

Chapter One

North glided silently to the Factor's door, bearing the meat and pelts of the seal. Bitter iron cold shackled the northland, the abode of desolation. Armies of caribou drifted by, ghostly under the aurora; moose, lordly and scornful, stalked majestically along the shore; wolves howled invisible, or trotted dog-like in organized packs along the river banks. Day and night the ice artillery thundered. Night and day the fireplaces roared defiance to a frost they could not subdue, while the people of desolation crouched beneath the tyranny of winter.

Then the upheaval of spring with the ice-jams and terrors, the Moose roaring by untamable, the torrents rising, rising foot by foot to the very dooryard of her father's house. Strange spirits were abroad at night, howling, shrieking, cracking and