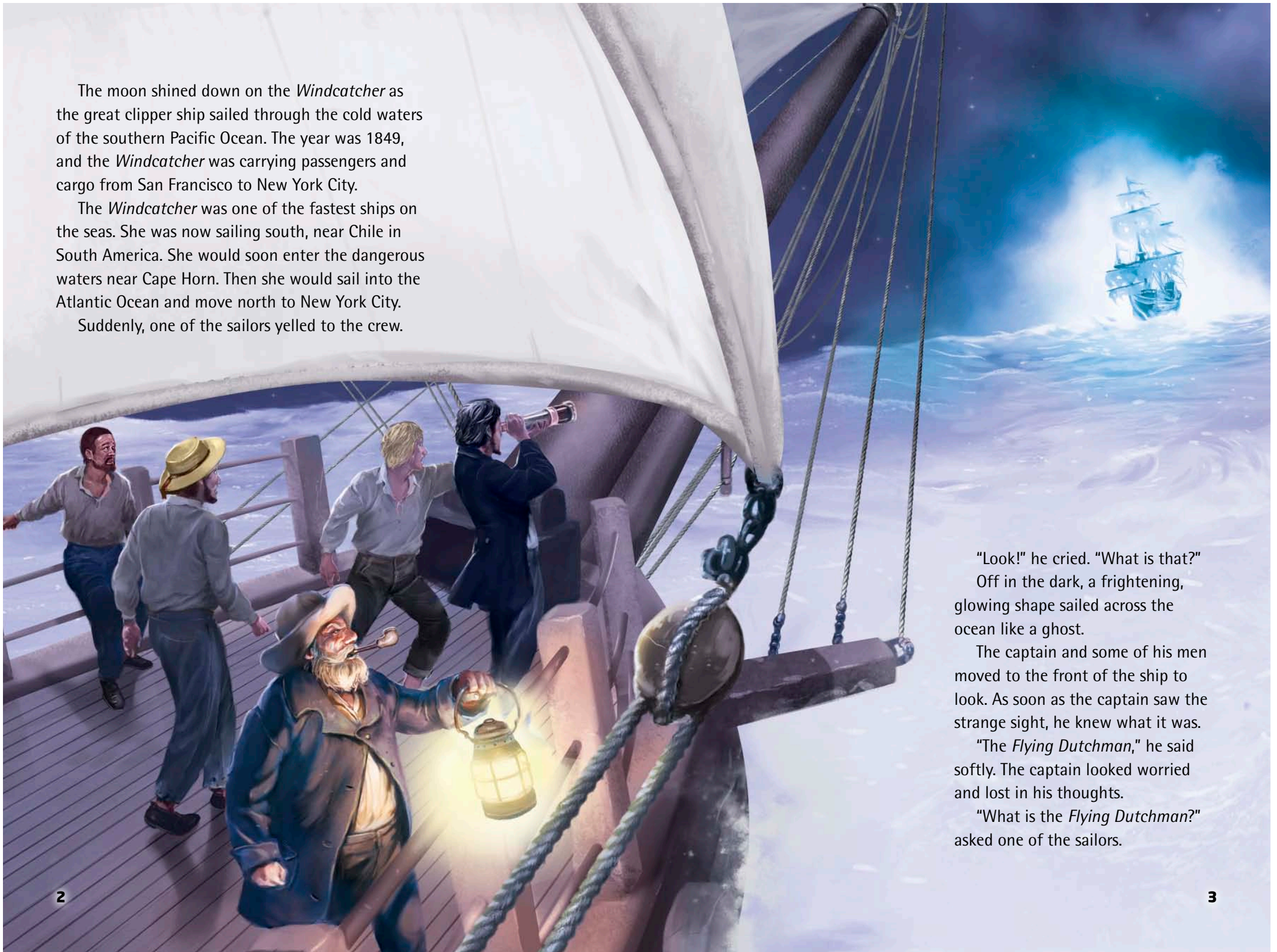The moon shined down on the *Windcatcher* as the great clipper ship sailed through the cold waters of the southern Pacific Ocean. The year was 1849, and the *Windcatcher* was carrying passengers and cargo from San Francisco to New York City.

The *Windcatcher* was one of the fastest ships on the seas. She was now sailing south, near Chile in South America. She would soon enter the dangerous waters near Cape Horn. Then she would sail into the Atlantic Ocean and move north to New York City.

Suddenly, one of the sailors yelled to the crew.

"Look!" he cried. "What is that?"

Off in the dark, a frightening, glowing shape sailed across the ocean like a ghost.

The captain and some of his men moved to the front of the ship to look. As soon as the captain saw the strange sight, he knew what it was.

"The *Flying Dutchman*," he said softly. The captain looked worried and lost in his thoughts.

"What is the *Flying Dutchman*?" asked one of the sailors.

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A PART OF CENGAGE

Facts about Pirates

A pirate is a robber at sea who steals from other ships out at sea. We've all read about pirates in books and seen them in movies. But did pirates ever really exist? Yes, they did!

There have been pirates for as long as people have been sailing on the seas. This means that there were pirates in Ancient Greece more than 2,000 years ago! The period best known for pirates was the early 1600s to the early 1700s – a time known as "The Golden Age of Piracy."

During this time, there was a great deal of valuable cargo being shipped across the Caribbean, the Atlantic, and the West Coast of Africa. Usually navies kept the seas safe from pirates. But during this time, the navies weren't able to control the large areas of ocean on which the pirates sailed.

The pirates would attack ships carrying cargo from Africa and South America. The stolen treasures might include gold, silver, jewels, silk, and spices. Sometimes the pirates even stole the ship itself.

Pirates often captured the ships and stole the cargo without violence. Often, just seeing the pirates' flag and hearing their cannons was enough to make the crew of these ships surrender to the pirates. But when the crew resisted, they were sometimes killed or left at sea with little food or water. Other times, the pirates took the crew as slaves, or the crew became pirates themselves!

Blackbeard, one of the most famous pirates of all time.