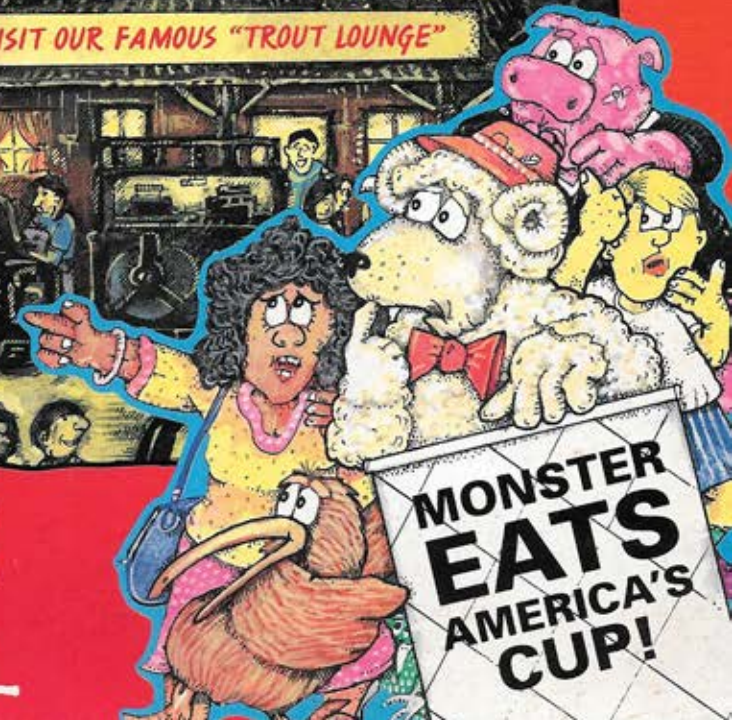
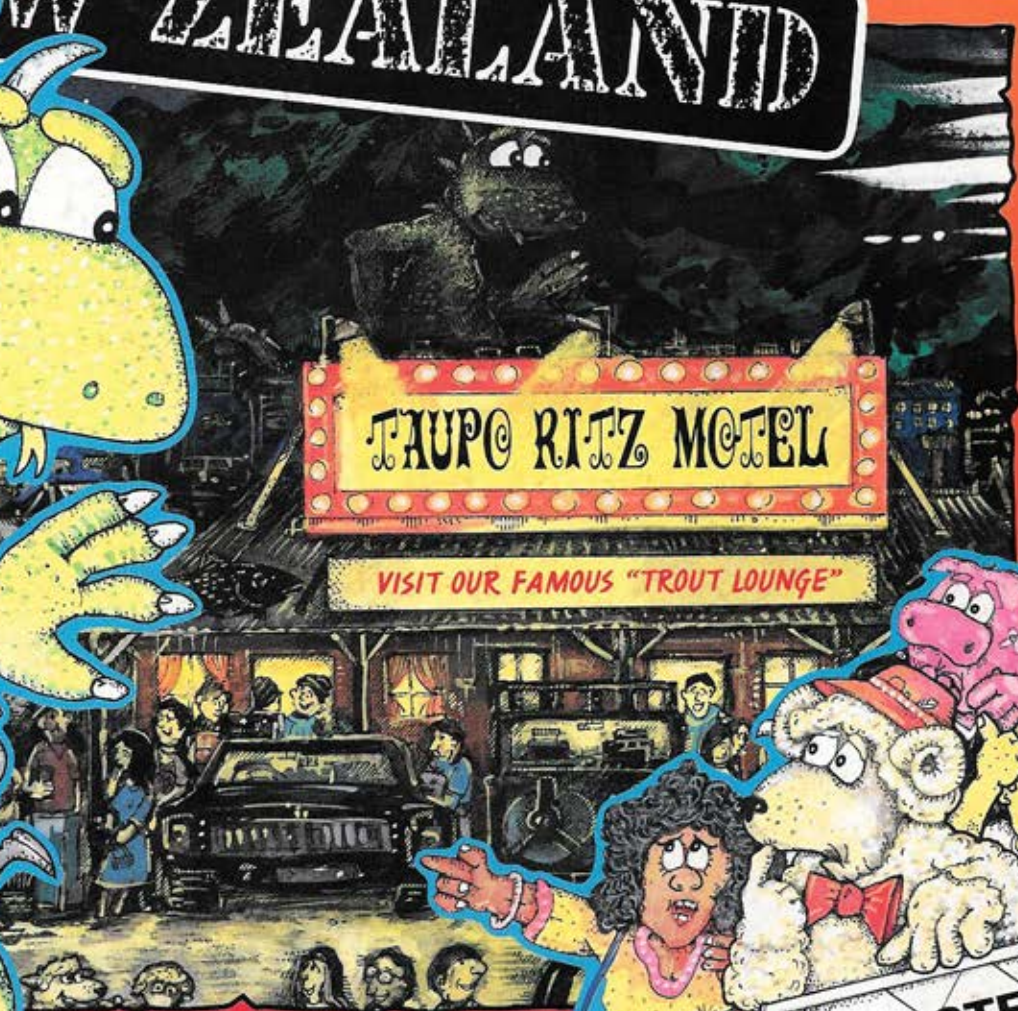




