



Cities in the Move

Adventure Book



START

The recent trend across European cities has been to step back from the originally car-oriented focus in order to regain pedestrian freedom. This movement is already taking place; the following story is set in the close future, and tells the tale of the ins and outs of such a change, from the people's point of view. You will wear Nora's shoes, a young student who recently moved to the city to study.

CONTINUE

You take the last turn before the cafe where you work, and there it is: a brand-new white signal painted on the asphalt, "10 km, SLOW DOWN."

Another one, you think, conflicted. You slow, of course. You'll have to leave earlier from now on. Six months ago, the scooter ride between the university and the cafe was fifteen minutes. Now it's almost twenty-five.

You run the math automatically, the way you've been running every kind of math since September: how many shifts cover rent, how many minutes of sleep you can borrow from tomorrow, how many euros you've sent home this month, how many you haven't. Your mother still calls every Sunday to ask if you're eating. You always say yes.



CONTINUE

The city has been taking measures for the upcoming “Zero Motors by 2040,” aiming at completely banishing motor vehicles inside city limits. You ride your old scooter, your brother's old scooter, technically, the one he handed down with a grin and a “don't kill yourself on it”, out of necessity. The university and the cafe are not well connected by public transport, and your phobia of cycling makes it impossible for you to even start thinking of cycling in the city.

Stupid, you sometimes think, when you watch the bike lanes flow smoothly while traffic stalls. Stupid not to just learn. But your hands always go cool when you imagine it. You've been thinking about how this is going to go for you, and you don't see any practical solution...



CONTINUE

After your shift, you go back home, exhausted. Your feet ache. The smell of milk steam and burnt coffee clings to your jumper. You take the usual route, the long detour that has grown longer every month as more streets become pedestrian-only, and arrive at your usual parking spot. As you pull up, you hear chanting and music.

A group of about fifty people has formed around technicians taking a traffic light down. You stop and get off your scooter. Faces are lit up; people are joyful, celebrating. A banner reads: "The Sooner, The Better, we want a car-free city NOW."

For a moment, you stand there with the helmet still under your arm, watching the way they smile at each other. You think of your hometown, three traffic lights total, half of them blinking yellow. You think of how, on your first night in Barcelona, you walked around for hours just to listen to a city that never went silent. I love it here, you remember thinking. It's the loudest, busiest, alive-est place I've ever been. Now they want it quiet, and you don't yet know which part of you is glad and which part is afraid.

CONTINUE

The package arrives the next morning, thin and light, like it barely contains anything at all.

“Another delivery?” her parents said from the kitchen. “Seriously, Aisha? How can you even afford this? We don’t give you that much money.”

She mumbled something and grabbed the parcel.

“You already bought jeans last week,” they add.

Aisha doesn't explain that jeans don't cost the same anymore. She can buy a tshirt for 3€ now. In her room, she tears the plastic open. The fabric smells new and synthetic. It's thinner than she expected and almost transparent. She pulled it on immediately.

She doesn't check the mirror properly. She doesn't ask herself if it fits well, or if it feels like her. She just adjusts it until it looks close enough to what she saw on her screen.

At school, Aisha catches her reflection in a window. Skirt. Jeans. Same as the others. No one compliments you. No one questions it either. And for now, that's enough, She doesn't stand out for being different and she is content.

CONTINUE

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"What is going on?" you ask a young person.

"We're celebrating that one of the main streets is going to be car-free! They're taking down the traffic light, such a big symbol!" he almost shouts in your ear.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

⇒ You join the celebration. How great that you'll get to live in a quieter neighbourhood, without so much noise and air pollution ! You will figure it out for your scooter, no problem. (Go to page 14)

⇒ You really don't agree with that. Those people don't realise that some people NEED vehicles on a daily basis. (Go to page 9)

⇒ You think it is a bit much to celebrate the taking down of a traffic light, but you agree that it is a step forward towards a better city. Still, you wonder how you are going to manage with your scooter... (Go to page 12)

“Well, how about those who need a vehicle to go to work or school?” you answer drily.

The words come out sharper than you meant. They taste like the same defensive sharpness you used to hear in your father's voice when someone in town suggested he should retrain, find something easier on his back. You used to wince at it. Now it's coming out of your mouth.

“You're one of those, huh, thinking that your own comfort prevails over the rest of the city?” the young person scowls.

You're taken aback. He isn't wrong, exactly. It IS more comfortable not to wake up an hour earlier. Before you can think about how to answer, an older woman steps in.

She is small, with silver hair pulled back, and a cane she's leaning on lightly, the kind of leaning that pretends not to be leaning.

CONTINUE

“For some people, it isn't comfort. It's necessity.” Her voice is soft but it cuts through the noise. “Elderly people, like me, depend on deliveries. Food. Medicines. The carers who came to clean my house and check on my husband when he was still with us, how are they supposed to reach us? Do you know how many homes they visit in a day? They cannot be expected to take an hour of public transport between each one.”

