

Jack and Jason

Jack and Jason toppled off the couch. “Boys! Stop fighting!” yelled Mom from the kitchen.

Jason pushed Jack off of him. “Jack started it,” yelled Jason.

“He started it,” screamed Jack.

Mom came to the doorway. “I don’t care who started it. You two fight every day. You both had better start getting along, or I’m sending one of you to military camp for the rest of the summer.”

The boys got up and sat on the couch. They looked at each other as Mom walked away. “Who do you think she’ll send to camp?” Jason whispered.

“Probably you. You’re nine. You’re a year older,” said Jack.

Jason shoved Jack. “Doesn’t matter. She might send you. You need discipline more than I do. I think she’s bluffing though. I don’t think there are military summer camps.”

“Let’s look it up,” urged Jack.

Jason got the laptop and searched for local military camps. “Whoa! They have one in the next town. Mom wasn’t kidding. We’d better cool it.”

The rest of the day, the boys didn’t fight, not even once. But the rest of the week, it was war.

“That’s it!” yelled Mom. “I’m calling the camp.”

Jason laughed softly. “Yeah, right,” he said to Jack. “We’ll be good the rest of today, and she’ll forget. Now, behave, Jason.”

The rest of the day the boys behaved, but over the weekend they fought and fought and fought over everything and anything. Then on Monday morning the phone rang.

“Yes,” said Mom. “Thank you for returning my call . . . Yes, I’d like to send one of my sons. One is nine and one is eight. Which age would be better?”

Mom looked around the room then she looked at Jason and Jack. “Really,” she said. “It’s that strict? Oh, they’re not going to enjoy that. Well, okay, I guess both would be best. I’ll discuss it with my husband tonight and get back to you tomorrow.”

“Who was that, Mom?” asked Jason.

“The military camp. They don’t tolerate any nonsense. The man said it’d be good for you. He

suggested you both go. You can start on Wednesday.”

Jason’s face fell, and his heart sunk. “No! Mom, please give us another chance. I know Jack and I can behave. Right, Jack?”

“Yes. I promise I’ll behave. Don’t send us to military camp. Please.”

“Well,” said Mom. “I’ll talk to Daddy, and we’ll see. But remember, even if you don’t start this week, you can start any week during the summer.”

Jason and Jack hugged and kissed their mother. “Thanks, Mom,” they said in unison.

As the days passed, Jason and Jack played together without fighting. They played catch in the yard. They played video games in the basement. And they rode their bikes outside. If either of them began to misbehave or started fighting, the other one walked away.

The rest of the summer went by, and the boys didn’t go to military camp.

Questions

1. What does *toppled* mean here: "Jack and Jason toppled off the couch."
2. How did the boys' mother describe the military camp?
3. What does "his heart sunk" mean?
4. When the next summer comes, do you think Jack and Jason will fight a lot again? Why or why not?