

Sydney King

Fourth Period

When Ben Met Jerry

“Let’s go, Cohen! Hurry the heck up!”

Ben Cohen rolled his eyes as he (unsuccessfully) tried to run another lap. “Coach, I’m the fattest kid here, can we just call it enough?”

“No way, Cohen! Alright, that’s seven minutes and you’re not done with your mile. You know what that means—run again. Make it this time.”

“Gee, Coach, if I can’t do it in under seven minutes the first time, how am I going to do it on the second try?”

“Just get going—It’s already been thirty seconds!”

Despite his feelings, Ben Cohen started his second lap, running even slower this time around.

Jerry Greenfield, another boy in the class, watched, awed. Then, he laughed a bit. He could not believe that this thirteen-year-old boy had yelled at their gym teacher, defying his authority with every word. Jerry was running right behind Ben, which is hard to believe because Ben WAS the fattest kid in the class. Jerry knew better than to yell at Coach though, he knew he wouldn’t have the nerve to fight back. Jerry picked up his pace a bit to catch up with Ben.

“Hey... uh... hold on.” Jerry said, catching his breath. “You’ve got some nerve yelling at Coach that way.”

“Well, it’s idiotic that they make us do this! We can’t help it if WE’RE SLOW!” Ben yelled that last bit, so that the gym teacher would hear it.

Jerry laughed. For two Jewish boys, they pair couldn’t be more opposite. Ben was loud, always challenging authority, and Jerry was quieter, he fell in line more with what people expected. The two became great friends.

They grew up together, always by each other’s sides. Jerry was the people-pleaser, the crowd talker. He knew his way around a group of people and could get Ben out of any tight spot he needed. Ben caused trouble every day. If it wasn’t him saying something wrong, it was him doing something wrong. He didn’t really care—after all, why should he--but Jerry did. And Jerry kept him cool when his anger rose. The two worked their way through middle and high school together.

When Jerry entered college, he always knew what he was going to be, a doctor. He worked hard through college, but when the time came to medical school, he couldn’t get in. He could not figure out why, either. He tried every medical school that he could find, and eventually gave up. Ben reached out to him, right about that time. His pottery wasn’t selling much, and he wanted to move in with Jerry to help make ends meet a little better. When Jerry received the call,

he rolled his eyes a little. He had known that being a potter was not going to work out for Ben, but he was always the creative type. He said yes anyway.

“Hey, Ben,” Jerry said one day, long after they had both been out of work. “Let’s go into business together. I mean, at this point, what could it hurt?”

“Yeah, sure,” Ben laughed. “What do you want to sell? Bagels?”

“Well, why not? We’re two Jewish boys from Long Island, and bagels ARE the latest craze.”

The two began researching what it would take to make money selling bagels. Unfortunately, it was really expensive to buy all of the machinery and necessary supplies to make bagels. The two kept looking for an alternate plan, trusting in each other to find something that would work.

“You know what Jerry, what if we did ice cream? Look here, Penn State is offering an ice cream making correspondence class—it's only five bucks. You’ve got five bucks, right?” Ben said, one lazy afternoon at their apartment. He had been scouring the paper for deals on cheap machinery or a cheap location out of which they could work.

“Well, actually. That’s not a bad idea—we could make ice cream that even you could enjoy.”

So, the two men took the class together. Soon, they began experimenting with ice cream flavors. Jerry would make the ice cream extra chunky and full of flavor, so that Ben, who had no sense of smell (and thus no taste), could taste them. Eventually, they became pretty good at it.

The two found an old gas station up in Vermont for sale, only \$6,000. They spent their time one (or two) hot summers really fixing the place up, and soon enough, they were in business selling ice cream to people.

And from there, the rest is history.