Marven of the Great Woods
(Grade 4 Theme 4 Selection 2 Summary)

Back in 1918 a dangerous illness struck the city where young Marven and his family lived. To keep Marven safe, his parents sent him up to the snowy woods of northern Minnesota. There he would work as a bookkeeper – at a logging camp!

All alone, Marven made the long trip north. The camp was a strange place, full of towering trees and immense men called lumberjacks. It was like a whole new world. As if that wasn’t scary enough, the lumberjacks spoke only French! Getting settled took Marven a lot of time. He also needed a good mind for solving all kinds of problems. For example, what’s the best way to wake up cranky, sleeping lumberjacks every day? But the hardest part was always having to wonder if his family was healthy back home… Were they even still alive?

In time, Marven learned to make the best of his difficult situation. He even made an unlikely friend – a huge lumberjack named Jean Louis. Together, they sang French songs and hiked the beautiful, winter landscape.

One day, Marven was told it was time to return to his family. He said good-bye to Jean Louis. On the train, he wondered who, if anyone, would be home to greet him. At the station, Marven was happy to find his whole family safe and healthy. At last, the sickness was over – and Marven was home.