

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due on wed

## **"The Streak" from 145th Street Short Stories by, Walter Dean Myers**

Okay, so my name is Jamie, Jamie Farrell. Remember that, in case I get famous or something. My main man, my ace, the Jack who's got my back, is Froggy Williams. Froggy is definitely for real. Only thing is that he doesn't know scratch about ball.

"So you missed a shot," Froggy said. "Big deal."

"So we lost to Powell Academy," I said. "We're the only team uptown that has lost to Powell."

"So what happened?"

"The game was down to fifteen seconds and we're loosing by a point," I said.

"Tommy Smalls steals the ball and they all jump up into his face. Me, I see Tommy cop the pill and I'm running down the court. My man is trying to double-team Tommy and so I'm free as I want to be and standing under the basket."

"Tommy didn't see you?"

"No, he sees me, jumps up, and gets me the ball with like two seconds to go."

"Yeah?"

"Then I blow the layup," I said/

"Why you do that?" Froggy asked.

"How do I know?" I said. "I was free, I didn't rush it, I banked it soft off the backboard just like in practice, and it rolled around the rim and fell off!"

"So you want to go by my crib and listen to some jams?" Froggy asked.

"Man, the whole school is on my case for blowing the game to dumb old Powell Academy and you talking about listening to some jams," I said. "What am I going to listen to, the Death March?"

"Yo, just forget it ever happened," Froggy said. "Life goes on."

"No, it doesn't," I said. "That was the first thing that happened today. Then I go into the locker room and all the guys are giving me the evil eye because I blew the game, right?"

"Yeah?"

"So I try to finesse it off and I'm sitting there drinking a bottle of WonderAde, okay?" I said, thinking maybe I shouldn't even tell him.

"WonderAde is cool," Froggy said.

"It was until I dropped the bottle, it broke on the floor, and everybody had to pussyfoot around the floor so they wouldn't get cut by the broken glass," I said.

"Oh." That's what Froggy said.

Okay, so I go on home and I'm feeling miserable. When I go to bed what fills up my dreams? Tommy throwing me the ball and me blowing the layup. Only in my dreams when the ball falls off the rim it breaks up on the floor and everybody on my team gets cut. When I get up in the morning I don't even want to go to school, but I

go. You know, do the right thing and all that.

Froggy and I have biology together. All the way down the hall to class people were giving me dirty looks. We stopped to look at the posters for the junior dance and a girl gave me a bump in the back. I gave her a look and she gave me a look back.

"How you blow that layup?" she said. "You taking bribes or something?"

When she left I turned my attention back to the junior dance. "I'm thinking about asking Celia to the dance," I told Froggy.

"Celia Evora?" he asked.

"Yeah." Celia was from the Dominican Republic and the finest chick in the school.

"Man, you are never in all your days going to pull that girl," Froggy said. "You probably couldn't even pull her in a dream."

That got my jaw a little tight, but I didn't say anything. I just went on in and sat through the longest biology class I have ever had in my life. I thought the bell would never ring, but it finally did.

"Okay, class, let's wrap it up," Mr. Willis said. "This slide project is going to count as twenty-five percent of your final grade so I want the slides labeled with your name, class, and \_"

My hands must have been sweaty. Maybe I caught a cramp in my fingers, I don't know. All I remember was a sick feeling to my stomach when the slide slipped out of my hand. I went to grab it and almost had it before it hit the ground. I looked up and Mr. Willis was looking down at me and shaking his head.

I had to explain to Mr. Willis how I didn't break the slide on purpose and he didn't believe a word of it. The man just looked at me and kept shaking his head. He picked up his marking book and I saw him write down a big red 0 next to my name.

"I'm giving up," I said to Froggy. "I'm going home, getting under my bed, and staying there until the year 3000. Maybe things won't be going so bad by then."

"You could be a streaker," Froggy said.

"A what?"

"A streaker," he said. "I read in this book that some people do things in streaks. You ever hear about a baseball player who gets a lot of hits in a row, then he stops and they don't get any more touchdowns?"

"You mean base hits?" I said.

