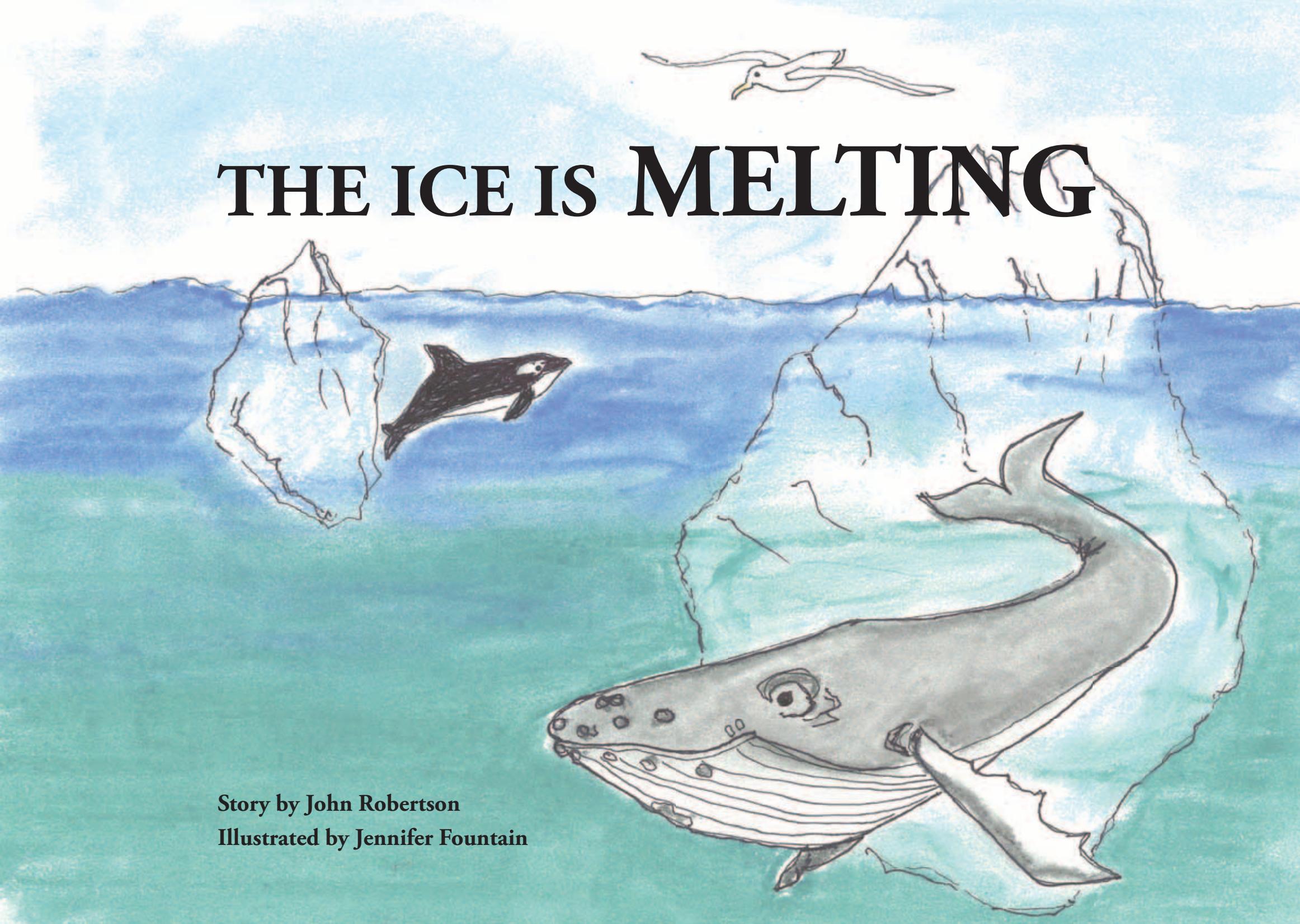


THE ICE IS MELTING



Story by John Robertson

Illustrated by Jennifer Fountain

THE ICE IS MELTING
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Ocean, Flynn, and Joe and to Juliette, Poppy and Flynn in New Zealand and Emma and Jilly in the United States of America and to all babies to be and children who come after them, or simply through the love of the birds and animals of the sea.

Acknowledgements

This book would not have happened but for the continuing encouragement and wise counsel of Carol, who first listened to a story composed in the middle of the night from a dream, put into writing by John and into colour by Jennifer. Sharron kindly provided grammatical insight and proof read the final script.

