

Name: _____

Shooting for Perfection

by Kelly Hashway

Jason cringed as the basketball bounced off the rim and fell to the ground. He'd made nine free throws in a row, but he'd missed the tenth. He watched the ball roll across the driveway and into the bushes.

"Hey, want to play a little one on one?" his older brother Xander asked, scooping up the ball.

"I can't," Jason said. "I'm trying to get my free throw perfect for tryouts next week."

"I was watching you through the living room window. You made most of your shots. I think you'll be just fine for tryouts."

Jason shook his head. "I have to be able to make every free throw. Coach McElroy said his players need to be able to make their free throw shots."

Xander spun the basketball on his finger. "I don't think he meant every free throw."

"How do you know? He could've. So I need to be ready." Jason held his hands out, waiting for Xander to pass him the ball.

"What about the rest of your game? You can't just be good at free throws."

"I know. I've been practicing the other stuff, too. But this is what I really need to work on."

"All right," Xander said, tossing Jason the ball. "Let's see what you've got."

Jason lined up his shot, taking his time to make sure his form was perfect. He took his shot and smiled as it swooshed in the net.

"Nothing but net," Xander said. "Very nice. Try again." Xander bounced the ball back to Jason.

Jason repeated his shot, exactly as he had before. He sunk nine baskets. On the tenth try, his knees felt wobbly and his hands got sweaty. He held his breath as the ball left his fingers and headed toward the hoop. It hit the rim and bounced into Xander's hands.

"See!" Jason said. "Every time I get to my tenth shot, I miss."



A car slowed to a stop at the end of the driveway. Jason gasped when he saw it was Coach McElroy. He'd seen Jason miss the free throw shot!

Coach McElroy leaned out the window. "Hi, Jason. Nice to see you practicing. I wish more of my players would work on their free throws. Tryouts are just around the corner."

Jason nodded, nervously waiting for a comment about how he'd missed his shot.

"So how is it going?" Coach McElroy asked. "I like my players to be able to make at least six out of every ten free throws."

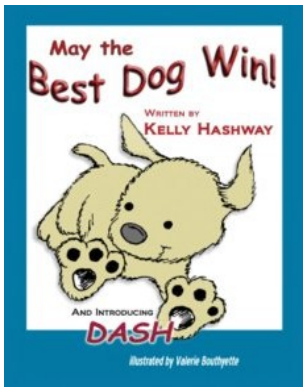
Six? Jason smiled. "I've been hitting nine out of ten."

Coach McElroy's face lit up. "That's great! I can't wait to see it in tryouts."

Jason's smile widened. He couldn't wait either.



About the Author



Kelly Hashway's picture book, *May the Best Dog Win*, is now available!

Dash has the perfect life until the Super Sweeper 5000 shows up. Sweeper runs all over the house sucking up the leftover food scraps, and he even gets his own room! But Dash won't give up his place as the favorite dog without a fight.

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1. What was Jason doing at the beginning of the story?
- a. Standing several feet from the basket and throwing the ball.
 - b. Running up to the basket with the ball and tossing it through the hoop.
 - c. Dribbling up to the basket and throwing the ball in.
 - d. Playing a game of basketball with his brother.

2. Coach McElroy said he wants his players to be able to....
- a. make all free throws
 - b. make nine out of ten free throws
 - c. make over half of their free throws
 - d. just try their best

3. Do you think Jason takes basketball seriously? Explain your answer.

4. What happened when Coach McElroy's car pulled up?
- a. The coach saw Xander miss a free throw.
 - b. The coach saw the boys playing one-on-one.
 - c. The coach saw Jason make a free throw.
 - d. The coach saw Jason miss a free throw.

5. Which word best describes Jason? (circle one)

careless	perfectionist	confident	quiet
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Explain why you chose the word circled above.

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Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. ___ u s ___ ___ s

hint: plants used for decoration near a house

2. ___ a ___ s i ___ g

hint: throwing gently

3. ___ e r ___ ___ u ___ l y

hint: in a worried way

4. ___ i d ___ n ___ d

hint: became wider

5. c ___ ___ c ___

hint: person who trains or leads a team

6. ___ o ___ ___ e ___ t

hint: remark

7. r ___ ___

hint: edge of a basketball hoop

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In the story, "Shooting for Perfection," Jason is nervous about basketball tryouts, so he spends a lot of time practicing to perfect his free throws.

Think of something that you have had to practice to become good at. Describe what you practiced, how long you practiced, and whether the practicing helped you achieve your goal.

ANSWER KEY

Shooting for Perfection

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1. What was Jason doing at the beginning of the story? **a**
- a. **Standing several feet from the basket and throwing the ball.**
 - b. Running up to the basket with the ball and tossing it through the hoop.
 - c. Dribbling up to the basket and throwing the ball in.
 - d. Playing a game of basketball with his brother.

2. Coach McElroy said he wants his players to be able to.... **c**
- a. make all free throws
 - b. make nine out of ten free throws
 - c. **make over half of their free throws**
 - d. just try their best

3. Do you think Jason takes basketball seriously? Explain your answer.

Jason does take basketball seriously because he is trying to perfect his free throws. He becomes frustrated with himself when he misses an occasional shot.

4. What happened when Coach McElroy's car pulled up? **b**
- a. The coach saw Xander miss a free throw.
 - b. The coach saw the boys playing one-on-one.
 - c. The coach saw Jason make a free throw.
 - d. **The coach saw Jason miss a free throw.**

5. Which word best describes Jason? (circle one)

careless

perfectionist

confident

quiet

Explain why you chose the word circled above.

He doesn't like to miss any shots. He aims for perfection.

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Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. b u s h e s bushes
hint: plants used for decoration near a house
2. p a s s i n g passing
hint: throwing gently
3. n e r v o u s l y nervously
hint: in a worried way
4. w i d e n e d widened
hint: became wider
5. c o a c h coach
hint: person who trains or leads a team
6. c o m m e n t comment
hint: remark
7. r i m rim
hint: edge of a basketball hoop