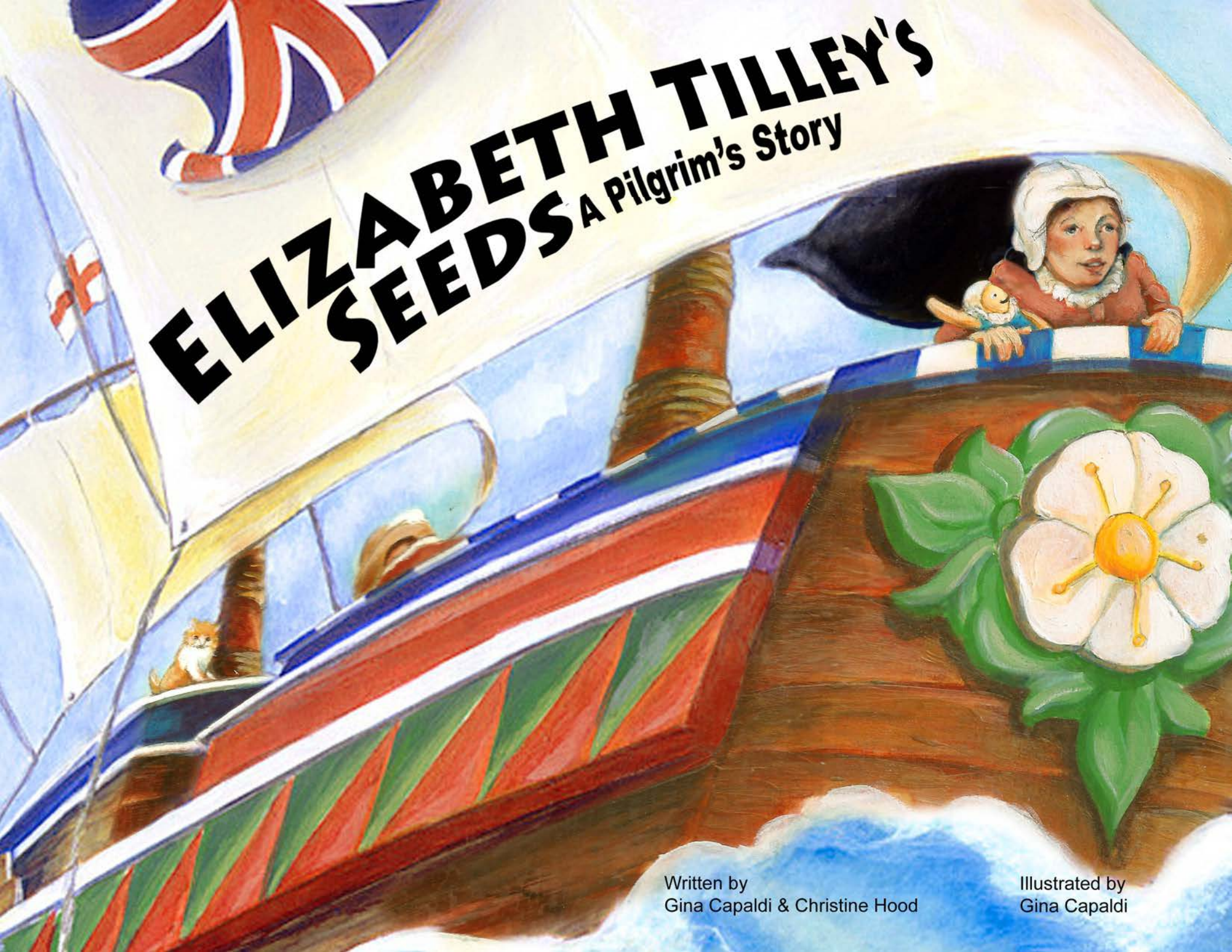


ELIZABETH TILLEY'S SEEDS

A Pilgrim's Story



Written by
Gina Capaldi & Christine Hood

Illustrated by
Gina Capaldi



ELIZABETH TILLEY'S SEEDS

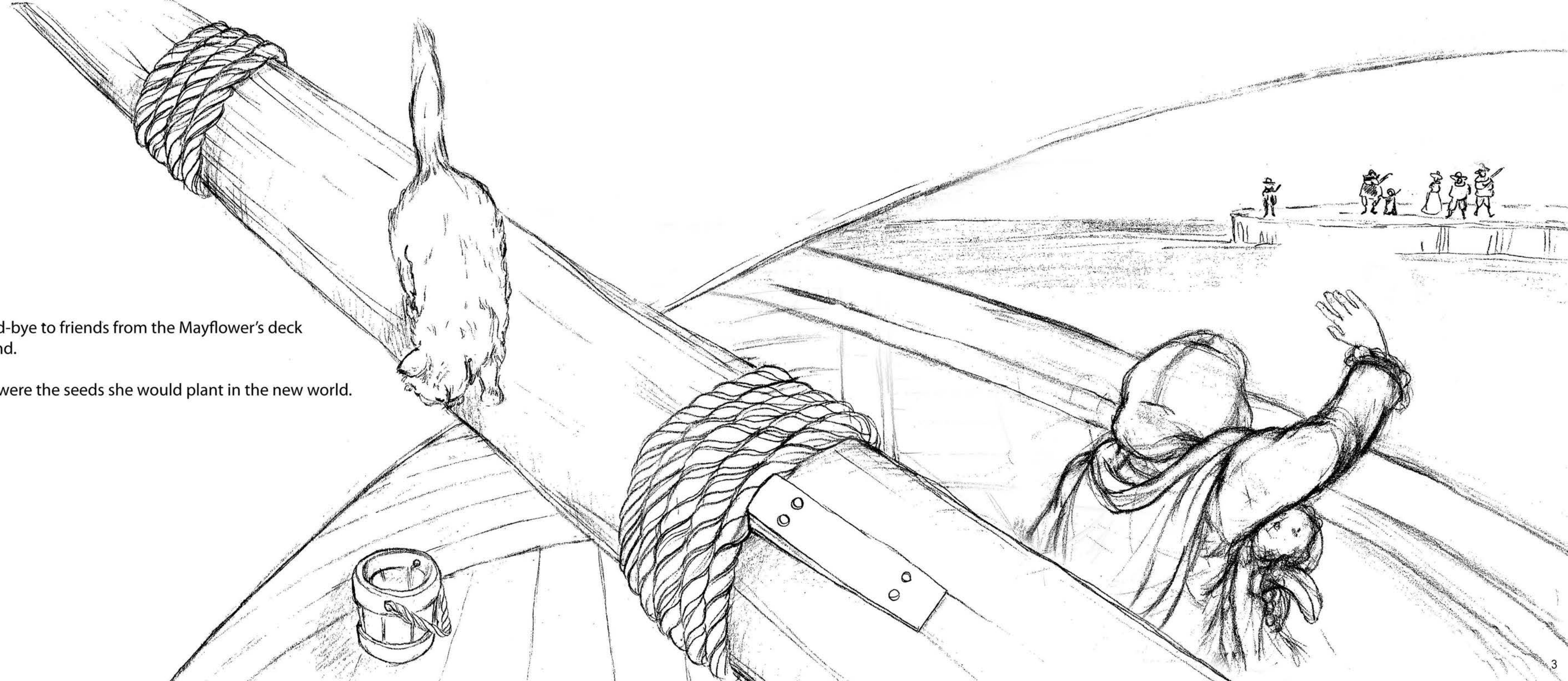
A Pilgrim's Story

