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Opening extract from

The Tobermory Cat

Written by

Debi Gliori

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To the people of Mull who gave this book their blessing ~ this is for you



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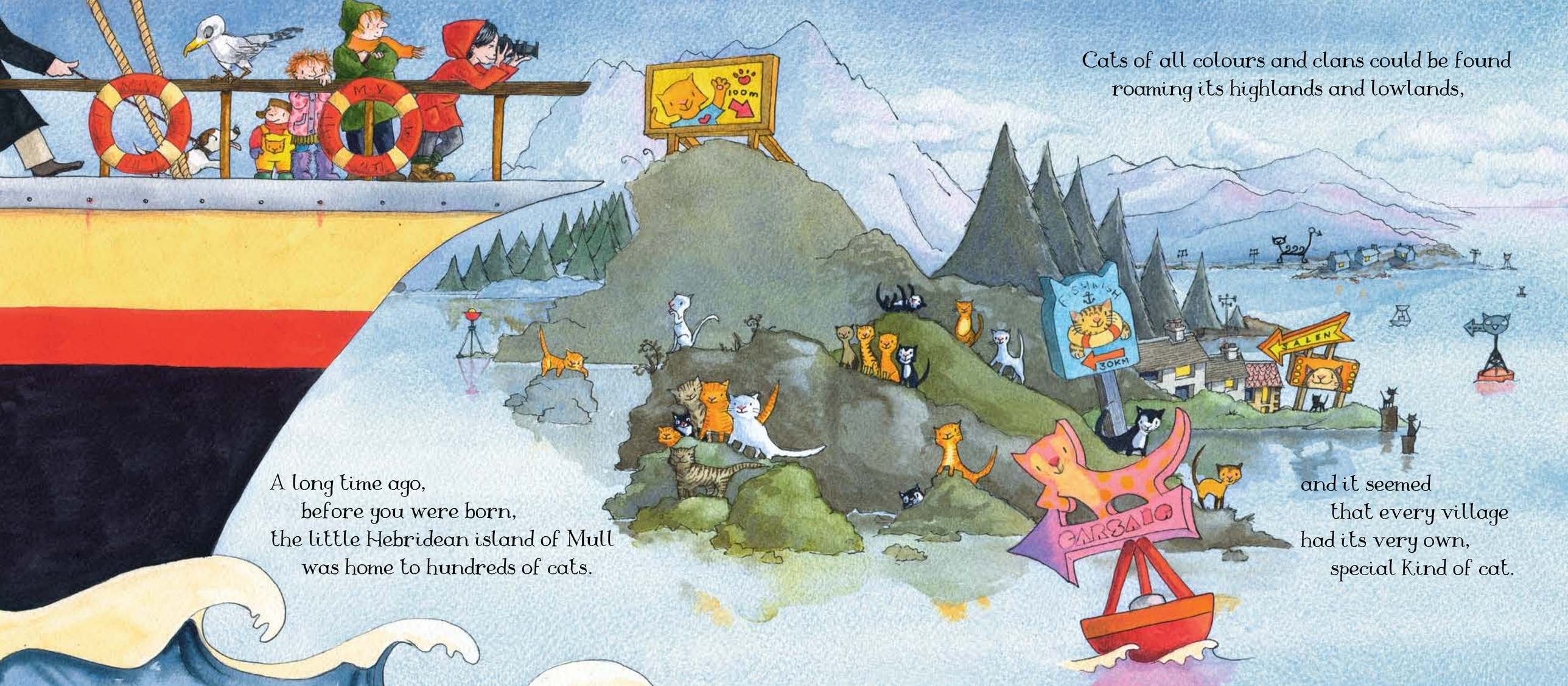
