



**ANTLER
AND
FANG**

Man: A Course of Study

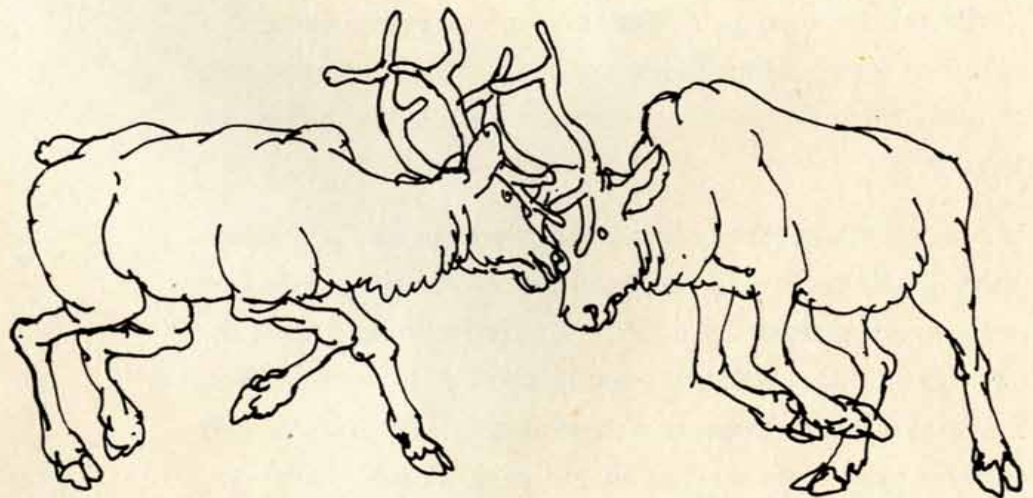
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ANTLER AND FANG



Illustrated by Arielle Mather

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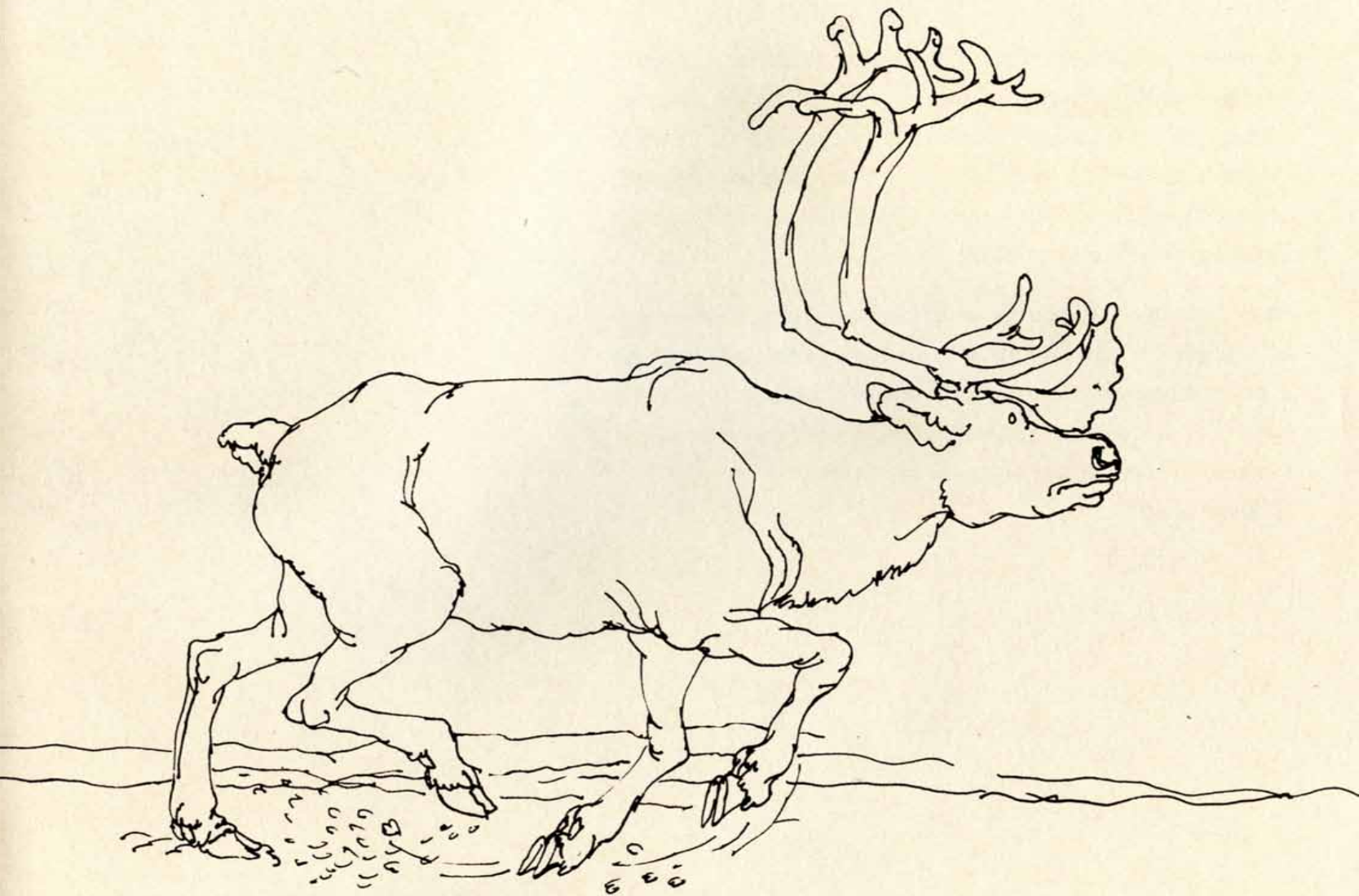
The caribou has two predators: man and the wolf.

In some ways caribou are built to survive these predators. They are fast and sure on bare ground and snow. They are born ready to move. They live their whole lives in the company of other caribou. And they have senses that warn them about things and events at a distance.

Caribou have strong legs capable of carrying them at a speed of over thirty miles an hour. Their broad hoofs support them on snow and on the soft, summer tundra ground.