She looks at the young man, then at you.

“But you know what? I'm also tired of being afraid to cross the street. People drive like maniacs these days. Most of my friends won't leave their flats anymore. So when I see a traffic light come down, part of me wants to clap. And part of me wants to ask, what about the rest of us?”

In her eyes, you see fear, and anger, and something older, something that looks almost like grief. She's saying things you hadn't thought about. You feel a small heat on your cheeks.

“You should both come to the assembly next week,” she says. “It's organised by the city council and BiciHub, that's the bike collective at the corner. They're running the rollout of these new measures in our neighbourhood. Oh, by the way. I'm Rosa.”

CONTINUE

The young man, visibly less ready to fight now, extends his hand. "Diego. From BiciHub." He looks tired in a way you didn't notice at first. His knuckles are bruised, the way mechanics' knuckles are.

"Sorry I came at you. I get heated. My dad... let's just say I have feelings about engines."

You feel a small ache of shame for jumping in the way you did. You haven't informed yourself much about other people's needs. Or, honestly, much about anything outside your own narrow loop of class, work, sleep.

"I'll go," you say. "I'm Nora. Sorry I jumped at your throat, it's just... it's a bit of a radical change for me." "It's okay. We have different opinions. That's the whole point of an assembly, it's the only space where everyone gets to say theirs."

"And I'll be there too," Rosa adds, "representing elderly people. And reminding everyone that a city with fewer cars is possible. I lived it when I was your age. We didn't always live like this." She winks. "Some of us, ah ah ah, remember."

CONTINUE

"I mean, yeah, that's a great step forward. But I wonder about people who need their vehicle to get to work..."

"Well, they can bike! It's even good for your health!"

"Yeah... I tried, but..."

The guy looks at you without understanding. You feel a familiar tightness in your throat, the same tightness you felt in primary school, when a substitute teacher asked why you wouldn't get on the bike during PE. Just a bad fall, your mum used to say. She'll grow out of it. You are nineteen and you have not grown out of it.

You are too ashamed to say it now, to a stranger at a celebration. So you do what you always do. You aim sideways.

"What about older people, huh? Or people with reduced mobility? They can't bike either!"

CONTINUE

It works. The guy softens. "Hm, that's true. There are probably alternatives to look into. By the way, I'm Diego. I work at the BiciHub at the corner."

"That's why you're so happy, your business is going to thrive!" you joke, a little too brightly. You're embarrassed and you cover it with sarcasm. Old habit.

"I mean, yeah, but it's for a good cause, you know?" He laughs, but it's quieter than the laugh you'd expect from someone in a celebration. Something behind his eyes has shifted. "My dad drove a truck. Long hauls. He died of lung cancer when I was sixteen. He didn't smoke. He just breathed what he had to breathe to feed us. So. Yeah. I'm pretty happy about a traffic light coming down."

You don't know what to say to that. He doesn't seem to want a response.

"Anyway, we're organising an open assembly next week to talk about the changes the project will entail. You should come."

"Cool. I'll think about it. I'm Nora, by the way."

You walk away with the joke still hanging in your chest like a small, awkward stone.

CONTINUE

“Yes, what great news!” you reply.

The music gets louder, and you both start dancing. It's a really joyful moment, a celebration that the street belongs not to cars but to this: people living, dancing. You keep talking to this guy, whose name is Diego. He works at BiciHub and invites you to the assembly they're organising, they'll be supervising the rollout in the neighbourhood. He moves like someone who has spent his whole life on a bike, and when he laughs his whole face goes into it; but you notice, even between songs, that his eyes flick back to the traffic light coming down, like he's making sure it's really happening.

After a while, you spot an older lady sitting on a bench, watching the group with concern. In your euphoria of love towards the community, you go to her.

“Hi, I'm Nora. Are you okay?”

“Yes, thank you. I'm Rosa.” She gestures lightly at the dancing crowd. “It's nice to meet you, and to see you dancing in the street. It reminds me of my youth, ah ah ah.” Her smile fades a little. “But I'm not that young lady anymore. And, I'm worried about this new policy.”

CONTINUE

"I see. You know, I am too. Can I tell you a secret?" The words leave you before you've decided to say them. Maybe it's the music, the giddiness, this woman who feels for a moment like someone's grandmother.

"I use my scooter because... when I was eight, I had a really bad bike accident. I broke my arm in three places, and I, " you laugh awkwardly, " - I was so scared that night that I wet the bed for the first time in years. I've never gotten back on a bike since. I know it sounds stupid. I'm nineteen, not eight. But I can't. So, yeah. I'm worried too."

You don't know why you've told her. You haven't told a single new friend in Barcelona about this. There's something about the way she listens, calmly, without surprise, that opens you up.

"It doesn't sound stupid," Rosa says. "Fear is just memory you haven't been able to put down yet. We all carry some."

CONTINUE

Diego had joined the two of you and overheard. You turn around, mortified that someone who works in bicycles heard.

