



Shelly's Tin Bucket



Shelly had a street hockey contest tomorrow. She wanted to win it more than anything. So after lunch, she took her stick and a puck to the alley behind her house. Her pal Dan came along with his tablet to keep score. Shelly set up the net by the brick wall.



She took a big swing, and the puck went wide. It hit a trash can with a bang, and a gray kitten ran under the fence. Shelly tried again. That shot went wide too, and so did the next eight.

"Zero for ten," said Dan, tapping a button on his tablet.



"I can count, Dan," said Shelly. She sat down on the step and let out a sigh. "If I hit like this tomorrow, the Goblins will win." Dan handed her a walnut muffin on a napkin from the snack basket Mom had packed.



"You hit hard," he said. "But you just look at the whole net. Pick one small spot instead." Shelly ate her muffin and thought about it. Then she saw an old tin bucket by the trash cans. She set the bucket in the corner of the net.



"That is my spot," she said. Her first shot missed the bucket. So did the next six. Then one shot hit the tin with a loud bang! Shelly grinned and lined up another. She hit the puck again and again while insects hummed around the alley lamp.



By sunset, the puck went to that bucket like it was pulled by a magnet. "Nine out of ten," said Dan. The next day, Shelly put on her red jersey and her helmet. The Goblins were as quick as rabbits, and the game was tied until the last minute.



Then the puck slid to Shelly. She did not look at the whole net. She looked at the corner, where the bucket had been, and slammed the puck. It flew past a Goblin's stick and into the net.



It was the winning goal! Her team yelled and jumped all around her. The contest judge pinned a blue velvet ribbon on her jersey. Later, at the team picnic, Dan held up the old tin bucket. "This needs a ribbon too," he said. Shelly laughed and tied her ribbon on it.