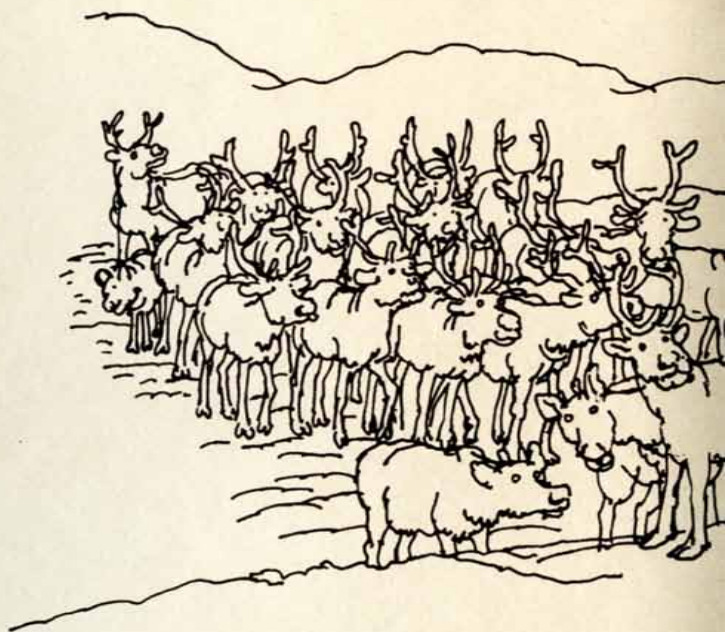
In other ways caribou are not built to survive these predators. Their teeth and jaws are built to chew plants and are useless against a predator. Their size makes them attractive to kill and fairly easy to spot. Although caribou live in groups, they never defend each other. And though caribou grow new antlers every year, these antlers are never used against predators. Even in its first year of life when a calf travels with its mother, she never defends it against a predator.