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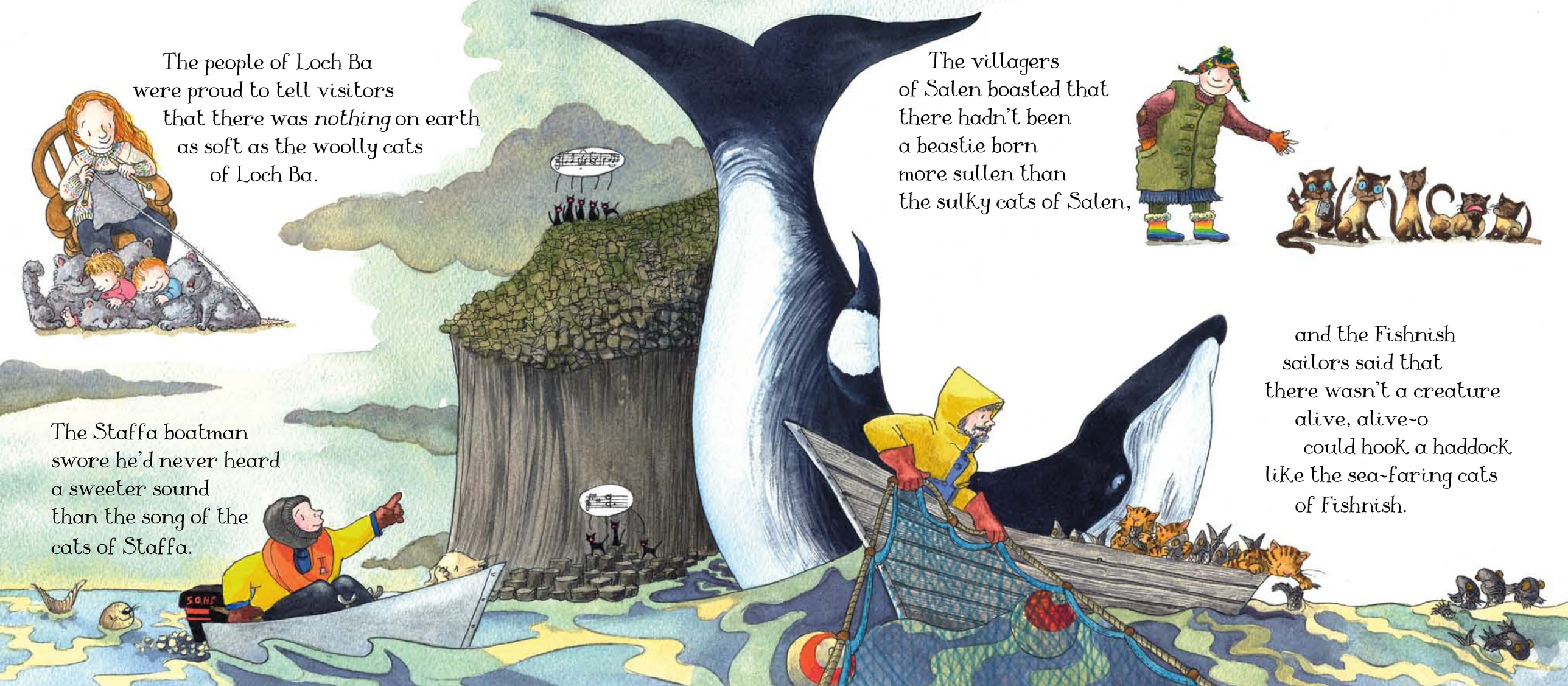
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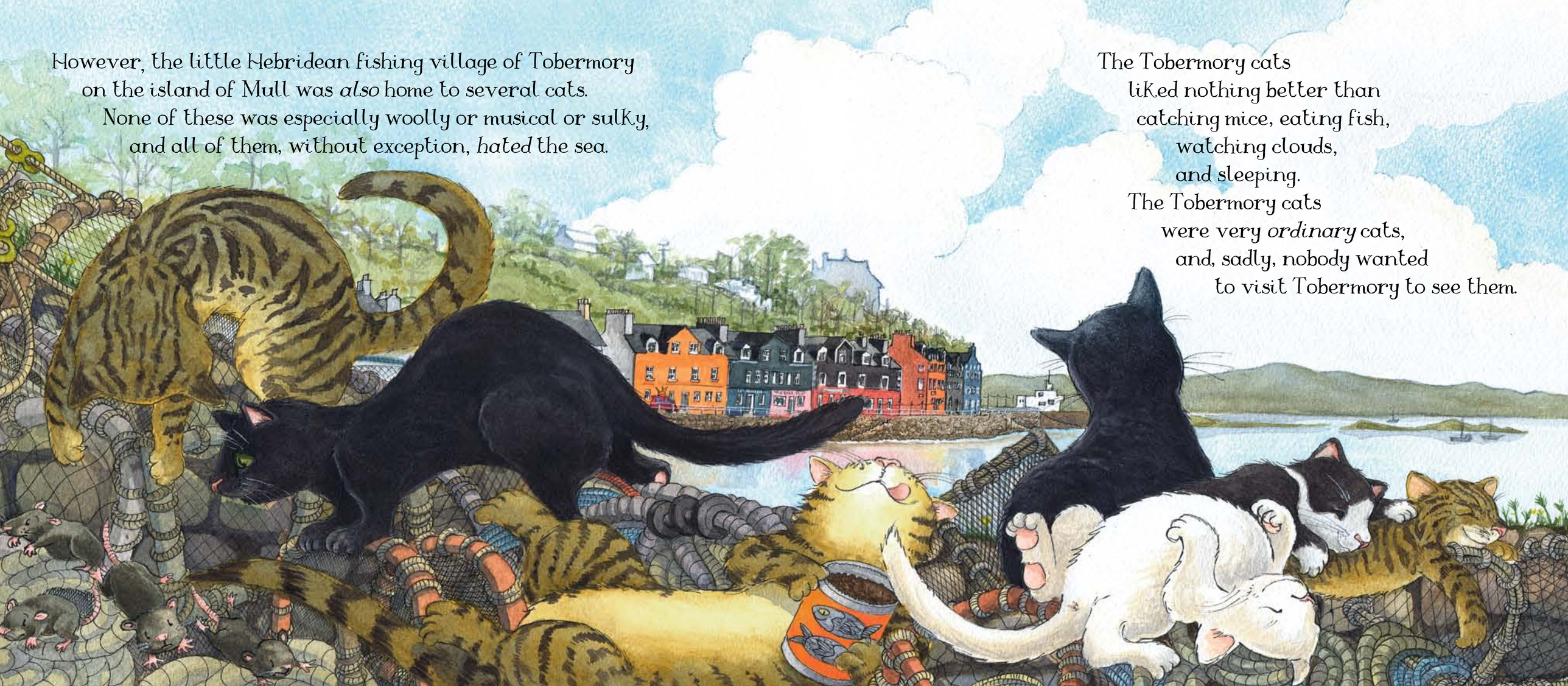
A long time ago,
before you were born,
the little Hebridean island of Mull
was home to hundreds of cats.

