

# The Bicycle Across the Sea



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Ben stood at his bedroom window every morning, watching the green island across the sea. He could see palm trees and a little beach, but no boat ever came to take him there. His curly dark brown hair bounced as he leaned out, and his hazel eyes sparkled with a big idea. 'I will find a way to visit that island,' he said.



Ben's neighbor Mira came over with her notebook and tools. She was tall for ten, with a long black braid and a small scar on her chin. 'What are you thinking?' she asked. Ben grinned his gap-toothed grin. 'I need a boat, but I don't have one. So I'll invent a bicycle that floats!' Mira raised her eyebrows and wrote it down.



Ben rode his red sneakers down to Grandpa Joe's harbour workshop. The old man sat on a stool, his flat cap pulled low and his wooden walking stick by his side. 'Grandpa Joe, can I have some spare parts?' Ben asked. 'I'm building a water bicycle.' Grandpa Joe chuckled. 'Well, that's a fine adventure. Take what you need, and I'll help you think.'



Back home, Ben laid out his blue overalls and yellow striped shirt on the floor. He pulled on his goggles and got to work. First, he tried attaching empty plastic bottles to his bike wheels. They bobbed and wobbled. Mira tested it in a tub of water. 'Not bad,' she said, 'but the bottles keep slipping.' Ben frowned and wrote in his notebook.



Next, Ben tried strapping pool noodles around the wheels. He pedaled down to the shore and splashed in. The noodles floated, but they spun in circles and the bike tipped over. Pip, his scruffy terrier, barked from the beach. Ben climbed out, dripping wet. 'That didn't work either,' he sighed. Mira patted his shoulder. 'Keep trying,' she said. 'We're getting closer.'



Ben studied his notebook full of sketches. He realized the wheels needed wide, flat floats to stay steady. He found two big plastic tubs at the dump and cut them into circles. He bolted them to the wheels with Grandpa Joe's help. 'These should spread the weight,' Ben explained. Grandpa Joe nodded. 'Smart thinking, lad. Let's test them tomorrow.'



The next day, Ben and Mira carried the bicycle to the water. Ben put on his goggles and climbed on. Pip jumped into the front basket, his red collar jingling. Ben pedaled hard. The wheels spun, and the floats skimmed the surface! He went ten feet before the bike wobbled and stopped. 'It floats!' Mira cheered. 'But we need more power,' Ben said, already thinking.



Ben added a small motor from an old fan and a battery pack. The bicycle looked strange now, with big round floats and wires everywhere. Mira tested the balance in her notebook. 'The motor might be too heavy on one side,' she warned. Ben adjusted the floats until it was even. 'Now it's ready,' he said. 'Tomorrow we ride to the island.'



Early in the morning, Ben met Mira at the shore. He wore his blue overalls and goggles, and Pip wore his red collar. Grandpa Joe waved his walking stick from the dock. 'Be careful of the currents,' he called. Ben nodded. He pedaled into the water. The bike hummed, the floats held, and he was off! Mira ran along the beach, cheering.



Ben pedaled across the sparkling water. The island grew closer. Pip stood in the basket, his one floppy ear flapping in the wind. Ben felt like a real explorer. Then, suddenly, the bicycle shuddered. A strong current pushed him sideways. He had to steer hard to keep going straight. 'Whoa!' he shouted. Pip barked a warning. The water swirled around the floats.



Ben remembered Grandpa Joe's advice. He had packed a map and marked the currents. He checked his compass and turned the handlebars. Slowly, he angled the bicycle across the current instead of fighting it. The floats stayed steady. Pip wagged his stub tail. 'Good boy,' Ben said. The island was still ahead, and he knew he could make it now.



After a long, careful ride, Ben felt sand under the floats. He had reached the island! People ran down to the beach, amazed. 'You came on a bicycle?' a girl asked. Ben grinned. 'It's a floating bicycle,' he said. The islanders helped him pull it ashore. They had no boats, so they were cut off from the mainland. 'Can you teach us?' they asked.



Ben stayed on the island all afternoon, showing the islanders how the bicycle worked. He promised to come back with more supplies and to bring Grandpa Joe. 'We can build more floating bicycles,' he said. 'Then you can visit the mainland anytime.' The islanders cheered. Pip ran in happy circles, his fish tag jingling. Ben felt proud of his invention.



When Ben pedaled back to the mainland, Mira and Grandpa Joe were waiting. 'You did it!' Mira shouted. Ben told them about the currents and the islanders. 'We need to build more bicycles,' he said. 'So the islanders can travel too.' Grandpa Joe smiled. 'That's a fine plan, Ben. Persistence pays off.' They got to work right away.



Over the next weeks, Ben and Mira built five more floating bicycles with help from Grandpa Joe. They painted them bright colors. The islanders came to the mainland for the first time in years. Ben watched them laugh and trade stories. His small invention had connected two worlds. He looked at his goggles and smiled. 'Big ideas and lots of trying,' he said.



Now Ben visits the island whenever he likes. He still keeps his notebook full of new ideas. Mira writes down every test, and Pip rides in the basket. Grandpa Joe says Ben's bicycle is the best thing to come out of the harbour workshop. Ben knows that dreams can come true—with water, wheels, and a lot of persistence. And maybe a little help from friends.