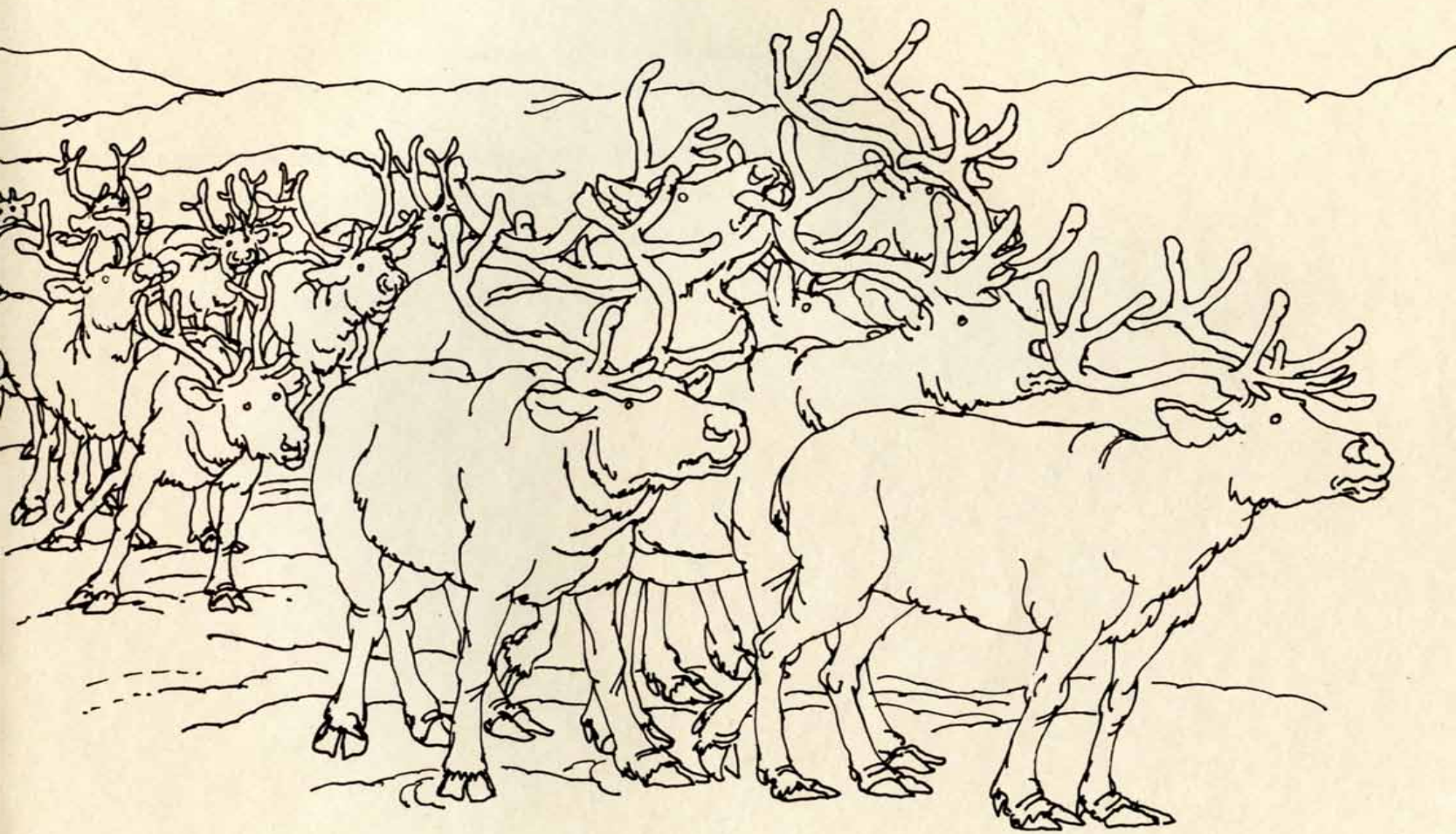


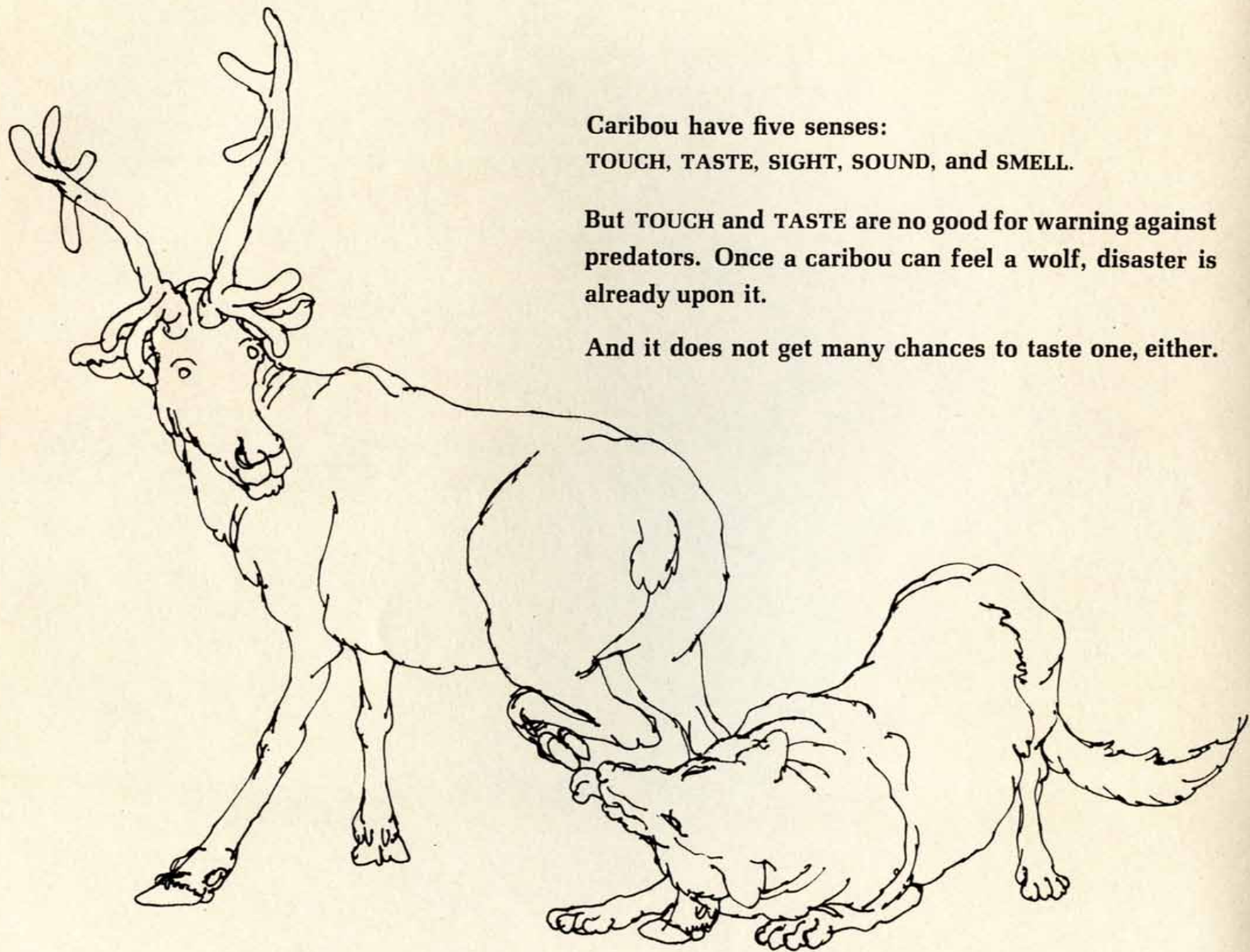


A lone caribou is nervous. The slightest noise may send it running. But a caribou in the middle of a herd of thousands is almost unconscious of wolves or humans nearby. A caribou seems to prefer having other caribou around. If lost, it will try to find a group to join. What advantage does a group give a caribou?

When it is in a group, a caribou need not always be warned of danger directly by its own senses. The reactions of other caribou may warn it. A caribou standing rigid, with hind legs spread, and staring in one direction causes other caribou to stare in the same direction. And when one caribou flees, all flee.





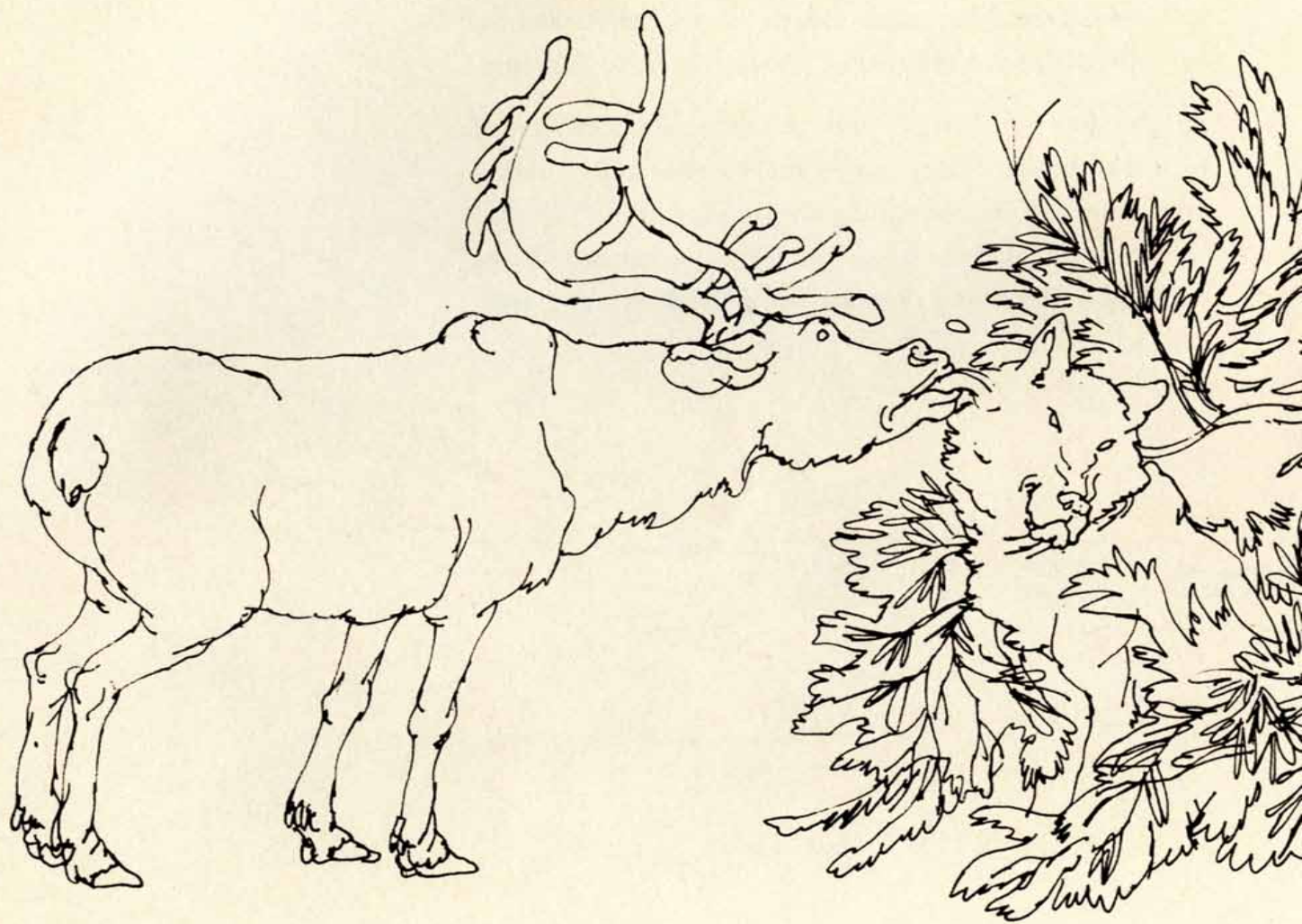


Caribou have five senses:

TOUCH, TASTE, SIGHT, SOUND, and SMELL.

