



Mr Milk Bottle



1 Jack owns a motorbike and he thinks that makes him the coolest dude around. What's worse, the girls really like Jack because he's handsome and funny. Sarah especially likes him, which really annoys me, as she's been my friend since we were in preschool. Unfortunately, I don't have the same effect

on her that Jack does. I've got a motorbike too, but I use it to do chores around my farm after school. Plus, I have a bit more than the average amount of puppy fat, and really milky-white skin. Jack likes to yell out stupid things to me. He often calls me "Mr Milk Bottle".

2 As you can imagine, there are times when I really feel like belting Jack. I could do it easily too. I'm bigger and stronger than him, but my family has taught me that violence doesn't solve anything. Jack thinks that I'm a wimp because of this, but I reckon I'm pretty tough. You have to be tough to live on a farm. I have to do a lot of the adult work on the farm, because we can't afford to hire help. Compared to that, the name-calling is nothing to worry about.

3 Last week, a teacher put up a notice from the local Motocross Club. The club was holding a motocross race for children under the age of thirteen. Jack sprouted off to everyone that he was going to win it. Sarah asked me if I was going to enter. I wanted to, but I had a lot of work to do on the farm. Sarah suggested I ask for the day off. That night I gave it a crack and, you know what? My sister actually said she'd take over some of my chores! It felt like Christmas for me — I'd never competed in any form of sport before. This was going to be fun.

4 The race was that Saturday. I almost didn't get through the inspection because my bike looked so dodgy. My bike isn't the prettiest toy in the shed. It used to be painted bright silver, but it's so old that it has turned a mucky grey. Also, my cousin had lent me some of his old leathers to ride in, but he's about double my size, so I looked like a squishy milk bottle covered in a floppy black sack. Maybe they took pity on me or something, because they eventually let me through.

5 When I reached the marshalling area I saw Jack with his great bike, dressed in his fancy leathers. He took one look at me, my bike and

my black sack. "What are you supposed to be, eh, bowl head? A garbage bag?" he joked. All the other racers laughed.

I ignored them. The race was about to start. We all lined up our bikes and tightened our helmets. "Go!" yelled the starter, dropping his flag. My bike has a lot of grunt, so I scorched down the track, taking the lead. Every now and then I caught a glimpse of Jack, who was right on my heels.

6 At the next corner we were neck and neck. Jack had positioned himself on the inside of the bend. As we were about to pull out of the corner, Jack's boot flicked over and smacked the side of my bike. I went into a death wobble, and flew off the road. Luckily there was a wall of tyres to cushion my fall, so I wasn't hurt too badly. All the other bikes whizzed past me as I got off the ground.

7 Boy, my heart was thumping harder than you'd believe. I'd had enough of Jack this time. I popped back on my bike and gunned the engine. I reckon I was sweating adrenalin by now. The other racers were a blur as I zoomed past them. Only Jack appeared clearly, dead in front. How I would have loved to kick him off his bike, send him flying off into the bushes. But no matter what he deserved, I just couldn't bring myself to do it.

8 Suddenly, Jack's bike whined as he lost control and went flying over the handlebars. He shot straight over an embankment, followed by his shiny bike. I was going to drive straight past when I noticed that none of the safety marshals had seen Jack. The finish line was so close, but I had more important things to

do. I sped over to where Jack had fallen.

- 9 I could see tears running down his face and his arm was at this really weird angle. I helped him take his helmet off and sat him up against the embankment. Making sure that he was okay, I jumped back on my bike and went for help. Jack's dad and some other folk came straight over with a stretcher. They rushed Jack off to hospital.
- 10 By the time this was all over, the race had been won. At the presentation I was given a "safety award" for stopping to help Jack. It would've been nice to win the race, but everyone still cheered for me. Without a doubt, there's no greater feeling in the world.

11 I saw Jack a week later, his arm done up in a cast. He thanked me for saving him and asked if I had told anyone about his cheating. When I said no, Jack smiled and told me that he wanted to be my friend. I thought about it, then shook my head. I didn't want to be his friend — he was only asking me because he was afraid I'd tell on him. Instead, I just told him to mind his manners and treat other people with respect in the future. He agreed.

12 No one thinks about Jack as a good motorbike rider anymore. He's even stopped wearing his fancy leathers to mufti days. I still ride about, just for fun, every Sunday afternoon. Sarah's asked if she can race me next week. That will be great.



Questions

- 1 Why is the narrator called "Mr Milk Bottle"?
- He owns a motorbike.
 - He has milk-white skin.
 - He lives on a farm.
- 2 Why couldn't the narrator enter the Motocross race?
- He had to work on the farm.
 - He didn't need to stand up to Jack.
 - He had never been in a race before.
- 3 What colour did the narrator's motorbike used to be painted?
- black
 - silver
 - grey
- 4 What did the narrator win?
- first place
 - an encouragement award
 - a safety award
- 5 When was the narrator "sweating adrenalin"?
- at the start of the race
 - when he got back on his motorbike
 - when he saw Jack crash
- 6 When does the narrator show he cares somewhat about what people think of him?
- in sections 3 and 6
 - in sections 4 and 9
 - in sections 2 and 10

Vocabulary

Match the words from the text to the clues. The brackets show the text sections ().

ignored embankment
glimpse chores respect

- 7 Routine tasks usually done around the house (1)
8 Paid no attention to someone (5)
9 See something for a very short time (5)
10 A man-made wall or mound (8)
11 To admire and value someone (11)

Grammar

You'll is the contraction of *you will*. Join the words below to form contractions. Write the word.

- 12 she would 13 what is
14 he is 15 I have

Back To The Text...

- 16 When the narrator says he was "sweating adrenalin" he means
- he was really hot.
 - he was really energized.
- 17 The text implies that Jack had broken
- a leg.
 - an arm.
- 18 Prediction: What is likely to happen in the future?

- The narrator and Jack will become better friends.
- The narrator will spend more time with Sarah.

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19
 - The narrator asked his sister for a favour.
 - The narrator borrowed some leathers.
- 20
 - The starter dropped the flag.
 - Jack called him a bowl head.
- 21
 - Jack shot over the embankment.
 - Jack kicked the narrator's bike.

Think About This

- 22 The word *embankment* in section 8 could be replaced with
- rut.
 - fence.
 - mound.
 - jump.
- 23 Which of the following descriptions could be applied to Jack?
- generous
 - thoughtful
 - considerate
 - self-centred

Challenge Option

Draw a scene from the Motocross Race