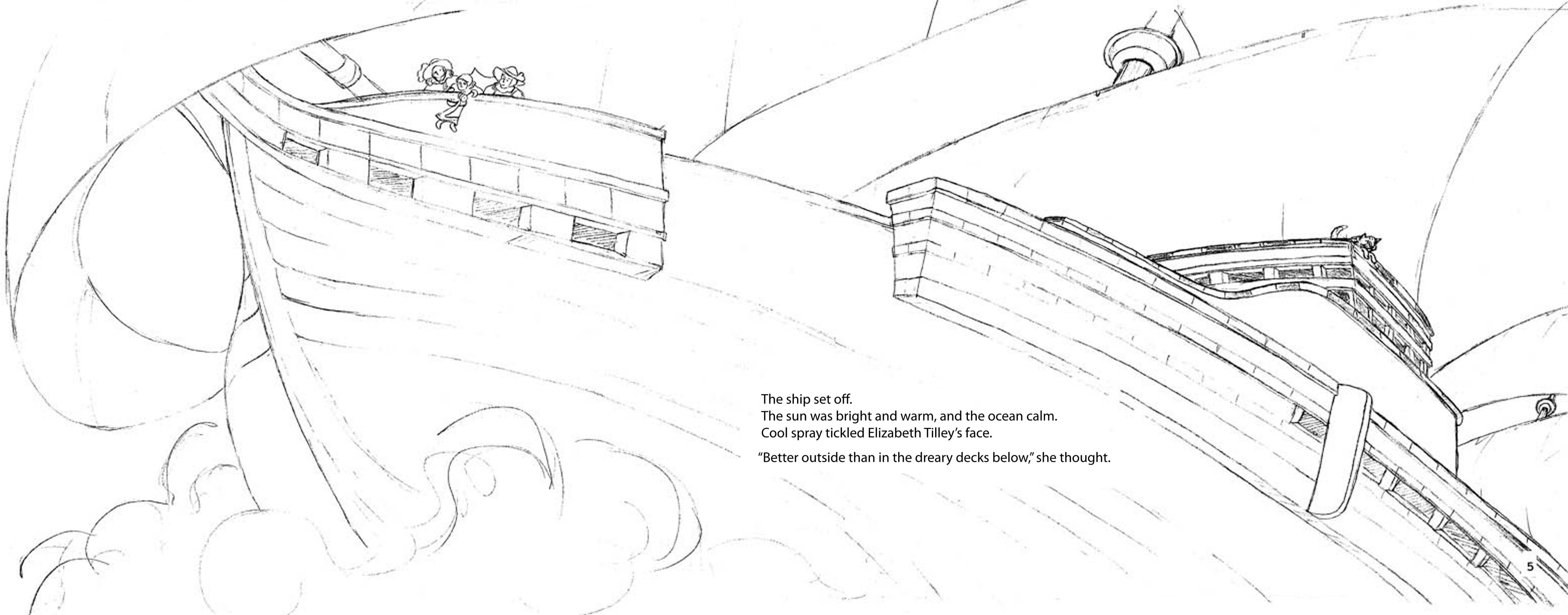
Written by
Gina Capaldi & Christine Hood

Illustrated by
Gina Capaldi

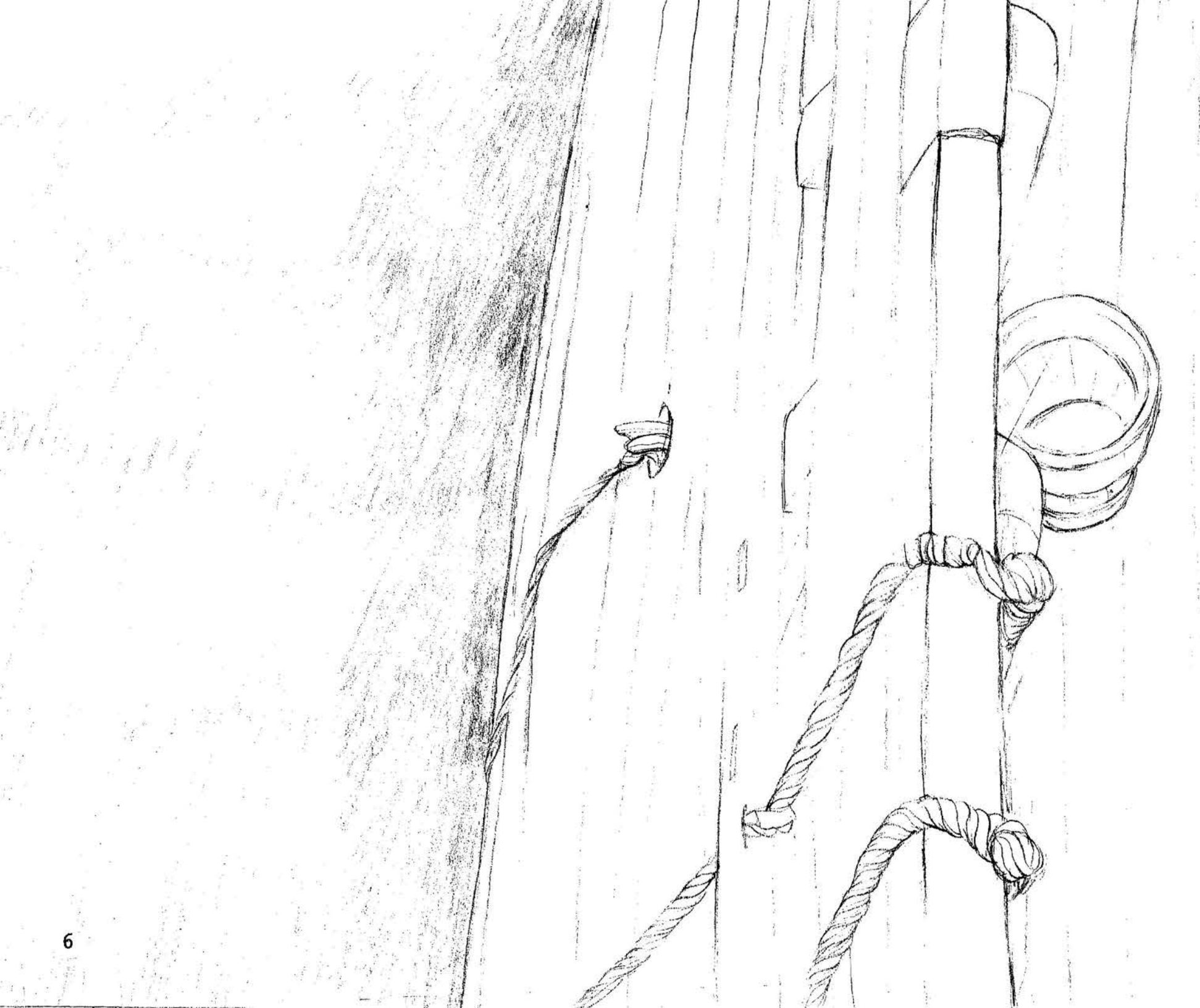
Elizabeth Tilley waved good-bye to friends from the Mayflower's deck at Plymouth Harbor, England.

