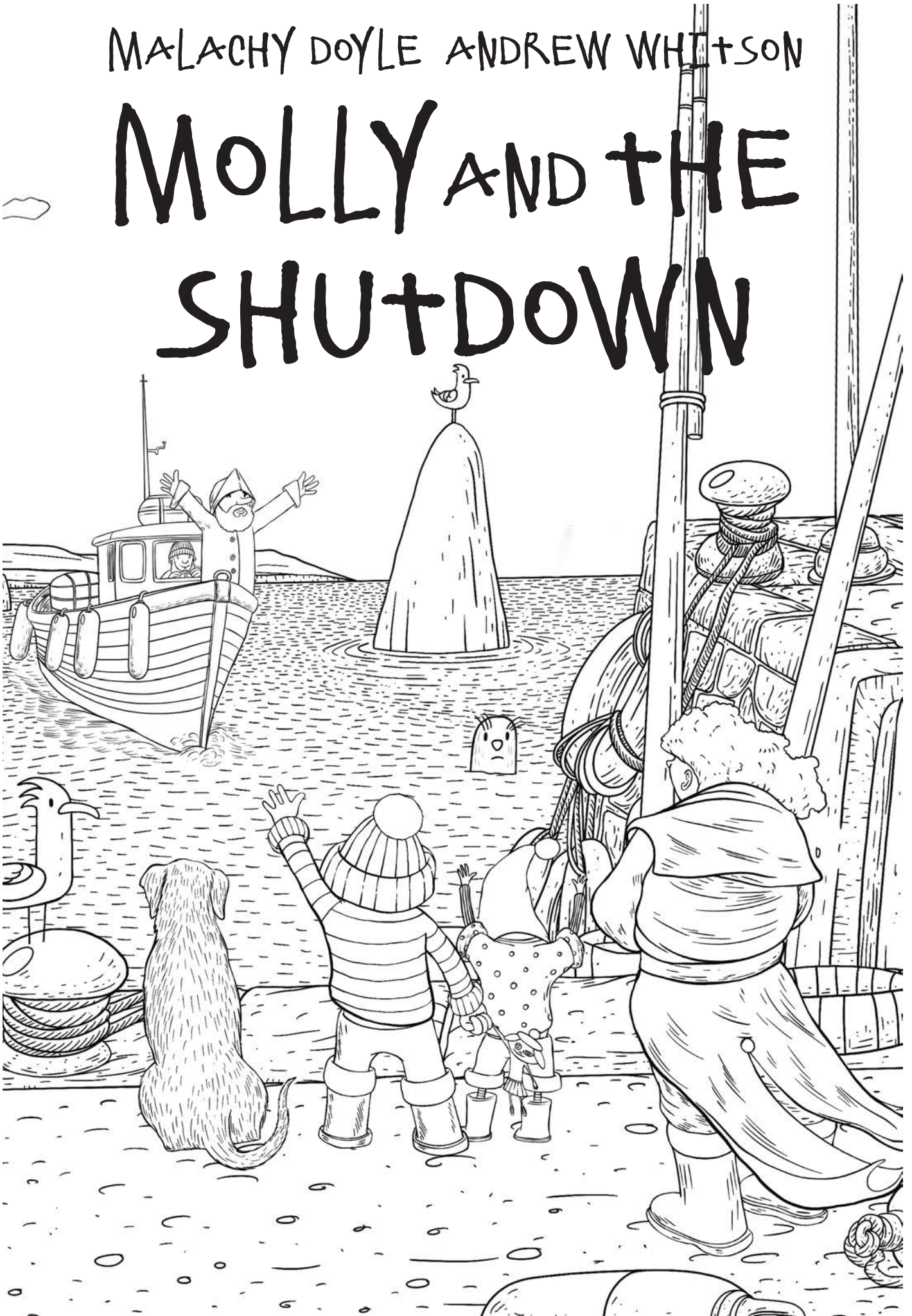
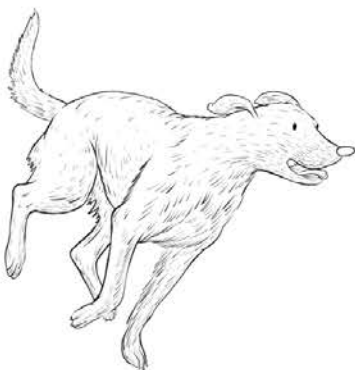
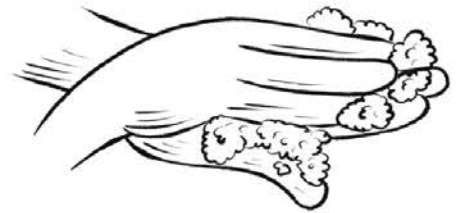
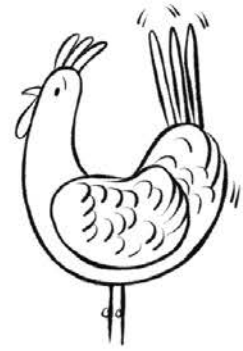
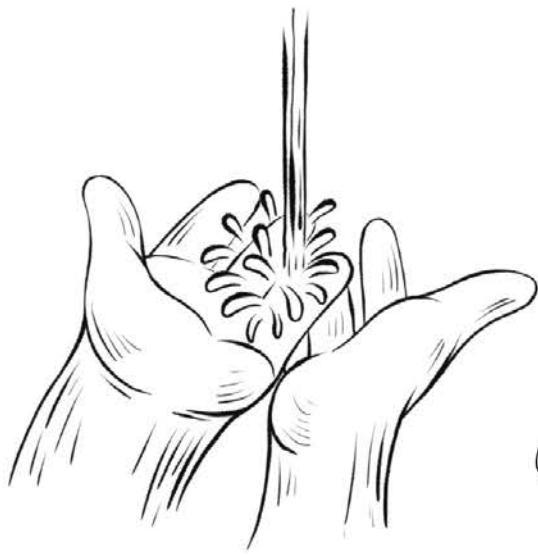


