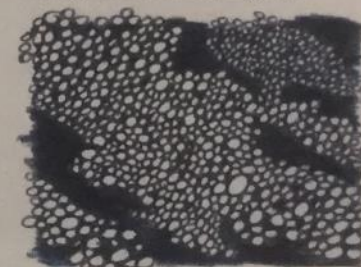
But the men were never out of harm's way. As they huddled in their boats, killer whales surfaced nearby, hissing and splashing, and almost capsizing them.

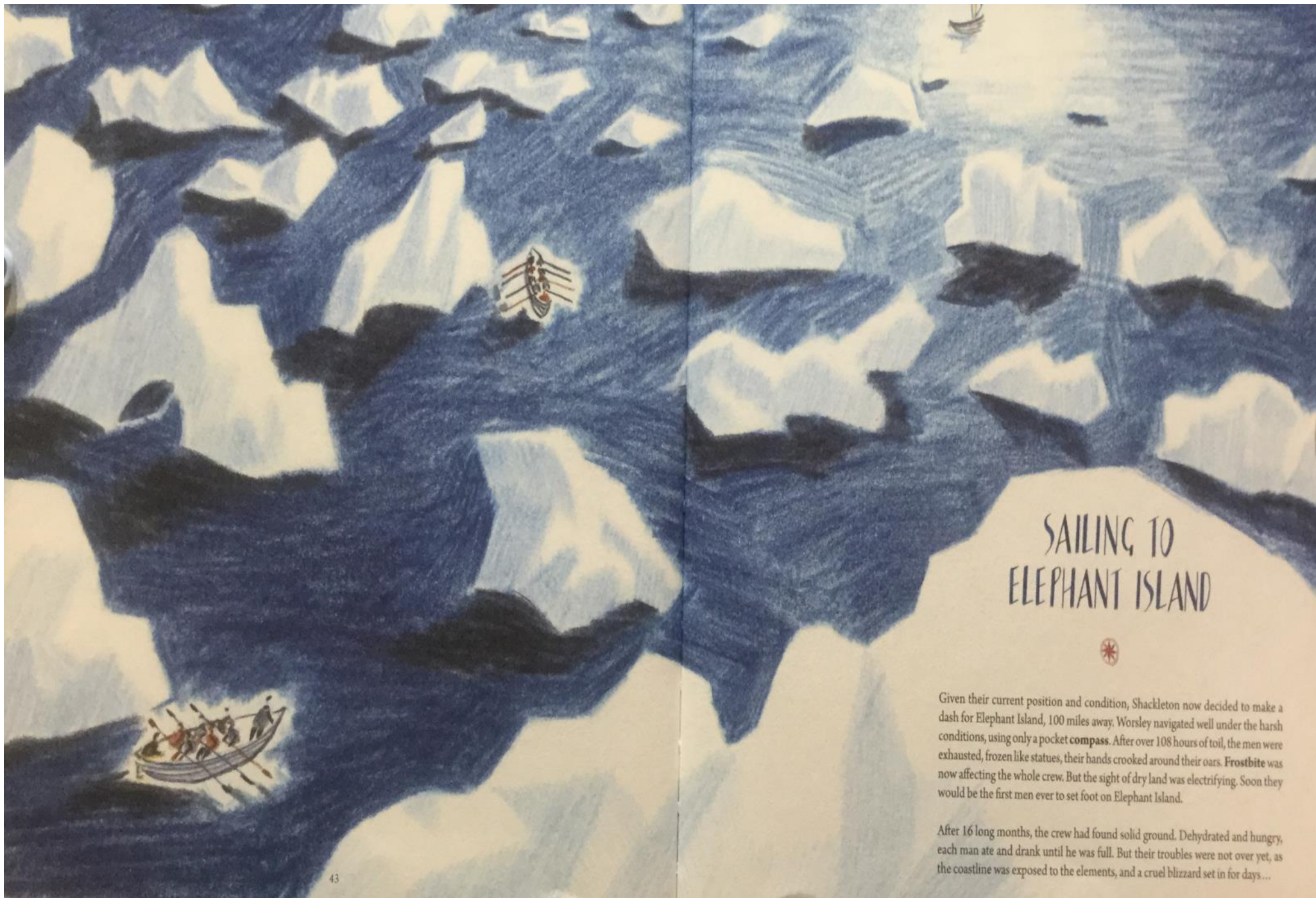


As the smoke and smells rose from the little stove, the men's hearts were lifted. The cook's abilities were truly tested on treacherous rafts of ice.



Exhausted, the men clung together for warmth as snow fell silently, covering them like a white blanket. The struggle for survival was taking its toll.





SAILING TO ELEPHANT ISLAND



Given their current position and condition, Shackleton now decided to make a dash for Elephant Island, 100 miles away. Worsley navigated well under the harsh conditions, using only a pocket **compass**. After over 108 hours of toil, the men were exhausted, frozen like statues, their hands crooked around their oars. **Frostbite** was now affecting the whole crew. But the sight of dry land was electrifying. Soon they would be the first men ever to set foot on Elephant Island.

After 16 long months, the crew had found solid ground. Dehydrated and hungry, each man ate and drank until he was full. But their troubles were not over yet, as the coastline was exposed to the elements, and a cruel blizzard set in for days...