

Starting the Long Journey North



One morning in mid-March, we got up early. It was so cold that my beard froze! This was the day I had been waiting for – the start of the **annual migration** to the reindeer's summer pastures. The women packed. The men headed off into the forest to round up the reindeer. Soon everything was ready to go.

We set off. It was an amazing sight – thousands of reindeer on the move, with a long line of 120 reindeer sleds that stretched back for almost 2 km. Young children travelled on the women's sleds, which had high sides to prevent the children falling off.



As we entered the forest, it was like being in a magical fairy-tale world. Snowflakes on the tree branches sparkled like diamonds in the sunshine. It was quiet. The soft noise of reindeer hooves on snow, the swish of the **sled runners** and the tinkling of bells on the reindeer's harnesses were the only sounds I heard. The forest seemed empty but I knew it wasn't, as I saw tracks in the snow from a fox and a **wolverine**. I quickly decided that I liked travelling by reindeer sled – it was wonderful.