THE MONSTER WHO ATE

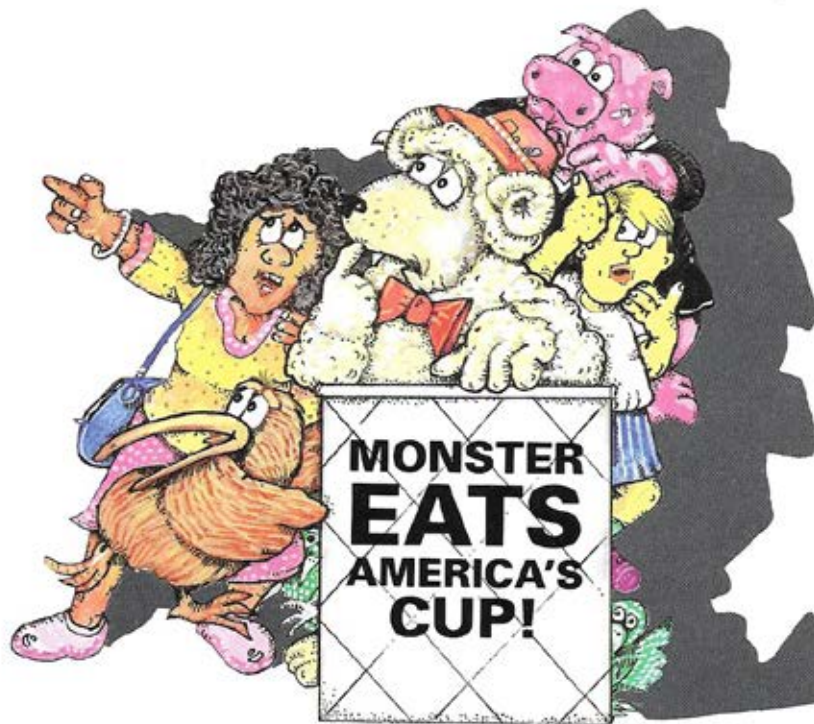
NEW ZEALAND



**MONSTER
EATS
AMERICA'S
CUP!**

Michael
Salmon

THE MONSTER WHO ATE NEW ZEALAND

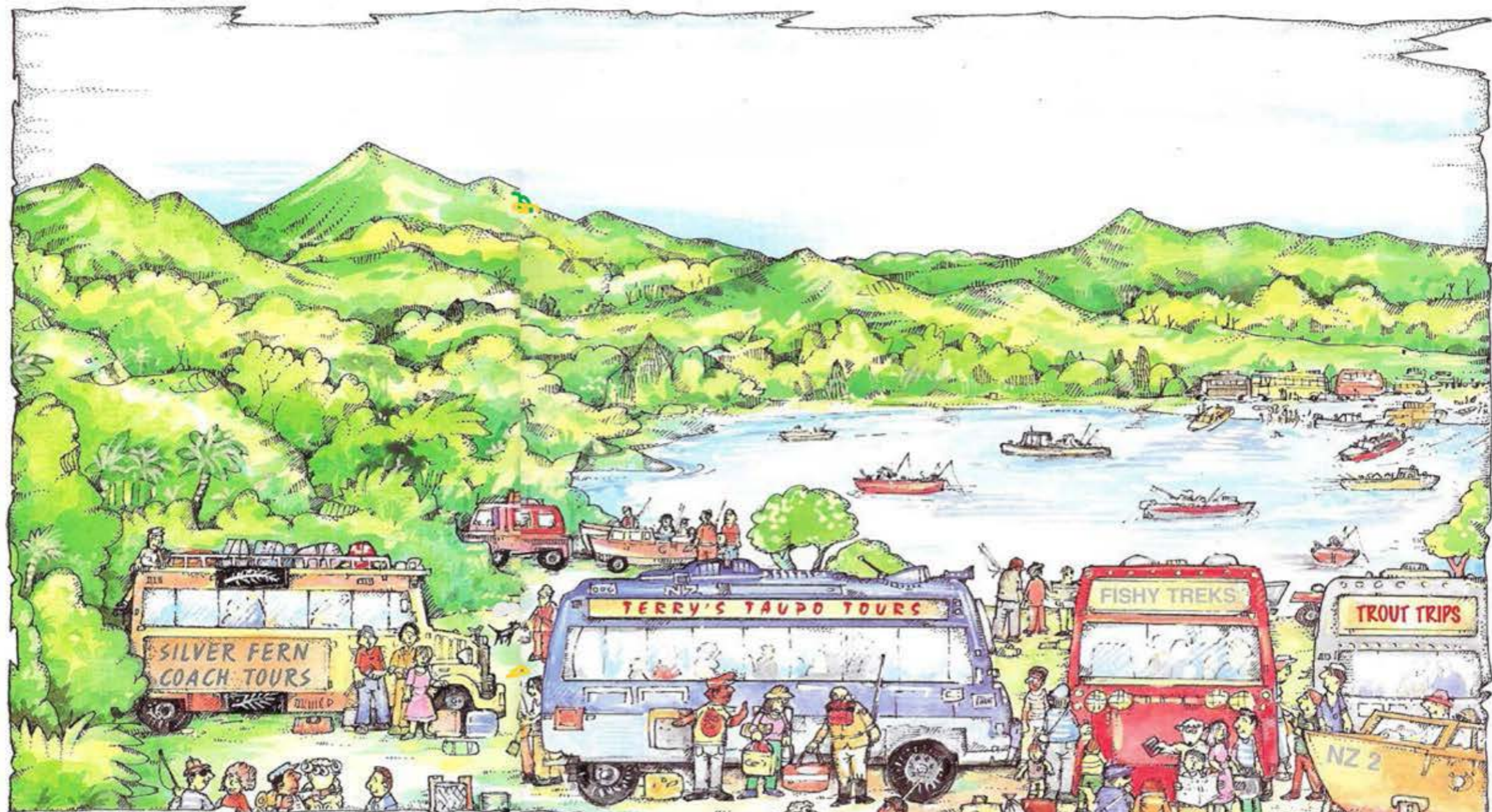


Written and illustrated by

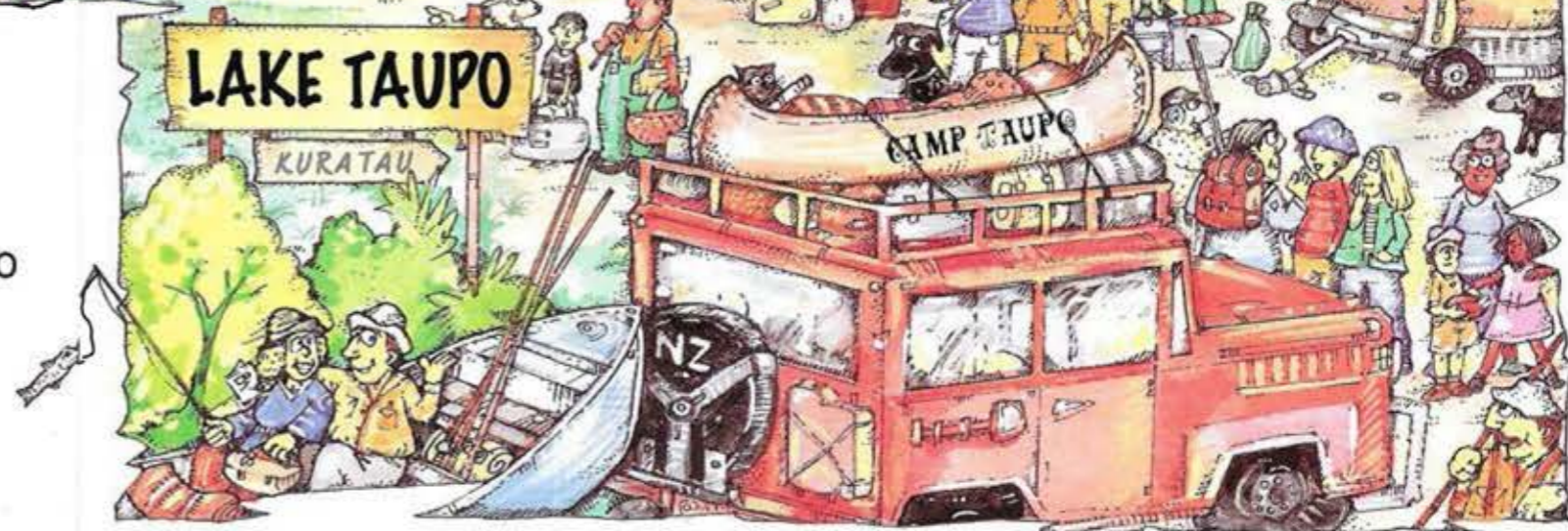
Michael Salmon

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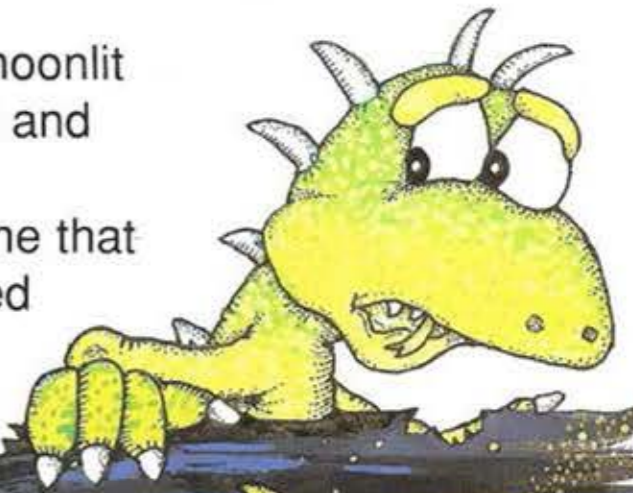


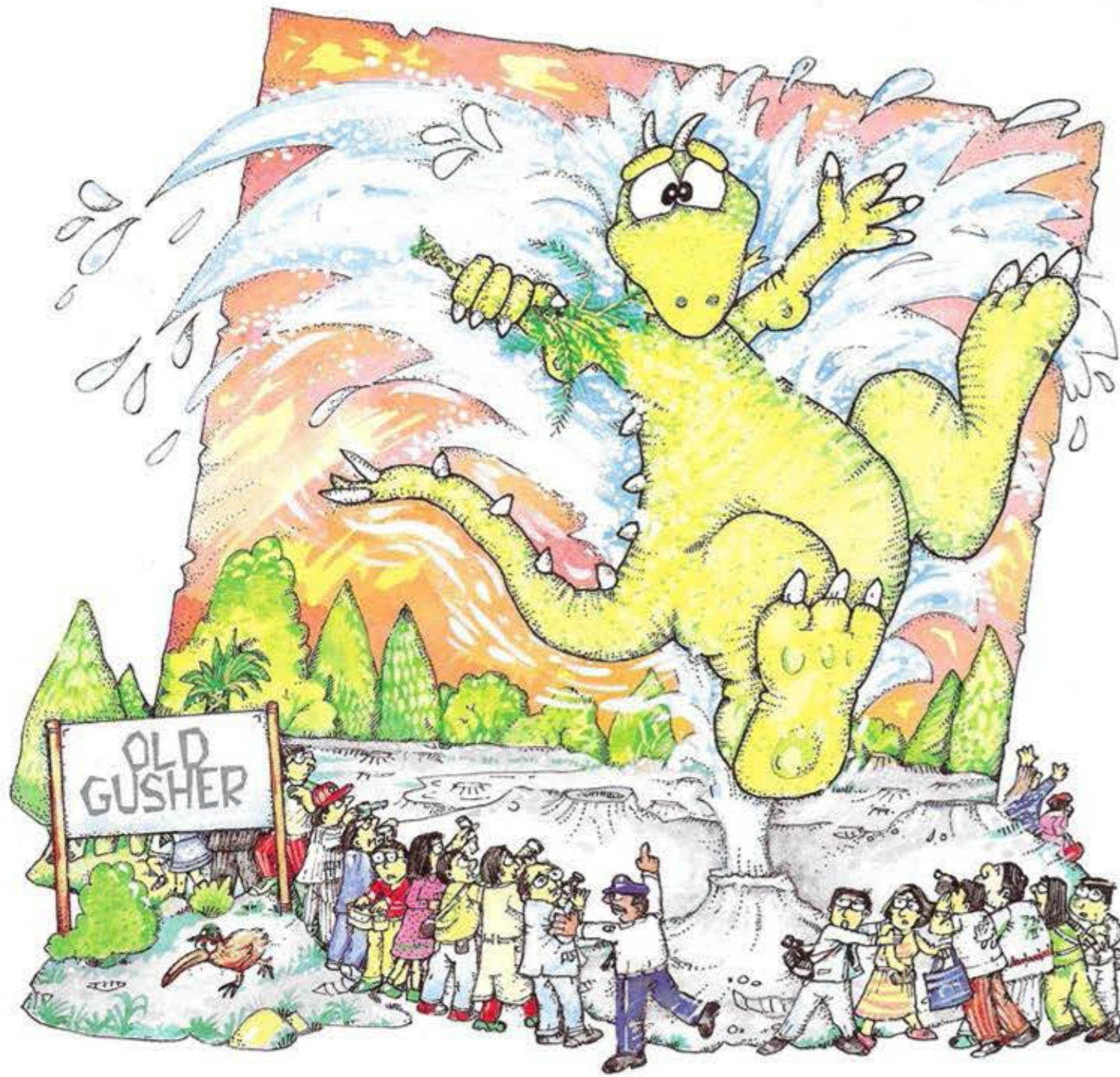
But Eric the tuatarasaur was certainly **not** extinct, even though he was the last of his kind. His family had lived in the mountains around the southern tip of **Lake Taupo** for millions of years. Eric knew the countryside well and kept out of human sight. He liked to gnaw on his favourite rocks. One day the bus tours started. Loads of tourists came to fish and sail – in his part of the lake! Eric felt lucky that his home was so well hidden.



