

Sidney the Dancing Caterpillar

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Chapter One

The Bug

Jamie's heart pounded hard against his ribs. His palms were sweaty and his knuckles were white as he held tightly to the bike's handlebars.

"What's the matter? You chicken?" Billy taunted.

"No!" Jamie protested weakly.

"You are so chicken!" Billy repeated with more conviction. "Ain't he chicken, Josh?"

"Chicken," Josh confirmed.

"I am not!" Jamie cried.

"We don't let just anyone hang out with us. We don't allow any chickens." Billy stated.

"I'm not a chicken!" Jamie countered.

"If you want to hang out with us, you do what I say," Billy demanded. "Now, are you in or are you out?"

Jamie hesitated—not sure what to do. He had just moved into the neighborhood and hadn't made any friends. He wouldn't admit it, but the very thought of a long, boring summer by himself was more than he could stand.

"I'm in," Jamie blurted without thinking.

"Let's do it!" Billy yelled "And remember—no brakes!"

Billy was the first to go over. "Bonzai!" Billy yelled throwing both his arms in the air above his head.

"Yahoo!" Josh screamed and followed Billy's lead.

Jamie paused for a split second. Nervously, he looked over the bike's handlebars. The hill seemed much higher than it had before. Jamie knew that going down the steep hill at such a fast rate of speed was dangerous. He could be badly hurt—or worse!



Not wanting to be called a chicken, Jamie raced after the two boys. Everything around him was a blur as he sped straight down. Jamie was scared, but he was strangely excited too. He had never done anything so daring before!

Jamie hurtled over the hill at breakneck speed. He knew that he was going way too fast, but he dared not use his brakes. He was more afraid of what Billy and Josh would think than he was of wrecking his bike!

Just as Jamie reached the bottom of the hill, his bike's front tire hit a small rock. The next thing he knew, he was flying headfirst over the handlebars and through the air! With a thud, Jamie landed in the middle of a large rosebush. His bike continued for several feet before coming to a rest in a flower garden next to a small, neat house.

Dazed, Jamie tried to focus his eyes. Out of the corner of his right eye, Jamie saw something—something very strange!

Jamie spied a fat, funny-looking bug beside him in the rosebush. Curious, he turned his head for a closer look.

The strange-looking insect sat on the thorny branch of the rosebush. Jamie leaned

over, his face very close, and peered intently at the bug. The weird bug turned its plump head and leaned toward Jamie. The bug looked like it was mimicking the boy! Its shiny black eyes seemed to twinkle as they looked directly at him. Jamie could swear that the weird bug was staring right back at him!

Not believing what he was seeing, Jamie rubbed his eyes with his fists. “It can’t be! Bugs

don’t do stuff like that,” Jamie said to himself. “I must be seeing things.” Jamie blinked hard and closed his eyes. “On the count of three, the bug’ll disappear.” Jamie said aloud—hoping that would do the trick.

Slowly, he counted,
“One...Two...Three...”

Next Time... **A Thorny Situation**