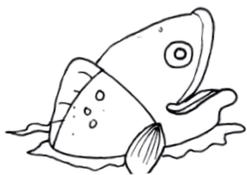


22MIDNIGHT



ONCE UPON A
GOSPORT



VICTORIA & TILLY'S ROYAL EXCURSION





Step into a magical world where Gosport's stories spring to life, where the past isn't something you read about, but something you meet. Here, heroes and heroines, sailors and scientists, inventors and dreamers transcend time, space, and history to share their adventures with you.

Every page is a doorway into Gosport's spirit of curiosity, courage, and imagination.

Once Upon a Gosport has been lovingly created by Annelies James of 22Midnight, bringing together local tales and timeless lessons for new generations to enjoy.

This enchanting project is funded by the Gosport Heritage Grant, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Hampshire Cultural Trust, and Gosport Borough Council, each helping to ensure our heritage continues to inspire wonder for years to come.





With Thanks...

Special thanks to Richard Oakes the fantastic Gosport based artist and illustrator.

Thanks also to Charlie Fletcher, Hannah Boyd and the 'GHG Girls' Claire Hargreaves, Charli Street and Lu Mellors. Big thanks to my people, Ian Richardson and Phyllis Sheldon.

Projects are only ever as good as their community and we have welcomed an amazing community of creatives, supporters and volunteers to make this project happen.

For more thanks and resources visit the website.



On a bright morning in Gosport, the market was full of chatter.

Stalls brimmed with baskets of fish, flowers, and fresh bread.

Between the legs of shoppers darted a stripy cat.

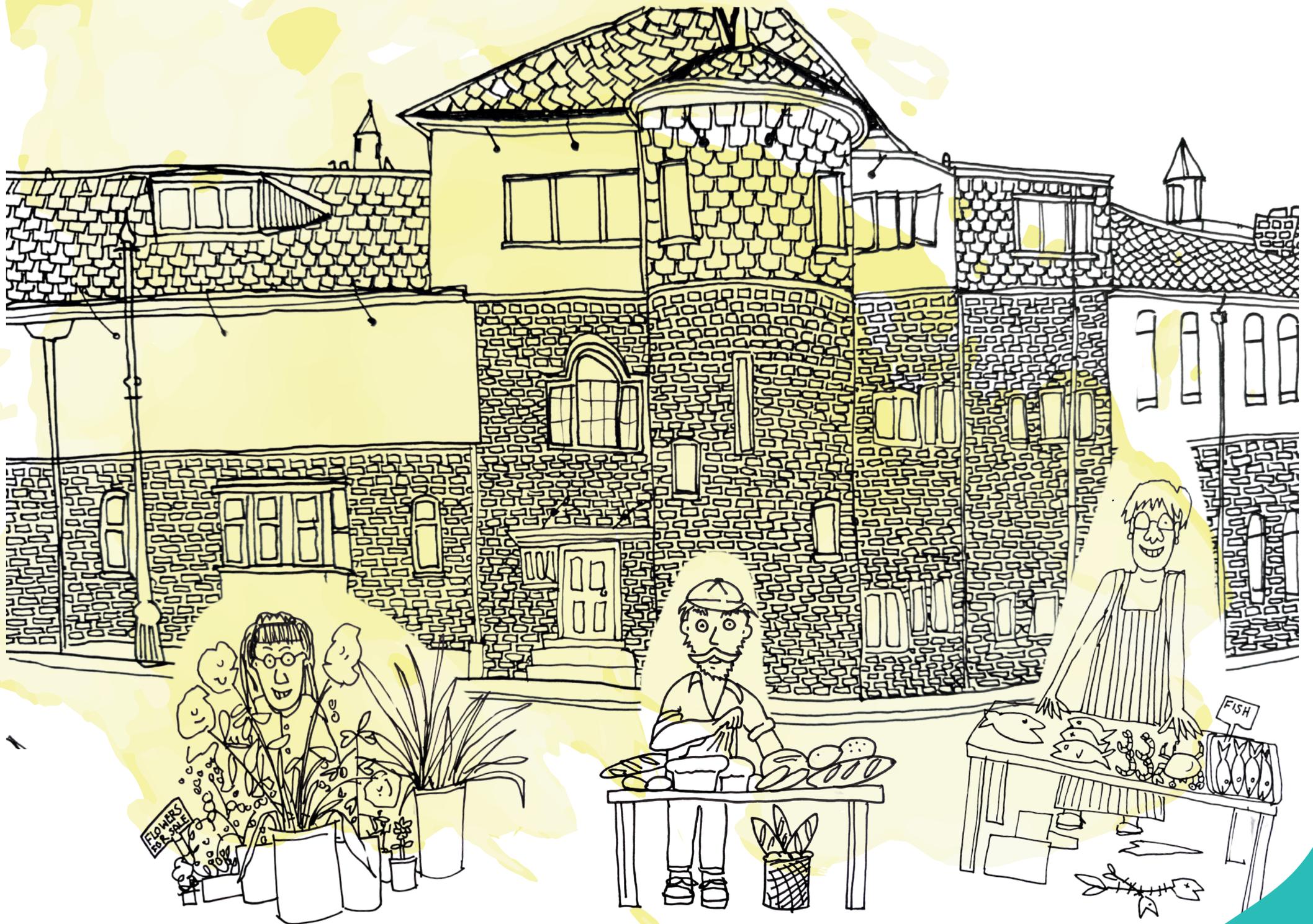
Her name was Tilly, and she was always looking for her next adventure.

