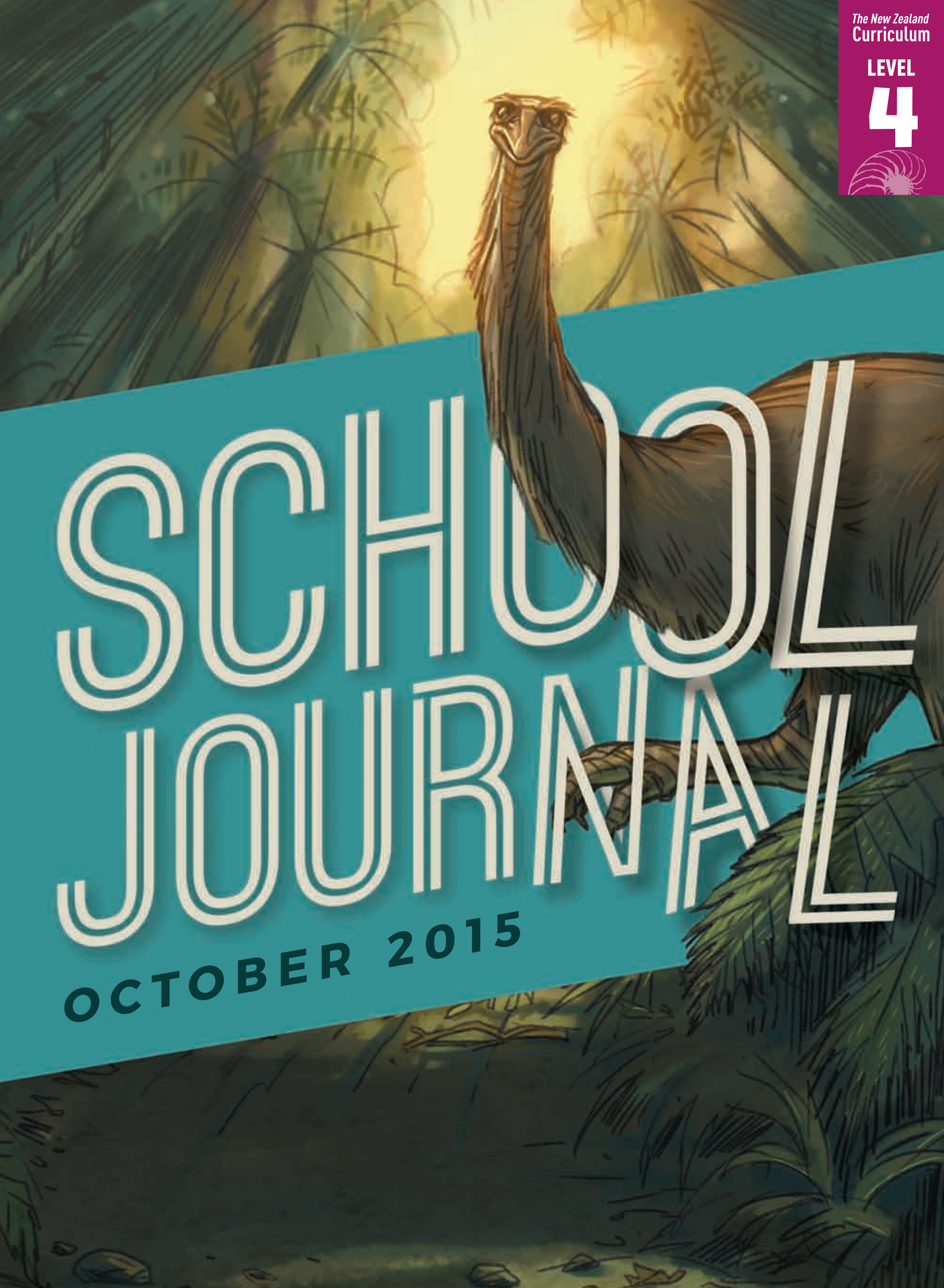
The New Zealand Curriculum
LEVEL
4
SCHOOL JOURNAL
OCTOBER 2015

TITLE	READING YEAR LEVEL
Hatter's Gold	8
Benny	7
Oakley Creek	7
The Seeing Hawk	8
Return of the Moa?	8
Comic Man	7
Family Photographs	7

This Journal supports learning across the New Zealand Curriculum at level 4. It supports literacy learning by providing opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to meet the reading demands of the curriculum at this level. Each text has been carefully levelled in relation to these demands; its reading year level is indicated above.

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SCHOOL JOURNAL

LEVEL 4
OCTOBER 2015

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Ministry of Education

Hatter's Gold

by Renata Hopkins

I own a dead man's boots because the coal miners went on strike. Our teacher, Baldy Bremner, would say I was drawing a long bow talking like that – bending the truth into a shape that suits me better. But I'm not, you know. If the strike hadn't gone ahead, Mum could have afforded to buy me new boots, like she'd been planning. I wouldn't have gone looking for gold … and I wouldn't have found the Professor staggering down the Croesus track with a bloody rag tied around his leg, the red drops going all the way back to his chopping block.

The strike started on a Thursday. It was February the 27th, 1908.

We were walking home for lunch, and I remember I stubbed my toe on a rock. I was hopping around, clutching my foot and swearing, and Teddy said, "You'd better not let Dad hear you saying them words."

Then Pearl glanced up the road and stopped laughing. "He'll hear you himself in a minute," she said. I turned, and there were the miners walking in a big group towards town. Us kids got a scare at that. Seeing the men above ground, in the middle of the day … that usually meant an accident down the mine. I was relieved to see Dad at the front of the group.

Dad told us about the strike on the way home, making it sound like a good joke on the bosses. But when Mum heard the news, halfway through slicing the bread, she froze. "A strike?"

"Don't look so surprised, love," Dad said. "You know trouble's been brewing. Fifteen minutes for crib is an outrage."

Crib is what the miners call their tucker break. They joke that a man can eat his lunch in fifteen minutes no trouble, just as long as he gives up chewing and swallows his sandwiches whole. The miners were striking because they wanted half an hour for crib. Dad said it was high time they got it but the workers had to stand together. Mum didn't argue, but she did say the shopkeepers would stand together, too. They'd refuse to give anything on tick to the miners' families, and without Dad's pay coming in, our savings would run out quick smart.

Mum had been cutting nice thick doorstops for lunch, but after Dad told her about the strike, the next slices were half the size. I knew right off we'd be scrimping on plenty of things besides bread. I could wave goodbye to my new boots. I looked at the rim of dried blood under my stubbed toenail and thought of the burning, itching chilblains to come.

A few weeks later, Pearl found me getting the old gold pan out. “Where are you going with that?” she asked.

I told her I might head up the Croesus track to do some panning. I said it like the idea had just come to me, but Pearl wasn’t fooled. It’s like she pokes her warty fingers into my ears and pulls my thoughts out while I’m sleeping.

“You’re dreaming, Laurie,” Pearl said. “You’ll never find a nugget big enough to buy them boots. You can’t even win a game of marbles.”

That got me mad. I did the walk in cracking time, imagining the look on Pearl’s face when I proved her wrong.

I saw a gold nugget once, in the window of a jeweller’s shop in Greymouth. It looked like a tiny golden potato, and for the first hour, panning in Clarke Creek, I pictured a perfect little nugget just like it in the bottom of my pan. When you’re shimmying out the stones and gravel, you’re always just about to get lucky – if not in this pan, then the next one, or the one after that. I reckon that kind of thinking is what hooked all those men during the gold rushes.

Pearl was right about my luck. After two hours, all I had was a few piddling flakes and cramp in my leg. I thought I might as well head up to see the Professor. He’s the last of the old hatters around here. Dad says they’re called hatters because they never take their hats off – not even for a bath. But Baldy says it’s what they call any miner who searched for gold on his own, long after everyone else had given up. It’s true that the Professor keeps to himself, but not in a crabby way. Mum has a soft spot for him. She’d given me a jar of blackberry jam to take to him.

When I ran into the Professor without warning on the track, he was such a sight, I dropped my swag. I heard the jar crack – but wasted jam was the least of our worries. The Professor's axe had bounced off a big chunk of firewood and chopped his leg instead.

"Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him, eh, Laurie?" the Professor said as I got his arm around my shoulder. I thought he might be going a bit doolally. Then again, he always talks in that wordy way. That's why we call him the Professor.

