

Ruth's Choice

"Sure, Mom, I understand. No problem," Ruth said and pushed the disconnect button on her phone. But Ruth did have a problem. She had to find a way to get to cheerleading tryouts on her own in the next half hour.

After some thought, Ruth came up with a solution. She went to the basement of the building and borrowed her friend Omar's bike. He was away, but she knew his lock combination. She reached the gym in time and did enough flips and handsprings to get to the next round of the tryouts.

On the bike ride home, she was feeling tired but happy. Then suddenly, in front of a construction site, she rode over something metal and heard a nasty hiss. "Flat tire," Ruth said to no one. "I'll get it fixed at the bike shop." But then she corrected herself. "Well, honestly, I would, if I had any money."

When she got home, she locked the bike and put it in the position she had found it in. "Tires go flat when you leave a bike for a long time," she told herself. But she did not feel good about this, since it wasn't why Omar's tire was flat.

It took until the middle of a sleepless night for Ruth to admit to herself that she'd made the wrong choice. She got up and wrote a note telling Omar that the flat tire was her fault. She promised to pay for the repairs after her next baby-sitting job. Ruth felt a lot better knowing that she'd be able to tape the note to the bike before Omar returned. She was soon able to fall into a restful sleep.