



KARENINA WOLFF

It was recently said that Philadelphia is the 4th bike-friendliest cities in the country, and I believe it. With all of the bike lanes, flat topography and drivers who are learning how to share the road with us, I love biking in Philly. More than anything, I feel amazing when I'm on my bike. I love feeling connected to my community and the speed with which I can get from place to place. As with any moving vehicle, I need to take care when I'm operating my bike. There's a lot to pay attention to, between the cars next me, the pedestrians waiting to cross in front of me, and the potholes, stop signs and stop lights that are a normal part of biking in the city. All of that focus can be dangerously intercepted, however, when someone calls out to me. "Hey girl on the bike!", a man walking down on the street might yell when I'm riding past. Having someone call out to me when I'm on my bike is equivalent to having someone honk their horn. I think that there must be something wrong, like my jacket is about to get caught in my chain or I'm in danger of a serious accident. I look up from the road, panicked, thinking "Who said that? What are they saying? What's wrong? Am I in danger?". Looking for the person who said that, I almost veer into a parked car. Then the man continues, "Can I ride wit you?". "What?!", I think, "That's all he had to say? I almost veered into a parked car, made a bunch of drivers swerve to get around me, and that's all he had to say?" With anger and dismay I realize that he wasn't trying to help me or warn me about an unsafe situation. He was just doing something for his own gratification. I ride home, distracted by the sadness I'm feeling that someone would have such utter disregard for my own safety and well-being. I just wanted to ride my bike, and I just wanted to do so safely. Please let me do that so we can truly say that Philadelphia is one of the safest cities in America. Thank you.