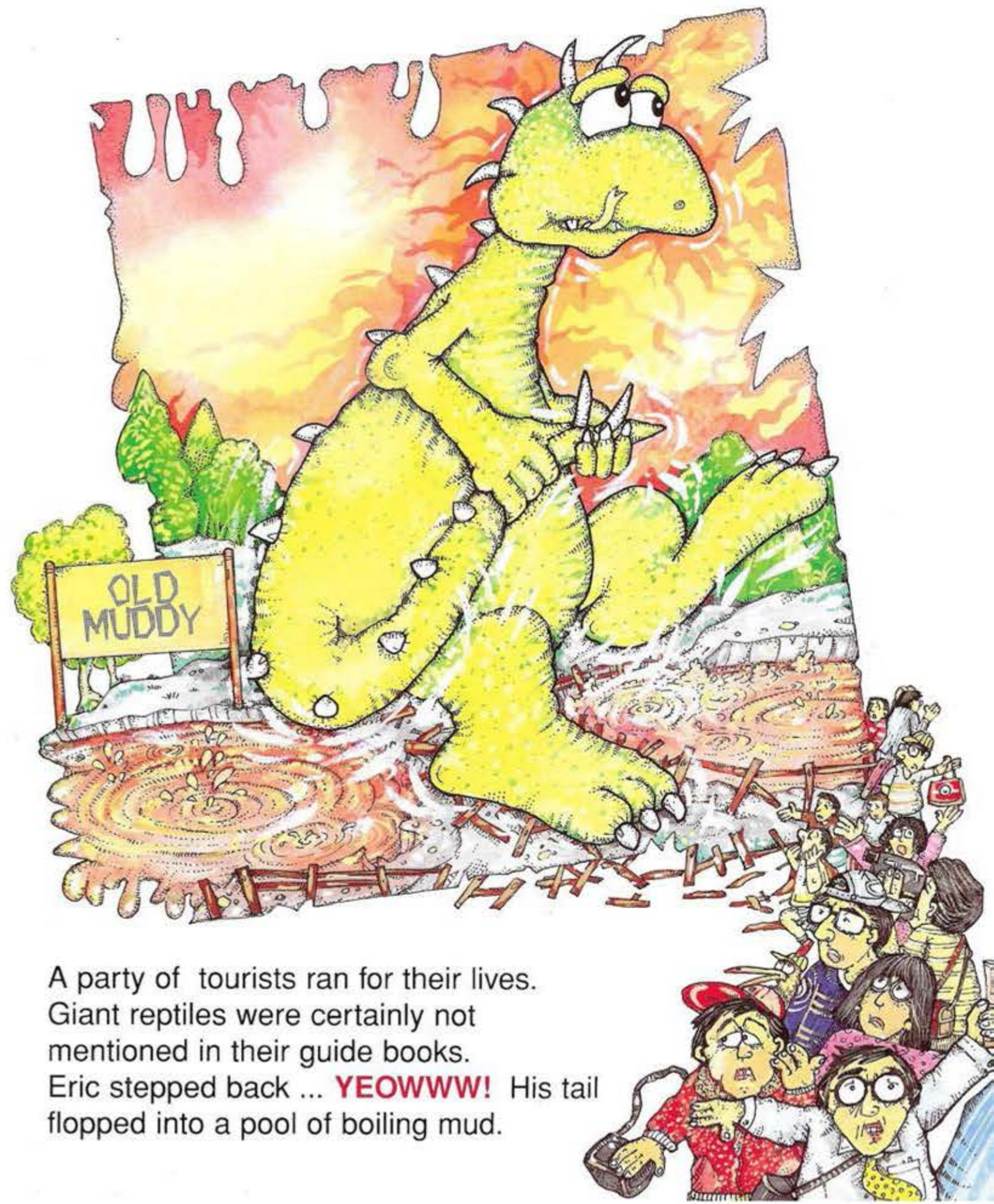
What noisy animals these humans are, thought Eric. Radio and cassette players kept him awake till late at night and engines and car horns woke him early in the morning. Some nights they let off noisy, exploding fireworks. Eric nibbled on a four-wheel drive one night – it didn't even taste good and the fumes made him sneeze.

I've had enough, thought Eric. On a moonlit night he crept past the tents, caravans and motels and set off into the darkness. Eric was determined to find a new home that would suit a prehistoric reptile who liked peace and quiet!





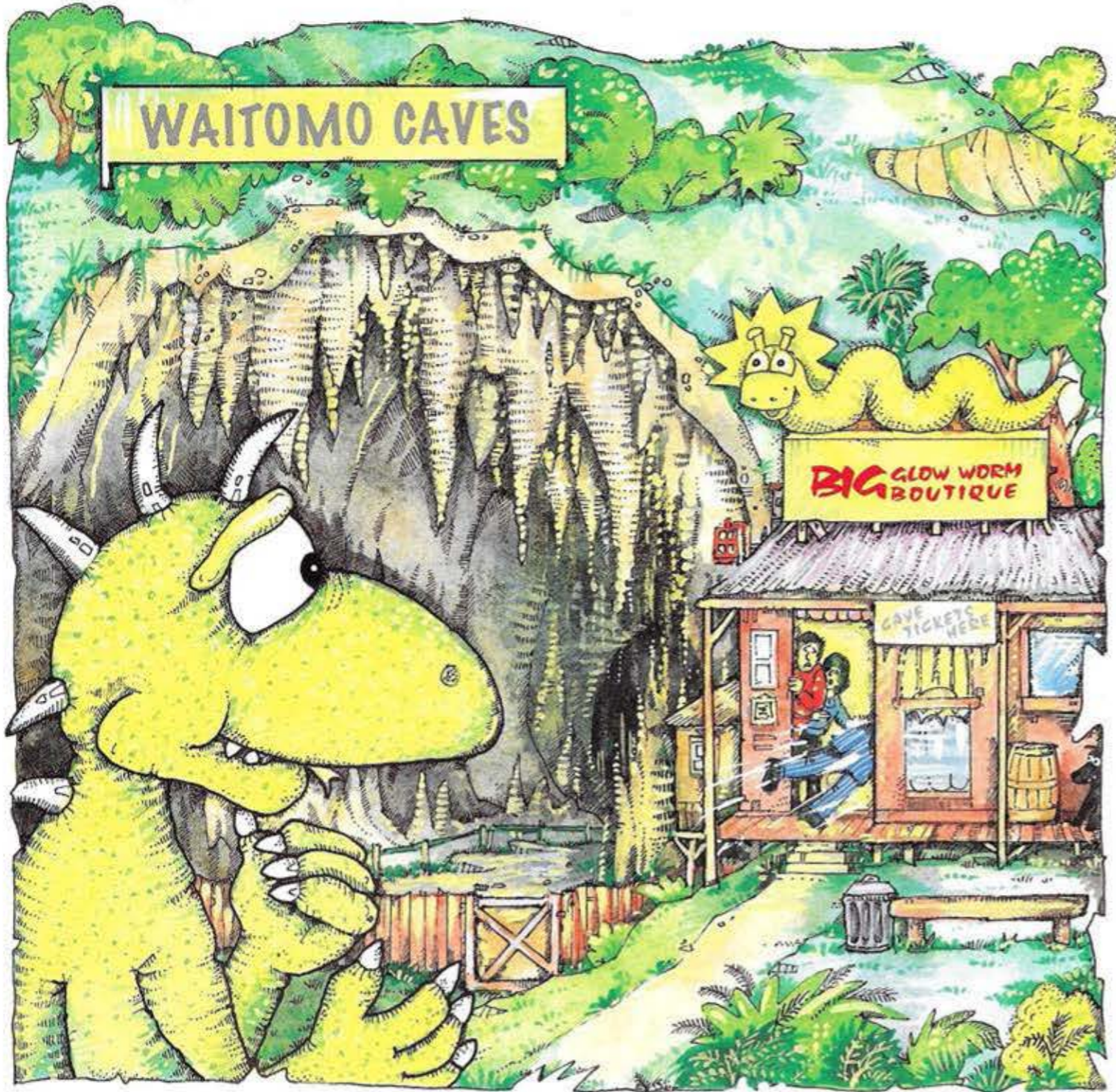
Eric wandered north for many kilometres until he reached **Rotorua**. There was a very funny smell in the air. He sat down on a warm grey rock and munched on a tree fern. **WHOOSH!** A large jet of hot water and steam tossed him high up into the air!



