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For my eighth or ninth birthday, which I can remember because it was one of the last years my mom was still alive, we had a much more *personal* celebration on the weekend. It wasn't a party like other years, it was me, my mom and dad, having cake and breakfast just in our house.

When we were done, my parents told me to get ready for one last surprise. Get ready to go outside. So, I started, like, rushing to get my boots and my coat to get ready. I picked up my yellow boots to put them on and I'm trying to put my foot in, I realized that there was a card in there and the card had a clue on it that was cryptically but coyly referring to this convenience store that was owned by a family friend. The friends are very coy but, oh! What a mystery! We should find out what this is.

So, I ran over to the convenience store with my parents trailing behind me, we got there, said hi to the family friend. Then, I found *another* card just like the one in my boot between the merchandise and the granola bars, and that one was leading us to this pizza place, also in our neighbourhood.

We went there, rushing along the sidewalk, zipping between the other pedestrians. There's another card there, on the windowsill, that one said something about banana yellow and I went, "Oh! Oh! That's No Frills! That has to be No Frills!". I ran over to the No Frills, I started getting so worried about searching the store and then my parents nudged me towards the flyers and there was the last card, buried in with the flyers and that one was leading us to a specific address, like, that was the destination, that was it.

And we got to the address. It was a bike store from our neighbourhood and my parents revealed they had got it set up so that I would have this custom bicycle for myself and I would learn how to ride one.

I must've mentioned something about my friends knowing how to ride or all the other kids in my class knowing how to ride bikes, but personally speaking, I didn't actually care that much about learning how to ride a bike, I didn't have much interest in it but at the time I just felt so loved, that they listened so much, that they put in so much work, that they cared so much – I was still overjoyed. I waltzed into that store eager to get that bicycle despite everything.

I don't have that bicycle anymore and I still don't know how to ride one, but that gift has stuck with me like no other.