

Everybody Has A Story

A Stranger Sparked Rielle Interest in Learning How to Roller Skate in a Month and a Half

Written and told by Rielle



The first time on tennis courts to skate; Photo taken by 'Father' on Mon, 28 Dec 2020

I had become interested in roller skates after seeing a woman, probably a young adult, skating down the footpath nearby Adelaide's Women's and Children's Hospital. It was a beautiful day in the city, birds singing, trees swaying, people behind steering wheels fuming and pressing hard on car horns, and she was skating, speeding on paths with pink and yellow skates on. I was intrigued, thinking: *Wheels strapped to your feet? Sounds dangerous.* I looked into it, finding many social media accounts dedicated to those that loved roller skating. They taught tricks, gave tips and in general loved and enjoyed the hobby. It took a while to convince my mother to buy me a pair of roller skates for Christmas, but I finally got them.

The first few days I only skated up and down the hall, we had linoleum flooring, so skating was smooth. By the end of the week, my father decided to take me to the local tennis courts. Upon getting there, you could see the courts were in bad condition – the trees and bushes surrounding the tall fencing were overgrown and there were multiple cracks that ran across the two courts. There was an attempt to fix up a pair of courts, it was painted over but was closed off and still had old paint buckets discarded, but tiny cracks that had started to resurface. It smelled horrid, the tennis courts being next to a small lake with thousands of birds, they were mainly ibises hanging around the reeds. The skating was fun and tough, I had room to practice turns and stops, dabbling in going backwards once or twice. I got used to the cracks, my father kept telling me to just bend my knees and be aware of my surroundings.

After a few more trips to the tennis courts, two of my friends, who had also gotten skates, visited Goolwa to go to the bike track, which goes all the way up to Victor Harbour. We only got to Middleton before asking my father to come pick us up, after walking up many large hills, we finally got to Middleton Beach, where we met my father. We ended up walking to the shoreline, dipping our toes in the water to cool off after an hour or so of skating and walking.

Early February, a month or so after unwrapping the Impala Skates box, I was speeding down a bike track in Victor Harbour, the concrete dipping, speed increasing. My knees were bent, close to the ground to avoid serious injuries. My father had pulled out his phone, filming my intense stare at the ground, I was determined to not ride over a rock. Such a small object could send me tumbling down the hill, busting up not only my skates, but also my body.

It's nearing the end of February and I'm starting to learn more tricks like moon walking, spread eagle, step overs, and more transitions. I love skating, though during the school term I haven't been able to skate as much. On weekends I'll go with my father to the bike track or tennis courts for a little skate. It has started to become a normal event with my father, we go down to the nearest bike track or tennis court and skate for an hour or two. I have learnt so much about myself – mainly my fear of falling, but I hope to learn much more.