Cats of all colours and clans could be found
roaming its highlands and lowlands,

and it seemed
that every village
had its very own,
special kind of cat.

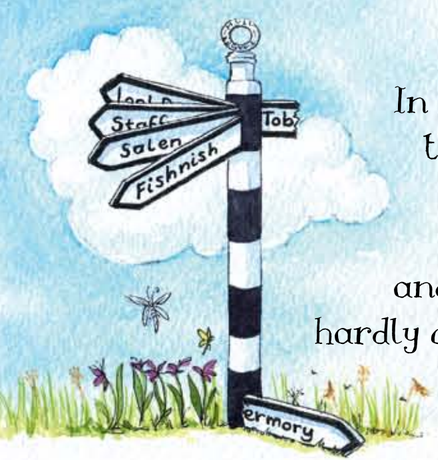

The people of Loch Ba
were proud to tell visitors
that there was *nothing* on earth
as soft as the woolly cats
of Loch Ba.
The villagers
of Salen boasted that
there hadn't been
a beastie born
more sullen than
the sulky cats of Salen,
The Staffa boatman
swore he'd never heard
a sweeter sound
than the song of the
cats of Staffa.
and the Fishnish
sailors said that
there wasn't a creature
alive, alive-o
could hook a haddock
like the sea-faring cats
of Fishnish.


