A Rock the Boat Book

First published in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and Australia
by Rock the Boat, an imprint of Oneworld Publications, 2023

Originally published in Dutch as *Mijn bijzonder rare week met Tess*
by Em. Querido's Uitgeverij, Amsterdam, 2013

Copyright © Anna Woltz, 2013, 2023
English translation copyright © David Colmer, 2023
Illustration copyright © David Dean, 2023

The moral right of Anna Woltz to be identified as the Author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved
Copyright under Berne Convention
A CIP record for this title is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-86154-296-3
eISBN 978-0-86154-297-0

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the support of the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

Nederlands Letterenfonds
dutch foundation for literature

Typeset by Geethik Technologies
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

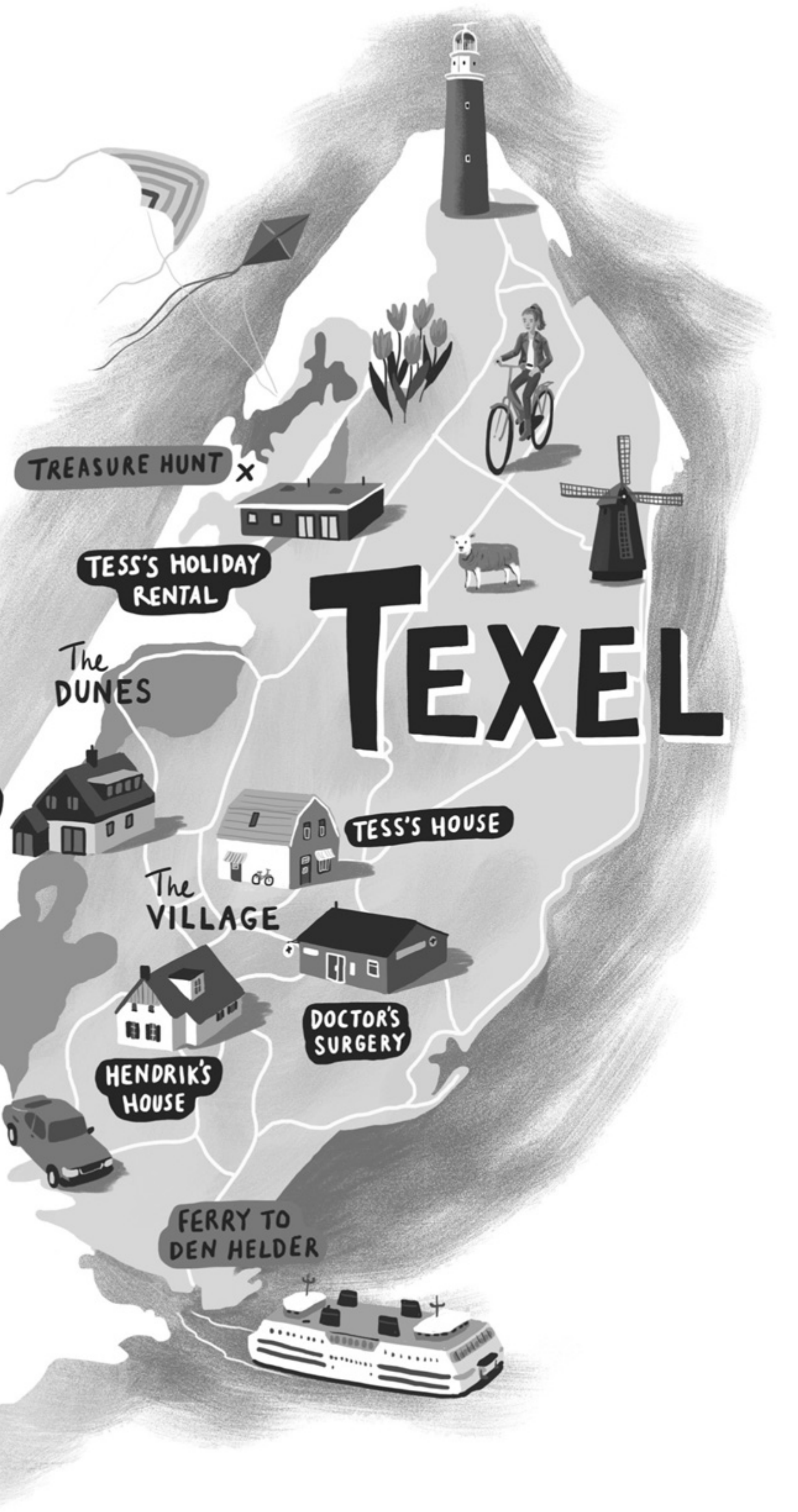
This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, businesses, companies, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Oneworld Publications
10 Bloomsbury Street, London,
WC1B 3SR, England