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Henry, the mighty Humpback Whale, lives in the seas feeding on tiny sea crustaceans called krill. Henry is very wise.

He knows the currents and the tides.

He guides other whales in their vast travels searching for waters rich in krill, calling to them in his beautiful haunting voice through corridors of cold seawater deep below the surface of the waves.

Henry feels uneasy. He feels in his knobbly head and great flippers that the sea is getting warmer and the taste of the sea is changing.

The water tastes more acid and bitter.

He worries to himself that if the sea changes the krill will die and there will be no food for whales.

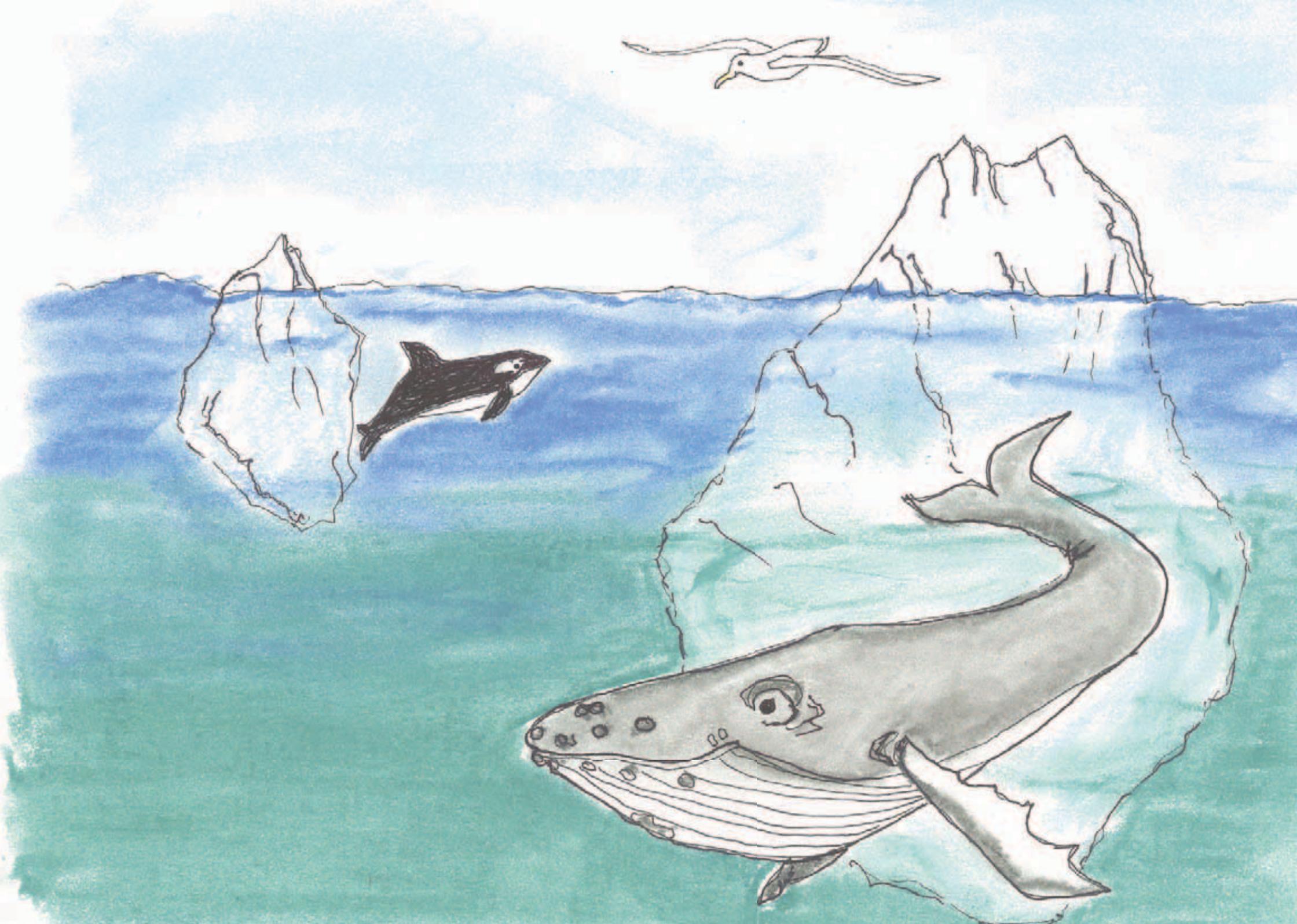


Henry swims deep into the Southern Ocean to the great ice shelf of Antarctica. He sees huge chunks of ice break away and fall into the sea.