The people of Loch Ba,
Staffa, Salen and Fishnish
were only too delighted to show
visitors round their villages
and sell them
their cat postcards
and cat t-shirts
and cat soap
and cat chocolates
Everyone agreed that
cats were a very good thing
to bring in the visitors.



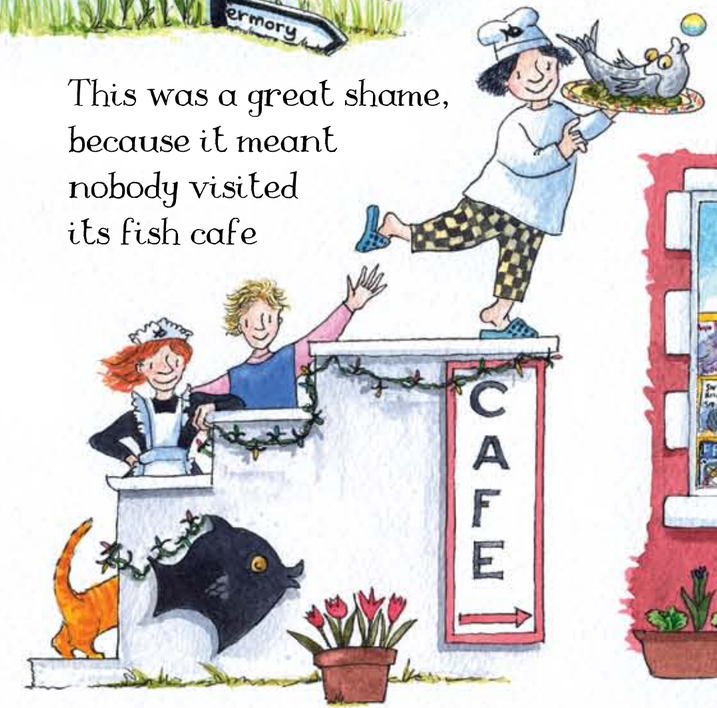
However, the little Hebridean fishing village of Tobermory
on the island of Mull was *also* home to several cats.
None of these was especially woolly or musical or sulky,
and all of them, without exception, *hated* the sea.

The Tobermory cats
liked nothing better than
catching mice, eating fish,
watching clouds,
and sleeping.
The Tobermory cats
were very *ordinary* cats,
and, sadly, nobody wanted
to visit Tobermory to see them.

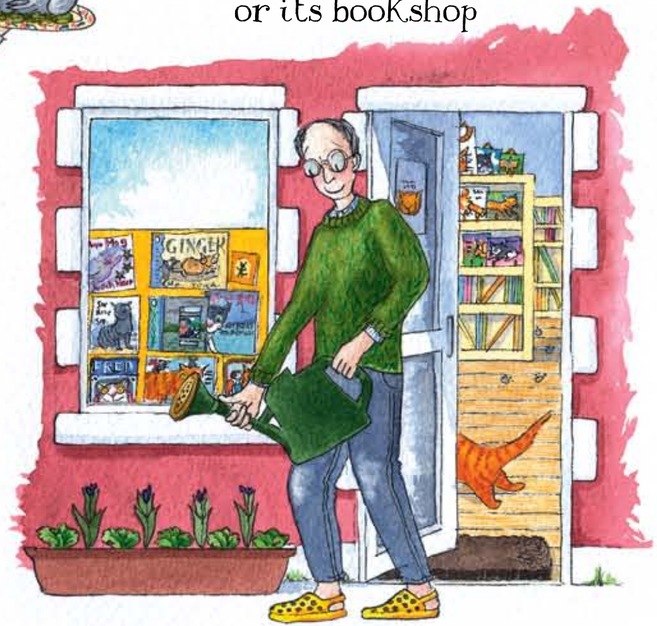


In fact, what with
the famously woolly Ba-Ba Cats,
the Singing Cat Choir of Staffa,
the Snotty Cats of Salen
and the Fishing Felines of Fishnish,
hardly *anybody* bothered to visit Tobermory anymore.