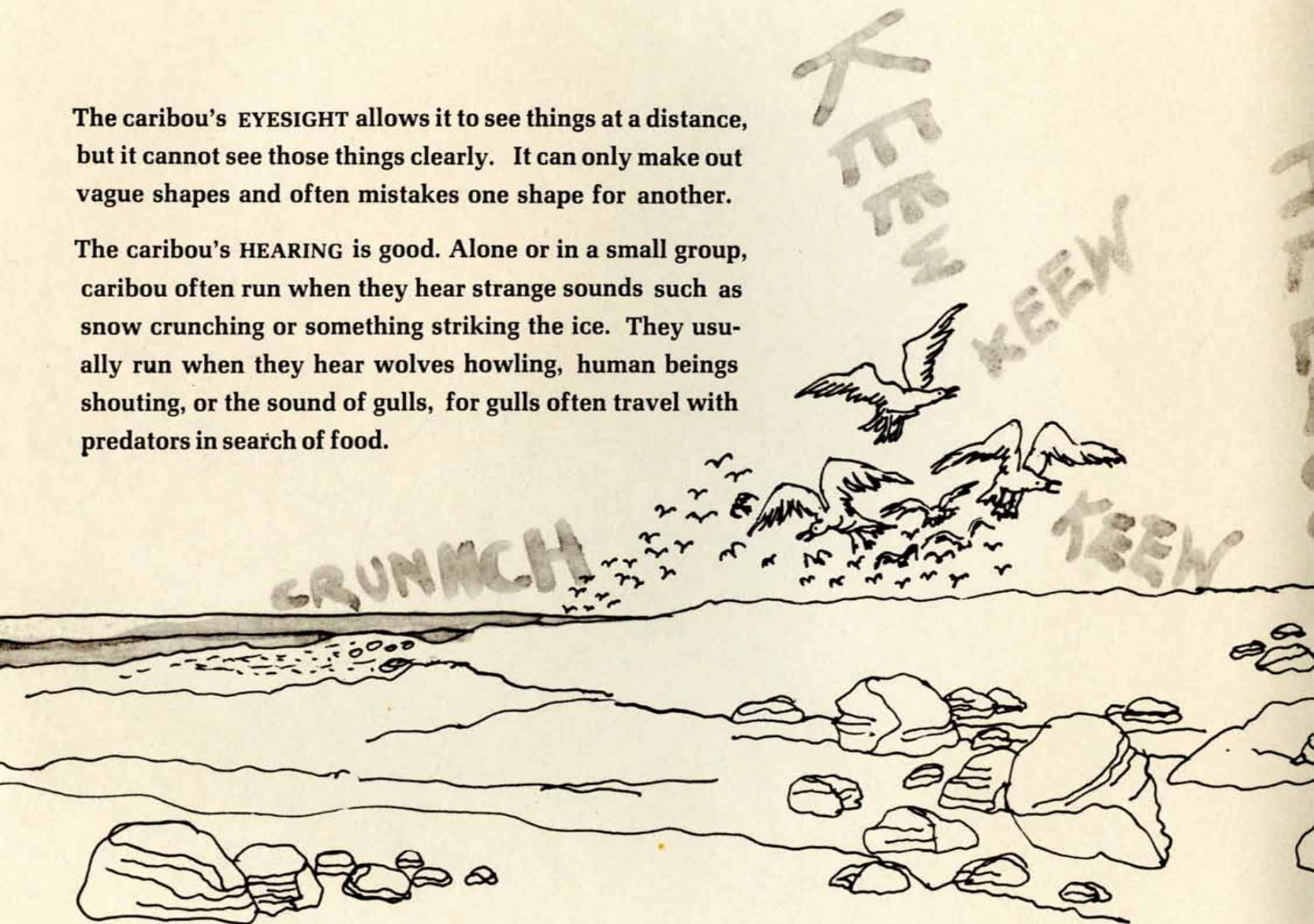
But **TOUCH** and **TASTE** are no good for warning against predators. Once a caribou can feel a wolf, disaster is already upon it.

And it does not get many chances to taste one, either.

