



# The Persistence of Lily

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Lily sat alone on the playground swing, her head down. Other children laughed and played nearby, but she felt a quiet ache in her heart. She wished she could join them, but a wave of sadness often made her feel invisible.



During recess, a few children pointed and whispered when Lily walked by. Their words weren't loud, but Lily heard them, and a knot formed in her tummy. She hurried away, her eyes a little watery, wishing she could just disappear.



Later that evening, Lily looked at herself in the mirror. She didn't like how she felt inside—tired and a little sad. She decided then and there that she wanted to feel strong and full of energy, not for anyone else, but for herself.



One sunny afternoon, Lily passed by the community center and saw children flipping and twirling in a gymnastics class. Their movements were so graceful and powerful! A spark ignited inside her, and she knew she wanted to try it too.



Lily's first gymnastics class was tricky! She wobbled on the beam and tumbled off the mat, but a small smile played on her lips. Her coach, a kind lady, told her about 'issrar'—the power of never giving up—and Lily felt a flicker of determination.



Lily also started paying attention to what she ate. She chose crunchy apples and colorful veggies, feeling her body grow lighter and more energetic. Soon, she was bouncing with new vitality, ready for her next adventure.



Day after day, Lily practiced her cartwheels and handstands. She fell many times, sometimes scraping her knee, but each time she remembered 'issrar' and bounced right back up. Her muscles grew stronger, and her movements became smoother.



The big gymnastics championship arrived, and Lily felt a mix of nerves and excitement. She performed her routine with amazing grace and power, sticking her landing perfectly. When her name was called as the winner, a huge, joyful smile spread across her face.



After her victory, the same children who used to whisper now wanted to be Lily's friend. But Lily smiled kindly, remembering the friends who had always been there for her—sharing snacks, playing games, and cheering her on, long before she won any medals.



Lily stood with her true friends, laughing and sharing stories. She knew that real strength came from within, from her 'issrar,' and from the kindness she shared with others. And the best friends were the ones who saw her true worth, no matter what.