



16. They didn't stop swimming fast until the island was so far behind them that they could no longer see it. 'My Mum told me about another island that's best of all', said Mori. 'Come on, we can get there in a day'. The others followed him through the deep waters to the other side of the Caspian. They swam through the darkness, and as the sun rose, they could see another island. Although they were so tired, they kept going. As they drew nearer, rounded shapes – seal shapes – were apparent on the beach. Lots of seals were there, all sleeping peacefully. And in the very centre of the group there was a large sign on a wooden post with a picture of a happy seal on it. 'SEAL REFUGE' said the sign. **THIS BEACH IS RESERVED FOR SEALS.** 'This is **FOR US**' shouted Mori so excitedly that some of the sleeping seals woke up, but when they saw all the little seals arriving, they just smiled and went back to sleep. Tyuli crawled out of the beach and lay down beside Mori. 'This is the best place ever', said Tyuli as she stretched out in the morning sun and closed her tired eyes. 'Let's make this our home until we're old enough to go back to the ice one day to have our own babies'. Mori didn't answer, because he was already asleep.



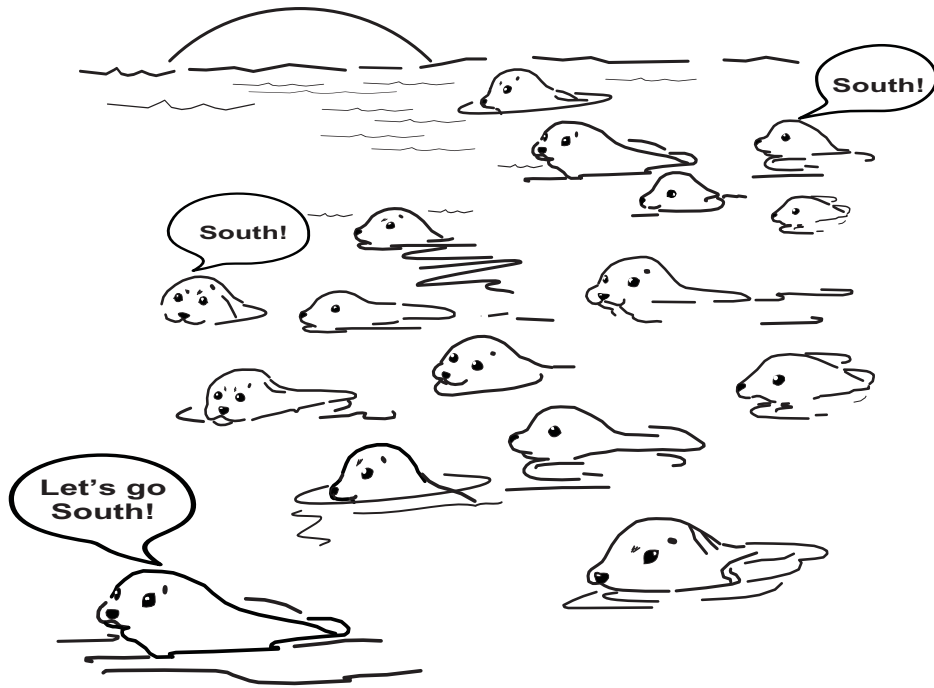
1. Little Tyuli is born on the ice. Her mother, Lena, looks after her and feeds her lovely warm milk. Tyuli's fluffy coat keeps her warm in the bitter cold.



