

# FROZEN FUN



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## Chapter 1

I wake up, and it takes me only a second to remember where I am. A giant half-moon smile raises my cheeks. I rise and look out the little window behind me. The sun isn't up, but the calm blue glow of a cold February morning says it's close.

I look over at my older sister, Crystal, lying on the little bed next to me. She isn't moving, still dead asleep. Typical for a fourteen-year-old girl.

I slide out of my sleeping bag and shuffle across the wooden floor to the old

black cast-iron stove. The big logs Dad stuffed in last night are still kicking out heat. I warm my hands for a moment.

I scoot over and peek out into the living room. The fireplace out there is almost done. I figure I better add some more wood if the cabin's going to stay warm. Especially in the middle of winter here in Minnesota.

I step through the doorway into the living room, and the cool air sends a chill up my back. I look out the window at the big round thermostat attached to the old oak tree.

Zero.

I shiver, imagining how cold it must feel out there. It doesn't seem to bother the oak tree, though.

I add a few split pieces of red pine to the fireplace. I shut the mesh grate and take a big, deep breath to blow on the orange embers. Like magic, a flame appears. I smile and give the fire a nod of thanks for being so cooperative.

I pull a chair next to the fireplace and look outside. The long row of windows provides a nice view. Like a king entering the celebration, the sun is emerging across the frozen lake covered in deep snow.

In fact, if you didn't already know there was a lake out there, you might mistake it for a big meadow. In wintertime, everything sort of looks the same when it's blanketed by a bunch of snow.

I'm Luke, and this is one of my favorite places in the world—my grandparents' cabin in northern Minnesota. I love hunting, fishing, and all outdoor stuff. And up here,

we get to do it all. Even snowmobiling and ice fishing!

Grandma and Bapoe didn't come up this weekend, so it's only our family. Mom, Dad, and Crystal are still sleeping. We arrived late last night because of the five-hour drive.

A chickadee lands on the wooden bird feeder that stands about five steps from the windows. Then a yellow-and-black bird lands next to the chickadee. Bapoe told me those colorful birds are called evening grosbeaks.



I look up in the giant pine tree that watches over the cabin and the bird feeder. I see a bunch more grosbeaks sitting on the branches. Five of them fly to the feeder. Two perch on each side. One grosbeak can't find a spot, so it lands on top, which is full of snow.

This is the only place I see these birds. They must love it up here in the north country.

Suddenly a big bossy blue jay crashes the party and scares the grosbeaks all back to the safety of the giant pine branches. Then the blue jay digs into the birdseed like he's looking for one specific piece on the bottom. Seeds fly out and disappear into the deep snow.

Snacks for a tunneling mouse, I guess!

Then I catch some movement to my right. Two white-tailed deer appear out of

the woods. It's a big doe—the mama deer—and her fawn.

I keep perfectly still. They will see me through the windows if I move.

The mom takes her time and cautiously moves to the bird feeder. She sticks her nose down into the snow. Then she uses her right front hoof to scratch open a spot. From all the chewing she's doing, it looks as though she found the seeds the blue jay scattered. I guess that mouse will have to share.

I stay still and feel the wonderful heat from the fireplace. I can't help but smile again. This place is so cool.

I hear the kitchen floor creaking. Someone else must be up. I keep watching the doe to see how she reacts to the sound and movement.



Her head turns left, and her ears swivel and cup toward the window. She clearly hears or sees someone.

“You have a visitor, I see,” a voice behind me says. It’s Dad.

“Yep,” I reply. “And she sees you.”

The deer turns slowly around and high-steps through the snow back into the woods. Her little one is right behind her.

“Good morning, Luke,” Dad says. “Looks like a perfect day to go ice fishing.”

My tired eyes don’t need any help waking up now. I’m fired up. I love ice fishing! And the best ice fishing in the world is up here at the cabin.

“Ice fishing would be awesome!” With a beaming smile, I look at Dad.

“Great! I’m thinking Boney’s Lake,”  
Dad says.

My eyes get even wider. Boney’s Lake is one of my favorite places to fish. We call it Boney’s Lake because a guy named Mr. Boney used to live there way before I was born.

The lake is small, tucked back in the woods, and loaded with monster bass, giant sunfish, and huge northern pike. I love fishing the lake our cabin is on, but we catch way more fish through the ice on Boney’s. And we get to ride our snowmobiles on the way there. A total bonus!

Dad’s eyes light up too. “It’s a deal, then. We’ll get going after breakfast.”

He gazes at the snow-covered lake for a moment. Then he turns and gives me a special wink.

“There’s some fresh powder out there,” he says. “I think it needs some tracks in it. Maybe you’ll have time to get in a few hot laps on your snowmobile before we head out for Boney’s.”

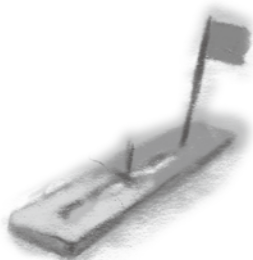
“Sweet!” I exclaim.

That’s the green light to take my snowmobile out for some fun. Like a jackrabbit, I spring to life and race for my gear. I high-five Dad as I rush by.

“Hold your horses,” Mom says. She walks out of the bedroom. “Let’s get some food in you before you go outside.”

And just like that, I have pancakes on my mind.

This is gonna be a great day!



## Chapter 2

Breakfast is a feast: fluffy pancakes, crispy bacon, sweet watermelon chunks, and tasty orange juice. As delicious as it is, we're all excited to get to Boney's!

After cleaning up, Crystal and I fly over to our duffel bags. In a flash, I'm snuggled inside all my winter gear and ready to ride.

I beat Crystal in our race to get ready, so I'm the first out the front door. I slowly tread across the short wooden deck.