

Tilly Soars

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Chapter 1

Always the Smallest



I'm Tilly, and I'm the smallest kid in Year 6. I was the smallest kid in Year 1, too. Then I was the smallest kid in Year 2, and then the smallest kid in Year 3.

Just like that, year after year.

The teachers at school are always saying things like "Come out to the front, Tilly, you won't be able to see" and "Don't put Tilly in the back row of the class photo, no one will be able to see her" and "I just don't know about having Tilly in the Year 6 basketball team – I'm worried she'll get hurt, playing with those bigger kids. Maybe she'd better play in the Year 4 team?"

Year 4 team! I mean!



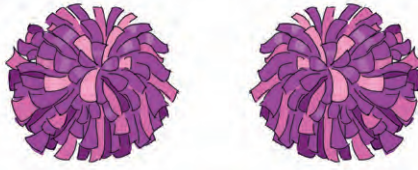
I've always been small. When my younger brother, Ned, and I were very young, I was bigger than Ned for a couple of years, but then he overtook me. Ned's much taller than me now and he's only in Year 4, so people are always saying things like, "So, is this your little sister, Ned?"

"I'm his *older* sister," I always say, rolling my eyes.

"But not my big sister," Ned says, grinning.

"You know, it's *all right* to be small, dear," my mum always says.

“Remember, good things come in small packages, sweetheart,” says my grandma.



“Lots of famous people were small,” said my dad one day, when I’d been complaining.

“Famous people like who?” I asked.

“Well, famous people like Queen Victoria,” said Dad. “She was only 152 centimetres. And Mother Teresa, she was 152 centimetres too, and so is the singer Kylie Minogue. And Olga Korbut, the Olympic gymnast, she’s not quite 150 centimetres. And Charlotte Brontë, the writer, she was only 147 centimetres, and John Keats the poet was not quite 155 centimetres, and there was Yuri Gagarin, first man to travel in space, he was just over 157 centimetres.”



“Really?” I said. “All those really amazing people were small? How do you know?”

“I looked it up on the internet,” said Dad. “Come and see.”

I went and looked at the site with him and Dad was right – lots of wonderful, famous people *were* small. “How about that?” I said to Dad, and suddenly, I was feeling much better about being small.

But I wondered if all those famous people had to do physical education classes in school. How did they feel about *that*?

For Review Only

Chapter 2

A New Teacher



Physical education classes were the worst time to be the smallest kid in the class. I was almost always the slowest when we ran races, I couldn't jump as high as the other kids, and, when we got into teams to play games, I was nearly always the last one chosen for a team. No one ever said "We don't want Tilly, she's too slow", but I knew that's how everyone felt.

Then, one day, something happened. A new physical education teacher came to our school – and things changed.

For a start, Ms Heiner didn't make us choose our own teams. She had different ways of doing it: one day everyone with white socks in one team, and navy socks in the other; another day, everyone whose name starts before M in one team, and everyone from M to Z in the other. I liked this way of doing things



much better, because I wasn't left standing waiting to be chosen any more.

Then, Ms Heiner changed the sports we played. We had always played football and basketball, but now, Ms Heiner said we were going to try something new.

Gymnastics.

We all looked at each other. "But I like playing football," one of the boys said.

"And I like basketball," a girl said.