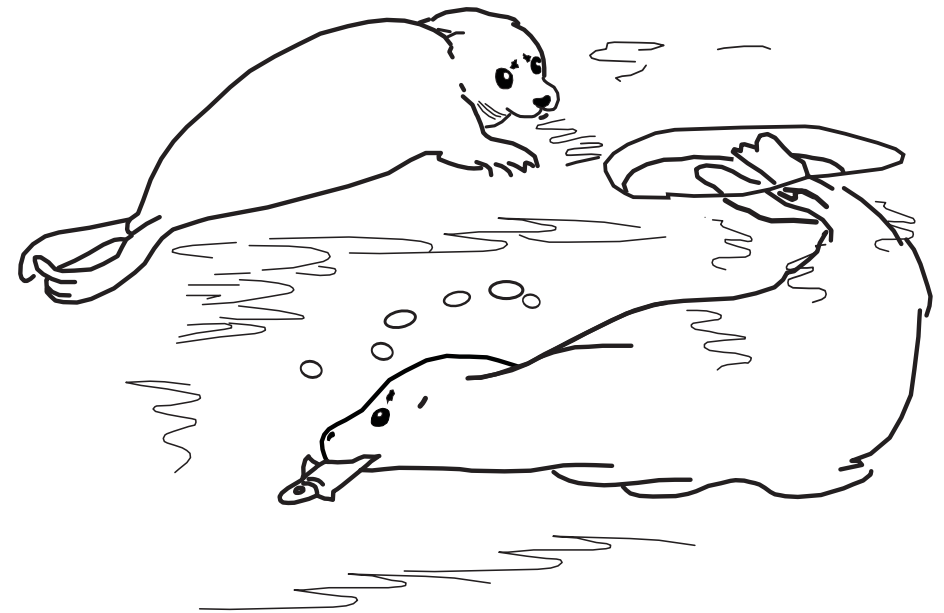
2. A large eagle flies down. He is hungry, and wants to kill Tyuli and eat her for lunch, but Lena defends her baby. The eagle goes off to find lunch somewhere else. Lena comforts her baby.



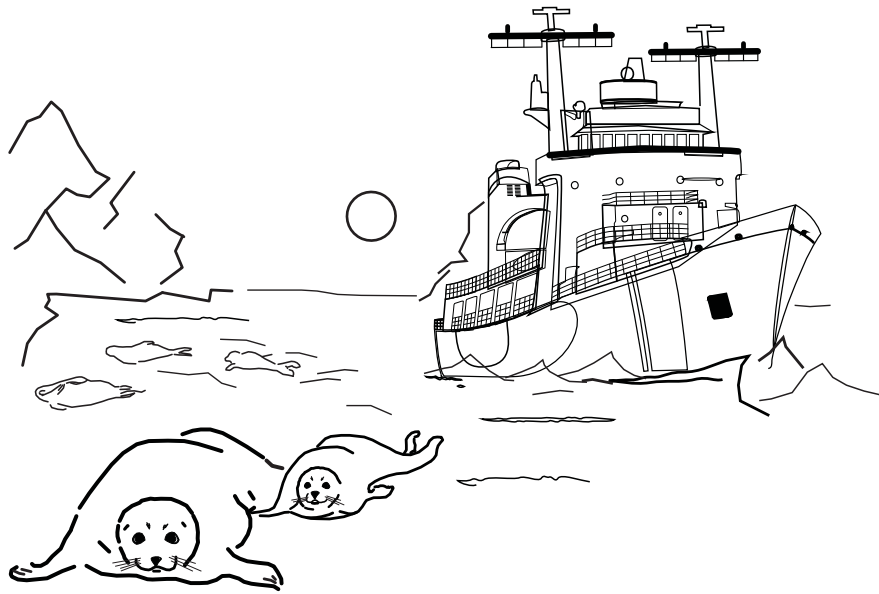
15. To keep them going on their journey, they caught little fish swimming in schools near the surface. These are delicious, said Tyuli. I like silverside best. I like kilka, said Mori. They make me grow big and strong. But after many days at sea, swimming and fishing, the little seals grew tired. Sometimes they dozed in the water, but Tyuli asked Mori (who knew everything) where they could sleep properly. I'm taking us all to an island where there are lots of seals and we can all go to sleep together, said Mori. Mori led them to this island, but there were no seals there. 'I'm so tired', said Tyuli, climbing out on to the beach and resting her head on the soft sand. 'I don't like it', said Mori, 'Where is everyone? Come back into the water, Tyuli, something is not right'. Suddenly they heard loud bangs which hurt their ears and made them cry out. Then there were loud, ugly sounds behind Tyuli on the island, and two big men appeared with sticks. 'Run, Tyuli', cried Mori, and Tyuli ran, streaking into the sea and safety.