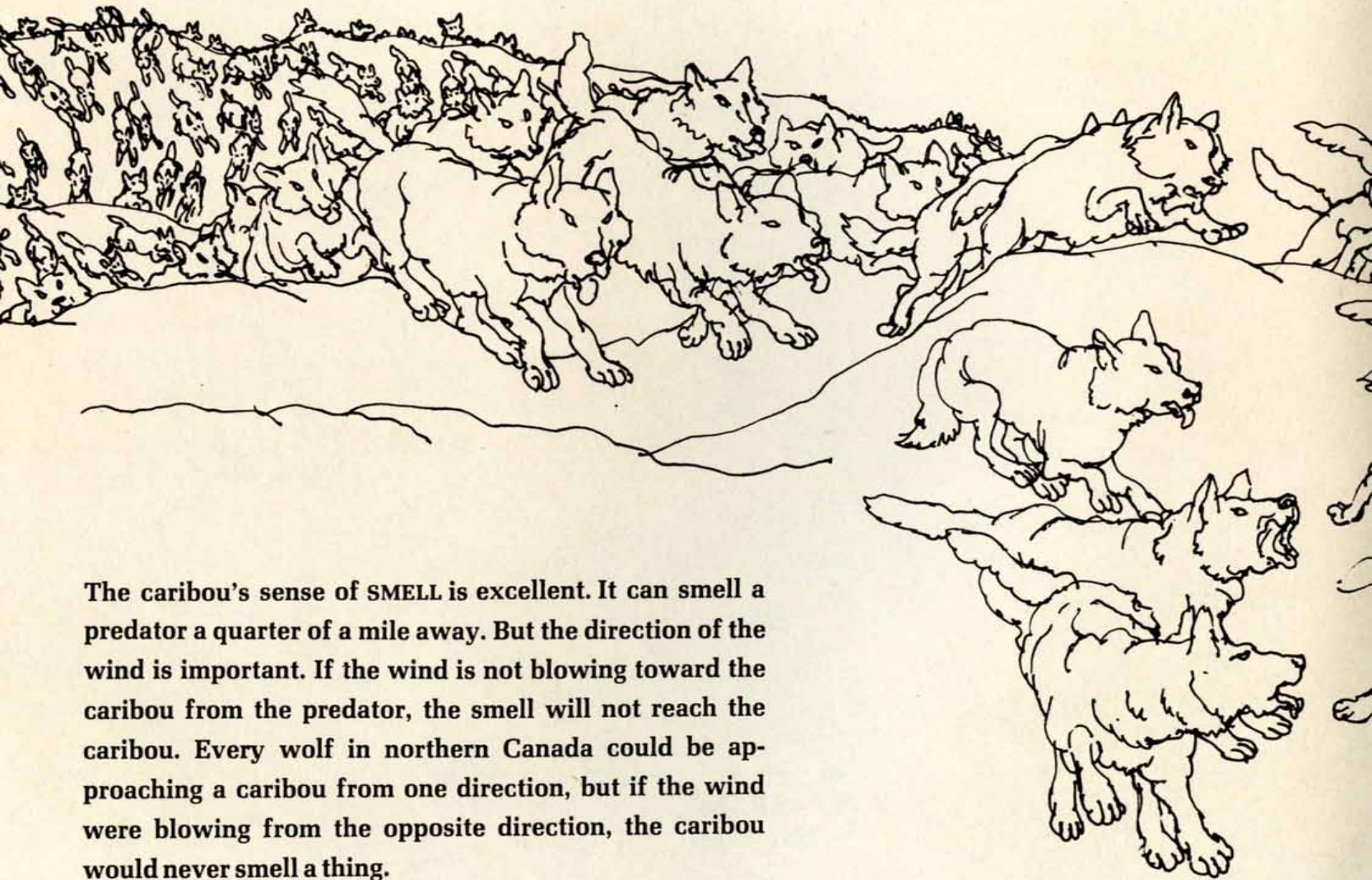


The caribou's **EYESIGHT** allows it to see things at a distance, but it cannot see those things clearly. It can only make out vague shapes and often mistakes one shape for another.

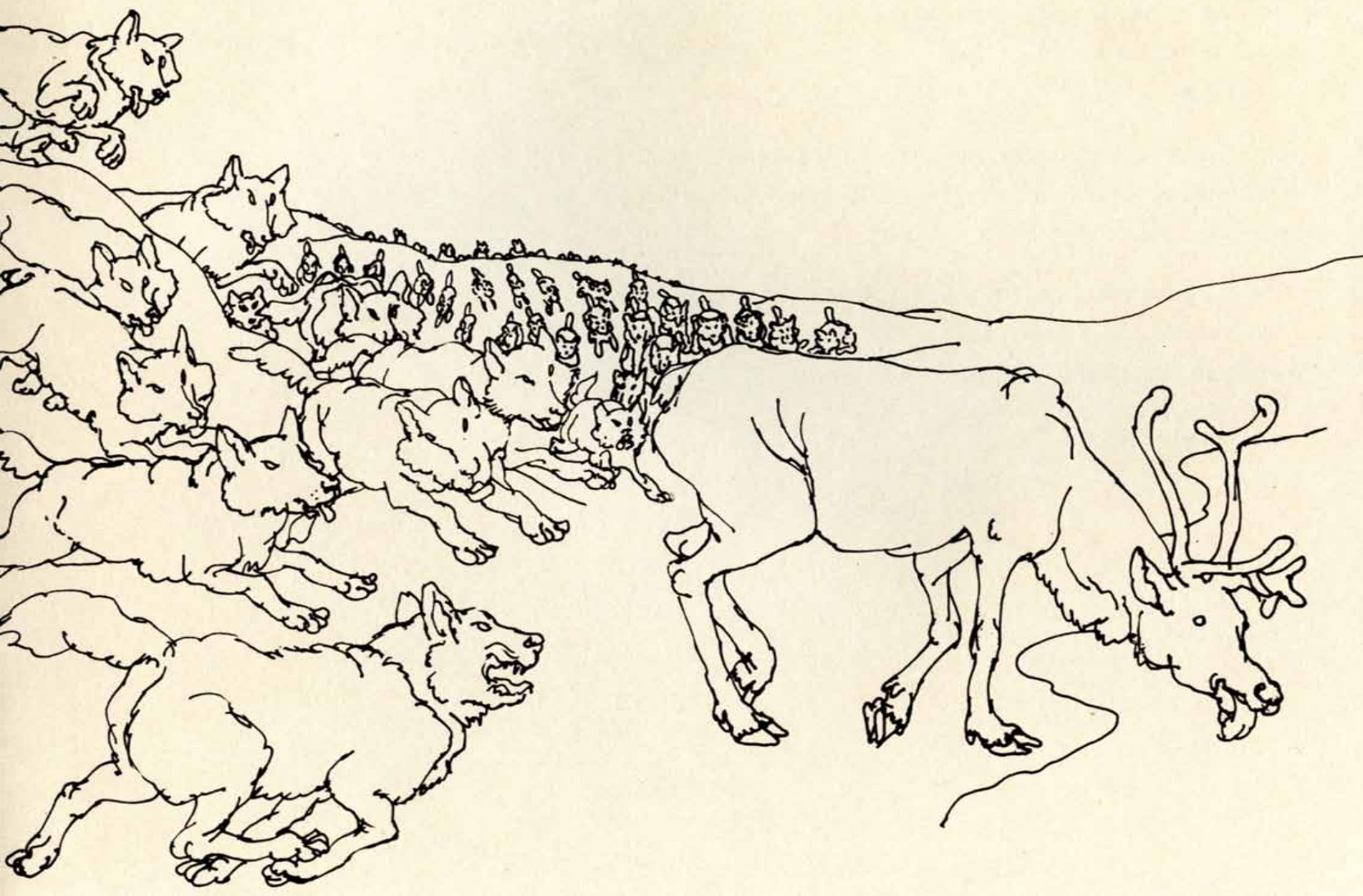
The caribou's **HEARING** is good. Alone or in a small group, caribou often run when they hear strange sounds such as snow crunching or something striking the ice. They usually run when they hear wolves howling, human beings shouting, or the sound of gulls, for gulls often travel with predators in search of food.







