

-- THE RESCUE

This true story is adapted from Michael Smith's biography of Tom Crean, the Antarctic explorer. On 4 January, 1912, a three-man party — Crean, Lashly and Evans — set out on a punishing 750-mile journey across the South Pole. However, only 35 miles from base camp, disaster struck. Evans fell ill. Crean was forced to make the rest of the dangerous journey on his own. The survival of all three men depended on Crean's success.

1. Crean now took the bravest decision of his life and volunteered to make the solo walk to Hut Point. Lashly had offered to go but Crean had told him to remain and look after the very frail Evans. Then Lashly stuffed Crean's pockets with the only food they could find. Before he left, Crean ducked his head inside the tent to say goodbye to his two companions. They watched the courageous Irishman stagger forward in knee-deep snow, to begin his lonely march for survival.

2. Crean was bitterly cold, thirsty, starving and physically drained as he began his journey. The travelling was hazardous. His thighs frequently sank in the soft snow and there was the ever-present fear of crashing through a crevasse. The wind was blowing up the drifting snow and blinding Crean. A blizzard could be seen approaching in the distance. In his tiredness, Crean frequently slipped on the glassy ice. He scrambled down the hill as the wind picked up and made his way slowly towards the hut.

3. Then to his utter relief, Crean saw dogs and sledges in the distance out on the sea-ice. He somehow found enough strength to reach the camp. When Crean finally stumbled into the hut, he fell to his knees, almost delirious with hunger and exhaustion. Inside, he found the Russian dog-driver, Dimitri,

and Atkinson, the one doctor within 400 miles of Hut Point. He blurted out the alarming news about his two companions and collapsed on the floor. A rescue party set off immediately to find Lashly and Evans.

4. Lashly had wisely torn up an old piece of clothing and attached it to a long piece of bamboo so that the recovery party would not miss the tiny green tent on the vast Barrier landscape. After hours on the Barrier, the two men had almost given up hope of being rescued. Suddenly the howling and yelping of Atkinson's dogs which galloped right up to the tent door shattered the stillness and silence. One animal stuck his head through the little tent flap and licked the face and hands of the stricken Evans. To hide his emotions, Evans grabbed his ears and sank his face into the hairy mane of the grey Siberian dog. Then both men laughed uncontrollably. They never should have doubted the courage and determination of the Irishman. They couldn't believe that they had been saved. It was as if a heavy weight had been lifted from their shoulders.

Diary Entries

Imagine that you are Lashly. Write two diary entries describing your thoughts as you wait to be rescued.

- They were only in the tent for a number of hours so make the entries a few hours apart
- Use the date from the extract
- Entry 1 - Just after Crean leaves
- Entry 2 - Just before the rescue party arrive
- Use words that convey emotion - fear, worry, scared, hope, believe etc
- Read back through the extract
- Underline any references to what Lashly does, feels, what the weather is like
- Use information from the extract
- Remember that you are freezing and facing death so no time for flowery language or 'Dear Diary'.

4th Jan, 1912, 10am

Evans, Crean and I set out early today on a long journey across the pole - 35 miles out and Evans was ill - too ill to continue. We pitched tent and decided what to do. I wanted to go back for help but Crean insisted **he** go. I suppose he's right - with my medical knowledge I should stay with Evans and his greater experience makes him the right one to go but it is **frustrating** to stay here. I made him take all the food we have. As we watched him go we prayed for his safe and swift return. The wind picked up and it became bitterly cold. I made up a bed for Evans but even with all our blankets and furs he is still very cold. I am terribly **worried** about him - without food and medical attention he won't last long.

4th Jan, 1912, 7pm

No sign of Crean or a search party - I must be patient - 35 miles there and 35 back through blizzards and howling winds - it's too soon to expect any help. Evans has had a rough day - he drifts in and out of consciousness and seems in great pain. I have no food to give him and can only melt ice in my gloves for him to drink. I was **afraid** that a search party will never find us in this vast landscape so I tore some cloth to make a marker flag to attach to our tent. I fear that our chances are slim. All seems lost - Evans is close to tears and I feel as if there is a heavy weight on my **shoulders**. I listen for a shout or the bark of a husky but there is only the howling of the wind.

Comment [DH1]: The date is given in the introduction

Comment [DH2]: Use information from the extract

Comment [DH3]: Describes feelings

Comment [DH4]: Describes feelings

Comment [DH5]: Describe feelings

Comment [DH6]: Use information from the extract