14. Tyuli and all her friends were very scared after that. 'My Mum told me to head for deeper water, said one big, bold pup called Mori. I think it's safer there – there won't be so many nets. Come on, follow me'. 'But where is deeper water?' asked Tyuli. 'Let's go South', answered Mori. 'South, South, South', chanted all the pups. 'But where is South?' asked Tyuli. 'Watch and feel the sky, my Mum told me, said Mori. So they all went together, guided by the sun and the stars, into the deep, deep waters of the Southern Caspian.



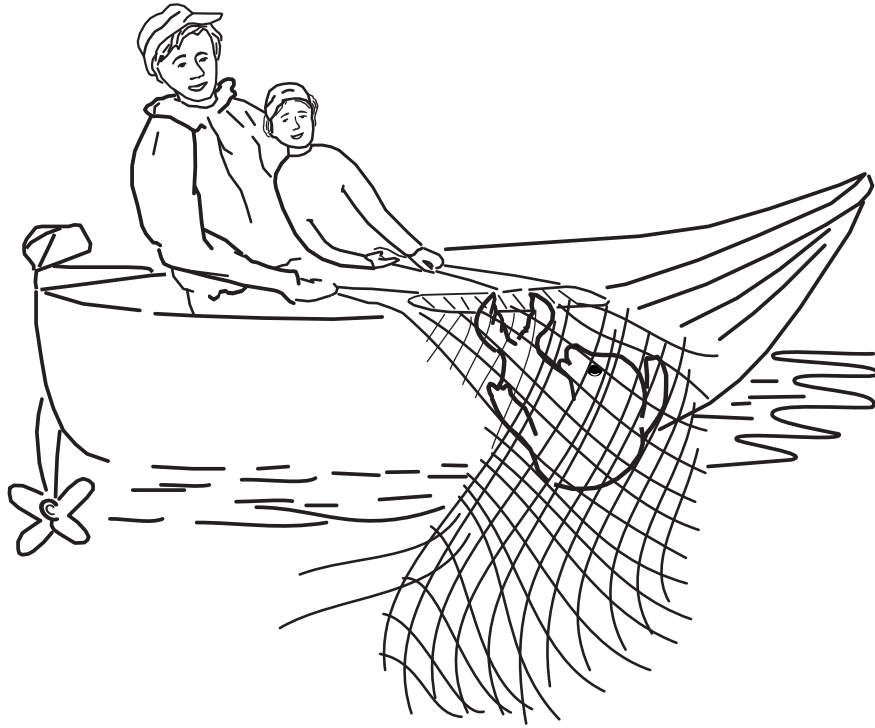
3. Tyuli grows bigger and fatter on her mother's rich milk. Her new blubber helps to keep her warm. Lena needs to eat fish to keep making milk for her. Before Tyuli was born, Lena made a hole in the ice so that she can get in and out of the water. She dives through the hole into the water and goes fishing. Tyuli waits for her beside the hole. Tyuli must not go into the water and get wet, or her white fluffy fur would get icy and Tyuli would freeze to death.



