

**Title: The Streak**

**Subcategory: Life Experience**

**Name of Author: S. G. Benson**

## The Streak

Northern Arizona University, founded in 1899 as state teachers' college, had only been a university for four years, when I entered as a freshman. The institution was steeped in tradition—some noble, such as holiday luminarias, and others less lofty, like water fights and panty raids. A brand-new national fad exploded in early 1974, and I, quite literally, had a front-row seat when it hit the NAU campus.

During my sophomore year, I lived in a women's dormitory on the North Quad, adjacent to the city streets of Flagstaff. Evenings were generally quiet on weeknights in the North Hall lobby, where I worked part-time at the front desk as a student employee. My work station, a massive, dark, wooden island in the center of the earth-toned lobby, provided a quiet place to finish my homework between the occasional phone call or visitor.

One night in late February, I sipped hot cocoa at the reception desk as I prepared for an exam. The aroma of popcorn wafted from the far end of the lobby, where a handful of coeds played Mah Jong in front of the fireplace. Outside, gently falling snow reflected the dim lobby lighting and muffled the footsteps of the few students entering and leaving the building. The silence, broken only by the ticking clock on a nearby table, ensured my absorption in my studies.

I looked up, startled, when the front door burst open, letting in a blast of freezing air. Three male figures, wearing nothing but sneakers and ski masks, rushed inside the building, whooping and hollering. The door slammed behind them as they paraded, double-time, around my desk. They didn't get much of a reaction from me, beyond my dropped jaw. My eyes were *not* on their ski masks.

"Where is everyone?" The lead streaker sounded disappointed.

Before I could think of anything to say, the young men sprinted down the nearest corridor, where several dorm residents had their doors propped open. As the intruders receded from sight, I heard one of them say, "We can leave by the back door."

I rose from my chair and walked a few steps to alert the head resident, who lived just off the lobby. She answered my knock, clad in a blue, quilted bathrobe and fluffy slippers.

Pointing down the hallway where the streakers had disappeared, I explained the situation to Meg. A grin spread across her face. "That exit is locked," she said. "They'll have to come back this way."

I chuckled, ignoring the likely fire code violation. When the trio returned, slinking silently into the lobby, she awaited, hands on hips and a scowl on her face.

"Stop right there, you Bozos, and off with those masks!"

Three hats transformed swiftly into discreet shields as the head resident wagged an index finger at them. "I suspect this isn't exactly how you expected your adventure to end."

The red-faced culprits glanced over Meg's shoulder at a dozen coeds who had gathered for the show. A few giggles drifted across the room.

"I don't expect to see any of you, especially not this much of you, at North Hall for the rest of the semester. Tonight, though, I will not call Campus Police if you are out of here by the time I count to three. One, two . . ."

Three shivering streakers flashed by my desk, pushed through the front door, and disappeared into the snowy darkness.

Meg shooed the gawkers back toward their dorm rooms, winked at me, and firmly closed her apartment door.

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