



## The Race That Wasn't a Race

Shelly the snail slid slowly along the garden path.  
It was a bright, busy morning. Bees were buzzing, frogs were hopping, and a speedy rabbit was stretching his legs.  
“Ready... set... GO!” the rabbit shouted.  
Zoom! Hop! Buzz!  
The animals raced past Shelly in a flash.  
Shelly blinked her tiny eyes.  
“Oh my... I could never go that fast,” she said softly.  
But Shelly didn't stop.  
She kept going... slowly... one little slide at a time.  
Along the way, she noticed a tiny ladybug stuck upside down on a leaf.  
“Oh dear,” Shelly said. “Let me help you.”  
With a gentle nudge, she helped the ladybug flip back over.  
“Thank you!” the ladybug cheered.  
Shelly smiled and continued on.  
A little farther down the path, she saw a droopy flower.  
“I wish I had a friend,” the flower whispered.  
“I can stay for a moment,” Shelly said kindly.  
She sat beside the flower until it lifted its petals just a little higher.  
Soon, Shelly came across a small pebble in the middle of the path.  
“That might trip someone,” she said.  
With a big push (and a little wiggle), she moved the pebble out of the way.  
By the time Shelly reached the end of the path, the racers were already there.  
“We're the fastest!” the rabbit cheered.  
“But... did you see the ladybug?” asked Shelly.  
“Or the flower?”  
“Or the pebble in the path?”  
The animals looked at each other and shook their heads.  
They had been too busy racing.  
Shelly smiled her small, quiet smile.  
“I may be slow,” she said, “but I see a lot along the way.”  
The animals paused... then smiled back.  
Maybe the race wasn't about being the fastest after all.  
And from that day on, they all tried to slow down... just a little.