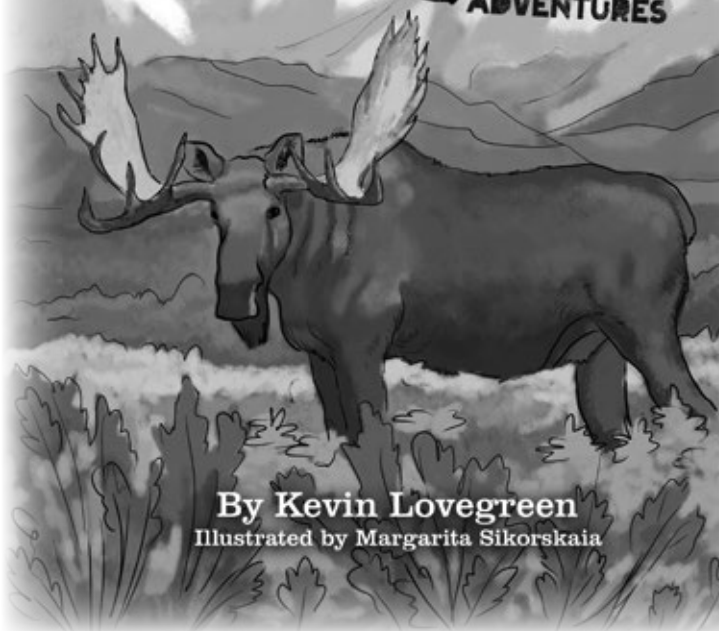


Moose Mania

 LUCKY LUKE'S
HUNTING
ADVENTURES



By Kevin Lovegreen
Illustrated by Margarita Sikorskaia

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Chapter 1

The bonfire crackled and sparks raced into the black night sky on this late September night. Crystal, Mel, Reed and I were all staring into the dancing flames, while listening intently to Dad's story. He was describing how the huge black bear took over an hour to finally walk within bow range of his stand. We are at my favorite place on earth, our hunting property in Minnesota. Mel, my dad's good friend was sitting across the fire from me, still dressed in full camo. His son Reed, who is the spitting image of

his dad and one of my best hunting buddies, was sitting to my right. With his long lanky legs, it was hard for him to keep his boots out of the fire. Mel kept reminding him to be careful, so he didn't melt the rubber soles of his favorite boots. My sister Crystal was sitting next to Dad, with her camo hat covering up some of her long red hair. There aren't many girls who have as much fun hunting, four wheeling and ramming around in the outdoors as Crystal. This was her second year trying to bag a black bear. She told Dad the boys at school didn't believe she would have the guts to shoot a bear, and Crystal was determined to prove them wrong.

After the second or third version of the bear hunt tale was told, Dad changed the tune and asked Mel when he thought the time would be right to take the kids on a big adventure. Reed and I perked up

and were listening closely to see where this conversation led.

“What do you have in mind?” Mel asked.

“I don’t know, what about doing something crazy like taking the kids to Colorado or Alberta?” Dad said.

“Where can we go to get a big bear?” Crystal wanted to know.

The dads both looked at each other. “Alaska,” they said in unison.

“Alaska!” I shouted.

“That would be so sick!” Reed said with a surprising amount of energy for how late it was getting. “I have seen some of the most amazing hunting shows about Alaska. You are in the middle of nowhere and anything

can happen. You can see grizzly bear, black bear, timberwolves and the biggest moose ever,” Reed went on.

“Moose?” Crystal’s eyes lit up. “Let’s go hunting for a moose, Dad!”

“Okay, okay, hold your horses, this was just a fun discussion. Let’s get to bed. Mel and I will talk about this more tomorrow and see if it makes any sense.”

Reed and I headed for the hose to fill the bucket and put out the fire. We couldn’t stop talking about the endless possibilities that might happen on such an adventure. We both knew we needed to keep the pressure on first thing in the morning, this trip had to happen.



Chapter 2

It was hard to believe a whole year had passed and now our same group—Mel, Reed, Dad, Crystal, and I—were standing on a small dirt runway in the middle of Alaska. We'd left Minnesota over fourteen hours ago. Our first landing was in Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska. We then hopped on a plane and touched down in this tiny village called Aniak. Now we are waiting for our third pilot to unload our gear. Each plane has gotten smaller, the farther we have journeyed into nowhere. Other than mosquitoes and pine

trees, there was nothing else around us in this little field at the end of the runway.

It was the perfect fall temperature and the afternoon sun was shining bright. I couldn't help but think this was a magical day, and one of many to come. The pilot hopped in the side door and started shoving out our gear like he was a machine. Quickly learning the game, we all lined up ready for the next bag. The plane was just about empty when a red four wheeler came motoring through the trees with a black trailer bouncing behind it. The driver pulled up next to our pile of stuff and turned off the engine. He was a skinny guy with a scruffy short beard, a well-faded camo ball cap, a red and white checkered flannel shirt, and blue jeans that looked like they hadn't been washed for a long time. If I had to guess, he might be around my dad's age, but definitely looked like he had been out here a while.

“Hey Todd, looks like you brought me another batch of fine-looking hunters,” he said.

The pilot was kneeling in the doorway of the plane, a bead of sweat running down his forehead.

“You got that right Mitch. I think they’re ready for some time in the bush.”

“No one threw up on the flight, did they?” Mitch looked right at Reed.

“Not a chance,” Reed said, trying to be tough.

“That’s good. That was your first little test to see if you’re ready for a week in the bush with bear, rain and wolves. I figure if I get someone with a weak stomach I better

keep a closer eye on them,” he said. “I’m Mitch, and I’m glad you’re here”

He was off the four wheeler now, shaking our hands. When he got to Crystal he stopped.

“Now this is what we need more of. Women brave enough to get out here and enjoy this great country. What’s your name young lady?”

“I’m Crystal.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you Crystal,” he said. “And I’m guessing you’re probably the best shot out of these characters.”

“I do all right. I have done a lot of practicing and my dad has taught me well.”

“I bet he has. At any rate, welcome, I’m glad to have ya.”

“Thanks. I’m really excited to be here.”

“Stack your gear in the trailer and let’s get out of Todd’s way so he can get back at it,” Mitch said after meeting everyone.

In a flash, all the gear was stacked high in the trailer. Mitch started the four wheeler and slowly crawled down the trail heading through the trees. After a quick wave to the pilot, we fell in line like circus elephants behind Mitch. I was anxious to see what kind of structures were built so far from civilization.

