

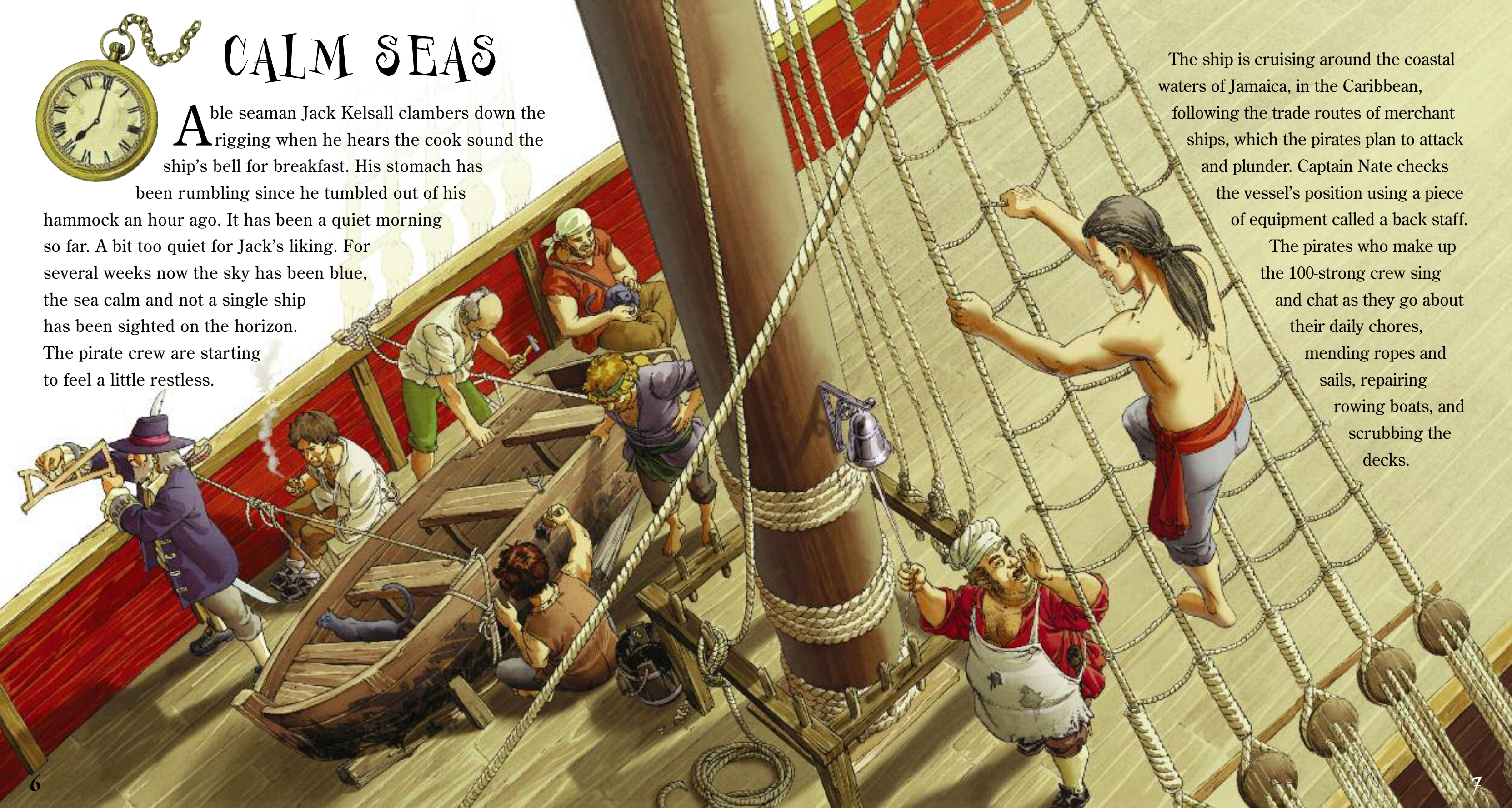


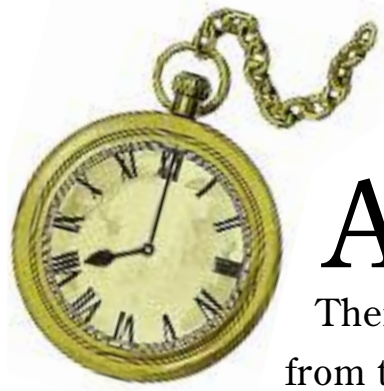
CALM SEAS

Able seaman Jack Kelsall clammers down the rigging when he hears the cook sound the ship's bell for breakfast. His stomach has been rumbling since he tumbled out of his hammock an hour ago. It has been a quiet morning so far. A bit too quiet for Jack's liking. For several weeks now the sky has been blue, the sea calm and not a single ship has been sighted on the horizon. The pirate crew are starting to feel a little restless.

The ship is cruising around the coastal waters of Jamaica, in the Caribbean, following the trade routes of merchant ships, which the pirates plan to attack and plunder. Captain Nate checks the vessel's position using a piece of equipment called a back staff.

The pirates who make up the 100-strong crew sing and chat as they go about their daily chores, mending ropes and sails, repairing rowing boats, and scrubbing the decks.






RATCATCHING

After a breakfast of stale ship's biscuits, Jack goes down to the stores to fetch some flour for the cook.