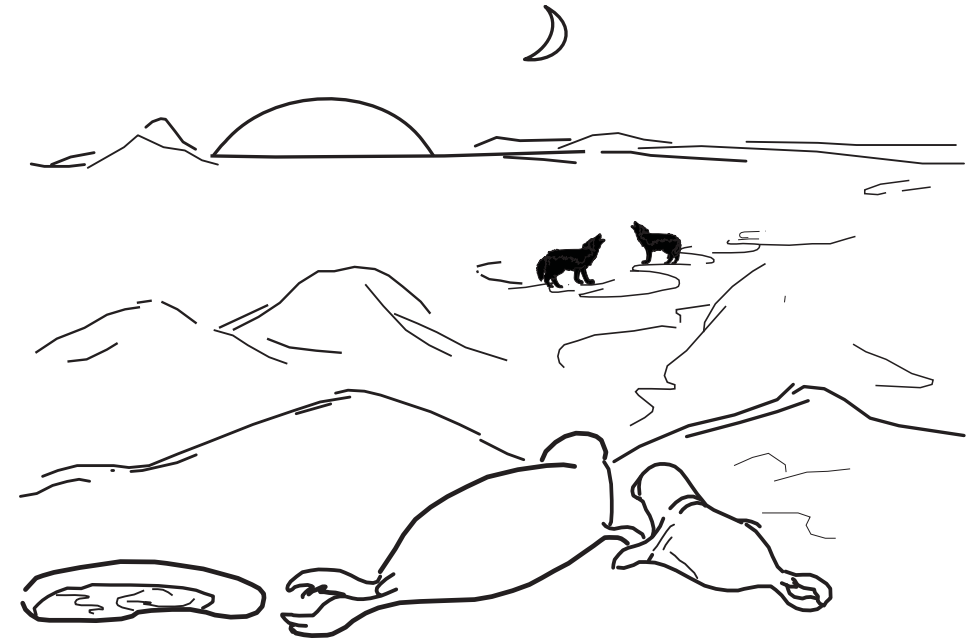
4. One day Tyuli is asleep beside her mother when a huge ship crashed through the ice towards them. 'Wake up, Tyuli, shouts her mother, 'This way, follow me!' Tyuli wakes up and hears the noise and sees the big red ship. She is frightened. She hurries to follow her mother, who stops to wait for her. They stop running as the icebreaker goes past them. Lena kisses Tyuli with her nose to comfort her. But now they are far from their hole in the ice and they must go back to find it.



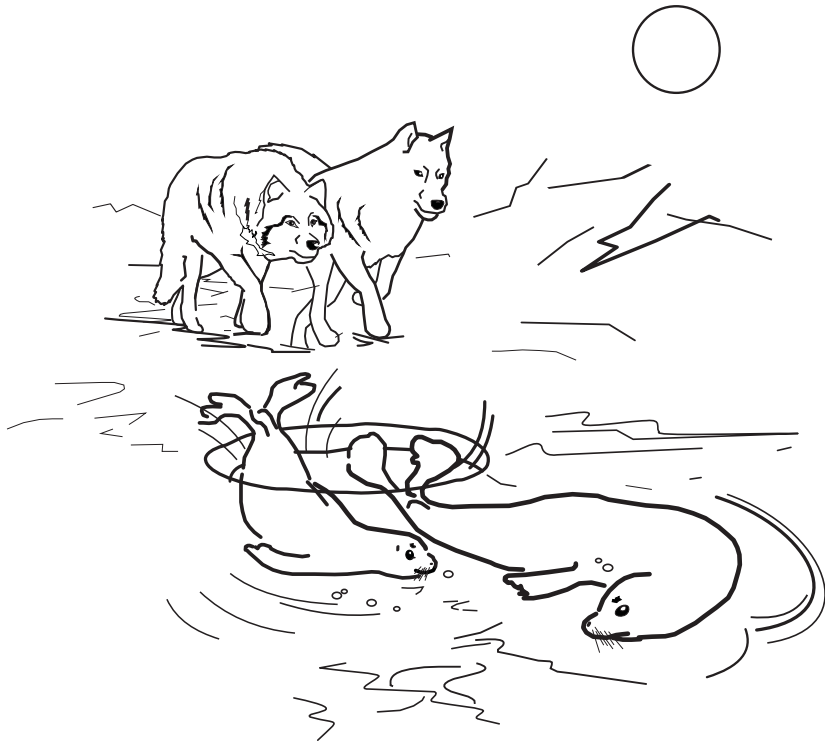
13. 'It's just a darned seal – hang on, I'll kill it before it destroys the net,' said his father, reaching for his oar. 'NO' screamed Kobey, 'You mustn't kill it. I love seals. Seals are our friends. This one is just a little baby. She has to live'. 'Well, how will you get it out of the net', said his father. It'll bite you. Kobey knelt down in the boat beside Tyuli and started to sing quietly. Tyuli heard his soft voice, and started to breathe more easily. She felt Kobey's hand stroke her gently, and she stopped feeling so frightened. Kobey carefully untangled the net around her, singing all the while. Soon Tyuli was free. She sat up in the boat and looked at Kobey. 'You are free', said Kobey. 'Off you go', said Kobey's father. Tyuli leaned forward and kissed Kobey's cheek with her nose. Then she slipped over the side of the boat and into the water. She turned round once more to her new friends. 'Watch out for nets', called Kobey. 'Thank you', called Tyuli.



