

Birthday Wish

Demetrius closed his laptop. Video calls with Uncle Embry were fun but depressing. It was hard to think of Uncle Embry being so far away in Iraq. Demetrius knew his uncle's work as a soldier was important, but he still really missed him.

Uncle Embry had been away for a year. He wasn't there when Demetrius's basketball team won the championship. He missed seeing Demetrius grow three whole inches. Uncle Embry wouldn't be back for another year. How tall would Demetrius be then?

During their video calls, Uncle Embry cracked jokes. He listened to Demetrius talk about his classes and his friends. But it wasn't the same as having him in the room. And Demetrius worried that he might get hurt. Or worse.

Today's call was extra depressing because it was Demetrius's birthday, but Uncle Embry didn't say anything about it. He must have forgotten. He had more important things to think about in the Army. Still, it made Demetrius feel sad.

He got ready to go out to dinner with his mom. Some friends and family were coming to the restaurant too, so that would be nice. But he still couldn't shake the feeling that something - someone - was missing.

At the restaurant, Demetrius smiled and pretended he was having fun. The food was pretty good. Gramps gave him \$50, which was awesome. And Mom kept giving him hugs. He loved that, even though he wouldn't admit it. He was ready for the night to be over. He didn't want to celebrate without his uncle.

But before the party could end, they had to have the cake. Someone from the restaurant carried the cake to the table as his family sang the birthday song. The person's face was hidden behind the blazing candles. Demetrius blew out the candles and made a wish.

With the flames gone, Demetrius could see that the person holding the cake wasn't from the restaurant at all.

"Uncle Embry!" he cried, jumping up to give his uncle a huge hug. His birthday wish had come true.

Best. Birthday. Ever.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What sport does Demetrius play?
 - a. Baseball
 - b. Football
 - c. Soccer
 - d. Basketball

2. How did the family celebrate Demetrius's birthday?
 - a. Cake at home
 - b. Dinner at a restaurant
 - c. A dance party
 - d. Lots of gifts

3. Why didn't Uncle Embry say happy birthday on the video call?
 - a. Because he wanted his arrival to be even more of a surprise
 - b. Because he was mean
 - c. Because he forgot
 - d. Because the connection was bad

4. What was Demetrius's birthday wish?
 - a. To have cake
 - b. To get a hug from his mom
 - c. To get money from his grandfather
 - d. To see his uncle

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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