“The ice is melting,” he calls to his friend Moana, the Wandering Albatross who rides high on the winds above him.

Moana knows the winds and the seas and the lands.

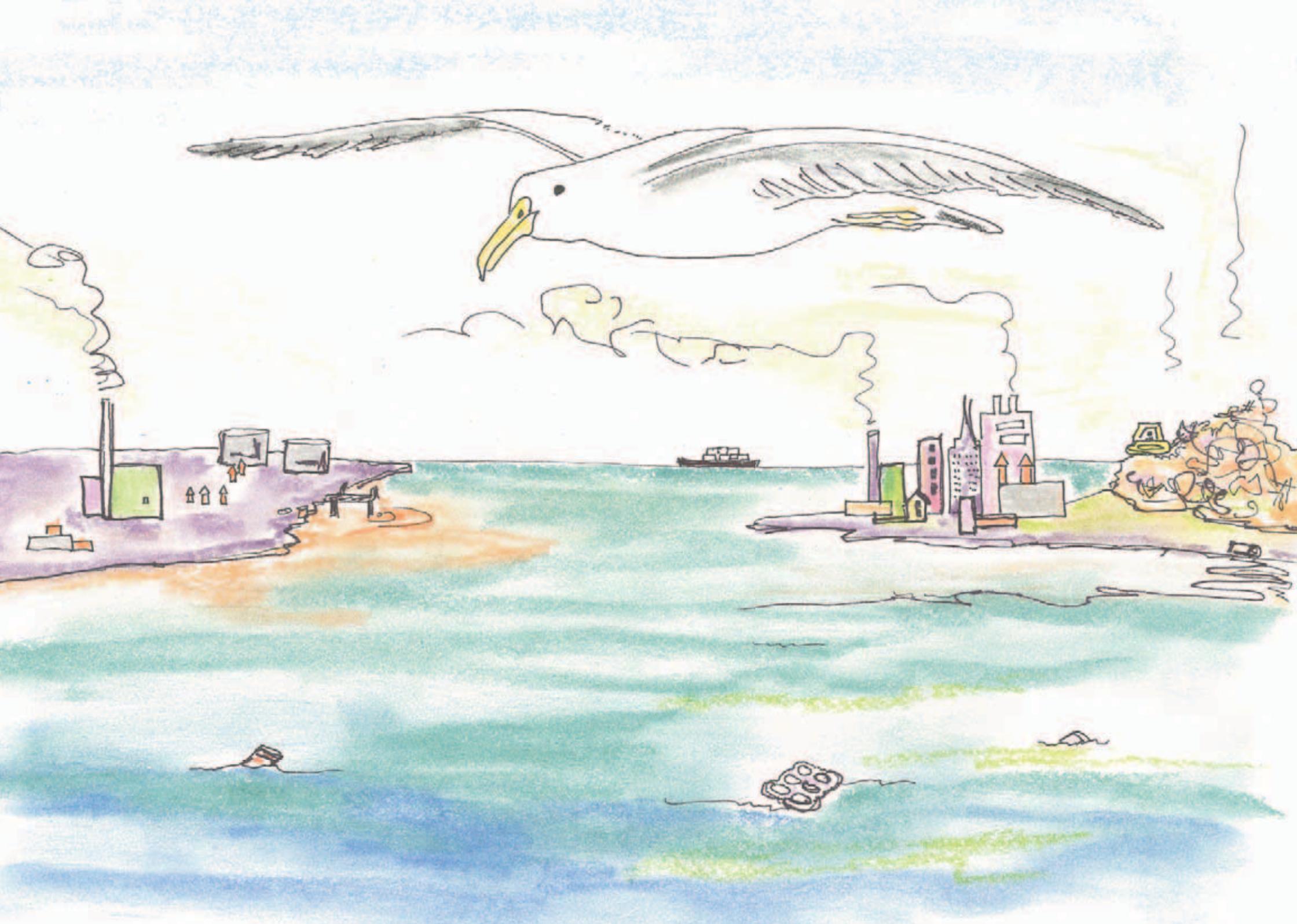
Her travels take her far and wide. “Why is the ice melting?” he calls to Moana.