This time, she skidded to a stop under the swish of a heavy skirt.

“Gracious me!” said a voice above.

Tilly peeped out and saw a tall lady in a crown and veil.





It was Queen Victoria herself, walking proudly through Gosport High Street.

Victoria looked down.

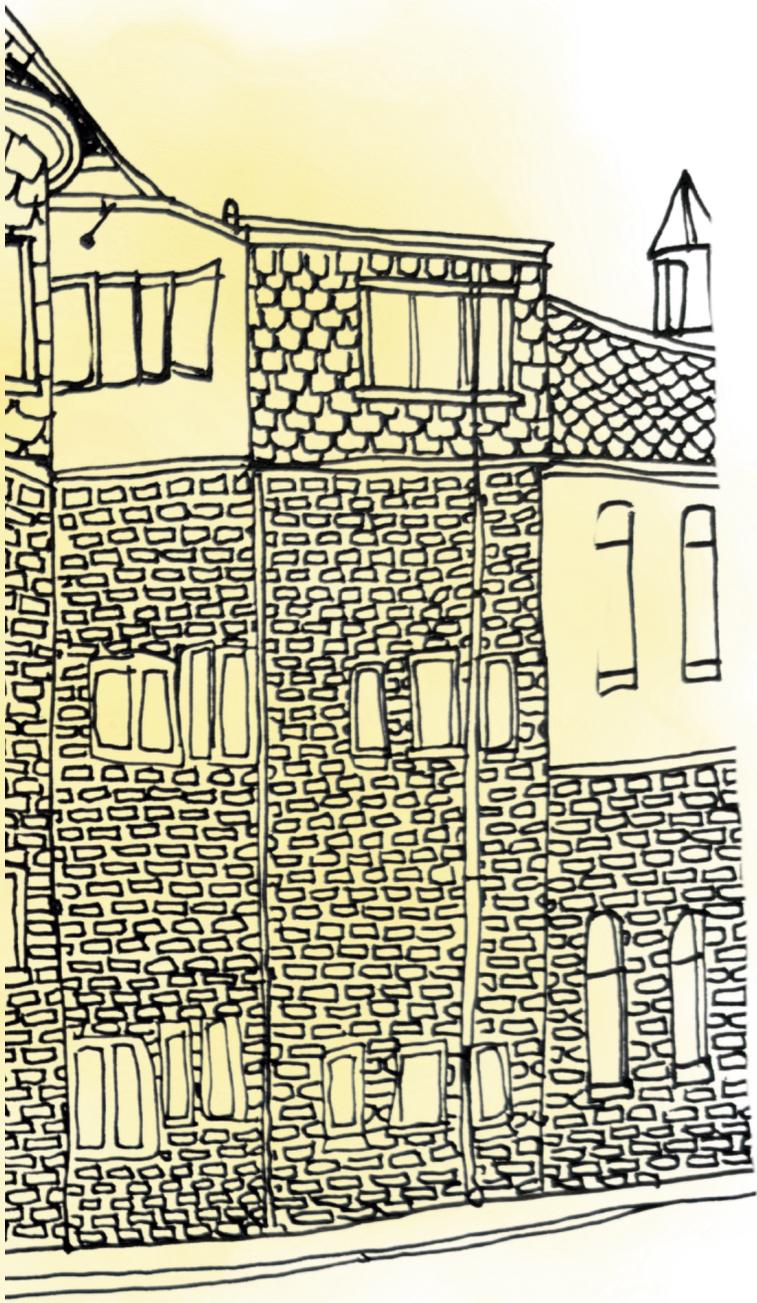
Tilly flicked her tail.

