

8 Billy's bicycle

Most of Billy's friends have bicycles. They all take them to the park on a Saturday morning. Matthew Mitchell has a beautiful red one with twenty four gears, Peter Perkins has a silver racer with drop handle bars and very shiny wheels, and Katie Clarke has a very smart yellow mountain bike with large knobbly tyres. For a long time though Billy didn't have a bike of his own. He would just look at all the other bikes.

"I wish I had a bike," he would whisper to himself as he watched the others having great fun racing round and round the park.

On his way home on Saturday morning Billy passed Mr. Jones's cycle shop. There were always lots of splendid looking bicycles in the window. Billy pressed his nose against the glass and stared at them. He saw a neat little racer in the corner. The price ticket said: £200.

When Billy got home he said to his Mum, "Mum, can I have a bike for my birthday? I've seen a nice one in the shop, its only £200."

Billy's Mum nearly dropped the iron.

"Two hundred pounds Billy. Where do you think I can get that much money from? I can let you have ten pounds for your birthday. If you can buy a bike with that then I don't mind."

Billy took his ten pounds and went back to Mr. Jones's shop. He pushed the door open and the bell rang with a loud 'ding.'

"Hello there, young Billy," said Mr. Jones, "What can I be doing for you then?"

"Err... I want to buy a bike," said Billy.

"Well we've lots of bikes in the shop," said Mr. Jones. "Which one do you like?"

Billy looked around at all the prices, and then he felt the ten pounds in his pocket.

"Have you got any more bikes?" he asked. "I'm not sure that any of these are quite the one for me."

Mr. Jones scratched his head, "Well Billy I might have a few old ones out the back, but they're not very good you know."

Billy followed Mr. Jones out to the back of the shop and there in the yard was a large pile of broken and rusty bicycles. Mr. Jones pulled one out of the pile. It was very old and very black and very dirty and very rusty.

"This one doesn't look much," he said, "but it's a good old machine with a lot of miles in it yet. I could let you have it for, what? Say £10?"

"I'll take it!" said Billy very quickly.

Billy pushed the bike home and immediately set to work trying to learn how to ride it in the garden. His Mum came out to look. She didn't know what to say,

"It's a bit....." she began.

"Its great!" he shouted.

"But its a bit...." began Mum again.

"Its got lots of miles left in it," he shouted as he fell off for the twentieth time. "Mr. Jones said so!"

Mum gave up and went indoors. Billy's sister couldn't stop laughing, but Billy was very proud of his new bike.

The next Saturday he rode it down to the park, but to his surprise, instead of thinking it was splendid, his friends looked at the bike and laughed.

"Where did you get that from Billy?" they shouted. "Your Granny!"

Every time Billy rode his bike near their bikes all his friends would ride away saying:

"Keep away Billy. We don't want to catch rust from you!"

Then two other boys came over. It was Trevor Trippup and Pete Pushem.

"Nice bike Billy," they sneered, "Can we have a go!?"

Billy was about to say "no!" when they pushed him off his bike and rode off on it. They took it right across to the other side of the park. Billy could see them in the distance and somehow he knew that they weren't really admiring his bike at all.

When Billy found his bike again he got very upset. The two boys had pulled one of the pedals off, they had broken the chain, and bent the back wheel, and the brakes didn't work any more. He pushed his bike home with little tears running off the end of his nose. He left the bike in the front garden and went straight out to the garden shed, to be alone for a while. He was so sad that he couldn't eat his tea. He didn't even watch his favourite T V program. He just went straight to bed and cuddled his teddy.

But when Billy had come home with the broken bike someone had been watching him. It was Mr. Green from across the road.

"Look at that poor little lad with that funny old bicycle," he said to himself. "He looks so sad. I wonder what's wrong?"

A while later Mr. Green met Billy's Mum in the shop and they had a little chat.

Later that night, when it was very dark, Mr. Green leaned over the garden wall to have a look at Billy's bike. When he saw what a sorry state it was in he lifted it up very quietly and gently and carried it across the road to his garden shed.

"There's not much wrong with you really," he said. "We'll have you fixed up in no time at all."

The next day when Billy looked out of his bedroom window, he just couldn't believe his eyes. His bike was gone! Not only was it broken and spoiled, but now it had been stolen as well. He went back to bed and said he'd never get up ever again.

Meanwhile though Mr. Green was hard at work. He took the wheels off of the bike, and the pedal that was left and the chain and the handle bars. He cleaned up the frame and painted it a beautiful dark green with red streaks that looked like lightening. He straightened up the wheels and polished them until they shone like silver. He bought a new chain and found a pair of shiny, racing handlebars. He mended the brakes and the pedals. In the end the bike looked wonderful! It looked just like new. No, it looked better than new.

Meanwhile Billy was having a terrible day, nothing would go right for him. Eventually, he gave up again and went to bed early and cuddled his teddy really tightly. But in the middle of the night Mr. Green quietly carried the bike across the road and put it back in the front garden just where it had been before.

Billy woke up early, the sun was shining and the birds were singing. For a moment he felt happy, but then he remembered his bike and felt sad again. He opened his curtains and looked out of his window, just like he always did. For a moment he just couldn't believe his eyes. Then, without thinking and still in his pyjamas, he ran down stairs and out into the garden. He just stood and stared at the bike. He just couldn't believe it! It was his bike alright. He was sure of that. But it was better. It was so much better. It was shiny. It was brilliant!

Billy rushed in and called his Mum.

"Mum! Mum! Mum! It's my bike! Its come back, its come back to life! Its beautiful....!"

"Oh yes of course Billy...." said Mum with a yawn, "Now go back to bed."

But Billy didn't go back to bed. Instead, he pulled on his clothes and rushed down stairs and rode his beautiful shiny bike up and down the road. But little did he know that Mr. Green was watching him from his bedroom window, and it wasn't Billy who had the little tear in his eye this time!

The next Saturday Billy took his bike down to the park. This time no one ran away, but everyone wanted to park their bikes next to Billy's.

"That's a neat bike Billy!" they all said, and Billy was very proud, very proud indeed.

Copyright © John Beauchamp/Kingdomstory.net 2010 All rights reserved.

Please refer to www.kingdomstory.net for copyright restrictions and permissions.