



CONFISKATED

1 The accident was so huge that even our local newspaper ran a story on it. And it was all pretty nasty. But like most accidents it should never have happened; it was just extreme bad luck and even worse timing.

Our town has two major roads — Radcliffe Street and Porter Road. Radcliffe starts at the top of a big hill, before it meets Porter at a cross intersection and finally flattens out for the strip of shops we call our mall. My mate, Jeremy, wanted to try out his new board — a

top of the line model with small, hard wheels that were perfect for street skating. A good boarder could get a lot of speed on Radcliffe; Jeremy was a great boarder. Jeremy's plan was to ride his board down Radcliffe, hit a jump just before the intersection, and pull a 720-degree aerial spin over Porter. That's two full spins of his body. In mid-air. The word insanity comes to mind.

2 A note was passed to a select few on Friday afternoon:

Saturday. 5 am. Radcliffe Hill.

We had to be extra careful with that note — our parents would have flipped if they found out we were going to do something so wrong.

Saturday morning was painful. The sky was that bruised blue colour, the shade only seen by kids who deliver newspapers or do well in swimming carnivals. I wore several layers of clothing, just to stop my rattling bones from waking my parents. We all looked a sight, standing on the hill, shivering and pumping misty breath into the air.

3 Jeremy arrived just after us, skidding to a halt on his board like a hero. He was dressed in a red t-shirt with his black shorts and shoes. Only his fog breath gave away that he was experiencing the same freezing temperature as us. We were filled in on the rest of his plan as Jeremy did up his safety pads and helmet. Thinking back, it was incredibly lucky that he did.

4 "I need Rooster and Dave to sit on the corner of Porter. You'll be lookouts. It's early, so not too much traffic, but I don't want to smack straight into a delivery truck or something. All I need is a clear stretch of road on both sides. Wave your hands in the air and I'll do the rest."

I sat with the others and watched events unfold. The two lookouts checked and waved that the coast was clear. Jeremy kicked off. He was so relaxed on the board, keeping his hands in his pockets while his torso leant back and forward to transfer his weight as he moved. The board's speed increased as the

hill became steeper. Soon the rolling-pebble sound of the wheels hit the intensity of a drum roll.

5 The lookouts had done their job right. There had been no cars or trucks when they waved. But we weren't the only ones taking advantage of empty, 5 am roads. A driver, testing out his new turbo-charged V8, had also snuck out early to see how fast his silver baby could fly. As a main road running perpendicular to a hill, Porter Road happened to be just the right length and flatness to speed down.

6 Rooster spotted it first. His podgy face paled and he turned to us, jumping and waving his arms, crying out for Jeremy to stop. Dave saw it too; the poor guy just froze on the spot with shock. Jeremy didn't hear anything as he sped forwards — his eyes were focused on the ramp sitting at the base of Radcliffe. Three. Two. One. Jeremy flew through the air, his legs curling up to bring his board into the first spin.

I can only imagine the terror and confusion of the driver. One second he had a clear straight, the next a boy was flying midair in his path. A howling rubber mark burnt into the road and the silver bullet spun out, trashing Jeremy's ramp as it ran up onto the curb.

8 The shock of the sudden crash dropped Jeremy's concentration. He flipped out at only 180 degrees, smashing into the road while his board clattered next to him. The road was a mix of rubber, and wheels, smoke and bits of metal. All I can remember is that I wasn't sitting down anymore; my feet barely touched the ground as I ran towards the crash.

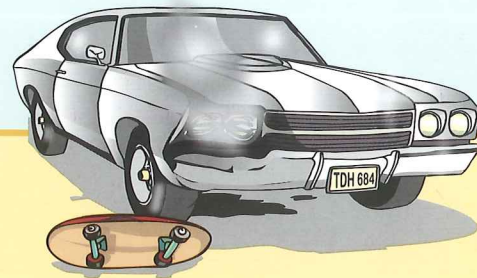
Jeremy's face was covered with blood, but he was alive and walking and so was the driver of the V8. His car wasn't so lucky. It was a write-off.

- 9 Once word got around, everyone went bananas: parents yelled, police lectured, apologies were written. Maybe it was because he was also in the wrong, or because he understood what it was like to do silly things, but the driver actually stood up for us and asked that everyone not be too harsh.

It wasn't his broken nose and jaw that bothered Jeremy the most. The first thing his parents had done was to confiscate his board. That just set off a crazy chain reaction. Suddenly my parents were taking my board,

then our principal announced that the council had banned skating on the roads around town altogether. It seemed now that every kid in the whole town — not just those of us who were on the hill — was being punished for our recklessness.

- 10 Don't worry though, the story doesn't end on that blubbery note. We've done our time; we've made our apologies. Now we're working hard to have a skate park set up in the town. Let the cars have their precious road. Those of us who love wheels and hate pollution need a place too. It's going to take some convincing, but I know that we'll win in the end.



Questions

- 1 Small, hard wheels were perfect for
a ramp jumping.
b street skating.
c a good boarder.
- 2 Where was Jeremy's jump ramp?
a It was on Porter Road, just before the intersection with Radcliffe Street.
b It was at the intersection of Porter Road and Radcliffe Street.
c It was on Radcliffe Street, just before the intersection with Porter Road.
- 3 Saturday morning was
a really cold.
b overcast.
c bright and sunny.
- 4 Who spotted the car first?
a Jeremy
b Dave
c Rooster
- 5 Who banned skating around town?
a Jeremy's parents
b the school principal
c the local council
- 6 The narrator thinks the parents, school and council
a overreacted.
b were justified in banning skating.
c did not do enough to punish skateboarders.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 A group of shops (1)
8 Move from one position to another (4)
9 At right angles to something (5)
10 Severe or strict (9)
11 A valuable item (10)

Grammar

A **preposition** is a word situated before a noun to show when or where something happened. E.g. **on** the mat, **in** the bin, **over** the fence, **before** the party, **under** the tree.

Find a **preposition** in these sentences.

- 12 Radcliffe starts at the top.
13 Jeremy arrived just after us.
14 I know we'll win in the end.
15 Jeremy flew through the air.

Back To The Text...

- 16 In this text *Rooster* is
a a male hen.
b a nick-name.
- 17 The title "Confiskated" has been misspelt
a accidentally.
b deliberately.

- 18 Prediction: What is likely to happen in the future?

- a The narrator will give up skateboarding.
b The narrator will skateboard in safety.

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Jeremy arrived.
b The narrator arrived.
- 20 a The driver saw Jeremy.
b Jeremy saw the driver.
- 21 a A note was passed around.
b Jeremy came up with a plan.

Think About This

- 22 Which of the following words best describe the narrator?
a bored
b determined
c disinterested
- 23 What was the writer implying in the sentence that begins "The sky was that bruised colour ..." in section 2?
a The sky was clear.
b The sky was a purple blue colour.
c It was a time of morning that was seen by few.

Challenge Option

Design: Your suburb needs a new skate park. Sketch a quick design.