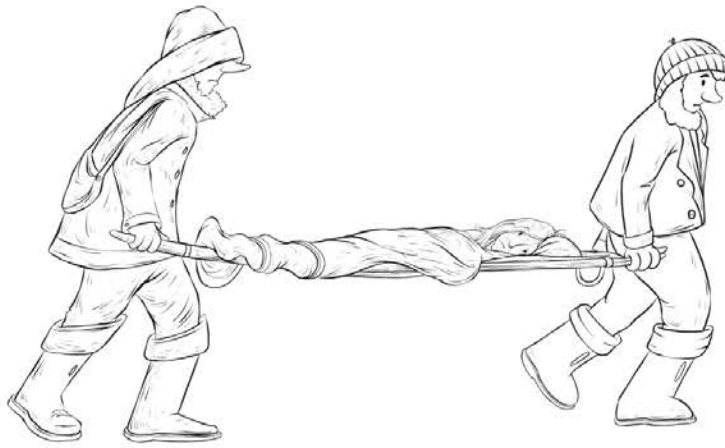
GRAFFEG

MALACHY DOYLE ANDREW WHITSON

MOLLY AND THE SHUTDOWN







For health and care workers everywhere.

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MALACHY DOYLE ANDREW WHITSON

MOLLY AND THE SHUTDOWN

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

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‘The island’s shut down! The island’s shut down!’

**Dylan was running around like a mad thing,
yelling his head off.**

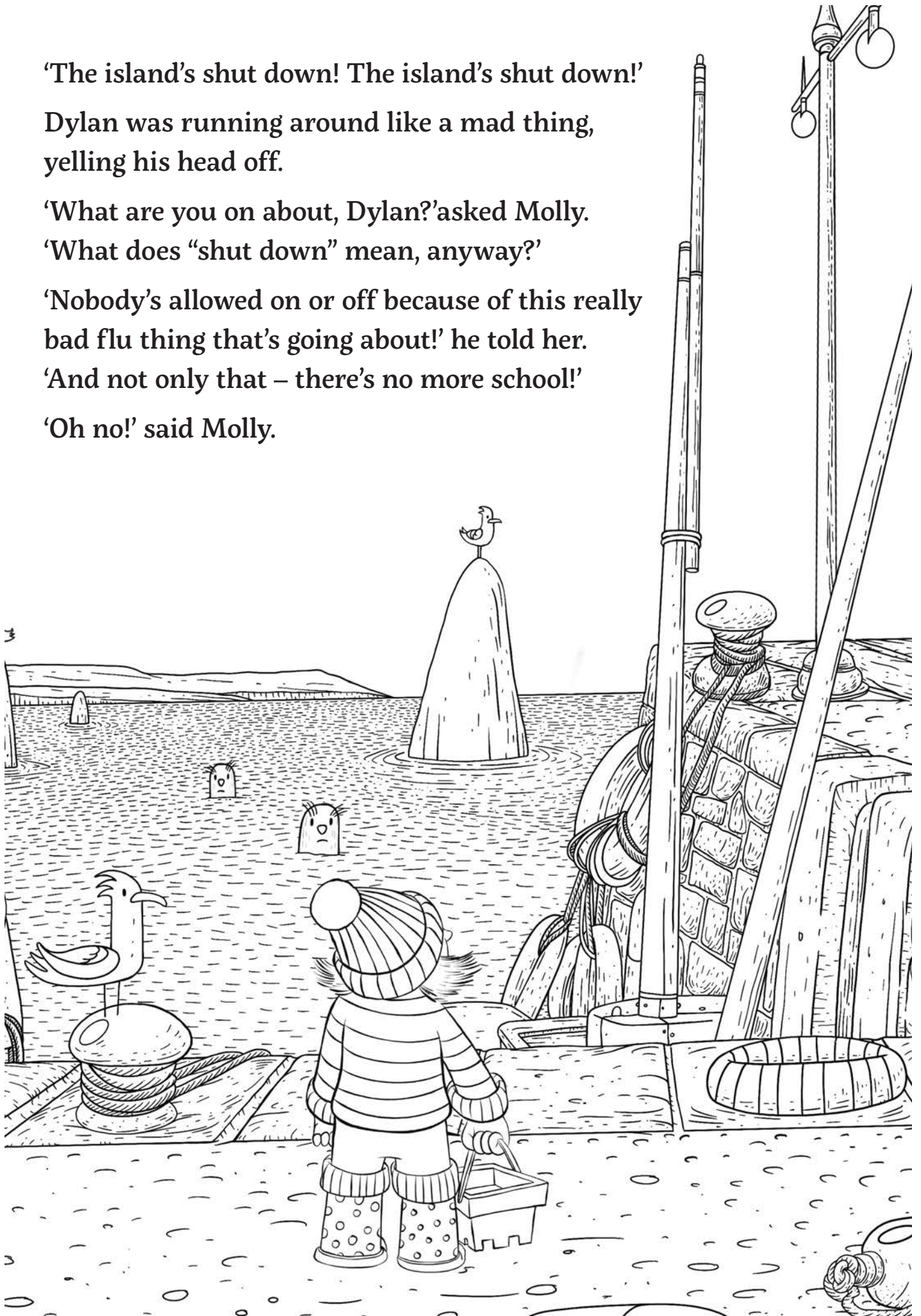
‘What are you on about, Dylan?’asked Molly.

