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College Writing R1A

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The Journey

It was a morning of heavy rain, but I was determined to ride. I had planned for a month on riding a bicycle with my friend to Wuzheng, a small town 50 miles away from my home city. We would stay there for a night, heading back next morning. From my home to the town would take an entire day, but I was eager to test my limits.

“You are mad if you want to ride in this weather!” My mom insisted, “You will get hurt!”

“He’s not a kid. He understands how to protect himself. ” My dad, however, was very confident in me.

My mom was still worried, suggesting I should postpone until the weather was better, but I was determined to go. My dad simply told me I should be safe. I threw on a raincoat and with my parents’ “be careful!” echoing behind me, I headed out into the rain.

The noisy city I used to know was gone. The usual crowded street became empty: people would rather stay indoors. The thrumming sound of rain and the grey color of sky were the only two characters in the world.

My friend quit right away when he realized how rainy it was. “Sorry I can’t ride with you today. I don’t want to get hurt.” He apologized to me on the phone.

“OK. I will go alone.”

I was alone, from the beginning to end. Riding on an empty road, I was the only person and soon got lost on the complex byways. The last time I saw a car was two hours before; I barely had a chance to ask for help. Several exits were passed, so I had to double back. The rain was like the fury of Poseidon, pouring down and immersing every living creature in the world. The water didn’t drip from my forehead – rather, it merged as torrent flooding through my face. Never expecting that bad situation, I had only brought a raincoat which was not large enough to cover myself and my backpack. The backpack was like a treasure: I had put several foods into it. Protecting them well was my priority.

Standing in the rain on the highway 18 miles away from home, I was exhausted and almost gave up. The rain and fog obscured the road ahead, so I had to ride more carefully, which consumed more energy. There was no room to retreat because I was already lost on the way several intersections before. I had no choice but to keep going.

My feet were sore and my thighs ached. The pedals became heavier and heavier. Lacking the experience of long distance riding, I couldn’t maintain a balance between rest and ride. I tried to take a rest every hour, but while I was riding, my brain constantly told me I need to stop. Riding in the rain was something I have never tried before. Under the perfect weather condition, my average riding speed is about 6 miles per hour, and for the rainy condition…Huh, I have never thought about it.

“I have to take another rest,” I told myself. Through a byway, I found a furniture factory with the front door opened. Sitting on a rough chair inside the factory, I suddenly remembered reading a useful technique about how to overcome the terribly long distance: divide the distance into several 2 to 4 miles segments. Focusing on achievable goals a step at a time eventually helps to get to the larger goal. I reminded myself to focused only on small distance on the map, like a short segment of road between two villages, instead of the 20 miles to the Wuzheng. In this way, segment by segment, I would finally reach the end.

The dark gradually took over the sky. I was full of energy when I finally saw the town only seen on the map before. Slowing down the bike to relax, I appreciated the traditional Chinese lanterns hanging on the street. The red flash of lantern loomed out of the fog, celebrating my personal extraordinary success. It was a remarkable journey: the first time I left my overprotected mom and conquered the challenge as a 16-year-old gradually matured man. It was a way to prove my growing up.

Although it was still raining, I yelled to the world: “I did it!” However, as I realized suddenly, this was just the start. “Maybe it is time for another ride?” I believed I had a clear answer.