Sewn in hems of her skirts were the seeds she would plant in the new world.





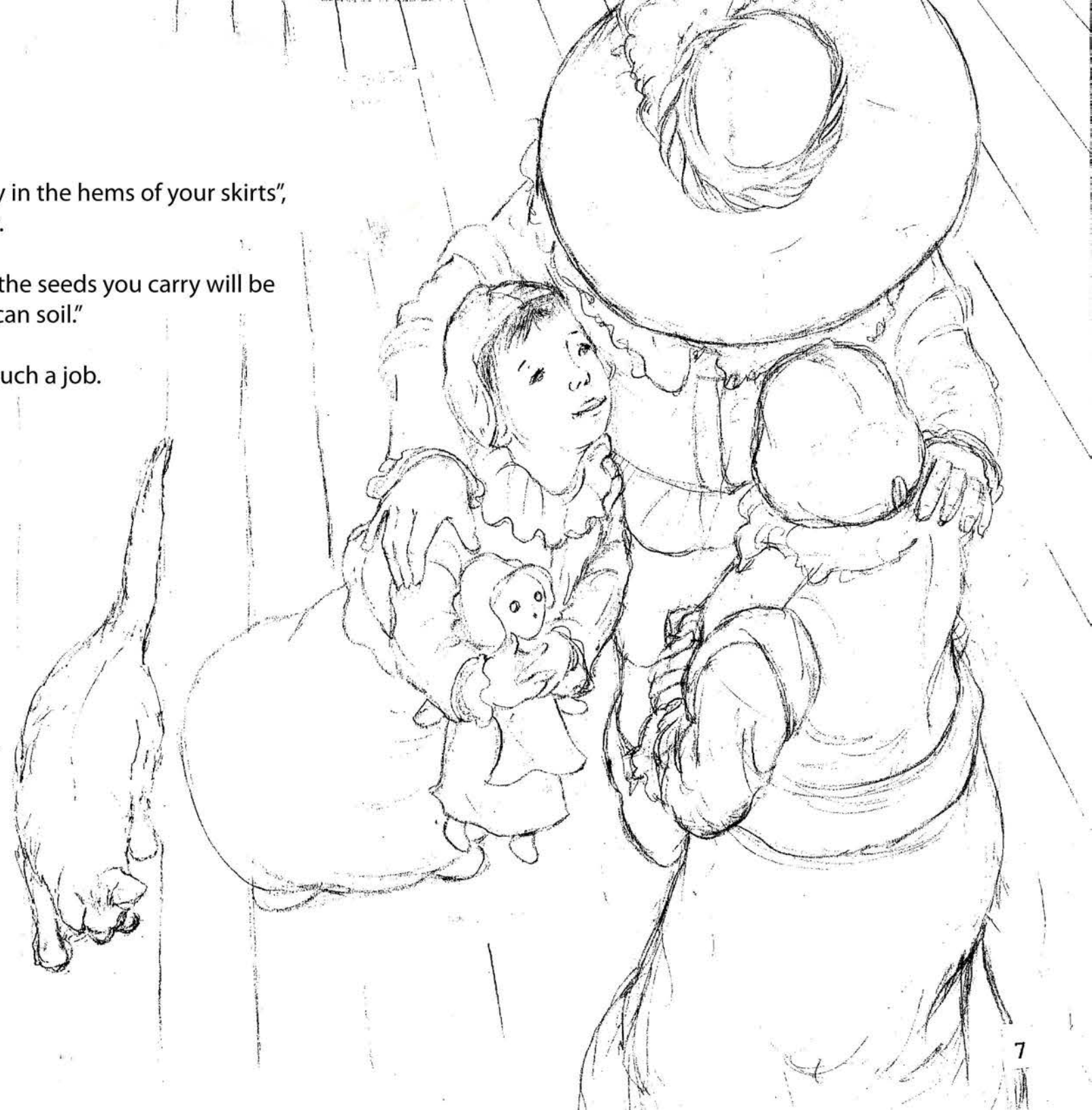
The ship set off.
The sun was bright and warm, and the ocean calm.
Cool spray tickled Elizabeth Tilley's face.
"Better outside than in the dreary decks below," she thought.



"Be careful of the seeds you carry in the hems of your skirts", Elizabeth Tilley's mother told her.

Papa smiled proudly. "Elizabeth, the seeds you carry will be the very first to sprout on American soil."

Elizabeth Tilley felt honored for such a job.



The lower decks of the ship were piled high with blankets, rugs, plates, tools, and guns.

Families crowded in the dark with straw mattresses, barrels, wooden boxes, crates and chests.

There was no place to wash or bathe.
No place to be alone.

No room to spare for extra garden seeds.





The Mayflower rolled and pitched in the gray Atlantic. Swamped decks soaked Elizabeth Tilley's shoes and splashed against her hems.