‘What does “shut down” mean, anyway?’

**‘Nobody’s allowed on or off because of this really
bad flu thing that’s going about!’ he told her.**

‘And not only that – there’s no more school!’

‘Oh no!’ said Molly.





But Dylan was right. When Molly got home, her mum confirmed it.

‘But what about Dad!’ cried Molly.

Her father was over on the mainland, selling fish.

‘I think he might have to stay there for now,’ said her mum.

‘It’ll be hard, love, but we have to keep the island safe. I’m sure it won’t be for long.’

But even a week’s a long time when you’re missing your lovely dad.



'I'm OK, Molly,' he told her, over the phone.
'I'll be fine here at Uncle Ed's house.'

'I'm worried you'll get sick, Dad,' said Molly.
'They say lots of people are getting sick.'

'I'm being really careful,' replied her father.
'I want you to help your mum around the
place, and I'll be back just as soon as I can.'



So Molly helped with the cooking. She helped with the ducks and the chickens.

And she went to see old Mary Kate every day, to make sure she was all right.



‘We’re lucky we live on such a beautiful island,’ said Mary Kate. ‘Some people on the mainland aren’t even allowed out of their houses!’





Though the shutdown went on a lot longer than a week, life wasn't all that different for Molly, apart from no school and no Dad.

But one morning, when she popped in to check on Mary Kate, the old woman was having a bad turn.

'Run and fetch Nurse Ellen, there's a good girl,' she gasped, from her bed.



So Molly ran – and when Nurse Ellen came, she said Mary Kate had to go to hospital.

‘Is it the flu? The really bad flu?’ Molly whispered to her mum, who’d come over to help.

‘No, love,’ said her mum. ‘It’s her heart.’

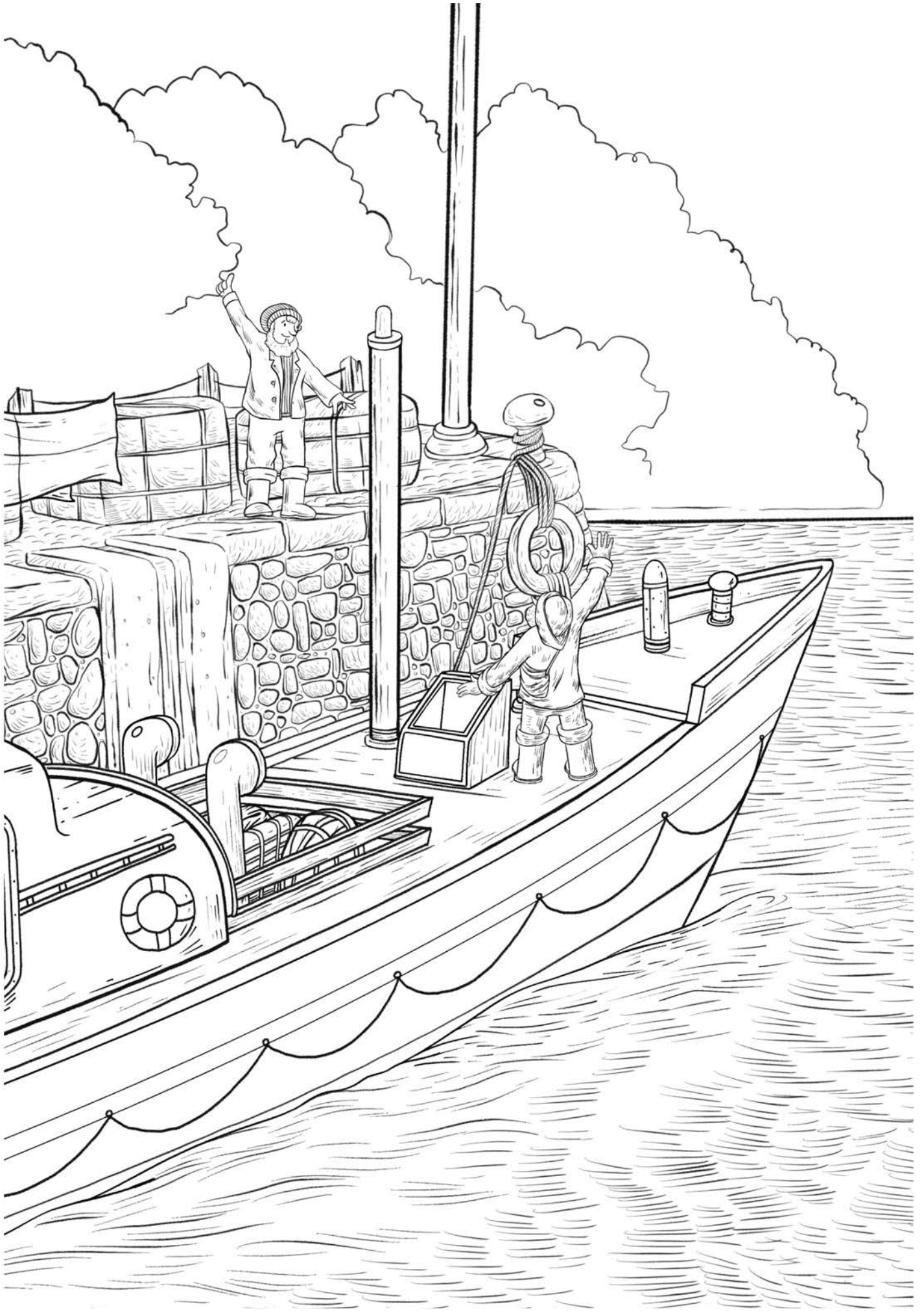
‘But how will she get to hospital? Nobody’s allowed off the island!’ said Molly.