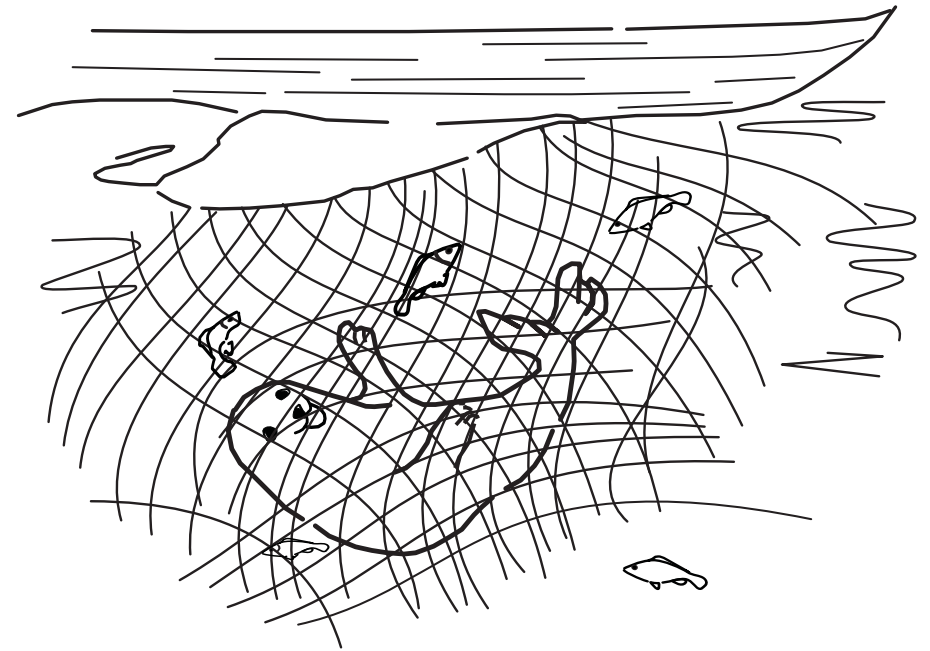
12. Daddy, stop, the buoy is moving, something's pulling on the net,' shouted Kobey from the bow of their small boat. His father was just starting the engine to leave the net and go home. 'Let's pull the net in then', said his father. Maybe we've caught a big beluga sturgeon and we'll make our fortune! Kobey started to pull the net in to the boat, but it was heavy and moved all the time. His father helped and suddenly they heaved the heavy thing over the side of the boat. It was Tyuli, terrified and gasping for breath. She couldn't move.