The Queen raised an eyebrow, then smiled.

“What a curious subject you are,” she said.

And just like that, **the pair set off together.**





They came first to the great red-brick arches of Royal Clarence Yard.

“Here,” said Victoria, “the Navy’s food and supplies were once prepared. My sailors kept strong because of this place.”

Tilly wasn’t listening.

She was too busy chasing pigeons.

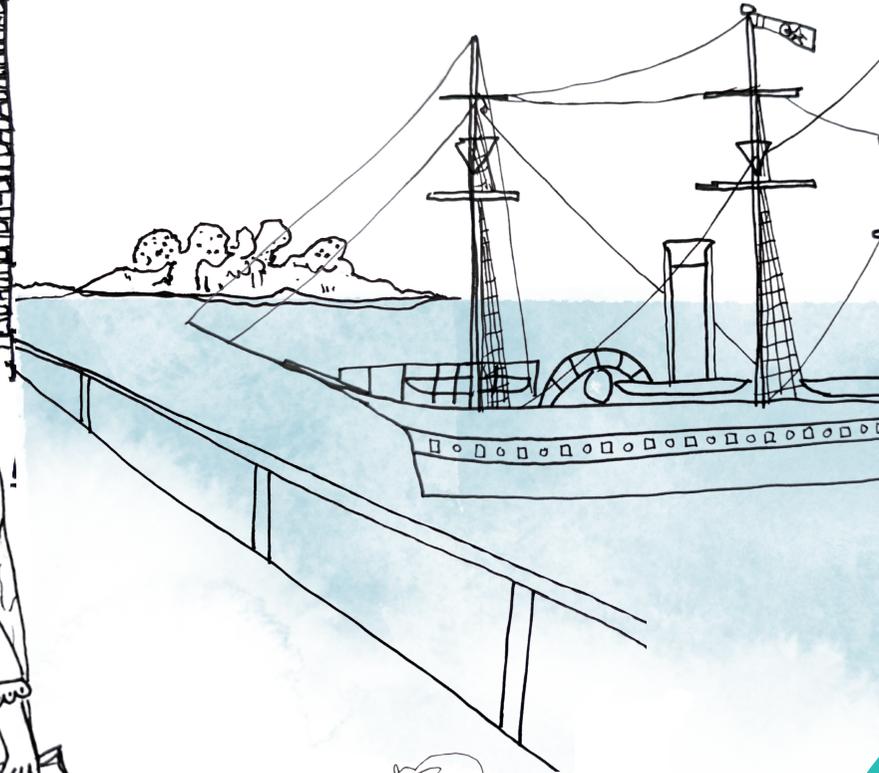
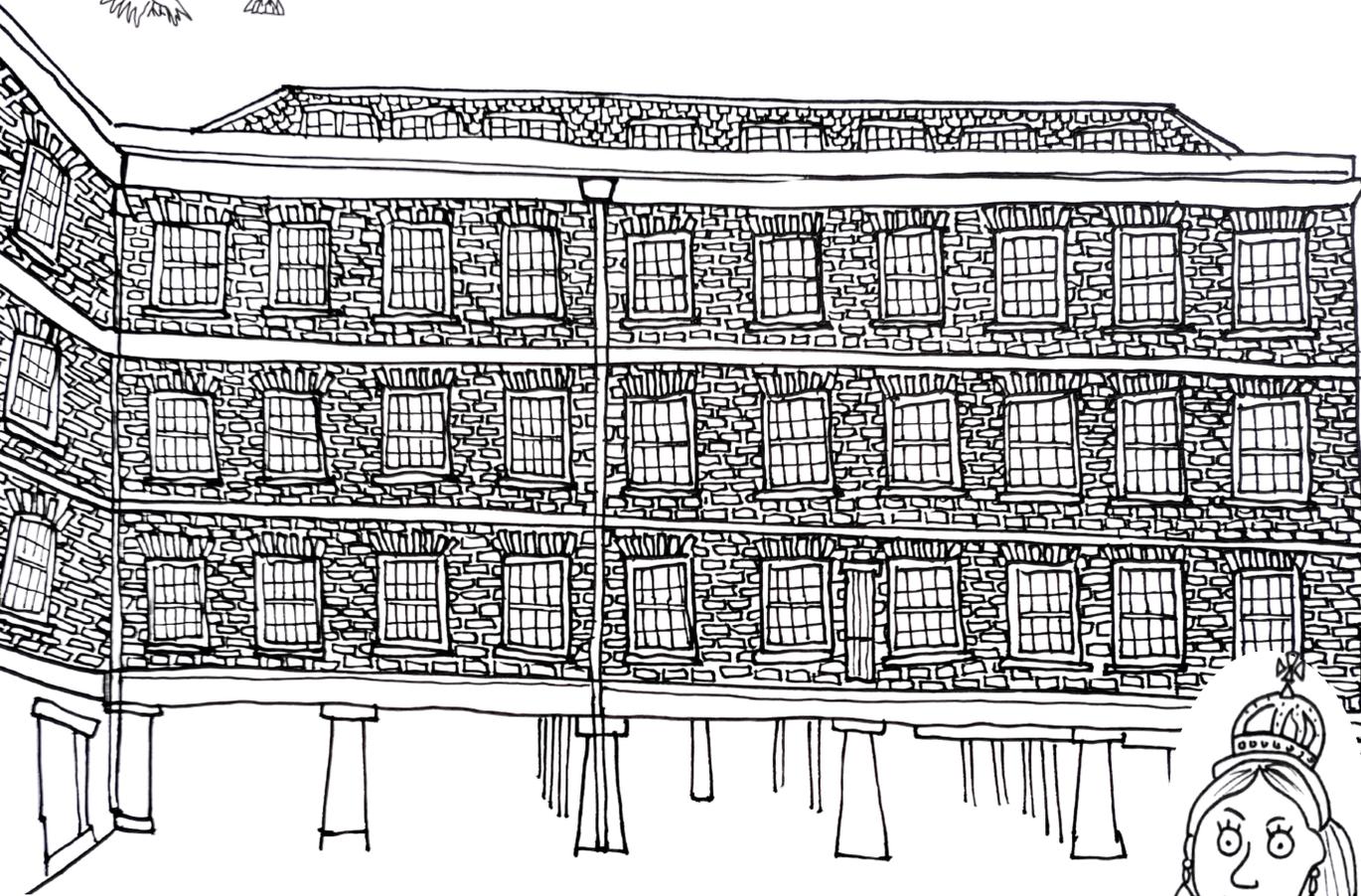
Round and round the yard she ran, until, plop! she tumbled into a barrel.