"It's Shakespeare," he added. "Do you know which play?"

I shook my head.

"The Scottish play. I can't say its proper name. It's bad luck."

I told him it was a bit late to worry about bad luck, and he actually laughed.

We set off down the track, me doing my best to take the Professor's weight. It felt like the three-legged race at the town picnic: stepping on toes and trying not to go over in a heap.

“What’s the news of the strike?” the Professor asked. I could see fresh blood leaking through his bandage, but I told myself that if he could manage to chat, then it couldn’t be as bad as it looked.

“Still going,” I said. “Mum’s getting a bit maggoty having Dad under her feet all day.”

“I’ll be bound. But your father and the others, they’re thinking of your future. When you go down the mine, the working conditions will be better.”

I said nothing to that.

“I take it you don’t want a miner’s life?”

“A gold miner’s maybe.”

“You arrived a bit late for that, my boy.”

“I know. Just my luck.”

Down a coal mine, there are plenty of ways for bad luck to find you. You can be crushed by a rockfall or go under a coal tub. Or maybe an explosion will finish you. The year I was born, sixty-five men breathed poisonous gas and died in the Brunner mine. I tried not to think about where I was headed once I’d finished with school.

Instead, I asked the Professor about his days chasing gold. He did his best to answer, but he was starting to shake, and his breath came fast and raggedy. After a time, he went silent. That scared me, so I took over the talking. I told him how I needed winter boots, how Athol Crewe could spit from the schoolhouse to the fence. I was telling him that Mum had more jam at home and she’d make scones to go with it, when crash – the Professor went over, taking me with him.

I tried to get him up, but he was past it.

“I’ll run the rest of the way,” I said. “I’ll get Dad.”

The Professor grabbed my arm. Then he spoke. He was so quiet I had to lean in to hear. “The gold’s not just in the creek, Laurie. It’s all around us. Take your chances, son. Make your own luck.”

I thought he really had gone loose in the head. But I swear, his eyes looked clear into mine. “This world is golden,” he said. “I am lucky to have known it.” That’s what Baldy would call the past tense. The way you talk when something is over and done with.

“Hold on, Professor,” I said. And I ran.

I’d had it when I finally found Dad and Mr Higgins. I didn’t go back with them. Dad told me how they’d found the Professor, lying there in his bare feet. He’d taken his boots off and lined them up neat beside him. Dad and Mr Higgins thought that was odd … until they saw the message scratched in the dust with a stick: For Laurie.

The boots are too big for me right now. But when the cold weather comes, I’ll pack the toes with rags. I’ll grow into them.

Author's note

The Blackball miners' strike in 1908 did happen, and it really was about winning the right to a longer lunch break. It was also about working an eight-hour day (the mine manager wanted it increased to ten). The strike lasted for three months, which made it the longest in New Zealand's history. The miners eventually won. I learnt about the strike by reading the novel *Blackball '08* by Eric Beardsley, my grandfather.

BENNY

BY BERNARD BECKETT

A lot of people say Benny's stupid, but I never have. I'm his friend, for starters. We've been right through primary school and intermediate together. People also say that Benny and I are opposites. They have a point, I suppose. Benny's tall. The top of my head reaches his armpit. Not that I often put my head in his armpit – it's not a thing we do. I'm skinny, and Benny's mostly muscle with a bit of fat to keep him warm, he says. There are other things too. Like Benny's good at rugby, but I'd rather just watch. And I'd rather watch league than rugby.

I live in the Hutt, and Benny lives in Eastbourne. He didn't always. He used to live just down the road, but his mother met a guy at a work party and she and Benny moved in with him. Now, seeing Benny means a bus trip. At his new place, there are gates and a security camera. My house doesn't have that stuff.

Last week, I took the bus to meet up with Benny, like we've been doing all holidays. I haven't seen him since then.

Eastbourne has an OK beach by city standards. There's an ice-cream shop and a place where you can hire kayaks and a jetty you can bomb off. Our favourite thing was to combine all three. The aim was to land a massive bomb beside some nervous kid paddling past and try to upend their kayak.

It made sense for Benny to do the bombing. Then I'd jump in the water and help the kid back into their kayak and apologise. Benny's so big, and I'm so weedy – I'd always look heroic. The kid would be grateful – or the parent would be – and most of the time, they'd buy me an ice cream. Benny and I would share it behind the pavilion. Our record was six in a day … before the guy who owns the kayaks threatened to call the police.

That day last week shouldn't have been different, but it was. We were on the jetty, same as always. This little kid was just getting his balance in his kayak at the water's edge. His mother was standing beside him, looking like she was sure he'd drown. They were the perfect target. But suddenly, all I saw was this kid who didn't deserve to be hassled. He looked a bit like my cousin.

Still, I said to Benny, "He looks like a good one," because even when everything changes, you pretend that it hasn't.

"You do it," Benny said, despite the fact he was always the bomber.

"Perhaps we should give it a miss," I said.

That's when it got weird.

"Nah, let's do it – and it's your turn," Benny said. He had a mean look on his face. "I've been doing it all summer. You go." He was standing over me, like he wanted to hit me.

"What's wrong?" I asked. The kid in the kayak was almost underneath us.

"Why should you always be the hero? You think you're better than me, don't you?"

"No," I said. "I don't." Which was true. I'm not better than Benny. Benny's excellent.

I turned away because I didn't want Benny to see my face. Then he pushed me – real hard. It sent me off the jetty … the bomb I didn't want to do. But Benny's timing was off. My arm hit the edge of the kayak and flipped it. When I came up, Benny was beside me in the water and the kid was nowhere to be seen. He was trapped under his kayak.

On the shore, I could hear his mother yelling.

Benny wanted to be the good guy, but he's not very co-ordinated. He turned the kayak over just as the boy was coming up. It looked like Benny was trying to push him back under, which he wasn't. I managed to grab the kid and drag him back to the beach. His mother was wading towards us, using words my mother had banned.

Poor Benny was still trying to play the hero, and this meant pushing me aside. That's when the kid really started to howl. The mother grabbed her boy with one hand and pushed Benny away with the other. She gave him an earful. Then we heard a police siren. I don't know if it was coming for us or it was just coincidence, but Benny and I headed for the hills. We left our towels and jandals on the beach and didn't stop until we'd followed the track to the top of the ridge.

We were bent over double, sucking in air, so it took me a while to realise that Benny was crying.

I'd never seen him cry before, and I had no idea what to do. So I did what felt right. I waited for Benny to straighten, then I hugged him. My head does, by the way, fit exactly into Benny's armpit. My arms only just reached around him. When he breathed in, my fingers came apart.

I can't say exactly how long we stood like that, but it wasn't long. Then Benny shrugged and pulled away. That was the moment of no return.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

Benny looked me in the eyes, and there was something there that I'd never seen before.

"I'm not stupid," he said. Then he walked away, and I didn't follow.

In a few days, we start at different high schools. Benny's school has streaming. I heard from another friend that the class lists went up online last week – the same day as the trouble at the beach.

I miss Benny already.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PIPPA KEEL

RETURN OF THE MOA?

by Quinn Berentson

IMAGINE THIS: You're walking through the bush, native birds all around. It's very peaceful, but then you hear crashing footsteps. Another tramper? No, whatever's making that noise … it's huge. The footsteps get closer, and something totally unexpected steps onto the track. The creature is taller than any person, despite its short stubby legs. A comically small head sits at the end of a very long neck. You see feathers but no wings, although it's clearly a bird – and another native one at that. It's the moa, New Zealand's legendary giant, back from the dead!

Back from the Dead

No one has seen a live moa for more than five hundred years. We can be sure there are none left, even in the most remote parts of the country. But recent scientific breakthroughs have created a startling possibility – bringing the moa back from the dead! It sounds like science fiction, but de-extinction is closer to reality than you might think.

In 2013, a historic meeting took place in Washington, DC. For the first time, world experts in fields such as **genetics**, animal biology, and **bioethics** met to talk about de-extinction. They reached an amazing conclusion: de-extinction is now within reach. “It’s gone very much further, very much more rapidly, than anyone would’ve imagined,” says Ross MacPhee, a mammal expert from the Museum of Natural History in New York. Professor Philip Seddon, a zoologist at Otago University, agrees: “The technology is real, and it’s coming.” What’s really interesting for New Zealanders is that our very own moa is near the top of the de-extinction list.

