

# And the Academy Award Goes to...



It's not the Oscars until my dad yells at the TV.

Words by Leo Graziani

The Academy Awards are a big deal at my house. My family goes out to watch as many nominated films as we can, we compete against each other in an Oscar pool, we play Oscar bingo and we indulge in wings and nachos. We'll even watch the red carpet pre-awards show!

But by far the best part of the Academy Awards is listening to my dad yell at the TV. My dad loves movies—probably even more than I do—and though he has the uncanny ability to find fault with everything everyone does on stage, he is also appreciative of the great or funny moments where the Oscars shine and become more than a self-congratulatory celeb-fest.

With that in mind, I now present you with the Top 3 Oscar Moments in the Graziani Household.

### 3. Jack Palance winning Best Supporting Actor for *City Slickers* (64<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards, 1992):

There's nothing like watching a 73-year-old man do one-armed push-ups to make you feel inadequate. I was 16 at the time and my dad was 42, but wow, did we both feel a little older in that moment. I couldn't do a one armed then and I can't do it now. **Dad Reaction Factor (DRF): 2/5.** He yelled, but in amazement. Thankfully my mom and my sisters stopped us from attempts to duplicate Palance's push-ups to prove our manliness that would surely have ended in the emergency room.

### 2. Heath Ledger winning Best Supporting Actor for *The Dark Knight* (81<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards, 2009):

The running gag in my house when it

comes to films is "If Leo likes it, it's no good." But there are a few areas where my dad's interests and mine overlap, like Batman movies. He loved Jack Nicholson's Joker, but was blown away by Ledger's brilliant, unnerving performance. When Ledger posthumously won this award, it felt right. He deserved the win, and it's a shame that we'll never see what else he could've done. The actors in the audience wore expressions of sadness but also of approval. It was a rare, touching, non-manufactured moment. **DRF: 3/5,** in sombre appreciation. We drank shots of Amaro Averna in remembrance.

### 1. Roberto Benigni winning Best Foreign Language Film and Best Actor for *Life Is Beautiful* (71<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards, 1999):

We're all fans of Benigni in my house (especially of his 1991 film *Johnny Stecchino*), but 1997's *Life Is Beautiful* was massive. We were hoping Benigni would win, and when Sophia Loren shouted "Roberto!" after opening the envelope, every Italian on the planet went a little crazy in celebration. Watching him stand on and climb over the chairs through the audience, listening to how wonderfully loud he was in his acceptance speeches, and witnessing his sheer, raw giddiness from winning—it pasted a grin to our faces for days. He said, "This is a moment of joy, and I want to kiss everybody!" And you know he's not kidding. **DRF: 5/5,** roaring approval. We spent the next few days during dinner imagining ourselves climbing the kitchen chairs and kissing strangers.

What are your top three Oscar moments? Send them in to [leo@mississaugalife.ca](mailto:leo@mississaugalife.ca) and we'll post on our website. The 85<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards will be held on February 24, 2013.

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