

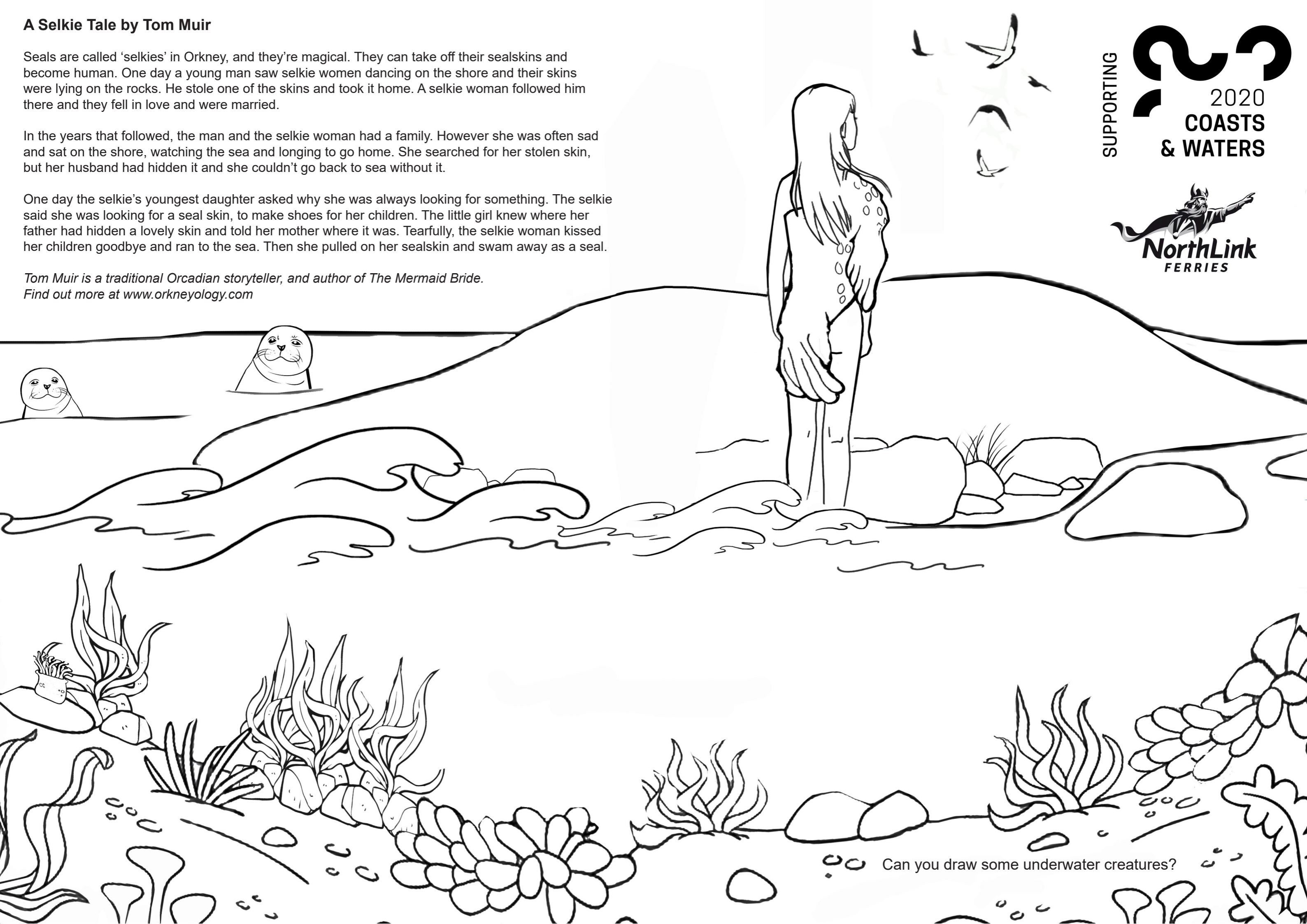
A Selkie Tale by Tom Muir

Seals are called 'selkies' in Orkney, and they're magical. They can take off their sealskins and become human. One day a young man saw selkie women dancing on the shore and their skins were lying on the rocks. He stole one of the skins and took it home. A selkie woman followed him there and they fell in love and were married.

In the years that followed, the man and the selkie woman had a family. However she was often sad and sat on the shore, watching the sea and longing to go home. She searched for her stolen skin, but her husband had hidden it and she couldn't go back to sea without it.

One day the selkie's youngest daughter asked why she was always looking for something. The selkie said she was looking for a seal skin, to make shoes for her children. The little girl knew where her father had hidden a lovely skin and told her mother where it was. Tearfully, the selkie woman kissed her children goodbye and ran to the sea. Then she pulled on her sealskin and swam away as a seal.

*Tom Muir is a traditional Orcadian storyteller, and author of The Mermaid Bride.
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