Plenty to Think About

De-extinction is a form of cloning. But while cloning usually takes the **DNA** from a living animal to make an exact replica, de-extinction begins with the DNA from an extinct animal. Not surprisingly, ancient DNA from long-gone animals is never complete. Essential information is missing. These gaps are filled using DNA sequences from a closely related species.

Of course de-extinction is very complicated, but here’s the thing: a lot of progress has already been made. So, if putting giant birds back in the bush is no longer a fantasy, the question isn’t can we bring certain species back … but should we? In its short history, de-extinction has created much debate. The arguments are strong on both sides. So, what are they? Let’s take the moa as a case study.

bioethics: the study of controversial issues arising from breakthroughs in biology and medicine
DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid): the genetic information inside cells
genetics: the study of DNA (see above)

De-extinction: The Arguments Against

Although the technology is almost here, bringing the moa back would be a huge venture. It would take a large team of scientists and cost a lot of money. There would also be no guarantee of success – and many embryos and even live chicks would die during the process. Plus, of course, one moa is only the beginning. For the species to survive, you would need lots of them, both males and females, so they could breed and become established. And you would need a safe habitat for them to live in.

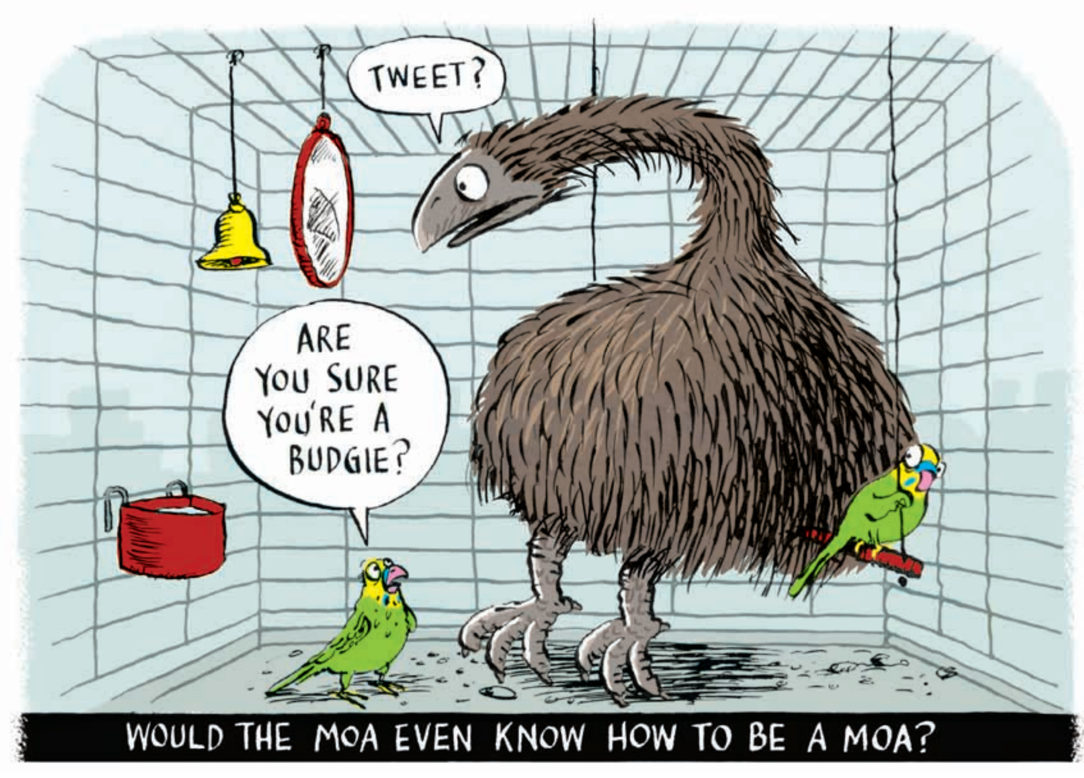
Many people believe that de-extinction is a waste of money and effort, especially when our list of threatened species is so long. Shouldn't we just focus on saving the kiwi or kākāpō? What about the 2,786 other threatened species in New Zealand that most people don't even know about, such as the black stilt, the *Powelliphanta* snails, the southern elephant seal, the lesser short-tailed bat?

What about the 2,786 other THREATENED SPECIES in New Zealand …?

And if de-extinction were to become cheaper and easier, would it change our attitude to conservation? If we can bring a species back, would that make us care less about protecting it in the first place? People might say, "Let's just mine all the coal we can. Don't worry about that native snail's habitat. We can bring it back later." This attitude could be more dangerous than we ever imagined.

Other people find tinkering with the building blocks of life – and making what they consider to be artificial animals – deeply disturbing. If scientists "made" a moa, we'd have no idea how it would behave. Would it even know how to be a moa? If not, who would teach it? And where would it live? At the moment, releasing a genetically modified organism into the wild is illegal. Many species have also become extinct precisely because the habitat in which they lived was destroyed.

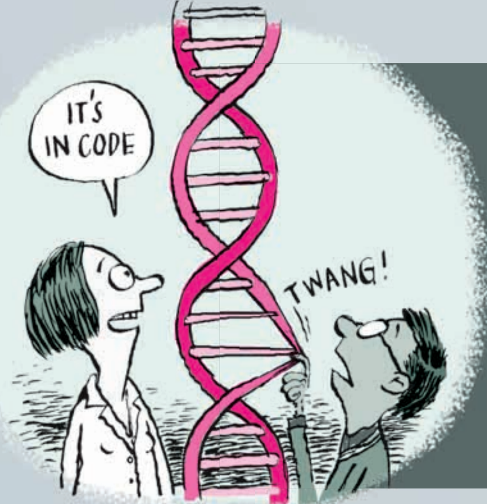
Then there's the tricky question of who would own (and make money from) the giant birds. What if a private company brought the moa back? Could it do whatever it wanted? What role would the government play? And scientists? And what about the opinions of iwi? Who would make decisions about the de-extinct bird?



A MOA IN FIVE EASY STEPS!

1. Get some moa DNA.

Because moa died out "only" five hundred years ago, this bit is easy. Many moa also fell into caves, which are excellent places for preserving things like DNA. Scientists have recovered good DNA samples from each of the nine species of moa. You'll need to borrow some of it.

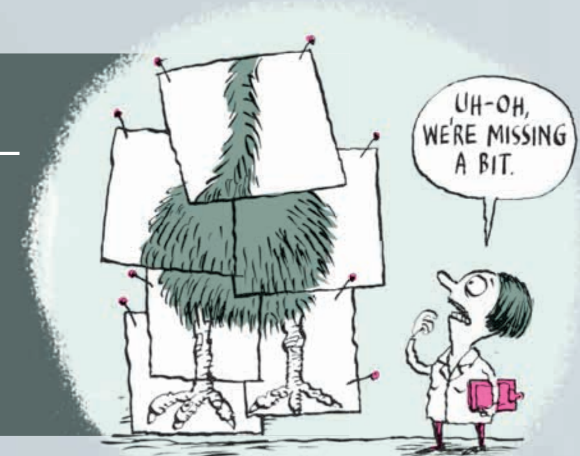


2. Figure out the genetic code of the moa.

Imagine billions and billions of building blocks, all joined together to make strands of DNA. This is a genetic code (or "recipe") for a living thing. Sweet-talk a geneticist into analysing your moa DNA sample to figure out its genetic code.

3. Fill in the gaps.

Ancient DNA samples are never 100 percent complete – but if you want to make a moa, all the genetic information needs to be there. To fill in the gaps in the moa's genetic code, you now need bits of DNA from a close living relative. Try the ostrich or emu.

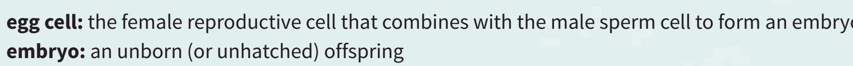


4. Create an embryo and find a mother.

Now that you have a complete code, you can get started on the **embryo**. Remove the DNA from an ostrich or emu **egg cell** and replace it with your moa DNA. Chemically stimulate the egg cell so it starts dividing to form an embryo, then find a **surrogate** mother. Because this bird has to lay a moa egg, she needs to be very large. Again, an ostrich or emu would be a good option.