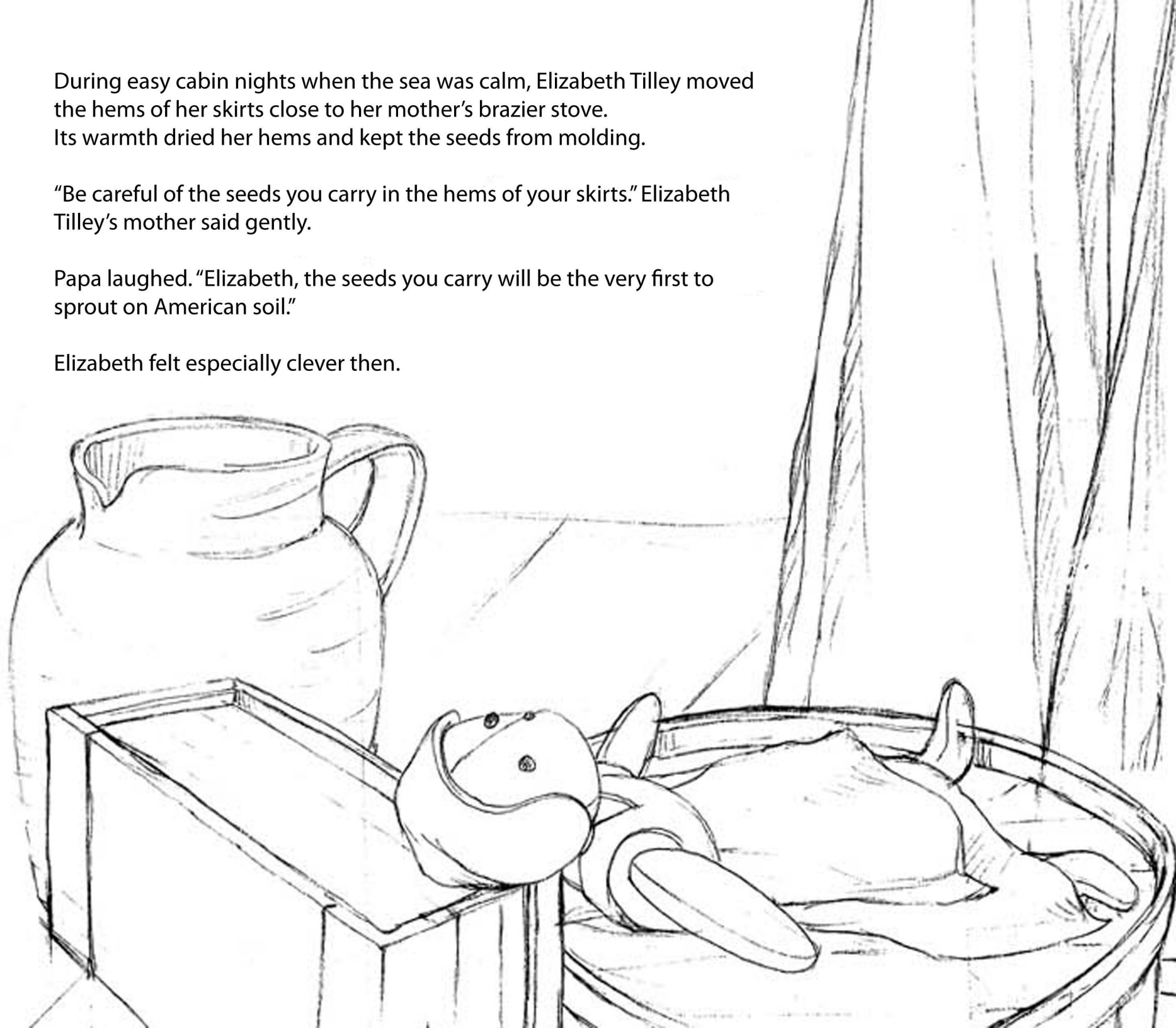


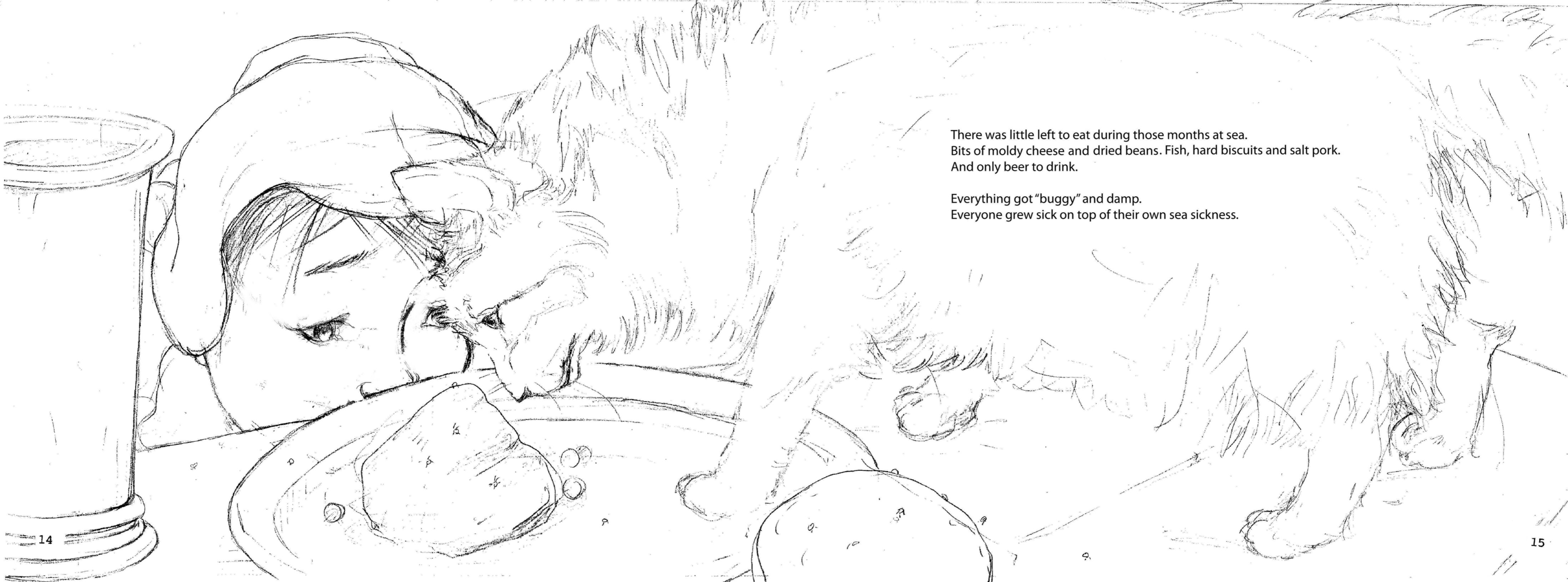
During easy cabin nights when the sea was calm, Elizabeth Tilley moved the hems of her skirts close to her mother's brazier stove. Its warmth dried her hems and kept the seeds from molding.

"Be careful of the seeds you carry in the hems of your skirts." Elizabeth Tilley's mother said gently.

Papa laughed. "Elizabeth, the seeds you carry will be the very first to sprout on American soil!"

Elizabeth felt especially clever then.





There was little left to eat during those months at sea.
Bits of moldy cheese and dried beans. Fish, hard biscuits and salt pork.
And only beer to drink.

Everything got "buggy" and damp.
Everyone grew sick on top of their own sea sickness.



Elizabeth Tilley dreamed of what she would eat when they landed in America. Her seeds would be especially welcome then! Marigolds, peas, and sage. But while she slept, rats nibbled holes in her skirts for a taste of seed.