"It's okay, your secret is safe with me." He winks. "Rosa, you should come too, to the assembly we are holding at the BiciHub, about the new policy. We need to hear all voices, and you have an important one."

"I'll think about it," Rosa says. "Will you be there, Nora?"

You nod, before you've decided. Something about the two of them, the activist with bruised knuckles and the woman with her cane, has made you nod before you could find a reason not to.

CONTINUE

The assembly takes place at BiciHub, where Diego works. He and the other members have pushed the big workshop furniture aside to make space. The room still smells of grease and rubber, of metal and something faintly sweet, coffee from a thermos on the corner table. A lot of people are present. You spot Rosa near the back and go to say hi.

"Hi, Rosa."

"Oh, hello, Nora. How are you?"

"Tired. You?"

"At my age, dear, tired is the baseline." She pats the chair beside her. You sit. "I came because Javi handed me a flyer at the pharmacy. He said they were going to ban food deliveries, well, that's not exactly true, but he wanted me here. So I came to represent elders who depend on those services. Myself included." Her hands fold neatly in her lap, but you notice the tremor in them. "So often we are left out, you know. I understand the need to lessen motors. But for some of us, the bike is not a choice. The bus is not a choice. So we have to be in the room."

CONTINUE

She lowers her voice. "My husband, before he passed, refused to go out alone the last two years of his life. Couldn't cross the road. He'd been a man who walked everywhere when we were young." She straightens. "So yes. I came."

You can tell Rosa is genuinely worried. And she's right. The big campaign pushing for "Zero Motors" is built on air pollution and noise pollution. It's not telling the story of the people who need specific services to live their daily lives.

The room buzzes with anger before anyone speaks. Delivery riders cluster near the back, helmets on laps, eyes guarded. Taxi drivers cross their arms. Students whisper. Seniors sit close to the exits, close enough, you notice, to leave fast if things go bad. Diego stands near the front, talking fast, gesturing with his hands. He looks smaller up there than he did on the street.

CONTINUE

A city councillor steps up to the mic. Councilor Antonia Vidal does not raise her voice. She doesn't need to. You watch her settle into the space the way a person settles into a chair they own. Her blazer is sharp; her smile is sharper. You'd read about her in a school newspaper interview once: she grew up on the outskirts and clawed her way through a public university.

She talks like someone who has been doubted her entire career and is done being doubted. She is reading the crowd, you think, the way Diego reads a broken chain.

"This transition," she says, "is necessary. Air pollution kills. Climate change is not theoretical. But, we are listening."

A murmur ripples through the room.



CONTINUE

“We will adjust as needed,” Antonia continues. “Innovation requires discomfort.”

She lets the word discomfort settle. From where you're sitting, you can see her watching the room, not the people in it, the room itself, the temperature of it.

From the back, someone laughs, sharp, humourless. Javier Moreno stands without waiting for the mic. Late thirties, lean, wearing a faded BiciHub T-shirt under a battered jacket. Diego will tell you later that Javi used to repair bikes here too, before things got political.

CONTINUE



“Discomfort?” he repeats. “That’s easy to say when your salary isn’t tied to an engine.”

“I work with delivery riders who make three euros a delivery,” he says. “Many of them undocumented. Some of them don’t even own the licenses they ride under, they rent them from a guy who takes a cut. They risk their lives every day for a company that can’t even spell their names right. You take away their vehicles without alternatives, and you call it innovation? My mother cleaned offices in this city for twenty-five years. She rode a moped scooter because the night bus didn’t reach her clients. You think she’d have made it on a bike at fifty-eight? With her knees? After a ten-hour shift?”

CONTINUE

Antonia's smile tightens, but her face does not move. She has practised this, you think. She practises everything.

Diego steps forward.

"No one's saying workers don't matter, Javi. But streets full of cars aren't protecting them either. You know that. My old man, "

"I know your old man's story, Diego. I went to the funeral." Javi cuts him off, but not unkindly. "And I'm sorry. I am. But you're not the only one who buried someone. My cousin Ahmed lasted six months on the bikes before a delivery van knocked him into a tram. He's back home now, he can't work. Where's HIS statistic in your charts? You're using one death to justify pushing a hundred more people off a cliff. So forgive me if I don't find it inspiring that bikes are your brand."

The room fractures into noise. Rosa grips the edge of her chair. You notice her knuckles are white.

CONTINUE

You feel something rise in you, not certainty, but urgency. A pressure behind your ribs. They're both right, you think. They're both right and they're both about to ruin it. If you don't speak now, you might never. You think of your mother on Sunday calls, asking if you're eating. You think of your hands, going cool with imagined fear every time you pass a bike. You think of Rosa's tremor. Of Diego's father. Of Javi's cousin. Of how this room is going to remember itself.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



Stay quiet and observe, trying to understand all sides.
(Go to page 24)



Support Diego's vision of motor-free streets publicly. (Go to page 26)

You stay seated, fingers pressed into the cool metal of your chair as the room erupts around you. Diego's statistics about reduced asthma rates in car-free zones clash with Javi's data on delivery worker injuries during rushed commutes on packed buses. Javi mentions Obaid, who told him just yesterday: "I fell from the scooter and broke my left wrist. But the owner of my license will fire me if I don't go to work, and I have no other way to make money, I don't have the legal papers to work differently."