“The man people are burning the Earth,” she calls back.

“I have seen huge pits where black rock is carried away on great machines to buildings with tall chimneys which spew out smoke and I cannot breathe there. The smoke makes the Earth warmer. The smoke makes a canopy which traps the heat. The man people call it the “green house effect”.

It is the man people who are causing the ice to melt.”



“We must stop the ice from melting,” calls Henry.

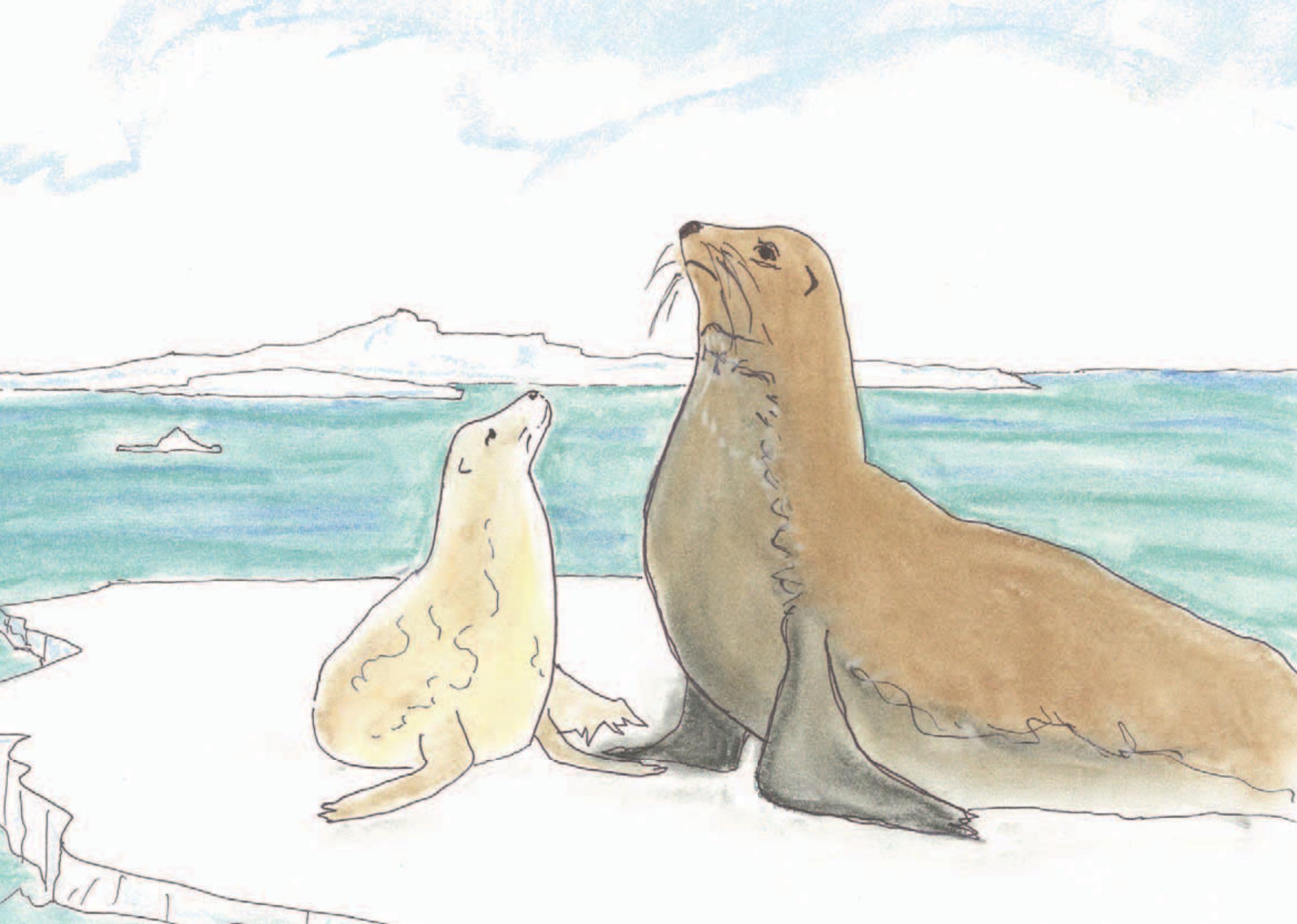
“There must be a way. Let us have a great peace conference of the creatures of the sea to decide what we can do. If the seas warm there will be no food for any of us and we will all perish.”

