

WALPOLE

by Syd Hoff

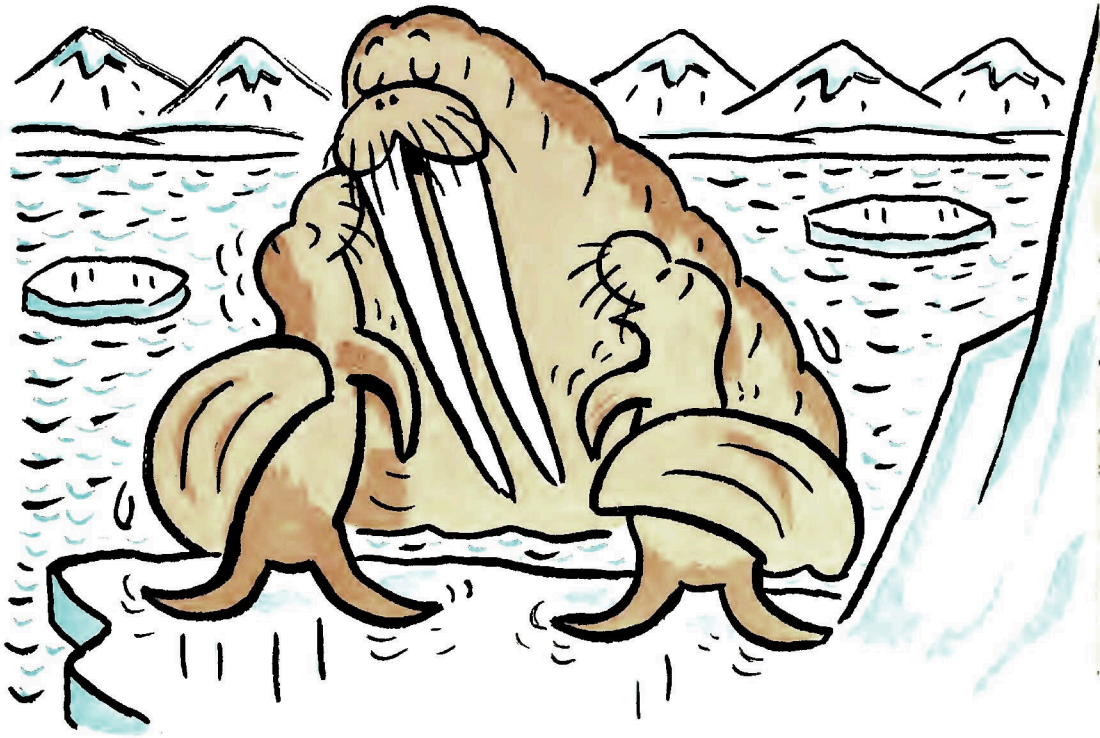


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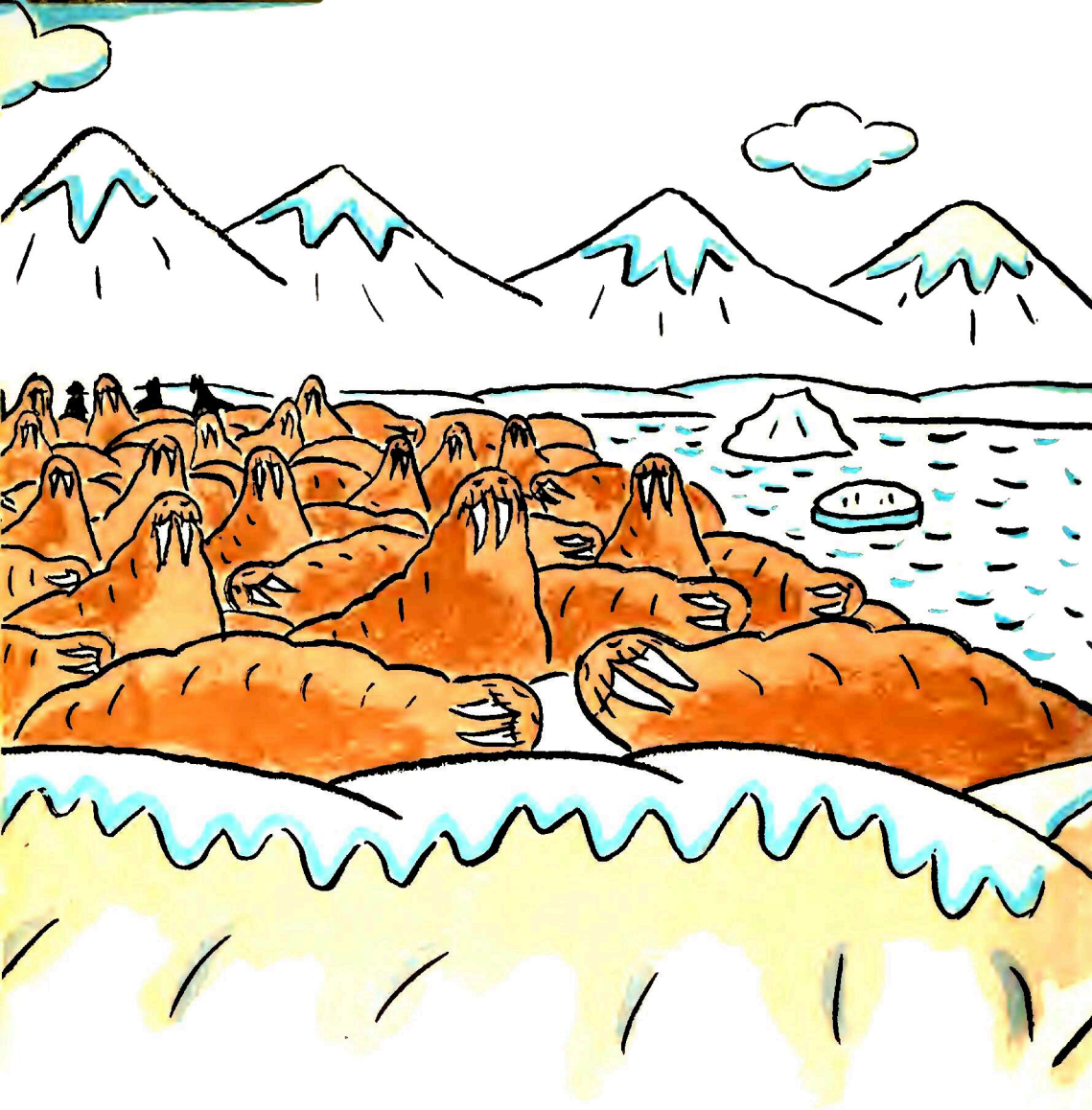
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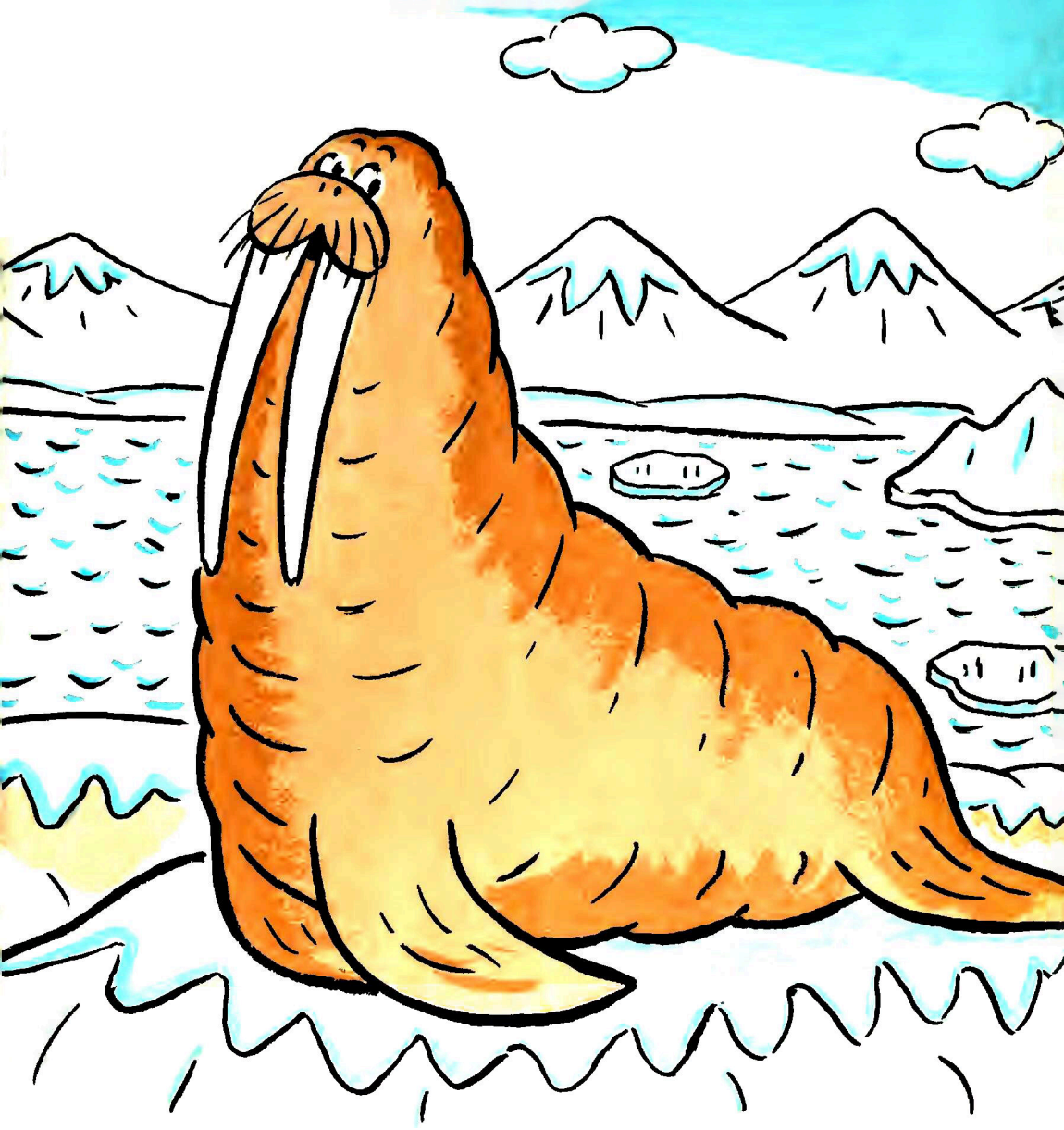
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For my granddaughter Shelli,
who will now want a walrus

