

“It is by faith that miracles are wrought” (Moroni 7:37).

A Miraculous Escape from **DANGER**

BY MYRA HAWKE DYCK

Based on a true story

It was a sunny spring afternoon, a week after my eighth birthday—a perfect day for a bike ride. My sister Marla, our friend Lisa, and I headed out on a backcountry road that was part of my family’s cattle ranch in British Columbia, Canada. The mountaintops glowed as the sun reflected off their snowcapped peaks. Excitement filled my chest as I pedaled.

I had been riding a two-wheeler for only about a week, so I was still a little shaky. The first part of the road was smooth dirt, flattened by regular tractor and hay-wagon trips. As the road wound past the thick green alfalfa fields, we began to pedal faster. I felt strong and free, coasting through the fresh mountain breeze.

Then we came to a division in the road. We could keep going straight along the edge of the field, or we could turn and take the road that went along the creek at the base of the mountain. We decided to take the more adventurous route.

Marla and I had been on this road several times before with our family, but this was my first time riding a bike here. I was a little nervous as my bike jiggled across a cattle guard, a ditch covered with evenly spaced bars to keep cows from crossing. I pedaled hard to stay with Marla and Lisa. The sunlight pierced

through the majestic pine trees, creating a cheerful, bright pattern on the bumpy path.

As the road became rockier, I became more nervous. I was having a hard time keeping my balance. I wondered if the rocks would puncture my tires.

“I think maybe we should go back,” I said.

“Why?” Marla asked. “Are you scared?”

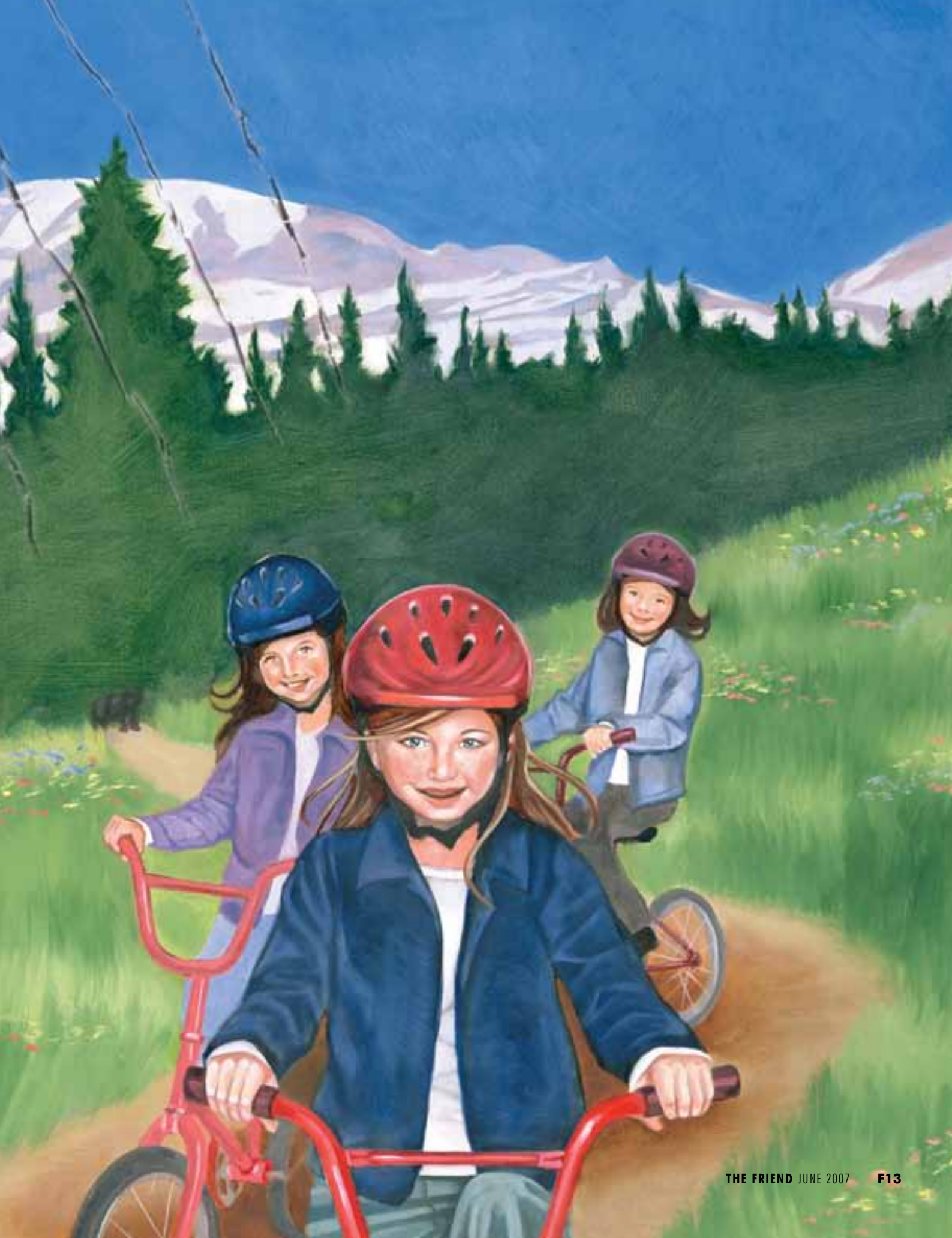
I would never admit to my older sister that I was afraid. “No. I just don’t want to get a flat tire.”