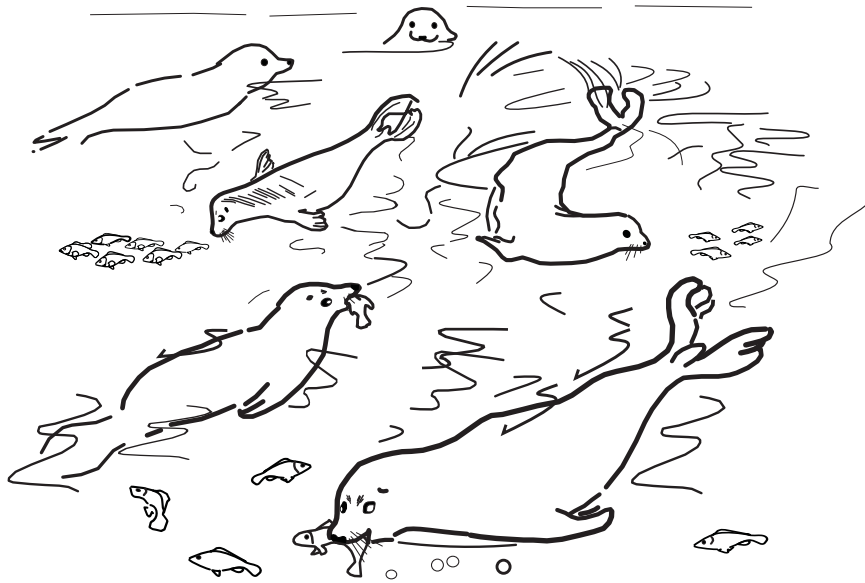
5. It is a beautiful day with a sunny sky. Just as the sun sets, Lena sees the frightening shapes of a family of wolves against the evening sky. 'Tyuli, quick, hide behind this icy hummock', whispers Lena. Cautiously they peer out from behind the icy hummock at the wolves. For a moment they think they are safe.



6. 'Oh no', gasps Lena. The wolves are heading towards them. 'Quick, follow me through our hole!'. Lena dives into the hole and Tyuli falls in after her just as the wolves reach the hole. Lena holds her closely and swims away with her under the ice. Lena knows where the next ice hole is. She swims towards it, still holding Tyuli between her flippers. Tyuli finds she doesn't need to breathe under the water. She feels quite calm.



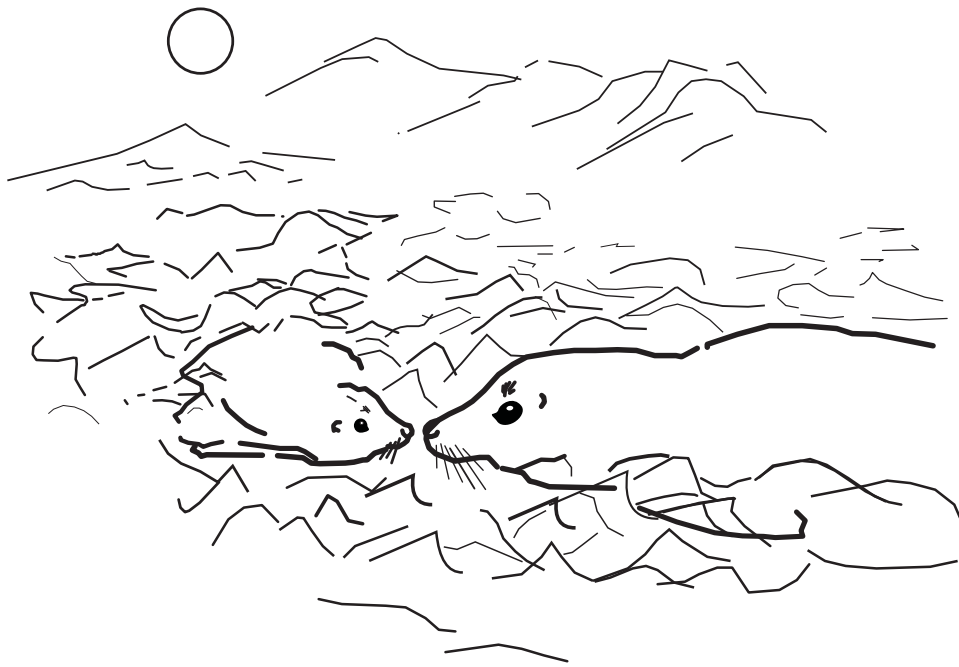
11. Soon Tyuli made friends with lots of other little seals and they all played and went fishing together, looking for gobies. Tyuli was having such fun and feeling so good she even forgot she was missing her Mother. Then one day she had a terrible fright. She was chasing a goby along the sea-bed, and suddenly she could go no further – something touched her all over – she turned round and that something was still there, everywhere – the more she twisted and turned, the more she was caught up in a little ball. She kicked and struggled in terror, and soon she needed to breathe, but she couldn't.....HELP...!!