The caribou's sense of **SMELL** is excellent. It can smell a predator a quarter of a mile away. But the direction of the wind is important. If the wind is not blowing toward the caribou from the predator, the smell will not reach the caribou. Every wolf in northern Canada could be approaching a caribou from one direction, but if the wind were blowing from the opposite direction, the caribou would never smell a thing.

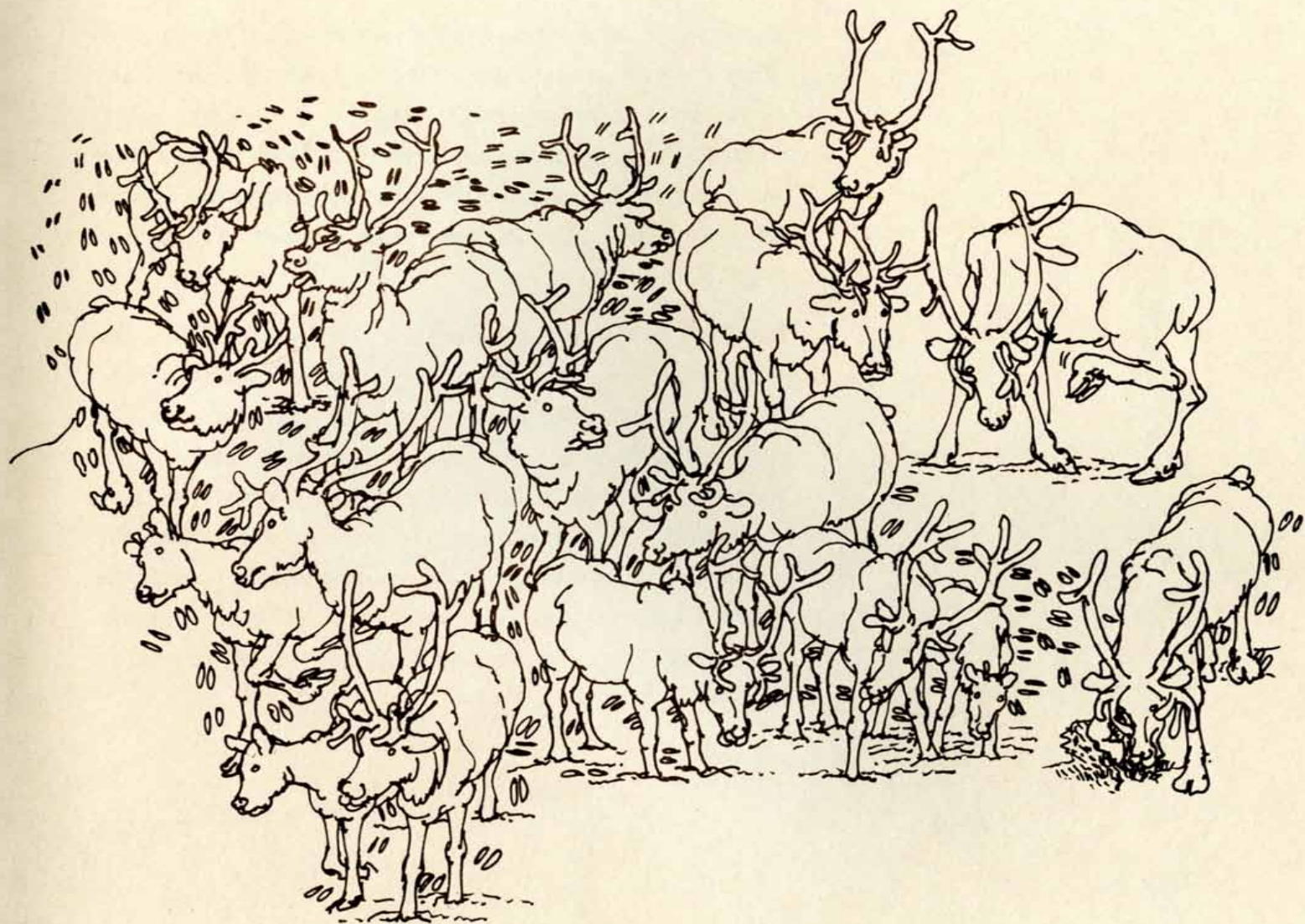


Except when they are in large herds, caribou run when they sense man is near. Caribou generally run when they smell or hear a wolf. But if they see the wolf, they often do not run. Why?

A wolf is not always dangerous. It is only dangerous when it is hunting. A caribou can often tell from a wolf's actions whether it is hunting or not. How?

