

hesaid_51903

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He Said/ She Said:

The award

SHE SAID:

"Mrs. Wingfield, this is Denise May at Moss Haven." That greeting on our home answering machine started my heart pumping. Mrs. May is our assistant principal in charge of discipline. "Oh, no, I thought, who's in trouble? What did one of my sons do?"

All that went through my mind in the split second before the message continued, " ... there's nothing wrong."

Mrs. May must be used to my previous reactions. She continued, "Garrett wanted to share some good news with you, so if you get this message in the next half hour, please call me back."

Hmm. She had left the message around 11:30 a.m. and it

ALISON WINGFIELD

was already 2:30 p.m., so I figured it was too late to call and find out what was going on. As I reviewed what was happening that day, I remembered Garrett was going to be in a contest as part of the school district's trip to hear two high school symphonic bands play. He had won the contest for fifth graders at our school, which was a listening game. The students had to guess which instrument they were hearing. Garrett guessed all but one right, so he got to represent our school at this concert.

So, I guessed that Garrett had probably done well in the contest. When I picked him up from school, I coyly asked him why he wanted to talk with me in the middle of the day.

“I won, Mom! Where were you?” he asked. I explained that I was sorry, but I hadn't been home when he called. I was naturally thrilled that he had wanted to share the good news with me. But that bubble quickly burst. I found out the real reason he had asked Mrs. May to call: As part of his reward, he got a free meal from McDonald's. He wanted me to pick it up for him right then.

I was thrilled when I found out he also had won tickets to the Dallas Symphony and a \$50 savings bond. He was thrilled with McDonald's french fries. Ah, the simplicity of youth.

HE SAID:

Well, the final truth of the matter explains why when the school secretary called me at work looking for Alison, Garrett wasn't interested in talking to me. I, too, inferred from the conversation that Garrett must have done well in the competition. But I couldn't understand why if the school was calling, he wouldn't get on the line and tell me he had won.

I just thought the school secretary thought I was chopped liver.

Truth is, Garrett was more interested in the Fren



ch Fries than anything else.

This is a child, however, who won't eat the hamburgers at McDonald's, won't eat the Chicken McNuggets, won't eat anything except the fries.

At least he knows what he wants—which almost always has been the case. He likes to wear specific colors (orange being his first choice) and do things in specific ways. He wants to eat specific foods and those foods only.

Trouble arises when his idea of what he likes conflicts with generally accepted concepts of good taste. We've had to restrain him at times from going to church decked out in three clashing shades of blue.

“Those colors don't go together,” I'll say.

“They look good to me,” he'll reply.

“But they clash,” I'll shoot back.

“It looks good to me, so that's what's important,” he'll retort.

Chalk one up for courage.

Let's just pray he's able to retain that sense of determination and independence when the peer pressures increase in the years ahead.