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Dirt Bike Adventure

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CHAPTER 1

Friends

Dave stopped his Harley and took off his goggles. There was dirt all over his jacket. He looked at his watch. It was two o'clock. Joe and Willie would be here soon. Dave looked down at his bike. He had saved his money for over a year for this bike. It wasn't new but it was all his. His folks hadn't wanted him to buy a motorcycle, but he had wanted one so much. Finally they had agreed to let him have one. And he had proved he could be careful. He'd gotten only one ticket in ten months of riding. He had been going forty in a twenty-five mile zone. That had meant giving up the bike for a whole month. After Dave went to driver's school, the judge gave him back his license. No more speeding on the city streets, Dave decided. There were too many cops around the schools and drive-ins.

The roar of motorcycle engines made him look

up. Here came Joe and Willie. Joe was first to get there. He spun his bike around in a 180° as he stopped. Willie was right behind him. They were both yelling at each other.

"Ha! Beat you that time," yelled Joe.

"You were just lucky," shouted Willie. "If I hadn't spun out, you and that Yamaha would have lost."

"Oh, yeah?" said Joe. "Your bike couldn't beat a turtle!"

"Any time you're ready I'll take you on," shouted Willie. "Any time, any place."

"Hold it, hold it!" said Dave. "You two guys are always fighting. Don't you ever stop?"

"He thinks he's such a hot shot," said Joe loudly. "Ever since he got that Kawasaki all he wants to do is race."

"Yeah, and I can beat both of you," answered Willie. "Let the good times roll!"

"OK! OK, you two, do you want to fight or ride? Come on," said Dave, "let's climb some hills."

Joe and Willie slammed their bikes into gear. Then they sped up the hill behind Dave. After an hour they came to a stop. They had dirt and mud all over themselves.

"You know," Dave said, "we should really give

these bikes a workout."

"What kind of workout?" Joe asked.

"Yeah, what kind?" added Willie. "Do you want to race or something?"

"Race, race, race! Is that all you ever think of?" Joe yelled.

"No, I think about girls, too," answered Willie. "Bikes and girls."

"I sure hope you do better with the girls than you do with your bike," said Joe.

"Hey, man, what's wrong with my bike?" Willie yelled. He got off the Kawasaki and started towards Joe.

"Stop!" Dave shouted. "You guys want to prove who has the best bike? Let's really test them then."

"How?" asked Willie and Joe at the same time.

"Well," said Dave, "I thought we should try to cross Death Valley on our cycles. That would really prove who has the best bike."

Both boys were quiet for a short time. It was Joe who spoke first. "Death Valley? You must be crazy. It gets over 120 degrees out there in the day."

"Yeah, and colder than anything at night." added Willie.

"What's the matter?" asked Dave. "You guys



He got of his Kawasaki and started toward Joe.

afraid your bikes can't make it? Are you guys chicken?"

"I know my cycle could make it," said Joe.

'Hah," said Willie. "I bet you don't get halfway across!"

Willie turned to Dave. "When do we leave, buddy?"

"How about Tuesday?" asked Dave. "That will

give us two days to prepare."

"Fine with me," said Joe. "I'll tell my old man tonight."

"OK by me," said Willie. "My mom will fuss some but she'll let me go."

"Fine!" Dave said. "Then it is agreed that we'll go. Now we have to decide what to take with us."

"No problem!" Joe answered. "We each need a sleeping bag and some clothes."

"Don't forget some things to cook with," said Willie. "I sure want plenty to eat. I think we better take some tools with us, too."

"Right!" Dave replied. "And don't forget to bring a first-aid kit. We might need one."

"A map, don't forget a map!" Willie added. "I sure don't want to get lost out there in the desert. Man, that would be a real bummer!"

"Don't worry about a map," said Dave. "I'll take care of planning the route. I'll make sure we don't get lost."

"Hey!" Joe said. "We'd better bring canteens. It gets real hot out there. We'll need water with us all the time."

"Right," Dave agreed. "That's a good idea. OK, I think we've talked about everything. Just make sure you each bring your stuff. Pack your bikes so they are balanced. It makes it easier to ride." "Oh,

boy! I can hardly wait to get going," said Joe.

"Me, too!" Willie added.

"Good!" said Dave. "We'll all meet at Gil's gas station Tuesday morning at seven."

They all agreed on the time and the place to meet. Each rider would talk to his parents that night. They shoved their bikes into gear and started down the hill.

"Oh, boy, let the good times roll!" yelled Willie. They roared off through the dirt.

CHAPTER 2

The Trip

Dave arrived early at Gil's gas station. The morning was cool. He had his leathers zipped up to his neck. This kept the chill off when he rode. He would change his clothes when it got hot. He pulled off his helmet and looked at his watch. It was ten minutes to seven. Willie and Joe would be here soon.

Dave thought about his friends. They were all right guys even if they did fight all of the time. They had been friends for the last few years. They made good partners. Each of the three had special talents that helped the group. Sometimes Dave envied Joe and Willie. Joe lived with his dad and usually was on his own most of the time. His folks had been divorced for several years.

Willie's dad had been killed in an accident. He lived with his mother and kid sister.

