

That Winning Feeling!



As soon as Mum left the house, Sarah wheeled herself into the kitchen and took the letter down from the worktop. She had been itching to read it again, but she had felt embarrassed. "You're not reading it again, are you, love?" Mum had joked when Sarah had last looked at it. "Are you learning it off by heart?" she had continued with a laugh. "Don't go getting a big head!"

However, Sarah was in no mood to be teased just now, even though she knew that, behind it all, her mother was as pleased as Punch. Sarah just wanted a moment all to herself with her letter, to read every word slowly and to savour the excitement brimming up inside her. "... more than 10,000 entries for our essay competition," she read.

Then, closing her eyes and letting the words wash over her, she repeated it out loud, "more than 10,000 entries and mine was the best!" She clenched her small fist and punched the air. "I won it!" she shouted, and a huge smile broke across her face.

Dropping the letter in her lap, Sarah applied the brake on one wheel and pushed the other for all she was worth. The heavy wheelchair began to turn around and around, squeaking on the tiles. Faster and faster, Sarah turned the chair until tiny beads of perspiration appeared on her forehead.

As the chair spun and the kitchen flew past her in a dizzy swirl, she called out, "I won it! I won it! I won it!" Her mother, who had returned unnoticed, stood in the doorway and watched the sparks flashing in her daughter's eyes.

As her spinning slowed and then stopped, it seemed to Sarah as if her body had uncoiled like a spring, leaving her calm and deeply content. She looked up to see her mother beaming at her, and, wheeling her chair over to her, she wrapped her arms around her mother's waist and hugged her as tightly as she could.

Question Time

A

1. Where was the letter?
2. Why was the letter important to Sarah?
3. Why was Sarah embarrassed to reread the letter in front of her Mum?
4. What kind of competition did Sarah win?
5. How many entries were there in the competition?
6. How did Sarah make the wheelchair spin in a circle?
7. How did Sarah show her excitement?
8. What did Sarah call out?
9. Who did Sarah see when she looked up?
10. What did Sarah do when she saw her mother?



B

1. Explain what is meant by "pleased as Punch".
2. How do we know that spinning the wheelchair was hard work?
3. (a) How does the writer describe Sarah's eyes?
(b) Explain what the writer means by this.
4. Describe how Sarah's mother felt as she watched her daughter from the doorway.
5. Put these words in sentences to show their meanings.



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6. "Her body had uncoiled like a spring." Explain what this means.
7. Compare how Sarah felt.
(a) before spinning her wheelchair;
(b) afterwards.
8. How do you react when you are overjoyed or excited by something?

Think and Talk

1. Imagine you have just won an essay competition that had 10,000 entries.
Describe how you would react to the news.
2. Imagine your best friend has won a sporting competition that you had really wanted to win. Describe your feelings.
3. Suggest ways of staying calm before an important event, such as an exam, a parachute jump, a final, Christmas, etc.

