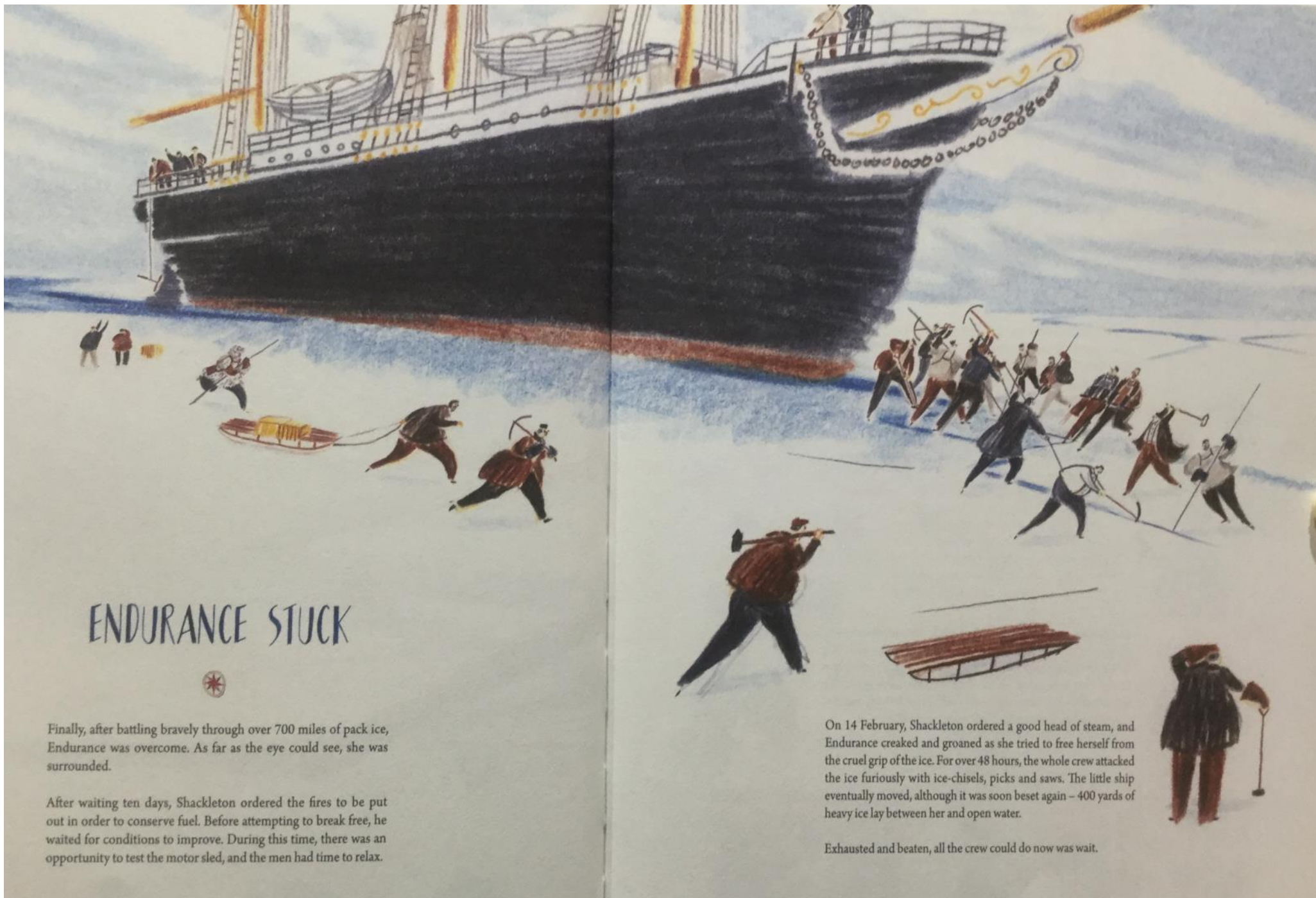




ENDURANCE STUCK



Finally, after battling bravely through over 700 miles of pack ice, Endurance was overcome. As far as the eye could see, she was surrounded.

After waiting ten days, Shackleton ordered the fires to be put out in order to conserve fuel. Before attempting to break free, he waited for conditions to improve. During this time, there was an opportunity to test the motor sled, and the men had time to relax.

On 14 February, Shackleton ordered a good head of steam, and Endurance creaked and groaned as she tried to free herself from the cruel grip of the ice. For over 48 hours, the whole crew attacked the ice furiously with ice-chisels, picks and saws. The little ship eventually moved, although it was soon beset again – 400 yards of heavy ice lay between her and open water.

Exhausted and beaten, all the crew could do now was wait.