When she climbed out, she had a shiny button stuck to her paw.

She dropped it proudly at Victoria’s feet.

“A fine treasure,” said the Queen with a smile.





Soon they boarded Victoria's very own train.

The engine hissed, and the carriage jolted into motion.

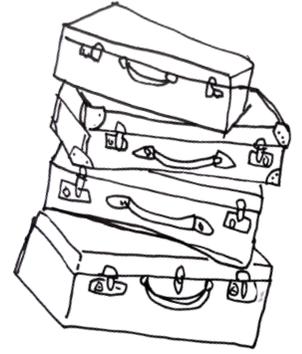
Victoria sat perfectly upright, nodding politely at passengers.

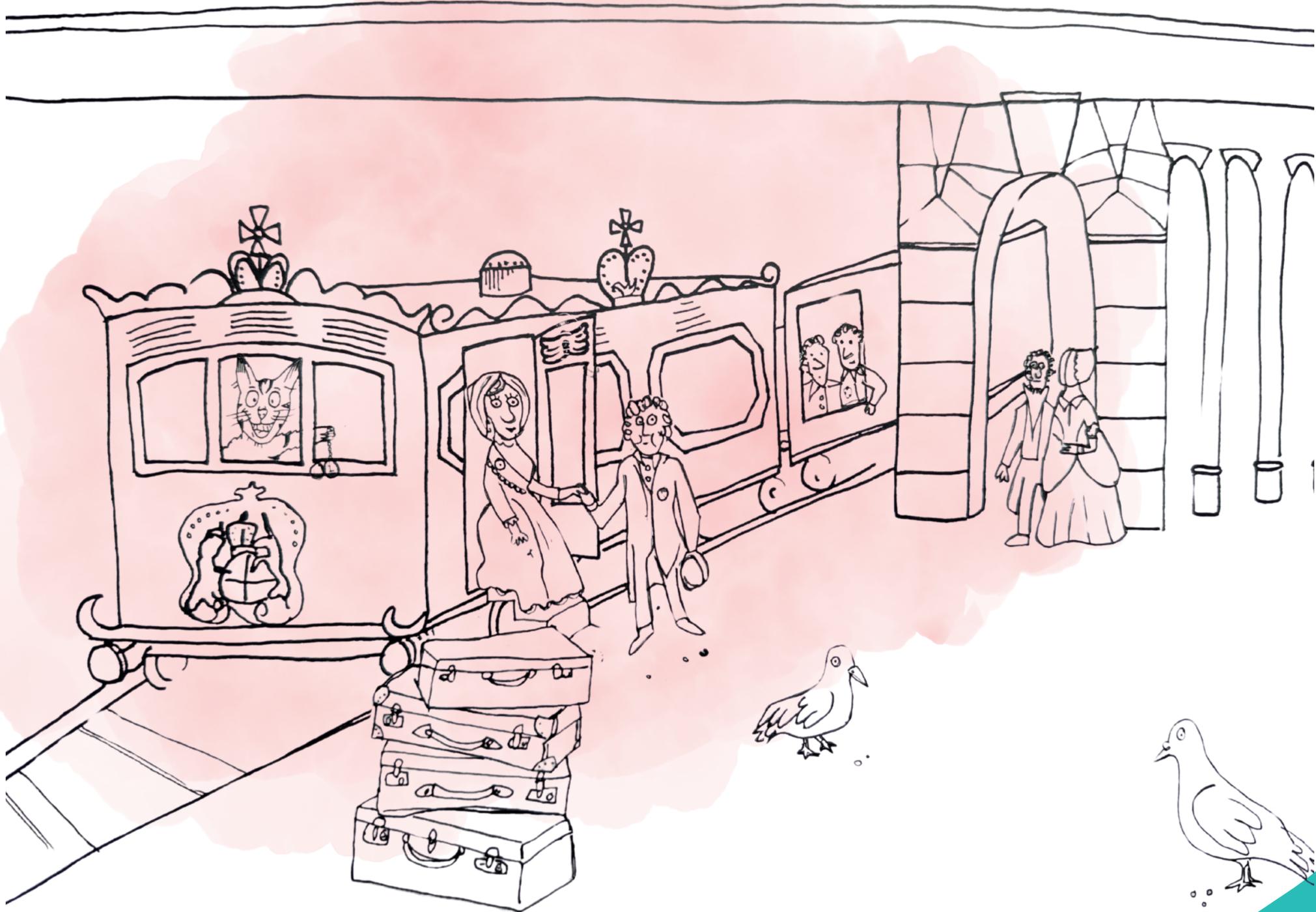
Tilly bounded from seat to seat, nosing at parcels and batting at a dangling watch chain.

Outside, fields and forts flashed past.

Victoria gazed proudly: "These lines carried me to Portsmouth and beyond."

Tilly pressed her paws against the glass, whiskers twitching at every sight.