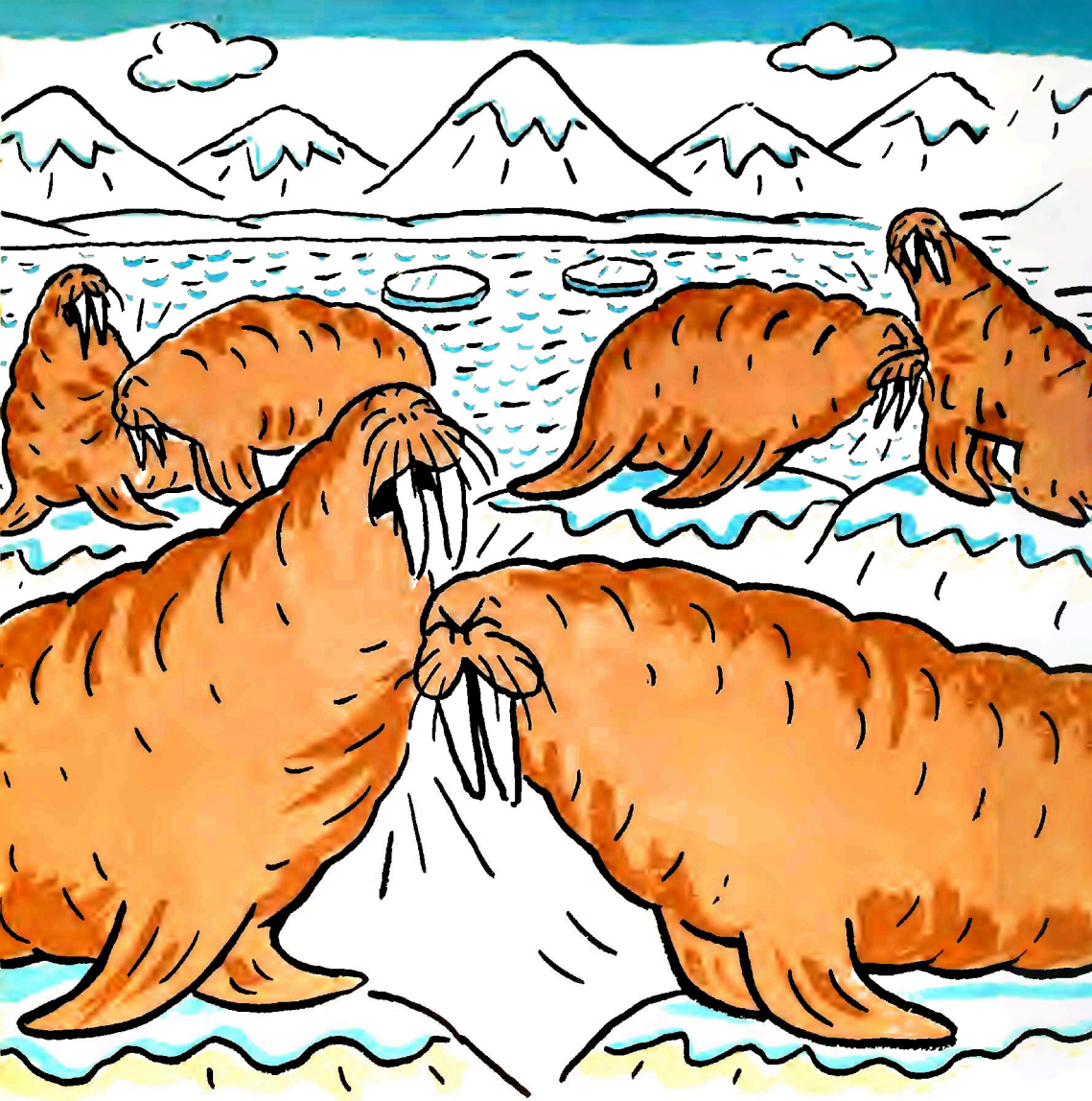


Way up North
where it is always cold,
there lived a great herd of walruses.



The biggest was Walpole.

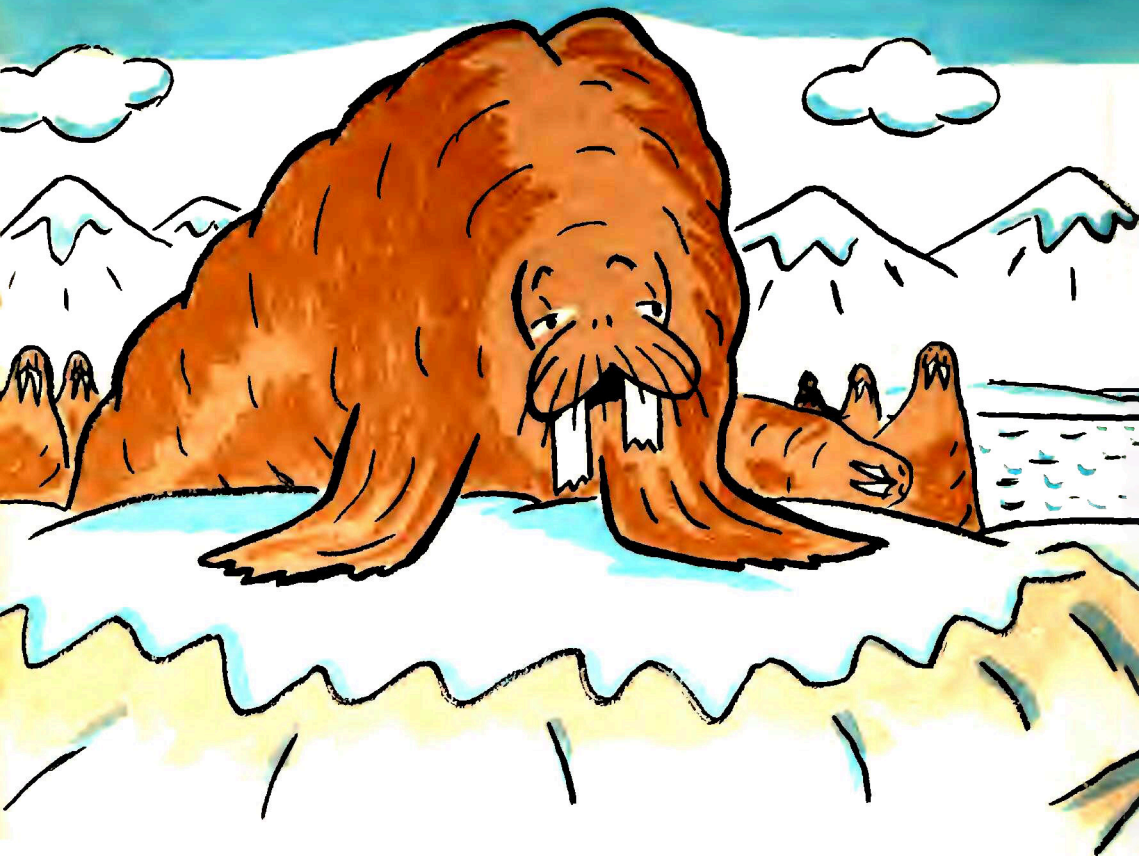
Walpole loved the cold.



Sometimes the walruses
pushed each other to get
the best place on the rocks.



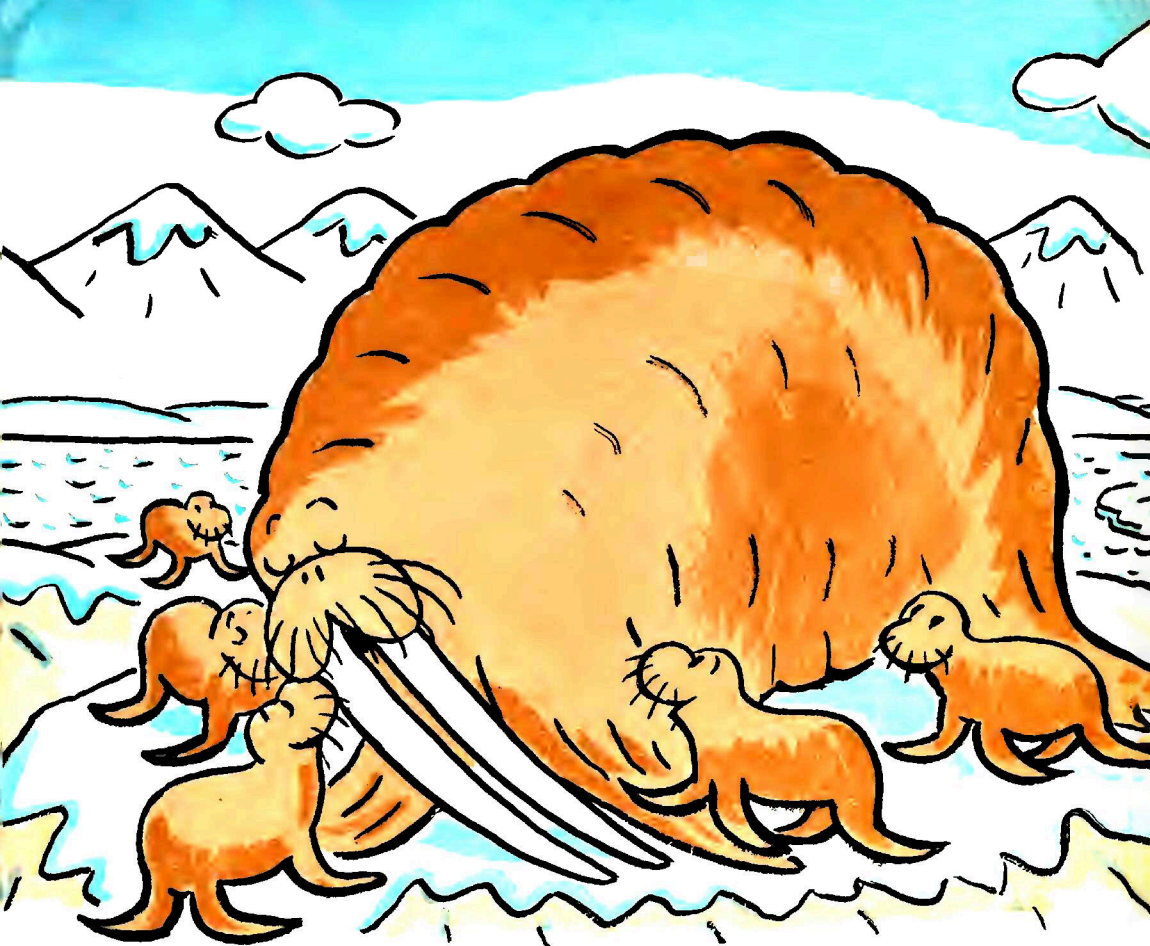
But they never tried to push Walpole.



“It’s time for you to lead the herd,”
said the oldest walrus.