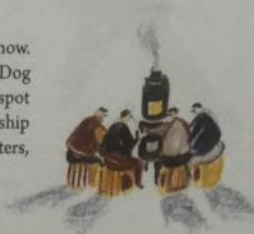
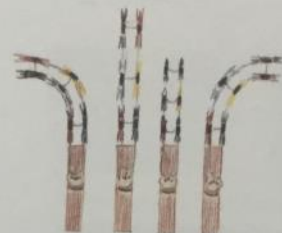
A CHANGE OF PLANS



Shackleton briefed the men on a new course of action: Endurance would now become their winter base. Hoping that spring would bring better fortune, he planned to keep the men busy, training the dogs and preparing for the ice to break up. But how far would they drift before that day came?



Dog igloos were built out on the ice, made from wood and snow. Overjoyed to be off the ship, the animals soon settled into 'Dog Town'. McNeish constructed a stove, which became a popular spot for the crew to hang out. At the same time, the inside of the ship was remodelled to improve life on board. The new living quarters, always bustling with activity, were known as the Ritz.



The dogs were divided into teams, and training continued over several months. Pulling sledges and learning to work together, the dogs and the crew quickly became firm friends. Apart from the training, the crew had plenty of things to keep them active. Whenever possible, they would try to catch penguins to increase their food stocks, and the constant build-up of ice on the ship needed to be removed at regular intervals. Stores were also reorganised in case they needed to be removed from the ship quickly.



WINTER MONTHS



The crew passed the time fishing, hunting penguins and taking scientific measurements. Vibrations and **pressure ridges** in the ice meant that the men had to be extremely careful when they were out on the **floe**.



As May and June went by, the expedition passed into twilight and long, dark days lit only by the moon.



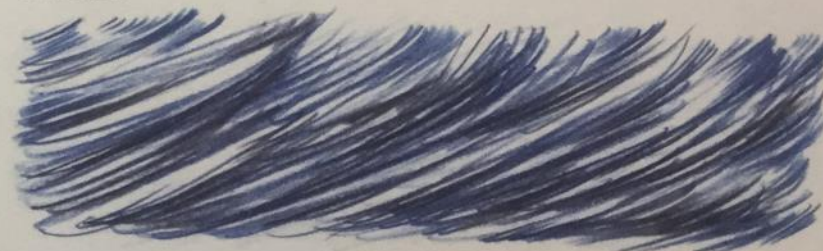
Meanwhile, the dog teams began holding races. In June, the crew held an Antarctic derby, with Frank Wild snatching an exciting victory over Frank Hurley.



Despite the pressures of leadership, Shackleton knew it was vital to keep the crew's morale high. On Midwinter's Day (21 June), the crew celebrated with speeches, songs, toasts and a rousing rendition of the national anthem.



A severe **blizzard** a few weeks later saw winds of between 60 and 90 miles an hour, and Dog Town was buried under 5 feet of snow.



Finally, in early July, the sun began to return.



As the ice floe continued to buckle, provisions were made for emergency evacuation of the ship. New **kennels** were built on the upper deck, and tensions mounted as the pressure around the Endurance continued to grind ice against the **hull**. Soon after, loud cracks were heard from the ice as pressure forced huge blocks up into the air, and the dogs were hurried back onto the ship.



ISOLATION



Endurance was now 500 miles from the nearest civilisation...

PRESSURE



Another roaring blizzard heaved the ice into a maze of **hummocks**, and as the pressure around the ship continued to grow, the crew realised they might have to escape at any minute.



Intense pressure on all sides began to push the ship up out of the water. By October, Endurance was tilted at a 30-degree angle, and still the ice showed no mercy.



Finally, the ship began to crack as it was twisted out of shape. A loud bang was heard and water flooded in. Luckily, McNeish managed to fix the dangerous leak, but conditions continued to worsen.



With pressure ridges rising all around them, Shackleton reviewed his plans to evacuate the ship, which was being crushed from all directions.



The force of millions of tons of ice made it too perilous to stay onboard. As the ice roared deafeningly, the men were ordered off Endurance and onto the ice.



They set up a temporary camp where they would be safe from harm, and a new plan of action could be made.



Endurance creaked and groaned as the strain increased, and loud cracks and deafening sounds were heard as the ice slowly crushed the cross-bracing of the ship.



Frank Worsley wrote, "The behaviour of our ship in the ice has been magnificent... It will be sad if such a brave little craft should be finally crushed in the remorseless, slowly strangling grip of the Weddell pack, after ten months of the bravest and most gallant fight ever put up by a ship."



Despite such grim circumstances, Shackleton remained positive in front of his crew. "So now we'll go home," he remarked calmly. A new challenge rested on his shoulders: their mission now was to survive.