5. Wait for the egg to hatch.

If everything goes according to plan, the surrogate mother lays the moa egg and eventually a healthy baby moa will hatch. Congratulations!



egg cell: the female reproductive cell that combines with the male sperm cell to form an embryo
embryo: an unborn (or unhatched) offspring
surrogate: a mother that carries an embryo that isn't her own

De-extinction: The Arguments For

Professor Michael Archer is a big supporter of de-extinction. He's leading a team of Australian scientists that's trying to revive a strange amphibian called the mouth-brooded frog – last seen in the 1980s. When people argue that de-extinction is "playing God", he replies something along the lines of "Didn't we play God by making them extinct in the first place?"

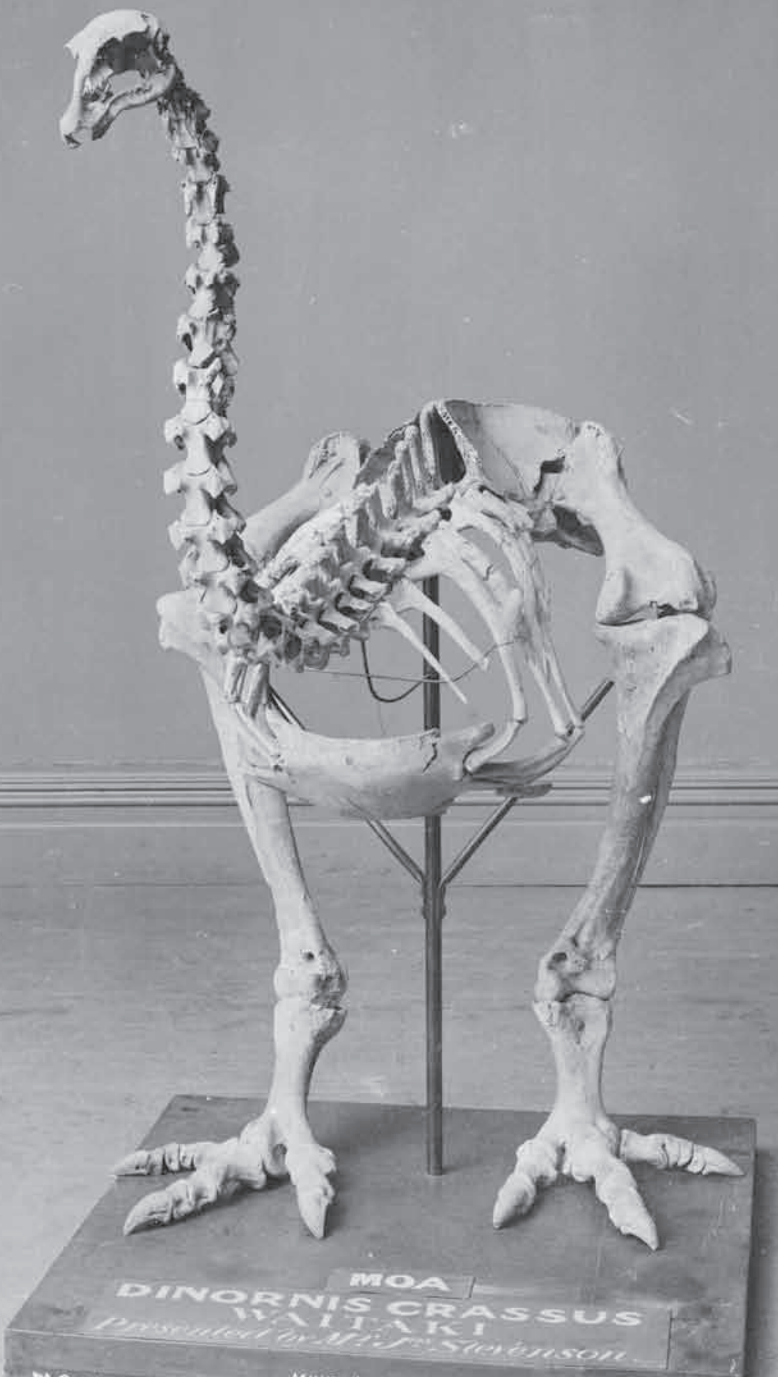
There's no doubt that humans wiped moa from the Earth (in just two centuries). So isn't it our duty to bring them back if we can? We've had a devastating impact on countless species. The World Wildlife Fund estimates that half of all the planet's wildlife has been wiped out in the last forty years. Many of our most iconic animals are on the verge of extinction. Tigers, orangutans, elephants, rhinoceroses, and many species of whales and dolphins may not survive another decade. Imagine your children or grandchildren never seeing one of these creatures. Wouldn't bringing the moa back fix a mistake from the past – and open the door to doing the same with other important species?

Another thing: **ecologists** are just starting to understand how important the nine species of moa were. Moa were around for over 60 million years. In that time, they became a valuable part of the forest ecosystem. Moa did things like spread seeds and keep the growth of some plants under control as they ate. They were the most important large **browsers** in our forests for a very long time. If we're serious about restoring our forests to their original state, then moa should be in them.

Wouldn't bringing the MOA back FIX a MISTAKE from the past ...?

And the final reason for bringing the moa back ... well, it would be truly awesome! Everyone in the world would want to see these amazing birds. And people everywhere would learn to appreciate other endangered species and try harder to save what we've got. Just imagine: you're walking through the bush, nothing but birds all around, then you hear crashing footsteps ...

browser: an animal that eats vegetation from trees or shrubs
ecologist: a person who studies where plants and animals live and how they live together


MOA
DINORNIS CRASSUS
WAITAKI
Presented by Mr F. Stevenson.
No. 1270.
MUIR & MOODIE, DUNEDIN, N.Z.

OTHER CONTENDERS

There are other animals that could be brought back from the dead. Here are five for starters:

1. Pyrenean Ibex (also known as the bucardo)

Date of extinction: 2000

Ever heard of this Spanish relative of the goat? Technically, it became the first animal to ever return from extinction when a team of Spanish and French scientists used frozen DNA from the last surviving bucardo with a common goat as a surrogate mother. The baby bucardo was born on 30 July 2004, but it only lived for nine minutes because it had major genetic deformities.

2. Tasmanian Tiger

Date of extinction: 1930s

This was the largest meat-eating **marsupial** known in modern times – and it's the only marsupial that scientists suggest could be brought back. Although it vanished recently, the dog-sized Tasmanian tiger may be tricky to bring back because it has no close living relatives. Despite the challenges involved, some Australian scientists have already made a start.

3. Huia

Date of extinction: Last confirmed sighting in 1907 (although unconfirmed sightings continued into the 1960s)

When the tail feathers of these elegant birds became fashionable for hats, the huia was quickly wiped out (although deforestation and introduced pests also played a role). Tissue samples of the huia remain, and the species has several close living relatives (for example, the saddleback and kōkako). Because of these factors, some people think the huia is a better choice for de-extinction than the moa.

marsupial: an animal that carries its young in a pouch on the mother's belly

4. Dodo

Date of extinction: 1662

This unusual flightless member of the pigeon family lived on the island of Mauritius (off the coast of Africa). When hungry sailors learnt about the dodo, the species was wiped out in just a hundred years. Some preserved parts remain. Might we one day have to retire the phrase “dead as a dodo”?

5. Woolly Mammoth

Date of extinction: 3,000 to 10,000 years ago

These hairy, tusked giants once roamed the plains of Siberia and Alaska. The mammoth is a close genetic match to the African elephant, and because mammoths lived in the cold, there are plenty of well-preserved remains. Some of these remains contain blood that is still liquid! Scientists in Russia and South Korea recently starting working together on a mammoth de-extinction project.

Note: One species that can’t be brought back is the dinosaur. It turns out that DNA has a use-by date of around 500,000 years. After that, no useful information can be extracted because the DNA is so decayed. Dinosaurs lived at least 65 million years ago. They’ve missed the de-extinction bus by around 64.5 million years.

Oakley Creek

by Kate Paris

I wake up with a strange feeling in my belly. It's like sick and butterflies. I've never lied to my mum before, so I feel scared – but I've never been to Oakley Creek before, so I feel excited. The idea of finally being there makes my heart race. The year 8s are always going on about it after the weekends. I can't believe I'll be the one bragging this Monday.

