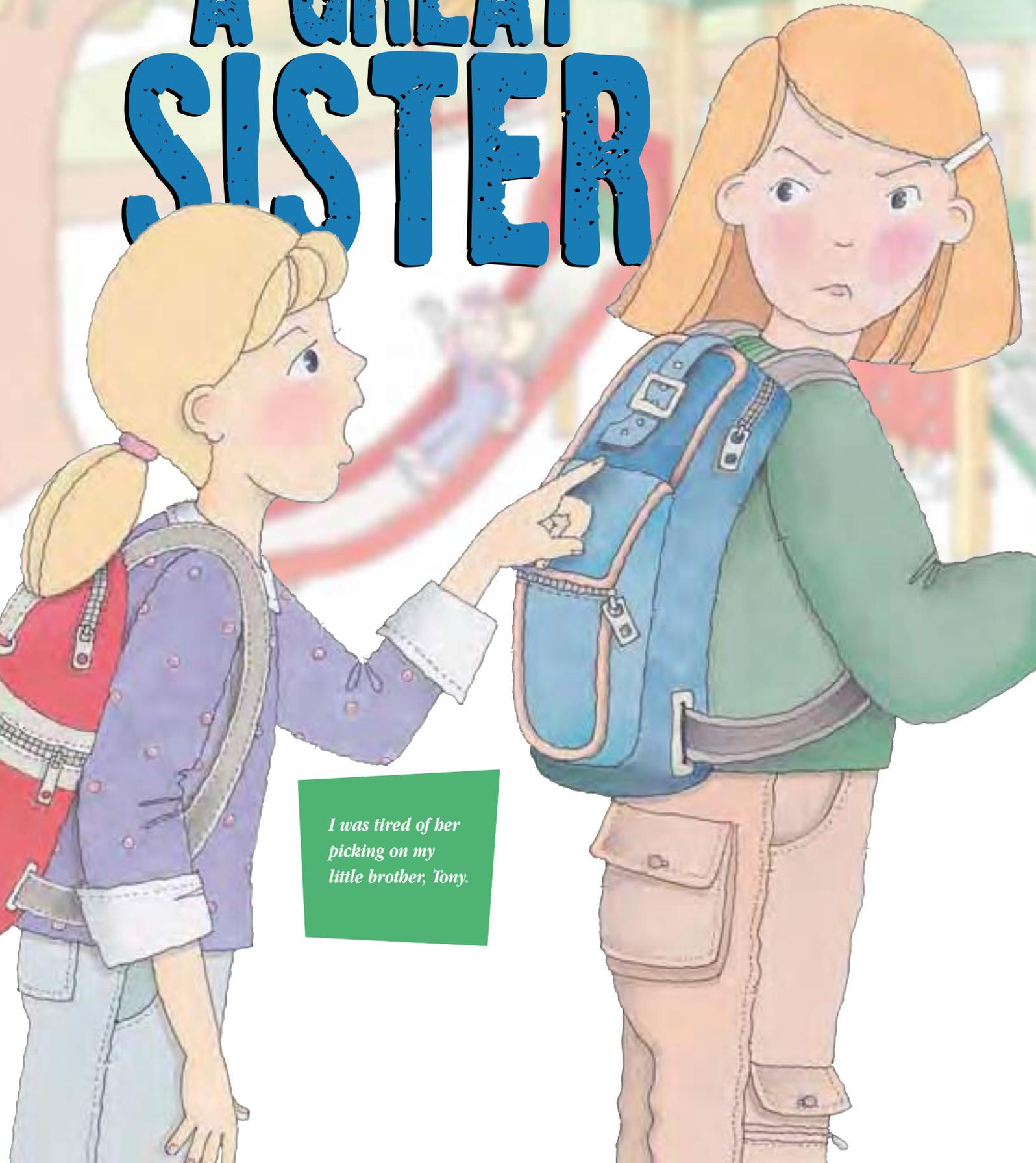


A GREAT SISTER



*I was tired of her
picking on my
little brother, Tony.*



BY MELANIE MARKS

(Based on a true story)

Behold thou hast a gift, and blessed art thou because of thy gift. Remember it is sacred and cometh from above (D&C 6:10).