This was a great shame,
because it meant
nobody visited
its fish cafe



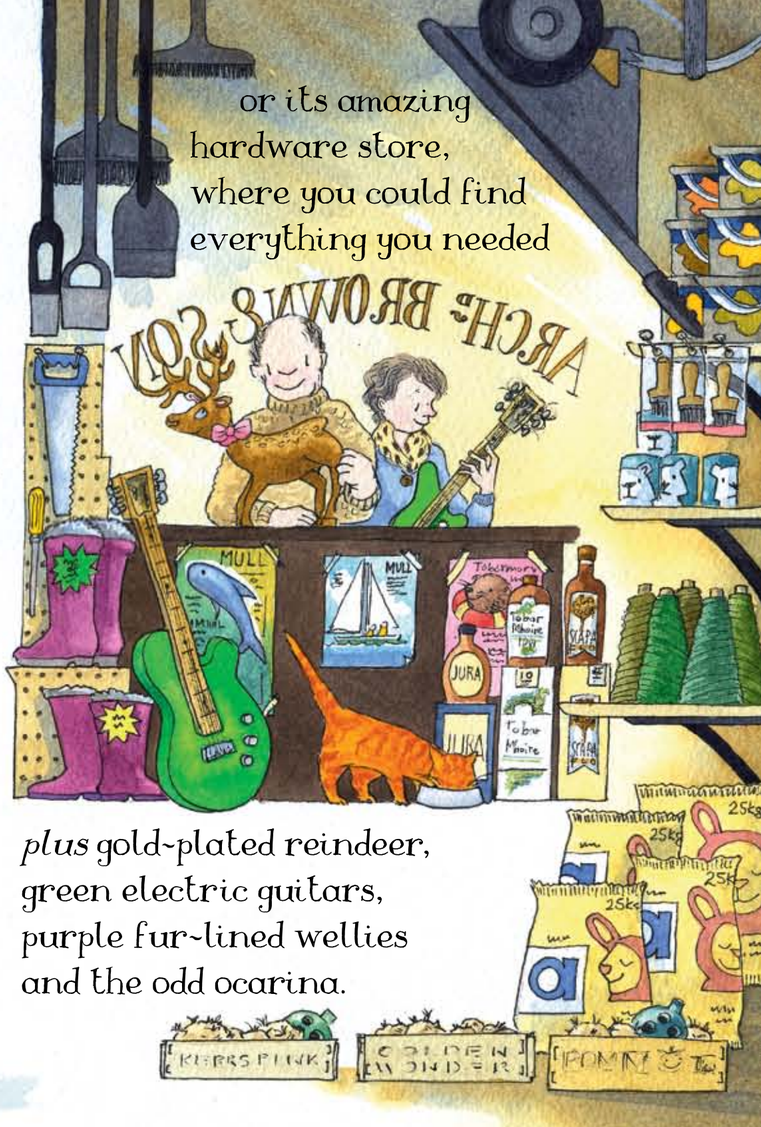
or its bookshop



or its beautiful
launderette



or its amazing
hardware store,
where you could find
everything you needed



plus gold-plated reindeer,
green electric guitars,
purple fur-lined wellies
and the odd ocarina.


Without visitors,
the people of Tobermory grew desperate.
They had a meeting in the village hall.
Our fish are floundering.
Our books are mouldering.
Our launderette is folding.
Our reindeer, guitars, wellies and ocarinas are becoming antiques.
I know.
Something *had* to be done.
'I know,' said a very small person, 'let's teach *our* cats how to be special.'