





What is best – sitting alone here in England under sleeting skies or living on a sunny island as a lighthouse keeper?

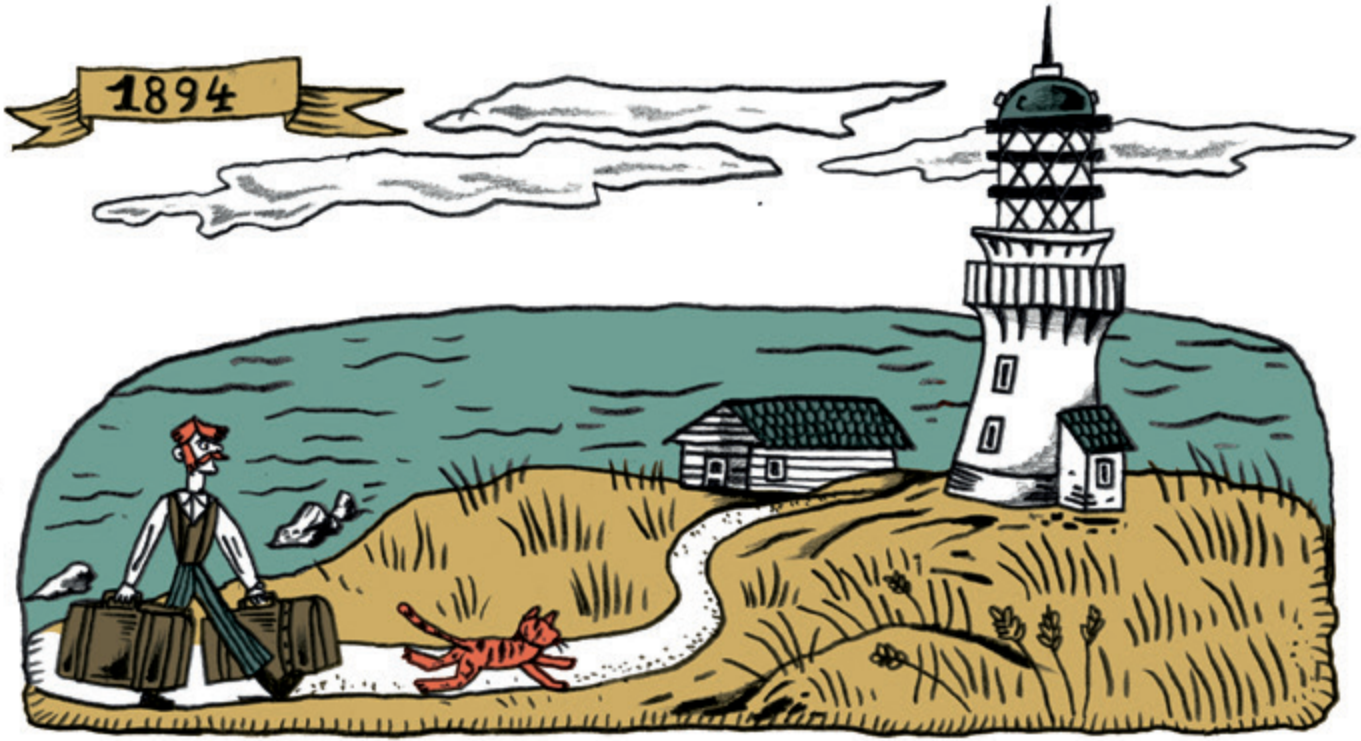


NEW ZEALAND

This piddling dot in Cook Strait is Stephens Island.