"Whatever." Froggy shrugged. "Anyway, some people go through their whole lives like that. All of a sudden something really bad happens to you and then you do a bunch of bad things in a row. Or something good happens and you do a bunch of good things in a row. You lost the ball game, you broke the bottle in the locker room, then you just broke your slide in biology."

"I don't believe in luck or streaks or whatever else you're talking about," I said. We were taking a break in the cafeteria. I was having a soda and Froggy was drinking milk like he always did. "I don't believe in astrology, either."

"Froggy kept on talking about this streak stuff but I wasn't into it. The next bell

"Oh, thank you, sir. You have made my day with your kindness," I said.

By the time I got to the refrigerator to get some ice from my ankle I was crying. No, I don't mean no sad look- I mean some right out boo-hooing with tears running down my face. My ankle was throbbing, my feelings were hurt, and I was ready to give it all up and resign from the human race.

I put the ice on my ankle, which was bruised and swollen and little bloody. Then I say down, put my leg up on the kitchen table, and called Froggy.

"Froggy, I give up, man," I said. "I'm on a death streak and I know I'm probably headed right on out the world."

"No, man, the streak is going to end," Froggy said.

"Yeah, when I'm dead."

"No," Froggy said. "Just like you missed the shot and lost the baseball game--"

"Basketball game," I said.

"Whatever. Anyway, something dramatic can happen and the whole thing will turn around. Then you'll have as much good luck as you had bad luck."

"What you mean by dramatic?" I asked.

"Hey, when it happens," Froggy said, "you'll know it."

Ellen is my sister. She's twelve and has a fast mouth. She also has braces that cost a whole bunch of money and I can't pop her when she's running her weak girl game.

"What happened to you?" she said when she came home. "I heard somebody was chasing you down the street?"

"Nothing," I said.

"Why don't you tell me who was chasing you so I can go tell them you're here?" she said.

"Why don't you shut up?" I answered.

What happened to your leg?

"Nothing."

She went to the refrigerator and took out the eggs. She took one egg out and handed it to me.

"Here," she said. "If nothing happened to your ankle you must have an egg under your skin it's sticking up so much. Here's another egg for your other leg."

Man, I just wanted to punch her right smack in her wire braces. She went waltzing out the kitchen and had the nerve to stick out her tongue at me. That's when I lost it. I tossed that egg toward the sink and started to get up but then the pain started throbbing in my leg and I sat back down real quick. I saw this movie once where this guy got shot in the leg and they had to cut it off. They gave him a drink of whiskey and a bullet to bite on. There was some soda in the fridge and I eased my leg down real slow and went for that. That's when I saw it.

Okay, wrap your brain around this. I got one hand on the refrigerator door when my mind hit the sink. I looked at the carton of eggs on the counter and there were twelve eggs in the carton.

rang and we got up to leave. I dropped my soda can carefully into the garbage can. Then I grabbed Froggy's milk container and tossed it into the center of the can. I said center because I meant center. I don't know how it hit the edge of the can and bounced off into Maurice Dupre's lap.

Maurice Dupre is six feet high, six feet wide, and has more fingers and toes than he has points on his IQ. I watched as the last drop of milk fell onto Maurice's lap. Then I watched as he looked up at me with his little squinty, bloodshot eyes. Then I watched as he stood up with his fist in a ball. Then I ran out the cafeteria as fast as I could.

I spent all day sneaking around the halls and slipping into classrooms so Maurice wouldn't find me. I mean, I wasn't worried about fighting him, because I knew how it would come out. What I was worried about was if I would ever wake up when the fight was over.

When school was over I didn't even go to my locker to get my stuff. I just told Froggy to walk down the hall and if he saw Maurice to call out my name and point in some direction away from where I was sneaking out of a side door. Froggy didn't understand sports, but he understood me not wanting to get my butt kicked and so he went along with it. Last thing I heard in school was that Maurice was chasing Froggy around the gym.

I got to the block thinking about Froggy and Maurice and the streak. I stopped on the corner where I live and bought some potato wedgies and a soda from the burger joint. I got the wedgies first and started munching on them while the lady behind the counter poured my soda. Then I remembered I had taken my wallet out of my pocket and put it in my locker after lunch.

