

The sparkle of hope

by Marta Wolankiewicz

I am tiny, invisible to the naked eye, but I possess the type power, which others, even the largest humans I know, do not have.

For some time now I circle around Katie, since sadness, thoughtfulness and depression are present on her face.

I met her for the first time at the swimming pool. She felt like a fish in water. She was extremely nimble. She was focused, serious and calm. At times I felt that the girl went in too deep and that she couldn't get back up to the surface again. This was when I delicately pushed her up, making sure that she didn't drown.

One day Katie came to the swimming pool with her coach. Regular practices of particular swimming styles began. The coach got angry and shouted at Katie when she got something mixed up or did wrong. I couldn't look at it that is why I very quickly entered Katie's heart to be able to even closer and help her out in tough times. Since there was not much happiness inside the girl's heart and too much tiredness I poured half of my strength into her. The fatigue disappeared right from the get go.

Katie swam brilliantly, charming with the swiftness of her moves.

Days, weeks and months of monotonous practises passed. The coach never seemed to be satisfied. Was it that Katie could not do enough? Maybe all her work will go to waste?

It was then that the little girl was about to go for her first real competition. I was with her at all times, making sure that she felt good, trying to disperse all of the worries and dark thoughts.

The atmosphere was tense and for Katie it was the time for concentration... We're waiting... she jumped! She swimming swiftly without showing any signs of tiredness, but I know best how hard her heart beats. I am doing what I can do to give Katie with strength and to comfort her. Her rivals are also doing their best. The competitors are quickly heading for the finish, the distance between them is small, it is hard to predict who will win. The finish is very close. Ka-tie! Ka-tie! Katie's first! First! What a joy! I just can't believe it, Katie's great dream has become the reality. I can feel Katie's heart beating from the great effort and great joy. Katie's on the podium – what a wonderful and a marvellous moment! We are very proud and extremely happy.

What followed were the next competition and next successes...

But nothing lasts forever. From long before I felt that the end will come to that what is beautiful and even though Katie did not allow for any bad thought to get to her – on the contrary she enjoyed her happiness and success.

The worst came suddenly and unexpectedly, despite it had been around for long. A truck from around the corner, no brakes a hard hit... Katie! What's with Katie? She is alive, but the injuries are extremely serious.

Many of her exercises Katie, does in water, in the swimming pool. I presented her with a certain thought – it is obvious that Katie will not be able to take part in the normal competition for healthy and strong sportspeople, but there are also other possibilities – Olympic Games for the disabled!

Although with the difficulty, but the girl's life has gained a somehow new direction and even charm...

I am happy that I was able to talk Katie not only into taking part in competitions but also into practicing regularly.

I am happy also that to a large extent it is my work – the work of the small sparkle of hope, which, when there comes a need – is able to burn a huge fire, the one that every four years burns at the Olympic stadium, and the same one that burns within the heart of my friend Katie.

I am eleven years old. I attend fourth grade of Gomulin Primary School. I was born in Piotrków Trybunalski but I currently live in the beautiful village of Łachta. My parents started my interest in history and the love of nature.

The Polish Language, Mathematics and Natural Environment classes are my favourite subjects. Ms. Danuta Stępień, the Polish teacher is my head teacher. I like sport. Running and football are my favourite sports disciplines.

I am a happy, friendly girl who apart from sports enjoys writing essays.

Marta Wolankiewicz