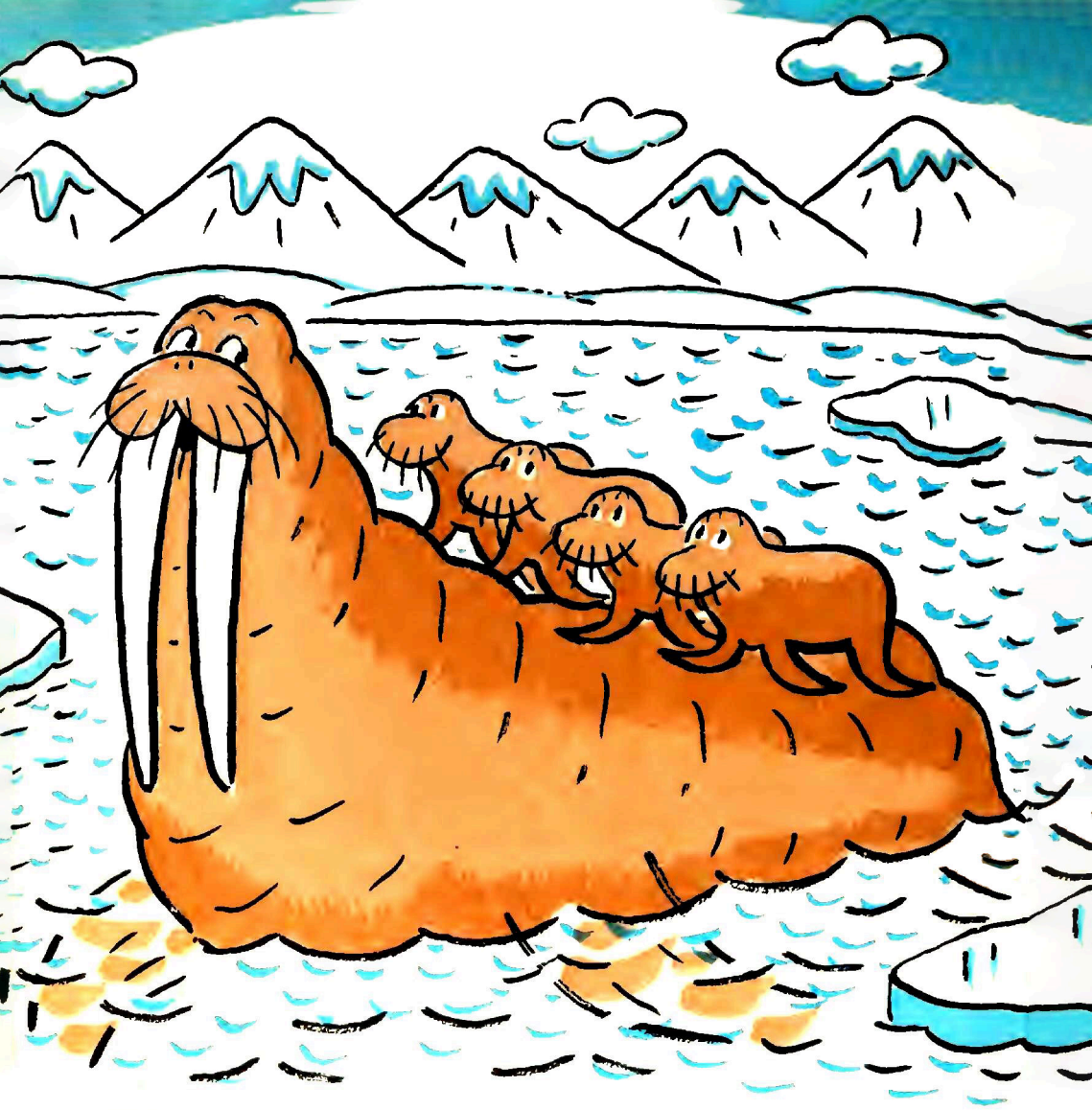
“You are the biggest
and the strongest.

Polar bears never come near us
when they see your tusks.”

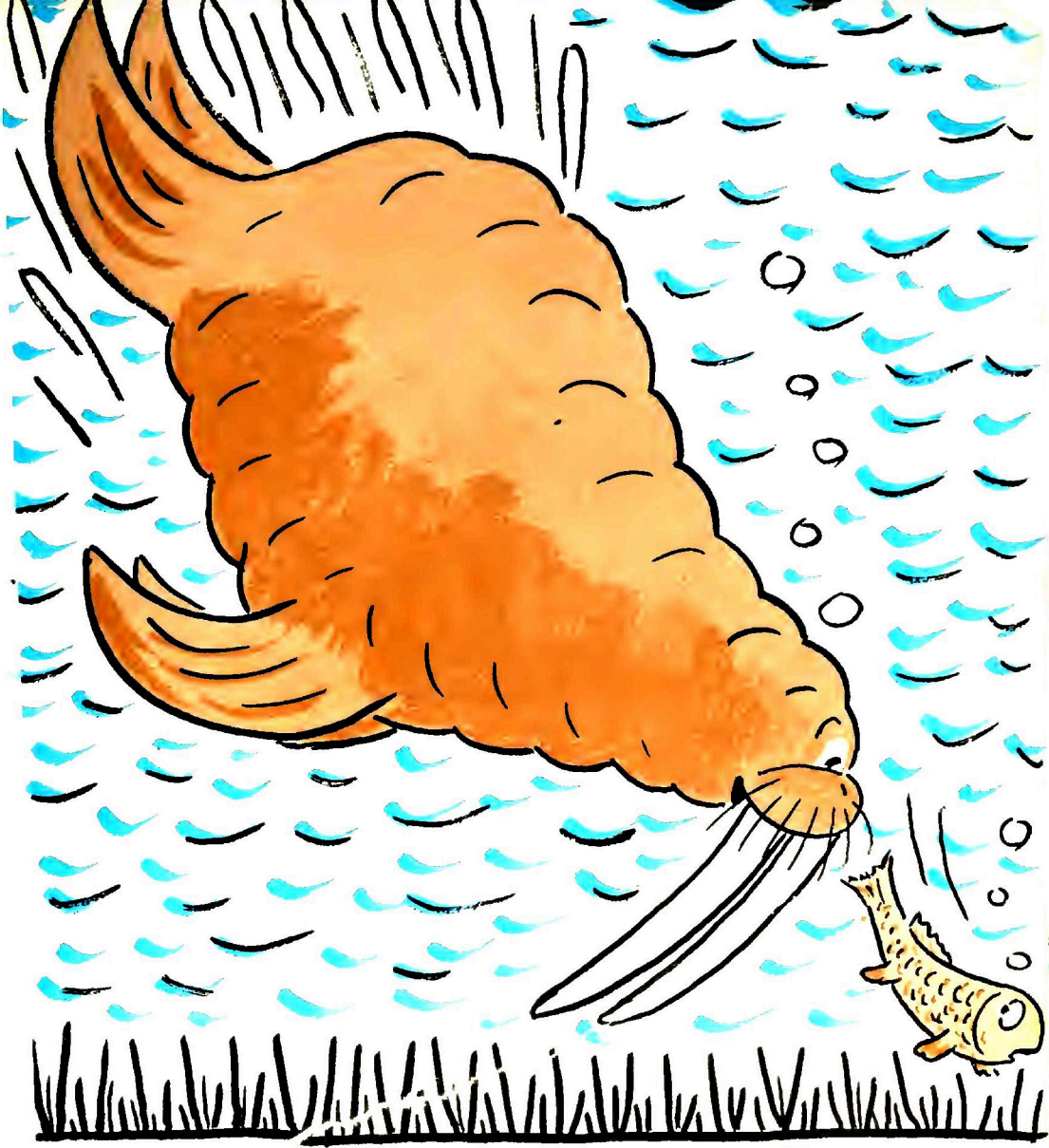


“I don’t want to be leader,”
said Walpole.

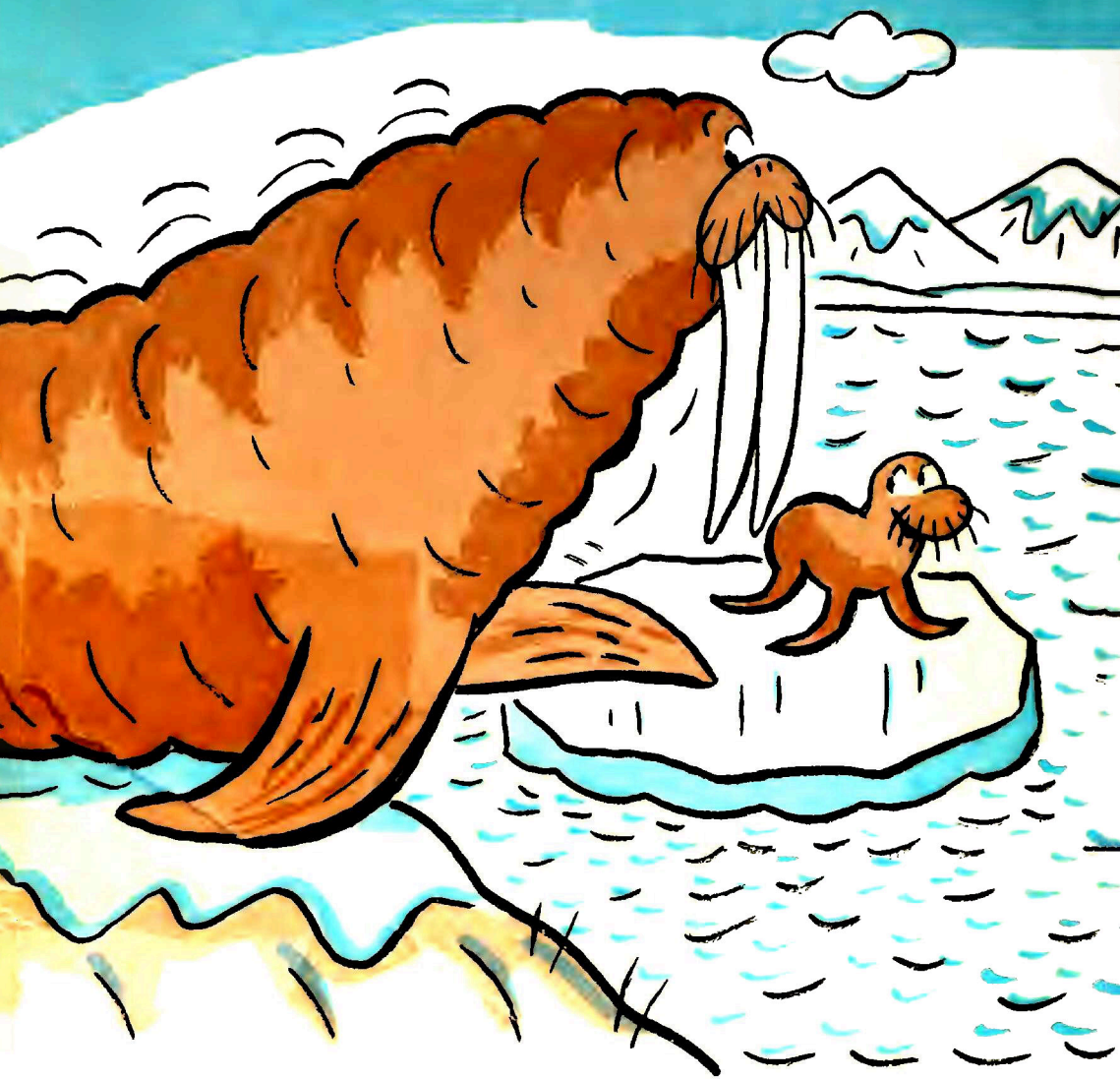
“I want to take care of
baby walruses
who have lost their mothers.”