Both cite peer-reviewed studies. Both speak with conviction. Your gaze shifts between them as each point lands like a chess move. Why is it always either-or? you think. Why can't anyone in this room hold two true things at once?

You watch Antonia's face. She isn't really listening to Javi. Diego, for his part, looks like he hasn't slept in days. Rosa's hands are trembling. Three reasons for this work, three people you know by name, and none of them is winning.

The meeting dissolves into smaller arguments, people collecting their things with sharp movements. A lot has been said. What stays is that opinion is divided, there is no one-fits-all solution.

CONTINUE

You find yourself approaching Antonia as she gathers her papers. I'm too small to do this, you think. I'm a nineteen-year-old in a borrowed jumper. But you do it anyway.

"Could there be a follow-up?" you ask. "Something where people from both sides actually draft something together. Not present at each other. Build with each other."

Antonia looks up, properly seeing you for the first time. Her eyes are tired in a way her smile won't show.

"Are you offering to organise it?"

You hadn't been. "I, yes. I think so."

She studies you for a beat. Then she nods, once, and slides a card across the table. "We'll talk."

Your voice sounded steadier than you felt. Your hand, picking up the card, did not.

CONTINUE

You stand up before thinking about what you want to say.

“This is a chance to reclaim the city,” you say, louder than you feel. “Cars aren't neutral. They hurt people. We can't keep waiting.”

Javi glares. Rosa looks away, and that hurts more than the glare. Rosa, who told you about her husband, who said fear is memory you haven't put down yet, Rosa won't meet your eyes. You feel powerful, and slightly sick from the adrenaline.

Diego's statistics about reduced asthma rates clash with Javi's data on delivery worker injuries, but their point gets lost; no one is willing to hear the opponent's opinion. While they were debating, you were imagining the city you love with less engine noise, people strolling together on sunny days. You believe in that. And you believe a solution can be found, together.

Antonia adjourns the meeting, disappointed by the poor results. She walks past you on her way out, and for a second her eyes flick to you, assessing, filing you away. That one. The student. Useful.

CONTINUE

You stay to help Diego clean up after the chaotic meeting. He moves chairs slowly, like every one of them weighs something extra.

"I know it didn't go as planned," you say, once you can tell he has cooled down, "but I think it was necessary." "Yeah." He doesn't look at you. He's stacking flyers no one read.

"The community is so divided, you know. It's going to be hard, all this change, and no one seems to know where to start. Honestly? I don't either, half the time. I just know the alternative. I watched the alternative kill my father." He looks up. "Sorry. I'm not... I didn't sleep last night."

"Maybe we should meet again," you say. "Brainstorm some real solutions. And then bring them back." He nods. There is something almost grateful in his face, and it surprises you.

CONTINUE

You catch Diego's eye across the café table, his finger tracing a coffee ring as Rosa's voice crackles through your phone speaker: "Third time this month they've missed my delivery window."



Outside, a delivery rider kicks his scooter tire at the edge of the pedestrian zone, cursing under his breath. Diego's pen scratches across a napkin. You watch upside-down as he draws overlapping circles, arrows connecting neighbourhoods.

It is the third coffee you've had today. You can feel your heartbeat in your jaw. You did not get to your two o'clock seminar. You will not finish the reading by tomorrow. Choices, you think. Always choices.

"What if," Diego says, voice low enough that you have to lean in, "we stop fighting about what CAN'T go where, and start figuring out how things MOVE. With cargo bikes."

CONTINUE

He says it the way someone says the name of a person they used to love. You realise then that this, this idea, this hub, this argument, is not a job for him. It is the only thing keeping him standing

“Yes!” you say. “And, what if we put solar-charging fridges on them? For food and medicines?”

“A fleet?” Diego's eyes light up. “A solidarity fleet.”

The napkin fills with sketches: a cargo bike with a refrigerated compartment, a map with arrows pointing to senior housing, wage calculations with question marks.

“It could also be a way to take us out for a stroll!” Rosa says, on the phone. “A senior in a cargo bike. Picture it. I'd terrorise the bike lanes. Ah ah ah.”

You laugh, properly, for the first time in weeks. This is what it could feel like, you think. Tired and stupid and laughing in a café.

You leave the café hopeful you've found a real direction. Diego heads back to BiciHub to start building the first cargo bike, while you take on the harder job: presenting the idea to Javi and to Antonia. You don't know which conversation you fear more.

CONTINUE

The next morning:

Antonia is sceptical, but glad someone else has come up with an idea. She receives you in an office that smells of expensive coffee. She doesn't offer you any. Her nail clicks against the budget page of your proposal.