Leave him alone!" I yelled to Laurie Hilton, the school bully. "Pick on someone your own size." I was tired of her picking on my little brother, Tony. If she treated him nicely—or simply let him

alone—he would be fine. It was her fault that he cried. And I hated it.

"Pick on someone my own size?" Laurie sneered. "Like you?"

I wasn't Laurie's size. She was two grades older and a head taller. "Sure. Like me." I tried to sound confident, but inside I was shaking. I didn't want to fight. I just wanted her to leave Tony alone.

The bell rang and Laurie gave me a shove. "You're going to get it after school."

Still shaking inside, I watched her stomp away. I doubted I would really "get it" after school—Laurie would probably cool off by then. But just in case, I was going to avoid her.

My stomach was in knots even before I got to music class and found out I didn't make the school play. I had really, really wanted a part. Any part. I didn't have to be the star. But I didn't even get to be an alternate.

And I sure didn't feel any better in math class when I got my test back. I made a poor grade on it—even though I had studied hard.

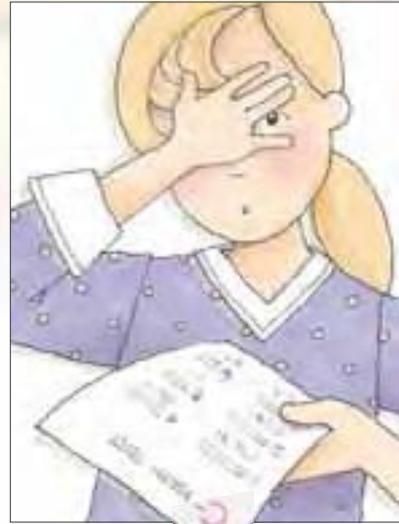
"How did you do?" my best friend Audrey asked. She had helped me study the night before, and she had assured me I would make a good grade.

"Don't ask," I advised. I wadded up the test and threw it in the wastebasket.

I was careful not to look at Audrey. I knew what I would see if I looked into her eyes—sympathy. I could not take that. It would make me cry.

I wished I could be like Audrey. She was good at everything. She got the lead in the school play. She got straight As in math. She was beautiful.

It wasn't fair. I wasn't good at anything. Lately I felt like Heavenly Father had forgotten about me.