A party of tourists ran for their lives. Giant reptiles were certainly not mentioned in their guide books. Eric stepped back ... **YEOWWW!** His tail flopped into a pool of boiling mud.



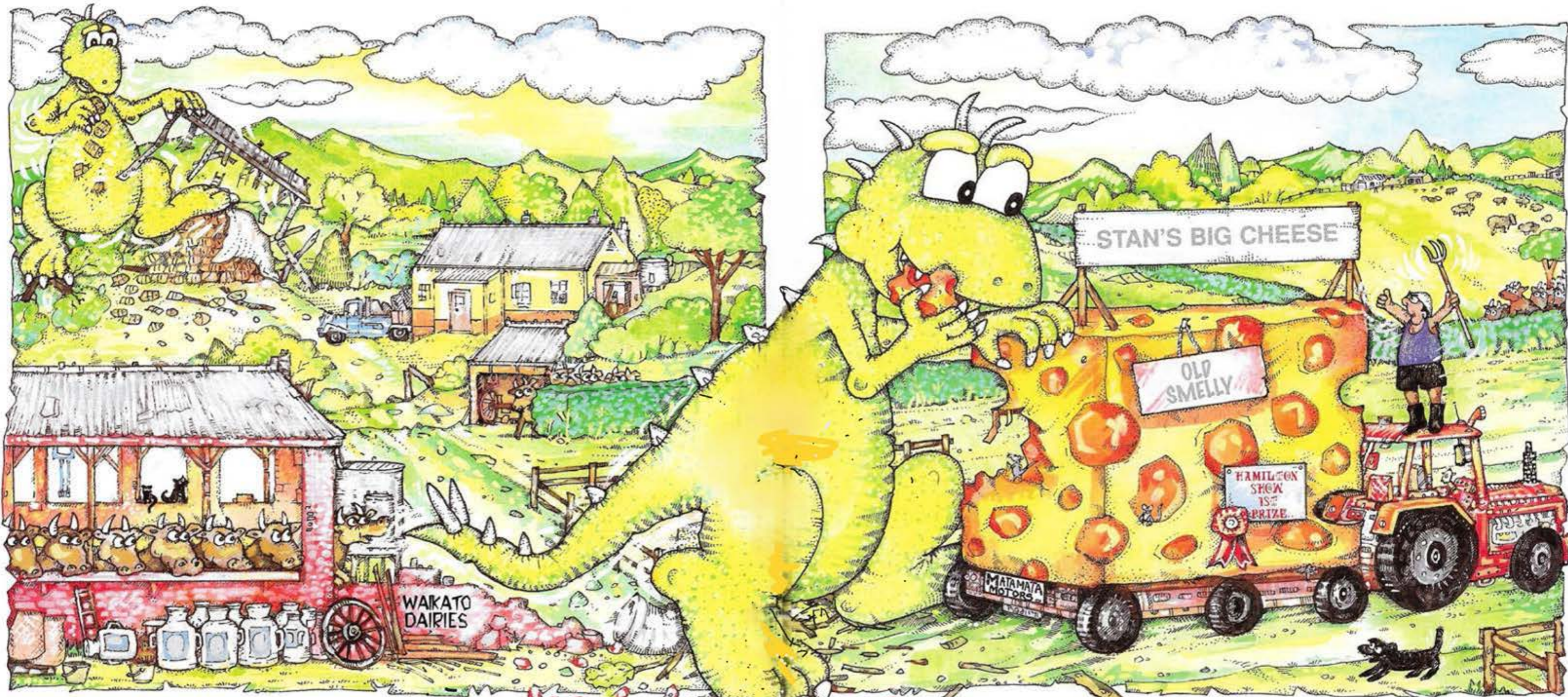
When he reached a place called **Waitomo**, Eric rubbed his eyes and looked again. Yes, here were the biggest caves he'd ever seen. They looked very cosy, the perfect place for a tired tuatarasaur with a tender tail.



As he nibbled on a piece of stalagmite he looked around in amazement at the beautiful glow-worm lights.

'Hey you,' shouted an angry tour guide. 'What do you think you're doing? I bet you haven't even bought a ticket.' Eric left quickly.

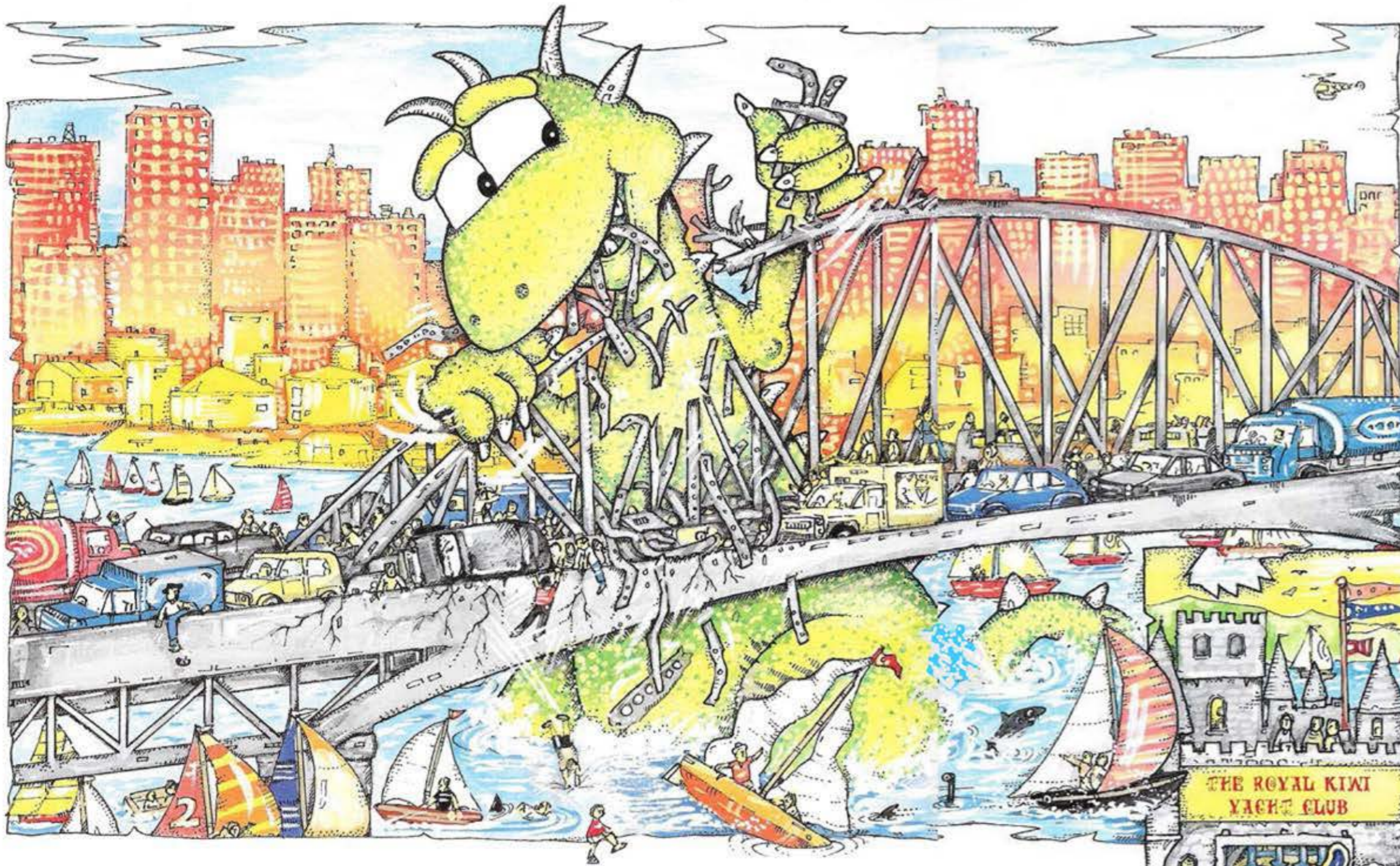




So Eric continued on his way up North, looking for a new home. The **Waikato** countryside was very green and full of cows who didn't appreciate this unwelcome visitor. Eric munched a few hay bales on his way past.

'Oi you! Get out of it,' bellowed a furious dairy farmer as Eric chewed on his prize-winning cheese. The cattle dog barked loudly as Eric lumbered off.



