

*We know, we know*, thought Matt. *Let's just get on with it.*

“... and there are staff posted at various points along the route, should anyone require assistance. Any questions?”

Someone shouted, “Supercycle FS-MTB, here I come!”

Matt eyed the boy and gripped his handlebar as if to say, *Forget it, turkey. I'm the one who's going to win that bike.* He hoped no one noticed him grab for the seat that decided, just then, to try to come unattached.

“We wish you all the best in your race,” the announcer said. “Please move now to your starting positions.”

The racers lined up on the road at the end of the school driveway. An air of determined competition surrounded them. Because of the deaf girl in the race, officials had agreed to drop a flag as a starting signal, in addition to firing a gunshot.

Matt leaned over his handlebar, ready for the

Go. Sweat trickled down the side of his face. He reached up to wipe it away.

*Bang!*

They were off. Lennox, Amanda, and the kid with the big mouth took early leads. Matt thrust forward and pedalled hard along Sandhurst. He gained quickly on the flashing fenders ahead of him. Then all his practice taking corners at high speeds paid off.

He leaned into the turn onto Booth, cutting close to the big-mouth as he passed him. Coming out of the turn, Matt surged past Lennox, too. Amanda was still ahead, but he'd lose her on the straightaway — no sweat.

Matt stood up to gain an added burst of speed. He headed off Amanda just before taking the bump from the street onto the path into the ravine.

*Thud. Clank!*

Matt turned. On the ground lay his battered bike seat. So much for the new screw!

What seemed an army of bicycles barrelled toward him. And Amanda hurtled past.