

### Three Friends

A canoe containing two boys and a man were moving slowly on one of the little lakes in the great northern wilderness of what is now the state of New York. The water, a brilliant blue under skies of the same intense sapphire tint, rippled away gently on either side of the boat, rising in heaps of glittering bubbles as the paddles were lifted for a new stroke. Vast masses of dense green shrubbery crowned the high banks of the lake on every side. Only pink wildflowers, which were just bursting into bloom, gave a break from the solid emerald walls. Except for the canoe and a bird of prey, darting in a streak of silver for a fish, the surface of the water was still and silent like a statue.

The three who used the paddles were individual and unique - none of them bearing any resemblance to the other two. The man sat at the back, he was built very powerfully with large muscles. His face had been burned by long days in the sun. He was clothed in tanned deerskin adorned with many colourful beads. A hatchet and knife were in the broad belt at his waist, and a long rifle lay at his feet.