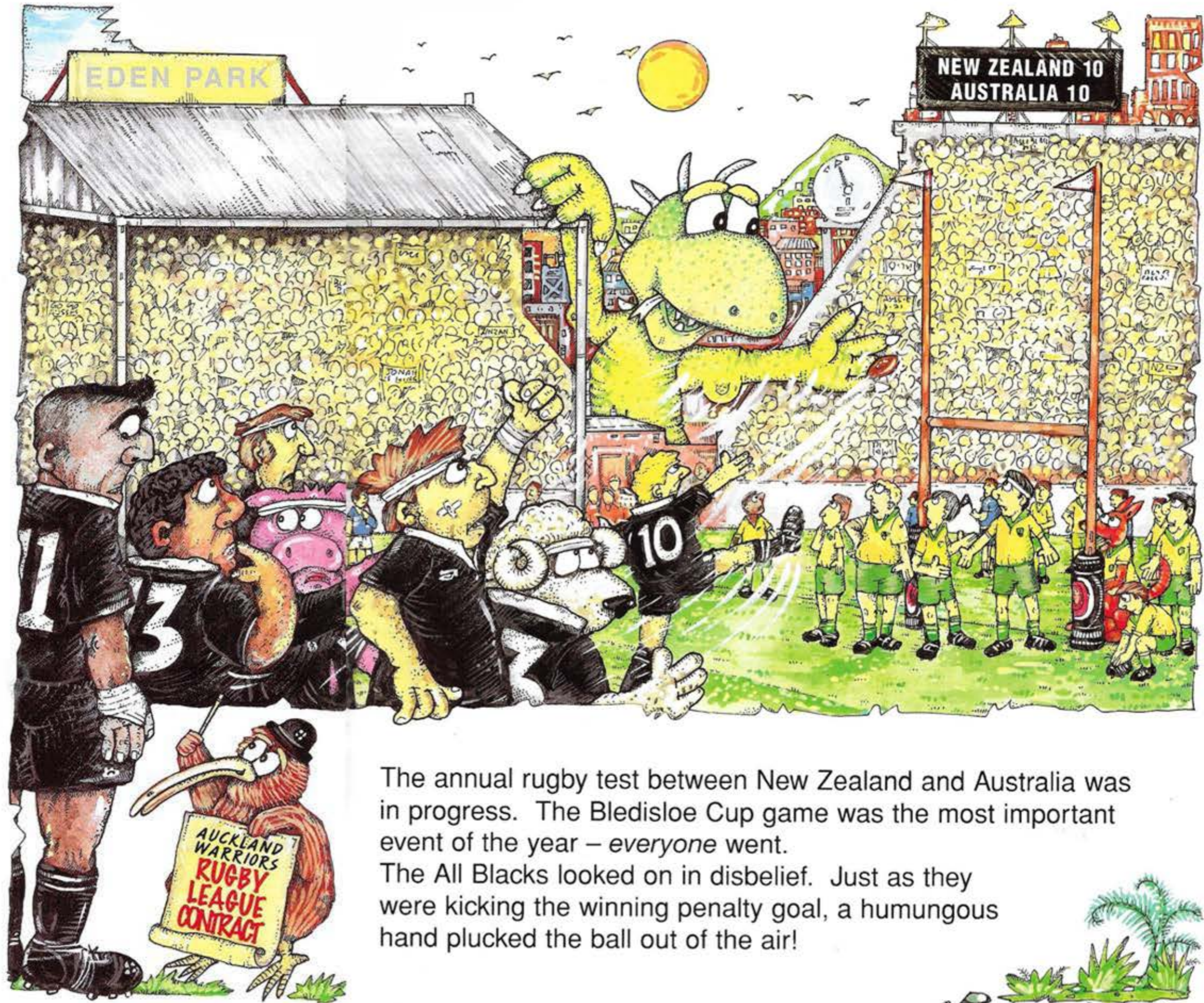
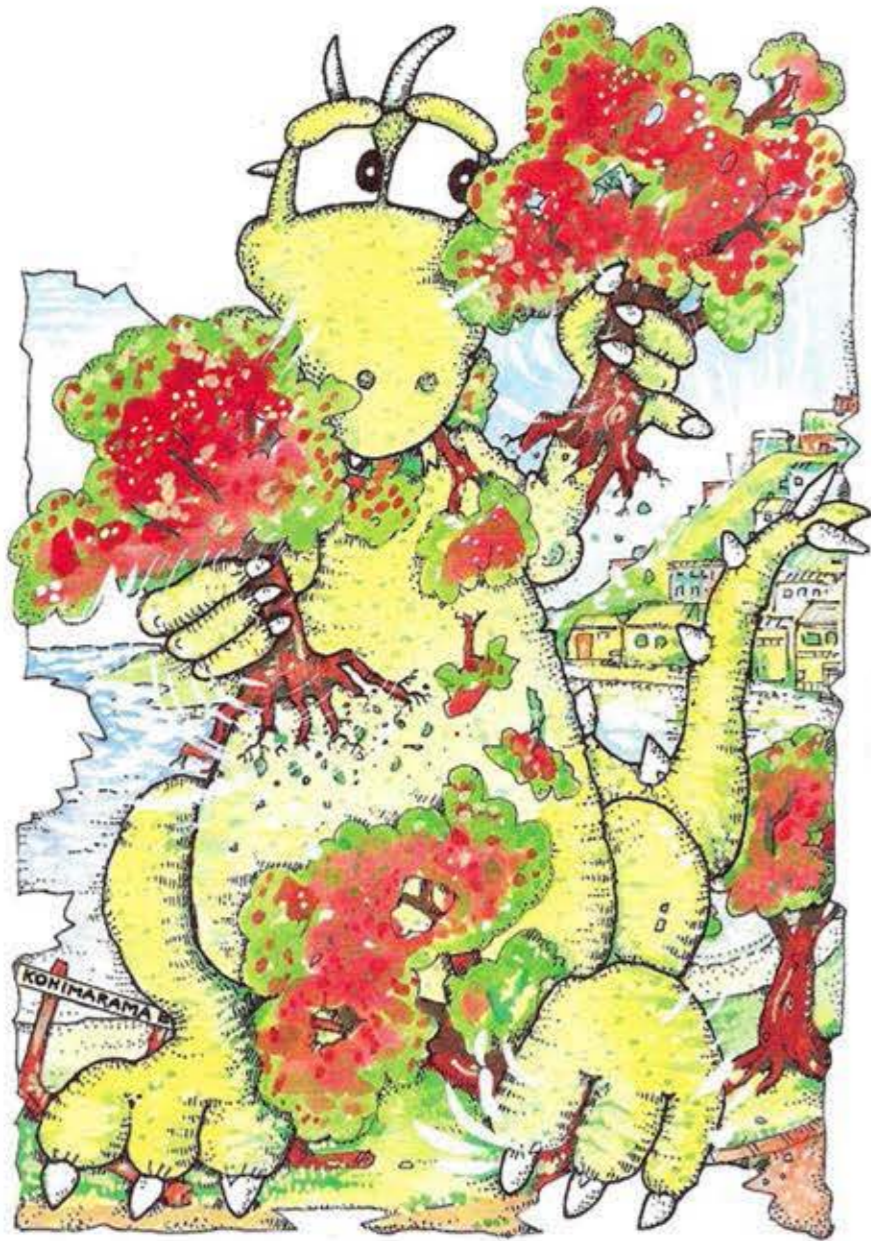


The nearby yacht club committee was proudly polishing the America's Cup, the most famous sailing trophy in the whole world. They didn't see the giant claw until it was too late. The 'auld mug' was gone!

Eric soon reached **Auckland**, New Zealand's biggest city, where the buildings all looked like funny-shaped rocks. He ignored the irate humans as he took a big bite out of one of the more interesting looking 'rocks'. The Harbour Bridge, the city's best known landmark, had just been devoured!



As he gobbled his way through a grove of tasty pohutukawa trees that lined the bay, he noticed the streets were empty ... all the humans seemed to have suddenly disappeared. A large **ROAR** came from behind the next hill.