‘I know love,’ said her mum. ‘But she badly needs a doctor. We’ve no choice.’

So Nurse Ellen called up the lifeboat.

She made a few special requests too, so the lifeboat men brought crisps and toilet paper, and all the things that the island was in danger of running out of.



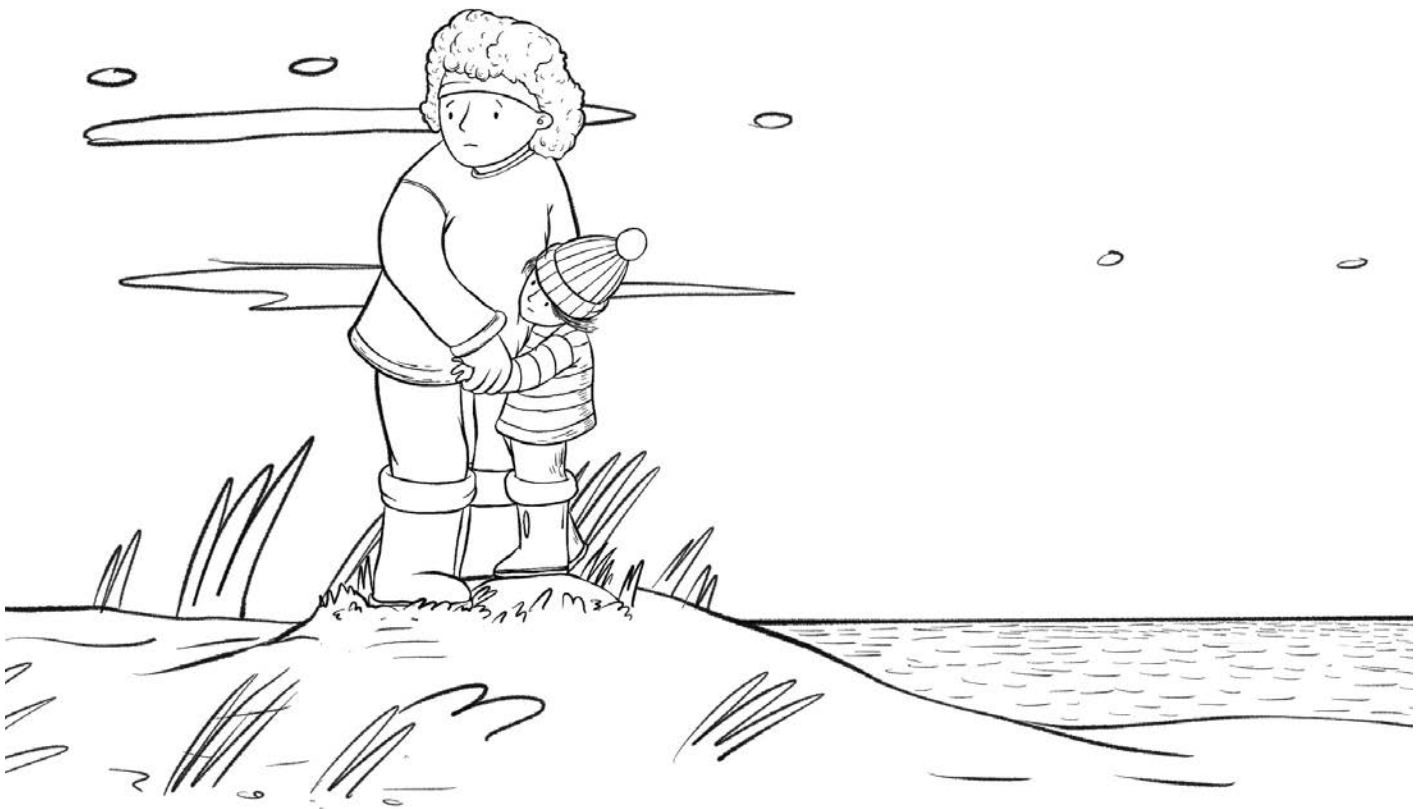


And then they took Mary Kate off to hospital.