"So," she says, not looking up. "You need my signature."

There is something in her tone, not unkind, exactly. Calibrated. She is letting you feel the size of the favour. She is a kind woman until she isn't, you think. And I won't always know which one I'm meeting.

"I need your help," you correct.

A small smile. She likes that you didn't agree right away. "Yes," she says. "We'll see."

At the riders' union, Javi's arms remain crossed. The office is small and bright and very, very loud, phones, a printer, two children doing homework on the floor in the corner. Javi's daughter, you'll learn later, and her cousin. He's a single father. The mother went back to Honduras to care for her own mother and has not yet come back.

CONTINUE

“Pretty drawings,” he says, glancing at your folder. “But my people need jobs, not experiments.”
“They’d be the riders,” you say. “On the cargo bikes. Paid properly. With training.”

He doesn't soften, but something flickers. “Define properly.”
“Not three euros a delivery.”

He looks at you for a long second. Then he uncrosses his arms, only just. “Send me the figures. The real ones, not the ones you'd send Antonia. And don't tell her you sent me anything first.”

You don't tell him you've already shown her. I will pay for that decision later, you think, and you carry that thought down the stairs and out into a street that smells of rain.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

⇒ Work directly with riders through Javi, outside the city system. (Go to page 37)

⇒ Accept city council support under Antonia’s guidelines. (Go to page 32)

The funding helps, God, does it help, but the rules strangle.

Every morning you wake wondering if you've made a terrible mistake. Logos plastered where community artwork should be. Reports that reduce human stories to percentages. Metrics that count bike racks but not Rosa's missed medicine. Antonia's voice follows you: "Success justifies expansion," she insists, while you lie awake wondering what success even means anymore.

You smile in public meetings because people are getting what they need, aren't they?

CONTINUE

The delivery system works. The seniors get their groceries. The riders earn living wages. The air is purer; children play outside again on streets where once cars idled.

Diego's hub works wonders, a little too much, in fact. They work relentlessly. The fluorescent lights at BiciHub are on past midnight most nights now. Diego has lost weight. He laughs less. His knuckles, when he hands you a coffee, are scabbed in three new places.

CONTINUE



Yet each night you stare at your ceiling fan, questioning whether you've built something beautiful or just become another bureaucrat with good intentions. You know it is good, but your life is now running between political meetings, reports, and still trying to make it on time at work. You haven't called your mother in two weeks.

You haven't even had time to overcome your fear of biking, the one thing, you sometimes think bitterly, I started all of this trying to face.

You never wanted this power. You never wanted this doubt.

One morning, after working late on a report for the council, you are woken by a phone call from Diego.

“Nora, there's been an accident. One of the cargo bike's batteries exploded... Come to BiciHub, please. We have to fix this.” His voice is shaking. You've never heard Diego's voice shake like that.

CONTINUE



You rush outside. Already, you see protesters heading towards BiciHub. There you find a young rider, bleeding from the forehead. Thankfully, the wound isn't critical. He keeps apologising, to YOU, of all people, for getting hurt.

But still, the cargo bike doesn't follow security rules, Antonia announces, already in front of cameras you didn't know had been called. Diego stands behind her, his gaze down.

CONTINUE

"I am so sorry," he says, when the cameras have moved on. He won't look up. "It's just... I have so much work, and I probably forgot to fix the screws properly. We are all exhausted, Antonia. We need more help."

Antonia squeezes his shoulder, gently. The cameras catch it. Then she walks past him without another word.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



You hold on, beginnings are always difficult.
(Go to page 41)



You can't continue like this, you need a
break. (Go to page 48)

You walk out of the office without the council's support. Their offer was interesting and, let's admit it, easier. You would have had the money directly. You could have started with the production of the engine, the parts, the riders. But Javi pushes hard.

"I don't trust her," he insists. He's holding a cigarette he hasn't lit; he hasn't smoked in years, he tells you, but he holds them sometimes, out of habit, when he has to think hard. "She doesn't care for the sustainability of any of this. She wants fast results. A ribbon to cut. That's not how this is going to work. I've watched her career, Nora. She doesn't fail. So when something fails near her, somebody else takes the fall."

You hear him. You also hear, very faintly, the ghost of your father's voice, don't trust the ones who promise. You agreed to walk out before you noticed your hands had gone cold.

So the three of you, you, Diego, Javi, start a crowdfunding process. You try to get people on board. You try to get investors. The network grows slower, but deeper. Not everyone trusts it. You manage to get three cargo bikes. They are a bit wobbly; Diego must fix them often. Funding is scarce, and not everyone can receive the services. The riders are defying the rules; some still enter the neighbourhoods on scooters.

CONTINUE

“What else am I supposed to do?” one of them says, when you propose sharing a cargo bike as a solution. “I can't afford a day off.” His name is Karim. He has two children. He shows you their photo on a cracked screen, before he rides off.