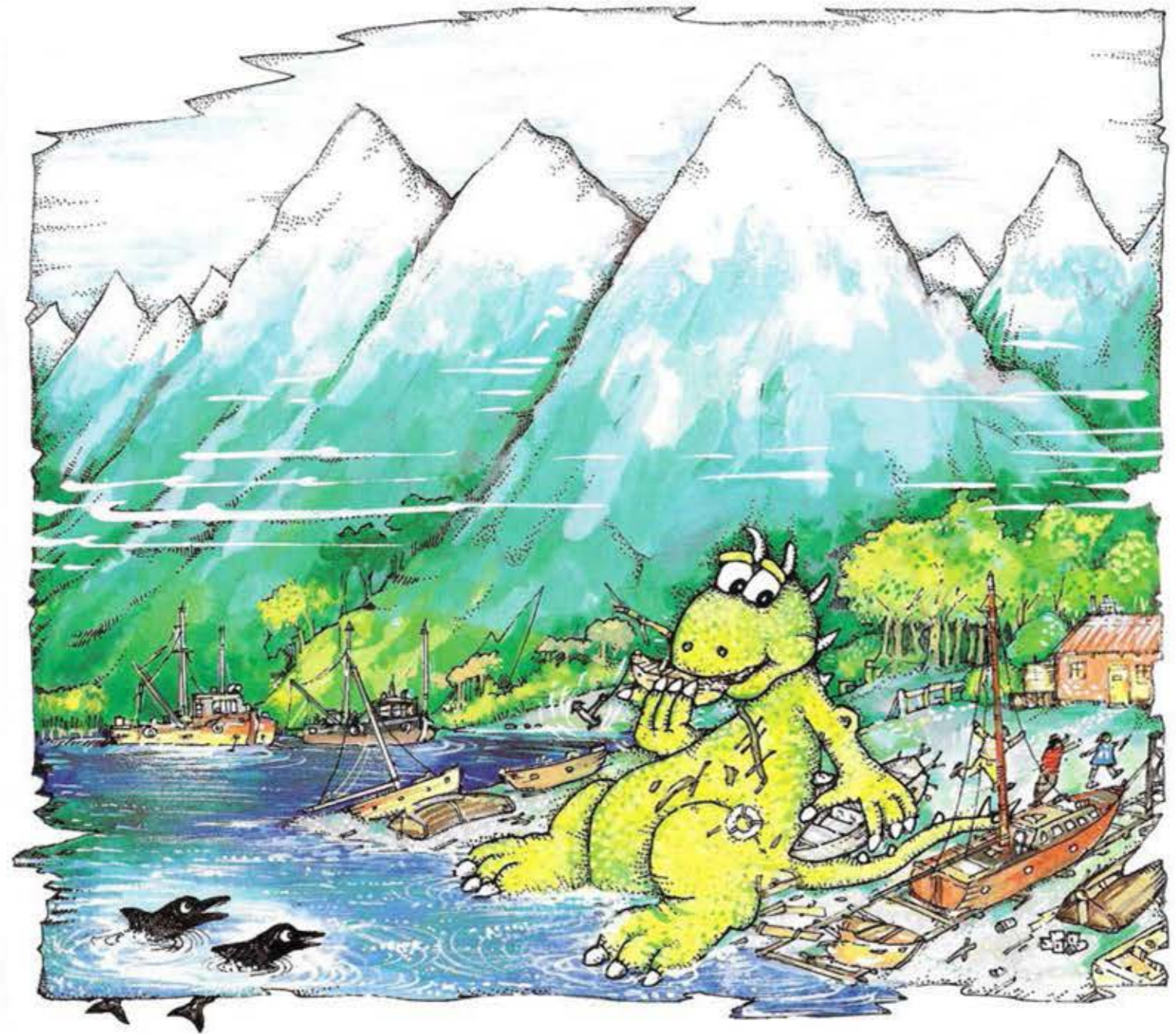
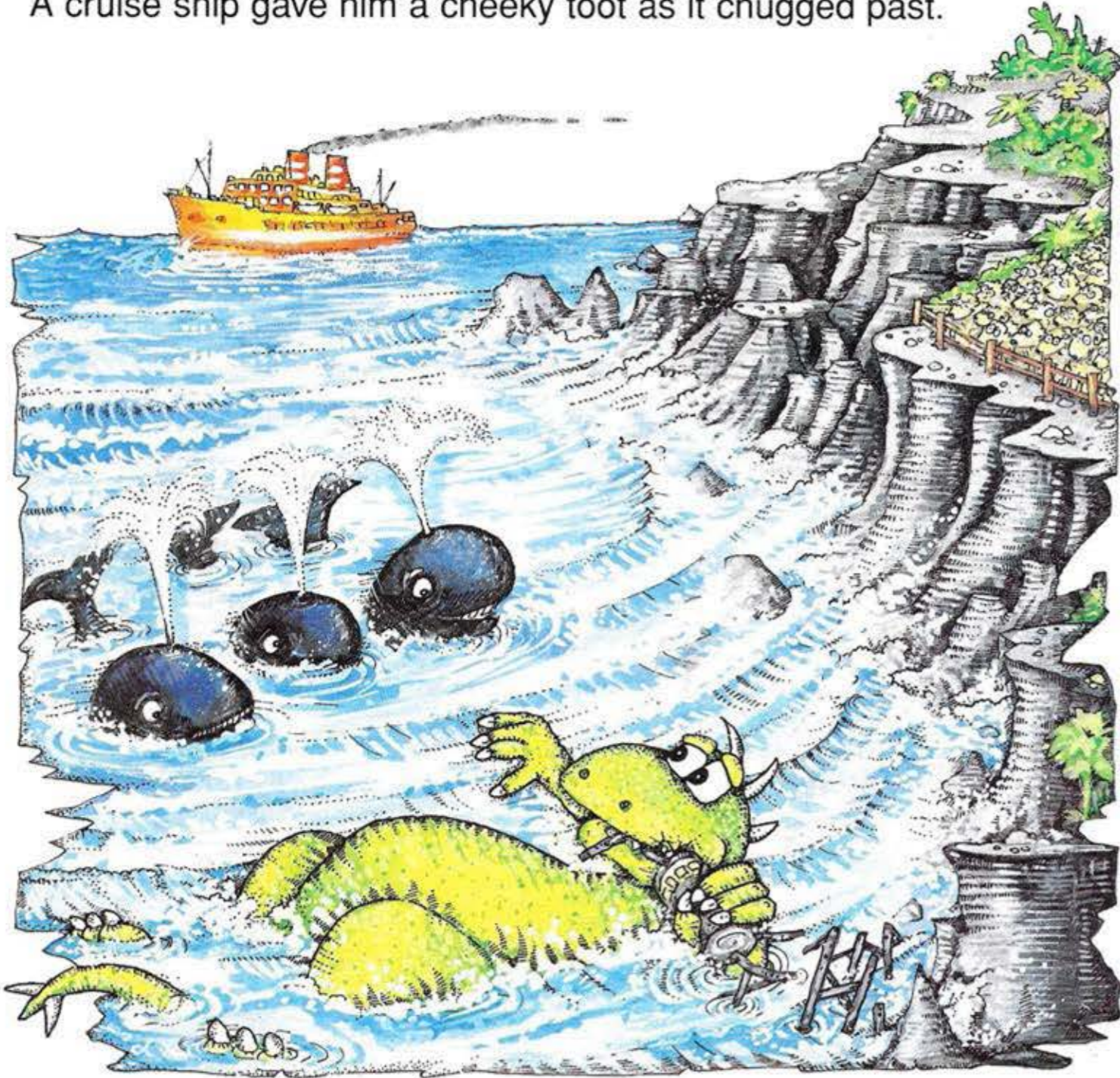


The annual rugby test between New Zealand and Australia was in progress. The Bledisloe Cup game was the most important event of the year – *everyone* went. The All Blacks looked on in disbelief. Just as they were kicking the winning penalty goal, a humungous hand plucked the ball out of the air!



This is no place for a tuatarasaur to make a home, thought Eric as he swam out into the harbour. He paddled down the coastline to the **South Island**. The water was getting colder and colder and the rocky shore didn't look that inviting as he floated past **Westport** and **Greymouth**.

A cruise ship gave him a cheeky toot as it chugged past.



The cliffs along **Fiordland** were so steep that he couldn't clamber back onto land.

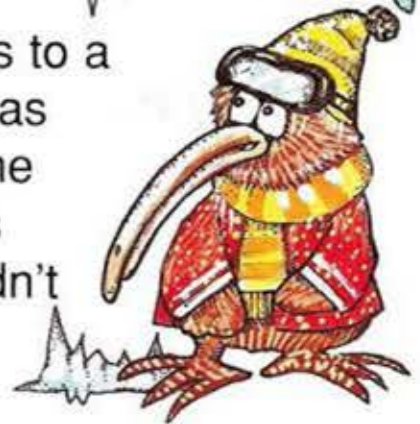
He floated into **Milford Sound** and heaved himself up onto a small, pebbly beach. Eric was very tired, but he was still able to gulp down a few small boats before he went to sleep.

