

Parker's BIG Problem



ILLUSTRATION BY MARK ROBISON

By Breanne Richards

(Based on a true story)

"I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature . . . did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me" (1 Nephi 2:16).

Parker bent his knees a little as he stood against the height chart in P.E. *Please be shorter*, he pleaded inside.

"Stand up straight," his P.E. teacher said. Parker sighed and straightened his knees.

"You've sure grown this year," his teacher said. "You're 5'9" [1.75 m]!"

Parker groaned. He'd grown another two inches (5 cm) in just the last month. Most of his friends were a *lot* shorter than he was. He was only 10! It was so embarrassing.

After P.E. Parker walked back to his classroom and sat down at his desk. His knees didn't fit underneath, and they banged loudly against the metal. The kids sitting nearby started laughing.

At recess Parker's friends played on the monkey bars. They all swung easily across. But Parker's toes dragged on the ground, and it wasn't much fun. During soccer, Parker kept tripping over himself. Everyone else ran quickly across the field.

Parker stopped and watched as they ran farther away. He sighed. Why did his body feel so awkward? It felt slow and clumsy.

Frustrated, Parker walked to a tetherball court and started swinging the ball around. At least *this* was easier now that he was taller and stronger. He unwound the ball and hit it harder and harder until it started swinging up toward the sky.

"Hey!" a teacher said. "Don't hit the ball that hard. You could break the rope!"

Parker froze. He didn't think he was doing anything wrong.

Teachers always expected him to act older just because he was tall.

The bell rang to come in. His

friend Lucas waved at him on the way back from playing soccer. "Where'd you go?" he asked.

"I didn't want to play anymore, I guess," Parker said as he sat down in his chair. He almost fell over because he was so much bigger than it was.

Lucas laughed. "Hey, Parker! You're supposed to sit *in* the chair."

Parker felt his cheeks get red. Luckily, no one else saw. But then he saw Mrs. Warner looking at him. She started walking toward him.

"Parker," she said, "would you come with me please?"

Parker's heart started to pound. He *really* hadn't done anything wrong this time. He followed Mrs. Warner into the hallway.

"You sure have grown a lot lately," she smiled. "You're taller than I am now."

Parker frowned. "I'm sorry," he said.

Mrs. Warner's forehead wrinkled. "Sorry?" she said.

"Don't ever be sorry for being tall."

Parker said, "But I'm so *big* now. It's awkward."

"I know it's hard," Mrs. Warner said. "When I was young, I was always the smallest kid in my class. I hated how everyone else was taller and stronger."

"Really?" Parker said. "But you're not short anymore."

Mrs. Warner laughed. "Exactly! Most of your friends are like I was. They haven't grown yet. You just beat them to it!" *Was it really OK to be tall?* Parker wondered.

"Now, I called you out here to ask you something," Mrs. Warner said. "How do you like your chair?"

"Um, it's kind of small," he said.

She smiled. "Let's get you a bigger desk and chair."

"Thank you!" Parker said.

The next day Parker walked into his classroom. In his spot was a full-sized desk and chair. It was all the class could talk about.

"Why does Parker get a bigger desk?"

"I wish I was tall!"

"I want one!"

Parker sat down in his chair. He fit! And his knees didn't bang against it! He liked having a bigger desk. Maybe being tall wasn't so bad after all. ♦

The author lives in Utah, USA.