

Bud's Wild Ride

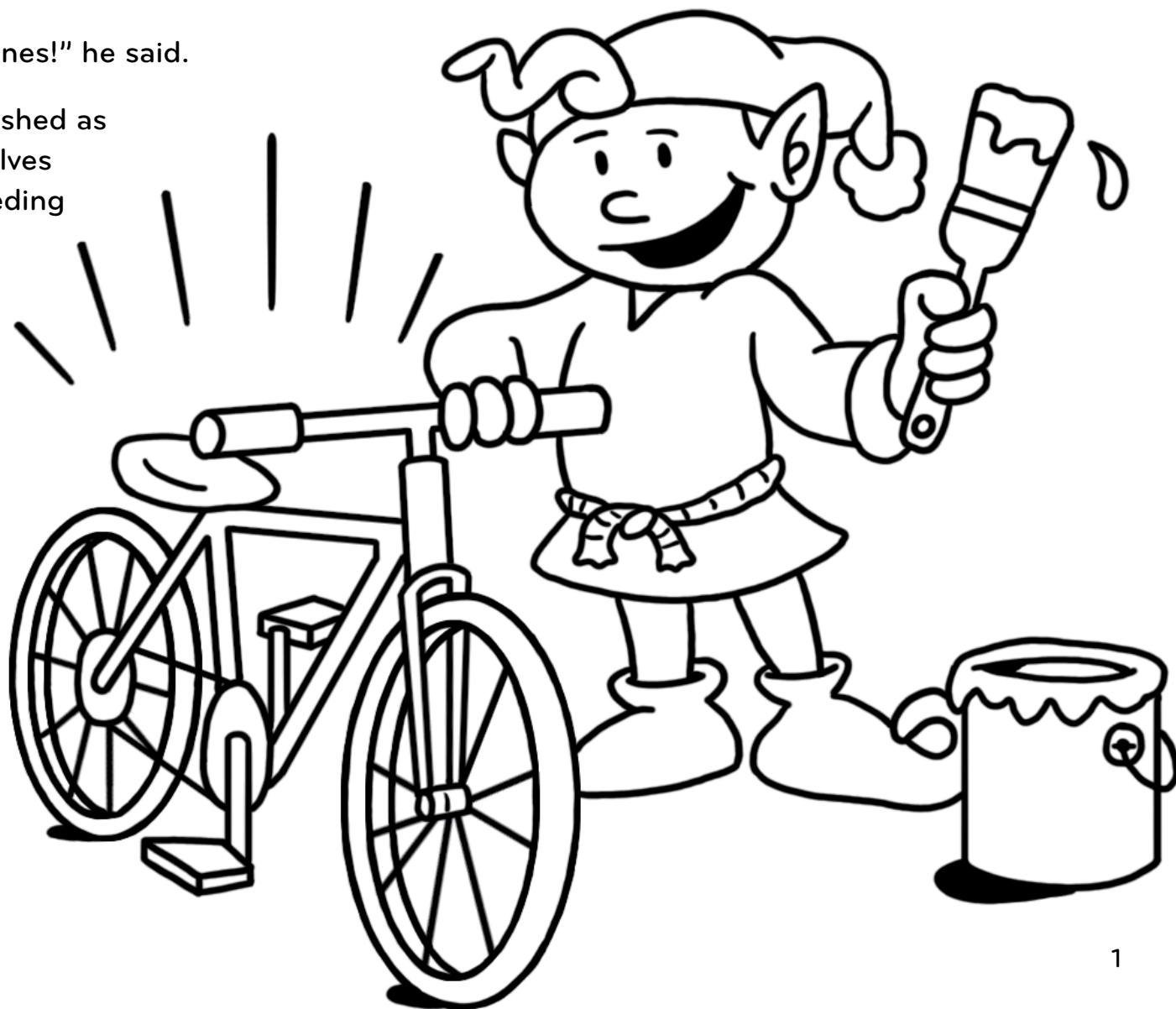


Bud had just finished putting the last coat of shiny red paint on a bicycle he built for Santa's Workshop.

"Wow! That one really shines!" he said.

But his smile quickly vanished as he saw the bike-testing elves through the window, speeding up and down the heated bike paths.

"I sure wish I could test bikes, too," he said to Burt.

