



# Smooshed Tutus & Missed Goals

“All right, girls!” Miss Watson, the dance instructor, clapped her hands. “Get in your places. Jessie, you and Olivia are in the middle.”

Jessie moved to the center of the room beside her friend, Olivia. They had started ballet classes together two months ago, and now they were practicing for their first performance in front of their parents.

“Ready, begin, and one, two, three,” Miss Watson counted as the girls stepped forward and then turned.

“Ouch! Jessie, watch out.” Olivia hopped around on one foot, holding onto her injured toes Jessie had stepped on.

“Jessie, remember, you must turn to the right first,” Miss Watson reminded her—again.

“I’m sorry,” Jessie said.

The girls got in their places once more and the music started. “Plié, good, and one, two, three, now pirouette—no, Jessie! Turn the other way!”

“It’s no use, Miss Watson, I’m never going to get it right,” Jessie blurted.

“Jessie, I know you can do this. Keep practicing at home.” The instructor turned to the other girls and announced, “That’s all for today. Good job, everyone!”

When Jessie got in the car, she heaved a huge sigh. “Wheeew! What a day.”

“Uh oh!” said Jessie’s mom. “Sounds like things didn’t go too well today.”

“Nope,” Jessie said. “I just can’t remember which way to turn. I’m afraid I’ll mess it all up in the show.”

“You’ll get it. Just keep practicing.”

Jessie did keep practicing turning her pirouettes every day after school. Soon it was time for the girls to perform the ballet for their parents. The girls took their places on the stage. Jessie took a deep breath as Miss Watson started the music.

“Plié and one, two, three, now pirouette,” said Jessie to herself as she bent her knees then stood up on her toes ready to turn her pirouette. As Jessie spun herself around, she expected to crash into Olivia at any moment and ruin the show. But to her surprise, Olivia kept dancing, the music kept going, and the audience was still watching. “I did it!” Jessie whispered.

“Yeah, Jessie,” said Olivia, “but we’re not done yet, keep going!” The two girls turned, then bent their knees in a plié. Jessie stood up on tip toe and stepped toward Olivia. She was so thrilled that she had finally turned correctly, she forgot that it was time for another pirouette—turning in the *other* direction.

Before she knew what was happening, Jessie bumped into Olivia. Their fluffy pink tutus smooshed into each other, and both girls stumbled. Jessie turned, but Olivia stepped on her toe. “Ow!” Jessie yelped. Both girls scrambled to get back in time with the music, but they couldn’t seem to catch up with the other girls stepping and

twirling. After what seemed like forever, the music finally ended.

The audience clapped as all the little ballerinas curtsied then left the stage.

On the drive home, Jessie’s mom said, “You know, Jessie, you did do a good job. I noticed you even turned around the right way at the right time today.”

“Yeah, isn’t that what you’ve been working on all week?” asked her dad.

Jessie nodded glumly.

“And you did it! That’s great,” her dad added.

Jessie shrugged. “Yeah, but then I messed up a part I used to do just fine.” Jessie’s eyes filled with tears.

When they got home, Jessie went straight to her room to change her clothes. She threw the tutu on the floor. “I don’t ever want to wear that thing again,” she grumbled.

“Jessie! Justin’s here,” called her mom.

Jessie didn’t feel like talking to anyone. But she knew Justin wasn’t at the show. He didn’t see her mess up, so she figured she could at least say hi.

“Hey, Justin,” said Jessie as she tromped down the stairs.

“Hi, Jessie. How did your dance thing go?” Justin asked. “I hope you did better at that than I did at my soccer game today. I got a bunch of chances to score goals, but my kicks were so bad the ball didn’t even go near the net!”

“Really?” said Jessie. “Last week you got two goals.”

Justin nodded. “Yup, I felt bad because my teammates gave me such good passes then I didn’t score.”

“Wow, Justin. You must feel terrible.”

“Well, I did at first, but that’s just the way it goes sometimes. Even great players like Jeremy goof up once in a while. Coach said to keep shooting even after I missed so many times.”

“I messed up on my dance today,” Jessie admitted. “I did the turn just right, but then I bumped into Olivia! It was a mess.”

Justin thought a minute. “Hey, do you suppose God let me mess up today so I could know how you feel?”

“Huh . . . I don’t know. But my dad did tell me that God does work in quiet ways like that so we can encourage each other.” Jessie smiled. “Thanks for telling me about your goofed-up game. Now I don’t feel so bad about my goofed-up dance.”

“Hey, maybe I should try ballet. I could show off my dance moves!” Justin stood on his tip toes and spun in a wild circle then crashed to the floor.

“Haha! Maybe you should stick with soccer!” laughed Jessie. “And I’ll keep practicing ballet.” Jessie stood up on her toes and twirled around—doing a perfect pirouette.