

The Bike MONSTER

By Marissa Widdison

Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

"These many blessings make me feel so thankful to be me" (Children's Songbook, 11).

When April's family moved to a farm, there was lots to love about their new home. There were ponds to swim in and meadows to explore. And there was always something that needed to be done! The whole family—Mom, Dad, and eight kids—learned to milk cows, pick corn, and fill jars with homemade applesauce.

For April, the hardest part of the move was making new friends. None of her siblings went to her school, and most of her classmates had grown up together. It was tough to fit in, especially when some classmates made fun of her hand-me-down clothes and worn-out backpack.

And worst of all, April didn't have a bike.

Almost everyone had a bike. After school, they'd hold races and play bike tag. Meanwhile, April was stuck walking home—usually alone.



One day while April was on her way home, David and Maria from school pulled up next to her, their bike wheels glinting in the sunshine.

"You should ask for a bike for Christmas," David said. Before April could say anything, Maria started teasing.

"Her family can't afford bikes, not even one."

"That's not true!" April said. "My parents could buy us all bikes if they wanted!"

Maria and David just laughed and rode away.

From then on, April wanted a bike more than anything. Christmas was a few weeks away. Was there any chance she might get one under the tree? She started asking for a bike every chance she got.

The big day finally arrived—Christmas morning! April was the first to run to the tree. She saw games, clothes, and a few school supplies . . . and zero bikes.

But then Dad said something that made her heart pound.

"Hey, I think I saw something on the porch."

"I did too!" Mom said. "Kids, why don't you see what's out there?"

April and her siblings ran outside to look. And there, right on the porch, was a row of bikes! April could tell they weren't new, but that didn't matter. They were bikes!

Pam squealed in delight as she grabbed the red one with her name on the tag. Billy rolled the orange one down the steps. Then April got a good look at hers.

It was big. It was black. And it had the widest tires she'd ever seen. April felt her stomach drop. She tried to smile but felt a little sick.

It looks like a monster, she thought. What will the other kids say?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID MALAN



On the first school day after Christmas break, April pedaled slowly. She hoped the bell would ring before she got to school so she could hide the Bike Monster while no one was watching.

But everyone was still outside, talking about the holidays. And it wasn't long before someone spotted the Bike Monster.

"Is that made of old tractor parts?"

"It's from the junkyard!"

"Maybe if your folks didn't have so many kids, they could get you something nice for once."

April tried to ignore the mean comments, but those last words stuck in her mind. *Would I be happier with a new bike instead of all my brothers and sisters?*

That evening April was watching her older brothers playing in the living room. She picked up her littlest sister and squeezed her with a giant hug. *Would I trade her for a shiny new bike?* April thought. *No way!*

Suddenly the Bike Monster didn't seem like such a big deal after all. And it didn't even really seem like such a monster. It was a gift from parents who loved her, and that made it the best bike in the world.

As the school year went on, April discovered that her bike *was* the very best—at least for racing and riding in the snow. Everyone wanted to try the big, wide tires. And April would let them. But the Bike Monster was hers, after all, and she loved it! ●



I am adopted, and sometimes I wonder what would've happened if I hadn't been adopted. I think about what would be different, like if I had a different life or family. It wouldn't be the same. I love my family, and I am so grateful for them. I don't know what I would do without them. I love them so, so much.

Keira W., age 11, Virginia, USA