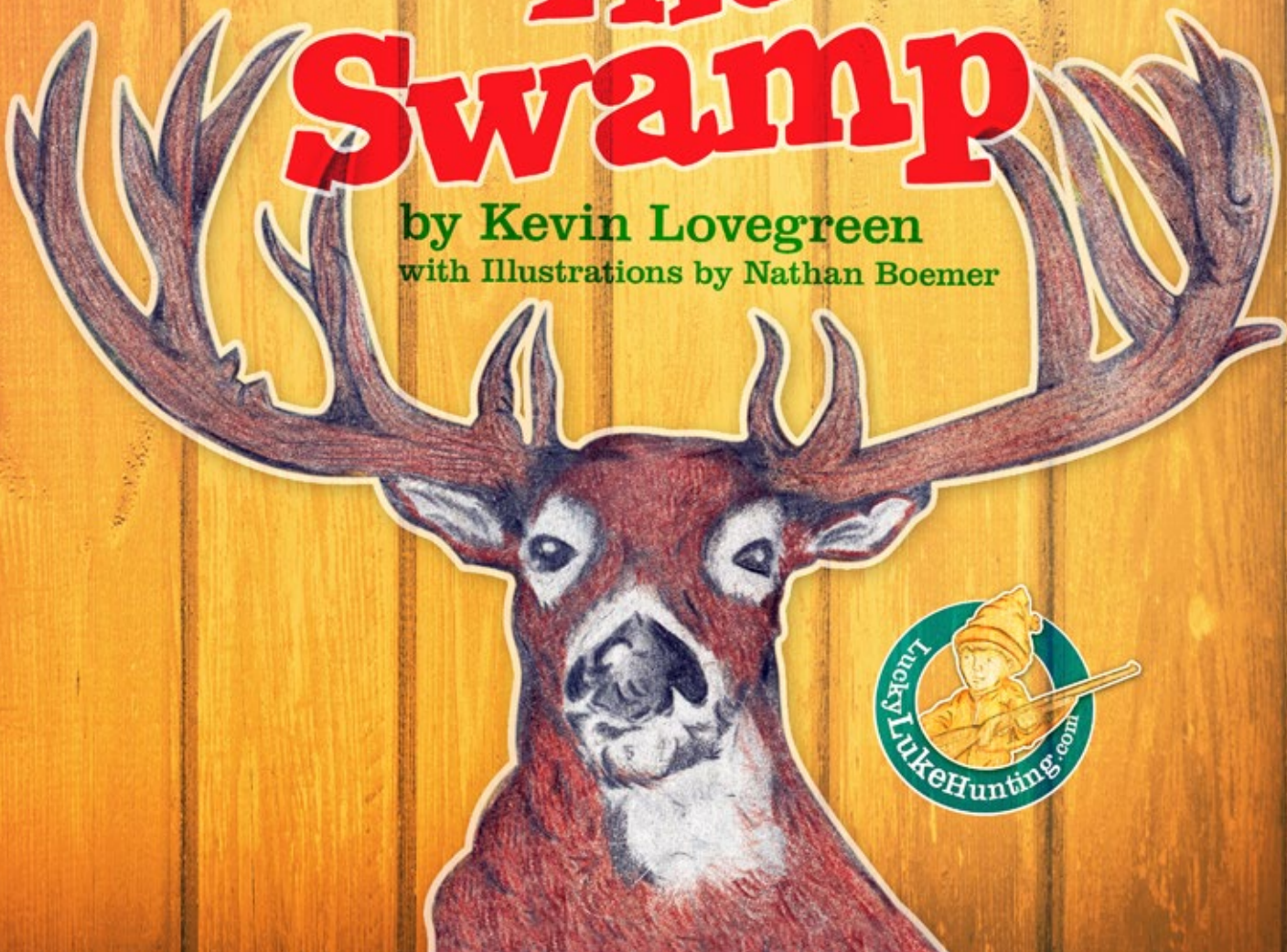


Lucky Luke's Hunting Adventures

The Swamp

by Kevin Lovegreen
with Illustrations by Nathan Boemer



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Illustrated by Nathan Boemer

ISBN 10: 1-59298-441-X

ISBN 13: 978-1-59298-441-1

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2011941522

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing: 2012

16 15 14 13 12 5 4 3 2 1

Cover and interior design by James Monroe Design, LLC.