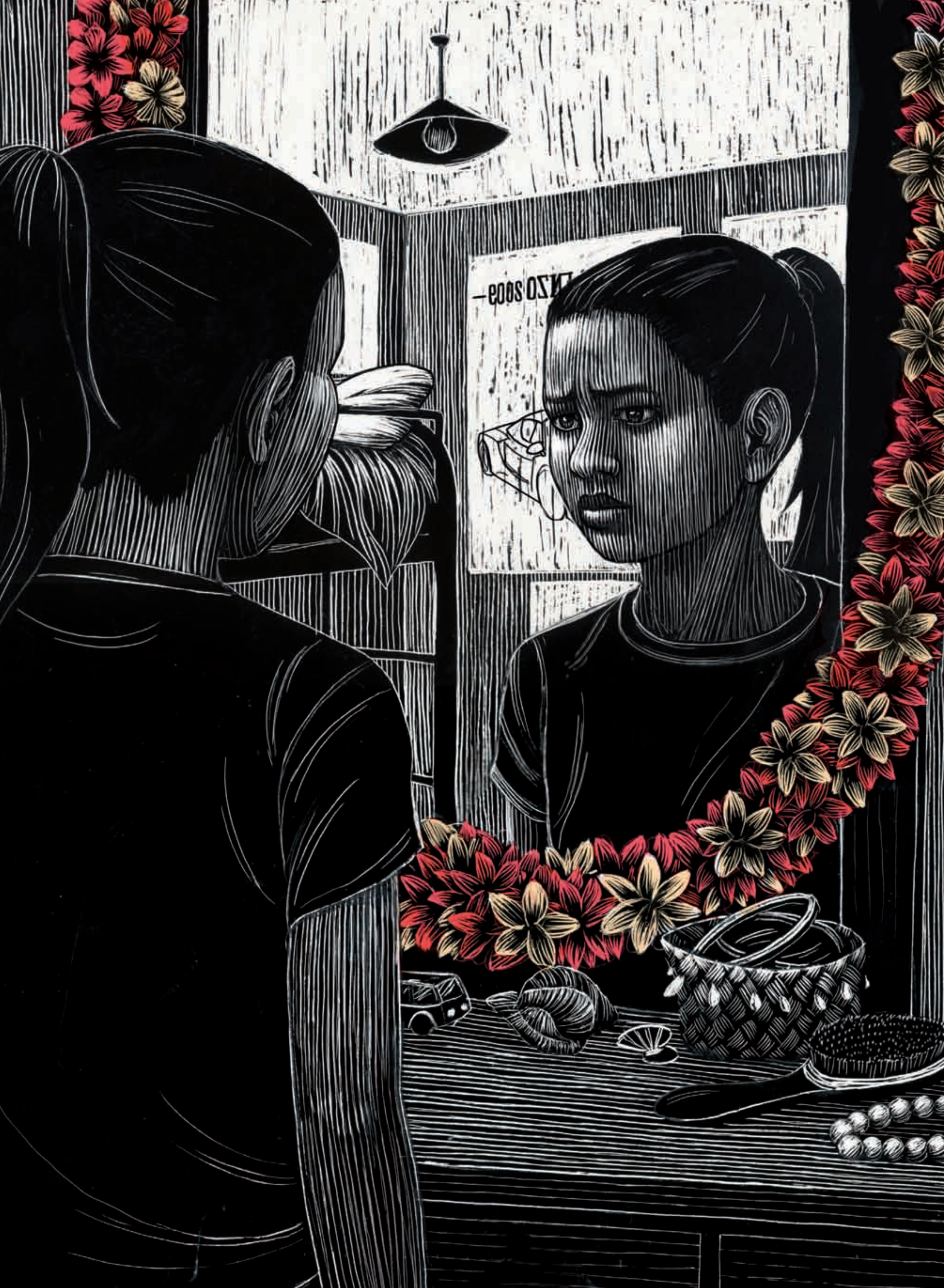
We have it all planned. Or at least Destiny has it planned. As soon as we got out of assembly yesterday, she charged up to me and grabbed my arm. "Are you going to do it?" she asked. Destiny has a way of sounding mad at you even when she isn't. "Well are you? I bet you chicken out."

"I'll do it," I said quietly, not wanting anyone to hear.

Destiny said where we should meet and when. Then she filled me in on who else was coming, but I didn't really listen. I knew who they'd be. Destiny belongs to a group of kids that I'm not supposed to hang out with. The teachers started frowning at me when they noticed I was spending less time with my old friends and more time on the bottom field, where things were a lot more interesting. I have the feeling Lelei and the others are jealous. They make out like they're worried about me – but I know they just feel left out.

I get out of bed and grab my swimming gear from under the pile of clothes I picked out last night. The sun reaches in through the gap in my curtains. It feels like it's cheering me on. As I quickly dress, I listen for footsteps. I can hear my brother grizzling in the kitchen. I'm glad he's not in our room, asking questions. I pull my T-shirt and skirt over my swimming shorts and singlet and check that my towel is still stashed in the bottom of my school bag. I jiggle some things around, making sure Mum can't see flashes of tell-tale colour through the rip by my strap.

I brush my hair and pull it tight and high. The face in the mirror staring back at me looks the same as always, but I feel different. I try to do some of the calming breaths Miss showed us before culture night, but that only makes things worse. The breaths just bring her face into my head, her face with a big frown. I grab my bag and walk down the hall into the kitchen.



Mum has left the cereal out, so I fill my bowl and try to look normal. Jonah is watching cartoons in the lounge and has stopped grizzling – unfortunately.

"What time do you have to be there again?" Mum asks.

"Nine-thirty," I mumble, looking up at the clock. It's only eight, but it will take me an hour to do my jobs and half an hour to walk to the dairy, where Destiny will be waiting.

Mum sits down opposite me, so I become very interested in my bowl.

"Why no note?" Mum asks for the tenth time. She knows it's weird to be going to school on a Saturday.

"I told you I lost it," I say. "Just ring the school and ask them." I'm bluffing. I know Mum's phone won't have any credit until pay day. I can feel her waiting for me to look up, so I scoff the last of my food and start clearing the table.

Mum's still sussing me out, and as I fill the sink to wash the dishes, I think perhaps I should just chicken out. She knows something's up. Is going to the swimming hole with my friends worth the hassle? But then I think how I'm never allowed to go anywhere. I can't even go to the shops on my own. Mum's scared the boys hanging round the takeaway bar, with their coloured bandanas and baggy jeans, will give me a hard time. As if I can't take care of myself! My cool fear has been painted over with hot anger. Destiny's right. I'm nearly twelve. It's time I stopped acting like a baby.

After drying the dishes, wiping the bench, making the beds, and shaking out the mat – it's time to go.

Mum's hanging out the washing. "Bye!" I say as I race past, brushing her warm, soft cheek with a kiss.

"Wait, Faith. We'll come, too. I want to talk to your teacher."

My belly does a flop, and I walk back to the clothesline.

"What? You can't," I say. "You'll make me late. Jonah's too slow. Don't worry, I'll be home at two-thirty." I reach my arms round Mum, and she hugs me so hard I can feel her heart thumping. I still can't look at her properly, and I pull out of her arms and race off towards the gate, my feet on some horrible autopilot that I can't turn off. She won't bother going to the school. Jonah will complain about having to walk.

By the time I get to the dairy, my jaw hurts from clenching my teeth.

"Come on," Destiny urges, "or the boys will beat us there." Destiny looks impressed. I know she didn't expect me to go through with this. Now it's too late to change my mind.

We walk across the busy road a little way down from the crossing. I see a lady shake her head at us. It's a relief to get through the park and onto the quiet track. The trees and gentle flow of the creek make me feel safe. Sunlight and shadows flutter on the path. As we come round a corner near the bridge, I hear shouts and splashes, almost drowned out by the sound of rushing water that must be the falls. The boys have beaten us here.

Liam raises his eyebrows when he sees us. Abroon does a showy flip into the swimming hole. Olivia and Ana are stretched out, their towels spread beneath them, watching. We sit down beside them, and Ana offers me some chips. I know their mothers don't mind that they come here, and they know my mother would … if I'd told her. It isn't spoken, but I've gained something by showing up.

