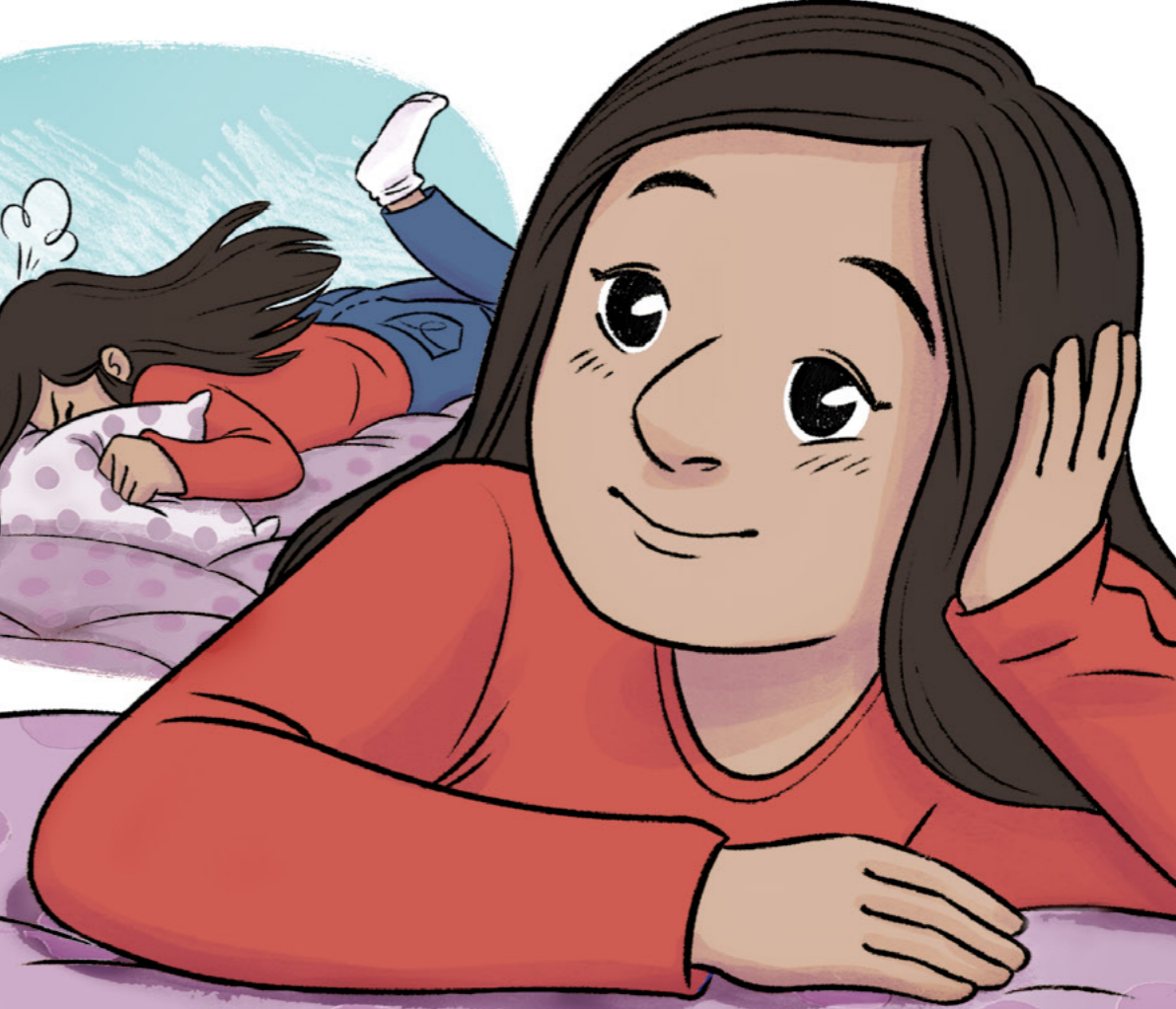


Why did Mila always have to be so perfect?



Ana Learns Her Worth

By Lucy Stevenson Ewell
(Based on a true story)

This story happened in Canada.

“Mamá, guess what?” Ana’s older sister, Mila, said. She held up her report card from school. “I have As in all my classes!”

Ana rolled her eyes. Why did Mila always have to be so perfect?

“That’s great,” Mamá said. “I’m proud of you.” She turned to Ana. “And how are your grades?”

Ana handed Mamá her report card. “They’re fine,” Ana said, looking down. Ana tried hard in school. But she didn’t have perfect grades like Mila did.

“I’m proud of you too,” Mamá said. She gave Ana a hug.

She’s just saying that to make me feel better, Ana thought. Mila had always been smarter than her.

But Mila wasn’t just better at school than Ana. She was better at *everything*. She had more friends. She had prettier hair. She was better at sports. Everyone loved Mila.

Ana’s parents tried to help.

“You are so important, Ana,” Papi would say.

“You are beautiful and smart,” Mamá would say.

But Ana didn’t feel important or beautiful or smart. Not compared to Mila.

One day Ana and Mila were playing a board game. “Looks like you won again,” Ana groaned.

“Want to play something else?” Mila asked. “We could go outside. I bet you’ll beat me at soccer!”

“No!” Ana snapped. “I’m tired of losing, and I’m tired of you always being better than me.” She felt like there was hot water boiling inside her.

Mila’s eyes widened. “I’m sorry—”

Ana turned and ran to her room before Mila could finish. “I’ll never be perfect like you!” she said, and slammed the door.

Ana lay on her bed with her face in her pillow. She felt so angry!

She huffed some deep breaths. When she was calm, Ana knelt to say a prayer. “Dear Heavenly Father,” she said, “please help me. I’m always jealous of Mila.” Her voice got quiet. “I feel like I’ll never be good enough. Do You really love me?”

A warm feeling spread from Ana’s head down to her toes. Then she had a thought. Heavenly Father loved people because they were His children. Not because they were the best. Maybe Ana didn’t have to be better than anyone else to be loved. She was loved right now.

Ana stayed on her knees. She didn’t want the good feeling to go away. Heavenly Father *did* love her—a lot.

Then there was a gentle knock at the door. It was Mamá. She sat on the bed next to Ana. “I heard you were upset.”

Ana nodded. “Yeah. I feel better now though. I know I shouldn’t be angry at Mila for getting good grades or winning. And I said a prayer, which helped a lot.”

Mamá put her arm around Ana. “How did you feel when you prayed?”

“Good,” Ana said. “I felt like I was really important to Heavenly Father.”

Mamá pulled Ana close. “You’ve always been really important—to Heavenly Father and to us. But I’m glad that *you* know that now.”

“Me too. I’m going to tell Mila I’m sorry for yelling at her.” Ana smiled. “And ask if she wants to play soccer!” ●