

Rock, Paper, Scissors

Reflections of Life

By J. Lew



Summer of 1940

A group of boys is starting a stickball game, choosing who will play on which team. Michael's father is walking home after working his Saturday shift and sees a group of young boys; they look about the same age as his son. He walks into the house, greets his wife with a kiss and a hug, and then asks, "Where's Michael?"

"He's in the backyard playing," his wife answers.

So he walks out to the backyard, where Michael is playing with his toy truck. When he looks up and sees his father, Michael runs up and hugs him.

"Michael," he says, "Some boys in the street are about to put together a team for a stickball game. Why don't you go out there and join them?"

They look about your age, around eight or so. Go out there and have fun.” He encourages him.

Excited, Michael runs through the house, out the front door, and into the street where the team selections have just begun.

“Can I play?” he asks.

The boys turn around, and standing before them is a skinny kid with big black-rimmed glasses and his trousers pulled up just under his chest. Craig Daniels laughs and asks, “Who’s the wiener?”

“I think he lives three houses down; he doesn’t come out that often,” Tony remarks. Waving him on, he says, “Sure kid, come on. We haven’t chosen sides yet.”

“What’s your name?” Jimmy asks.

“Michael Oliver James III.”

Some of the boys are bending over, holding their stomachs, while others are poking fun at his trousers and glasses.

Then Craig asks Michael, “Do you know how to play stickball?”

Michael nods and says, “Yes.”

“You are only allowed to play on Tony’s team,” Craig tells him.

“No,” Tony yells, pointing his finger at Craig. “That’s not fair. It shouldn’t matter whose team he plays on.”

Craig pushes Tony and says, "Let's settle this then. We'll play Rock, Paper, Scissors, and whoever loses gets the little wiener."

Tony protests but plays the game anyway. "We'll start on three, okay? One, two, three," they say, pounding a fist into their palms.

"Yes!" Craig yells. "Rock beats scissors. You lose. You get the wiener."

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