All morning, there's only us, and it feels good. We've just finished lighting a fire to try to cook the eel Liam stabbed with a stick, and I'm drying myself by the flames after my third swim, when a familiar voice startles us.

"Faith? Is that you?"

It's Miss – and she's with Mum and Jonah, up on the bridge. They're looking down at us, Mum's face tight, and my heart stops. For a moment, I can't breathe or move. Abroon makes some lame joke, asking Miss if she's brought her togs. My brain flops around trying to piece things together. Why is Mum with Miss? How have they found me? Mum knows nothing about Oakley Creek. Jonah knows nothing about anything. I snatch up my towel and bag, quickly turning away from my friends. I'm not cool. I'm in big trouble.

On the way back, Mum and Jonah trail behind. Miss explains that Mum walked to school after all. Miss had been there writing reports and quickly figured it out. The sunny day and the stories about the falls in kids' writing books had told her where to start looking. Miss doesn't growl, and so far Mum hasn't said a word. She hasn't even made eye contact. Even Jonah is quiet.

Miss tells me it might not feel like it right now, but I'm lucky. My mum cares enough to come looking for me.

She's right. I don't feel lucky.

illustrations by Bridget Monro

Family Photographs

There are two photographs of my father
and his family when he was young.
You can tell these photographs are old:
they are black and white – and it's not
just the style of their clothing but the way
they hold themselves, unsmiling, captured
in that one long moment when children
are not allowed to be children but
forever still and emptied of play.

Aotearoa New Zealand, 1929
My father is four years old.
He cannot speak English. He has
two older brothers and two sisters.
The boys wear woollen jackets
with short pants; the girls short
short-sleeved dresses with
fitted bodices. They all wear long
socks that wrinkle at the ankles.
The older boys wear a tie and
a handkerchief folded in their
jacket pocket. My father is too
young for lace-ups, so he wears
shoes with a strap like his sisters.

They are about to return
to China. I say *return*
even though my father
and his siblings were all
born in New Zealand. Their
grandfather arrived in 1896.
He never *returned*.

Canton, China, 1932

My father is seven years old. He has
three brothers and two sisters.
The brothers wear light cotton
jackets with Mandarin collars.
They wear loose cotton trousers.
Their sisters wear loose cotton
dresses that come down
well below the knees. None
have buttons – their world
is held together with loops,
with complex Chinese knots.

They are about to return
to New Zealand. This is why
the photograph has been taken.
Who knows what might happen
on such a long sea journey?

The family must pay £100 to
the New Zealand government.
This is the poll tax. This is
because the youngest was
not born in New Zealand.
Because they are Chinese.

A child of two or three is too
young to be left behind. Not
a child of six or seven.
The family will have to work
hard. They will have to save.
When there is enough money,
they will send for my father,
for his two elder brothers.

How long will it take?

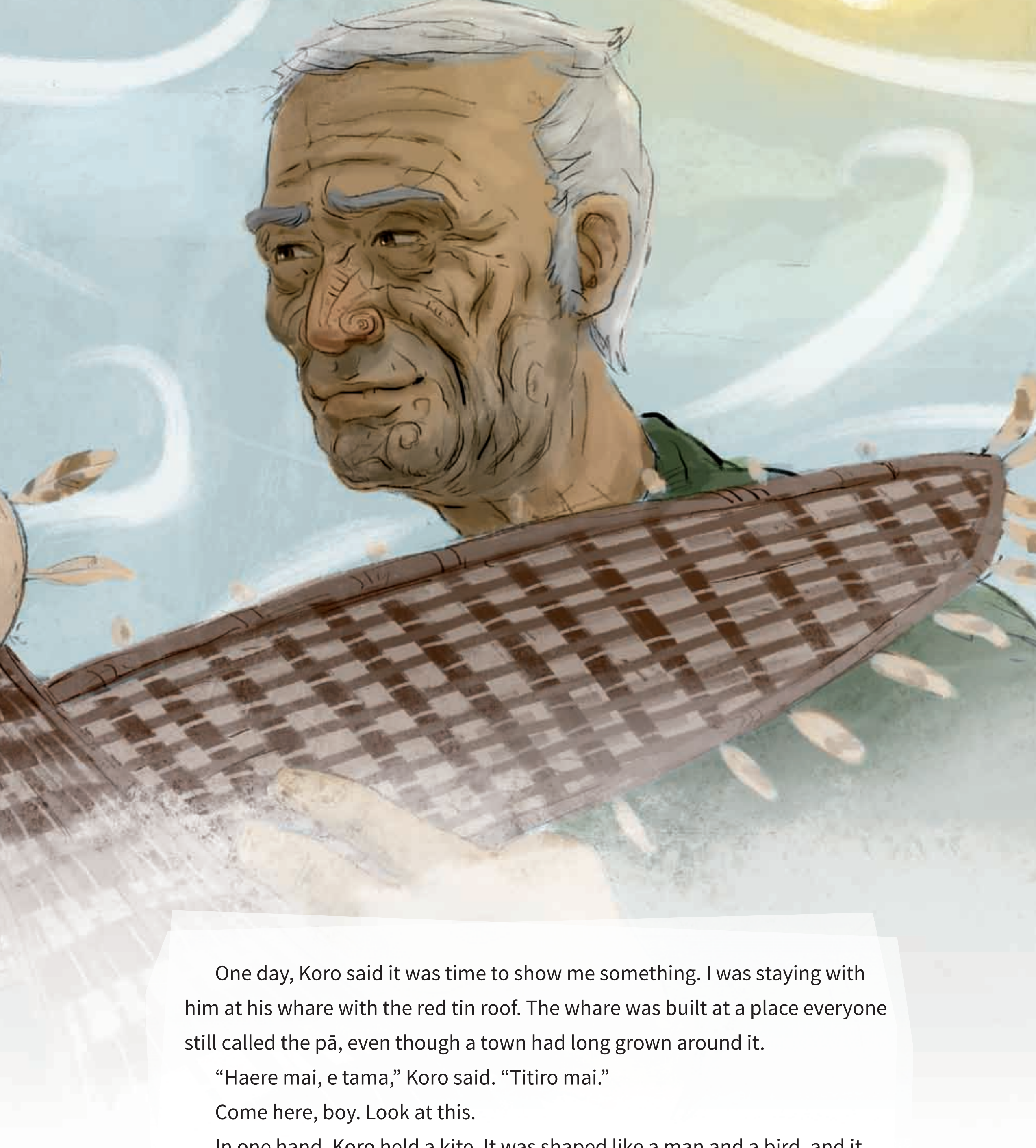
Alison Wong

THE SEEING HAWK

by Ben Brown

Kāhukitekite – the seeing hawk. This is the name of my koro. On the day that he was born, a hawk was seen to circle in the sky. When Koro drew his first breath and gave his first cry, the hawk was heard to reply with a piercing cry of its own. Some say that as well as his name, this was how Koro came by his gift. Because my koro is matakite, a visionary. He can see the hidden ways of things – their shape and shadow. Koro can see what others cannot.

Koro is ancient. He is as old as the hills behind his house, my aunties say. He wears a moko, half-hidden by the lines of his age. The moko was carved in the old days by a tohunga using a chisel bound to the bone of an albatross wing. Koro comes from another world.



One day, Koro said it was time to show me something. I was staying with him at his whare with the red tin roof. The whare was built at a place everyone still called the pā, even though a town had long grown around it.

"Haere mai, e tama," Koro said. "Titiro mai."

Come here, boy. Look at this.

In one hand, Koro held a kite. It was shaped like a man and a bird, and it was as big as me. The kite had wide wings and a head with a big-eyed face; a tail in the shape of a gliding hawk. Feathers adorned the head and hung from the edges of its wings. In his other hand, Koro held a coiled line of plaited fibre made from cotton-thin strands of flax.

It was a cool, clear day with a good breeze blowing. Koro handed me the kite and the coil of line, and we walked out into the paddock behind his house.

"Hurihia," Koro said. He wanted me to turn around, with my back to the wind as it came off the hills. I lifted the kite high and let the air take it.

The kite climbed quickly as though it were a bird released from a cage. I didn't even have to run. The coil unravelled through my hands until Koro told me, "Puritia." Hold on. I leaned back against the pull of the kite as the line became taut.