But somehow, though everyone had been extra-specially careful, the lifeboat had brought something else to the island.

Something bad...



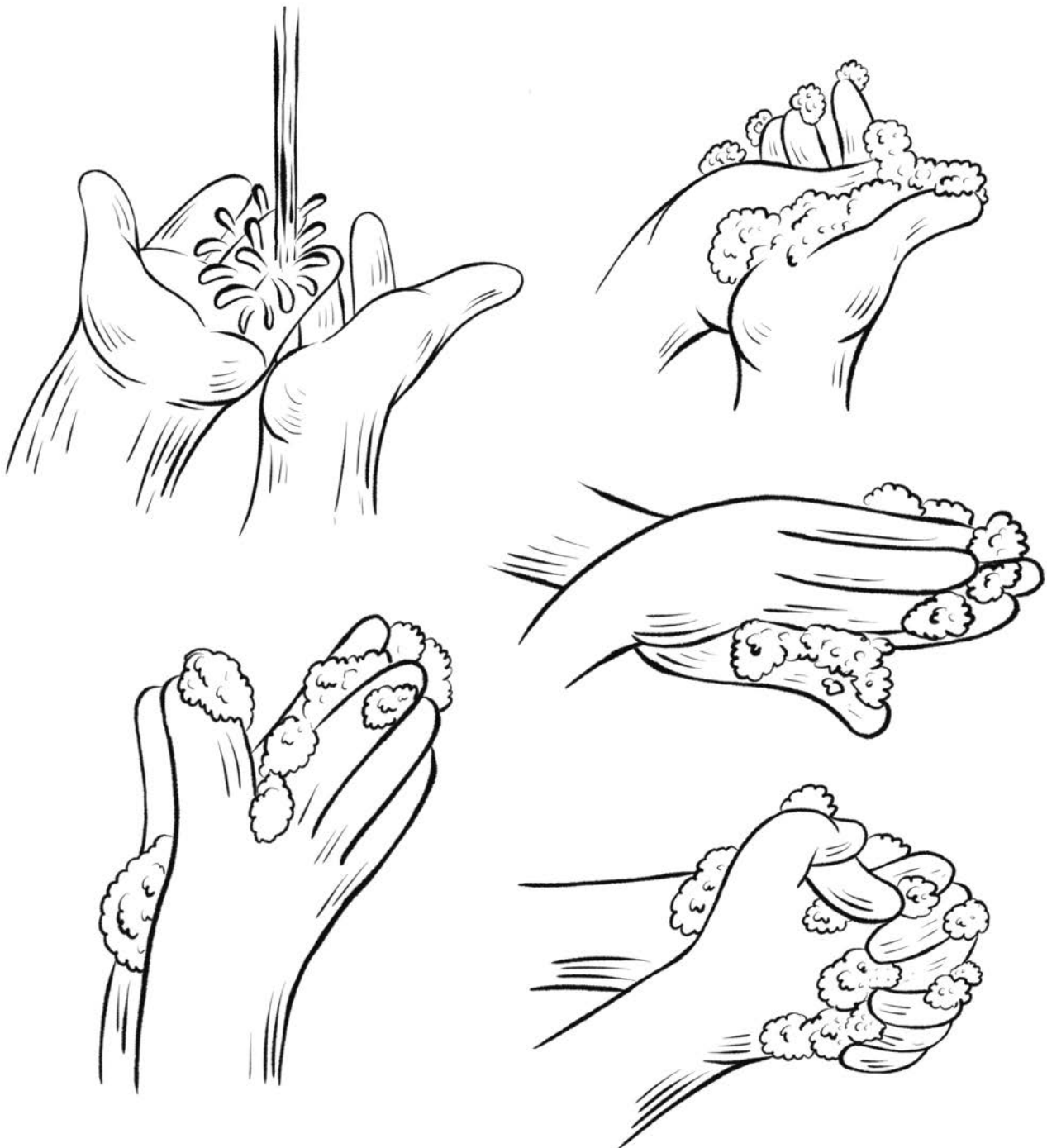


Two weeks later, nobody was allowed out of their houses.

The virus had reached the island, and they all had to try and stop it spreading – by washing their hands, lots and lots, and by staying indoors.

Only Nurse Ellen was allowed out to visit people.

Oh, and Molly's mum, who'd offered to help her.



So Molly had to do most of the jobs around the house, all by herself.

She let the dog out, when he needed a wee...

She called in the chickens to feed them – and then she decided it'd be easier to just keep them in the back room...

She did the cooking and the cleaning, because her mum was dashing round the island, helping people...

