

STOP, Thief!

by
Simon
Cooke

CHARACTERS



MOHUA

MAX

(MARAMA'S
ASSISTANT)

KEA

MARAMA

(A PHOTOGRAPHER)

KĀREAREA

KŌKAKO

WHIO

HOIHO

SCENE: A forest by the sea. **MARAMA** and **MAX** are walking through the forest. It is very early in the morning, and the air is filled with birdsong.

MARAMA. I love the forest at dawn. It's so beautiful. I want to photograph everything.

MAX (yawning). It's too early. Can I please go back to bed?

MARAMA. No, Max, we have a job to do. We're here to get pictures of birds for the new banknotes that are going to be printed. And we'll need to find a really special bird for the hundred-dollar note!

MOHUA, WHIO, KŌKAKO, KĀREAREA, and KEA are nearby, listening to the humans.

MOHUA. Did you hear that? Those humans want to take our pictures and put them on banknotes. We'll be famous!

WHIO. Awesome! Mum will be so proud of me.

KEA (talking to himself). That camera is so shiny. I wonder if I can get a closer look ...

KEA shuffles around behind the humans to get closer to the camera.

KĀREAREA. Since I'm the most important bird, my picture is sure to be on the hundred-dollar note. Everybody wants to see Kārearea, king of the skies!

KŌKAKO. In your dreams, Kārearea. They'll want to see my beautiful blue wattle. Watch!

KŌKAKO *flies around the humans, doing rock star poses.*

MARAMA *snaps photos excitedly.*

MOHUA. Out of the way, Kōkako. My bright yellow head will make them forget about your blue wattle.

MOHUA *flies around the humans, doing supermodel poses.*

KŌKAKO (*pushing in front*). Stop hogging the camera, Mohua!

MOHUA (*pushing back*).

Get off my beak, Kōkako!

MAX (*confused*). What are those birds doing?

MARAMA. I think they're fighting over territory.

HOIHO *waddles up.*

HOIHO. What's going on?

KĀREAREA. Kia ora, Hoiho. Good news. Those humans are going to take my photo and put it on the one-hundred-dollar note.

HOIHO. Do you think they'll take a photo of me?

WHIO. No chance, Hoiho. You're not a proper bird. I mean, you can't even fly!

KŌKAKO (*laughing*). Imagine a flying penguin!

The birds all laugh at HOIHO.

WHIO (*to KŌKAKO, KĀREAREA, and MOHUA*). Anyway, I don't know why you three think you have a chance. They'll want a photo of me – a bird that's brave and sporty. I love swimming in fast mountain streams and rivers. I'm a thrill-seeking duck!

WHIO *flies in front of the camera and pretends to be kayaking down rapids.*

MAX. What is that duck doing? Break-dancing?

MARAMA. It's a whio – and no, I think it might have something stuck in its beak.

KĀREAREA (*calling to WHIO*). I'm braver than you, Whio. (**KĀREAREA** *turns to where the other birds are standing.*)

Isn't that right, Kea? Hey, where's Kea gone?



WHIO. He's over there.

MOHUA. What's he up to? I think we'd better stop him before he does something silly!

KEA is sneaking up behind MARAMA, who is still taking photos. Suddenly, KEA grabs the camera and flies away with it.

MARAMA. Stop, thief!

MAX. What's happening?

MARAMA. That kea has stolen my camera!

The birds look at each other, their beaks open in shock.

KĀREAREA. Oh no! If there's no camera, there'll be no photo of me on the hundred-dollar note! Come on, everybody. Catch that kea!

WHIO. Sorry, Hoiho. You'll have to stay here because you can't fly.

MOHUA, WHIO, KŌKAKO, and KĀREAREA chase KEA.

KEA. This heavy camera is slowing me down. They're catching up. But if I can't have this camera, nobody can!

KEA flies over the sea and drops the camera.

MOHUA. Oh no, Kea's dropped the camera into the sea!

WHIO (*crying*). The camera's gone?

Now we'll never be famous.

Mum will be so disappointed!



HOIHO. Don't worry. Leave it to me.

HOIHO waddles towards the sea and dives in.

WHIO (to **KĀREAREA**). Wow! Look at Hoiho dive! She dives into the sea as well as you dive down from tall trees!