"Ka pai!" Koro said, nodding his head.

As the kite darted about, I could hear – or at least thought I could hear – a chanting karakia in words I didn't recognise. The karakia swirled in the air as though the wind itself were speaking and then snatching the words away. Or was it Koro muttering?

"Tākiri i te tukutuku, e tama," he said.

Pull on the line, boy. Pull on the line.

I pulled, and the kite lifted higher, feathers streaming. I could feel the hum of the wind. I could see the kite ride from gust to gust, straining at the line, the clouds passing by above. And I could hear the karakia, louder now, all around me.

Then it seemed I could see what the kite was seeing – as though I were the kite and the kite were me. The wind passed over me and under me, lifting me. I saw a boy in a wind-swept paddock, an old man with him. I could see the whare with its red tin roof and wisps of smoke coming from the chimney. There were the hills behind the whare, and beyond them, other hills rolling away into the distance.

I rose on the wind, and it carried me up and up. There was no coil of line beneath me now. I wasn't a kite straining against the wind. My arms were now the living wings of a creature of the sky. I had become a silent, soaring hawk.

Down in a wild valley, I could see a river twisting like an eel between the bush-clad slopes. This was the wilderness that saw the birth and early years of my koro. In a clearing, people had built a kāinga, rough and ready, using timber from the trees of the forest.

I dropped lower and circled. Small fires burned in the kāinga, and there were people gathered round them. Some were cooking; others were keeping warm and staring into the flames. I knew what I was seeing: the very place and time my koro was born.

Even as I realised this, I heard him cry out for the first time, and I cried out myself. "Koro! I can hear you! It's me, tāu moko." But my voice was not my own – it was the shrieking cry of a hawk.

A man called up to me, asking where I was from. "Nō whea koe e kāhu?" He must be the father of my koro – my tupuna.

"Home," I replied.

I called again and again as I circled in the sky.

Even though I wanted to stay longer, the wind took hold of me and led me back to the paddock where I had stood with my koro. But I could not see him anywhere. Instead I saw another old man with his mokopuna. The boy was carrying a kite as big as he was, and the man was talking to the boy and pointing into the sky. I saw that the face of the man was my own face … but much older.

I heard the chanting karakia once again – and something else. It was the humming of the wind across a line. My wings felt tired and heavy, so I rested them, and it seemed that I fell gently from the sky, almost as though I were a kite on a softening breeze.

Now I could see the passing clouds above me. And Koro was looking at me, smiling. The kite lay on the ground.

"Haere mai, Kāhuiti. Tīkina tō manutukutuku."

Come on, Little Hawk. Get your kite.

illustrations by Tim Gibson

COMIC MAN!

by Kate De Goldi

When I visited Dylan, he was about to go to Europe to promote his latest book, *Sam Zabel and the Magic Pen*. We sat at the breakfast bar in his kitchen. Tūī sang outside. Dylan's golden retriever, Bailey, barked occasionally at passers-by and cars. It's always excellent talking with Dylan, and my visit lasted the entire afternoon. He has a lovely voice, for a start, and he's very thoughtful and articulate. In the course of a conversation, he sheds light on all sorts of topics: childhood, politics, films, art, books …

STARTING OUT

Reading was big in Dylan's childhood, especially fantasy novels. Along with *The Lord of the Rings*, he gobbled up stories by Alan Garner and Susan Cooper. These British writers specialised in Dylan's favourite kind of story: where the fantastic – the magical – enters the real world and changes it, sometimes in alarming ways. As a teenager, "when life was more complicated," Dylan escaped by reading the kinds of books we usually associate with younger readers, things like *Paddington Bear* and *Winnie the Pooh* (Dylan identified with Piglet).

Comics were also constant companions for Dylan. In fact, the entire Horrocks family loved them, which was unusual in the 1960s and 70s. This was a time when many parents (and teachers and librarians) frowned on comics because they weren't "proper" books. But Dylan's dad, Roger, had once thought about being a comic book artist himself. He brought home a steady supply of them, in all their different forms. There were British war comics, the Asterix and Tintin series, American underground comix*, and the French comic magazine *Pilote*.

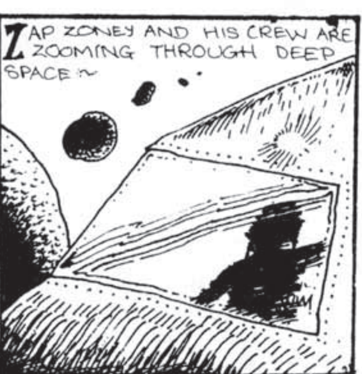
Dylan has been drawing cartoons and comics ever since he could hold a pencil. He always knew that he would be a comic book artist. He had natural talent as well as great determination and filled endless notebooks with his work – war stories, mostly. He also manoeuvred cartoons into every possible school project. "I was drawing all the time," Dylan remembers.

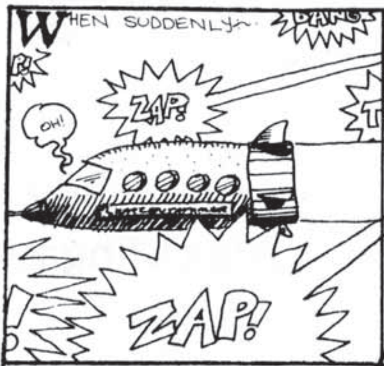
By Dylan.

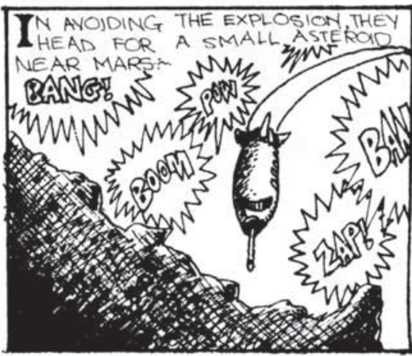
* Comics that were often self-published and contained edgy, controversial content

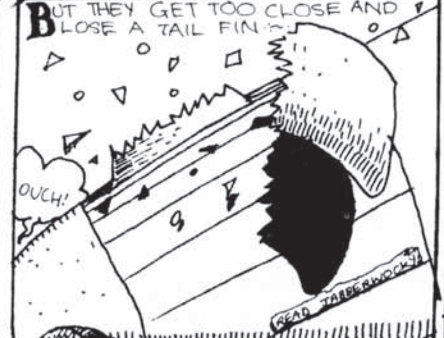
At Green Bay High School, there was drama club and plenty of script-writing practice. Writing scripts helped Dylan to learn about storyline and dialogue. Role-playing games were another big thing. From the age of fifteen, they became an important creative outlet for Dylan – “as important as comics,” he says. Role playing helped Dylan to practise creating worlds and developing characters. He remembers the first night he tried role playing at a friend’s house. “I rang my mother and said, ‘Can I stay here? It’s like being in a novel.’” It’s this creation of an imaginary environment that Dylan particularly loves. “For me, what happens next is less important than being there, of feeling the world. The environment is like a character.”

While still at school, Dylan started getting his work out to different audiences. He drew fifteen-page, full-colour birthday comics for his friends, which worked as a kind of serial. “All the comics made one big science-fiction story,” he says. Dylan also got his first paid gig: a monthly comic strip for the children’s magazine *Jabberwocky*. The strip was called “Zap Zoney of the Space Patrol”, and he was paid ten dollars a month. “I was ecstatic.” (The Zap Zoney strip, greatly transformed, makes an appearance in *Sam Zabel and the Magic Pen*. Ideas can have long and interesting lives.)









Dylan's style – the careful lines and colouring – has a precision similar to that of Hergé and his Tintin books. Dylan says Hergé has always been a very strong influence on him. "As a child, I loved how each panel in a Tintin story looked like a window that I could climb through to be in another world." He especially admires the verisimilitude of Hergé's work – the feeling of looking at a real place. "Hergé's comics are very elegant," Dylan says. "He worked hard to get just the right line." That "line" is known in French as *la ligne clair*, a drawing style pioneered by Hergé that uses strong, clear lines and flat colour. Dylan's work is very much in the *ligne clair* style, "though my drawings are a little scruffier … and I do like to use some cross-hatching and shading."

