One Last Trick

By: Molly Sanderson

I was next. I was so nervous that I forgot to eat breakfast. I heard the clock ticking- in sync with my heartbeat. I knew my family was here, cheering me on. Their voices echoed in my head. And my friend Kayla- She has been there for me, whenever I needed her. Then, I heard my name. My leotard got tighter, every time I breathed in. I started walking to the floor. My feet bounced on the springy surface. I heard my name again… and this time it was louder…

“Abby! Time to wake up!” My mom came in my room and opened the blinds.

“Ugh,” I moaned.

“Come on! It’s a Friday morning, and your gymnastics meet is tomorrow. So get out of bed!” Mom ordered.

I got out of bed and opened up the window. The warm Californian summer breeze blew in my face. It made me feel calm and relaxed, like I was ready to take on the day.

“Bye Mom! Bye Dad!” I yelled as I headed to school.

“Bye, honey! Love you,” they both replied.

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“Hey Abby! Are you excited for your meet?” asked Kayla as she was walking towards me.

“Um, I'm more nervous. I am scared I will mess up,” I answered heading into math class.

“Oh, don´t worry about it. You´ll do great!”

“Thanks Kayla!”

The day went by pretty fast after that. I went over to Kayla’s house after school for dinner. I was having fun, but I kept thinking about my meet. Around 8 o'clock I went home, and I got straight into bed. I couldn’t sleep at all. I got up and I went outside on the deck. It was a nice summer night, and a soft breeze blew through my hair. I walked over to the grass and lay down. It was nice and cold. I shut my eyes and thought of all of the positive things that would happen tomorrow.

“Let’s go! You’re going to be late!” Dad said, getting out my leo.

“I’m going. Stop your yapping.” I replied with a smile. I went down to my kitchen and ate breakfast.

After I got ready, I went on the bus with my team. Kayla was on my team, but she wasn’t competing. My gymnastics team was a really good gymnastics team with 10 1st and 2nd place trophies! When we got on the bus, Coach Lacey had to talk to us.

“So girls, today at the competition, The Shooting Star Gymnast’s are going to be there.” Everybody moaned at the same time. Shooting Star Gymnastics were a really good gymnastics team. They had won first place for 12 years in a row!

“Abby, I want you to do your best, but don’t go overboard. We don’t want to risk any injury.”

“Got it,” I answered.

“Mackenzie…” Coach Lacey’s voice faded in my mind. All I could think about was that floor. *What if I do the wrong move? What if I stop after the music ends?*

“Hey, Abby,” Kayla peered her head over the top of my seat.

“Yeah?” I replied.

“Do you know if Tracy Scott is going to be there today?” *Oh no. Tracy Scott? She is the best gymnast in our age group. She is on the “Shooting Star Gymnastics” team. If I mess up one little move up, she could totally get first place for floor. I was not ready for her.*

“Oh, I hope not, but knowing Tracy, she will never miss a meet. What if I mess up and she wins? She probably has a really good routine,” I replied.

“Just don’t worry about it,” Kayla answered.

I turned around and put my head on the window of the bus. It was cold, but nice. I slowly fell asleep. About an hour later, we were at the competition. As we walked out of the bus, there were at least 5 other teams who were heading in, and it included Shooting Star Gymnastics.

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The gym was humongous! There were so many people there. We got to our seats and sat down. It felt like my heart was pounding out of my chest. I watched everyone go up to their events. They were flipping perfect cartwheel and handsprings. They didn’t look nervous at all! I was going next after my friend Alex. And Believe it or not, she was on deck. The judge said her name, and Alex walked over to the bars.

“Whoo! Go Alex!” Our team cheered.

Alex was really good at bars. She was doing a split in the air and a ton of back hip circles. I watched her flip and twist in all different ways. She was about to do her dismount, and she landed it! She got a score of 9.79! That was really good for a 12 year old gymnast. The judge said my name, so I walked on to the floor, and got in my position. The music started, and so did I. Suddenly, I was flipping and twisting through the air. I felt so free that I didn’t hear the music playing. Everything around me was still, and I could hear the yelling and cheering of the crowd. I did another flip and twist. My performance went by fast, and my ending was coming up. I went to do a double backflip, but something went wrong. I landed awkwardly, and I felt a pain in my leg. Not just any pain but a pain that felt like a thousand knives were being struck on the side of my leg. I started crying. I heard everyone gasp, and I saw the replay of me when I fell on the big screen. I saw my leg land sideways. Ouch!

“Abby!” yelled Kayla, running over to me.

My parents picked me up and asked me what happened.

“I was doing my trick and-and I guess I fell, but my leg really hurts,” I said.

“Ok, you’re ok. Can you stand up?” Dad asked. I tried to stand up, but my leg shook and I fell back down.

“Alright. We’re going to a hospital. Let’s go.” My mom and my dad helped me up and we went to the hospital. I slowly fell asleep on the bed, my leg still in pain.

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The next day came, and it was time for me to leave the hospital. I had a bright blue cast on my leg and crutches that leaned against the bed. I looked at my parents and said,

“Will I be ok?”