The three friends spent time at each other's

houses. They all had little family problems. Boy, thought Dave, I wish I had only one parent to ask about going on this trip. Willie and Joe had to talk to only one parent each. On the other hand, Dave thought, having two parents can be nice, too. Whenever he had a problem, there was usually someone to talk to. His father had liked the idea of the Death Valley trip. His mom had been against it. But Dave's dad had talked her into letting Dave go. His dad had even called Willie's mom to try to help Willie go on the trip. Finally it was Dave's mom who helped plan the route. She also made up a shopping list for the boys.

It might be OK to have just one parent Dave thought. But having two is all right, too.

Just then Willie drove up on his two-wheeler. It was two minutes to seven. "Where's the Yamaha Kid?" he yelled over the roar of his engine.

"He'll be here soon," answered Dave. "You got everything you need?"

"Sure do," said Willie. "Food, sleeping bag, first-aid kit, and a change of clothes."

"Good," said Dave. "I have the route all mapped out. We'll leave as soon as Joe shows up."

Both boys looked up as they heard the sound

of Joe's bike. He hung a right off Fourth Street. Then he skidded to a stop in front of them.

"You guys ready?" asked Joe.

"Ready, willing, and able," answered Willie. "Let's go!"

Dave and Willie pulled on their helmets. Then they stepped on their foot shifts. The engines roared as they started to move. The three young riders pulled out and headed for the desert.

It was six o'clock when they stopped for the night. The first day had been fun but not too much happened. They had stopped for lunch and gas at a small drive-in near the desert. The cycles were in good running order. They had stopped again at three to gas up and check their map.

Each rider carried an extra gallon of gas strapped to his bike. According to the map, they might need extra gas at times. They all agreed that it was better to be safe than sorry.

All three riders were happy to stop for the night. Biking could be fun, but it was hard work, too. Their muscles ached after sitting all day on their cycles. It felt good to stretch out again. They cooked up a pot of franks and beans, boiled some coffee, and had dinner. After dinner they rolled out their sleeping bags and went to bed.

CHAPTER 3

Breakdown

"Hey! You guys going to sleep all day?" shouted Willie.

Dave and Joe opened their eyes. Willie was standing by a small fire with a cup in his hand. The sun was just coming up over the mountains.

"Oh, my aching back," groaned Dave. "I hurt all over."

"Me, too," said Joe, rubbing his eyes.

"Come on, you two," shouted Willie. "Coffee's hot and I brought some fruit to eat."

The three friends ate their breakfast and talked about the day's ride. Then they put out the fire and rolled up their sleeping bags. Each rider packed his bike and got ready to go. Then they took off across the desert. Dust, dirt, and rocks flew up behind them.

They had been on the trail for about three hours. Suddenly Joe's bike slid to a stop. Dave

and Willie saw Joe stop. They turned and went back.

"Hey, what's wrong?" asked Willie.

"Oh, it's that darned chain," said Joe. "It just broke on me."

"No sweat," said Willie. "We'll have it fixed in no time."

Joe, Dave, and Willie went right to work on the chain. In about thirty minutes Joe's bike was ready to go again.

"Hey," said Dave, "let's climb that hill over there to check out your chain."

"Sure, let's go," answered Joe.

They all took off. Willie raced to the front. Joe and Dave went right behind him. Dust and sand were flying as they reached the top of the hill. Willie got there first. Dave was second and Joe trailed behind.

"Hi, slowpoke," Dave said to Joe. "How's the bike?"

"Not too good," said Joe. "She still slips a little."

"Can't trust those old bikes," said Willie with a grin. "You should have a good bike like mine."

"It'll be OK once I get it fixed," said Joe. "Don't worry about me."

"I don't know," Dave said. "Maybe we should call this trip off. If your bike is in trouble, maybe

we should head back."

"No way, man!" Joe growled. "I came on this trip to have fun. I'm not going to head back now. My bike will be just fine. I'll fix the chain better."

"Are you sure?" Willie asked. "Maybe Dave's right. Maybe we should head back home. I sure don't want to have to carry you on my bike."

"I said it will be fine," Joe said. "Come on, let's do some riding. I'll keep up with you two."

The three riders drove their cycles around the area for about an hour. They tried small hill climbs and made some jumps. Joe put his bike through a test. He wanted to show Dave and Willie that his motorcycle was OK. Dave and Willie watched Joe ride. They knew he wouldn't quit. They knew that Joe would do his best not to spoil the trip.

Joe stopped his bike a few times and worked on the chain. After a few changes his cycle was working fine again. He made one last run up a small hill. His bike climbed the hill with ease. He waved to Willie and Dave. They waved back and went up the hill after him.

"How's it going now?" asked Willie.

"Just fine," answered Joe. "The chain is tight. It doesn't slip anymore. We don't have to give up on the trip."



"Hey, what's down there."

Just then Dave looked over the other side of the hill. "Hey, what's that down there?" he said.

"Where?" asked Willie.

"Over there," said Dave, "to the east."

"I don't know," said Joe. "It looks like a camper van up on a jack."

"Let's take a look," said Willie. "Maybe we can help."

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