

Name: _____

Who's on First?

by Kelly Hashway

Liam carried his baseball mitt onto the field, feeling it wobble a little on his shaky hand. He was nervous. He'd been practicing and practicing. His dad told him he was ready. Now tryouts were here and Liam had to prove he was the right person to play first base.

"Hey, what position are you going out for?" Eric asked, running up to Liam.

"First base. You?"

Eric stopped short, and Liam turned to see what was wrong.

"I'm going for first base," Eric said.

"I thought your dad was helping you learn to play third." Liam's mitt shook even more on his hand. Eric was his best friend. They couldn't go out for the same position.

"I was but then I heard John was going out for third baseman. He's really good. Dad told me to try for first."

Liam stood there, not knowing what to do.

"Come on, boys," Coach Mathews said. "Pick your positions so we can get started."

"What are we going to do?" Liam asked. Eric was his friend, but what about all the time he'd spent practicing for this position?

Coach Mathews jogged over to the boys. "What's the hold up?"

"We both want to play first base," Liam said, looking down at his shoes.

"Oh." Coach Mathews nodded. "Tell you what. I'm going to have to see you both play the position so I can choose the right person. Liam you take first base, and Eric why don't you try shortstop? No one seems brave enough to give it a try. After a while, I'll have you switch."

Liam nodded, but Eric looked nervous. As Coach Mathews headed



out to the pitcher's mound, Liam said, "What's wrong, Eric?"

"Shortstop is a huge responsibility. I don't know if I can do it."

"Do you want me to try it first?" Liam didn't see the harm in trying shortstop. It would be a good warm up.

Eric nodded, so Liam ran over to the shortstop position. Coach Mathews watched them without saying a word.

When practice started, the first ball came right to Liam. He scooped it up and threw it to Eric. He smiled when Eric got the out. The same thing happened two pitches later.

"Okay, switch up you two," Coach Mathews said, pausing the practice.

Eric and Liam met halfway across the field.

"You were great," Eric said.

"So were you." Liam thought for a moment. Shortstop was a really cool position, and he was good at it. "Coach, I think I want to stay at shortstop, if it's okay with Eric."

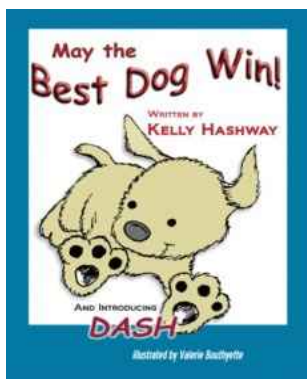
Eric looked relieved. "Fine with me."

Coach Mathews smiled. "Perfect. I think you two make a great team. Let's keep practicing."

Liam and Eric took their positions again. They smiled at each other and got ready as the batter made contact with the ball.



About the Author



Kelly Hashway's picture book, *May the Best Dog Win*, is now available!

Dash has the perfect life until the Super Sweeper 5000 shows up. Sweeper runs all over the house sucking up the leftover food scraps, and he even gets his own room! But Dash won't give up his place as the favorite dog without a fight.

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1. When does this story probably take place?
 - a. before the first baseball game of the year
 - b. in the middle of baseball season
 - c. towards the end of baseball season
 - d. after baseball tryouts

2. When the coach found out that both Liam and Eric wanted first base, how did he plan to solve the problem?

3. Eric and Liam are...
 - a. brothers
 - b. not close friends
 - c. best friends
 - d. angry with each other

4. Coach Matthews asks Eric to try shortstop and says:
 "No one seems brave enough to give it a try."
What does Coach Matthews mean when he says this?
 - a. Shortstop is the most dangerous position to play.
 - b. Nobody else volunteered to play shortstop.
 - c. Shortstop is a better position than first base.
 - d. There are several brave kids trying out for shortstop.

5. At the end of the story, who got the first base position? _____

6. What type of story is this?
 - a. fiction
 - b. biography
 - c. non-fiction
 - d. science fiction

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Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. ___ i ___ t _____
hint: special glove used for baseball

2. ___ h ___ r t ___ to ___ _____
hint: baseball position located between second and third base

3. ___ o ___ g e d _____
hint: ran at a slow, but steady pace

4. ___ o u ___ d _____
hint: hill of dirt that a baseball pitcher stands on

5. ___ a ___ t e ___ _____
hint: person who is trying to hit the ball in baseball

6. p ___ u s i n ___ _____
hint: stopping for a short time

7. ___ h o ___ s e _____
hint: pick; decide on