KĀREAREA (*disgruntled*). Hmmph!

MOHUA. Look at Hoiho glide through the water!

KŌKAKO. She glides through the water as well as I glide through the forest!



HOIHO arrives back with the camera, placing it carefully on the ground near **MARAMA** and **MAX**, who look astonished. **HOIHO** waddles back to the other birds.

KŌKAKO. Well done, Hoiho!

MOHUA. Yes, we're sorry we made fun of you. If anyone deserves to be on the hundred-dollar note, it's you.

KĀREAREA scowls but doesn't say anything. **MARAMA** picks up her camera.

MARAMA. That was amazing. I didn't expect to see this camera again. It's a good thing it's waterproof.

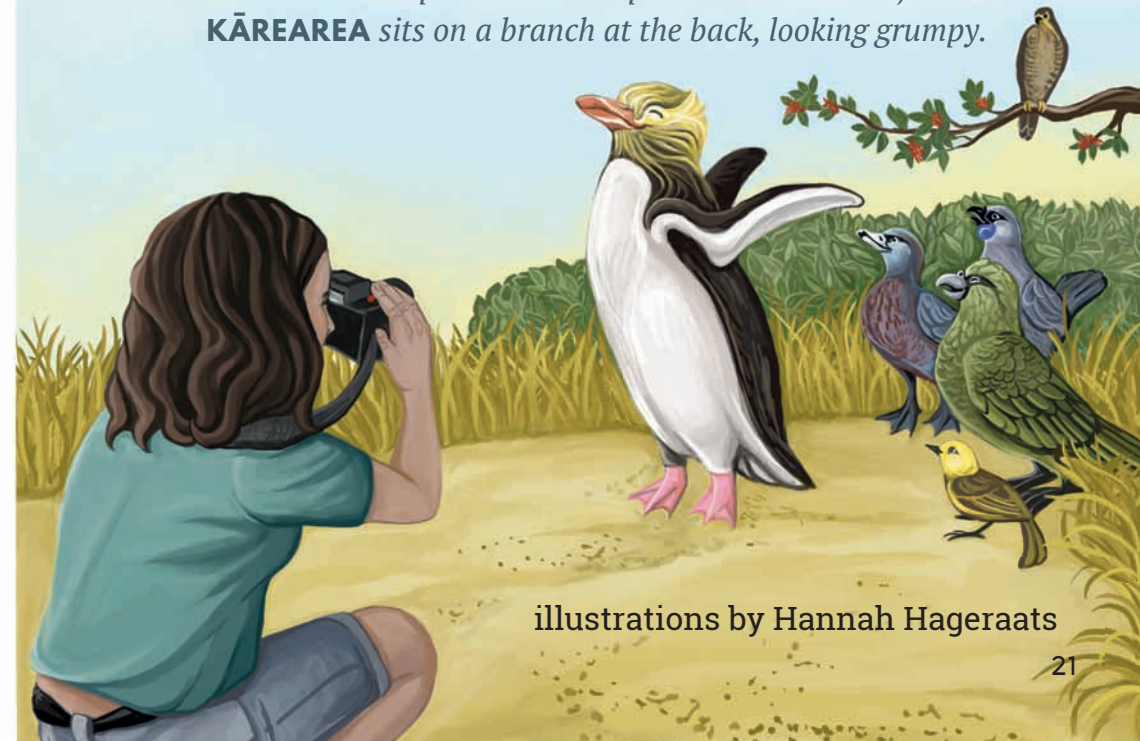
MAX. It's a pity it wasn't kea-proof too.

MARAMA. Yes, that kea caused so much trouble there's no way he's going to be on a banknote. But that helpful hoiho should be. I'm going to make sure she ends up on the best note of all.

MAX. You mean the hundred-dollar note?

MARAMA. No, hardly anyone uses those. The five-dollar note is the best. There are lots of them around. People use them and look at them every day. I'm going to make that little bird famous!

MARAMA starts taking pictures of the birds again. All the other birds except **KĀREAREA** push **HOIHO** to the front. **KĀREAREA** sits on a branch at the back, looking grumpy.



illustrations by Hannah Hageraats

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