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Roger's Long Ride sample
NOT FOR SALE

ROGER'S LONG RIDE

Level 3 - A2/B1 Intermediate (1) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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Roger's Long Ride
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1. A bad week

Roger grew up in Medford in Oregon. He loved food and cooking, so after high school he studied to be a chef. He worked in restaurants and cafes in Medford, but his dream was to live in a big city.

I'd like to work in San Francisco. I would learn a lot about food and cooking there. I might become a famous chef, he thought. Maybe I could have my own restaurant one day.

Finally, he got a job in a small café in the Mission District of San Francisco. He found a furnished room in an apartment less than a mile from the café. His roommates were Cameron and Oliver. They were brothers. They had lived in San Francisco for a long time. They were truck drivers. When he went to look at the apartment, Cameron said, "Our family has a hardware store in Chico. Our father wants help. Our brother Otis has gone home to work in the store. The rent of this apartment is too much for Oliver and me, so we need a roommate. You can have Otis' room if you want it."

Roger liked living with Cameron and Oliver. He liked his work at the café. Marietta was one of the waitresses at the café. She was very pretty. Roger liked her very much. After a few months, they started dating.

Marietta loved going to the beach. Roger saved some money and borrowed some more money from the bank to buy a car. When they had a day off work, Roger and Marietta drove to the beach and watched the sunset.

Life was good.

Then Covid 19 came. Many people got sick. Some people died. Everyone wore masks and tried to stay home. A few months later, Roger's life changed.

One Monday, Roger's boss said, "I have to close the café. It is impossible. People are staying home. No one goes to cafes anymore. I lose money every day. I will pay you for today, but I'm sorry. This is the end of your job with me. You are a good worker. If things get better, I will ask you to come back."

On Tuesday, Roger went to the café to collect his money and his chef's knives. Marietta was there. She had lost her job too, but she wasn't unhappy.

"I'm going home to New Mexico," she said. "My parents are telling me I must start planning for my wedding."

"Wedding!" Roger was amazed. *I didn't ask Marietta to marry me, he thought.*

"Yes." Marietta was smiling. "I am going to marry my boyfriend from high school. He has a good job now, so we can get married."

"But what about us?" Roger was shouting. "You never told me about this other guy! I thought I was your boyfriend."

Marietta kissed him on the cheek. "I wanted to have some fun before I got married. You were my California boyfriend. You're very nice, but I was never serious about you."

Roger left the café and walked to a park. He was shocked and unhappy. He sat in the park for hours. Finally, it got cold, and Roger realised he was hungry.

I'll go back to the apartment and cook something delicious for dinner. Cameron and Oliver like my food.

As Roger walked along Bryant Street towards the apartment he saw a big truck driving away from the apartment building. *That's strange*, he thought. *That looks like Cameron's truck. He should be out delivering food to supermarkets on the other side of the city.*

He climbed the stairs to the apartment and unlocked the door. He could not believe what he saw inside. The apartment was empty! All the furniture had gone!

Someone has come here and stolen everything! I must call the police!

He ran to his bedroom. All the furniture was gone, but his blankets were folded up in a corner. His pillows were on top of the blankets. His laptop, books and clothes were in another corner and his bicycle was leaning against the wall. *Who steals the furniture and leaves a computer?* he asked himself.

Then his phone rang. He opened it. There was a text from Cameron.

---Hi Roger.

Oliver and I are sorry. We got a call this morning from Otis. Mom and Dad have Covid 19. They are very ill and they are in hospital. Maybe Dad will die. We're on our way back to Chico to be with them, and to help Otis with the store. We don't think we will come back to San Francisco for a long time. So we have taken everything with us. The rent is paid until the end of this month. Maybe you can find new roommates. You are a good guy, and we hate doing this to you. If you are ever in Chico, be sure to come and visit us. Good luck.---

Roger sat on the floor. *This is not their fault*, he thought. *They didn't want to do this to me.*

-----END OF SAMPLE-----