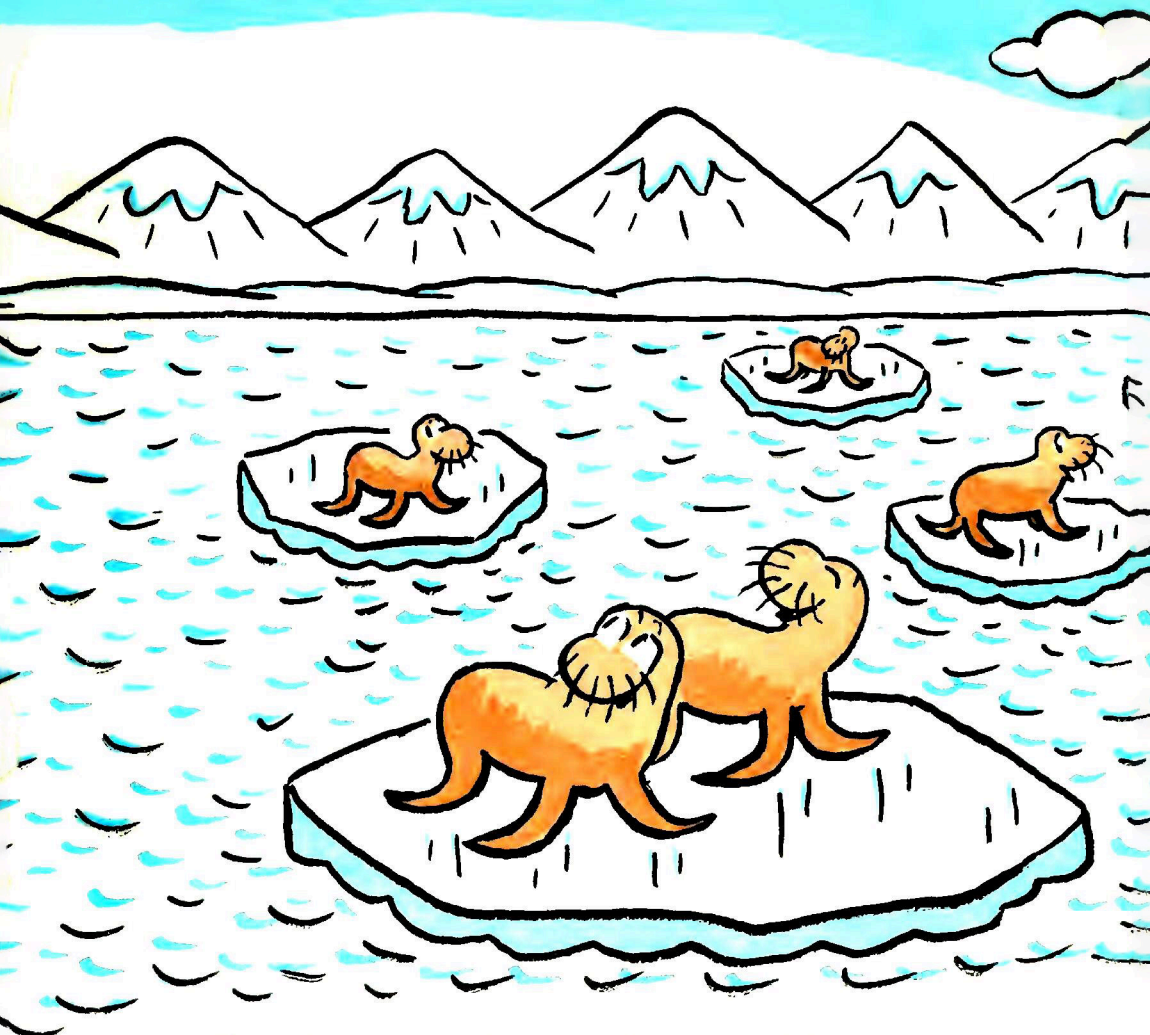
Walpole gave the little walruses
rides on his back
as if *he* were their mother.



He found food for them
on the ocean floor.



And he made sure they
did not float away
on a piece of ice.



The little walruses loved Walpole.

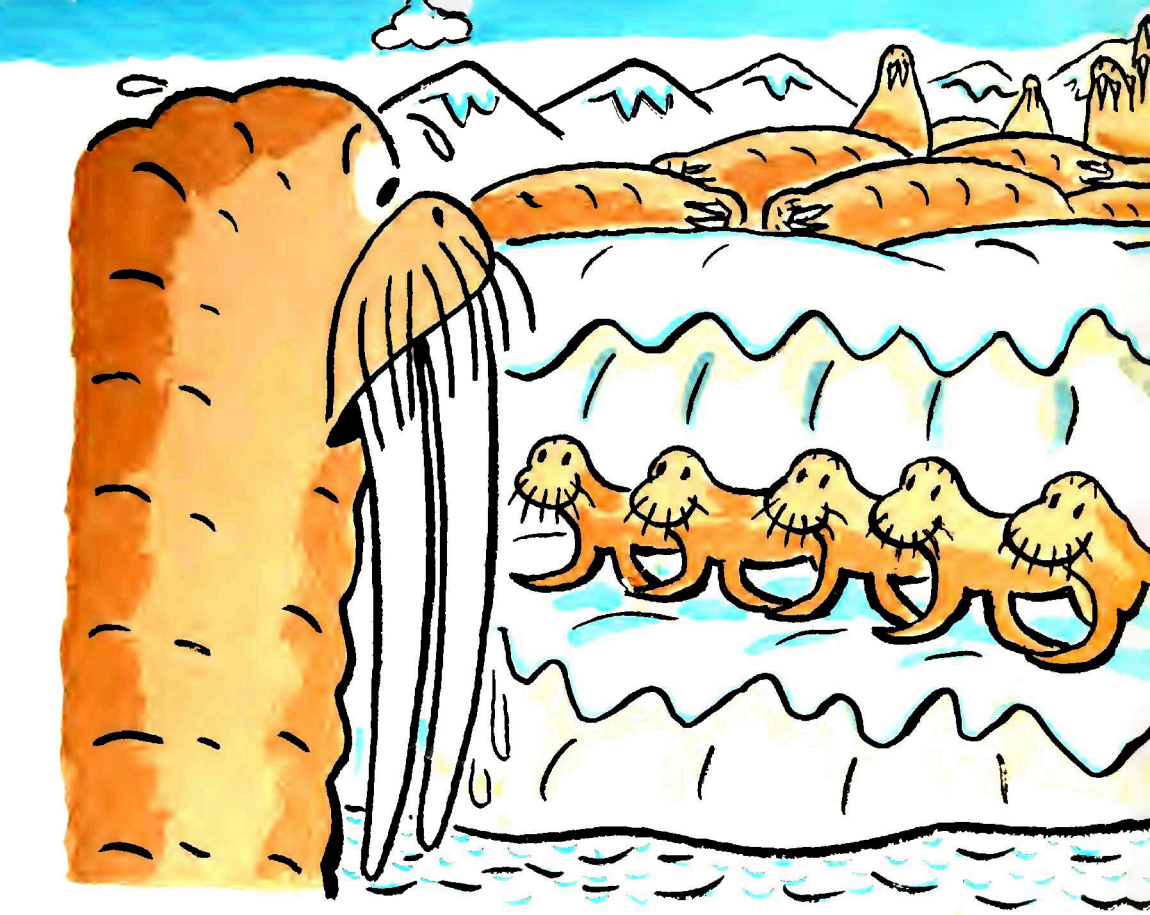
They barked like puppy dogs
when he walked on his flippers
and shook all over.



“Please be our leader,”
said the oldest walrus again.

“No,” said Walpole. “I’m
having too much fun.”

He dove into the water
to find food
for seven little walruses.



When Walpole came up,
he counted the walruses.

“One, two, three, four, five.”

Two little walruses were missing!

“Where are they?” asked Walpole.



“They went that way,”

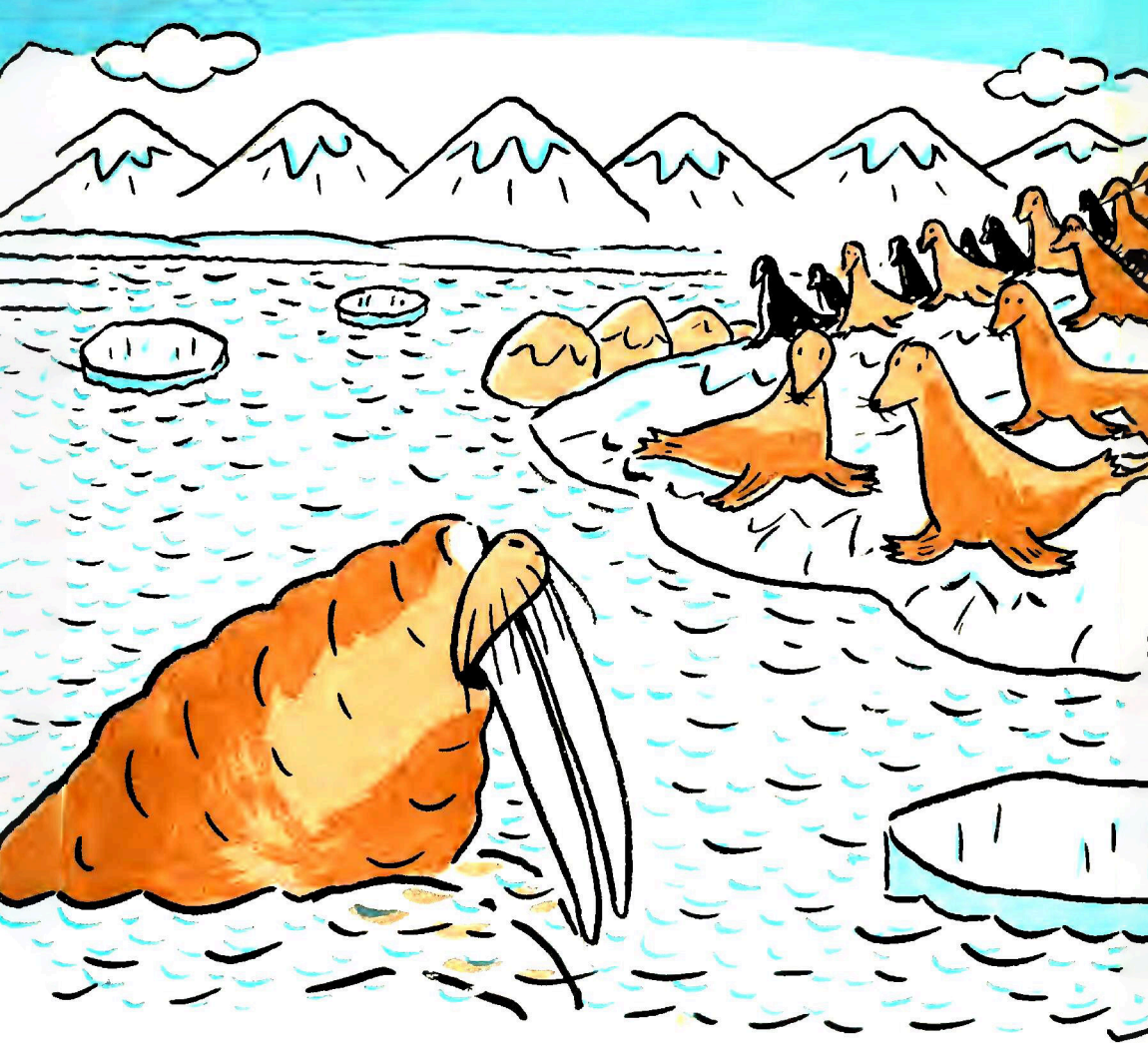
said the oldest walrus.