Dylan also likes the way Tintin books can be enjoyed by both children and adults. "Belgian and French comics always seemed so sophisticated," he says. "They were intellectual and philosophical." As well as the Tintin books, Dylan pored over American underground comix from the 1970s. This included the work of Robert Crumb, which taught him something else again. "The underground comix had no rules. They were wonderfully rude, and political, and crazy. And I thought, 'I can do that!'"

GETTING PUBLISHED

When school finished, Dylan's plan went like this: go to London, get work in the British comics industry, get rich and famous. His actual life went like this: work mostly in a bookshop, do comics every spare moment.

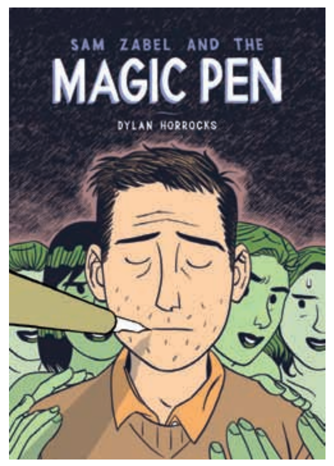
But the bookshop owner was very nice. He let Dylan use the shop photocopier. "So I was able to self-publish my mini-comic *Pickle*. I mostly gave it away to people, but I also took it to comic shops." This was how *Pickle* came to the attention of the right person – a British comic book promoter, Paul Gravett, who introduced Dylan to a Canadian comics publishing company, Black Eye Productions. "Back in New Zealand," Dylan remembers, "I got a fax – a fax!* – saying they wanted to publish my work!" Happy days.

Artists' and writers' lives seldom go in a straight line, though. Black Eye Productions later published Dylan's first book, but not until 1998. In the meantime, he worked to earn money to help support his family. This included a weekly comic strip for the *New Zealand Listener.* Then there were the long, extra hours he spent on his own stuff, like a comic book called *Café Underground*. Dylan had been working on this book "for years", but then he needed something else … another project to help him "relax". He describes this second project as "a kind of back-up story, a story about a place". Dylan knew that this place was going to be a town by the sea. He also knew that the story would be about comics.

* Scanned, printed messages or information that is transmitted through phone lines, with a fax machine at either end (like a very early form of email)

The story was eventually called *Hicksville*, and it would become the book that truly started Dylan's career. *Hicksville* is a black-and-white comic book set in a small New Zealand town. It has multiple stories, a clever use of different narrative techniques, an absorbing cast of characters, and a page-turning mystery. It's smart, sweet, and surprising (and set by the sea!). Above all, it's a celebration of comics and their place in the world of story.

Dylan's second book, *Sam Zabel and the Magic Pen*, took ten years to write and draw. "It began as a casual story, just for myself," he says. "I'm always thinking about multiple books, making notes, trying out ideas. Eventually one of these books takes over." The first chapter of the Sam Zabel book took Dylan two and a half years; the second chapter, two years. "It's a very messy process," he says.



Sam Zabel and the Magic Pen is once again about the world of comics, but this time, it questions some of that world's publications and values. It's a colourful riot of a story with a diverse cast. You'll find Venusians, monks, an author with writer's block … even a schoolgirl with a blast gun.

HOW IT HAPPENS EVERY DAY

So how does all this happen? Once an idea has been chosen (or "takes over" as Dylan puts it), how does it become a comic? How does a comic book artist pull it all together?

Notebook

"I work on the script in my notebook." (Dylan has scores of these. He's been numbering them since he was twenty.) "There's a lot of crossing out and diagrams, which is how I sort out the infinite story possibilities." The script is driven by the dialogue, but there are also notes about the setting and other details. These notes are a bit like describing film shots. Dylan uses them later on to remind him what he wants each panel to show.

Panels and pages

“Next, I break the script down into panels and pages, and I work out where the bits of dialogue will go.” The dialogue usually sits in speech bubbles – and some panels also have captions. Then come the page layouts. This involves some maths to calculate how the panels will fit on each page.

Roughs

“Lastly, I do a quick, rough version so I can read it all like an actual comic,” says Dylan. “That way, I can feel the rhythm of the story and decide whether I need another panel or even another scene.” According to Dylan, this rough stage is crucial because it’s the best time to make changes. “Editing later on – and adding or subtracting panels – has the potential to disrupt the whole layout.”

And then comes final art.

"I put a piece of paper on the drawing board. I rule up where the panel board will go. Then I start drawing." Dylan works at A3 size. Later, at the publication stage, the pages are reduced by 70 percent. This is because it's easier to draw in a larger scale, but ultimately, the final result looks better smaller.

Dylan loves drawing because it's just drawing – not the hard, mental work of writing and layout. He reckons drawing is good, physical work, "like building a chair". The drawing is also the reward after months – and even years – of thinking and scribbling, of crossing out and starting again. Over and over.

ADVICE TO ASPIRING COMIC BOOK ARTISTS

There are two important things, says Dylan:

1. Take your work seriously. Do a lot of comics. Do them all the time. And finish them. Don't just draw your characters hundreds of times and think you've made a story.
2. Secondly, get your work out there. Don't wait for someone to ask for it. Put it online yourself. Or start your own publishing company!

But mostly, just do it.

GENERAL STORE

Mr Archibald

by Oliver McLean, Arrowtown School
Winner of the Elsie Locke Writing Prize 2015

Edward kicked at the gravel and quickened his pace. It wasn't his fault his father hadn't signed up. Why couldn't he fight like everyone else?

"Looking for some eggs?"

Edward spun around, the small stones crunching underfoot. It was Mr Archibald, the shopkeeper. In his hurry, Edward had walked straight past the store.

"Yes, I was," Edward said, wondering how Mr Archibald had known. No one knew very much about Mr Archibald. He had moved to the district from Dunedin about ten years ago. Edward knew he was old and troubled – but by what or whom, he had no idea.

The shopkeeper rearranged his wrinkled face into a smile. "Sit down, boy," he said. "Something on your mind?"

"No, I just need some eggs," Edward said, lowering himself onto a bench.

Mr Archibald ignored this. "I saw your father yesterday."

Edward clenched his fists. "He's a coward! He's too scared to do his duty like all the other men around here. It's not my fault, so don't blame me."

Mr Archibald raised an eyebrow but said nothing.

"I'm sorry," Edward mumbled. "It's just … I hate my father."

The shopkeeper reached into his pocket and pulled out a pipe. "How can a boy hate his father?"

Edward looked away.

"Listen well, lad. In my life, I've done many a thing and been to many a place. But nothing at all, *nothing*, has changed who I am more than war."

Edward looked up, confused. "But you're too old to go to war, aren't you?"

"This time around maybe. But not last time."

"You were in the Boer War?"

The smoke rings from Mr Archibald's pipe seemed to freeze in mid-air. Edward's eyes bulged with excitement.

"I was."

"What was it like? Did you fire a gun? Did you win any battles?"

Mr Archibald gave a long, tired sigh.

"You know, a long time ago, I used to think much the same way you do. But war isn't what you think it is."

“How do you mean?” asked Edward.

“I mean that war is confusing. It has nothing to do with us – not you, me, your father, or any of our soldiers at the front. The only people wars are about are the leaders. The ones who drag us into their mess.”

“But we’re fighting for the Empire, aren’t we? We’re loyal to the British.”

“Oh yes, the British! Open your eyes, boy. Look around you. Do you know how many lives have been destroyed by the British Empire?

“When I was fighting the Boers, we would raid houses. We killed people farming their own land. Forever, I have to live with the knowledge … the memory … that I have killed.” Tears welled up in the old man’s eyes. “I am a murderer,” he said quietly.

“Sir, I …,” but Edward didn’t know what to say.

“You may think your father is a coward, but what he is doing is braver than anything I’ve ever done in my life. He’s risking his reputation, risking everything, by refusing to kill people. Be proud, boy. You can grow up saying your father didn’t make the same mistakes I made.”

“I never knew,” Edward said.

They talked some more, until the sun broke through the grey sky and then fell behind the pine-topped hills. As the red dusk spread through the valley, Edward stood.

“Thank you, sir, for everything. I don’t know how to repay you.”

Mr Archibald stood up, too. “Please, call me Bill. Now let’s get those eggs.”

Later, Edward began the walk back home, thinking of all the things he had to say to his father.

illustrations by Craig Phillips

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