

# Chapter 1

“It just is what it is, and I don’t need no ribbing about it,” I insisted.

“I just don’t know what to say,” Jet responded with real surprise on his face. “I mean, I knew it was growing on you, but I never expected this. Not in a million years.”

It was the middle of February, which meant that deer season had just wrapped up in Alabama and that turkey season was right around the corner. As had become our custom for the first Friday night after deer season, The Hunt Club Kids were holding our first meeting of the new year. And I had just made a big confession.

“It really is hard to believe,” Parker joined in. “But there ain’t nothing wrong with it, I don’t guess,” he finished with noticeable uncertainty in his voice.

“There ain’t nothing wrong with it at all, Mason,” Wyatt agreed, a bit more confidently. “My dad knows a guy who doesn’t even hunt deer at all anymore. All he does is turkey hunt.”

“Wait!” Jet jumped back in. “That’s not your plan, is it?” he continued in a panic.

“No. I never said that,” I looked over and assured him. “All I said is that I’ve decided I like turkey hunting better than deer hunting. But that doesn’t mean I’m not going to deer hunt anymore,” I promised. “I still love it too—just not as much as chasing turkeys.”

I went on to explain that it’s sort of like having two favorite desserts. Maybe one is your most favorite, but you’re not sad when your mom makes your second favorite. You still love that one, too.

## TURKEY TROT

“Well, I guess it’s just surprising, Mason. Because you and your dad have been the most serious deer hunters out of all of us,” Jet explained, having calmed down a bit.

“I know,” I agreed. “But things changed a lot for us after Dad got back into turkey hunting a few years ago and won the calling competition. Now we’re just eat up with turkeys. It’s pretty much all we talk about.”

“So, your dad agrees?” Parker asked me. “He likes turkey hunting better too?”

“I suppose he does,” I answered with a few nods. “I know he told me the other day he was ready for deer season to end so we could start focusing on getting after some big gobblers.”

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After talking about it some more and everyone eventually coming to terms with my confession, the conversation moved to talking about how each of our deer seasons had gone. Yes, we talk about it some at school

along the way, but this meeting is always when we really dive down into the details. And one of the things we all wanted to know about was Wyatt's recent hunt in Maine.

"Yeah, it was awesome. And a whole lot different than the way we hunt down here. But different in a good way," Wyatt explained. "Tracking a big buck in the snow the way we did might be the most exciting thing I've ever done. I thought my heart was going to jump out of my chest," he finished.

Everyone else had had good seasons, too. Parker and his dad were still committed to hunting with just their bows—but doing well. And Jet and his dad were really figuring the deer out on their Turkey Creek property. Of course, with my new turkey obsession, I couldn't help but ask him one more time how that creek got its name.

"Don't even think about it," Jet laughed in response. "There ain't no way you're coming to kill all our turkeys!"