“They went that way,”

said another walrus.

“I better find them before
something happens to them,”

said Walpole.



Walpole swam away fast.

He swam to an island of seals.

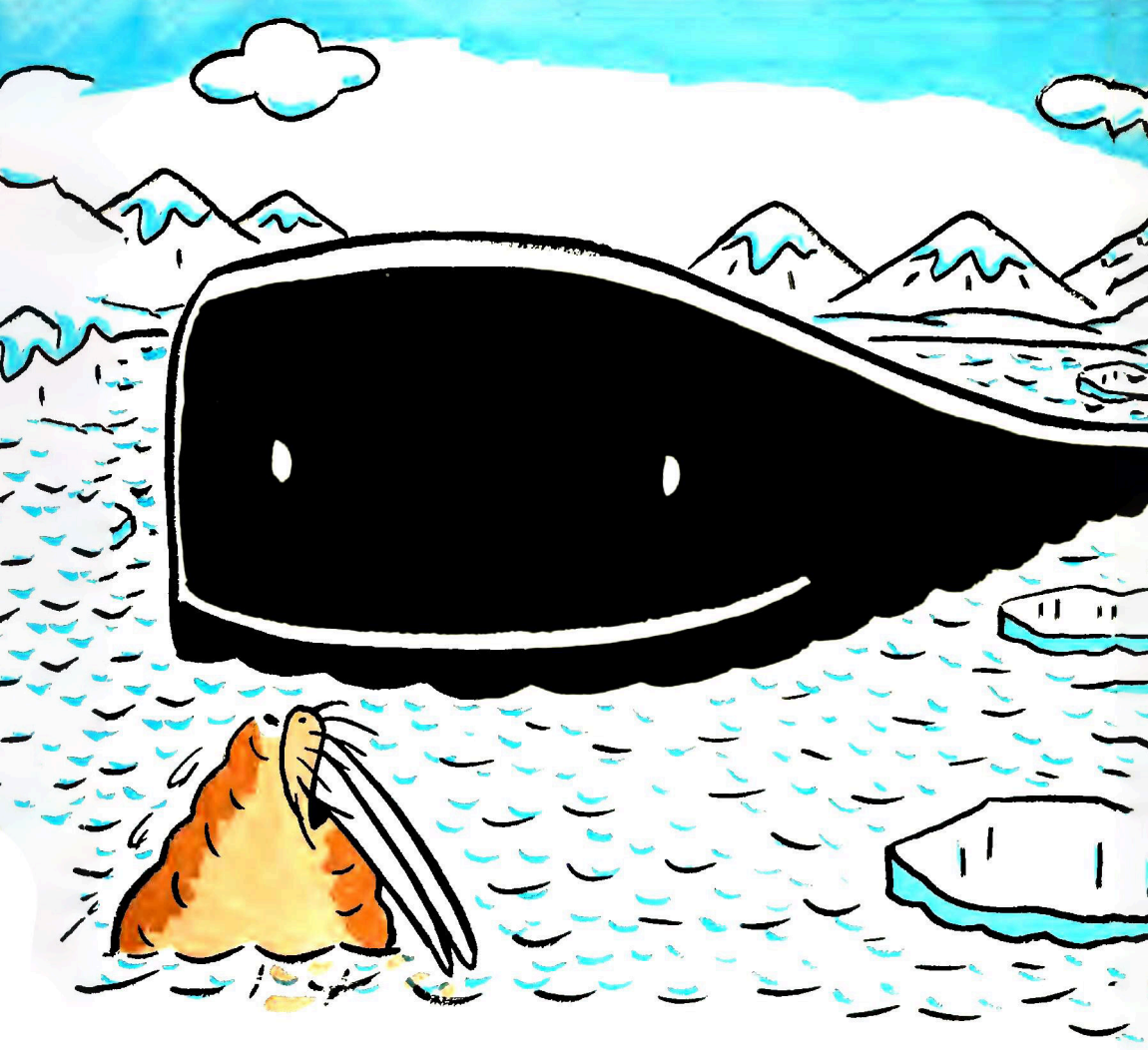
“Have you seen any walruses?”

he asked.



“Sorry,” said the seals.

“There’s nobody here with
tusks and a mustache.”

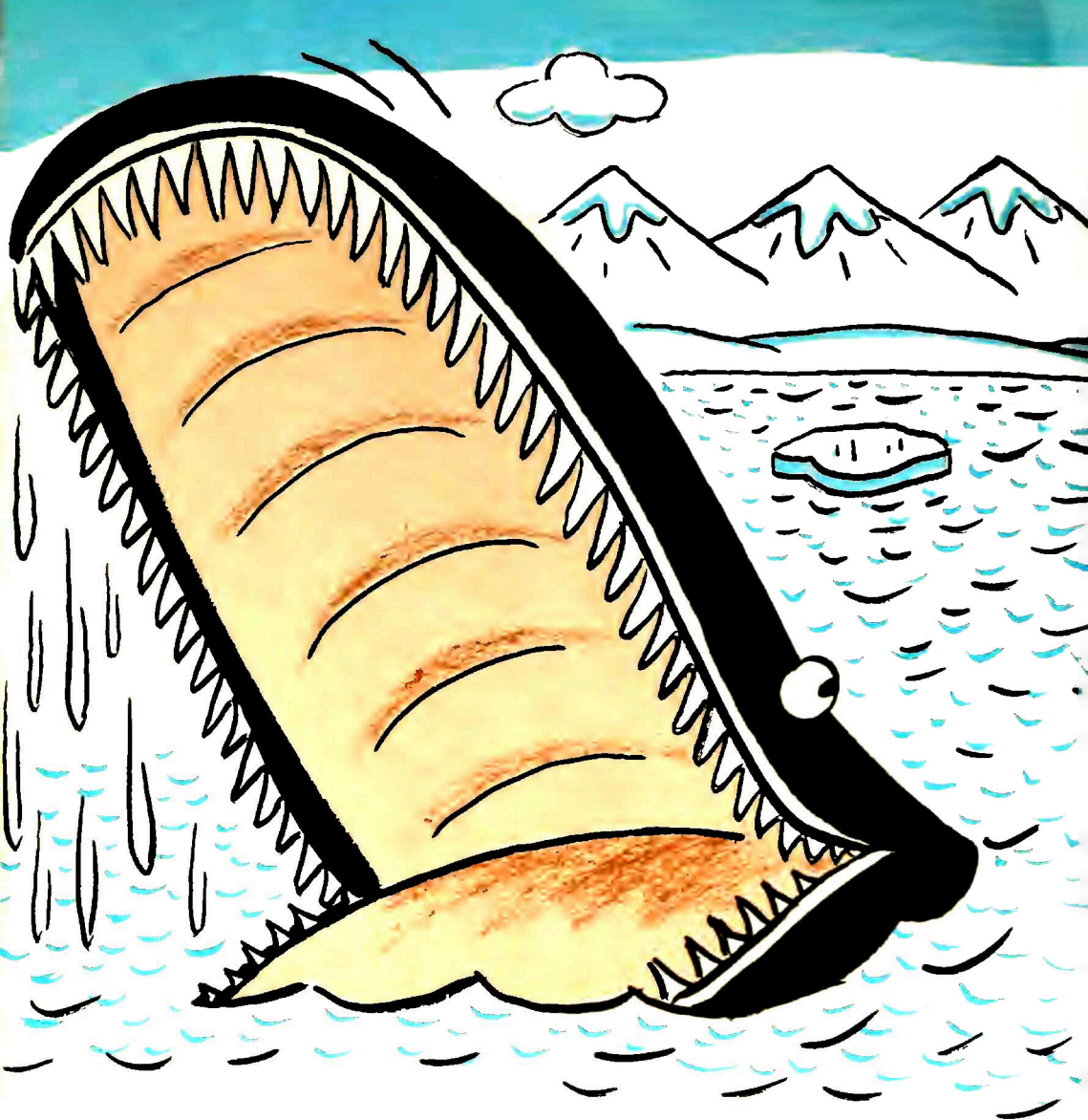


Walpole swam

until he came to a whale.

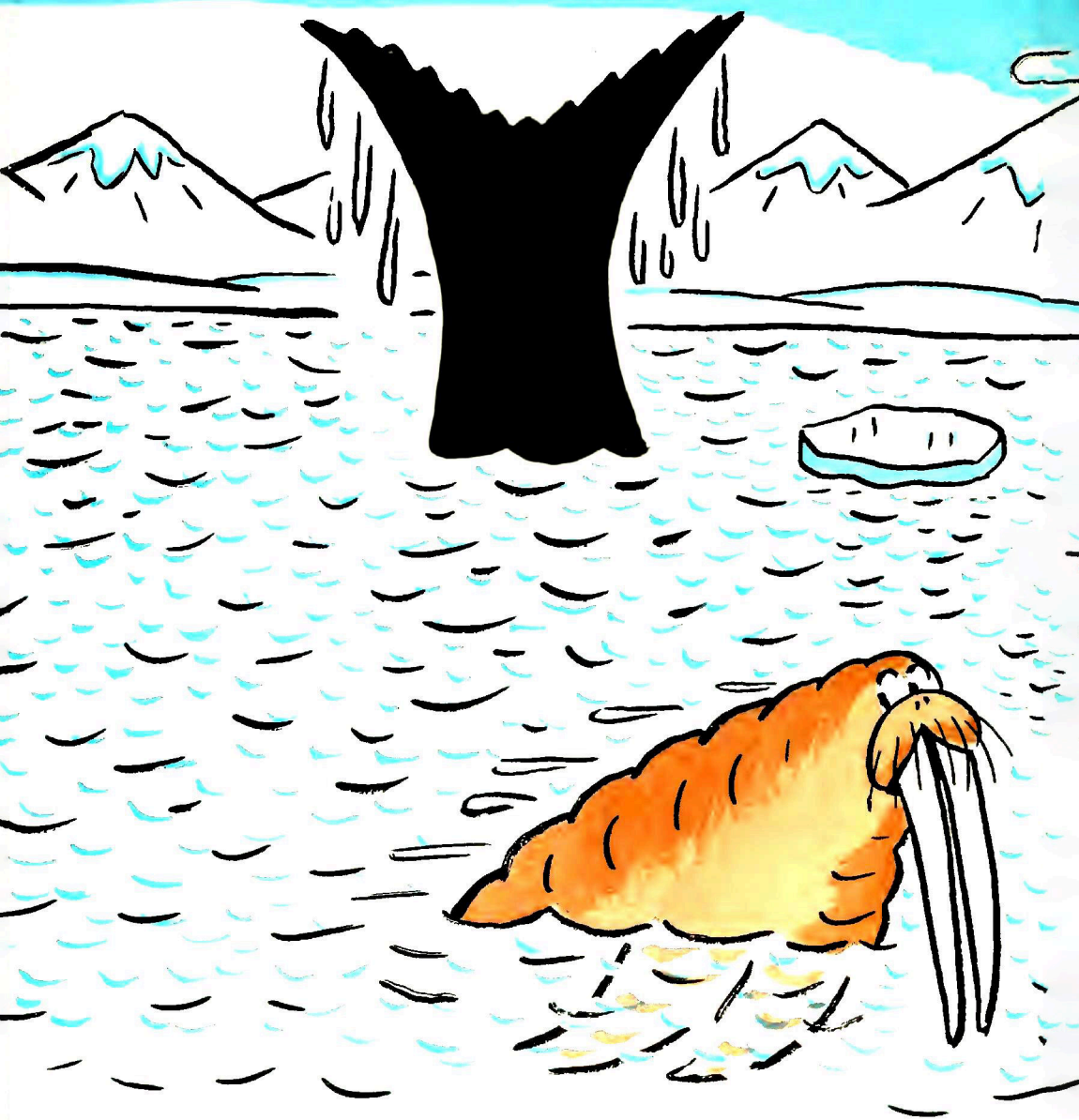
“Have you seen any walruses?”

he asked.