Henry and Moana ask their friends the noisy gulls and the dolphins to tell others about the peace conference on the edge of the ice.

The creatures of the sea gather in great numbers. Henry addresses them all. “My friends”, he says “the sea is getting warmer. The ice is melting. It is the man people who are causing this to happen. We must stop the man people from warming the sea before it is too late and there will be no food for us.”



The other penguins and creatures of the sea argue among themselves, back and forth. Nobody can decide what to do. Then Sammy the seal pup climbs up to his father and speaks in his loudest voice: “Let us take an iceberg to the man people to show them the ice is melting.”



The sea creatures laugh at Sammy. “What do you know?” they laugh. “You are only a seal pup.” Big Bruno the Orca (or killer whale as the man people call him) licks his lips. When the peace conference is over, he will go back to hunting for Sammy the seal pup.

Henry the Humpback Whale does not laugh. “Has anyone got another idea?” he calls. There is more commotion and arguing, barking and squawking but in the end none of the sea creatures come up with another idea.

“So let us consider Sammy’s idea,” Moana says. “Tell us, Sammy. How can we take an iceberg to the man people?”

“We’ll make a rope of kelp cut from the kelp forests,” Sammy says, “and we’ll pull the iceberg to the man people. Then they will see the ice is melting.”

Once again the sea creatures laugh at Sammy the seal pup. Even his father and his mother look nervously about and wonder why it is their son who is causing all this commotion when other seal pups are playing happily on the ice. Sammy’s father says “Shush, be quiet Sammy.” Moana speaks softly. “Let Sammy tell us how we will make the rope of kelp. Sometimes children see things adults cannot see.”

“The smalltooth sawfish will cut the kelp for us,” Sammy says. “The giant squid with its long arms will gather the kelp and tie a knot for the end of the rope. Then the dolphins and the penguins will weave the kelp in and out to make a rope around the iceberg. The whales and the walruses, the seals, the great white sharks and the penguins will all work together to pull on the rope so the iceberg will begin to move. We will take the iceberg to the man people. Then they will know that the ice is melting.”