In the evenings, after Diego closes the hub, Javi sometimes sits with you on the curb outside, eating something cheap from the corner shop. He talks more than he did in the assembly, about his mother, about his daughter's school, about the time he was almost deported for organising. You start to understand that his anger is not anger. It is grief that has chosen a useful direction.

“You know what scares me?” he says one night. “It's not failing. I've failed lots. It's that we'll succeed for the wrong people. That we'll build a beautiful thing and someone will steal it and put their logo on it, and our riders will end up where they started, just on prettier bikes.”

You don't know what to say. You hand him half your sandwich.

CONTINUE

One morning, after working late on an investor presentation, you are woken by a phone call from Diego.

“Nora, there's been an accident. One of the cargo bike's batteries exploded... Come to BiciHub. Please. We have to fix this.”

You rush outside. Already, protesters are heading towards BiciHub. There you find a young rider, bleeding from the forehead. Thankfully, the wound isn't critical. But still, the cargo bike doesn't follow security rules, Antonia announces, and she is there, somehow, with her press team, before the ambulance has even left.

Javi looks at you across the chaos. You see in his face: I told you. You also see: I'm sorry I told you.



CONTINUE

You go outside to catch your breath, but you are met only with reporters and citizens shouting at you. Irresponsible. Opportunist. Careless. Once again, people want answers, and it is you they are looking at. You think, absurdly, of your seventh-grade teacher who once told you you were too quiet.

You'll have to learn to use your voice, Nora

You wonder whether she'd be proud of you now, or terrified.
Something has to be done.



WHAT WILL YOU DO?

⇒ Negotiate publicly with protest leaders. (Go to page 41)

⇒ Step back to focus on personal survival. (Go to page 48)

⇒ Push forward anyway, refusing to compromise. (Go to page 46)

“If you want to talk,” you say, your voice trembling more than you'd like, “let's talk for real. In the open. With the council.”

It takes hours. Negotiations about negotiations. But by late afternoon, a date is set. Public. Livestreamed. No closed doors this time.

The room is overflowing when it happens. People stand along the walls, sit on the floor, lean in doorways. Antonia arrives without her usual entourage, a choice you note. Diego watches from the back. Rosa sits in the front row, hands folded, alert. She catches your eye and gives the smallest nod. Fear is memory you haven't put down yet. You think the line back at her, like a thank you. Javi stands beside you. You're grateful he does.

The anger comes first. Raw. Unfiltered. Protest leaders speak about being pushed aside, about pilots that feel permanent when they fail and temporary when they succeed. Riders talk about waiting lists and broken promises. Shop owners talk about lost customers. The word transition is repeated so often it starts to sound hollow.

CONTINUE

Javi listens. Then he steps forward. He doesn't soften the anger, he reshapes it. He turns shouts into sentences. Complaints into demands. He speaks about funding gaps, staffing limits, districts left behind. About how a system that relies on enthusiasm will always decay. He speaks about Karim's two children. About Ahmed, back home, unable to work. About his own mother, twenty-five years on a moped. He names them. He makes the room remember that this is what abstraction costs.

Antonia's expression changes as he speaks. Less defensive. More focused. You watch the moment something in her shifts, the moment she decides, calculably, that she would rather be on the right side of this room than the dominant one. Even her conscience runs on strategy, you think. But maybe a strategic conscience is still a conscience.

When it's her turn, she doesn't pretend anymore.

"We underestimated what it takes to maintain this," she says. "And we overestimated how much goodwill could replace structure." A beat. She looks, briefly, at Diego. "I asked too much of people who were already giving me everything they had."

CONTINUE

The room holds its breath. She talks about reallocating funds. About creating a second team, paid, full-time, with proper training. About opening another BiciHub in a district that has been asking for one since the beginning.

Then she looks at you. At Javi.

“We need people who know this from the inside,” she says. “If you're willing, we want you to manage the expansion. Together.”

You don't answer immediately. You look around the room. At the protesters. At the riders. At Diego in the back, who is crying and pretending he isn't. At Rosa, who nods once, slowly. You think of your mother's Sunday calls. You think of how badly you wanted, six months ago, to just be a quiet student in a quiet flat. You think of how that is no longer who you are.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



Expand the network to new districts. (Go to page 44)



You don't think you can accept the offer, it's too much responsibility for you. (Go to page 48)

The changes don't happen overnight.

They never do.

But slowly, things begin to shift. The pilot expands. Riders are paid during training. Cargo bikes appear where scooters once lined the streets. Diego's workshop fills with noise and life, becoming a place where problems are argued over and solutions are built, but he's not alone anymore. More people are recruited.

Some nights you walk past and see him laughing with a stranger over a wheel, and it knocks something loose in your chest. Rosa gets her deliveries on time. She tells everyone who will listen. Sometimes she rides along, in the front basket of a cargo bike, like a small dignified queen, and waves to people she has known for forty years.



