December 8th 1914

We are here! True adventure begins today and I was lucky enough to be called upon for the first ‘ice look-out’. As I clambered up the rigging to the crow’s nest, I could still hear the Boss’ words ringing in my ears (The Boss is the name we give Shackleton because …, well, because he is the Boss and we all do what he says).

“Get up there, Percy. No hanging around. Keep an eye out for growlers. They’ll rip our keel to shreds if we’re not careful,” Shackleton bellowed.

Like a spring, I launched myself at the ropes and started to pull myself up. It was only as I paused to take a breather that I realised I had no idea what a growler was. Luckily, the mercurial Tom Crean was close at hand. Living up to his reputation, he kindly and quietly informed me that growlers were large chunks of ice, lying close to the sea surface. He then viciously punched me on the arm, accused me of being a slacker and threatened to set the dogs on me if I didn’t get a move on up to my perch at the top of the mast.

Entering the Weddle Sea meant that we were in Antarctica proper and from the endless chunks of ice that lay ahead of our plucky ship, I knew we would have our work cut out as look-outs. Endurance was strong - very strong we had been reassured - but ploughing through ice was an art-form and not for the faint-hearted.

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