And then, when Mum came home in the evening, Molly couldn't even have a hug – for they weren't even allowed touch each other!



Three weeks later Molly and her mum were down to eating tinned sardines – and for a family of fisherfolk that means things were pretty bad.

Four more islanders had been taken to hospital by then, while others were ill at home.



The shutdown went on for a long time. A long, long time.

Molly was missing school. She was missing her friends.

But most of all...

‘How are you doing, Dad?’ she said, over the phone.

‘I miss you so much.’

‘I miss you too, love – you and Mum,’

said her dad. ‘And Uncle Ed here’s

driving me mad. He stomps

around the house all day,

playing the bagpipes!’

Molly laughed.



Molly did all her schoolwork.

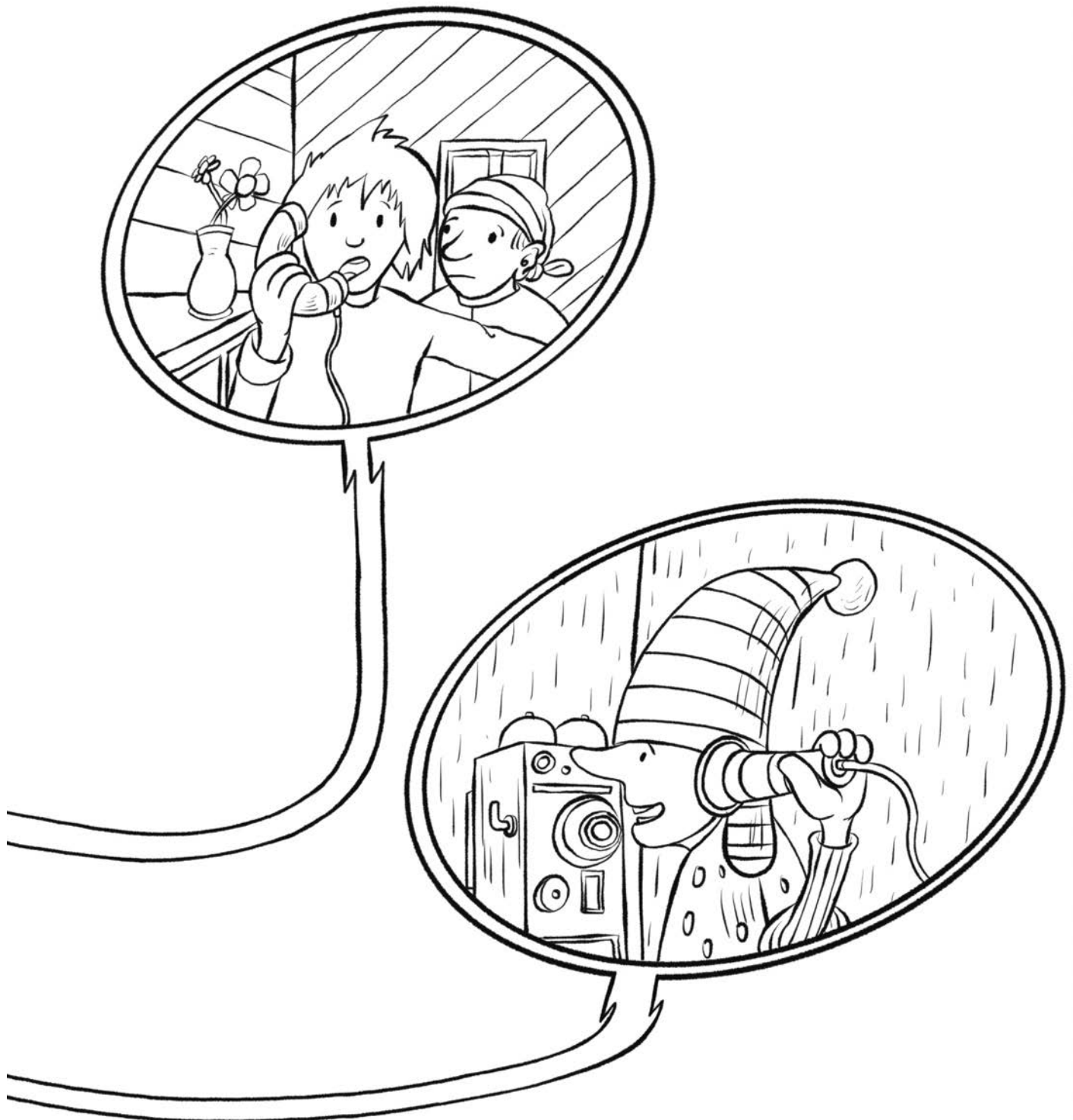
She taught the dog tricks, and they did
keep-fit together.



She did all her jigsaws in world record time, and made up some new games too.

She talked to Dylan and her friends (and her teacher) on the phone.

She read her favourite books, over and over, and tried some new ones she hadn't read yet – and they were really good as well.



And do you know what?

In time, the shutdown eased – and all the islanders recovered.

Even Mary Kate came home, safe and well.

And while not everything got back to normal straight away, in a funny way Molly quite enjoyed having so much time at home, just her and the dog and the ducks and the chickens...

