

Tania's cycling Adventure

By

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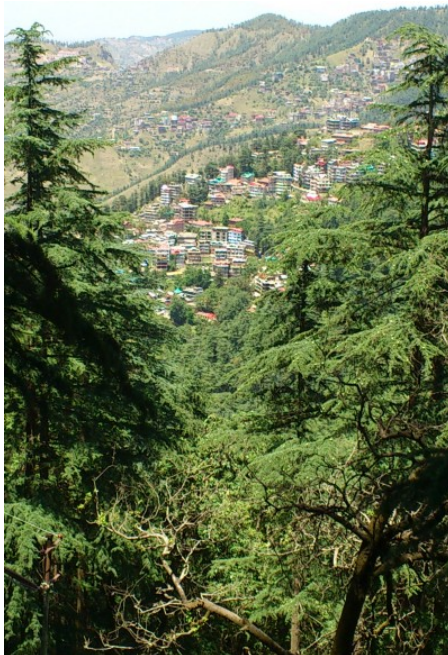
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Tania's Cycling Adventure

It was summer. The month of May was unbearably hot in Bombay. So every year during the worst of the sweltering hot weather, Tania and her parents left the city for a week long vacation to a hill station. This year they went to Shimla. Shimla is a hill station in the mighty Himalayan mountain range.



Tania and her parents were staying in a resort with sprawling grounds. The area around the hotel was surrounded by lush green cedar and pine forests. The place was indeed very picturesque.



Every morning after breakfast, and every evening after a scrumptious tea, Tania and her parents went for walks in the forests. Mama pointed out pretty flowers of many different colors and sizes. Tania would sometimes spot the flowers before Mama and cry out, "Mama, look there is an orange flower."

During the day there was not much for Tania to do. Her parents liked to read, laze, play cards or chat, and that was too boring for the energetic little four year old. The hotel had a children's activity room where Tania had found a pretty pink tricycle. She wanted to ride the tricycle around the hotel grounds. Mama thought it was a good idea and comfortably settled down to read a book on a shady spot on the lawn. She said, "Tania, don't wander off too far away. You may get lost. The grounds are quite big. Stay where I can see you."



Tania was merrily cycling up and down a path in front of the lawn where

Mama sat. She was a fairly good girl and typically listened to Mama. After a few minutes, Tania spotted a squirrel. Tania loved little furry animals.



She started riding towards the squirrel. But as she got close, the squirrel started running away. She followed as fast as she could, completely forgetting what Mama had said about staying in sight. She saw that the squirrel had stopped near a large tree at a short distance. She got off the cycle and slowly approached the squirrel, so as not to startle it. She pulled out a couple

of almonds from her pocket and stretched out her hand offering the nuts to the squirrel.



The squirrel looked at her suspiciously for a minute. Tania knew she should not get too close, or the squirrel would run away again. Cautiously, the squirrel started approaching her. Then it suddenly darted towards her, grabbed the nut and stepped back again. It chomped away on the nut keeping a sharp eye on Tania. Tania waited patiently holding the second nut.

Slowly, the squirrel began to trust her. He was less skittish when he approached her for the second nut.

Tania fed the squirrel a few more nuts and made friends with it.

She was happy she had the nuts in her pocket. She had put them there to snack on during the morning walk with her parents. After playing with the squirrel for sometime, Tania got up to get back on her cycle.

It was only then, that Tania realized that she had never seen this part of the hotel grounds before. She had been so intent on following the squirrel that she had not noticed where she was going. "Oh, oh!" she exclaimed. "Now I am lost." She decided to continue cycling along the path for a little longer. Maybe, she would see something familiar.

In the mean time, Mama was getting worried. She had not seen Tania in a while. She started looking for her but couldn't find her. The grounds were huge, and Mama was feeling annoyed with Tania for wandering off. She informed the hotel staff, and they sent out a few people in

different directions to search for her.



As Tania cycled on, she came across a fountain. It had a shallow pool of water around it. It was really quaint, and Tania walked up to it for a closer look.

She saw a frog in the pool. She was seized with the desire to touch the frog, so she leaned over the edge of the pool and stretched out her hand. But she slipped, lost her balance and fell into the pool. Soaking wet and a little bruised, she started crying loudly for Mama.



Fortunately, one of the hotel staff searching for Tania heard her cry. He picked her up and took her too Mama. Mama was relieved to see Tania, and she gave her a big hug. Then she noticed that Tania was soaking wet.

She asked, "What happened Tania? Where were you, and why are you wet?".

Tania told her everything that had happened. Mama scolded her for wandering off and told her that she could have been badly hurt. Tania

apologized, and Mama hugged her again. Then she carried Tania off to the hotel room to give her a nice warm bath.

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