

Friendship Pins

by JM Prescott

There were two kinds of kids in grade one. Those with Velcro. And those with shoelaces. There were a lot of advantages to having shoelaces.

You got your picture on the Tie Your Own Shoes Graduates Wall. The Tie Your Own Shoes Graduates Wall was a big colorful bulletin board at the front of the class with all the smiling faces and tied shoes.

You got a few more minuets before and after recess to change your shoes - a few more minutes that you weren't expected to be sitting at your desk.

And friendship pins.

My picture wasn't on the bulletin board. I was always first to my desk. And I didn't have any friendship pins.

I made five for my best friend, Kelly, who wore them all in a row on her shinny white sketchers. Five safety pins with tiny beads threaded along the pin. Carefully chosen colors lined up. The Pink and white one for her favorite color. The blue green and purple because I liked them together. The black and orange one I gave her for Halloween and the red and green one for Christmas. And the one with all yellow because I had a lot of yellow beads left.

Kelly's shoes were covered in friendship pins, seven on the other shoe that she got from other girls in my class. And she had made each of them one in return. But none for me.

"You have Velcro," she told me, "where would you wear it?"

I hated my Velcro shoes. They were from last year in kindergarten,

and Mom said she wouldn't buy me new ones because they still fit. They were dirty and the Velcro didn't stick properly. I kicked the pavement, hoping my toes would push through and she'd have to buy me a new pair.

"When you can tie laces I'll buy you a new pair." Mom said.

I picked up my brother Mike's shoe and sat in the back of the closet - trying to get it right. But I couldn't get it. Loops and ties and push it through. Who could keep it all straight? I threw the shoe against the back wall of the closet. It left a scuff. Mom would be furious.

I snuck upstairs hoping Mom didn't hear the thud. I dressed one of my dolls in a big yellow gown with a sash - which was just one of my old hair ribbons. I tied a knot in the ribbon. Made two loops. And tied another knot.

I gasped and dropped my doll. Then I ran back to the closet and grabbed my Mike's shoe. I tied a knot. Made two loops. And tied them in a knot.

I couldn't believe my eyes - I'd done it.

I ran into the kitchen to show Mom. Knot. Loops. Knot.

Mike leaned over my shoulder, "that's not how you do it."

"Shut up," I snapped.

My mother smiled. "What does it matter Mike, if the results the same?"

"Can I get shoes with laces now?" I asked. "Please, Mom."

Mom said I could and I couldn't wait to go to school and tell Kelly.

That Saturday we went shoe shopping and I was so excited. I invited Kelly over for a sleepover so she could come with me and help me pick out just the right pair. She surprised me that night with a small present.

A friendship pin with glow-in-the-dark beads. She winked at me, "this way you can see your laces in the closet."

I cupped my hands around the pin and peered inside. A row of tiny yellow-green lights looked back at me. Eventually I got two shoes full of friendship pins, but only one that glowed in the dark. And I was the only one who tied her shoes with a knot, two loops and another knot.