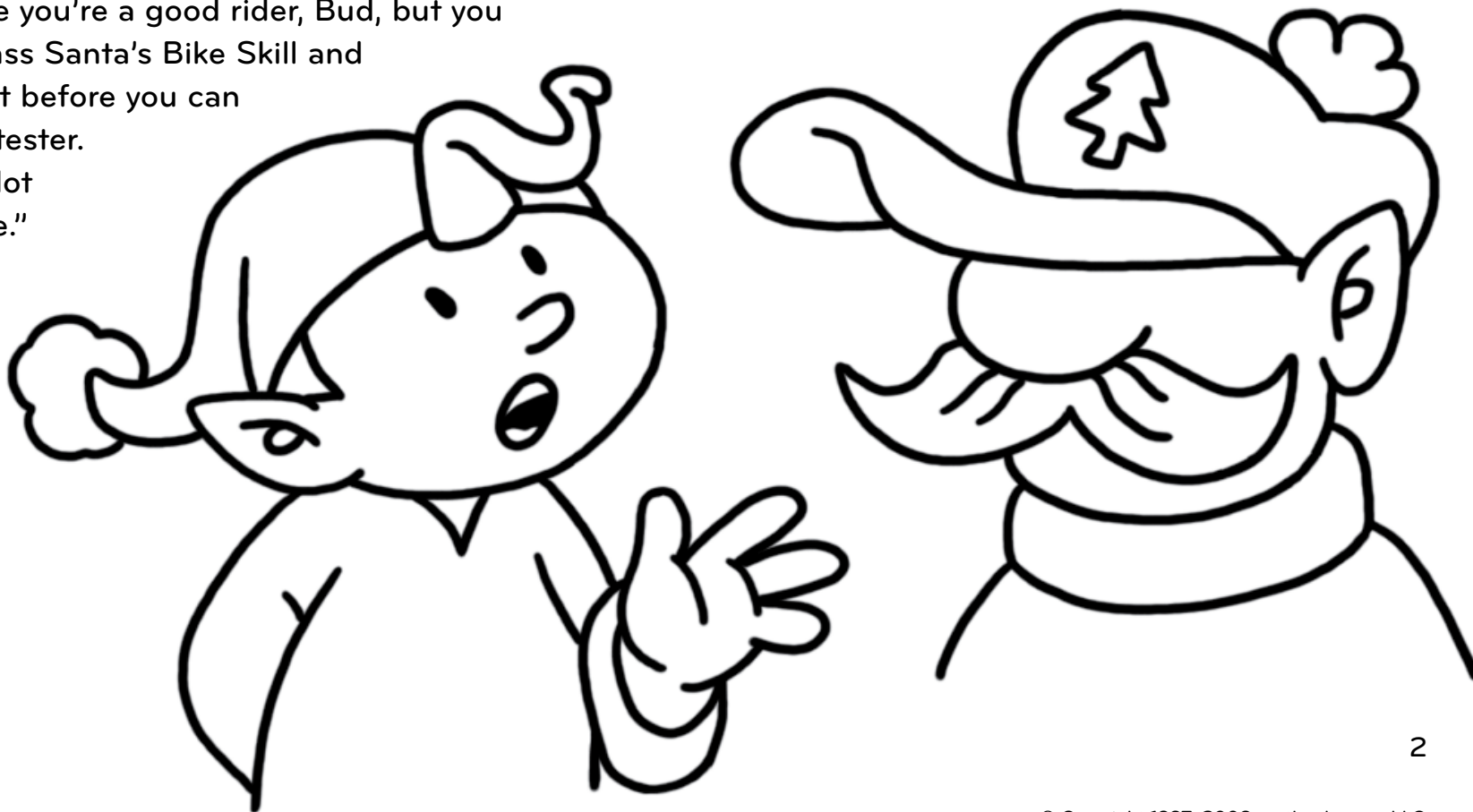


"Testing the bikes for all the children is an important job," Burt explained, "just like building and painting them is important. But you have to be an excellent rider to test them."

"I AM a good bike rider," Bud insisted. "Why can't I be a bike tester? How hard could it be, anyway?"

Burt smiled, because he knew that once Bud set his mind on something, he was sure to try it.

