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THE MAD COW SCIENCE CLUB

“Who has something to share?” asked Jenny, leader of the garage science club.

“I have a big colorful leaf,” said Tom. He held up his red, yellow, and orange leaf.

Crunch!

“Hey! Why’d you do that?” Tom yelled as Steve crumpled the leaf with his hand.

“Who cares about a dumb ol’ leaf?” asked Steve. “We need something cool to study. I want to use the new microscope.”

Jenny nodded. She looked at the sleek black microscope that their mother had bought her at a garage sale. It looked sad sitting next to two shelves filled with leaves and rocks.

“We’d find great science stuff in the woods,” said Steve.

“Th-th woods?” asked Tina. “But Tom and I aren’t allowed to go there. It’s too far.”

“Not if we ride our bikes,” said Steve. “We can be back before anyone notices.”

Tom and Jenny looked at each other. Neither of them was supposed to go in the woods – not without an adult.

“Aw, come on, you guys,” said Steve. “Do you really want to keep studying the same rocks and leaves over and over? Or do you want to find some real science stuff?”

“I could use some new soil samples,” said Jenny.

“And I need some new bugs to study,” said Tom.

“Let’s go then,” said Steve. “Come on.”

Jenny shrugged. Tom and Tina nodded. The four kids set off down the road on their bikes.

As they reached the edge of the woods, they heard rumbles of thunder in the distance.

“I don’t like this,” said Jenny.

“Scaredey- cat!” cried Steve. “Come on!” He rode his bike onto the narrow path into the woods.

Jenny clutched her handlebars and followed.

Steve stopped suddenly as the woods opened up into a large field of brown grass. The others parked their bikes and pulled their plastic “sample” bags and tweezers out of their pockets.

Tina picked a few yellow flowers and put them in her bag.

“Ah-ha!” Tom picked up a worm and placed it in his bag.

Jenny scooped up some soil. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Steve push off on his bike.

“Hey! Where are you going?”

“To the woods on the other side of the field,” shouted Steve.

“Wait! There’s a storm coming!” Jenny shouted, but Steve had already pedaled down the trail. She brushed a raindrop off her nose and looked up at the dark sky.

“Hey!” Jenny yelled to Tom and Tina. “I have to get Steve. Then we’ll leave, before we get soaked.”

Tom waved as he pounced on another bug.

Sighing, Jenny jumped on her bike and pedaled quickly into the woods. The trail was muddy from the falling rain. Her wheel spun out and she flew off the bike.

Whump!

Jenny landed hard on the ground. Her sample bag broke open.

“Rats! Steve! Where are you?”

Crack! Boom!

A bolt of lightning lit the sky. The trees shook as the ground trembled.

“Steve!”

Jenny bent over to check her bike.

“Boo!” Steve jumped out from behind a big tree.

“Hmph! We don’t have time for jokes,” she climbed on her bike. “Let’s get home before it pours.”

“Are you scared of a little lightning?” Steve taunted.

Jenny glared at him and pedaled up the hill towards the open field. Steve followed closely behind her, laughing.

When they entered the clearing, they could see Tom and Tina huddled next to their bikes.

Cr- ash! Boom!

A bolt of lightning cracked right over their heads.

Startled, Steve fell off his bike.

“AHHHH!” He shouted.

“What?” cried Jenny.

Steve was lying face-to-face with the skull of a cow. Its hollow eyeholes looked dark and menacing in the storm.

“Cool!” said Jenny.

“Don’t touch it!” yelled Steve. “What if that thing died of mad cow disease?

You could catch it!”

“I don’t think...”

But Steve wasn’t listening. He jumped to his feet, picked up his bike, and raced up the trail.

“He finally discovers “real” science and he runs off screaming.” Jenny laughed. She carefully picked up the skull and put it in her extra sample bag. Then she raced to meet the others.

A short time later, wet, but happy they met in the garage.

“Look at our great science discovery,” said Jenny. She held up the cow skull.

“Ahh! You brought that thing?” cried Steve.

“Sure, it’s the best piece of real science we have,” Jenny smiled. “And in your honor, I say we re-name our science club- the Mad Cow Science Club!”

Tom and Tina clapped. Steve crossed his arms and grunted.