1894



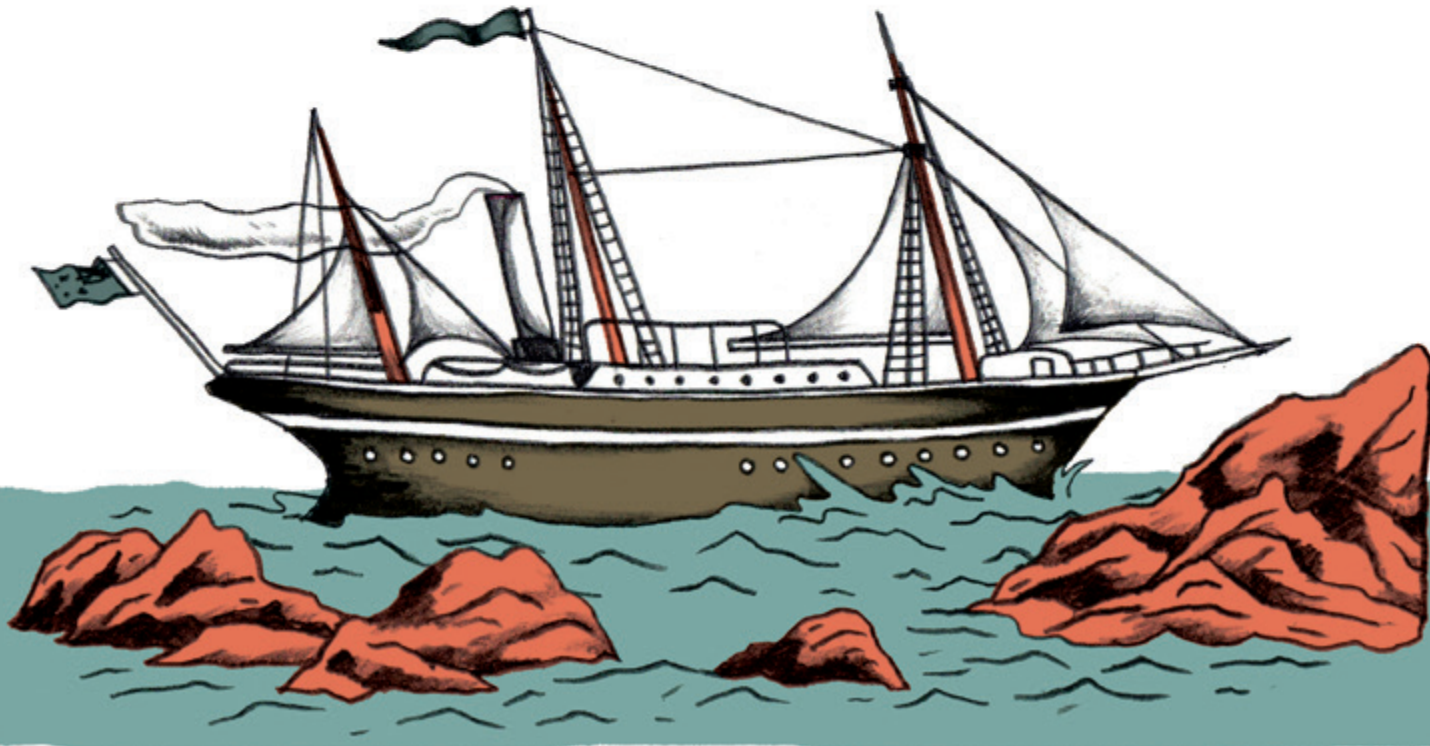
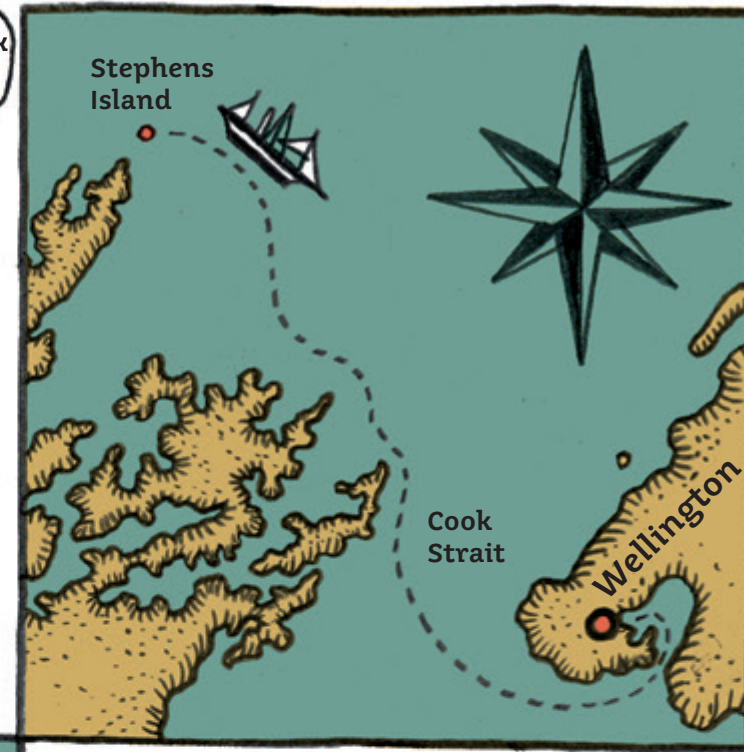
On this island they have just built a lighthouse. Here comes the new lighthouse keeper David Lyall and his faithful companion, the cat Tibbles.



As a bachelor, Lyall had plenty of time on his hands. He was knowledgeable about lots of things, because he'd read a lot of books, and one of his hobbies was ornithology. But never had he seen such a strange bird in any of his books.



Thank you for taking it, Captain. I've packed the box with sheep's wool, but please handle it with care.



The package arrives safely and is handed to scientists at the Colonial Museum in Wellington.



The ornithologist Sir Walter Buller confirms that it is a previously unknown species of bird.

In London, the illustrator John Gerrard Keulemans makes a lithographic plate of the specimen that has been sent to him.



He rolls the paint onto a limestone block. The paint only adheres to those parts that have been drawn in grease pencil. With this printmaking technique, he prints the drawing on a lithographic press in his workshop.





And that is why Tibbles had grown so fat! He had hunted the bird he famously discovered to extinction in less than a year.



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Illustrated by © David Dolenský, 2021

This unusual comic book recounts a true story that happened on a small island just off the coast of New Zealand in 1894. The tragicomic hero of the tale is a cat named Tibbles, who belonged to the keeper of the island's lighthouse. Tibbles discovers a rare species of previously undescribed flightless bird — the Stephens Island wren, and simultaneously becomes the cause of its demise, thereby inadvertently contributing to global awareness of the danger of domesticating non-native animal species on other continents.