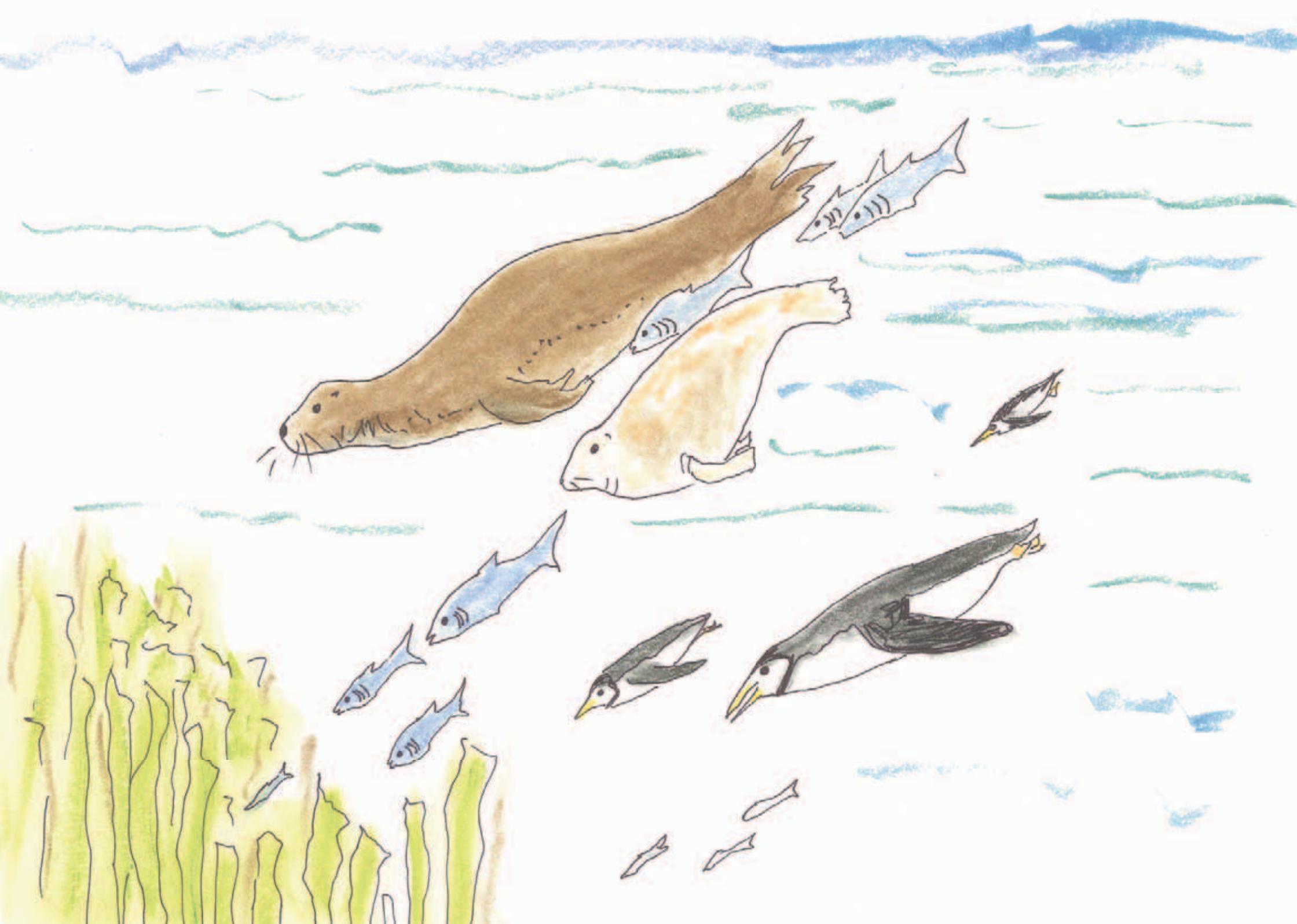


Everyone could see how wise and clever Sammy was. The Emperor Penguins, who knew they could not survive global warming, clap their flippers and everyone wants to begin at once. “How will we know where to pull the iceberg?” asks one of the seals.

“I will guide you. I know the winds,” says Moana. “I will guide you to the man people.”

“And I know the currents,” says Henry. “I will work with Moana to bring the iceberg to the man people. We will take the iceberg to the north, to Aotearoa which is “The Land of the Long White Cloud”. We will show the man people the ice is melting.”

The creatures of the sea dive down to the kelp beds.



The smalltooth sawfish cuts the longest of the sea kelp in the kelp forests and the squids tie the ends in a knot and the dolphins and the penguins diving in and out weave the kelp into a wonderful rope.

Moana and Henry search along the ice shelf for an iceberg. They discover a huge piece of ice as big as a small island that has broken away and is drifting free. Moana calls to the dolphins and the penguins to take the rope around the iceberg.



“Now,” says Henry “Let’s all work together to pull on the rope.”

“We must work quickly,” says the Great White Shark. “We sharks do not like these cold waters. How shall we pull the rope? Our sharp teeth will cut the rope if we put it in our jaws.”

The tiny Sea Horse knowing about ropes and harnesses speaks up: “Pull the rope in your own ways, with your fins or flippers, in your jaws or your beaks, but do not cut the rope.”

When everyone is ready holding the rope, Henry gives the command! Slowly, ever so slowly, the iceberg begins to move away from the ice shelf. The great journey has begun.

Moana flies high above them and with her wings points them towards the North. “How far is it to Aotearoa?” asks a young penguin. “About 11,000 nautical miles,” calls the Arctic Tern who knows the seas and oceans from the North Pole to the South.

Henry says: “It will take us sixty days and sixty nights to reach Aotearoa.” The lazy penguin who had turned his back on the Peace Conference laughs at them. “The iceberg will melt before you get to Aotearoa,” he says.

Henry leads his brave team out into the Emerald Basin of the South West Pacific Ocean heading north to the southern shores of Aotearoa. They had all agreed the rules of the peace conference would continue within a 1 nautical mile radius of the iceberg. Within that region the sea creatures could live in safety, free from attack from those who might prey on them. Even Sammy the seal pup, who had demanded he travel with his father, but spent much of his day asleep on the iceberg, feels safe from the jaws of Big Bruno the killer whale.