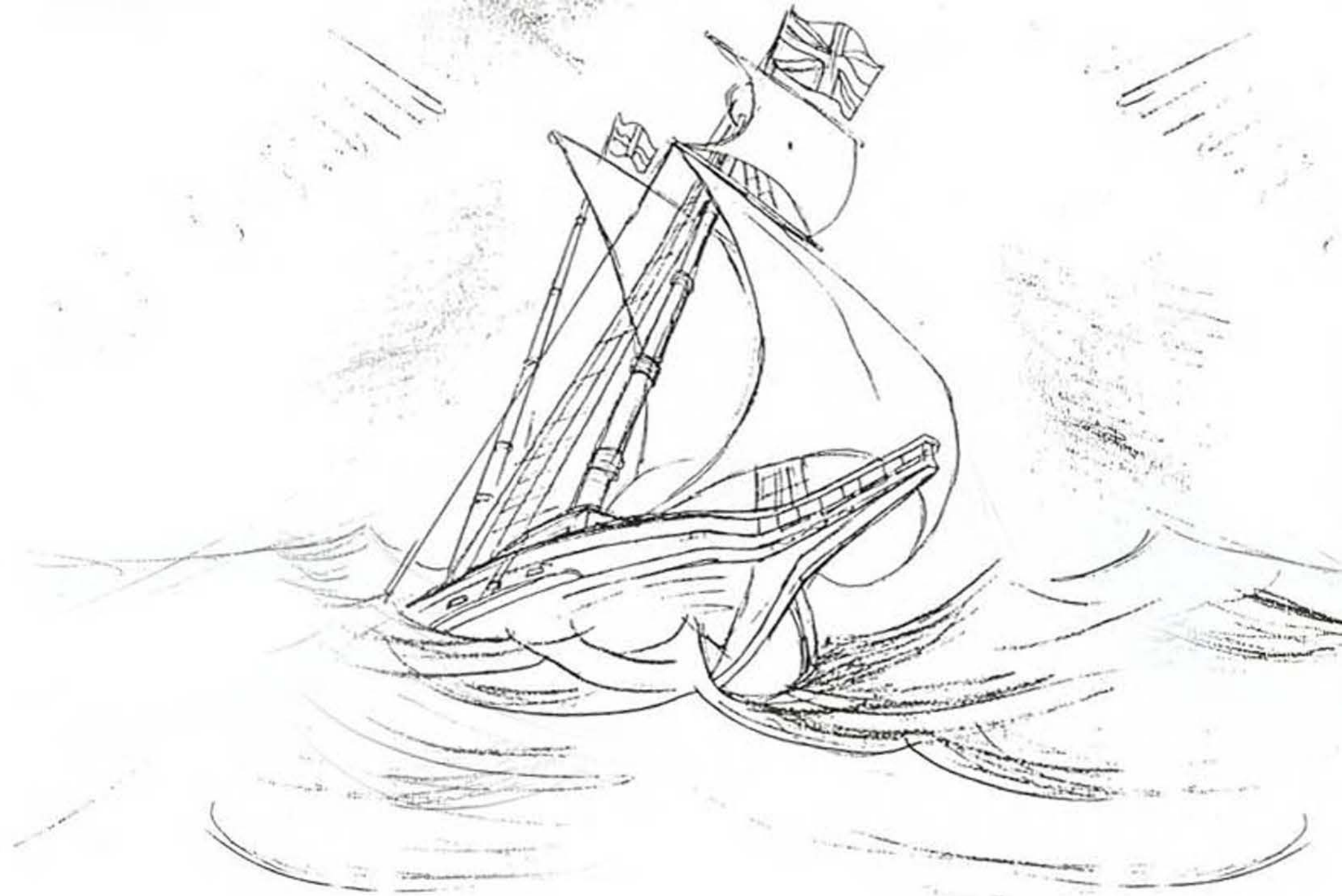
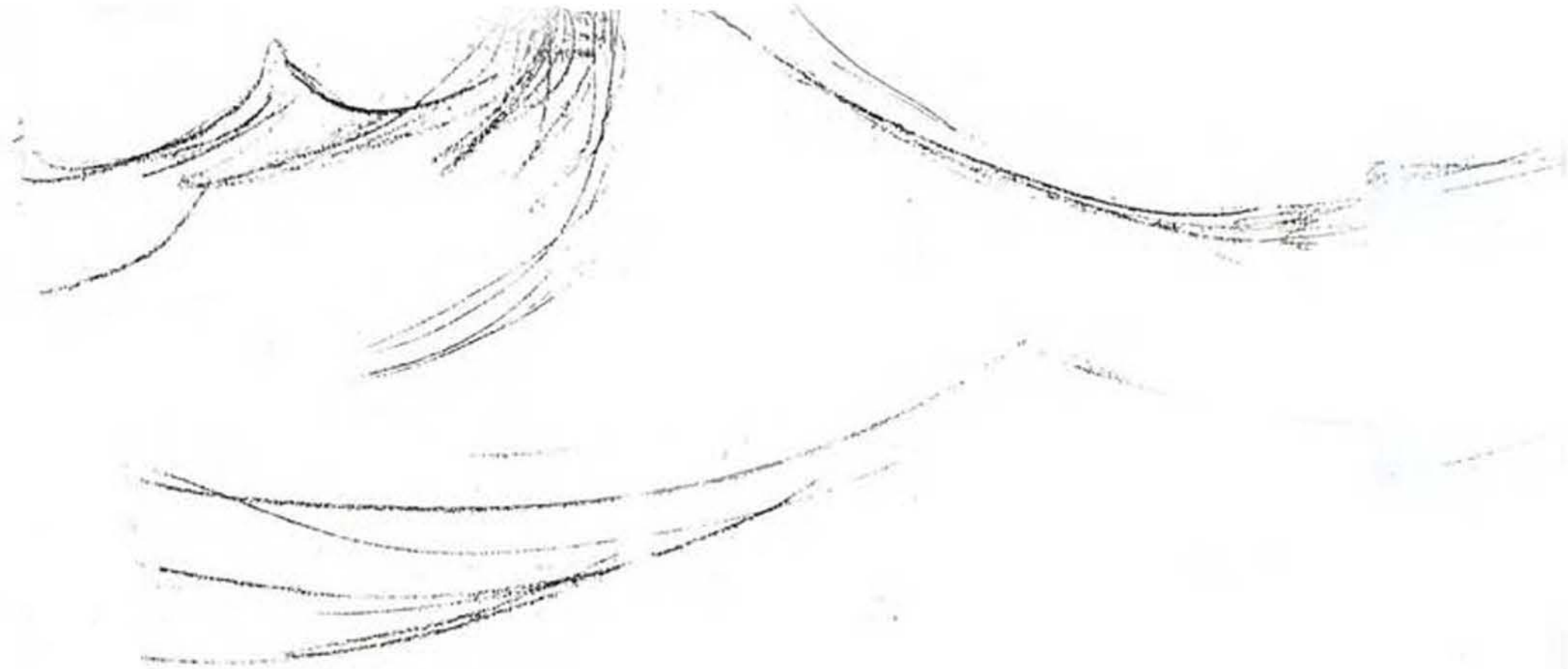
"Be careful of the seeds you carry in the hems of your skirts", Elizabeth Tilley's mother begged.