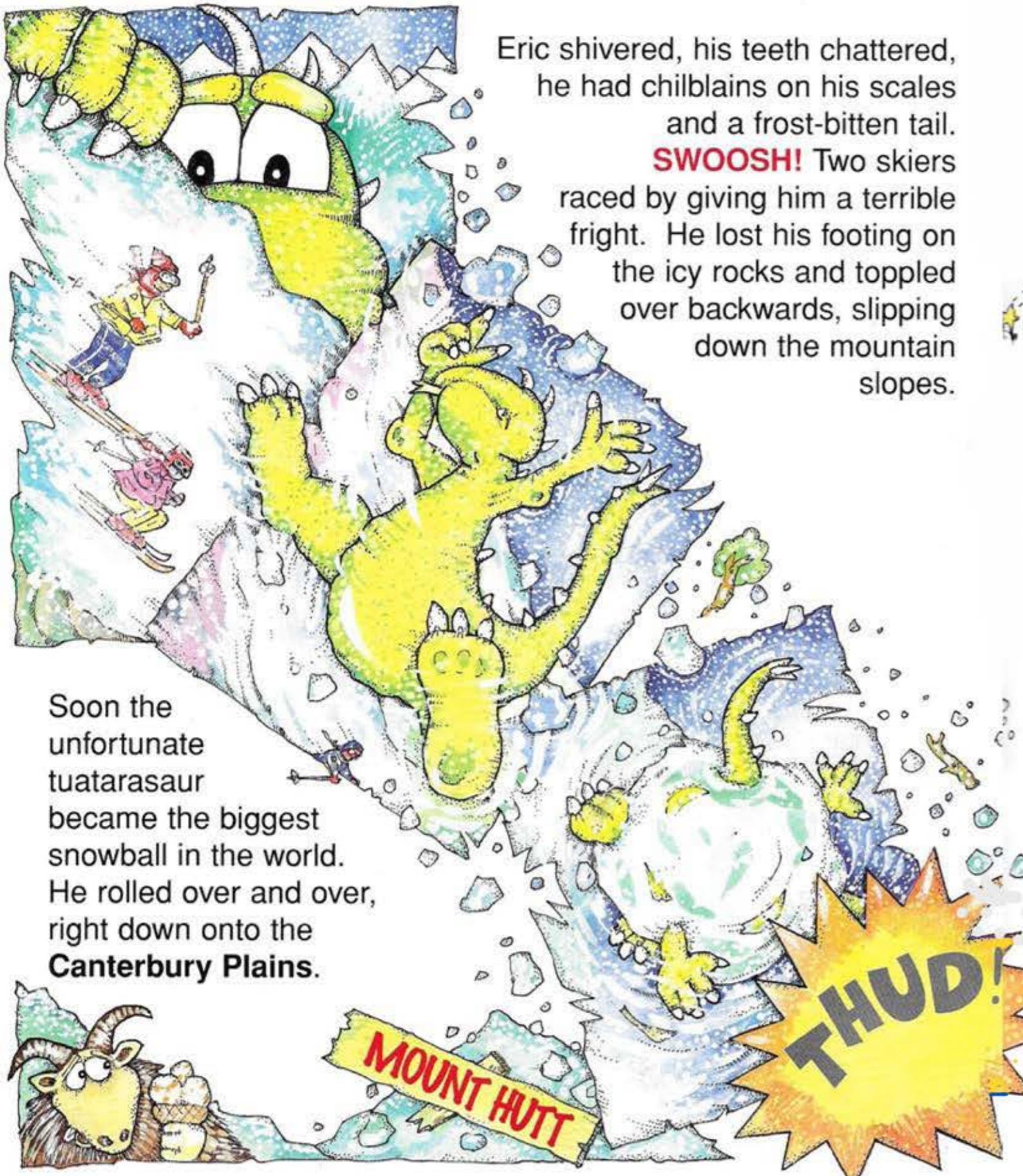


Eric wandered along the **Milford Track** for a while before heading off into the scrub. **CREAAAK! SPLASH!** The bridge over the **Shotover River** gave way under his heavy weight. The tuatarasaur plunged into the mountain river sending a giant foaming wave towards **Queenstown**.



He struggled along the Southern Alps to a very tall mountain, **Mount Cook**. It was freezing cold. He broke off a ski plane wing and ate it slowly – anything was better than cold snow to eat. Eric didn't stay long, there were too many of those noisy tourists around.

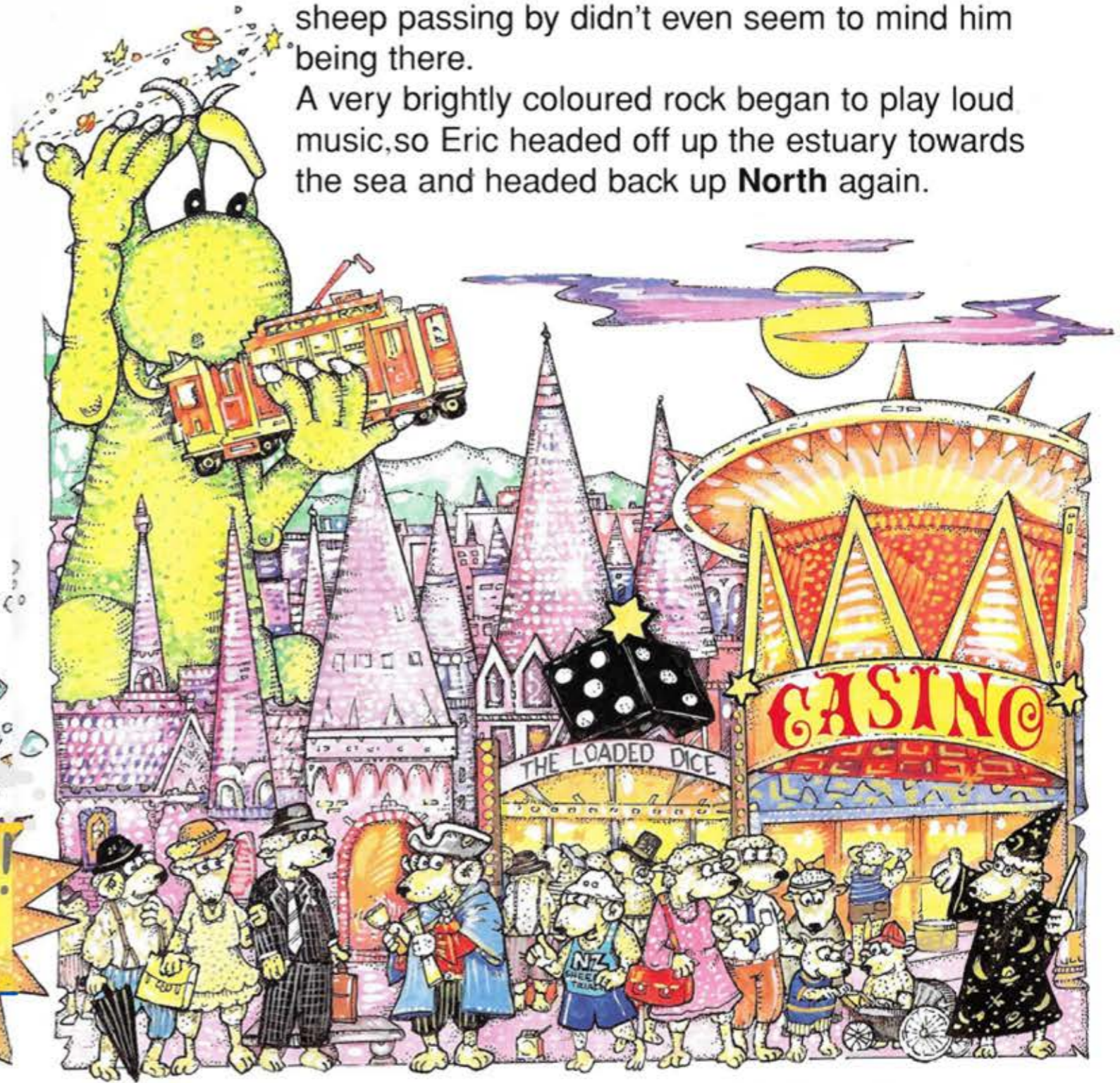





Eric shivered, his teeth chattered, he had chilblains on his scales and a frost-bitten tail. **SWOOSH!** Two skiers raced by giving him a terrible fright. He lost his footing on the icy rocks and toppled over backwards, slipping down the mountain slopes.

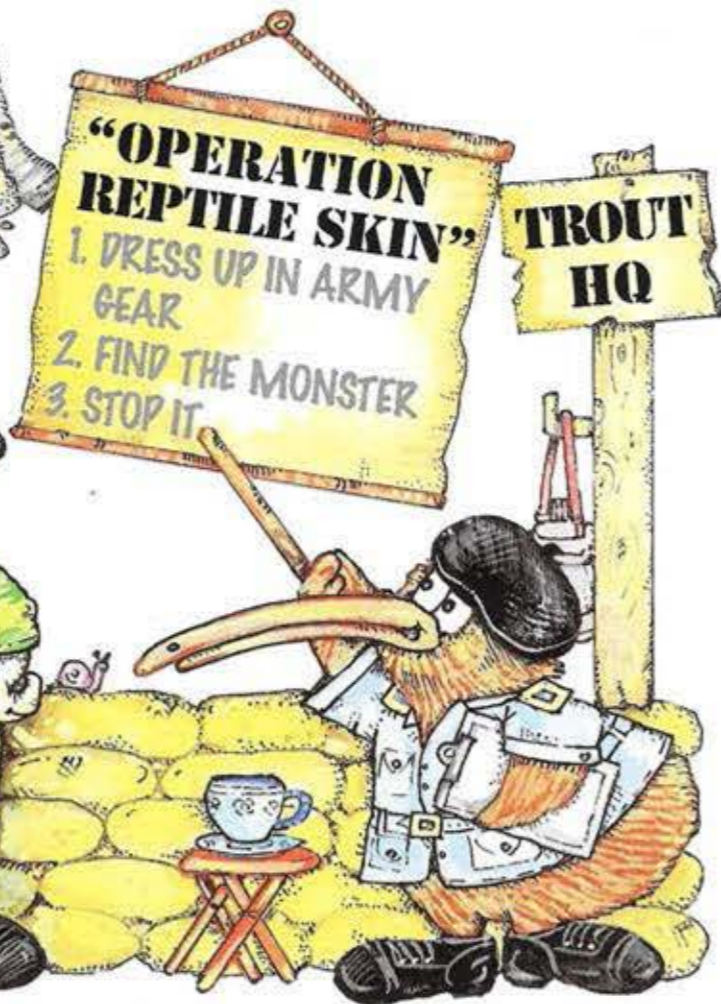
Soon the unfortunate tuatarasaur became the biggest snowball in the world. He rolled over and over, right down onto the Canterbury Plains.

