

The Heart of a Gymnast

By Charlotte G.

Bang! Bang! Bang! “CLAIRE,” Mr. Anderson yelled, sounding like the deafening thunder last night. Claire, ignoring the furiousness of her father, leaped and tumbled. Ever since she was four, she’s dreamed of being the most beautiful, magnificent gymnast on the planet. Her father, Gail Anderson, plays for the Houston Astros, and in college played baseball for Texas A&M. He is the most “sporty brain” Claire ever knew. Unfortunately, Claire wanted to be a gymnast and her dad wanted her to play softball more than anything. Her mom, Susan Anderson, didn’t really care but was worried what her husband would think if she said that, so to everyone else she was on Gail’s side. Mr. Anderson was a tall and skinny man, but muscular. He had brown hair and a little, bushy beard. He had huge blue eyes and spoke in a deep voice. She had a very high-pitched voice and spoke very softly to everyone she met. Claire was very tall for her age. She had hazel eyes and freckles just around her nose and the tip of her cheeks. She had brown hair and was very shy, although whenever it came to gymnastics, she’d jump up in the air like the most exciting thing had happened. She had two older brothers and a sister in college at the University of Kentucky. Her name was Robin. She was on the volleyball team and is also on Mr. Anderson’s side. She also has a seventeen-year-old brother, Ross, and a fifteen-year-old brother, Luke. None of them were really too thrilled about the idea of gymnastics.

One day Claire woke up for school. She came downstairs, into the kitchen where her family was silent. Claire started to enjoy the silence but then got suspicious. She tried to brighten things up by saying, “Good morning”. The only response was from Ross muttering, “mornin’”. She got dressed into her light blue tank top that said, “A Gymnast Always Follows Their Dreams”. She walked to school in the beating hot sun, and by the time she got to school she was drenched in sweat. Her friends played soccer, and they all made fun of her that she wanted to do gymnastics. Claire had a bad day of school. She was sort of excited to go home, but she knew it wouldn’t fix her problem. At 5th period with Mr. Benolken, while the class was taking their social studies test the classroom phone rang. Mr. Benolken signaled Matthew Peters to get it. Claire did NOT like Matthew. He wasn’t very nice to Claire, well, actually no one was. Claire was lonely. Matthew answered the phone and put a smirk on his face and said, “Claire, you’re needed in the office.” Claire’s face turned white. Claire made her way downstairs where the front office was. She got there and the lady that was sitting there smiled at her with gleaming eyes. “You will be a walker today,” the lady said in a high voice. Claire put a puzzled look on her face and left with so many questions and lots of confusion. “Why a walker?”, Claire thought to herself, “I’m usually bus”. “So, did you get in trouble,” Matthew said, still smiling. “No,” she replied with anger. “Just a walker,” Claire continued her test and about 30 minutes later she packed up her backpack and walked home.

She got home way earlier than she usually did. Her parents hadn't even gone to the hospital to check on her mom's friend. "Why did you make me a walker today?" Claire asked. "Because we have a surprise for you," her mother replied quite happily. Claire wanted it to be that her parents signed her up for gymnastics, but Claire knew that never in a million years would they do it. But Mr. Anderson was quite grumpy. There was a 1% chance of that happening, almost a zero. "We are going to sign you up for gymnastics," said her mom. Claire screamed with excitement but suddenly frowned. "So, you haven't signed me up yet?", Claire asked with sorrow and disappointment in her eyes. "We signed you up for a program to help kids with cancer. Basically you can raise money by a lemonade stand, donating to the food bank, etc." "So?", exclaimed Claire. "So, whenever you raise \$50, we will sign you up," growled Gail interruptingly. "That's going to take a long time," sobbed Claire. "No, it's easy," said Susan half smiling half frowning. "When do I start?", asked Claire toughening up a bit. "Tomorrow." Claire went to school the next day and went straight to her new program.

Months went by it was Claire's eleventh birthday. There was one single birthday present and Claire frowned when opening it. There was a letter that said, "*Congratulations, you are now a Gymnastics Super Star*". Claire knew what this meant. It meant that all her hard work had paid off. Claire screamed at the top of her lungs and the whole house was filled with excitement.

Years passed by and Claire was becoming a stronger gymnast every practice. She finally made it on the Superstars Team, their gymnastics team. Claire won tons of medals. She succeeded. Always keep trying because hard work pays off.