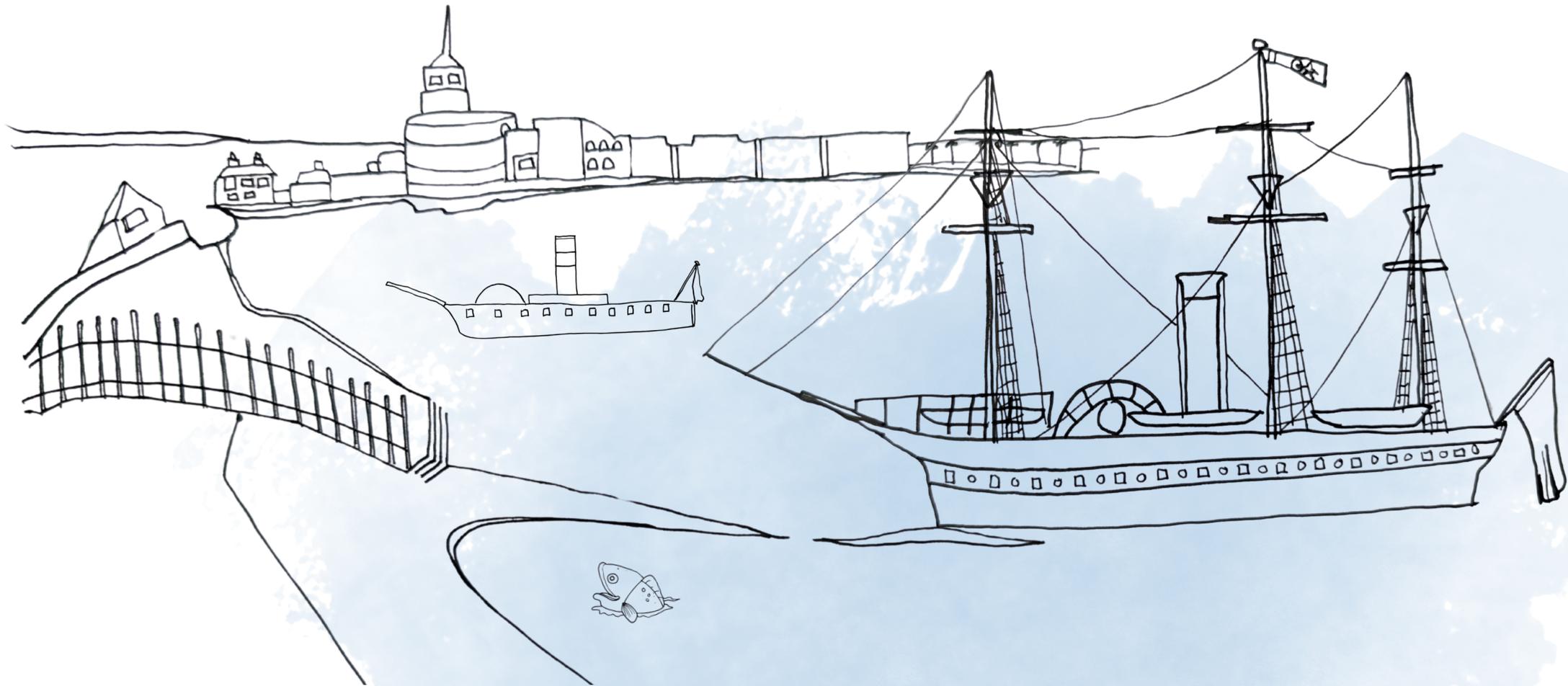




The train slowed near the water. They stepped down onto the Haslar Sea Wall.

Victoria stood tall, looking across to Portsmouth Dockyard.

