

**You know the feeling. A big day at school. Everyone will be watching you. Tom is nervous and excited at the same time ...**

**22/09/2015 22:21**

... I'm afraid of the letter 'W'.

... Yes, I stutter. So what?

**01/03/2016 19:35**

... A new boy started at school yesterday. His name's Luke Williams. He's Welsh. I can't stop thinking about him.

**07/04/2016 22:51**

It will take a long time to write about today. What a day! I'm probably not going to post some of this.

It started badly. The phone was ringing when I came down for breakfast. Dad was in the shower. I was feeling good but nervous – a big day for me!!! And so I answered it without thinking. Bad idea! It was Luke Williams. I thought, 'How has he got my number?'

When I saw him yesterday he probably only wanted to ask me what I was doing in the science fair, but of course I couldn't speak. He makes me so nervous, so I just walked away. He probably thought I was a complete idiot. I feel terrible when I remember it. So I was thinking, 'Why is he ringing me now?' He just said, 'Hello ... hello? Is that Tom?'

Did I tell you 'H' is my enemy too? So, trying to say 'hello' was my second bad idea of the day. My throat just closed up and all that came out was that strange sound I told you about in last week's blog. I really wanted to die. And then I heard someone laughing. It sounded like Ryan Colby. So I just put the phone down. OK, so they were ringing up to laugh at me. Nice!

**08/11/2015 20:22**

Some people aren't happy unless they're making someone else miserable. Ryan Colby really hates me and he knows about me and the letter 'W'.

**22/03/2016 21:30**

There are good days and bad days. This blog is helping, even if I don't post everything. Music really helps too! Today was a good day. I had a talk with Dad. He told me there's a new drug that can stop you stuttering. But guess what? I like my stutter! So does Dad. He told me it's made me a much better person because I

think carefully before I speak. He thinks I'm more aware of other people's feelings, but he doesn't know I'm just trying to find words without 'W' or 'H' in them. We decided I don't need drugs.

07/04/2016 22:51

As I said, today was a really big day for me. The last time I spoke in class was three years ago and it didn't go well. I tried to say the letter 'W' and made that strange sound. Everyone laughed at me and I haven't spoken in class since.

But it's been going really well lately. I've got a great speech therapist and I can use my laptop in class all the time. I've even got an app that turns text into speech! Very cool!

And guess what? This is really big news! When I listen to music on my headphones in the background I can speak without stuttering!!! That's why I agreed to talk at the science fair today.

So I got to school early this morning to practise with my group. Our project is about using bacteria to eat plastic. Well, I think it's really interesting. We also finished school at lunchtime today!

Luke Williams was waiting by the entrance when I arrived. He smiled at me. Then Ryan Colby came up and said, 'Hey, Tom, guess what?' I didn't think. I tried to say, 'What?' and of course got stuck on the 'W' and you can guess what happened then. So Ryan Colby and his friends started laughing. So yes, I turned and ran. Very brave!

I wasn't going to take part in the presentation, but then I got a text from Dad saying good luck. And I thought OK, I'm not going to let idiots like Ryan Colby make me feel bad any more.

Unfortunately, when it was my turn to speak I looked up and saw Luke Williams in the front row. He looked away. And then I was so nervous that I chose the wrong music on my MP3 player. So instead of Mozart I was listening to my dance collection. The problem is that when I have dance music on the headphones I can't stop myself talking in the same rhythm as the music. So it just sounds like I'm rapping!

Most people in school have never heard me speak. They weren't expecting a rap about bacteria that eat plastic. I could see they were laughing at me, but I didn't care. And when I finished they all stood up and cheered.

After we finished, suddenly everyone in school wanted to be my friend. They didn't know about my trick with the music, so they just thought I was a brilliant rapper, ha ha! I checked my phone at lunchtime and I've got 187 new friend requests!!! I didn't see Ryan Colby or Luke after the science fair.

OK, I'm not going to post this next bit. Luke came here this afternoon. I can't believe it! I was wrong. He wasn't laughing at me this morning. He was ringing to wish me luck in the science fair. And that wasn't Ryan Colby laughing on the phone, it was Luke's dog barking! We thought that was really funny! He thinks Ryan Colby is horrible and no, they're not friends! They had a fight after Ryan laughed at me today and they were

both in trouble. We talked for three hours! And ... he told me he really likes me!!!! I love his Welsh accent. I didn't want him to stop talking. Anyway, Dad invited him to stay for dinner. They got on really well and I could see Dad thinks he's really intelligent. Then when I said goodbye to him at the door he turned around and said, 'Guess what?' And I said, 'What?'

Brendan Dunne