Bruised, battered and feeling very giddy, Eric limped into **Christchurch**, very careful to avoid those pointed, sharp rocks everywhere. He looked around and thought it was a nice quiet place. Perhaps this could be his new home? The sheep passing by didn't even seem to mind him being there. A very brightly coloured rock began to play loud music, so Eric headed off up the estuary towards the sea and headed back up **North** again.



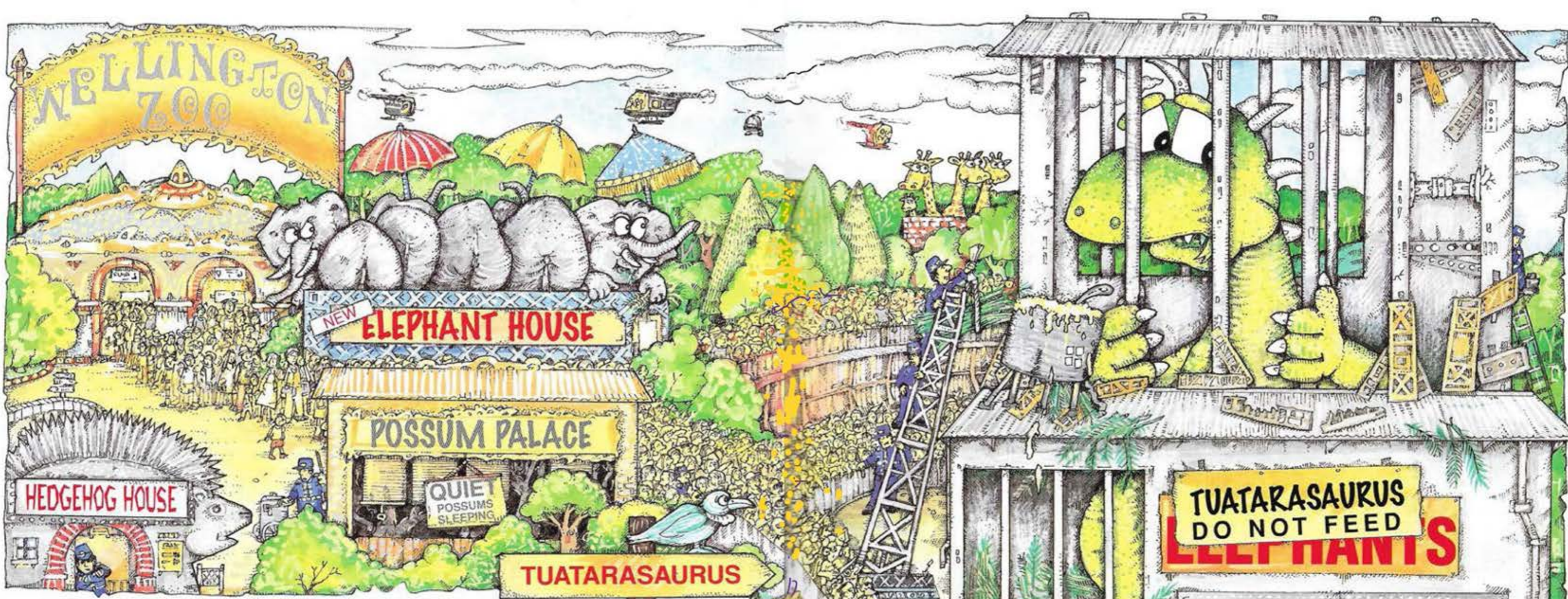


As Eric rushed off, the Prime Minister rang out on his mobile phone as he surveyed his ruined office. He spoke to Commander Kiwi, the head of T.R.O.U.T. (**Tactical Response Operational Undercover Team**). 'Find that monster and stop it – immediately!' The Prime Minister was worried; his chances at the next election were diminishing rapidly.



Eric's quest to find a new home had become a national disaster. He tried to hide across the harbour in **Eastbourne**. It was no use, the T.R.O.U.T. squad soon found him. They built a dam at the harbour entrance and finally trapped him in the sticky mud.





Everyone in New Zealand breathed a sigh of relief when they heard that Eric had been caught at last (especially the Prime Minister). Large cranes were used to lift the reptile into the hastily remodelled elephant house at the zoo. He quickly became the greatest tourist attraction that **Wellington** had ever had.

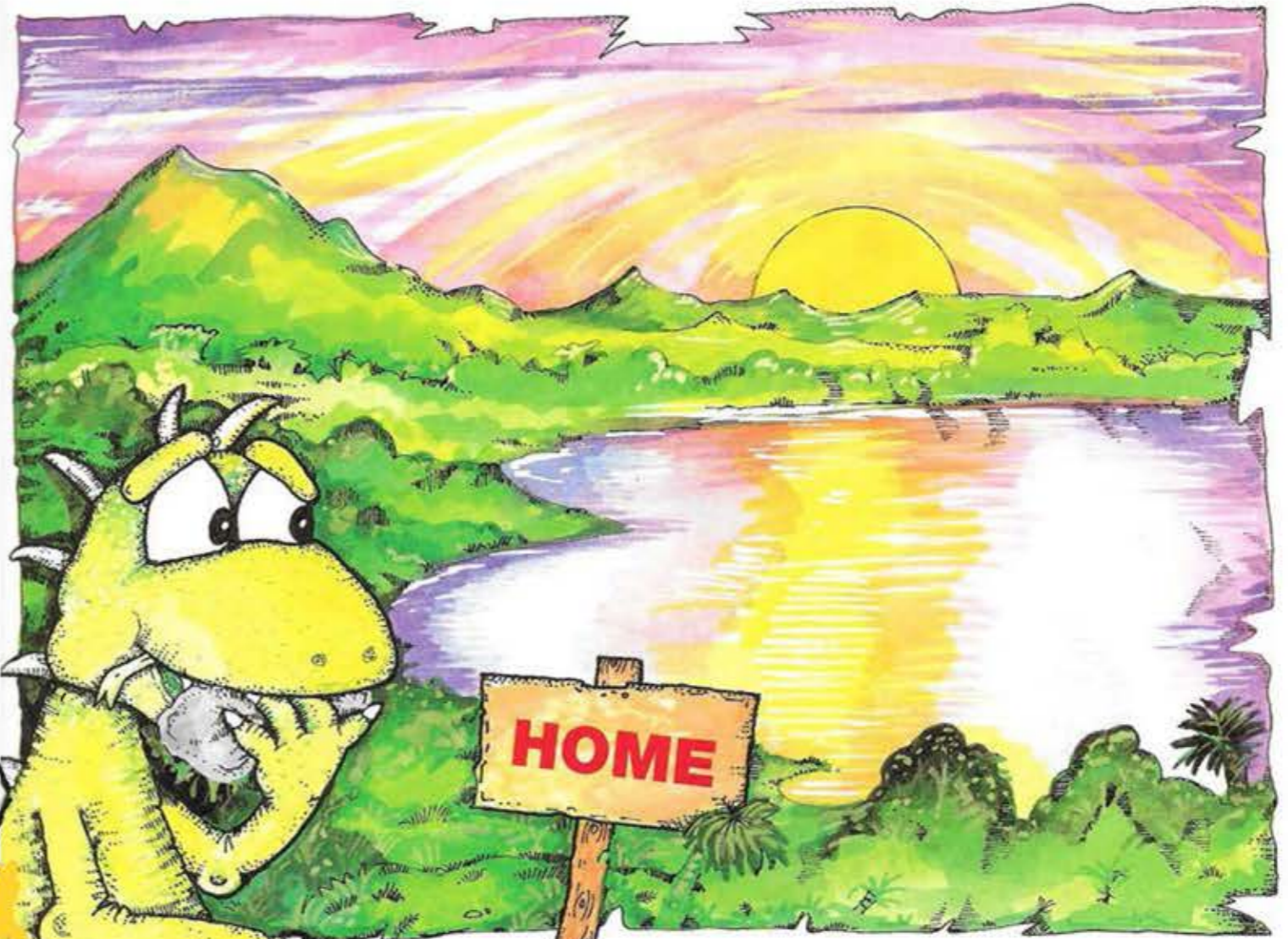
Thousands of visitors poured through the zoo gates.





But Eric was not happy being a tourist attraction. He tried to hide in the back of his cage but it wasn't much use, everyone could still see him. The food was soft and mushy – and very uninteresting.

He decided to escape. Late one night when all the animals were asleep (except the possums) he bit through his cage and left the zoo.



Eric was *exhausted*. He had travelled all over New Zealand looking for a home and still hadn't found one. He decided to go back to his old habitat, the one he left months ago. The sun was rising as he saw **Lake Taupo** in the distance, and the hills he knew well – he was back **HOME!** Those trout fishermen had just better learn to be quieter, he thought to himself as he chewed on a good old Taupo rock!

**ERIC
THE
TUATARASAUR'S
NEW ZEALAND
TRAVELS...**

**NORTH
ISLAND**

**SOUTH
PACIFIC
OCEAN**

**TASMAN
SEA**

Auckland

Waitomo

Hamilton

Rotorua

Lake Taupo

Wellington

Greymouth

Westport

Mount Cook

Christchurch

Mount Hutt

Milford

Queenstown

**SOUTH
ISLAND**



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