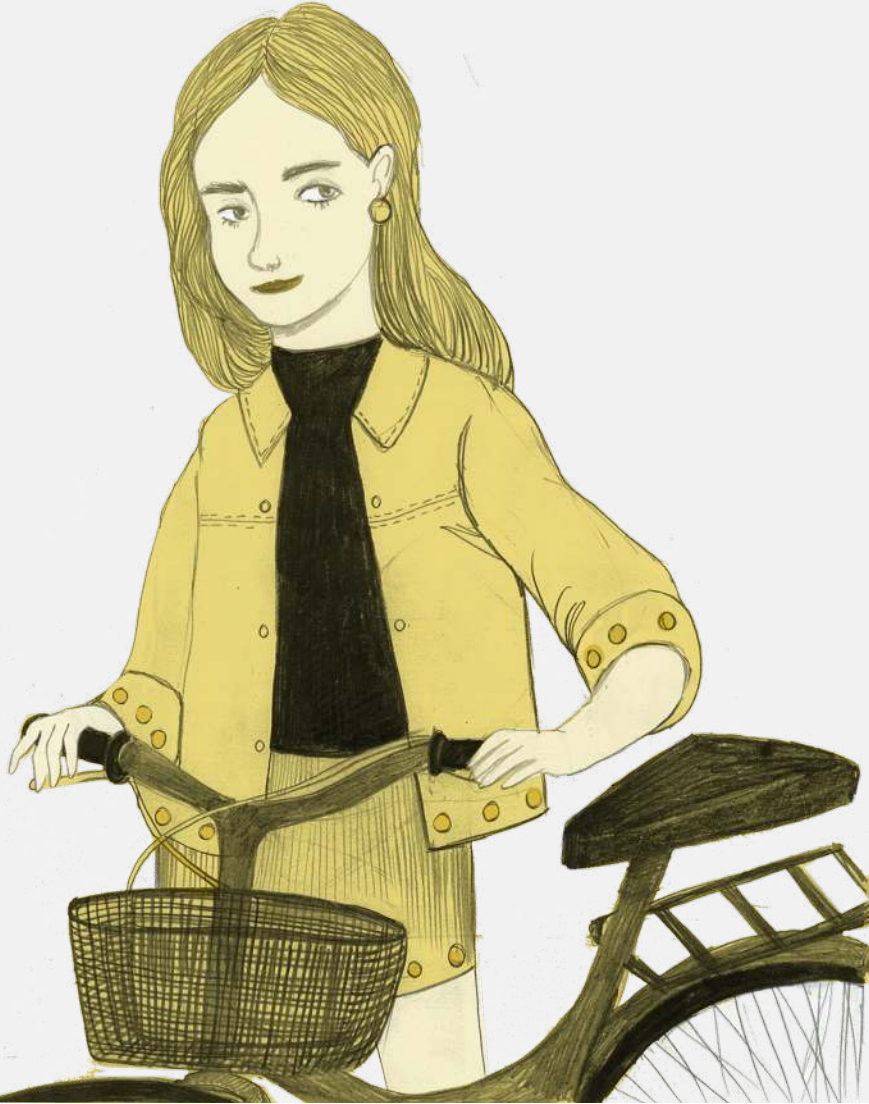
CONTINUE

Months later, the network spreads. A new hub opens. Then another.

You take your first proper cycling lesson on a Sunday morning, in an empty parking lot, with Diego holding the back of the seat. You fall twice. The third time, you don't. You don't cry until you're back inside.

Now you walk down a street that used to belong entirely to engines. You remember how it sounded before. How it felt to cross it. Now, it's different. Not quiet. Not perfect. Alive. And for the first time since that white "SLOW DOWN" sign appeared on the asphalt, you don't feel like change is something happening to you. It's something you're part of.

THE END



Another protest, another emergency meeting proposed, another request to “adjust expectations.” You're tired of adjustments that always seem to land on the same backs. Tired of softening words until they stop meaning anything. When Antonia asks if you're willing to compromise, again, you hear yourself say no.

Not angrily. Not dramatically. Just no.

You explain that a transition built on half-measures will keep breaking the same people. That underfunded systems don't fail by accident. That asking those who already adapted to adapt again isn't fairness, it's avoidance.

The room stiffens. Antonia nods slowly, the way people do when they're already calculating consequences. “Then we can't move forward,” she says. Not as a threat. As a fact. I made a calculation, her face says. You made yours. We disagree. It is, in its own way, the closest she has ever come to respecting you.



CONTINUE

The weeks that follow feel unreal. First, the delays. Then the announcements. Then the official language: pilot concluded, evaluation ongoing, return to baseline traffic patterns. You read the email three times before it sinks in

The city retracts the pilot. Cars come back like they never left. There's no "Zero Motors by 2040" anymore. Engines reclaim the streets with frightening speed. Noise pours in. The air feels heavier, even if you can't prove it yet. Painted lanes are scrubbed away. Temporary signs disappear overnight.