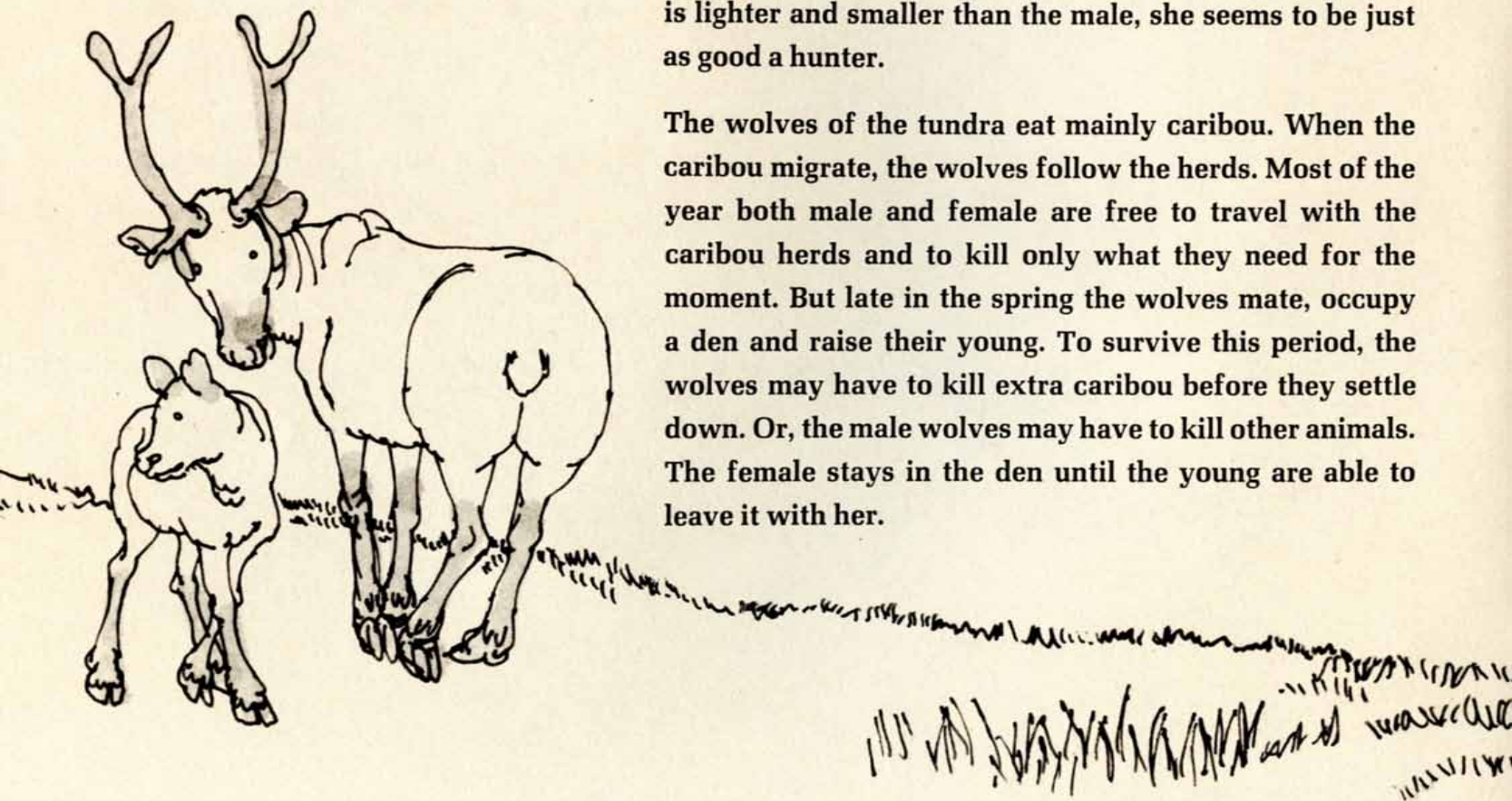
A wolf running full speed toward a caribou is probably up to something. And a wolf moving very cautiously toward a caribou is probably up to something also.





Wolves are carnivores: to live they must eat the meat of other animals. Wolves are built to kill animals. They have strong jaws and sharp teeth. They can run with great endurance for long distances, and for short distances they can run over thirty miles an hour. Although the female is lighter and smaller than the male, she seems to be just as good a hunter.

The wolves of the tundra eat mainly caribou. When the caribou migrate, the wolves follow the herds. Most of the year both male and female are free to travel with the caribou herds and to kill only what they need for the moment. But late in the spring the wolves mate, occupy a den and raise their young. To survive this period, the wolves may have to kill extra caribou before they settle down. Or, the male wolves may have to kill other animals. The female stays in the den until the young are able to leave it with her.



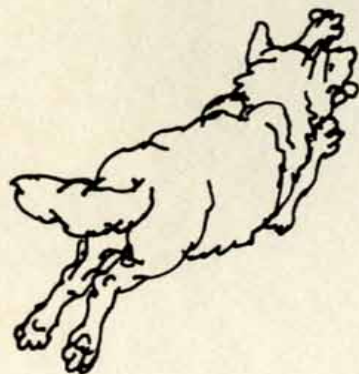


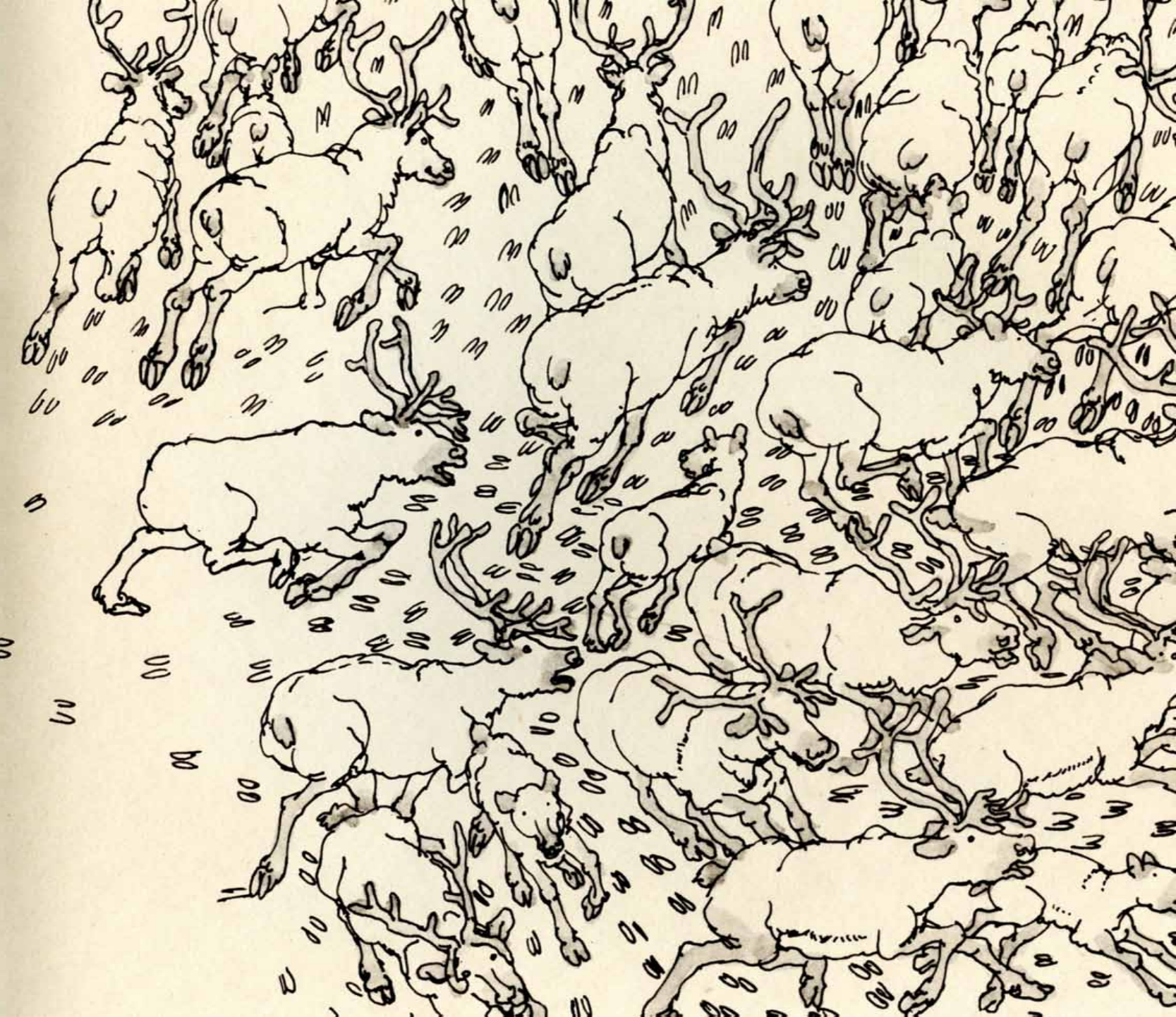
To live successfully off caribou, a wolf must find a caribou, approach it and kill it before it can eat it.