“My Navy’s ships,” she said softly, **“guardians of the realm.”**”



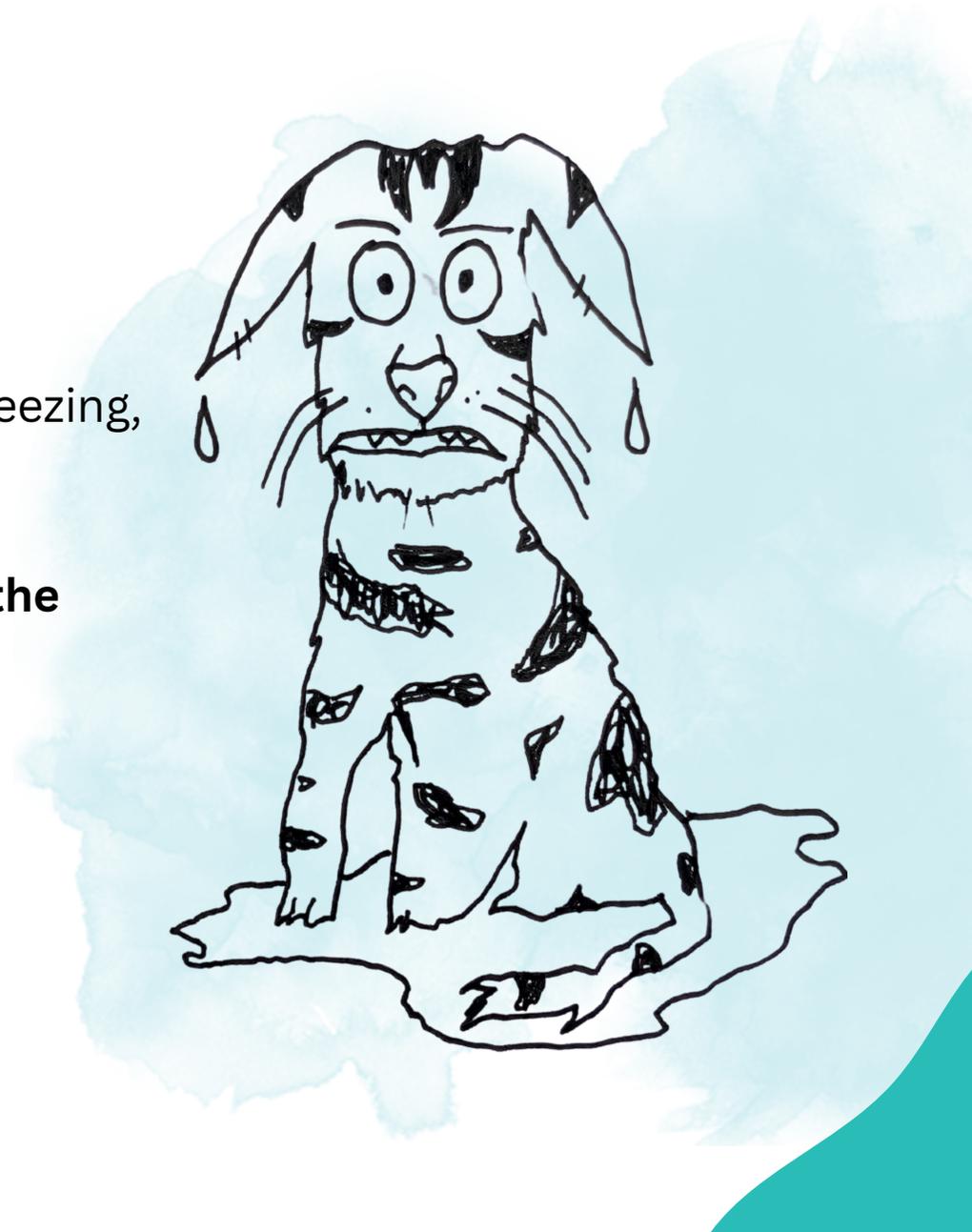
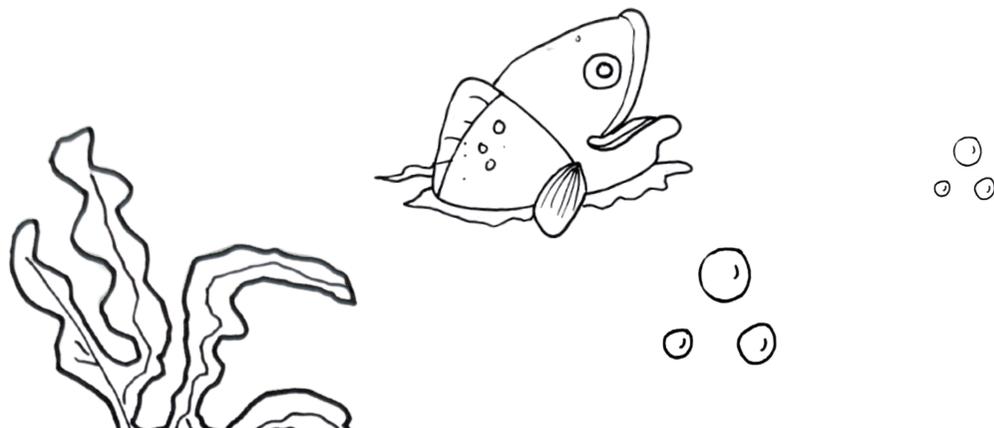
Tilly had spotted something else... a silvery flash beneath the waves.

