The Lemon on the Tray



A tiny mystery rolls into view.

A short story to enjoy together

The Lemon on the Tray

Zuri put a lemon on Grandpa's wooden tray. The lemon rolled away.

"Come back," she told it.

She put it in the middle. It rolled away again, bumping softly against the edge.

"This lemon likes that corner."

Grandpa turned the tray around. Now the lemon rolled towards Zuri.

She narrowed her eyes. "Perhaps it likes me."

They moved the tray to the kitchen table. The lemon stayed still.

"Now it is tired," Zuri said.

Grandpa smiled. "Let's look more closely. What was different before?"

Zuri carried the empty tray back to the little shelf. One end rested on a folded cloth. The other end rested on the wood.

She bent down until her eyes were level with it.

"This side is higher!"

The Lemon on the Tray

Grandpa brought the lemon. Zuri placed it at the high end. Away it rolled, down towards the low end.

She moved the cloth. The lemon changed direction.

They took the tray back to the table. Grandpa held it steady while Zuri lifted one end just a little. Roll, bump. She lifted the other end. Roll, bump.

"We are making the road," she said.

They tried a wooden ball next. It rolled smoothly. The lemon made a funny wobble because it was not perfectly round.

At lunchtime, Grandpa put the tray flat and set two cups on it.

"Will the cups go travelling?" he asked.

Zuri checked both ends carefully.

"No hills today," she said. "This tray is staying home."

The lemon waited beside the cups, looking perfectly innocent.

THE END

LET'S TALK

What made the lemon roll? Where else have you seen something travel down a slope?

Original story and illustration created with AI assistance. MimoMango, 2026.