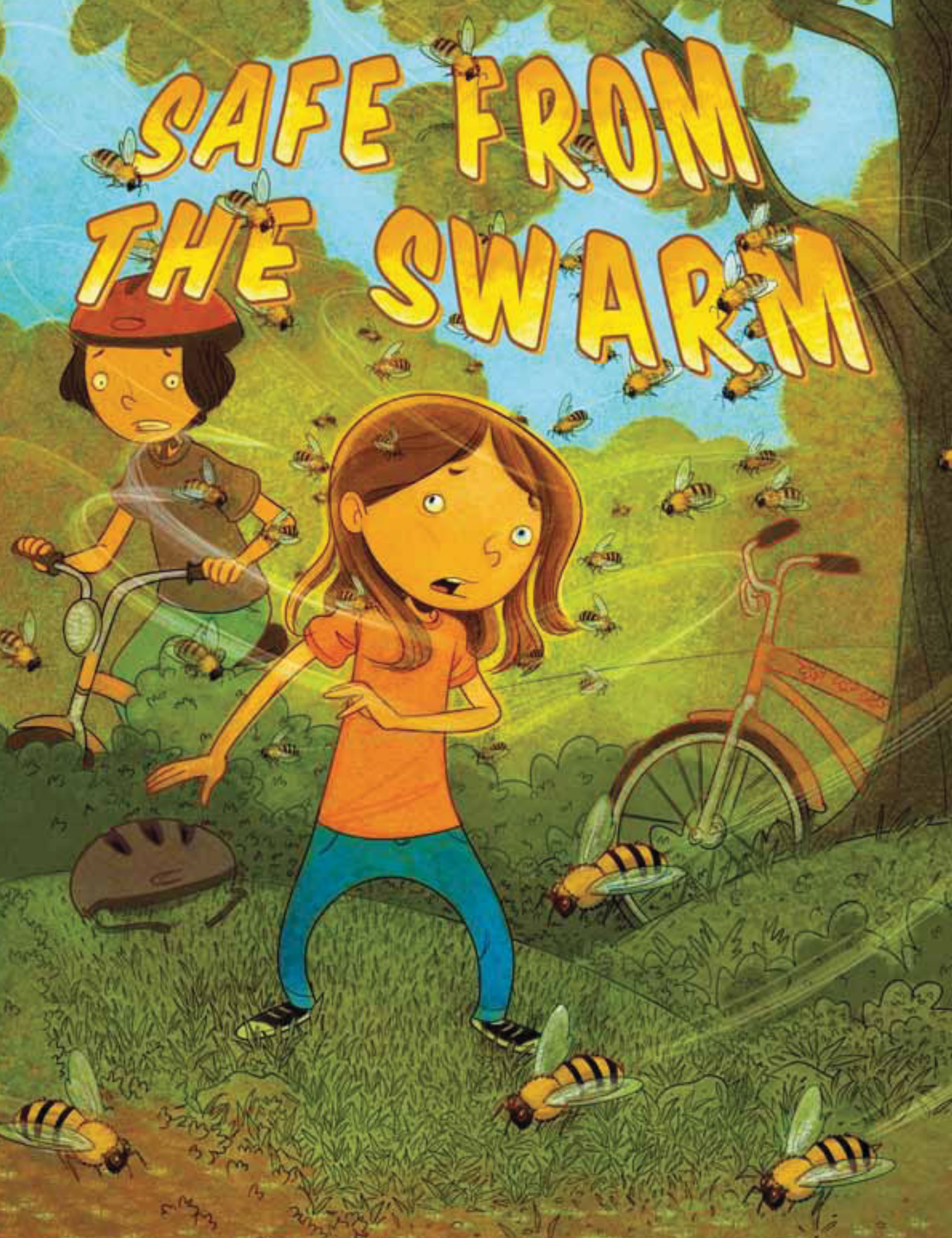


SAFE FROM THE SWARM



BY KELLY J. HUNSAKER

(Based on a true story)

Through a still small voice, the Spirit speaks to me
(*Children's Songbook*, 106–107).

Let's ride our bikes down by the stream," I said to my friend Amy.
"OK. I just need to ask my mom first," Amy answered.

A little while later we were happily riding down our street. The stream was just a few blocks from my home. A dirt path ran beside it. We rode our bikes to the end of the path, and on our way back we stopped to toss some rocks into the stream.

"Let's race sticks," I said. We both looked for a small twig to toss into the water.

"Ready, set, go!" Amy yelled. We threw our sticks into the water and watched as they floated around a bend in the stream and out of sight.

"I think you won," I said.

We continued riding our bikes back up the path. I stopped to pick up a stick lying across the path and tossed it in the stream. Before I could spot where the stick had landed, a buzzing cloud encircled me. Within seconds, hundreds of yellow jackets covered my body. Chills of fear ran up my spine. I had stepped on their nest somewhere underneath the brush.

"Run!" Amy yelled. "They're all over you!"

Just as I was about to swing my arms to try to swat them away, I had a strong feeling not to move. I remembered what I had been taught whenever a bee or wasp was on me: *The best thing to do is stay still. They won't sting unless they feel threatened.*

Fighting the urge to run, I felt the yellow jackets crawl into my hair. They walked across my ears and up the sleeves of my shirt. My rapid breathing shook my body, even though I tried not to move.

"Hurry, Amy, go get my dad," I stammered under my breath. My friend raced up the dirt path.

Suddenly, one of the yellow jackets stung my cheek. Shocked by the sharp pain, I jumped and screamed.

The persistent thought remained: "Hold still!"

I continued to stay motionless as the yellow jackets crawled on me. I quietly prayed, "Heavenly Father, please help me escape the swarm. Please, please help me."

A minute later, a wasp stung my other cheek. Startled once more, I flinched. My body trembled as I began to cry. Then the entire swarm flew away.

Worn out, I picked up my bike and walked up the dirt path as tears streamed down my cheeks. As I reached the paved road, I could see the relief in Dad's eyes as he ran toward me. Sobbing, I explained everything that had happened.

"You were very blessed," Dad said as he examined my cheeks. "What made you stand there so still?"

"At first I felt like swatting at them and running, especially when I realized they were crawling in my hair and clothes, but then I had a strong feeling to hold still," I explained.

"That was the Holy Ghost, Kelly," Dad said. "The Spirit gives us promptings so we will know in our minds and feel in our hearts what to do. It may not be what we want to do, but if we obey those feelings we will be protected from danger. I'm so grateful you listened and followed His prompting."

Even though my cheeks throbbed with pain, I felt extremely blessed to be safe from the swarm. ●



"If we listen and obey, we will be guided by His Spirit."³

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

