The Dreaming Place

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Chapter One

Leah's Story



My name is Leah. My friends say I should tell my story because it might help other people. Amy is really keen for me to do it, and so is Kayla.

"It might get published in a book!" Kayla says.

I'm nervous about sharing my feelings and experiences. I'm not sure that I can write well enough to tell the story. Amy and Kayla say, "You'll never know unless you try!" and "Come on Leah! You know about taking a risk!"

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So here I am, at the computer. I'm not much of a typist as I only use three fingers, but I can go quite fast. I can only have the computer for an hour each night because in our big family we have to take turns.

Our English teacher says the first part of a story is the hardest part to write. I agree with her! I've used up half of my time just thinking about a title. I think I'll settle for *The Dreaming Place*, as that's where my story begins.

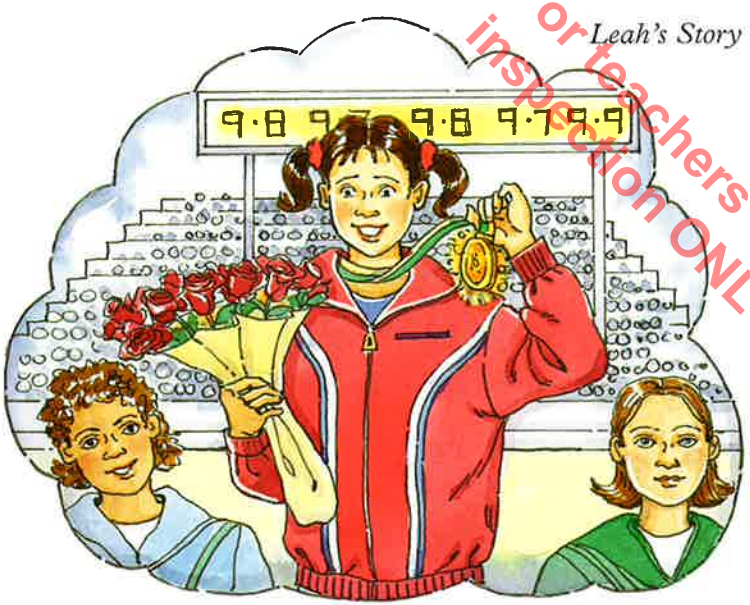


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I was nine when I found my special dreaming place. It was out in the orchard, my own private gymnasium! Around the old trees the grass grew strong and thick, making a spongy tumbling mat under my feet. The long low branches of the apple tree were my horizontal bars, and the old logs lying on the ground were the beams where I practised my balances and turns.

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Most afternoons, after school, I went to the dreaming place. I had seen the gymnasts on the television competing in the Olympic Games, and I had dreams of being just like them. As I somersaulted and cartwheeled in the grass, I saw myself at the Games tumbling across the mat in time with the music. I imagined the noise of the crowd as the judges called my scores:

9.8 9.8 9.8 9.7 9.9

In my dream I stood proudly on the presentation dais, with a medal around my neck and flowers in my hands.

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Sometimes I asked my older sisters, Sarah and Elizabeth, to come to my dreaming place. We did gym together, but I never told them about the dreams.

I knew I needed lessons if I was to become a skilled gymnast so I asked Mum and Dad if I could join the club in town.

"Soon, Leah," Dad said. "We just need to get the car paid for, then you can have your lessons."

But something happened, and my dreams were shattered!