"These wedgies don't taste right!" I called out.

"They're going to taste a lot worse with a broken jaw," the manager called out. "So you just better pay up and eat them."

I knew by the time he got around the counter I could get away. All he got was one little whack at the back of my head that didn't even hurt.

Right home. Up the stairs, close the door and lock it, then cool out. Life was just wrong! The phone rang and I started not to answer it, but then the way things were working out I figured maybe it was somebody warning me that a killer was coming up the stairs to me. I rushed to the phone, stopping just long enough to hit my ankle into a dumbbell. You ever hear that sound your anklebone makes when it hits steel? You ever see them little stars that go off in your head?

"Hello?"

"Jamie?" the voice on the phone asked.

"It depends," I said. "Who's this?"

"This is Mr. Bradley," came the answer. "I just wanted to let you know you failed your English test big time. You're about a hair from failing the course. I just wanted to warn you."

"Yo! Ellen! Come in here, quick!"

Ellen took her sweet time getting to the kitchen. Then she stood in the doorway with her hand on her skinny little hip. "What?"

"Did you hand me an egg a little while ago?" I asked.

"Jamie, are you using something you shouldn't be using?" she asked. "Like crack cocaine?"

"Did you hand me an egg or did you not hand me an egg?" I asked again.

"Yeah, you had an egg," she said. "Just don't get violent on me. You seeing any purple rabbits running around or things like that?"

"Check this out," I said. I knew I was excited. "I threw the egg over here and it landed in the egg carton!"

"Isn't that sweet?"

"No, you don't understand," I said. "First the telephone was ringing and then I hit my leg on the dumbbell and then I failed English, see?"

"You really enjoy yourself when you're alone, huh?"

Okay, so the girl was seriously stupid. But I knew who would understand and I called Froggy back and told him what happened.

"How many bad things happened to you?" Froggy asked.

"A thousand," I said.

"No, exactly how many bad things happened to you?" He said. "We need the exact number."

I started counting, I missed the shot in the basketball game, that was the first thing. Then I broke the bottle in the locker room. The third thing was when I broke the slide in biology.

"Then you dumped milk on Maurice DuPre," Froggy said. "He's still looking for you."

"Right, then I left my wallet in school and couldn't pay for my potato wedgies. Then when I got home I banged up my ankle and found out that I flunked my English test."

"Seven things," Froggy said. "Now you have seven pieces of good luck coming your way."

"Wait a minute," I said. "I just found out that I failed the English test. I didn't actually fail it at that time."

"When did you take it?"

"Just before the ... Just before the basketball game," I said.

"Okay, now you just had one piece of good luck because you threw the egg toward the sink and it landed in the carton," Froggy said. "You have six to go."

"I'm going for the top right away," I said. "I'm asking Celia to the dance."

"Hey, go for it."

I figured I'd see Celia in school and pop the question. The whole scene was in my mind. Celia would be coming down the hall with one of those short little skirts she

wears, looking tan and sweet and with those fine legs of hers strutting like she owned the world. Then I could call her name and say, "Hey, we are going to the dance together?" and she would just kind of go into a half swoon and maybe giggle a little and it would be all set. **(STOP) Will Celia say yes? Has Jamie's streak of Bad Luck truly ended? To find out the answers to these questions complete reading Walter Dean Myer's short story, "The Streak" from 145<sup>th</sup> Street Short Stories. You can find the story on the Nova Middle School Website.**

## *The Streak* By Walter Dean Myers

*(Read the entire story) Answer the following questions that coordinates with each day*

### Monday

1. What kind of streak does Froggy tell Jamie that he's in as the story opens? How does Jamie know that Froggy is telling the truth? Cite two details to support your analysis

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Analyze: What is the narrator's perspective? What evidence from the story illustrates perspective of the narrator?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Tuesday

3. Explain how good luck starts coming Jamie's way, and what is his plan to use that good luck? Cite two details to support your thinking

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. How does Jamie change from the beginning to the end of the story?? Cite two details to support your thinking.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Wednesday

*Directions Track the plot of the story and complete the plot diagram*