FSC www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C018072

Stay up to date with the latest books,
special offers, and exclusive content from
Rock the Boat with our newsletter

Sign up on our website
rocktheboatbooks.com


TREASURE HUNT X
TESS'S HOLIDAY RENTAL
TEXEL
The DUNES
SAM'S HOLIDAY HOME
TESS'S HOUSE
The VILLAGE
DOCTOR'S SURGERY
HENDRIK'S HOUSE
FERRY TO DEN HELDER



1

I saw it happen.

Dad's red jumper and my striped one were the goalposts. The sun was shining on my arms and the stiff sea breeze had decided to join the game. I chased the ball until I couldn't take another step, then stood there panting.

I could see Jasper in the distance. He wasn't doing anything. Just walking along the empty beach, staring up at the sky. Studying the white clouds drifting over the island as if he was forty, not twelve.

"Come on, Sam," Dad called. "We're in the middle of a match!"

"I know," I called back.

But I didn't move. I could feel the dry sand working its way up between my toes. I was an upside-down hourglass. I only needed to wiggle my toes and I'd gain another couple of minutes.

"Sam!" Dad shouted again.

I looked over at Jasper one last time and that was when it happened. He took another step, but instead of sand his foot landed on air. Arms flapping, he toppled into an enormous hole.

It was brilliant.

For a moment at least. Until my brother started screaming and the grin that had crept across my face vanished.

The wind whooshed and the waves roared, but nothing could drown out Jasper's screams. My blood turned cold. He didn't sound human, more like an animal.

Dad and I started running at the same time. We dashed across the loose sand as fast as we could.

We couldn't even see Jasper any more. The beach had swallowed him up.

"Jass!" I called.

"We're coming!" Dad shouted.

And then we were standing at the edge of the hole. My brother was lying at the bottom, holding his leg. His face was scrunched up and his hair was covering his eyes. Everything about him that had been so annoying these last few weeks was gone.

When he saw us, he stopped screaming. He looked up at Dad and tried to catch his breath. "I heard a snap," he said. "When I landed. There was a snap."

I shivered. It was still April. Way too cold to be standing on a windy beach with bare arms.

Dad lowered himself into the hole. When he stood in it, the sand came up to his waist. I'd only seen a hole in the ground this deep once before. That was three weeks ago, so I remembered it exactly. My whole class got to throw white rose petals into it. By the handful. I was scared the petals would run out before it was my turn, but they had an extra basket ready. I was the first one to take them out of the new basket.

Dad knelt down next to Jasper and lifted up his trouser leg.

"Careful!" I cried.

My brother didn't say anything.

"You're hurting him!"

I was scared to go too close to the edge of the hole in case the side collapsed.

Dad untied Jasper's shoelace, and I saw my brother flinch. But he still didn't make a sound.

"Give me your phone," I shouted down to Dad. "I'll call an ambulance. They can send one to the beach."

"Don't be silly," my father said.

"But he's in pain! Can't you see that? He's not saying anything, but he needs to go to hospital."

Dad nodded. "We'll take him to a doctor."

"But he can't walk."

"I'll carry him across the beach," Dad said. "Then we'll drive to the village."

"You're mad! You'll stumble while you're carrying him. Then his bones will move and grow crooked and he'll never walk again. Or he'll have a limp and then he'll never—"

"Shut up, will you?" Jasper blurted. He swiped his hair out of his eyes and looked straight at me. Now he was being Jasper again. The annoying Jasper from the last few weeks. "It hurts enough without having to listen to a little kid screeching too."

I took a step back.

Silently I watched Dad grab him under the arms and hoist him up. Jasper's face was pale and I could see him clenching his teeth. But he didn't say anything, and I knew I had to keep quiet now too.

I wasn't allowed to scream for him. I wasn't allowed to call an ambulance. He was one and a half years older than me, and by the time I was born it was already too late. He had a massive head start, but nobody said, stop, everyone back to the starting line, let's try again.

I bent down, picked a few white shells out of the sand, and tossed them one after the other into the hole. The last one landed on Jasper's head.