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# Student Leadership Election: RENARD



**R**unning for student leadership was the scariest thing I've ever done. I'm pretty shy and I don't like giving speeches or standing up in front of people. But I still wanted a chance to be on student leadership. I wanted to help people and do things to make my school a better place.

I wished I could do the helping part without doing the speech part. On the day of the election, I felt frozen and numb at the same time. I didn't feel like eating breakfast or even talking to my friends. The best part of my speech was when it was over. I didn't do a terrible job, but I didn't do a great job either.

Some of the other kids gave speeches that were really creative with props. Some told jokes and made the whole class laugh. I was glad that my words came out and that I didn't faint or throw up. But even after my speech was over, the nervous

## Student Leadership Election: RENARD

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feeling didn't go away. I still had to wait for the students to vote and for the teacher to announce the winners. It was a long wait.

Finally, when we came back from lunch the teacher was ready to write the names of the winners on the board. First, she told us that she was proud of everyone who ran for student leadership. Twelve kids gave speeches, but there were only six spots on student leadership.

Finally, she shared the list. My name wasn't on it. I felt deflated, even though I wasn't counting on winning. I was just hoping I might have a little chance. Losing was hurtful because I put myself out there and tried something really hard – and it didn't work out.

I didn't cry, but one or two tears escaped my eyes anyway. I was embarrassed and looked from side to side to make sure no one noticed my tears. Reuben, who sat next to me, gave me a gentle smile. He leaned over and whispered something that was just the thing I needed to hear. "I voted for you," he said.

Even though I lost and it hurt, finding out that someone voted for me, somehow made things so much better. I knew that if my words could connect with one person, I wouldn't give up.

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### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Can you relate to how Renard felt running for student leadership?
2. Why do you think Renard felt sad? Have you ever felt like that?
3. What made Renard feel better about not winning the election? Who helped him?
4. What do you think was the reason Renard said he felt better knowing just one other student had voted for him?
5. Is this something you could do for your classmates, sharing just a few words to encourage them?



**REMEMBER:** Sometimes a small action, such as just a few kind words, can make a tremendous difference to another person.

# Messy Desk: MARINA



I had a hard time going from fourth grade to fifth grade. Suddenly, it felt like I had so much stuff to keep organized: writing folders, math binders, reading notebooks. Every time the teacher passed out papers, I felt overwhelmed. I didn't know where to put each paper or what to keep or what to recycle.

Sometimes the teacher asked me to turn in a sheet and I didn't know what happened to it. Then I would start pulling everything out of my desk – a never-ending stream of papers – everything but the one that I needed.

Just when I would start to panic, then Cyrus would offer to help. Cyrus sat next to me for most of 5th grade and had a super power for being organized. Just when I thought I would never be able to find a paper, Cyrus would look in my desk and pull it out, like magic.

## Messy Desk: MARINA

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Then the teacher would give Cyrus time to help me clean out my desk at the end of the day. Cyrus was so patient. He would pull over the recycling bin and help me get rid of all the old papers that I didn't need any more. Then he would help me organize the rest of my papers into piles that would each go into a different folder.

Cyrus always took the time to explain, so it sort of made sense to me, even though being organized was never my super power. I always felt so good after Cyrus helped me clean out my desk. Each time, it started to make more sense to me.

By the end of 5th grade, with Cyrus' help, I thought I might be able to start taking care of my own papers once sixth grade started.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was the challenge Marina was facing?
2. Have you ever felt challenged by something similar to trying to keep your desk clean?
3. What was Marina feeling about her desk? Have you ever felt overwhelmed like that?
4. How did Cyrus help Marina with her challenges?
5. Is this something you could do for a classmate, helping by using your "superpower" – something you can do really well?



**REMEMBER:** You might have a special talent that could help a classmate who struggles in a certain way.