She even got a bit better on the fiddle!



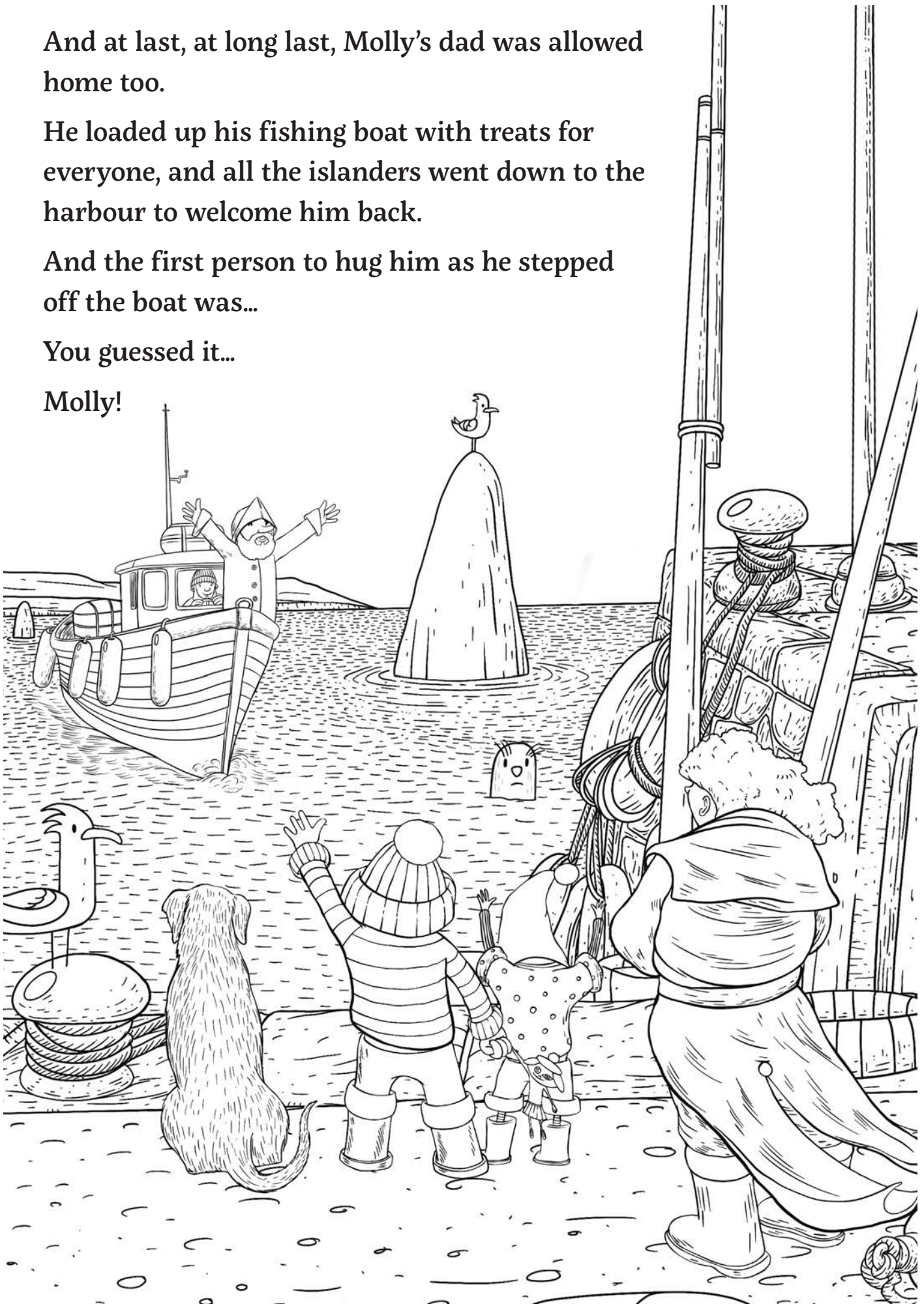
And at last, at long last, Molly's dad was allowed home too.

He loaded up his fishing boat with treats for everyone, and all the islanders went down to the harbour to welcome him back.

And the first person to hug him as he stepped off the boat was...

You guessed it...

Molly!



Malachy Doyle

Malachy Doyle grew up by the sea in Northern Ireland, and after living in Wales for many years has returned to Ireland. He and his wife Liz bought an old farmhouse on a small island off the coast of Donegal, where they live with their dogs, cats and ducks.

Malachy has had well over a hundred books published, from pop-up books for toddlers to gritty teenage novels. Over the years he has won many prestigious book awards, and his work is available in around thirty languages.