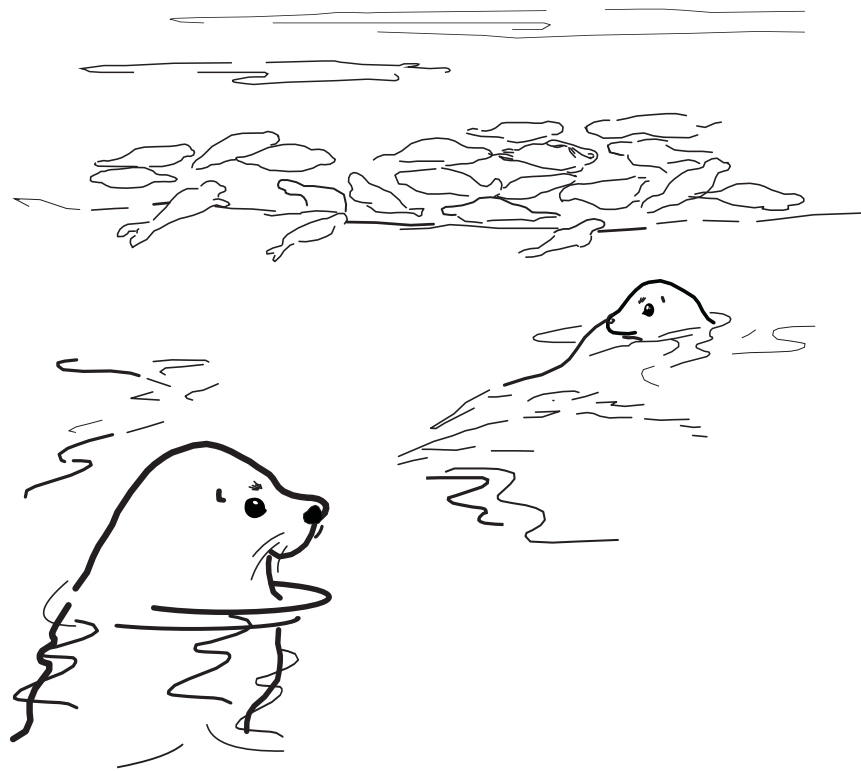
10. She was not alone for long. Around her there were ripples on the water and little splashes, and beneath her she felt the water move. Little seals, just like her, playing, chasing, chasing, chasing....what? What was that little wriggling thing? Oh, a little seal just ate it! Tyuli looked all around under the sea. On the sandy sea-bed below here were little grey shapes. Tyuli felt one with her long whiskers and touched it with her nose. It felt smooth and cold, and wriggled away. Intrigued, Tyuli followed it, trying to feel it with her whiskers. It wriggled more, and Tyuli tried to catch it in her mouth. Suddenly it was in her mouth, and 'gulp', it was gone. Tyuli felt it in her tummy. 'I think that was a fish', thought Tyuli.



7. Lena and Tyuli reach the next hole and they surface together. They both peep out of the hole. They can just see the wolves about 150m away, but the wolves can't see them. The wolves are still looking down the old hole and waiting. Lena laughs and Tyuli laughs, too. They are safe!



8. The weather is warmer now, and all around them the ice is melting into a grey mushy ice 'soup'. Tyuli has lost all her baby fur now and she is very proud of her new silvery-grey fur. 'You are so beautiful', says Lena, as they float together in the icy soup. 'Soon now we must say goodbye for a little while. I must go with all the other Mummies and have a long rest on a sandy island while I change into my new fur coat. I won't be able to give you any more milk, so you must go and learn to catch fish to eat. 'Fish', said Tyuli, 'What are fish?'



9. The ice melted away and Tyuli and her Mother swam and dived in the cool blue sea. 'Bye-bye Tyuli', be good, called her mother and she surfaced further and further away. 'One day you will come back to the ice and have your own baby. You are beautiful. I love you. Have a great time. Take care. You will always be mine'. Lena got smaller and smaller and her voice softer and softer until she was no longer there.