
The Dog that Saved the World
(Cup)
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Illustrated by
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Barrington Stoke

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To our Elsie, of course …

… and to my friends at Barrington Stoke, who are by far the greatest team the world has ever seen

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Football is the best thing ever. Fact.

I mean, sleeping is great too, but when I dream, it's always about scoring goals. And I like eating – I'll scoff every scrap of food in my bowl, but only so I have loads of energy to chase a football all day.

Everything comes back to football in the end. Know what I mean?

I'm pretty good at it as well. I should be, given how much time I spend in the park dribbling, passing, practising my silky skills. I don't want to sound like a big head, but when people see me playing football, they stop and

watch. Some of them even get their phones out and film me. They laugh and point and clap, which just makes me show off all my best tricks. There's nothing better than playing football in front of a crowd, and the bigger the crowd, the better. Some days in the park, we end up with so many people watching that it feels like we should be charging them.

"We'd make a fortune," Elsie always says. "Imagine how happy Dad would be if we went home with a hat full of cash?"

Elsie's right too. We haven't had much money lately, and it's caused Dad, and Elsie, a lot of worry.

Elsie has been my best friend ever since she was born. She's the person I always play football with. She's skilful, fast and has a properly powerful shot.

She's not as good as me, but that's OK. After all, there's a really good reason why I'm a better

footballer. Two reasons, in fact: I've got four legs and Elsie only has two.



Anyway, football has always been our thing. It's what Elsie and I do, the thing that makes us best mates. And then recently, it became more than that.

Football took us on an adventure. A BIG ONE.

And this adventure changed Elsie's world, and mine …