



**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

Title: *Marven of the Great North Woods*

Author: Kathryn Lasky

Illustrator: Kevin Hawkes

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Harcourt Brace, 1997

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota setting

Summary: This is the true story of a 10-year-old Jewish boy who was sent to a logging camp to escape the Influenza Epidemic of 1918. Marven finds both a world that seems very foreign and warm friendships with the loggers, including the biggest lumberjack in the camp who helps him overcome his loneliness and fear for his family back in Duluth. The author based the book on her own father's childhood experience, and the book won the National Jewish Book Award in 1997.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10, all ages

Tips for Reading:

- Learn the correct pronunciation of the French words and phrases.
- Have listeners repeat the French words as you come to them in the story.
- Explain the seriousness of influenza and epidemics before the advent of vaccines and even after.

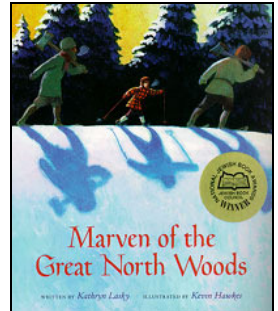
Questions before reading:

- Have you ever been separated from the rest of your family for a period of time? How did you feel?
- What do you know about life in the lumber camps?
- Have you ever had a special friendship with an older person?

To Introduce this story say: We are going to hear the true story of Marven, age 10, who had to leave his family to go to work in a lumber camp. It was a frightening experience being among men who were quite large, spoke a different language, and ate different food. Let's see how he got along.

Questions After Reading:

- How would you feel if you had to leave your home and family like Marven did?
- What new words did you learn?
- What food customs did you learn about?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Culture:**
- Visit the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids to experience the atmosphere of a 1906 lumber camp.
 - Compare methods of logging in the early 1900's and now.
- Music:**
- Learn the songs sung by lumberjacks.
- Science:**
- Learn about the trees and wildlife of the North Woods and what is being done to preserve them.
 - Take a nature hike to experience all the sights, sounds and smells around you.
- Other:**
- Compare the Influenza Epidemic of 1918 with current flu outbreaks.
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- Marven learned several French words in the story. How do you say those words in your language?
 - The food was different than what Marven had at home. What food customs do you have?
 - Do you have a story to tell of someone who made you feel especially welcome in coming to a new place?
- Related Books:**
- ***Mrs. Katz and Tush*** by Patricia Polacco (Bantam, 1992)
 - ***Angel Child, Dragon Child*** by Michele Maria Surat, illustrated by Vo Dinh Mai (Raintree, 1983)
 - ***The Influenza Pandemic of 1918*** by Virginia Aronson (Chelsea House, 2000)
 - ***WoodsWalk: Peepers, Porcupines & Exploding Puffballs! What You'll See, Hear & Smell When Exploring the Woods*** by Henry W. Art & Michael W. Robbins (Storey, 2003)
 - ***Blackwater Ben*** by William Durbin (Wendy Lamb Books/Random House, 2003)
 - ***Great Wolf and the Good Woodsman*** by Helen Hoover, illustrated by Betsy Bowen (University of Minnesota, 2005)
 - ***In the Forest: A Portfolio of Paintings*** by Jim Arnosky (Lothrop, 1989)
 - ***Lumberjack*** by William Kurelek (Houghton Mifflin, 1974)
 - ***Forest Explorer: A Life Size Field Guide*** by Nic Bishop (Scholastic, 2004)
 - ***The Name of the Child*** by Marilyn Reynolds, illustrated by Don Kilby (Orca, 2002)