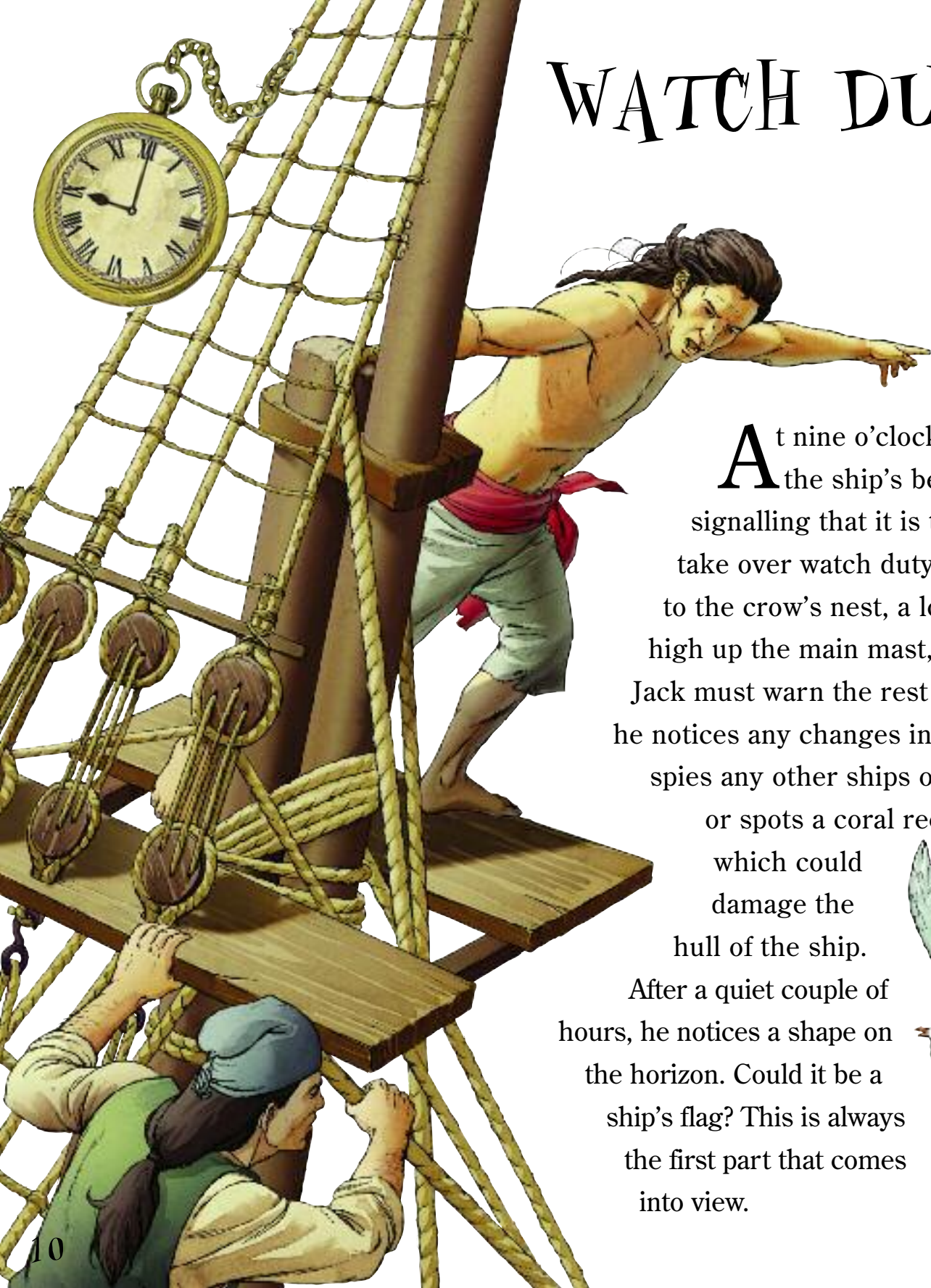
There is a foul smell of chicken muck from the chicken coop, rotting fish and stagnant water that has seeped in through cracks and gathered at the bottom of the ship in the bilge. The stores are crammed with barrels of fresh water and beer, bags of biscuits and dried meat, as well as spare timber and sails.

A squealing pig scurries past Jack, closely followed by Mark, the carpenter, who explains that rats must have chewed through the pigs' ropes. The pair set about clubbing the rats, who not only eat their food, but also cause all kinds of damage to the ship. They manage to kill 32 rats before catching the pigs and returning the stores to order.

Fact or fiction?
Pirates called their money "pieces of eight."



WATCH DUTY



At nine o'clock, Jack hears the ship's bell ring twice, signalling that it is time for him to take over watch duty. He climbs up to the crow's nest, a lookout point high up the main mast, to begin work. Jack must warn the rest of the crew if he notices any changes in the weather, spies any other ships on the horizon or spots a coral reef underwater, which could damage the hull of the ship.

After a quiet couple of hours, he notices a shape on the horizon. Could it be a ship's flag? This is always the first part that comes into view.



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There is lots of racing around on deck as the captain bellows out orders to the crew to change the ship's direction and raise more sails to increase their speed. Captain Nate has already come up with a cunning plan to trick the sailors on the merchant ship into letting his men board their vessel, so once they are on the right course, he calls a meeting on the top deck to tell everyone what they must do.



Fact or Fiction?

Pirates wore gold hoop earrings.