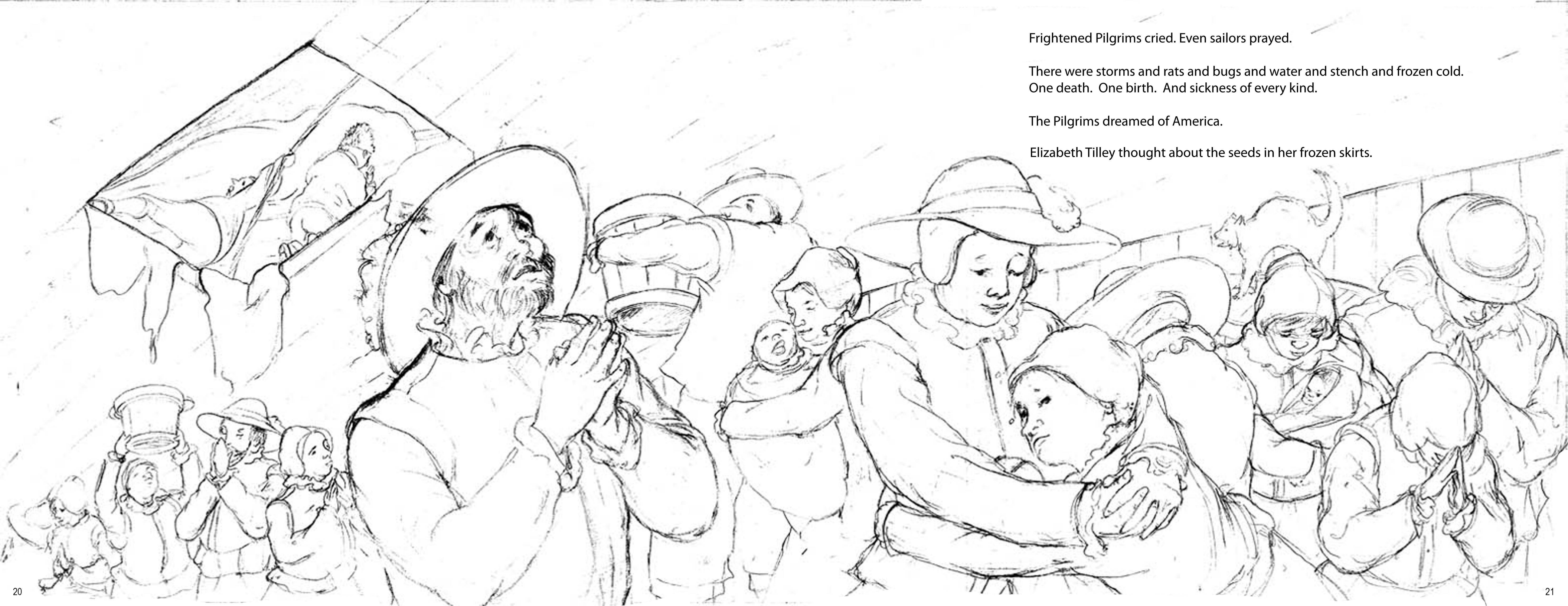
Papa spoke earnestly. "Elizabeth, the seeds you carry will be the very first to sprout on American soil."

Elizabeth Tilley quickly mended her hems.

The storms came and the Mayflower rolled and pitched, bobbed and bounced.
The hulls were icy and the decks frozen. Chilled waters streamed over the cabin floors.

Coughs and moans cried out against the howling wind.
No longer safe to walk outside. No longer safe to cook.



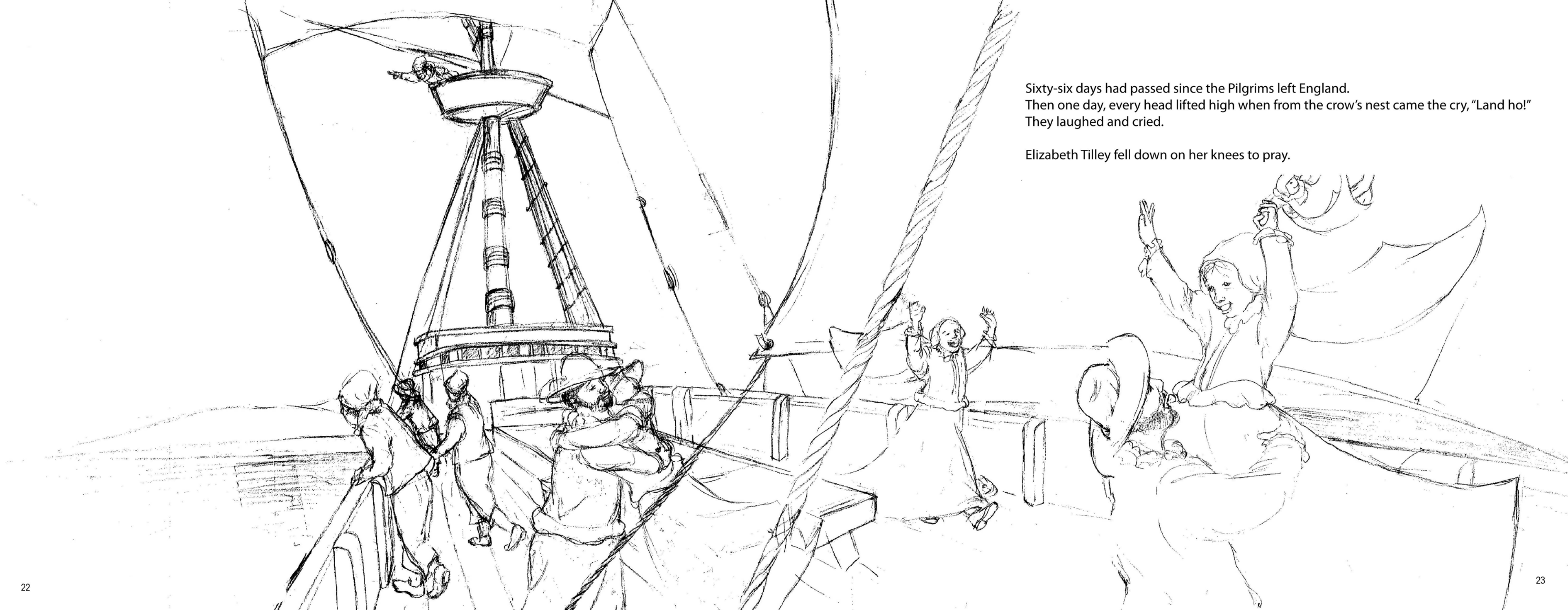


Frightened Pilgrims cried. Even sailors prayed.