BEAVER'S
POND
PRESS

Beaver's Pond Press
7104 Ohms Lane, Suite 101
Edina, MN 55439-2129
952-829-8818
www.BeaversPondPress.com

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This book is dedicated to my dad for introducing me to the amazing world of hunting. His love for the outdoors and his passion for the hunt inspired me at a very young age to follow in his footsteps. I am forever grateful.

Thanks Dad!



My name is Luke and I love hunting! Since I was little, my dad has taught me a lot about hunting and how to shoot guns safely. For years I have heard the stories and seen the pictures of my family's hunting adventures.

This is the story of my lucky year, when I was finally old enough to go hunting for whitetail deer in Minnesota. It was the first weekend of the season, otherwise known as "the opener."



The sun was going down the Friday night before the opener, and Dad, my brother Vernon, my sister Crystal, and I pulled up to the cabin in northern Minnesota. We walked in and were greeted by Grandpa, Uncle Jim, and our cousins John, Steve, and Justin.

“Welcome to the North Country!” Grandpa howled.

“The grill’s on. We’re just waiting for the chef.” Uncle Jim said to my dad. Everyone pitched in unpacking the truck as Dad grilled the burgers to perfection.

The smell of Dad’s mouth-watering hamburgers filled the cabin as we sat down to eat. “Burgers and baked beans! Your grandma would have a heart attack if she knew that’s all we had. At deer camp, we keep things simple,” Grandpa said with a smile.

After dinner, everyone began their preparations for the morning hunt. I watched Uncle Jim open a bottle of deer scent and put it on cotton pads. He was being very careful not to get any on his fingers. “Take a whiff!” Uncle Jim dared me. I did, and quickly understood why he was being careful not to get it on his fingers. “That’s my trick to getting the bucks to stop by my stand. I carry the cotton pads out in a Ziplock bag and hang them on the trees around my stand. Bucks can’t resist this stuff!” Uncle Jim said with confidence.

Vernon was putting deer scent on a rag. “What are you going to do with that?” I asked.

“I’m going to drag it from my boot on the way to my stand. I read an article in a hunting magazine, and they swear by it. I’m going to have the deer lining up at my stand in the morning. You just watch and see,” he said.

Crystal, who was lucky enough to be at her third opener, showed Grandpa how she rattled antlers to attract deer. She made it sound just like two bucks fighting. “That will get a big buck running to join the fight,” she told me with confidence.



“Hey, Dad, what’s your trick?” I asked.

As usual, he answered with very few words. “I sit still and be quiet,” he said. “If you’re moving, they usually see you before you see them.” Then, Dad turned to everyone and said, “Get all your stuff laid out! We don’t want any hold-ups in the morning.” With that, Vernon, Crystal, and I headed to our duffle bags and made sure our gear was ready.

After a while, everyone made their way to the living room to share stories of past openers. “Remember the time that big buck stood in the field and Grandpa pulled up his gun three times trying to see it through his scope? And when he realized the scope was filled with snow, he was so mad, he just about threw the gun at the buck!” said Uncle Jim.

“What about the time Dad shot that big buck way back in the swamp? It took us three hours to drag it out! I swear, it weighed three hundred pounds!” Vernon piped in.





There were so many fun stories to share, and I couldn't wait to be a part of them. Then, Crystal asked, "Grandpa, where are you going in the morning?" That started a whole new discussion in the cabin as everyone debated where to go.

My grandpa looked at me and smiled. "This is your first deer camp Luke, so you don't understand how important this question is. You want to pick a deer stand that is right for the wind. If the wind is blowing in the direction the deer are coming from, they will smell you and they're gone," Grandpa said with a knowing wink. My grandpa sure knew a lot about deer hunting—he'd been doing it f-o-r-e-v-e-r.

"Quiet! The weather is on the radio!" Grandpa shouted. Instantly, everyone was silent listening to the announcer.

"For your deer opener, it's going to be a northwest wind at ten- to twelve-miles per hour and a cool twenty-eight degrees, warming to thirty-five."

Grandpa turned to me and smiled. "Now we know what stand to choose and how warm to dress."

"That's not going to work for my lucky stand by Boney's Lake. Now where should I go?" Uncle Jim moaned.

