W6A - Lesson 8, Essay 5, Draft 1

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Topic:

**The Last Emperor and His Bicycles**

My name is Pu Yi. I was the last emperor of China. I ascended the throne when I was **3 years old**. I grew up in the Forbidden City. In the early 19**th** century, China was way behind the world. Even though I was the Emperor, I did not get to see many things from other countries. I’d never forget that summer when I first saw a bicycle.

When I got married, people **from** all over China came ~~over~~ to celebrate. I received thousands of precious presents, but none of it made me particularly interested. One day, my cousin came to visit me. He bought something to me as a present, something that I’ve never seen before.

“Your majesty,” He introduced proudly, “May I present to you a bicycle.”

“Bicycle?” I muttered, “What is a bicycle?”

My cousin giggled with excitement.

“This bicycle came from a place far away,” he said. “It came from Europe!”

“Really!” I said, and stared at it with great curiosity.

It’s about one meter high in black, and two circles standing on the ground.

“What’s that for?” I asked.

“Oh, this is called a bicycle,” **he replied.** “These are the wheels. These are the armrests. These are the pedals, and this is the ~~the~~ seat. Westerners ride bicycles to go to different places. Let me show you!”

He leaped on that bicycle, grasped the armrests tightly and zoomed away. The wheels turned so fast. It looked so fascinating. I wanted to give it a try.

“Your majesty!” one of my staff objected. “This is dangerous.”

“Nonsense!” I replied, sitting on the seat, holding the armrests tightly, and slowly **putting** my feet on the **pedals**. Immediately, I lost balance.

“Help!” I cried.

My cousin held the bicycle to prevent me from falling to the ground.

“Just look straight,” **he said encouragingly.** “Easy.”

The next few days, we practiced and practiced. Soon I was able to ride **the** bicycle by myself. I ended up buying **20** bicycles, imported from France, Germany and the US. My empress also learned how to ride a bicycle. We rode together in the Forbidden City.

But there was one more problem. There were too many gates in the Forbidden City. Each gate had a threshold**,** which was the symbol of power. We could not ride through the gates. I wanted to take them off so that we could ride from palace to palace. Of course the empress dowager did not agree.

One day she was sick, so I ordered to take the thresholds off immediately. When the empress dowager found out later, it was too late.

Word Count:

*Captain’s Notes: Zack, good job writing an interesting story. Although you wrote the essay from the point of view of an historical figure (not a fictional character), I'll still allow it because it's well written and interesting to read. I've already corrected a few things in bold. Please correct the highlighted parts. Also, the underlined areas either need to be rewritten or reworded, except for the last paragraph, which is too short and needs to be expanded. Please add some concluding thoughts about the emperor's love for bicycles. In the context of his life, what did the bicycle represent?*