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BIKING WITH DEBBY

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## Biking with Debby

Neither my friend Debby nor I had been on a bicycle for at least a dozen years when we agreed to go riding with our new friend Linda and her husband, who were avid cyclists. (I don't remember his name, but it probably doesn't matter since they're divorced now anyway.) Neither Debby nor I actually owned a bike, either, but we were the strong-willed, independent, take-charge kind of gals who would not allow such a trivial detail to stop us.

Scottsdale, Arizona, where all this took place, has a gorgeous 22-or-so mile long bike path running through it, and there was at least one place along that route where you could rent bikes. So Linda and what's-his-name in their little SUV with the sturdy and functional bike rack carrying their official and expensive bikes, and Debby and me in my little '88 Chevy Cavalier, which wasn't much bigger than a bike now that I think of it, set off for the bike rental place.

After perusing the selection carefully, Debby and I decided to go for a bicycle-built-for-two. We were promptly informed that it was correctly known as a “tandem”. (Get the lingo.) Linda and what's-his-name tried to talk us out of it, saying it was difficult to coordinate riders on a tandem, and both starting and stopping were tricky, and we were novices, and on and on. We took it anyway, based primarily on Debby's incredibly logical proclamation, “It's cute and we will look good on it!”

The bike rental clerk took our drivers' licenses, made us sign papers essentially saying that if we were maimed or killed we'd still pay for repairs to the bike, handed us helmets, and instructed us to have fun. Debby and I can have fun pretty much anywhere, so we didn't see a problem with that.

If we'd had a video camera we probably could have won the \$100,000 from America's Funniest Videos just for the part about getting on the

bike. By the time we were boarded everyone was sore from laughing so much. Well, everyone except what's-his-name. He took his biking seriously, and kept instructing us in clipped tones as we laughed not only at our own ineptitude, but also at him. Apparently he hadn't been listening when the bike rental clerk told us to have fun.

We finally got started, but we weren't moving any too fast so Linda and what's-his-name quickly left us behind. Debby didn't want to ride in front because she didn't want to be responsible for changing gears. It wasn't long, though, before we figured out that I was not particularly effective in front. I am long-waisted, which is a polite way of saying my legs are short. The seat was lowered as far as it could be, but this was a pretty big bike and I was losing touch with the pedals about 3/4 of the way down. I'd push each pedal hard when it was at the top, and then try to catch it again when it came back around. I work as a Civil Engineering Technician, and I told Debby that us engineer types would call that "inefficient".

So we stopped the bike – far more smoothly than what's-his-name would have expected – and switched seats. Debby got us to a sort of middle gear and then just left it there. I was contributing more to the actual propulsion of the vehicle now, so we were moving along pretty well and dutifully following the clerk's instructions by having fun.

We hadn't seen Linda or what's-his-name since we started, but we kept going, knowing they were ahead of us somewhere.

Since we were in Scottsdale, the weather was beautiful. It was nearing dusk, so we didn't have to worry about sunburn, and the air had cooled off to about the mid 80's. (For us that's just short of sweater weather.) And with the breeze created by our movement, we were feeling pretty good.

For a while...

Debby has always promoted exercise as being a spectator sport, and the only exercise that interests me involves a happy ending, so neither of us was what you'd call "in shape." Add the fact that we hadn't been on

bikes in over a decade and you see why we got to huffin' and puffin' in a pitifully short time.

We came down a gentle hill – grass on both sides of the path, kids playing with a ball off to our left, a family having a picnic on the right – basically an idyllic scene, and suddenly Debby said, “uh-oh.” I leaned to look past her and saw the problem: at the bottom of our little hill was about 40 feet of flat ground, followed by what appeared to be a HUGE uphill climb. Now we may not have been professional bike riders, we may not have been seasoned, or expert, but we knew immediately what we had to do. We coasted to the base of that mountain, got off the bike, leaned it against a light pole, stripped off our helmets, and fell face first into the cool grass.

We were sprawled that way, panting, when Linda came back looking for us. She started freaking out because she thought we'd crashed the bike and been thrown off! When we pointed out that the bike was upright against a pole and our helmet straps were in our hands, she calmed down.

We then politely informed Linda that she and what's-his-name could ride for as long as they liked, but we were taking the tandem back to the rental place and we'd meet them in the bar next door to it. We now deemed it a brilliant marketing strategy to open a bar next door to a bicycle rental place, and we intended to reward the bar owner for his entrepreneurship.

But mostly we just did NOT want to go up that hill!



Thanks for reading. If you enjoyed this story, you're sure to love my books. Each is a collection of quick, funny stories – like this one – that you can read on your lunch break. And they're available in multiple e-book formats so there's something for everyone. They make great gifts, too!

Instead of a bicycle, I now ride an adult tricycle, so here's a convenient link to help you find my book *Happy Curb (don't forget the salt)* which is a collection of funny stories about things that have happened to me and my trike: <https://www.books2read.com/u/3nYZ28>

If you'd like to know when my next book will be released, join my mailing list by sending a note to [Jacla-Lynnndon@On5Wheels.com](mailto:Jacla-Lynnndon@On5Wheels.com)

You'll find my blog at that site, too: <http://www.On5Wheels.com><sup>1</sup>

I look forward to hearing from you. Keep on trikin'!

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1. <http://www.On5Wheels.com/>