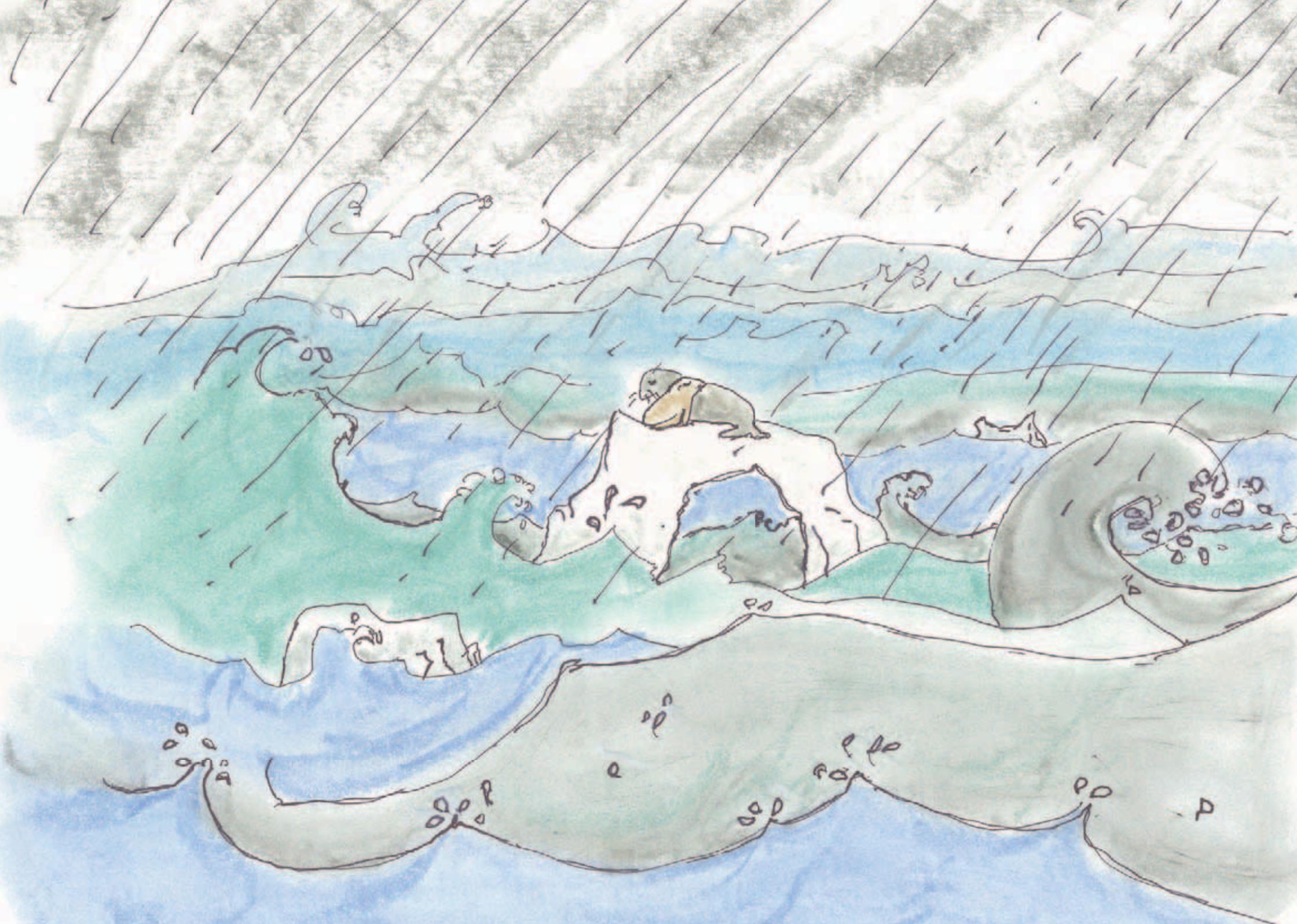
Days and nights go by. The sun rises and sets. The full moon creates for the travelers a silver pathway on the sea and the Southern Cross aids them at nights. Slowly but steadily the iceberg moves northward guided by the great wings of the Wandering Albatross.

Thirty days out into the southern ocean Moana's warning cry rings out. "Storm!" she calls, her cry drawn out by the rising wind. "A storm is coming. I must leave you until it has passed." Moana and all of the other birds of the sea who have traveled with her wheel away on the winds to disappear from sight. One by one the other creatures of the sea vanish into the depths to save themselves from the turmoil of the waves. Only little Sammy the seal and his father climb high onto the iceberg to ride out the storm, which strikes in full force in the middle of the night.