“Well, you can go back if you want, but we are going to keep going,” she said.

“Bye,” I called as I turned my bike around.

“We’ll see you at home,” Marla said. “We probably won’t go too much farther.”

I started toward home, all alone. The patterns on the road did not seem so cheerful now. I was suddenly aware of the strange sounds coming from the dark forest. But knowing that the comfort of home was near, I pedaled on. I was almost to the cattle guard when I sensed someone behind me. “Marla and Lisa must have decided to come home too,” I realized with relief. “Now I won’t have to ride home alone.” Swinging my leg over my bike, I stopped and turned around to see where they were. Marla and Lisa were nowhere in sight, but walking straight toward me was a black bear!



I froze. My bike clanked to the ground. All the advice I had ever heard about bears rushed through my mind. *Don't run or it will chase you. You can never outrun a bear.* I started to walk slowly backwards.

Make noise to scare the

bear away. Yell and bang two rocks together. I scanned the ground near my feet—no rocks, just dirt. I clapped my hands as hard as I could. But I could not yell. My throat felt tight. The bear kept walking toward me.

Pray. Throughout my life I had been taught to pray. My Sunday School teacher had even asked us what we



should do if we saw a bear, and she had emphasized prayer. I had been taught to pray with my head bowed and eyes closed, but that was impossible now. I kept my eyes on the bear and silently prayed: "Heavenly Father, please help me! Please save me from this bear! Please help me know what to do."

Praying and clapping, I walked slowly backward toward the cattle guard. Maybe if a cow couldn't cross it, a bear would have trouble too. Maybe it would trip, giving me a chance to run home! I stepped carefully across the widely spaced beams.

The bear snorted and drooled. I watched as it followed me easily across the cattle guard. It rose onto its hind legs. I stood horrified as the grunting bear came toward me with outstretched paws. It towered over me, and I could see its sharp, wet teeth. Suddenly, the bear swiped for my head! I screamed as its large, curled claws got tangled in my hair and jerked me to the ground. I jumped back up. The bear, on all fours again, bit my inner thigh and pulled me down. It started dragging me across the road.

By then, Marla and Lisa had found me. Marla tried to distract the bear, but nothing worked. In seconds, the bear had dragged me across the dirt road to the base of the mountain. It surely would have pulled me into the thick bushes, but suddenly my pants ripped. They tore into two pieces, from front to back, even through the elastic waistband. Miraculously, its teeth had not punctured my skin. I leaped up. "Run!" a voice said to my mind.

I ran toward Marla and Lisa, leaving the bear with my pant leg in its mouth. Pantless and wearing only one shoe, I ran as fast as an Olympic track star. I overtook Marla and Lisa, who were also running. We lunged into the bushes and raced toward the creek. The thorny brambles scratched my legs, but I didn't slow down.

Without pausing or looking back, I crossed a barbed-wire fence and sloshed into the creek. I lost my other



"As a result of the many miracles in our lives, we should be more humble and more grateful, more kind and more believing."

**President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95),
"The God That Doest Wonders," *Ensign*,
May 1989, 17.**

shoe when it got wedged under a log. Almost home, I plunged through the water and ran across the wet cow corral. I squeezed through a fence and sprinted up the porch steps and through the front door.

My parents bombarded me with questions when they saw me without shoes or pants and covered with scratches.

"What happened?" Mom cried.

"Where are your pants?" Dad asked. "How did you get all those scratches?"

Still afraid, I couldn't catch my breath. Stuttering, gasping, and crying, I finally managed, "I . . . ah . . . buh . . . buh . . . bear!"

Marla and Lisa ran onto the porch, and Marla told Mom and Dad what she had seen. Trying to calm me, Mom helped me into a warm bath.

Later that evening, clean and safe, we discussed the terrifying event. My palms were blue with bruises from clapping so hard, and my legs were covered in scratches from the bushes, but I had no marks from the bear. Its claws had brushed my head, and its teeth had gripped my leg, but my skin had not been broken. If the bear's claws had been any closer to my head or if its teeth had bitten into my thigh, I could have been seriously hurt and would not have been able to run away.

I know Heavenly Father heard my prayers that day, and I know I heard the voice of the Holy Ghost telling me to run. Heavenly Father blessed me with a miracle. ●