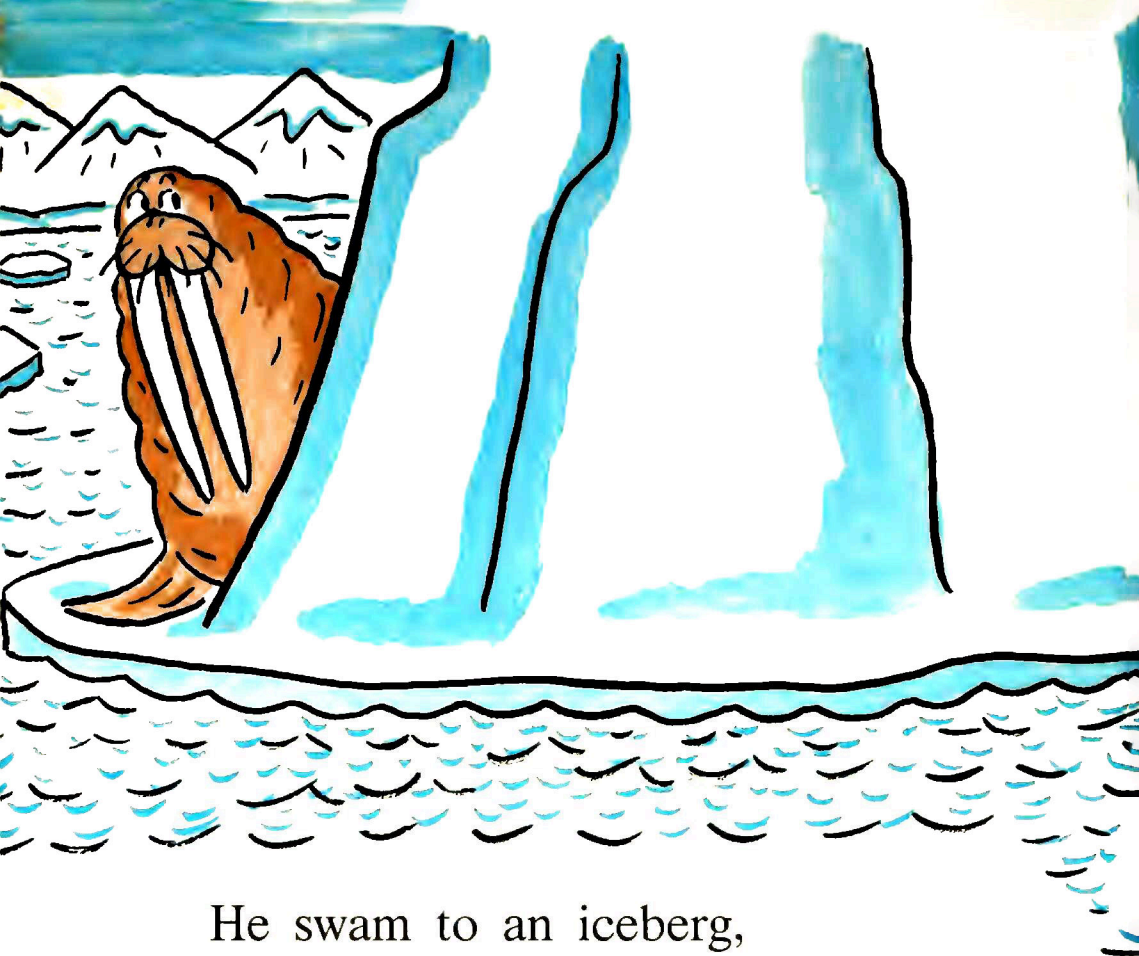
“Maybe I have.

Come in and see for yourself,”
said the whale.

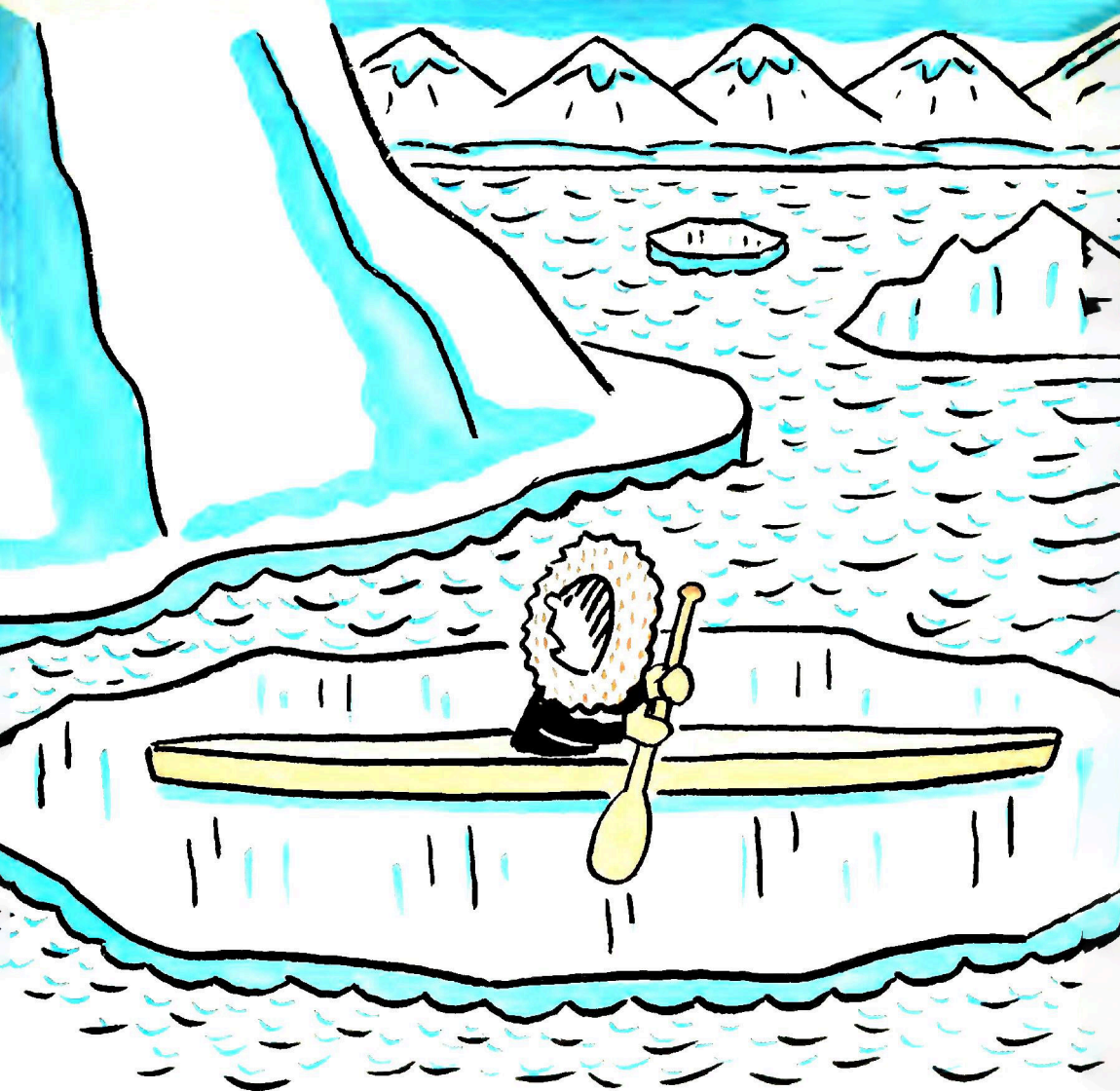


And he opened his mouth wide.

Walpole swam away *very* fast.



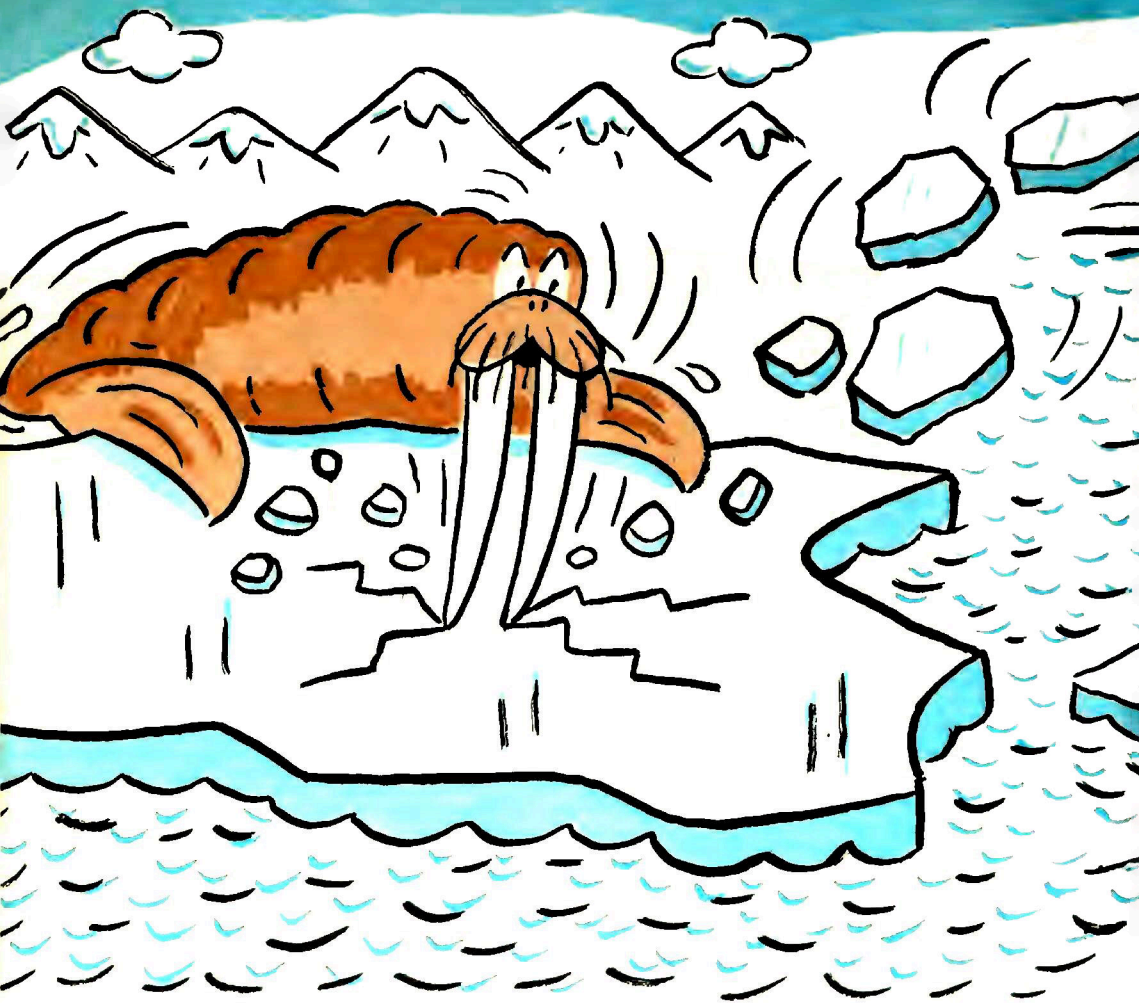
He swam to an iceberg,
but there were no baby walruses
on one end of the iceberg,
and no baby walruses
on the other end of the iceberg.
There was only *ice*.