Since the wolves travel with the caribou most of the year, they are never far from their food supply. A wolf has an excellent sense of smell and is able to follow the scent of an animal for miles.

Whether it is hunting alone or with others, a wolf always tries to separate a caribou from other caribou. It does this by running full speed at a group of caribou, but it will not chase a group for long if an individual does not fall back.

If a caribou does fall back, the wolf puts on a burst of speed. The caribou tries desperately to rejoin its group before the wolf closes in. If the caribou is unable to get







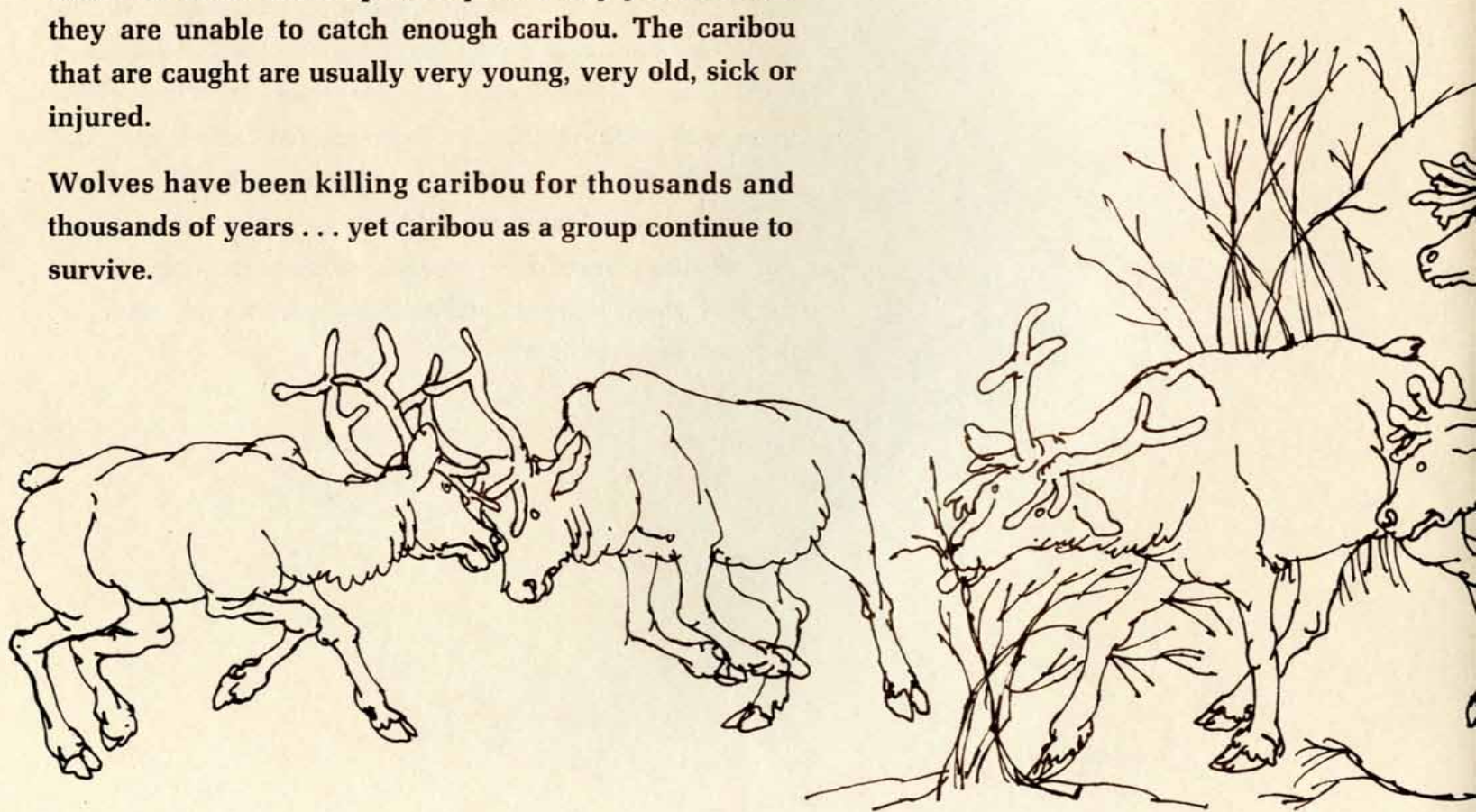
back to the group, it zig-zags wildly before the wolf brings it down with a bite on its legs, shoulder or neck.

The wolves of the tundra often hunt in small groups. The way they hunt as a group is very similar to the way they hunt alone. They follow the large herds. They chase groups of caribou until a single animal falls back. And they kill only one caribou at a time. But to kill that one caribou the wolves may split up, and some may chase the caribou toward other wolves waiting elsewhere. Also, the wolves may chase caribou in relays, first one wolf out in front, then another.



Caribou and wolves are evenly matched. A wolf may chase many groups of caribou before it manages to kill one. And some wolves probably die every year because they are unable to catch enough caribou. The caribou that are caught are usually very young, very old, sick or injured.

Wolves have been killing caribou for thousands and thousands of years . . . yet caribou as a group continue to survive.





Like the wolf, man must find a caribou, approach and kill it before he can use it. But man does not have sharp teeth and strong jaws. He does not have great endurance. He can not run faster than ten miles an hour. He does not follow the caribou through its yearly migrations.

How does man find the caribou?

How does he get close to it?

How does he kill it?

What does he do with the dead animal?





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