“You’ll be fine honey. Just, no gymnastics for…” my dad sighed, “You won’t be able to do gymnastics for another 6 weeks.”

A sharp pain went through my stomach, and I felt like crying.

“But, my next meet isn’t for another 8 weeks. How will I compete?”

“You will have to do physical therapy 3 days a week at your school,” my Mom explained, “And you will be able to get your cast off in 5 weeks.”

I sighed. I was relieved that I got my cast off one week before I can do gymnastics. We went home, and then I called Kayla. I told her everything my parents told me, and she was really bummed out. The next morning came, and I had physical therapy. It was okay, but my leg was hurting. It was a really nice day out, and I really wanted to go outside. I could hear the birds chirping, as if they were saying that I should come outside.

“Ok, Abby. Let’s begin therapy,” Doctor Gulia said.

“Great,” I moaned.

“Oh, come on. It’ll be fun! Now, let’s start by doing some leg exercises.” Doctor Gulia had me lift my leg up and down. It hurt, obviously, but it was helping.

Doctor said,“Ok, so you are walking fine, it’s just that you need to exercise your leg a little more. Try to do those exercises I taught you every night before you go to bed, alright?

“Ok. Thank you! Bye.” I hopped out of the office and went home. I knew that soon I would be able to go back out on the floor.

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A couple days later, we were back at school.

“Hey Abby,” Kayla said. “are you coming to my meet on Thursday?”

“I wouldn’t miss it.” I replied.

“Ok, good, because I am going to kill it at beam!” We both laughed. Kayla and I were at lunch. The day was dragging on, and that was good. I had physical therapy. *Please don’t ring, please don’t ring!* I thought. Soon enough, the bell rang to go home, but I wasn’t going home. I went to therapy and I had to do the same boring leg exercises that we do every time. It was boring, but it went by fast. I had a little time before I went home, so I stopped in to see gymnastics practice. I walked in the doors, and everybody was very happy to see me.

“Abby!” My teammates yelled.

“Hi!”

“Abby! I am so happy to see you here!” Kayla came and gave me a big hug. “What are you doing here?”

“I have a little time before I go home, so I came to see you guys.”

“Awesome! So, when will you start practicing?” asked Alex.

“Five weeks.” I mumbled. I was mad, but I needed the rest. A few minutes later I had to leave, and everyone said bye.

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Thursday came and I was at Kayla’s meet. She was doing a great job and she got 1st place on our team for beam. Her grand move was a roundoff, back layout. It was awesome!

A few weeks went by, and I was getting my boot off. I went to Doctor Gulia’s office, and she checked my leg out. My parents were there too. She told be my leg was healing great, and I was ready to start walking a little. I started walking around the room. I was cruising!

“Wow! Abby, your leg is great! The swelling has gone down, too. I think you’re ready to take off the cast,” Doctor Gulia said.

“Yay! That’s great. Let’s get her off.” I answered. I sat down on the bed and she took of the boot. I stood up, and walked again. I could run, but I hopped up and down a little bit. It was pretty embarrassing.

“Ok. So her leg is healing better than we expected. You should have her doing her exercises at night still, and she should be fine for her competition,” Doctor Gulia smiled.

“Ok. Thank you so much Doctor Gulia,” My Mom said.

“No problem.”My family and I went home, and I couldn’t stop smiling.

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The day of the competition arrived; I was nervous but excited at the same time. Kayla, Alex, Mackenzie, and I were competing for floor. We were at an even bigger gym this time. I was last, so that gave me time to concentrate. Alex was first. I saw her walk out on the floor, and then I got up and ran to the bathroom.

“Abby!” Kayla ran after me. “Abby! What are you doing in here? You’re supposed to go out there cheering on Alex,”

“I’m sorry. It’s just-I don’t think I can do this,” I clenched my stomach and looked out the door.

“Come on! You’re Abigail Thomas! You can do this. I know you can.”

“What if I hurt myself again? I will be done with gymnastics.”

“You won’t hurt yourself. It’s all in your head. You can do it. I promise.” Kayla looked at me with a stare.

“Ok,” I breathed. “Let’s go.” Kayla and I walked out to our seats.

“Are you ok Abby?” Asked coach.

“Yes. I’m fine.” I smiled.

Kayla was up, and she was doing an awesome job. All I was doing was thinking positively. I can do this. I breathed in and out. In…..out. My turn.

I walked to the floor. My feet bounced on the springy surface. My leotard got tighter, every time I breathed in. I could see all the faces of the people in the stands. I could smell the rubber from the mats. I could hear my family and friends cheering me on, and I could still taste my breakfast this morning. I chuckled. *I hope no one saw that.* I thought. I got in the center of the floor, and started. I was twisting and flipping all over the place, and I hadn’t messed up yet. I did turns and splits, and everything you can imagine. I knew I was killing it out there. I went to the corner of the floor and thought, *Here it is...my big ending. You can do this, Abby.* I ran as fast as I could. I did a round off, then a back handspring, and then an amazing double back layout. I landed; no pain, only happiness. Everyone was screaming and cheering. I did it. I landed my one last trick!