Then Walpole saw an Eskimo boy.

His boat was stuck in the ice.

“Can you get me out?” asked the boy.



Walpole hit the ice with his tusks.

He hit it again
and again and again.

The ice broke. The boat moved!

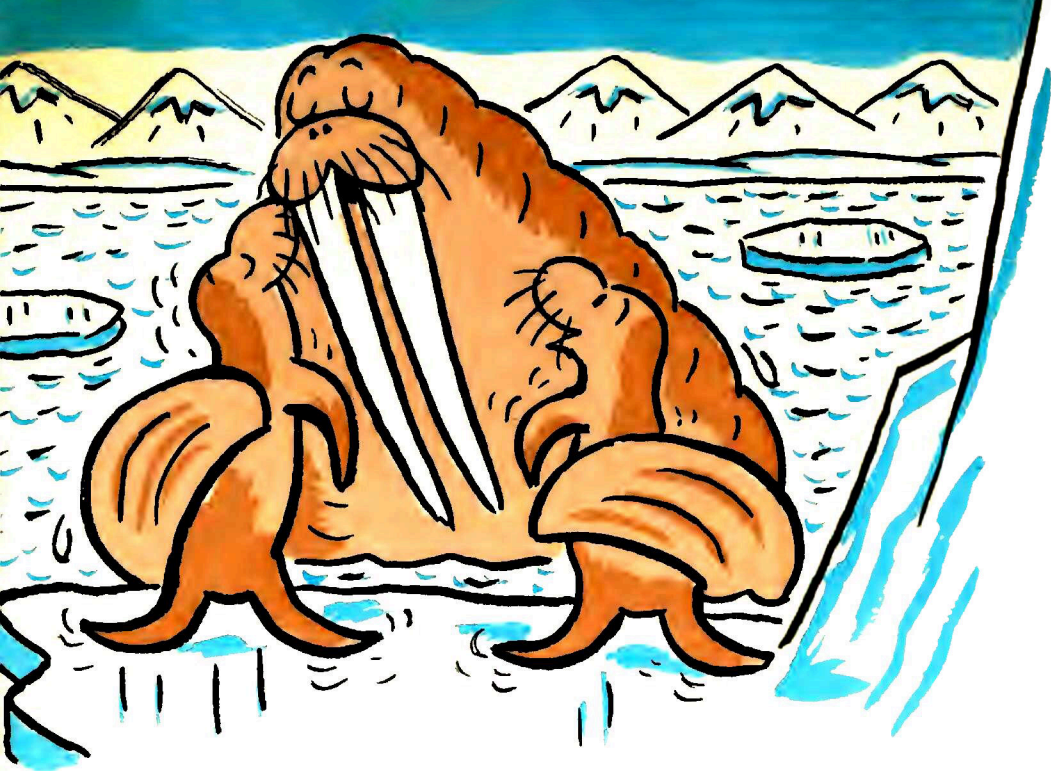


“Thank you for helping me,”
said the boy.

“You’re welcome,” said Walpole.

“Have you seen any little walruses?”

“No,” said the boy. “But I
heard some barking on that iceberg.”

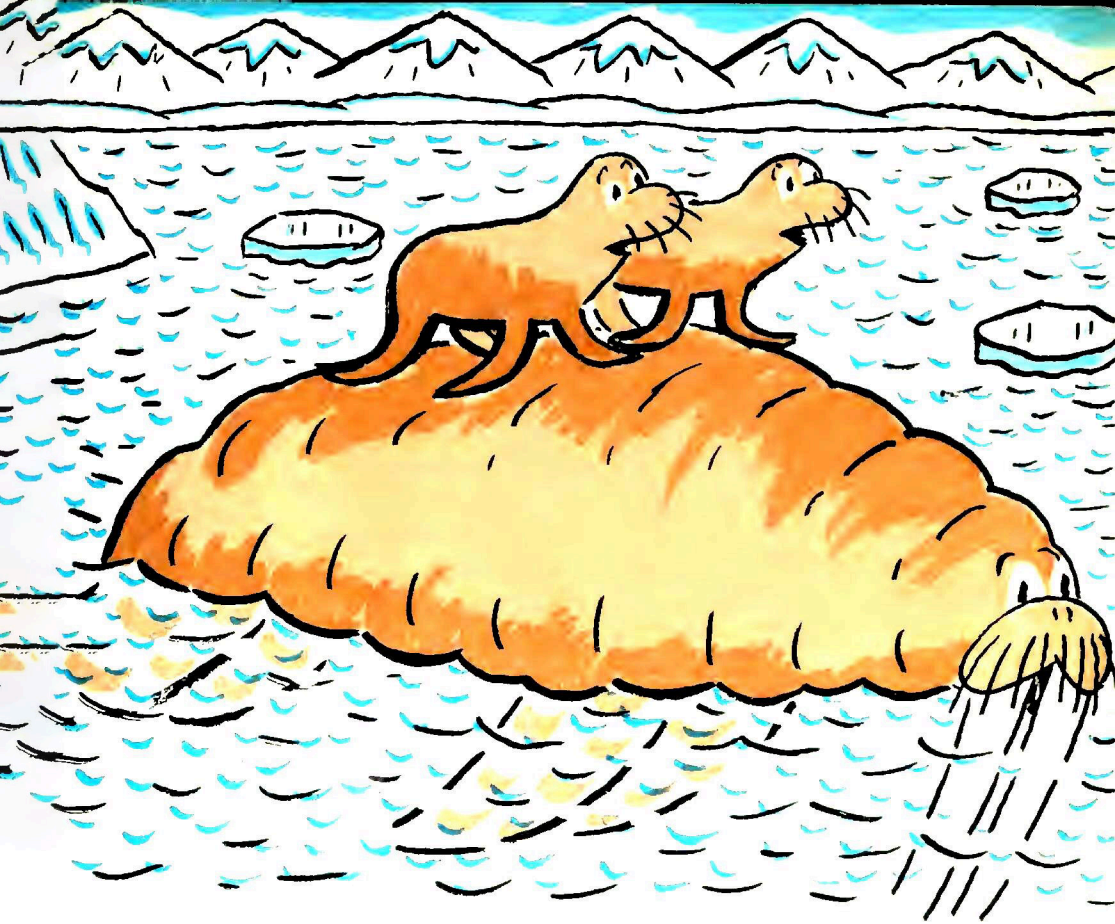


Walpole swam as fast as he could.

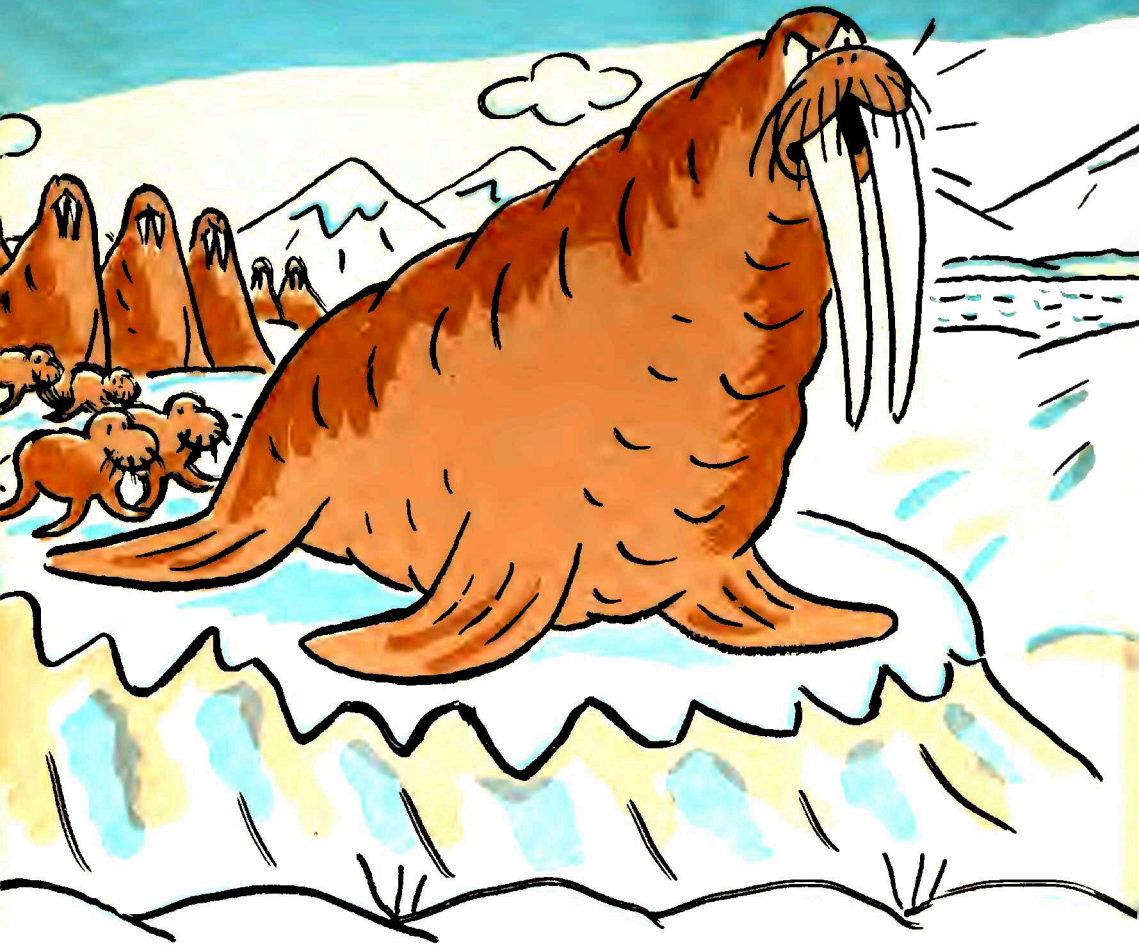
And there were the little walruses!

They were so happy to see Walpole,
they barked and barked.

“Someday you will have a nice thick
coat of blubber like me,” said Walpole,
“and you will never be cold.”

