

Lucky Luke

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Chapter 1

Luke's Secret



Luke and his friends Harper and Kyle were about to eat their lunch under a shady tree near the school oval when Luke's lunch box spilled open. Out rolled an apple with a large funny-face sticker on it.

Luke was embarrassed. "Oh, that's just my new stepdad being funny," he said.

"What does your stepdad do for a job, Luke?" asked Kyle.

"Tom's a ... um ... a ... he's a comedian," Luke said.

"Wow!" said Kyle. "Your stepdad must be really funny. Does he tell jokes all the time?"

"Yeah. Sometimes his jokes are funny," replied Luke.



"My dad's just got an ordinary job," said Harper. "He's an accountant."

"That sounds pretty boring," said Kyle. "My dad is a security guard at a shopping centre. He always complains about being indoors and wishes he could have an outdoor job."

"You're so lucky, Luke," Harper said. "Our dads don't have fun jobs like your stepdad does."

But Luke didn't think he was lucky at all. He couldn't tell his friends what Tom's job *really* was.

Luke knew the embarrassing truth about Tom. Tom was an entertainer. He performed at schools and children's birthday parties. Sometimes, Tom dressed up as a character from a movie. Other times, he was a pirate or a mad professor, or even a magician. Tom also pretended to be in a rock band, singing in a high-pitched voice and dancing with the other members of his troupe, which was called "The Giggles".

No one could ever know the truth about Tom, Luke thought to himself. Not if he could help it. It was just too embarrassing. None of his friends' dads had a silly job like Tom did. Luke *had* to keep it a secret.



Luke felt a sense of comfort because he couldn't remember there ever being entertainers at his school. There was no reason to think that would change now. At least, that's what he hoped.

Chapter 2

The Hiking Trip



More than anything else, Luke liked to go hiking. Now that his father was living in another city, he missed going hiking in the bush and being outdoors. So, when Kyle and Kyle's dad asked Luke to go hiking with them on Sunday, Luke didn't waste a second. He was packed and ready in five minutes.

Tom didn't like hiking. "You go, Luke. I'll stay home and get ready for my show," he said.

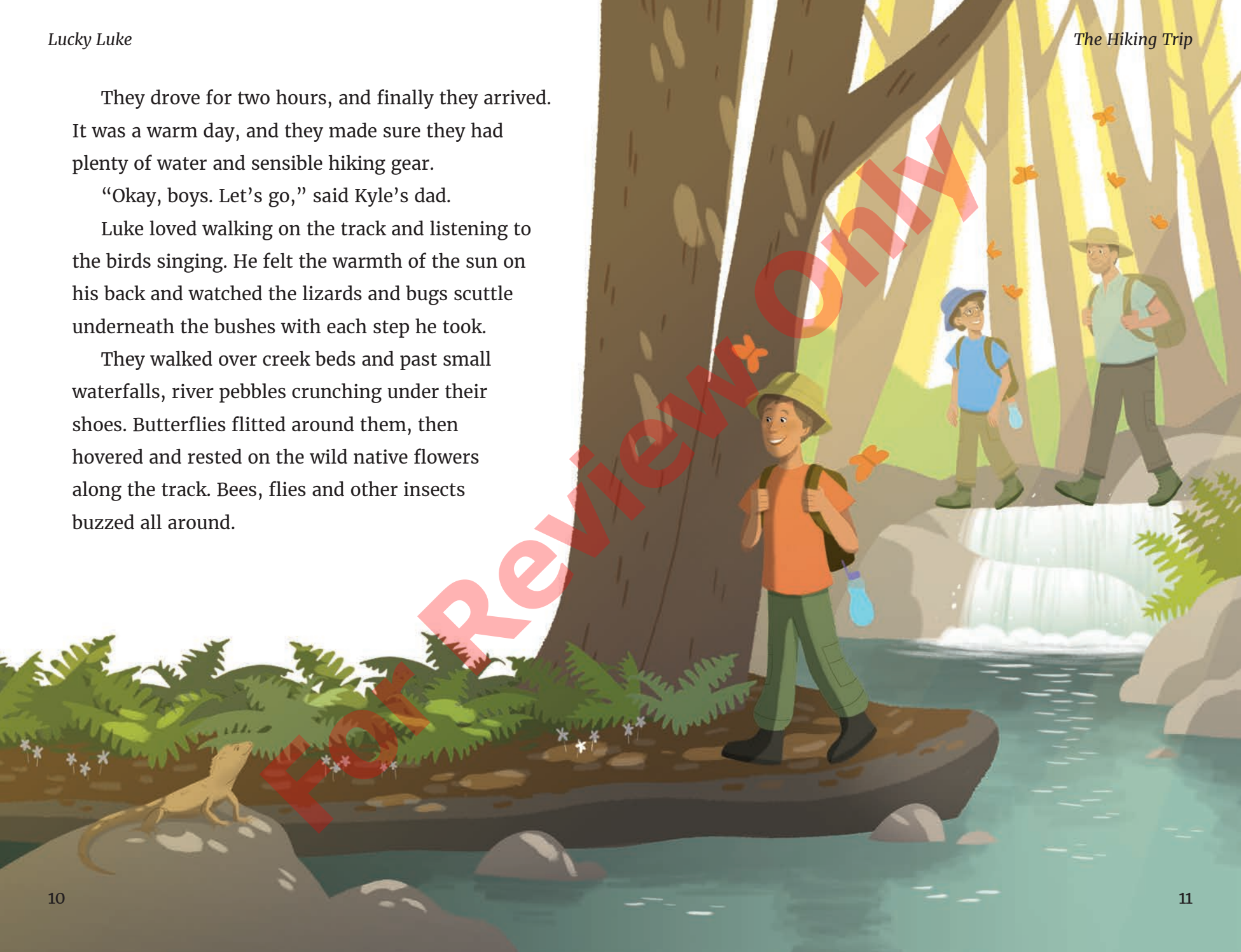
Luke said goodbye to Mum and Tom and put his backpack and water bottle in the car boot. Then he got into the car with Kyle and his dad. Luke couldn't wait to get to the Ferny Mountains and begin the hike.

They drove for two hours, and finally they arrived. It was a warm day, and they made sure they had plenty of water and sensible hiking gear.

“Okay, boys. Let’s go,” said Kyle’s dad.

Luke loved walking on the track and listening to the birds singing. He felt the warmth of the sun on his back and watched the lizards and bugs scuttle underneath the bushes with each step he took.

They walked over creek beds and past small waterfalls, river pebbles crunching under their shoes. Butterflies flitted around them, then hovered and rested on the wild native flowers along the track. Bees, flies and other insects buzzed all around.



Hiking with Kyle and Kyle's dad was the best thing to happen to Luke all week.

"The last time we hiked, we went by the lake and did some fishing," Kyle's dad said. "I nearly caught a cod. It was the biggest cod I've ever seen! And it got away."

Kyle grinned. "Right, Dad. The biggest fish always gets away."

Then, Kyle's dad turned to Luke and asked, "So, I hear your dad is a comedian?"

"You mean my ~~stepdad~~. I have a dad, and I have a stepdad called Tom. I don't see my real dad very often because ~~he~~ ~~lives~~ interstate and travels a lot," replied Luke.

"Maybe next time he visits, he could come hiking, too," said Kyle.

Luke really missed his dad. He wished he could see him more often.