Someone smashes BiciHub's window one night. No one sees who did it. Glass litters the floor like ice. Diego stands in the doorway the next morning, staring, hands in his pockets, saying nothing. He hasn't said much in days. Antonia calls it unfortunate during a press interview.

You walk the old route again, the one you used to take on your scooter, but what once felt like freedom feels sour now. The traffic light is back. Cars idle, impatient. A horn blares behind you.

You remember what it was like when it was different.

And even though the city pretends nothing happened, you know better. The question doesn't disappear. It waits.

THE END

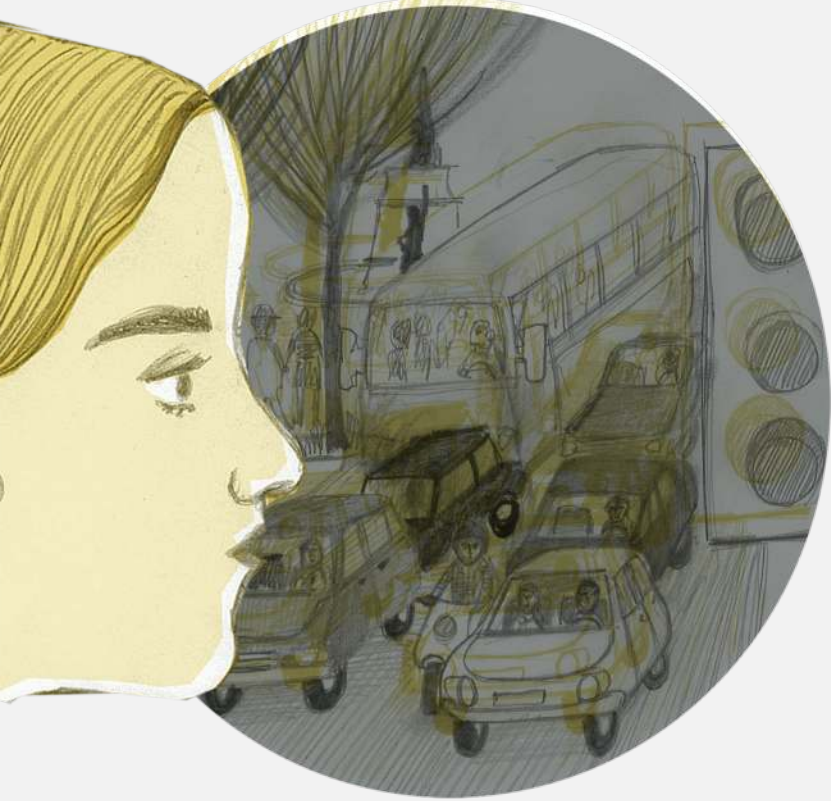
You step back.

Not loudly. Not with an announcement. Just a quiet decision that the work, the endless meetings, the protests, the frustration, the anger, cannot be yours anymore. You tell yourself you need to survive, to get through university, to keep your shifts, to pay rent. You tell yourself the system will handle it, that someone else will take up the pieces. You tell yourself a lot of things.

Weeks pass. Days fold into each other. The pilot zone loses momentum without champions. Diego tries to keep the hub alive, but with you absent, his energy starts to fracture. The network collapses like a house of cards in a windstorm. Cargo bikes sit idle. Streets that had begun to breathe again grow louder. Horns roar. Engines reclaim their rhythm.

Rosa waits longer. Her deliveries are late. Sometimes, they don't come at all. You remember her smile, the careful lists she made, the hope she had that someone would see her. The story she told you about fear being memory you haven't put down yet. Now she shrugs, adjusts, and waits, inside, too frail to go out into the busy streets.

CONTINUE



You pass the bench where you first met her, sometimes, on your way to class. She isn't there.

Life continues. But every so often, when you pass a street that once felt like possibility, the memory presses: the air once cleaner, the space once human, the system almost built, and you were there, and you walked away.

You wonder, sometimes, what might have happened if you had stayed.

But not often enough to act. Because survival, in the end, is easier than change. And someone always pays the price for your absence.

The streets grow louder. The network dissolves. And you move forward, carrying a quiet weight you can never fully put down.

THE END

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1

5

2

3

4

Next



Whose needs matter most in a city transition?

When cities reduce motor traffic, how can they balance environmental goals with the daily realities of students, elderly residents, and precarious workers?



Is sustainability still sustainable if it excludes people?

Can a green policy truly succeed if it increases inequality or ignores those who depend on motorized transport for survival?



What makes change last?

Looking at the different endings, what factors determine whether a transition succeeds, fails, or fades away? Is it funding, trust, leadership, community participation, or something else?



How does personal fear shape political decisions?

In what ways does Nora's fear of cycling influence her position in the debate? How do our personal experiences shape our opinions about public policy?



What does “innovation requires discomfort” really mean?

Who experiences the discomfort in Nora's story, and who benefits from the change?

FURTHER RESOURCES

Next



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