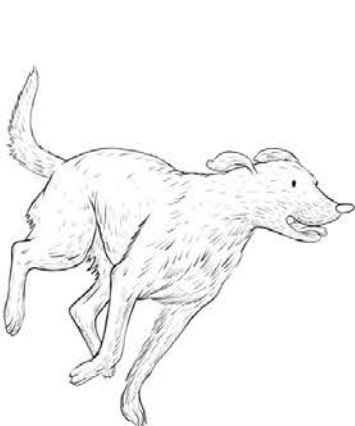
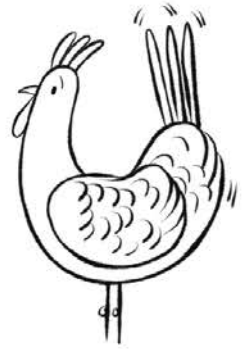
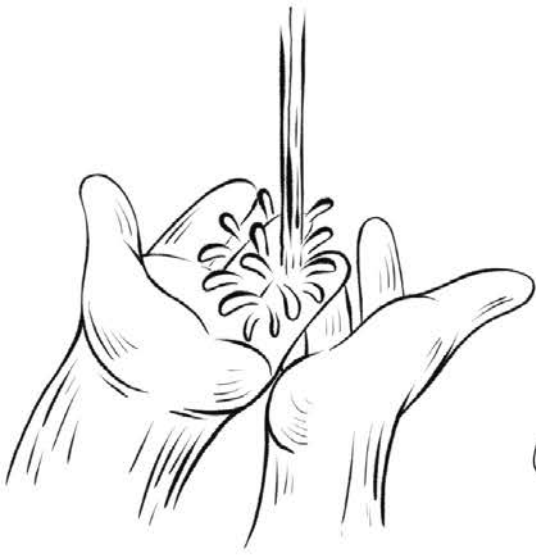
As well as the two previous stories in the Molly series, *Molly and the Stormy Sea* and *Molly and the Whale*, his recent books include *The Miracle of Hanukkah*, *Rama and Sita*, *Jack and the Jungle* and *Big Bad Biteasaurus* (Bloomsbury), *Fug and the Thumps* (Firefly Press), *Cinderfella* (Walker Books) and *Ootch Cootch* (Graffeg), which is illustrated by his daughter, Hannah Doyle.

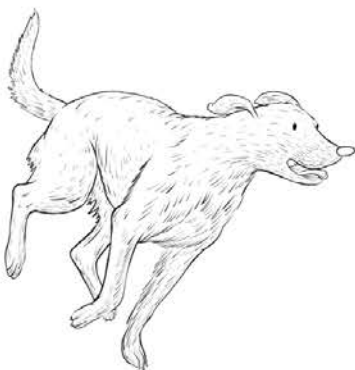
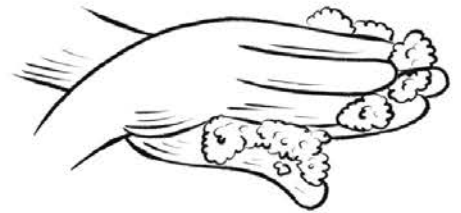
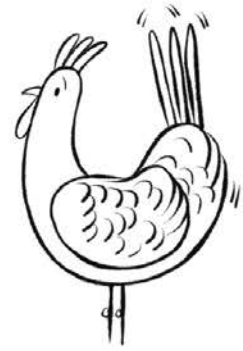
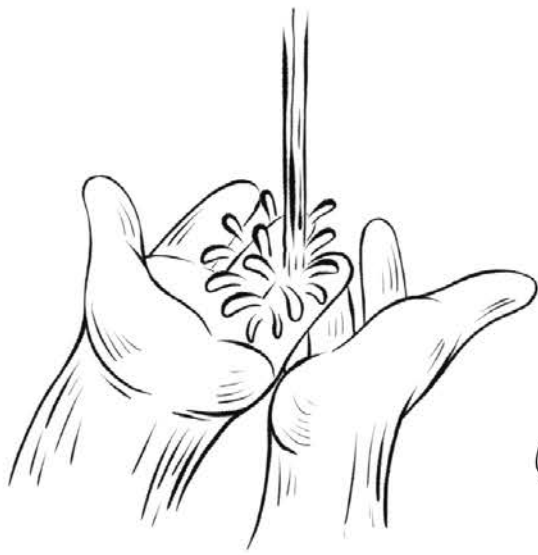
Andrew Whitson

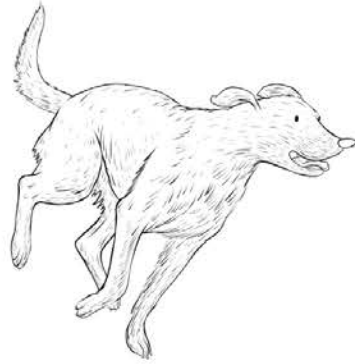
Andrew Whitson is an award-winning artist and Belfast native who likes to be called Mr. Ando! He lives in an old house which is nestled discreetly on the side of a misty hill; at the edge of a magic wood, below an enchanted castle in the shadow of a giant's nose. His house looks down over Belfast Harbour where the Titanic was built and up at the Belfast Cavehill where an American B-17 Flying Fortress bomber plane once crashed during World War II!

Mr. Ando makes pictures for books in the tower of a very old church and works so late that he often gets locked in. He has therefore forged a secret magic key which he keeps at his side at all times and uses to escape from the church when there is no one else around.

Mr. Ando has illustrated over twenty books under his own name, the most recent of which being the *Molly* series with Malachy Doyle and the award winning *Rita* series of picture books with Myra Zepf.







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