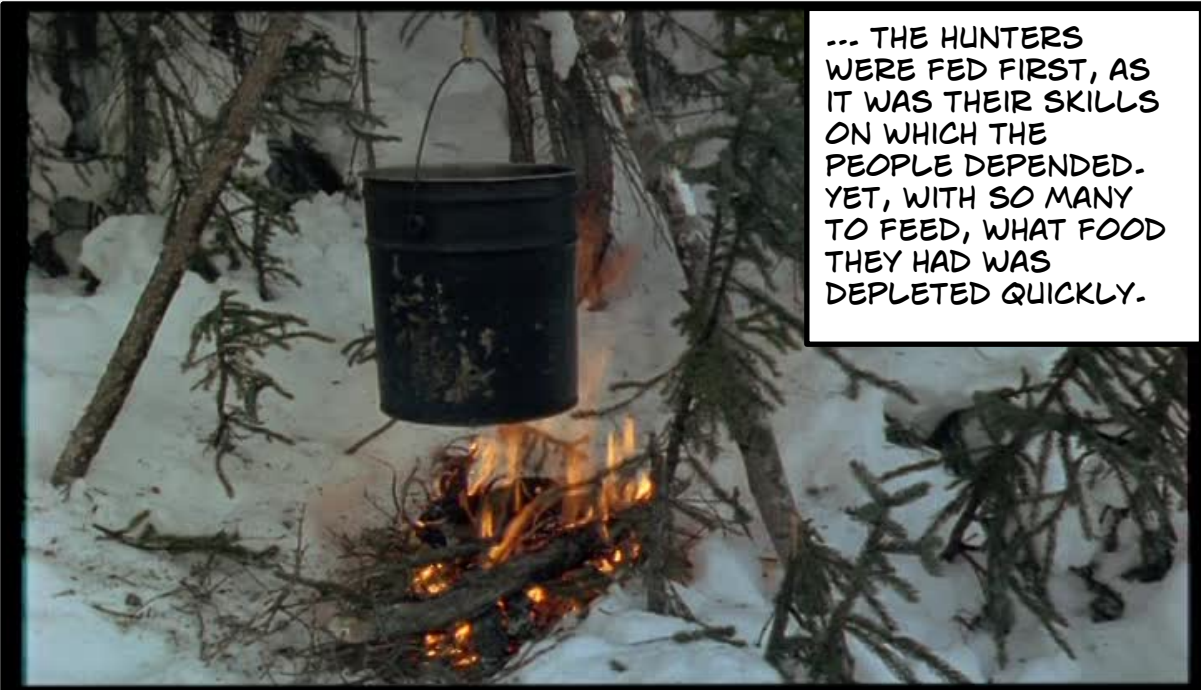


CHAPTER 1: HUNGER AND COLD TAKE THEIR TOLL



... THE HUNTERS WERE FED FIRST, AS IT WAS THEIR SKILLS ON WHICH THE PEOPLE DEPENDED. YET, WITH SO MANY TO FEED, WHAT FOOD THEY HAD WAS DEPLETED QUICKLY.

IN THIS PARTICULAR BAND WERE TWO OLD WOMEN CARED FOR BY THE PEOPLE FOR MANY YEARS.



CONSTANTLY, THEY COMPLAINED OF ACHES AND PAINS, AND THEY CARRIED WALKING STICKS TO ATTEST TO THEIR HANDICAPS.



"WE ARE GOING TO LEAVE THE OLD ONES BEHIND."



OZHII NELII ... FEARED THAT, IF SHE DEFENDED HER MOTHER, THE PEOPLE WOULD SETTLE THE MATTER BY LEAVING HER BEHIND AND HER SON, TOO.



SHRUH ZHUU ... TOOK FROM HIS BELT A HATCHET ... AND STEALTHILY PLACED IT HIGH IN THE THICK BOUGHS OF A BUSHY YOUNG SPRUCE TREE, WELL CONCEALED FROM THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE.



"SO I SAY IF WE ARE GOING TO DIE, MY FRIEND, LET US DIE TRYING, NOT SITTING."