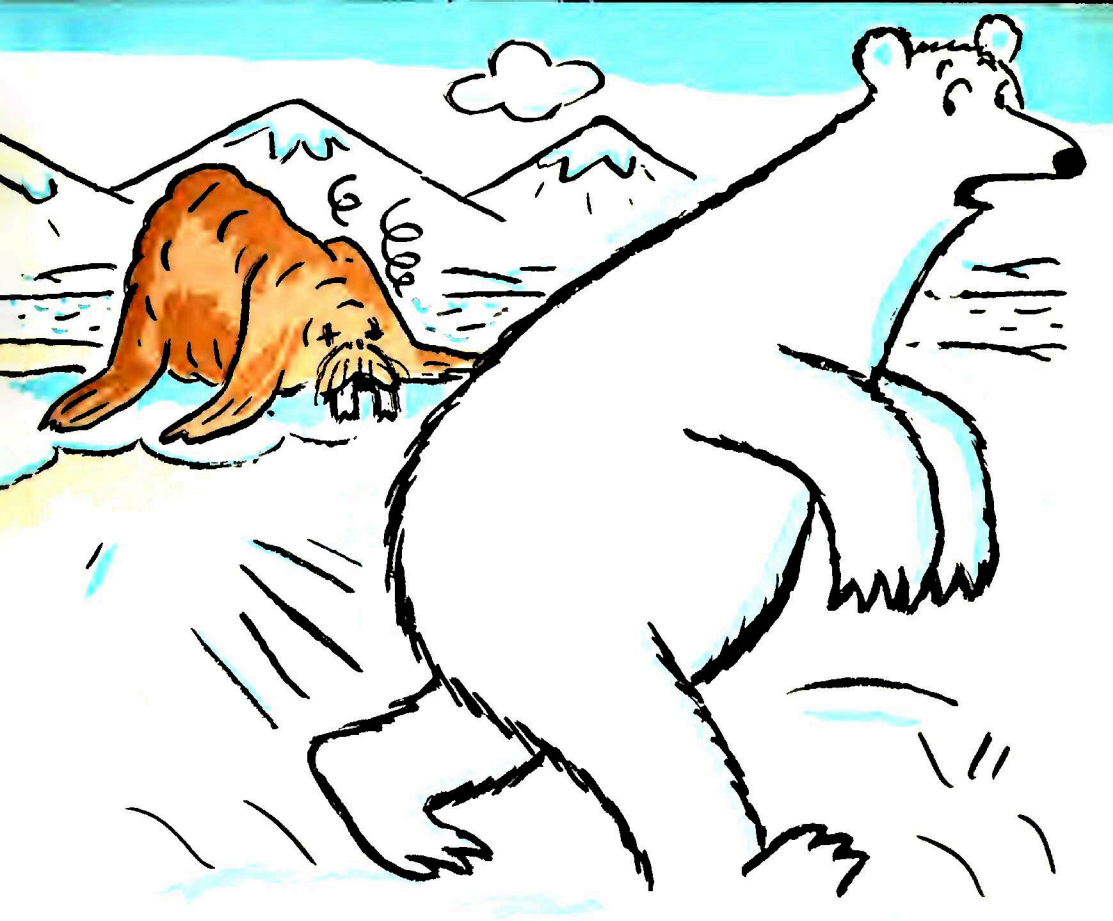


Walpole swam back
with the two little walruses.
“Something seems wrong
with the herd,” they said.
“Can you swim faster?”



Walpole swam very fast.

He got back to the herd
just as a huge polar bear
was chasing the oldest walrus.



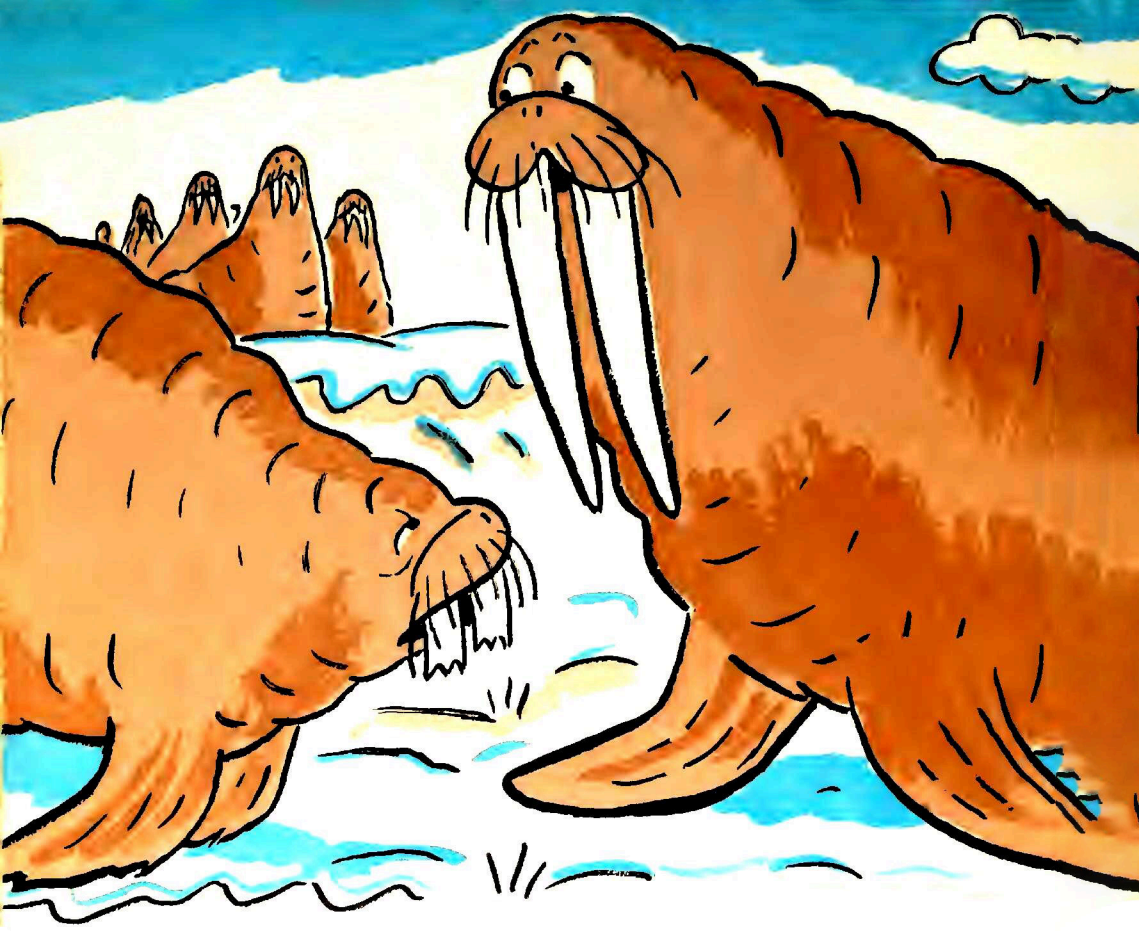
Walpole roared.

When the polar bear

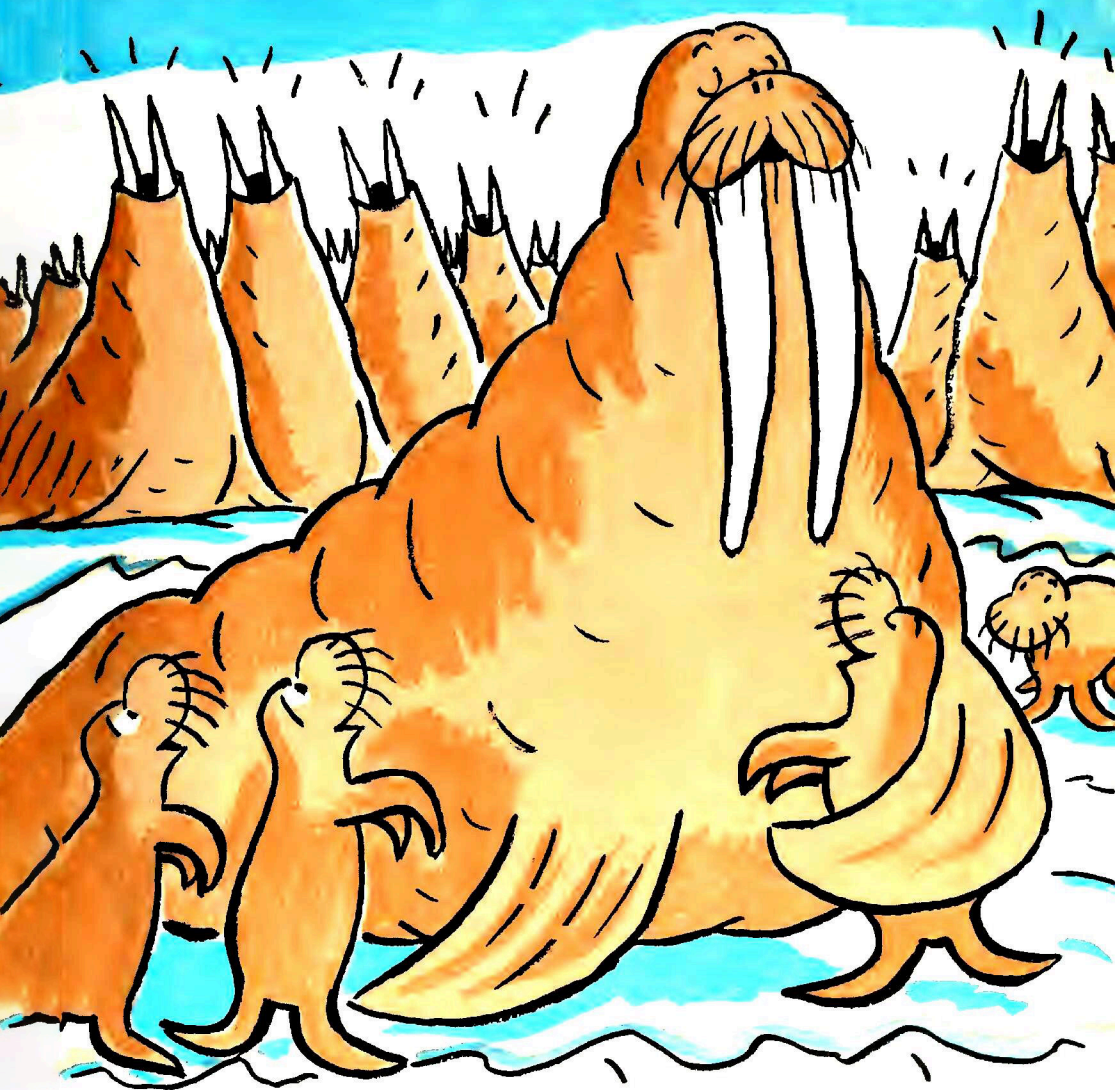
heard him roar

and saw his tusks,

he took off in a hurry.



“You came back
just in time to save us,”
said the other walruses.
“Now will you be our leader?”
asked the oldest walrus.



“Yes,” said Walpole.

“If you still want me.”

“We do,” all the walruses roared.



And they never had to worry again.