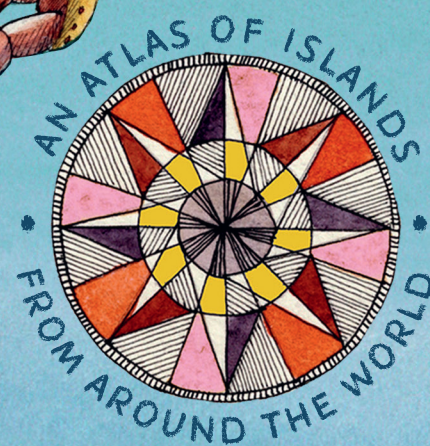


Once upon an Island



Alice Albinia

illustrated by Helen Cann

MAGIC
CAT

*In memory of the hopes and dreams, pasts and futures,
lost this year in Palestine and beyond — A.A.*

*For Laura Coleman, who lives on her own small island,
with much love — H.C.*

*The publisher would like to thank every person who graciously
shared their stories to help complete this book.*

MAGIC CAT
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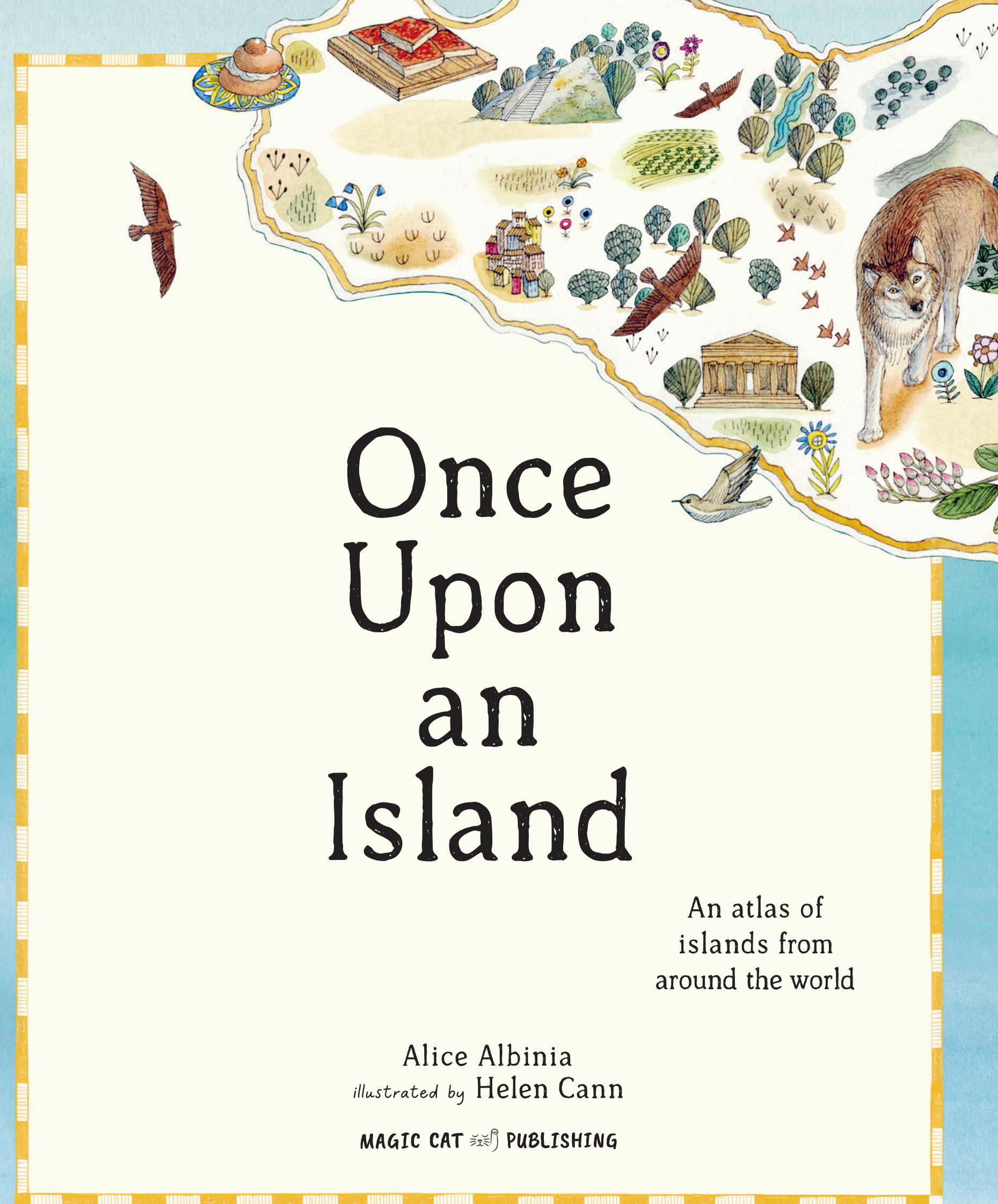
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Explore 20 wondrous islands, from south to north.