There were storms and rats and bugs and water and stench and frozen cold.
One death. One birth. And sickness of every kind.

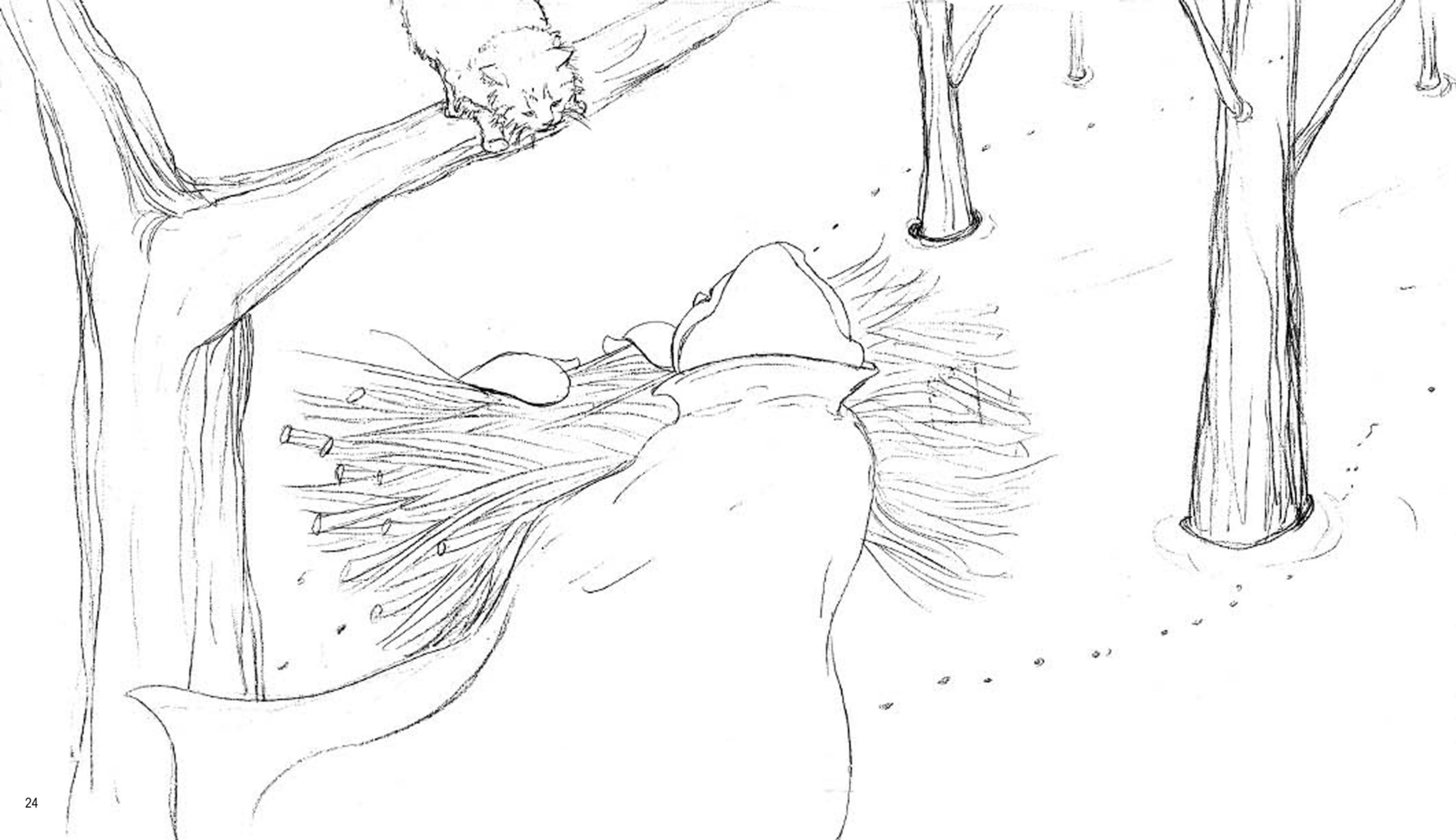
The Pilgrims dreamed of America.

Elizabeth Tilley thought about the seeds in her frozen skirts.



Sixty-six days had passed since the Pilgrims left England.
Then one day, every head lifted high when from the crow's nest came the cry, "Land ho!"
They laughed and cried.

Elizabeth Tilley fell down on her knees to pray.



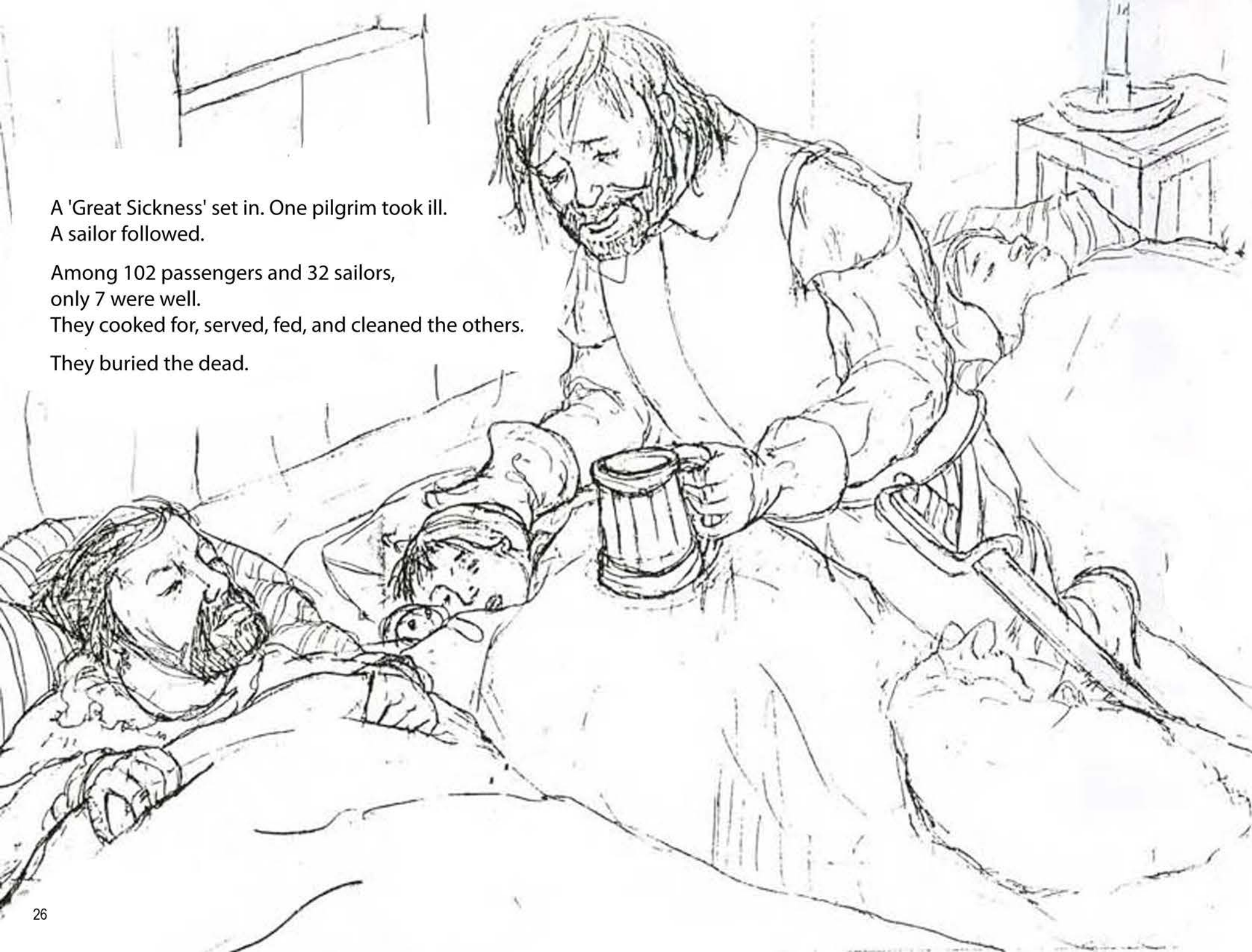
It was midwinter when the Mayflower landed and docked in Cape Cod Bay. The new land was frozen and had little food to offer.