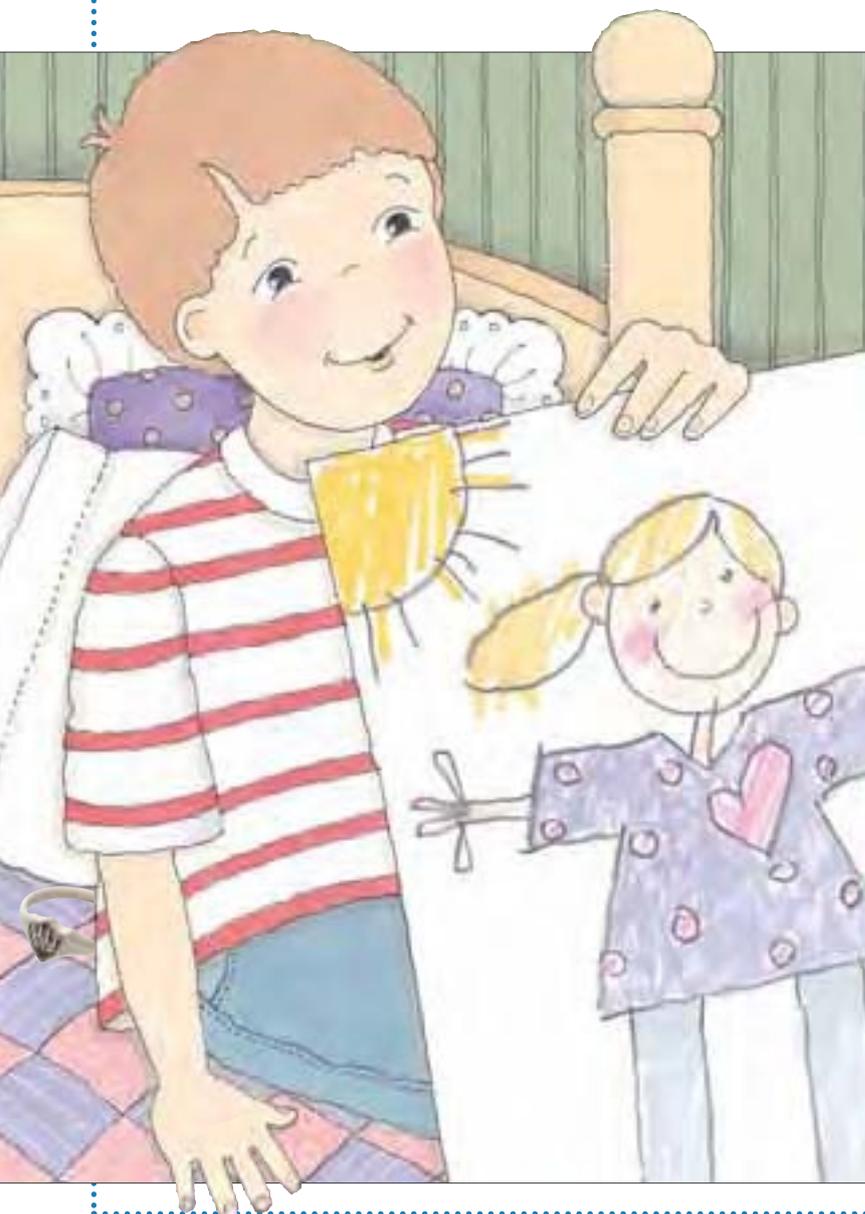
"I'm hopeless," I told myself. "I wish I could forget about me, too."

When I got home, I still felt like crying. I probably would have, too, if Tony hadn't come in. "Why do you look so sad?" he asked.

I thought about telling him to get out of my room. After all, he had come in without knocking. Sometimes Tony can be a pest. But he actually looked concerned for me.

"I didn't get the part in the play," I told him.

"Oh." He sat on my bed. "Well, you like to paint.



"One of the talents that needs to be greatly magnified is sensitivity to others, and this involves reaching out and touching another heart."

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Need for Balance in Our Lives," *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 5.

Maybe you could help with the scenery."

"It's not just the play," I said. "I did really badly on my math test, too."

Then I went on to tell him how pathetic I felt—like I wasn't good at anything.

"I'll be right back," he said. When he returned he had a drawing.

"What's this?" I asked.

"It's a picture of you." He handed it to me. "I drew it in Primary." He explained that his teacher had asked him to draw something he was thankful for. "So I drew you. Maybe you're not a good actress. And maybe you're not very good at math, either. I don't know. But I do know one thing—you're a good sister. In fact, you're a great sister." He put his arms around me.

And you know what? I felt a little better.

"Thanks, Tony."

"Something else," he said, sitting back on my bed. "You're really brave. You knew Laurie could hurt you, but you still stuck up for me today. You're good at sticking up for people."

When Tony left, I felt a *lot* better. He made sense. I'm not so good at some things, but that doesn't mean I'm not good at other things. Maybe the things I'm good at are really important—maybe even more important than being a good actress or a math whiz.

Heavenly Father hadn't forgotten about me after all. I knelt at the foot of my bed, figuring I should let Him know I hadn't forgotten about Him either. And while I was on my knees, I thanked Him for all of my many blessings. ●

Melanie Marks is a member of the Prince William Ward, Centreville Virginia Stake.