Our journey begins in Chiloé, on the Pacific coast of South America, and winds northwards through oceans, lakes and rivers to Baffin Island in the Arctic Circle.

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ONCE UPON AN ISLAND

*There's a kind of magic in crossing
over the water to an island.*

*Islands are worlds of their own, defined in
their specialness by the water that
encircles them. On islands we see things
more clearly: the histories of rocks, plants,
animals and humans, and what the passage
of people, with their languages and loves,
does to local ecosystems and species.*

*While writing about the islands in this
book, I discovered that amidst the stories of
struggle, these places hold onto stories about
women. Stories that might disappear on the
mainland cling to islands like thistledown in
hair or burrs in a sheep's fleece. Across the
world, islands have preserved feminist stories:
from Chinese Buddhism to Incan and Mayan
mythology, from Japanese and Greek history
to Islamic and Christian mysticism. People
have met, imagined and celebrated strong
island women since the earliest stories were
told — from the poet Sappho on Lesbos to
Pele, the Hawaiian fire goddess.*

*This book, then, ends with the voices of women
today, sharing their own experiences of island life.*

*It has been both beautiful and moving to travel
the world through stories of islanders. Along the
way, the incredible diversity of cultures, landscapes
and ways of living shines through, reminding us of
the richness that difference brings. I hope that,
like me, you will find these voices — speaking of life
in its many forms — inspiring: a modern chorus of
hope for this fragile, precious planet we call home.*





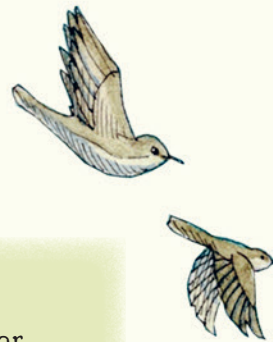
WHAT IS AN ISLAND?

AN ISLAND IS LAND SURROUNDED BY WATER.

Islands are made in different ways. Some come from volcanoes under the sea. Some are built by tiny animals called coral polyps. Others break off from other pieces of land. Rivers can also make islands by dropping mud and sand in one spot.

Some islands are tiny and INHABITED only by wildlife.

Other islands are much larger, supporting entire VILLAGES, TOWNS or CITIES.



HOW ISLANDS FORMED

Millions of years ago, Earth's supercontinents split apart, forming smaller continents and countless islands. New islands continued to appear as volcanoes erupted, glaciers carved the land and rivers and seas shifted. Later, as humans explored the planet, they created islands of their own. Some islands are formed twice-daily by tides moving up and down the land, with the gravitational pull of the Moon and Sun.



TYPES OF ISLANDS

Microcontinental islands broke off from supercontinents hundreds of millions of years ago, becoming isolated in the ocean. Examples include *Madagascar* and the *Seychelles*, once part of *Gondwanaland*.

Continental islands were once connected to a continent but became separated by rising seas or shifting rivers. Examples include *Sicily* (Italy), *Texel* (The Netherlands) and the *Tiwi Islands* (Australia).

Barrier islands are long, narrow strips of land running along coastlines. They play a crucial role in protecting the mainland from waves and storms – like *Isla Mujeres* (Mexico).

Oceanic islands are created by underwater volcanoes rising from the seafloor. *Hawai'i* (USA) and *Samoa* are famous examples.

Volcanic islands form when lava and other geological materials build up where tectonic plates shift. Some, like *Vis* (Croatia), are made largely from sedimentary rock, formed from ancient shells and sea life. Others form part of larger mountain ranges extending into the sea, like *Chiloé* (Chile), *Lesvos* (Greece), *Mount Putuo* (China), *Yonaguni* (Japan) and *Waiheke* (Aotearoa New Zealand).

Glacial islands were shaped by glaciers moving across the island long ago, as is the case with *Orkney* (Scotland). Glaciers still move and melt today, reshaping places like *Baffin* (Canada).

River islands form when mud, sand and rocks collect in one spot, allowing plants to grow, as in the *Mariuá* and *Anavilhanas Archipelagos* in Brazil's *Rio Negro*.

Lake islands can form naturally or be made by people, like the ancient crannogs in *Orkney*.

Coral islands are built by tiny sea creatures called coral polyps over many years, creating places like the reefs of *Madagascar*, the *Seychelles* and *Samoa*.

Human-made islands also exist. The *Uros* islands in *Lake Titicaca* (Peru/Bolivia) are woven from reeds. By contrast, *Mumbai* (India) was once a cluster of islands reclaimed by humans into a single landmass.

Lastly, some *tidal* islands connect to the mainland at low tide and become surrounded by water when the tide rises, like *Gugh*, which is connected to *St Agnes*, *Isles of Scilly* (England).