No homes. No friends. No warmth. No comfort.

The men searched for rich land and fresh water, but the harsh winter crowded in.

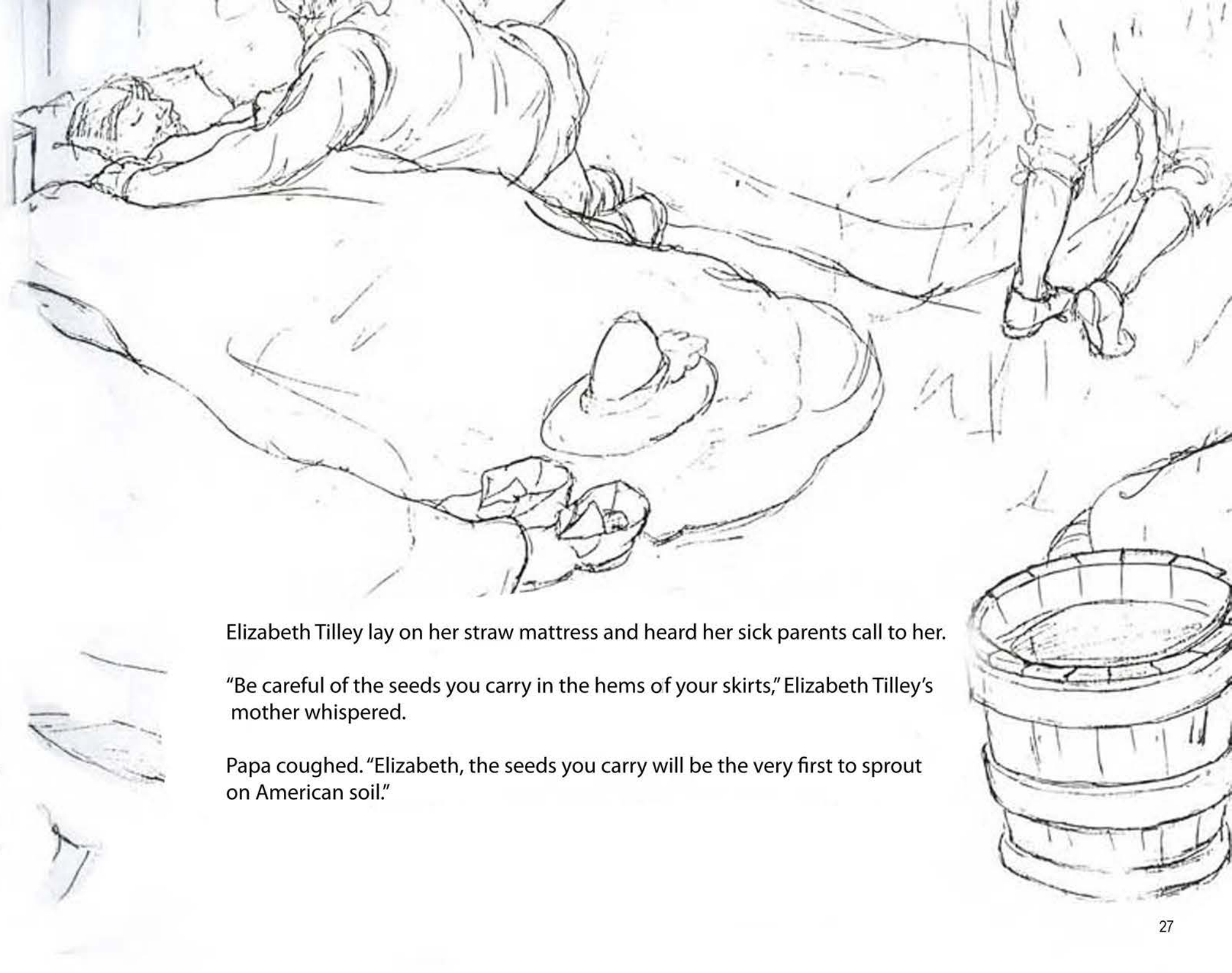
On Christmas Day, they set forth to build their Common House. They cut trees. They sawed planks. They raised the frame and thatched the roof. Their work was long and hard.





A 'Great Sickness' set in. One pilgrim took ill.
A sailor followed.

Among 102 passengers and 32 sailors,
only 7 were well.
They cooked for, served, fed, and cleaned the others.
They buried the dead.



Elizabeth Tilley lay on her straw mattress and heard her sick parents call to her.

"Be careful of the seeds you carry in the hems of your skirts," Elizabeth Tilley's mother whispered.

Papa coughed. "Elizabeth, the seeds you carry will be the very first to sprout on American soil."

Elizabeth Tilley's parents were quietly buried on a hill.





When spring came, only 51 survivors remained.

Elizabeth Tilley grew healthy and strong and worked hard with the others to survive.

She sowed her seeds. She watered and plucked the weeds. She shooed the crows and chased away the dogs.

Elizabeth Tilley gave her seedlings love and care.



When her Elizabeth Tilley's seeds sprouted, she heard her mother's sweet whispers in the wind, "Be careful of the seeds you carry in the hems of your skirts."

She could see her Papa's smile in the sky. He told her, "Elizabeth, the seeds you carry will be the very first to sprout on American soil."

As she tended her garden, Elizabeth Tilley felt honored for such a job.