

earliest possible day. If we get caught by the freeze-up travel will be very difficult, and we must hurry."

There was indeed need of haste. Already light snow had lain on the ground for days, and the air blew so cold over the lake that at early morning the water froze on the paddles between dips. The pale sunshine had lost all its warmth and little color was left in the landscape. For weeks the forests had been on fire with bright hues, scarlet and golden leafage flaming against evergreen walls. But all this glory had now faded, leaving only the last faint echoes of summer, the paling sunset radiance standing between the day that was gone and the night of winter that was at hand. The water-ways were soon to be in the grip of the ice king.

"We need not halt very long at the trading post, and I think we'll get out just in time—from what they tell me," continued Harold. "Lucien of course will have to wait till spring or come out on a dogsled. As for the convict, having him go out with us need not be disagreeable to you. We can of course travel in two parties."

"I must stay here, Harold."

"Here?"

"Yes. I hope you won't be displeased, because