Lucky Break

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Summary
Tom likes football. One day, he is playing football when he falls and breaks his leg. Later, he reads in the newspaper that his favorite movie star, Laurel Rowe, will be at a movie theater. His leg is broken, but he still wants to go see her to get her autograph.

Tom takes a taxi. It stops outside the movie theater. There are lots of people there. When the movie stars arrive, the crowd of fans pushes Tom and he falls.

When Tom falls, there is another accident. Laurel Rowe trips over Tom’s crutch. Newspaper reporters take pictures. The movie star is angry with Tom. It’s her big night—the first night of her new movie—and people are laughing at her. She hits him with his crutch. The reporters take pictures of this, too.

The next morning, Tom reads the newspaper. He sees a picture of him and Laurel Rowe. In the photo, she is hitting Tom with the crutch! Tom becomes famous.

The next Saturday, there is another game of football and Tom goes to watch. After the game, there is an auction to raise money for a children’s hospital. Tom has a good idea. He gives the crutch that Laurel Rowe touched to the auction. The famous crutch earns a lot of money for the hospital.

As the fall gives Tom the chance to meet his favorite movie star, and because as a result he was able to help raise money for the hospital, he says that the break to his leg is lucky.

Background and themes
Sports: Accidents happen in sports.

Luck: Sometimes things happen to a person that are not good but which can bring luck and help them.

Movie stars: Sometimes celebrities behave badly in public.

Charity: Giving to a good cause is in contrast to selfish behavior.

Discussion activities
Before reading
1 Discuss: Write on the board: You fall and break your leg. If necessary, help students understand the meaning of “break.” In groups, students discuss the things that they can/can’t do easily with a broken leg.

2 Discuss: Talk about the title of the book. Give students a few minutes to think about what the title means, using a dictionary, if necessary. You may want to explain that the title has two meanings. First, point to the illustration on the cover showing the boy’s broken leg in a cast. Is this a lucky break? Usually, it is not lucky to break a leg. Second, explain that when someone has luck, something good happens. A lucky break is when there is a good change in someone’s life. For example, when someone who has no job suddenly gets one.

3 Group work: Ask students to cover the words and look at the pictures in the book. Students decide what is happening. One person in each group writes down the story. After twenty minutes, ask another person in each group to read out what their group has written. The class can vote for the best story.

While reading (after p. 6)
4 Guess: Ask students to discuss with a partner how Laurel Rowe will behave after she realizes Tom has a broken leg.

After reading
5 Check: Were students right about their predictions in activity 4? Were they surprised? Why/why not?

6 Write: Have students imagine they are policemen/women and must write a report on the accident. Students make a list of events, using short sentences. Help them get started: Tom breaks his leg.

7 Role play: Assign the parts of the characters in the narrative to different students. They can read the whole story through, or you can assign different students to read each page, depending upon class size. Or, have students practice in groups, then call groups to perform parts of the story before the whole class.

8 Group work: Put students in groups of four. Two students think Laurel Rowe is right to be mad at Tom. The other two students think she is wrong. Each group must talk together and then decide if she is right or wrong.

Vocabulary activities
For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to www.penguinreaders.com.