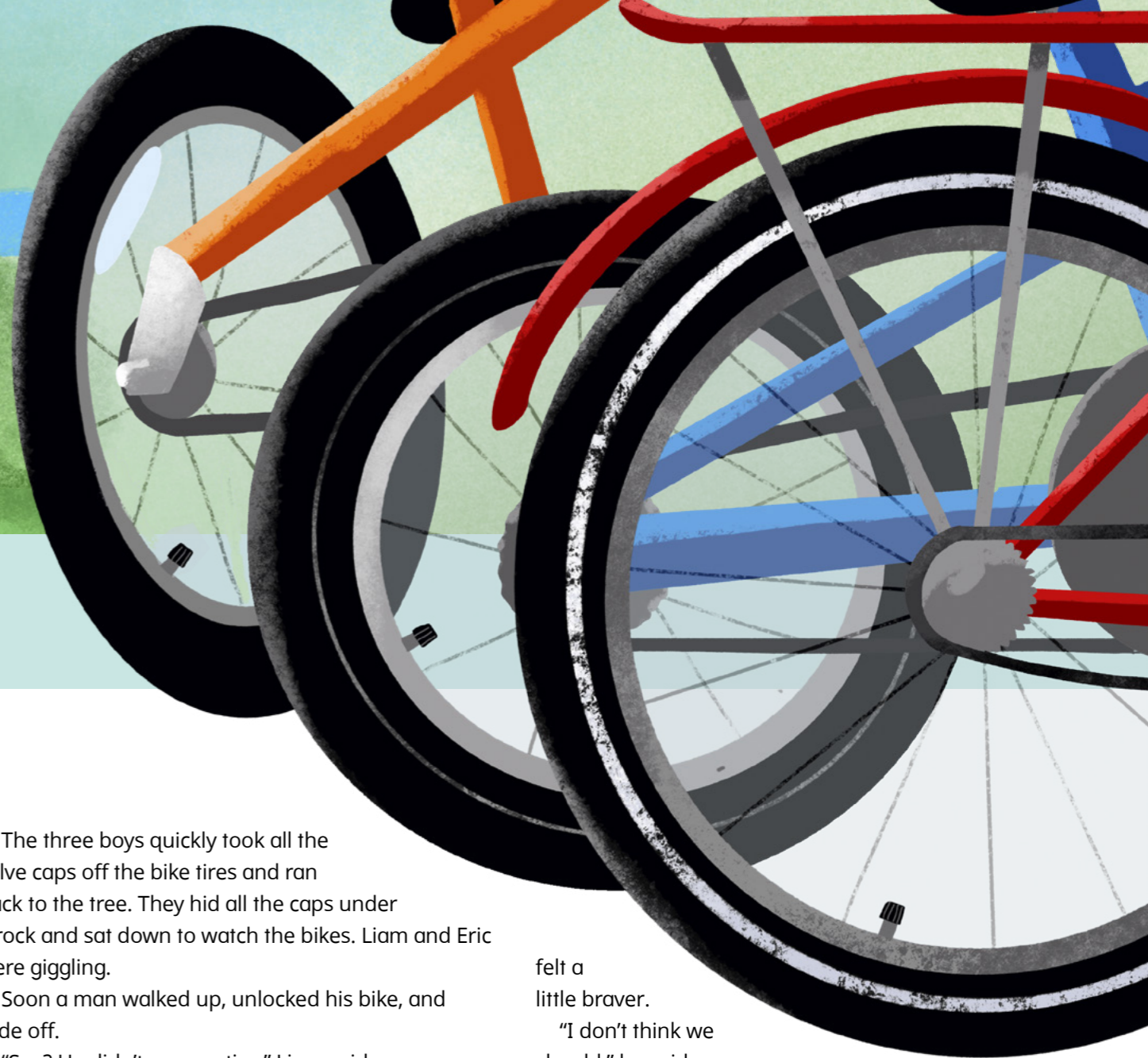




*His friends said it would be funny.
But it didn't feel right.*



The Bike Prank

By Haley Yancey
(Based on a true story)

Sam pedaled his bike as fast as he could up the hill. He leaned forward. The air whipped through his hair. His friend Liam pedaled next to him.

"Getting tired?" Liam said.

"No way!" Sam said.

Their friend Eric was already at the park at the top of the hill.

"*Komm schon!* Come on!" he yelled.

Sam and Liam reached the top of the hill. The boys parked their bikes and sat under a tree.

Liam picked up a rock and threw it. "I'm bored."

There weren't many places to go in their small village in Switzerland.

"Me too," Eric said. He scratched the dirt with a stick.

"We could keep biking," Sam said.

Liam scrunched up his face. "That's all we *ever* do."

"Let's do something funny!" Eric said. He hopped up and walked over to the bike rack, where lots of bikes were parked. Sam and Liam followed him.

Sam's stomach felt tight. Sometimes what Eric and

Liam thought was funny wasn't funny to him. Eric and Liam liked to tease other kids and say rude things in class. But maybe this time would be different.

Besides, there weren't many boys in Sam's class. If he wasn't friends with Eric and Liam, who would he be friends with?

"Let's take the valve caps off all the tires," Eric whispered. "We can hide them by the tree." He knelt down by a shiny red bike and twisted a little plastic cap off one of the tires.

Liam laughed. "Yes! That will be so funny."

Sam sighed. Nope. This time wasn't different. "I don't know," he said. "Maybe we should just go."

Eric shoved Sam's arm. "Aw, come on!" he said. "No one is even looking."

"They're just little parts," Liam said. "No one will even notice they're gone."

Sam tried to ignore the sick feeling in his stomach. Taking the valve caps wouldn't ruin the bikes. He shrugged and nodded.

The three boys quickly took all the valve caps off the bike tires and ran back to the tree. They hid all the caps under a rock and sat down to watch the bikes. Liam and Eric were giggling.

Soon a man walked up, unlocked his bike, and rode off.

"See? He didn't even notice," Liam said.

But I did, Sam thought.

The rest of the day, Sam couldn't stop thinking about the valve caps. He wished he could give them back, but he had no way to find the bikes' owners. He knelt down and told Heavenly Father about it.

"I feel awful," Sam said. "I wish I had never done it. Please forgive me, Heavenly Father."

The next day, Sam and his friends rode their bikes to the park again.

Once again, Eric said, "Let's take the valve caps!"

Once again, Liam agreed.

Sam remembered his prayer. And this time, he

felt a little braver.

"I don't think we should," he said.

"Why not?" Liam said, frowning.

"No one even noticed yesterday."

"I wouldn't want someone messing with my bike," Sam said. Before either boy could answer, he hopped on his bike. "Race you to the bakery!" he yelled. Then he started pedaling as fast as he could.

Eric and Liam grabbed their bikes too.

"No fair! You got a head start," Liam called.

Sam grinned as his friends raced after him. He whispered a thank you to Heavenly Father. He felt much better. ●

This story took place in Switzerland.

ILLUSTRATION BY SHANE CLESTER