The south easterly winds howl around the icy crags and the huge waves roll and crash, tearing away great chunks of ice. Sammy trembles as the fork lightning crackles and the thunder rolls about his hiding place where he snuggles close to his father for shelter from the freezing sleet and winds. Exhausted, he falls asleep. He leaves the storm to blow itself out in his dreams.

On the third day, when morning comes the sky is clear and the sun is a red ball of fire over the sea. One by one the whales and walruses, sharks, seals and penguins return to the iceberg. Some return because they believe that when the man people see the ice is melting they will change their ways. Others return because they are loyal to Henry their leader.

The rope of kelp had survived the storm and the sea creatures once again take their places and pull as hard as they can. The winds from the south east had aided their journey but the iceberg was now smaller than before. Henry says to Moana: "I am worried the iceberg will melt before we get to Aotearoa." But he says nothing to the others.



Henry makes the best use of the currents to guide them northwards. Then one day in the late afternoon sixty five days and sixty five nights after they had set out Moana calls to them again. “Land,” she calls “I see the land!”

The seals and penguins climb to the top of the iceberg. Far away on the horizon are the snowy peaks of great mountains. Henry says: “Let the dolphins and the pilot whales steer our passage to shore.” As the land comes closer the roar of the waves crashing on the beaches is heard against the cries of the noisy gulls.

The creatures of the sea are exhausted from their efforts. Henry calls for one last haul on the frayed rope. The iceberg shudders and lurches as it strikes rocks on the sea floor of the bay and anchors fast. The sea creatures cheer and dance through the water, the dolphins leaping high above the waves. More ice falls away, but they have achieved their goal. They have brought the iceberg to the man people who are gathering in awe along the beaches and high on the cliffs.

“Now they will know the ice is melting,” the sea creatures think as one by one they slip away, the seals, walruses and penguins to their colonies on the offshore islands, the sharks to their deep reefs, the whales to the open sea. Only Henry, Moana, the dolphins and the noisy gulls stay to keep watch on the iceberg.

The man people point out to sea, pointing to the iceberg. Local newspapers report whales and other sea creatures close to the iceberg. Some people who come to see the iceberg say it is a miracle but others say it is just the sea currents and the winds that brought it there.



Ben and Emily live in a little village at the bay. In the early morning they see the iceberg touched by the first rays of the rising sun, vanish in shafts of rainbow colours. A magic spell fills them with joy and wonder as though in that brief moment the spirit of the Antarctic is revealed to them.

“Where did the iceberg come from?” “Why is it breaking up and melting?” the children ask their parents. Their parents tell them about the earth getting warmer and about what people call the “green house effect” from the smoke from big cities. They talk about the exhaust fumes from cars and trucks and the burning of coal and oil and how the ice at the North and South Poles is melting and the seas were getting warmer and how birds and animals are losing their homes and dying.

“Can’t we stop the ice from melting?” demand the children. “Changing our ways will help,” their parents tell them. “Our politicians must make new laws. Our scientists must find new ways to stop the smoke from the cities.” They tell the children: “We are trying to do something now. We are planting trees to reduce the carbon dioxide in the air and we are trying to reduce the fumes from factories and motor cars.”

“I will be a lawyer when I grow up,” says Emily. “Then I will ask the people to elect me and I will go into Parliament and try to make laws to stop the smoke from the cities.” “I will be a scientist,” says Ben. “I will find new ways so that we will not need to burn coal and oil.”

“I don’t want the birds and animals to die,” says Emily. “The world will be so boring if there are only people alive. I love the whales and the baby seals. I love the godwits and the terns. They are so cool. We need to stop the ice from melting if we can.”



High above on the winds of the earth Moana the Wandering Albatross hears what the children say. She feels hope and gladness in her heart. Wheeling away to her nest in tussock land where she raises her chicks she passes on what she has heard to the dolphins and the noisy gulls. The word spreads among the sea creatures that the man people know the ice is melting. They know why the ice is melting and they know they have to change.

In the years ahead Sammy the Seal is now a full grown bull and well able to protect himself against Big Bruno the killer whale. Sammy lies in the sun on the round rocks of the seal colony. He dreams of the time he climbed up to his father at the Great Conference of the sea creatures.

And young whales point at Henry the Humpback Whale in wonder and admiration when they hear the story of how Henry led the team which took the iceberg to the man people to show them the ice was melting.



THE ICE IS MELTING

Henry the Humpback Whale, Moana the Albatross and Sammy the Seal Pup know the ice is melting.

How will they warn the world?