

This could be your lucky day—no, wait, it's your brother's

We rarely play the lottery. But a few months ago when we had two scratch-off tickets, John casually handed one to each of our sons.

Leo scratched his and won \$2. He was thrilled.

Then Daniel scratched his and won \$50. Leo's bubble burst.

"It's not fair!" he said. "Why did he win more?"

Why, indeed? I didn't even know you could win that much on a scratch-off ticket. John and I quietly joked that maybe Daniel had a lucky streak, but we never mentioned it within the boys' hearing, of course. We aren't trying to create any extra sibling rivalry.

Then, on one of our trips to the Boardwalk last week, John handed each of the boys a quarter. Leo carefully dropped his into a machine and one ticket slid out. He happily tore it off. Then Daniel, who was paying little attention to the machine, pushed his quarter into the slot. We stood and stared as 150 tickets came pouring out.



Then we visited the claw machines. Leo dropped a coin in, and maneuvered the claw so that a stuffed dolphin fell right next to the chute—but didn't fall out. He tried again. No luck. He and John walked away. I handed Daniel another coin while I scanned the area for something more age-appropriate for our 2-year-old. When I glanced back, I saw the claw dropping a stuffed bear on top of the dolphin. Both animals slid down the chute, straight into Daniel's hands.

Maybe I should have been happy for Daniel. And I am. The truth is, though, that, at this age, Daniel doesn't care as much about winning as he does about inserting the coins. Leo, on the other hand, cares a lot. When Daniel went running to give Leo the stuffed bear, Leo wouldn't accept it. After all, Leo is 4, and he doesn't want the bear

as much as the victory. And he definitely doesn't want the bear if his little brother won it.

Now I don't actually think Daniel has more luck than Leo. I can't believe that God singles out people and makes sure they win more tickets in the arcade. And, lest you worry that Leo didn't enjoy himself on vacation, he had a marvelous time, sharing a bedroom with his four cousins (and sometimes sleeping), playing nonstop from dawn to dusk, eating round-the-clock, and even winning his share of Boardwalk games. It's just that he also learned a bit about the unfairness of life—and especially games of chance—as he watched his little brother winning without even trying.



If, however, I happened to believe that some kids have all the luck, I might have been convinced the night we all went for ice cream.



Leo picked a beautiful cone of chocolate ice cream with rainbow sprinkles, and sat on a Boardwalk bench to eat it.



Moments later, he accidentally dropped it on the ground and inherited his father's cone.

Daniel was taking occasional, casual licks at his cone, but it was looking more like an exploding volcano. We were just starting to think about taking it away from him when he took off running at full-speed down the Boardwalk, cone firmly in hand.

As we watched that little boy sprinting down the boards, laughing heartily, his black hair bouncing, and his Crocs thumping the wood, I couldn't help but be amazed at his confidence, spunk—and speed. He ran and ran, with John hot on his heels, and yet the tower of ice cream, glued inside Daniel's ice-cream-covered hand, stayed intact.

Is he a lucky boy? Sure. So is his big brother.

But John and I know we are the ones who hit the jackpot.