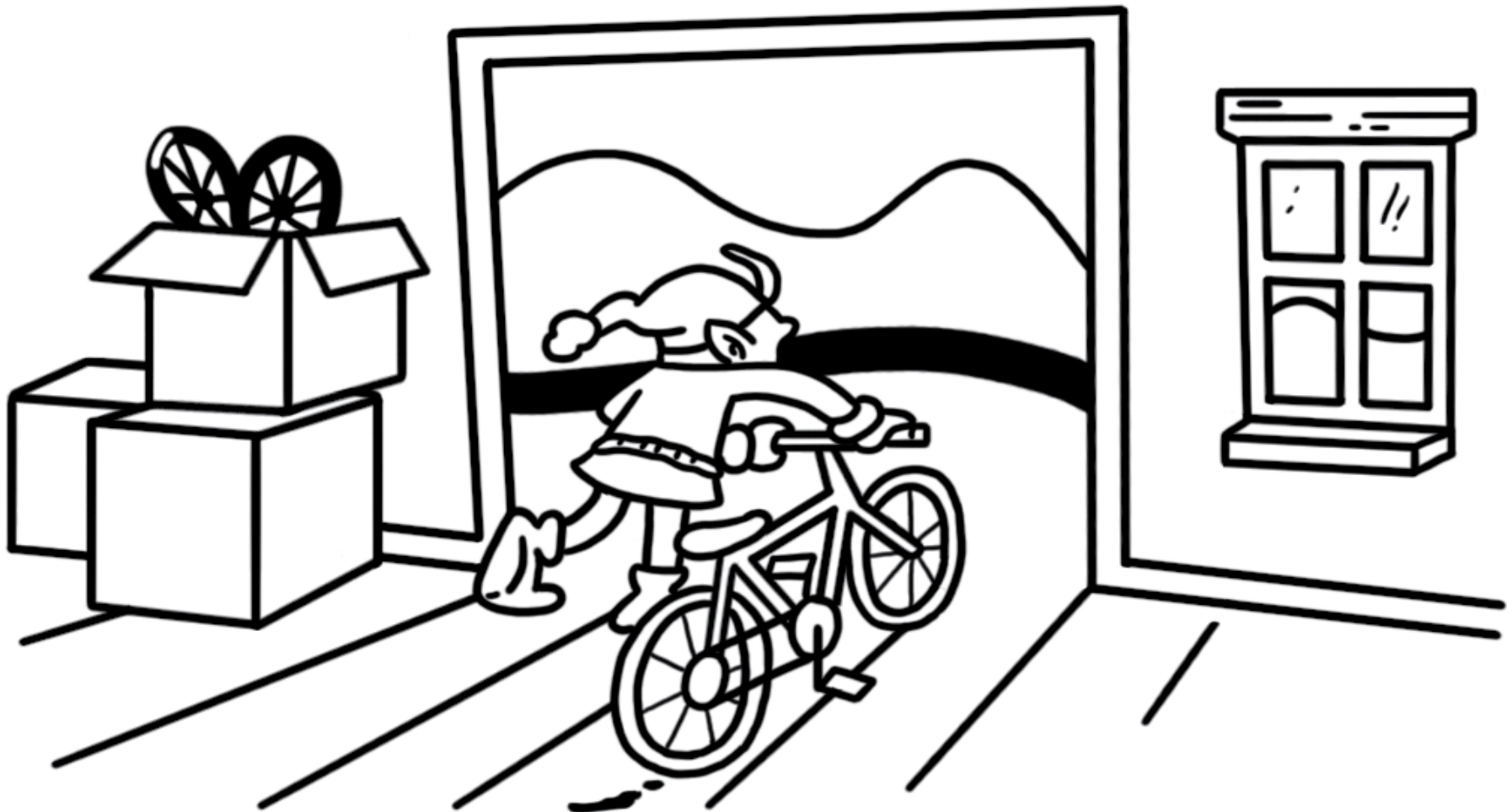
"Of course you're a good rider, Bud, but you have to pass Santa's Bike Skill and Safety Test before you can be a bike tester. It takes a lot of practice."