ENDURANCE LOST



"We were helpless intruders in a strange world," Shackleton wrote, "our lives dependent upon the play of grim elementary forces that made a mock of our puny efforts."

And then it came. On 27 October, the brave ship that had struggled so far was now crushed beyond hope of repair. Endurance sank a little, her deck breaking up gradually, and then water began to pour in. The state of Endurance left all the crew heartbroken. She had battled 1,500 miles of ice only to meet this sad fate.

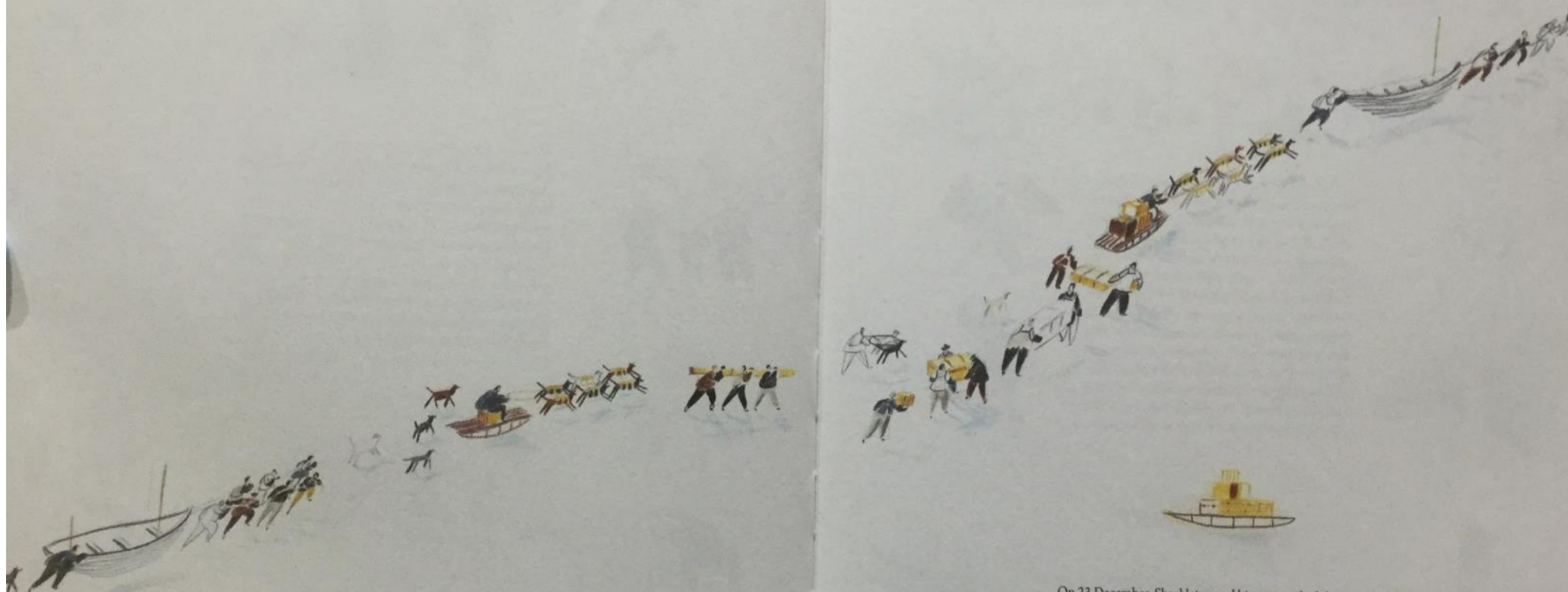


OCEAN CAMP

Ocean Camp would be the crew's new home for the next two months. Each morning, dog teams set out under Frank Wild's supervision to salvage boats, sledges, rations, fuel and equipment from the wreckage of Endurance. She finally sank on 21 November 1915. Having left South Georgia almost a year before, the crew was now drifting helplessly on an ice floe at the mercy of the wind. They hoped to drift north into the open Weddell Sea, from where they could sail to land. With warmer weather approaching, the ice was beginning to weaken and could break up at any moment. Always diligent, Shackleton made sure the camp could be packed up in just five minutes.

Life on the ice was not altogether bad, though. Time was spent hunting, reading, repairing kit, drying clothes and making weather observations and navigational readings. Meanwhile, Shackleton worked hard to provide a varied diet for his men so that their morale was kept high. He did this by combining tinned provisions with seal and penguin meat. Hurley created a **blubber** stove, and food became central to keeping up good spirits. Yet, despite their attempts to stay cheerful, the men were eager to be on the move.

THE MARCH



On 23 December, Shackleton and his men packed their remaining possessions and left Ocean Camp in search of safer ice. It was a long march. Exhausted and weakened, the crew and dogs worked heroically, pulling heavily loaded sledges for seven days and seven nights.

