

Shelly's Race

By Jan Pinborough

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(Based on a true story)

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:10).

Hey, Shelly!" Shelly looked up from tying her running shoes to see Rosa waving from the starting line. "Come on," Rosa called out. "Today we're going to beat our best time!"

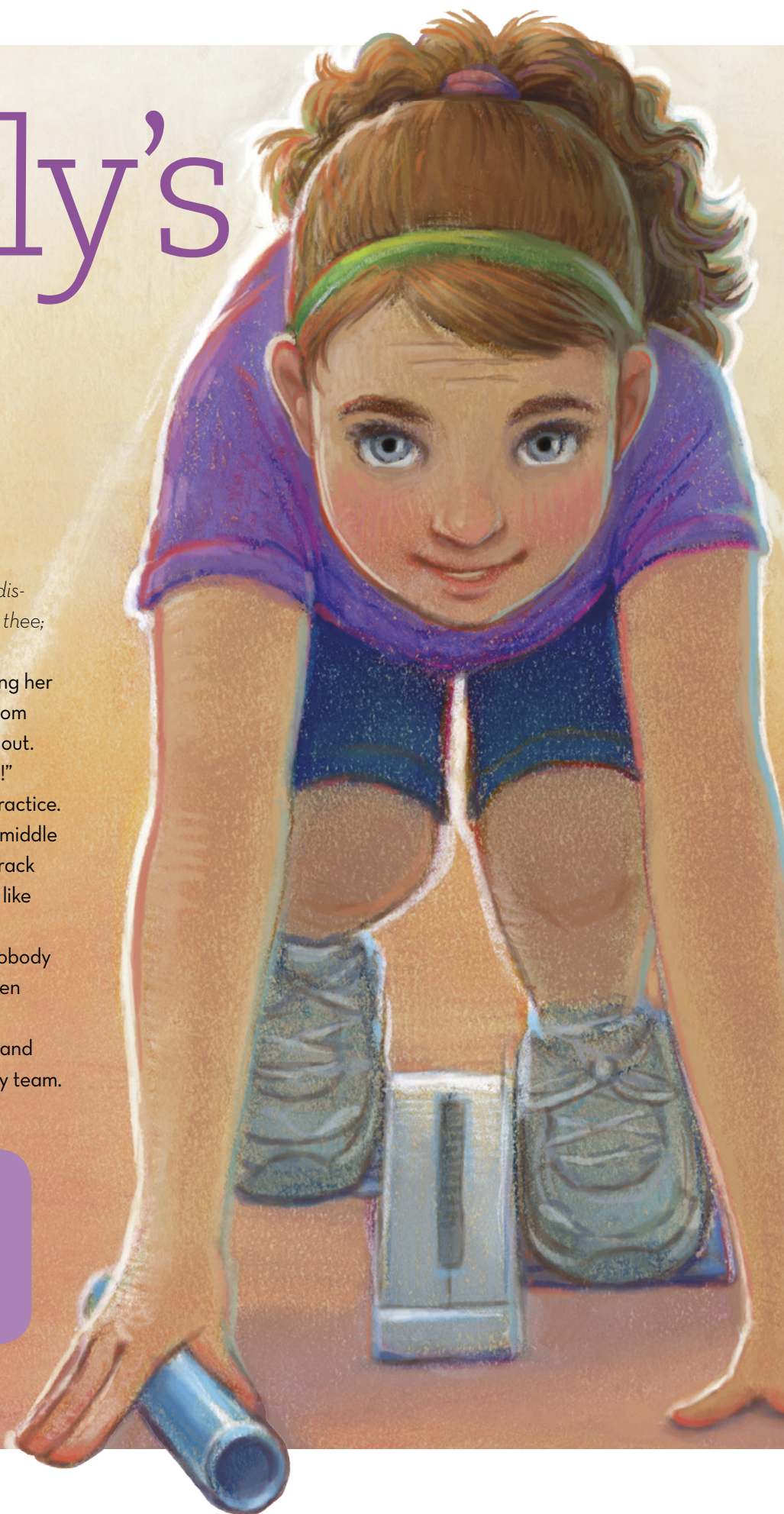
Shelly grinned. Rosa said that every practice.

Shelly liked two things about her new middle school. The first thing was being on the track team. When she ran, she felt light inside, like she didn't need to worry about anything.

The second thing she liked was that nobody here knew that her parents had just gotten divorced.

Shelly gave her shoelace one last tug and took off to join the other girls on the relay team.

Lately it seemed like no one could give Shelly the help she needed.



Ouch! She winced as her toes jammed into the end of her running shoes. How was she going to tell Dad she needed new shoes again?

After the race, Shelly, Rosa, Becca, and Tiana were celebrating their new best relay time. "I told you we were going to do it today!" Rosa said.

Shelly laughed. She handed the baton to their track teacher and bent to loosen her laces.

"Good work, girls," Mrs. Edwards said. "You work really well together. Don't forget to pay your track fee tomorrow."

Shelly's smile faded. She had totally forgotten about that!

On the bus ride home, all Shelly could think about was the shoes and track fee. She didn't want to give Mom one more thing to worry about. And the last time she had called to ask Dad for extra money, he had sounded annoyed. Lately it seemed like there was no one who could give her the help she needed.

When she got home, Shelly went straight to her room.

At dinner her brothers and sisters talked and joked, but she just pushed her food around her plate.



I was really nervous before a Scout campout, and my mom reminded me that I can pray anytime, anywhere, even as I was hiking. I went on the campout and prayed when I started feeling nervous and homesick. It made me feel better to know that Heavenly Father is always listening. I still get nervous on campouts, but I know that I can pray anytime.

Zach W., age 12, Utah, USA

After dinner Mom helped Shelly clear the table. "I'm meeting with Bishop Parker tonight," Mom said. "Would you like to come and get a priesthood blessing?"

Shelly nodded. She really missed the blessings Dad used to give her when she was worried or sick.

A little later, as Bishop Parker gave her a blessing, Shelly felt something deep inside her relax. "Shelly, your dad isn't in your home to help you now," he said in the blessing. "But your Heavenly Father is always there. I bless you that you will be able to talk to Him just as you would to your dad, and Heavenly Father will always help you."

Shelly felt lighter than she had for a long time. She had a warm feeling inside that told her the bishop's words were true. Heavenly Father loved her and would listen to her. With His help, maybe she could even have the courage to talk to her parents.

On the way home, she told Mom about the shoes and the track fee. That night she knelt and asked Heavenly Father to help her have the courage to talk to her dad. She prayed about it again on the bus to school the next morning. By the time she got home from school, she felt brave enough to call her dad. This time he didn't seem impatient or annoyed when she told him what she needed. Her prayers had been answered.

A few weeks later, Shelly laced up her new running shoes and ran to join Rosa and the other girls. It felt good to know she had a great team supporting her. She didn't need to run her race alone. ◆