

Nora’s Blue Bicycle

Nora had a blue bicycle with a silver bell that jingled. She had inherited it from her cousin, and although it had a small scratch on the fender, she thought it was the most beautiful bicycle in the world.

There was only one problem: she still didn’t know how to ride without the training wheels.

In the park, her friends pedaled along the main path. They circled, stopped at the fountain, and waved. Nora watched them from the small path.

“When are you going to take the training wheels off?” they asked her.

“Soon,” she replied.

But “soon” never came.

One Saturday, her grandfather brought a wrench.

“We can take them off today, if you want.”

Nora swallowed hard.

“What if I fall?”

“Maybe you’ll fall sometime. You’ll wear a helmet, we’ll start slowly, and I’ll be right there with you.”

They went to a flat square. Grandpa held the bicycle by the seat.

“Look ahead and pedal.”

Nora pedaled twice and put her feet on the ground.

“I can’t.”

“Not yet,” Grandpa said. “That word is important.”

They tried again. Three pedal strokes. Then four. On the fifth attempt, the bicycle tipped over, and Nora fell onto a knee pad.

She wasn’t hurt, but her eyes filled with tears.

“I’m giving it up.”

Grandpa sat down beside her.

“When I was learning, I fell into a bush.”

Nora pictured him with his legs in the air and laughed.

“Really?”

“Really.” The bush wasn’t too happy about it either.

They decided to rest. While they drank water, Nora watched the pigeons. To walk, they moved one leg at a time. None of them tried to take ten steps at once.

“Can we practice in small steps?” she asked.

First, she learned to push off with her feet and maintain her balance. Then she practiced how to brake. Finally, she put her feet back on the pedals.

One, two, three, four…

Grandpa was still holding the seat.

“Don’t let go!” she shouted.

“I’m here.”

One, two, three, four, five…

The wind tickled her cheeks. The bicycle wasn’t shaking as much anymore.

“I’m doing it!”

Nora looked behind her. Grandpa was five meters farther away, with his arms outstretched.

“You let go of me!”

As she turned her head, the handlebars twisted, and the bicycle ended up on the grass.

For a second, Nora didn’t know whether to be angry or laugh. Finally, she laughed so loudly that her grandfather started laughing too.

“I went all by myself!” she exclaimed.

“And now you know something else,” he said.

“What?”

“That falling doesn’t erase what you’ve learned.”

The next day they went back to the park. Nora practiced turning. On Monday, she learned to start without help. On Tuesday, she pedaled to the fountain. On Wednesday, she did a complete lap.

On Thursday, a little girl looked at her bicycle without training wheels with a worried expression.

“I can’t,” she said.

Nora stopped beside her.

“Not yet,” she told her. “But you can start with one pedal stroke.”

The girl tried it. Nora walked beside her, just as her grandfather had done.

As the sun began to set, Nora rode home on her blue bicycle. The bicycle bell rang, and the scratch on the fender looked like a medal.

She hadn’t learned because one day she’d stopped being afraid. She’d learned because each day she’d done something small that the day before she hadn’t yet learned to do.