立在门口的旧车

那辆二手车是爸爸从废品站淘回来的，二百块钱，链条换了新的，铃铛是哑的。车把上缠着一圈旧布条，是爸爸的手艺，缠得紧，边角收得服帖。

爸爸每天晚上收工回来，带我去巷子里练。他扶着后座，我蹬。巷子不长，从井台到拐角，也就五十步。他让我来回蹬，蹬到他喊停。

有一回拐弯急了，连人带车摔在井台边上，手掌蹭破一大片，血珠渗出来。同班的一个男生蹲在井台边看，笑了一声，说摔成这样还学。

那天回家，我把车推进杂物间，没再碰它。一连几天，爸爸收工回来问，走，练去？我说手疼。他说手疼就练脚，我说今天有作业。

爸爸没发火，也没提那辆车。他只是把车从杂物间推出来，支在自家门口，每天我上学放学，它都在那儿立着，铃铛哑着，布条旧着。

周末早上，家里没人。爸爸上夜班还没回，妈妈买菜去了。我站在门口看了那辆车一会儿，把它支起来，跨上去。

没人扶。我先在院子里绕圈，一圈，两圈，脚点着地。后来脚离了地，车晃了两下，稳住了。我出了门，进巷子，从井台蹬到拐角。

拐弯那一下我提前捏了闸，身子压过去，车轮擦着墙根过去了。没摔。我又蹬回来，再蹬过去，铃铛不响，我心里响。

傍晚爸爸下夜班回来，我在巷口等他。我说，爸，我会骑了。他站在原地看了我两秒，问，摔没摔。我说没摔。他点点头，说走，回家吃饭。

吃晚饭的时候，他跟妈妈说，车支在门口我就知道早晚的事。妈妈说你就不怕他真不学了。爸爸说，逼没有用，车在他眼皮底下立着，他自己会过去。

后来我骑那辆二手车上了几年学，铃铛一直是哑的，超车的时候我就喊一声让。再后来换了新车，那辆旧车立在杂物间，布条还是那圈布条。

手掌上那块蹭破的地方早就不见了，可每次路过井台，我都记得那个笑我的男生，更记得车立在门口的那些天——它没说话，比说什么都管用。

The Old Bicycle Standing at the Door

The second-hand bicycle was one my father dug out of a scrap yard, for two hundred yuan. The chain was new, but the bell was mute. The handlebar was wrapped with an old cloth strip, wound tight by the hands of my father himself, its ends tucked in neatly.

Every evening after work my father took me into the lane to practice. He held the

back of the seat while I pedaled. The lane was short, fifty steps from the well to the corner, and he had me ride back and forth until he called stop.

Once I turned too sharply and fell with the bicycle at the edge of the well, my palm scraped wide open, beads of blood seeping out. A boy from my class crouched by the well watching, and laughed, saying: riding like that after a fall like that.

That evening I pushed the bicycle into the storage room and did not touch it again. For days, whenever my father came home from work and asked, come on, practice? I said my hand hurt. He said if the hand hurts, train the legs. I said I had homework today.

My father neither lost his temper nor mentioned the bicycle. He simply wheeled it out of the storage room and propped it up at our front door. Every morning and every afternoon, on my way to and from school, it stood there, bell mute, cloth strip old.

On a weekend morning the house was empty. My father was still on the night shift, and my mother had gone to buy groceries. I stood at the door looking at that bicycle for a while, then propped it upright and swung my leg over.

No one was holding it. First I circled the courtyard, one lap, two laps, my foot tapping the ground. Then my foot left the ground, the bicycle wobbled twice, and steadied. I rode out the gate into the lane, from the well to the corner.

At the turn I squeezed the brake early, leaned my body in, and the wheel skimmed past the base of the wall. No fall. I pedaled back, then out again. The bell made no sound, but something inside me was ringing.

That evening my father came home from the night shift, and I was waiting for him at the mouth of the lane. I said, Dad, I can ride. He stood still and looked at me for two seconds, then asked, did you fall? I said no. He nodded and said, all right, let us go home and eat.

At dinner he told my mother that once the bicycle was propped at the door, he knew it was only a matter of time. My mother asked whether he was not afraid I really would not learn. He said forcing it is useless; with the bicycle standing right under his eyes, he will walk over to it himself.

I rode that second-hand bicycle to school for years afterward. The bell stayed mute, and when I passed someone I just called out to let them know. Later I got a new bicycle, and the old one stood in the storage room, still wrapped with the same strip of cloth.

The scraped patch on my palm disappeared long ago, but every time I pass the well, I remember the boy who laughed at me — and even more, those days the bicycle stood at the door. It never said a word, and it worked better than any words.

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