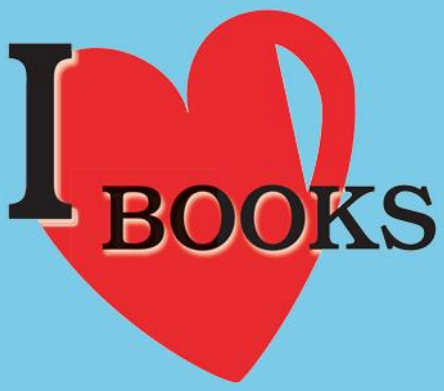


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Opening extract from

Fame Thing

Written by

Jonathan Meres

Illustrated by

Jake McDonald

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To Aidan – snowboarding superstar!

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CHAPTER 1
NAME THING

The school bus drove off. George and her brother Denis were all alone. It was a warm spring afternoon. Birds sang in the trees. The old church clock struck four. But George had only one thing on her mind.

"Well?" she said.

"Well what?" said Denis.

"Who do you think's going to win tonight?"

Denis let out a long sigh. "I have no idea who's going to win tonight, George. And do you know something? I couldn't care less."

George looked up at Denis from her wheelchair. "Are you serious?"

"I've never been more serious in my life," said Denis.

"No, but really."

"No, but really, George. I couldn't care less."

"But it's the semi-final replay, Den! You've got to care!"

"Have I?" said Denis. "Why's that then?"

"Because ... because ..." George said. "Because you just have to, that's all!"

Denis laughed.

"What's so funny?"

"You, George. You're funny."

"I don't see what's so funny about liking football," muttered George.

"*Liking* football?" Denis said. "You're obsessed with it! Football's all you ever think about!"

"So?" George said. "What's wrong with that?"

Denis rolled his eyes. She just didn't get it, did she? She just couldn't get her head round the fact that he'd sooner watch paint dry than watch a football match.

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "Everything?"

"Anyway, it's not my fault," George went on.

"Really?" said Denis, sounding surprised. "So whose fault is it, then?"

"Dad's," George said.

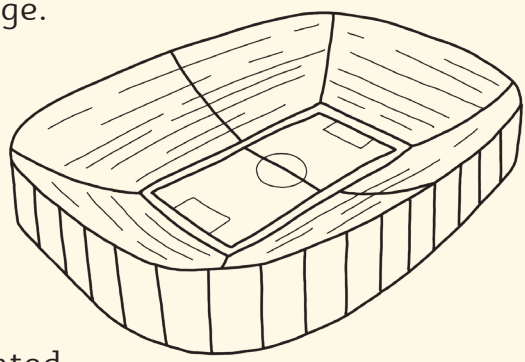
"Dad's?" Denis looked at his sister. "How do you work that out then?"

"Well, he's the one who named me after a famous footballer, isn't he?"

"He named me after a famous footballer as well," Denis said. "And I hate football."

Denis didn't like anyone to know why he was called Denis. He'd been named after Denis Law, who'd played for Manchester United back in the 60s. His sister George was named after George Best, another old United player and one of the

most famous footballers ever. Her proper name wasn't really George, though – it was Georgina. But everyone called her George.



"So?" said George.

Denis didn't say anything, as he started to push his sister along the pavement. If she wanted to have the last word, he thought, then fine, she could have the last word.

"Get a move on!" George said. "I can go faster than this myself!"

But Denis just smiled. He knew she was kidding.

"Oi, Georgie!" a voice yelled from across the road.

George turned around. It was her best friend Nick's dad.

"What's the score going to be tonight then?" he shouted.

Denis shook his head. What was it with these people? Hadn't they got better things to think about?

"3–1 to Chelsea," George yelled. "After extra time."

"What?" Denis said. "So now you can predict the future?"

George didn't reply. She'd spotted a huge removals lorry as it roared past them and rumbled round the corner.

"Did you see that?" she said.

"Yeah," Denis said. "A lorry. What about it?"

"Not just any lorry," said George. "A removals lorry,"

"So?" said Denis.

"It must be going to The Elms."

"Great," said Denis, trying not to yawn.

"I wonder who it is then?" George said. "They reckon it might be someone famous."

"Dunno," said Denis. "You tell me. You're the one with special powers."

"Ha ha," George said. "Very funny."

"You don't mean that, do you?" said Denis.

"What do you think?" said George.