NO.1 BOY DETECTIVE

Football Forgery



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For Maisy. A great football fan and a Stoke supporter.

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Chapter 1

My name is Drooth. Damian Drooth, ace detective. I search out crimes in all kinds of places.

Take last Saturday. Mum was running the café at the Rangers' football ground – which was cool cos I got in free and could watch the match. Brilliant. It was a big match. A sell-out. So I arranged to meet Winston, Harry and Tod inside the gate at one o'clock.

But when I got there, I could only see Harry and Tod.



'Where's Winston?' I asked. 'He's not usually late for a match.'

'Dunno,' said Tod.

Just then Harry's mobile rang and he was soon deep in conversation. When he'd finished, he turned and said, 'It's bad news. They won't let Winston into the ground.'

'Why?' I asked.

'It's his ticket,' said Harry. 'They say it's a forgery.'

I was gobsmacked. Who would go around forging tickets? I'd never heard anything so crazy.

'You can make a fortune doing forgeries,' said Tod, who watches the History Channel a lot. 'People forge famous paintings and stuff and earn millions.'

'Mmmm,' I said. 'But who would forge a ticket for a match? And . . .

where did Winston get it from?'

'All the tickets were sold out but there was a man outside the ground who told Winston he'd got some for sale.'

'And he bought one?'

'Yes.'

Sometimes I despair. How could Winston buy a ticket from a ticket tout? A real crook. Winston was part of my Detective School, wasn't he? He should know better.

'Where's Winston now?' I asked.

'He's outside,' said Harry, pointing to the gate. 'He hasn't got any money to buy another ticket.'

'Leave it to me,' I said, tapping my nose. 'I have a plan.'



Luckily Mum had asked me to fetch a gateau out of the van. This couldn't be better.

PLAN Part 1:

I ran to the gate where Mr Thomas was checking the tickets. (He used to be a footballer and now he has a bad back and not much hair.) He knows me cos I always come to help Mum in the café.

'Hello, Damian,' he said. 'Looking forward to the match?'

'Sure thing,' I said. 'But I've got to go out to the van first.'

'Righto, son,' he said, patting me on the shoulder. 'You go ahead.' And he let me through.

So far, so good. Outside the ground I soon spotted Winston pacing up and down Cranberry Street. He was looking as miserable as a worm on a hook.

‘Over here, Win,’ I shouted, and beckoned him towards the van, which was parked in the road. He cheered up when I told him my plan.

I unlocked the back door and reached inside.

‘Grab hold of this,’ I said and passed him a massive chocolate gateau with cream in the middle and chocolate sprinkles on top. Then I took another one.



PLAN Part 2:

We went back to the gate where Mr Thomas looked longingly at Mum's cakes.

'Ah,' he said. 'You're helping out at the café, are you? Good boys!'

We smiled and nodded as we walked straight through the gate. The simple ideas are always the best, that's what I say.

End of Plan



Unfortunately, there was a crush of people near the gate. Thwack! Splodge! Winston's chocolate gateau was flattened against his Rovers' sweatshirt, which was a shame as it was brand new.

'What will you tell your mum, Damian?' said Tod, who was waiting nearby.

'She won't be pleased to see the remains of that gateau,' said Harry.



‘No probs,’ I said. ‘I won’t take it. She only asked me to fetch one anyway, and she won’t even remember there were two in the van.’

I’m sure you’ll agree that there was no point in wasting the squashed gateau, so we scraped most of it off Winston’s shirt and shared it. As a matter of fact, chocolate gateau has an amazing effect on my brain. It always puts it into top gear. It wasn’t long before I had worked out a plan for catching the fraudster who had sold the forged ticket.