

## CHAPTER SIX

**EVERY YEAR, ABOUT** the time when the owners of fridges go off on their holidays, Chilly Billy and his friends held The Great Annual Fridge Olympics and Frozen Sports.



Billy's friends came from far and wide, and no wonder; this was the most important event of the frozen sporting year.

Because there were so many visitors, Billy couldn't possibly fit them all into his home behind the ice cube tray. So they had to sleep packed head-to-toe like sardines in those narrow shelves inside the door.



And what a grand time they had. Every evening, there was a party in the butter compartment, hide-and-seek among the

vegetables, and a remarkable game of musical eggs, which I'll tell you about another time.

The days were spent training, and if you happened to be taking a stroll through the fridge, you had to keep your eyes open so as not to be bumped into by all the little men who would suddenly come whizzing round corners or leaping from an overhead shelf.

The events that made up the Fridge Olympics included just about every frozen sport you could think of, and a few unfrozen ones too.

The ski-runs were in the freezer compartment, and a ski-jump had been made by coating the sloping top of a milk carton with ice. After coming off the carton at great speed, the skiers, their tiny arms and legs whirling to help them go further, would land safely on a large and very squishy slice of lemon meringue pie. (Difficult to climb out of, just in case you ever think of jumping in it yourself.)

Then there were the acrobatics—swinging, twirling, and flying through the air from the shelf bars. Only the most daring and athletic were allowed to enter, because it was really quite dangerous.



And the biggest and strongest competitors had an event all to themselves: Tossing the Carrot.

The idea was to get hold of a carrot at the big end, balance it upright in the hands, and fling it as far as possible with a mighty heave. When you think that an ordinary size carrot of the kind you would eat weighs much more than

any little man, you can understand what great strength is needed. (A good aim is needed as well. There are many sad stories of spectators being injured by badly tossed carrots.)

All these events, and many others, were included in the Fridge Olympics.

But the most important event of all, where the winner won a huge gold medal, was the Great Cross-Refrigerator Race. And that's what Chilly Billy had been training for all year long. (Remember? That's what I told you he did in the afternoons.)

Billy was very good at this race, and he hoped to win. But he had a serious rival, a real expert at cross-refrigerator racing who had come all the way from Birmingham, where he lived and trained in a refrigerator factory.

Nobody knew his real name; he was called the Mad Jumper, because of his rolling eyes and amazing leaps, and he was *huge*. He must have been nearly three quarters of an inch tall, even without his boots on. And that, for a tiny man, is very, very big.

For the last two days, the Mad Jumper hadn't joined in any of the games with the others. He'd just sat on his own, polishing his boots and glaring at Chilly Billy. He was

determined to win, and he didn't intend to let Billy stop him.

At last, the day of the great race came. Bright and early, all the spectators settled down along the race course, which started at the bottom left-hand corner of the fridge, and ended at the top right-hand corner.

A roar went up from the crowd as Chilly Billy and the Mad Jumper took their places at the starting line. Billy, who isn't very big at the best of times, looked even smaller next to the giant Jumper. But he wasn't going to let that worry him.

I may be small, he thought to himself, but I'm as nippy as they come. Big as he is, I'll keep up with him.

They were ready.

Billy's friend Lily, who was starting the race, called out, "On your marks."

Billy and the Mad Jumper shuffled their boots and flexed their toes nervously.

"Right," said Lily, "when I pop this Rice Krispie, that's the signal to be off. The first one to reach the top gets the gold medal and a kiss from me."



“Save your breath,” said the Mad Jumper with a nasty laugh, “I’ll want a *big* kiss when I win.”

Billy was furious, but before he could say anything Lily popped the starting Krispie and the race was on.

The two racers had completely different styles. Billy was running as fast as he could along the bottom of the fridge, but the Mad Jumper looked more like a kangaroo. He was taking huge hops, and it wasn’t long before he was out in front.

He looked back at Billy and sneered.

“What’s the matter, shorty? Have you got lead in your boots?” And he hopped away, laughing his nasty laugh.

Billy saved his breath, for they were just coming up to the first wall, and he was going to need all his energy to climb up it.

Even the Mad Jumper couldn’t hop up walls, so by the time they had climbed to the first shelf, Billy had caught up and they were side by side as they came to the first swing of the race.

They had to swing across the shelf to reach the opposite wall, and this is where Billy’s training started to pay off.



He was like a flying monkey, swinging round and round on one bar and then whizzing off to catch another bar further on.

And when they reached the far wall, Billy was well ahead.

By now, the spectators were all jumping up and down with excitement. They didn’t like the Mad Jumper’s nasty ways, and they wanted Billy to beat him.

But the race wasn’t over yet, by a long way.

The shelf that the two had reached was a solid one, and the Jumper was catching up on Billy by leaps and bounds and hops.



They were neck and neck. Now the Jumper had overtaken Billy, and was getting further ahead with each hop.

Suddenly, hidden from the crowd by an icicle, the Jumper stopped, took something out of his pocket, and squirted it all over the shelf before hopping off again.



Billy was running so fast that he couldn't stop to see what the Jumper had squirted on the floor. And then, to his horror, he found out what it was. His sucker boots started slipping and sliding until he could hardly stand, let alone run.

That wicked Jumper had covered the floor with cooking oil so that Billy's suckers couldn't suck! And there was another wall to climb before the final stretch of the race.

What was Billy to do?

Slipping and sliding and trying to run, Billy thought the hardest he'd ever thought in his life.



Then, just as he reached the wall where his sucker boots would be useless, he had a brainwave.

Unwinding his long woolly scarf, he threw it up and over the bars of the shelf above him so that it made a kind of rope. Kicking off his slippery boots, he climbed up his scarf and on to the next shelf.

The Jumper, meanwhile, was hopping along quite slowly with his hands in his pockets, feeling quite sure that he had put Billy out of the race for good.

So when the cheers of the crowd behind him made him turn around, he could hardly believe his eyes.

Chilly Billy had given himself a push off from the wall, and was sliding along the shelf at headlong speed on his socks.

The Jumper hopped and bounded and jumped his hardest, but it was no good. Billy slid past him like a rocket, his trusty scarf streaming behind him, and crossed the finishing line so fast that he crashed into the cheering spectators before he could stop.



“Oh Billy,” said Lily, giving him his gold medal and a big kiss. “Well done! I’m so proud of you.”

“Phew,” puffed Billy, “if it wasn’t for those socks you knitted for me, I’d never have won. They must be the fastest socks in the world.”

And that was how Chilly Billy won the Great Cross-Refrigerator Race, much to everyone’s delight.

As for the Mad Jumper, he was sent back to Birmingham in disgrace, and forbidden by the

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Fridge Olympic Committee to enter any more races until he stopped his nasty tricks.

And the gold medal is still hanging up on the wall of Billy's bedroom today, next to his world-beating socks.













