

THE WINNER





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(Based on a true story)

Let every man esteem his brother as himself (D&C 38:24).

On the way home from school, Ben ran to catch up with his older brother, Rick. Rick didn't seem to be in a good mood, but Ben had something important to ask him that just couldn't wait.

"Hey, Rick," Ben panted, "are you going to enter the school spirit contest this year?"

"I have no choice," Rick said without slowing down. "Everyone has to enter."

Ben was surprised. "But you probably can't win it again." Ben swallowed hard and then spoke quickly. "Maybe you'd like to help somebody else win."

"Like who?" Rick asked.

"Like me." Ben smiled weakly.

"You? Bashful Benny?"

"After I win, nobody will call me Bashful Benny anymore. They'll know I'm somebody special, a real winner, like—well, like you."

Rick's expression softened. "Think so, huh? I'm sorry I can't help you. It's against the rules."

"I didn't mean for you to *do* anything. I just need to borrow your camera for a few days. Please?" Ben pleaded.

"You can use my camera for one week *if* I can cut up all your old magazines for my poster," Rick said.

"Deal!" Ben sprinted home before Rick could change his mind.

Ben worked hard on his project. For the contest, students had to get involved in school activities and make posters to promote school spirit. Ben decided to take photographs of different school activities and mount

them on poster board. He had just finished writing carefully under the last picture when Rick came into his room and looked over his shoulder.

"You spelled a word wrong," Rick said.

"I did not! Mom checked all my spelling. You're just jealous of my poster."

"I'm not jealous," Rick said. "I won last year. You're the one who should be worried."

"What do you mean?" Ben asked.

"What are you going to do when you have to get up in front of all those people and accept your award?" Rick asked.

Ben thought about that. "I won't have to give a speech, will I?"

"You never know." Rick shrugged and turned to leave.

"Rick," Ben said, "were you ever scared to win?"

"Of course not," Rick said quickly. "Well, maybe a little." He sat down on Ben's bed. "Do you know what helped me last year?"

"What?" Ben scrambled up next to him.

"My friend, Pete—remember him?"

Ben nodded. "The one who moved away?"

"Yeah. Pete started clapping and yelling so loud when they announced my name that it made me laugh.

And I forgot my fear."

Rick smiled, remembering it. "Tell you

what, Ben.

When you win the contest

I'll clap

really loud,

and maybe even whistle."

Finally the day

came when the whole school assembled to

find out who would win



"Be loyal in your family relationships."²

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)



the school spirit contest. The room was so crowded that Ben had to look for a long time before he saw his brother. Rick grinned and gave him a thumbs-up sign. Ben tried to smile back, but he was too nervous.

The room fell silent as the principal stood up to speak. "I am so proud of each of you for the hard work you've put into your projects this year." Her words echoed throughout the gymnasium. "Normally we would not award the prize to the same person two years in a row," she explained, "but we have an exceptionally talented student at our school." Ben's mouth dropped open as the principal announced that Rick had won. Again. At first Ben wasn't sure he'd heard right. Then he thought it must be a mistake. The principal had probably confused him with his brother.

Ben looked up hopefully at the principal, but she wasn't looking at him. She was looking across the room to where a group of boys was shoving Rick forward. But Rick wouldn't move. He shook his head, looking disappointed and a little frightened.

When Ben saw this, he realized his brother really

loved him. Rick had wanted Ben to win. Ben could also see that Rick was scared. He couldn't face the crowd alone. Ben wished that Rick's friend, Pete, was still there to help him.

Then Ben had a rather frightening idea. He wasn't sure he could do it, but he knew he had to try, for Rick's sake. Ben closed his eyes. Then, finding his courage, he leaped to his feet and started to clap.

"Way to go, Rick!" he yelled as loud as he could. Some of Ben's classmates tugged on his shirt and whispered, "What are you doing? Sit down."

"That's my brother!" Ben whispered back.

Many students stood up and clapped with him. Others patted Ben on the back and said, "You're pretty brave, Ben!"

Soon the whole room was filled with applause and cheering.

Slowly Rick walked to the podium to accept the award. He looked at Ben and smiled gratefully. Even though Ben had lost the contest, he felt happy. He knew he was a winner.

Nobody could call him

Bashful Benny anymore. ●