With a wiggle of her tail, she pounced!

SPLASH!

Out she popped again, dripping wet and sneezing, the fish long gone.

Victoria chuckled and lifted her veil to **dry the soggy cat.**



They reached the ferry.

Victoria handed over her coin with ceremony.

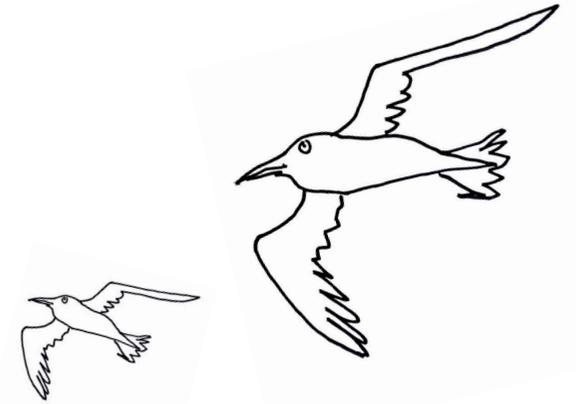
Tilly darted straight aboard without waiting.

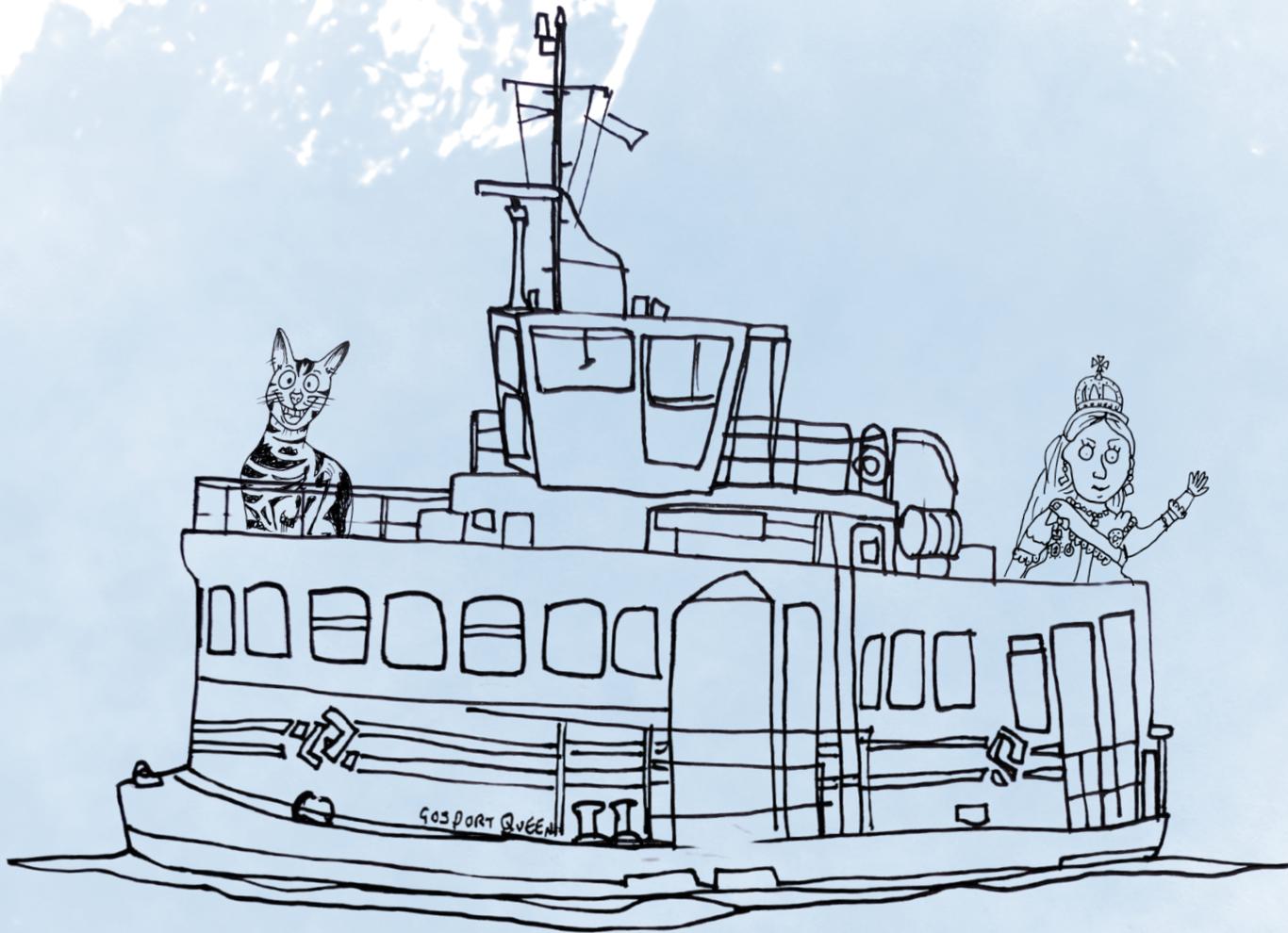
On deck, the Queen stood steady as the wind whipped her veil.

Tilly scrambled up ropes, ears pricked at the call of seagulls.

All around them the harbour bustled, ferries, fishing boats, and mighty ships.

Gosport shimmered behind them as they crossed the water.





At last, they arrived at Osborne House.



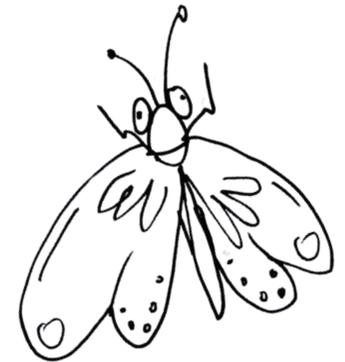
Victoria looked across the grand gardens with pride.

“Here,” she said, “I found peace with my family.”



Tilly had no time for speeches.

She bounded into the flowerbeds, chasing butterflies.



She darted through the rooms, discovering corners even Victoria had forgotten.

The Queen laughed as she watched.

Through Tilly’s eyes, her home felt new again.





As the sun set over the Solent, Victoria sat on a bench in the garden.

Tilly curled on her lap, purring softly.

Victoria stroked her fur.

“Every queen must have her pride,” she said.

“But every heart needs a little adventure.”

Together, they gazed across the glittering water to Gosport,
where their journey had begun.





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Visit the website for all the resources and to book
the Once Upon a Gosport Heritage Crate...

www.OnceUponAGosport.com

