

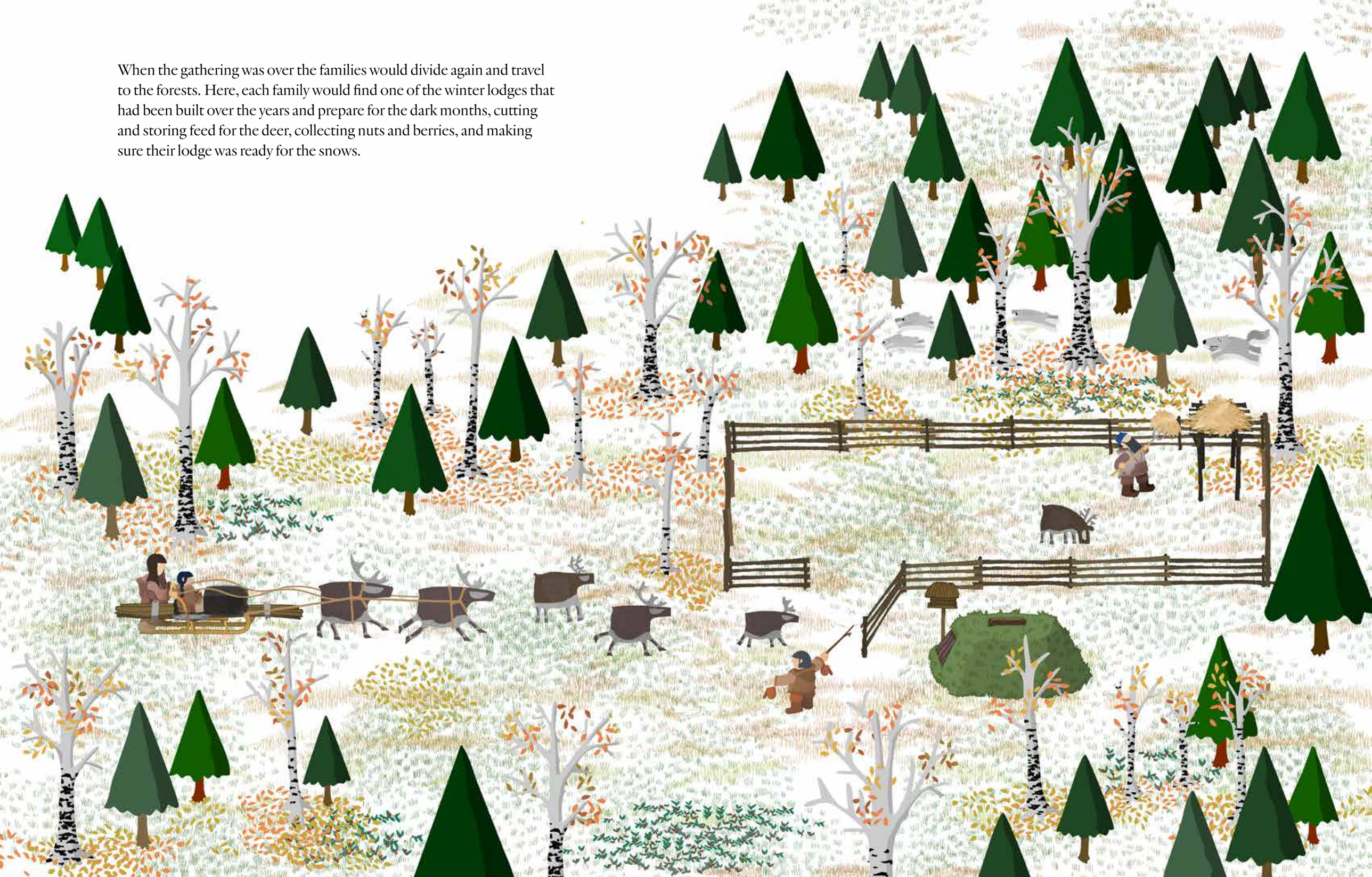
The Three Wishes

A CHRISTMAS STORY

Alan Snow

Long, long ago in the very north a group of people lived with the reindeer. In summer they would move as family groups, sleeping in tents and travelling on sledges drawn by their deer. The adults would hunt and forage, while the children would look after the deer, and play.

When the gathering was over the families would divide again and travel to the forests. Here, each family would find one of the winter lodges that had been built over the years and prepare for the dark months, cutting and storing feed for the deer, collecting nuts and berries, and making sure their lodge was ready for the snows.





When the days grew shorter and the snows arrived the families would retire to their lodges. Here they would make new clothes and tools, tell tales, and settle in for the time of darkness.

In one particular family it fell to the elder child to feed the deer. As the days grew shorter, the boy, who was afraid of the dark, would rush his tasks so he could return to the warmth and safety of the lodge.



"That, I am sorry to say, is not possible," the bird declared.

"The summer must protect itself, for it needs to rest here undisturbed.
Those in the outer world must not know of this place.

"If you return, time will stop and you may never tell," said the wood creature.

"Then what am I to do?" cried the boy.



At the end of the year, the creatures held a feast.

"You have done well, boy," they said to him. "You must be rewarded."

"Please, I need to know that my family are well!"

The friends looked at each other and the wood creature spoke.