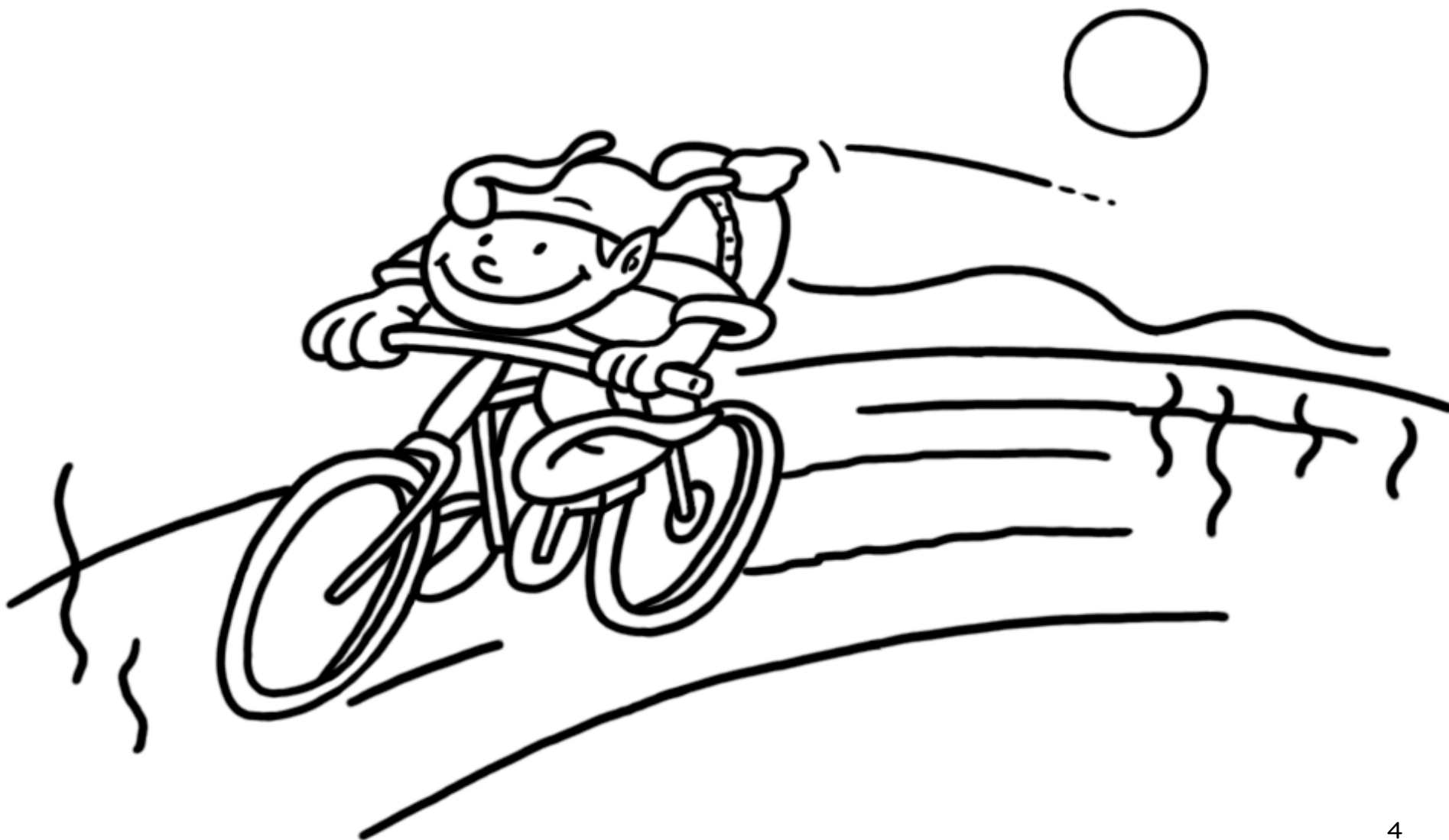


After the elves finished working that afternoon, they all went home.

But Bud stayed behind. He walked the new red bike out the door, over to the heated bike testing path, hopped on the bike, and took off!



“Wheee! This is great!” Bud thought to himself. “And it’s not so hard. Burt worries too much! I can do this.”



“Whoa! OH NO! Maybe it’s harder than it looks!” yelled Bud as he skidded into a tree, flew over the handlebars, and landed in a big pile of snow...right at Burt’s feet!



"Well, Bud, maybe now you'll listen to me," Burt said. He helped Bud to his feet and brushed the snow from his clothes.

"I know, Burt," said Bud, just a little embarrassed. "I don't think I'm ready to be a bike tester yet. Maybe I can be next year if I practice a lot."

"I'm sure you can, Bud," said Burt. "You can be anything you want to be, as long as you are willing to work hard at it. But for now, I need you to do the best you can, building toys for the children!"

THE END!

