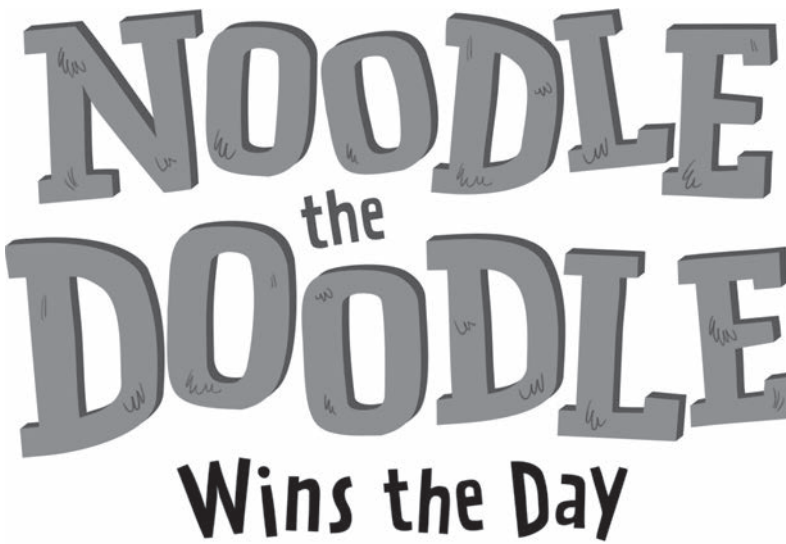
NOODLE the DOODLE

Wins the Day



Jonathan Meres

Illustrated by Katy Halford



Jonathan Meres

With illustrations by
Katy Halford

Barrington Stoke

This one's for Pablo again. My very own therapet.

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CONTENTS

1.	Exciting News	1
2.	Sol's Secret	11
3.	Teams	21
4.	Come Back with that Frisbee!	35
5.	Eyes on the Prize	44
6.	New Pup on the Block	53
7.	Ready, Steady, Throw!	65
8.	We Won't Bite!	73
9.	Everyone's a Winner	80

CHAPTER 1
Exciting News

It was warm and sunny. The sky was blue. Flowers were blooming. Birds were singing and bees were buzzing. Summer was on its way. But at Wigley Primary it was just another Thursday.

"Good morning, everyone!" said Mr Reed.

"Goooood moooooorning, Mis-ter Reeeeeed!" sang all the children together. They stretched out each word like they always did.

"WOOF!" said Noodle the doodle. "WOOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!"

Noodle was sitting next to Samir.

"What's that, Noodle?" said Mr Reed. "Did you say I've got some exciting news to tell everyone?"

"WOOF!" said Noodle. His tail began wagging like a windscreen wiper.

The children laughed. They liked it when Mr Reed pretended to understand what Noodle was saying. And they liked it when Mr Reed had exciting news too.

"What is it, Mr Reed?" said Lou.

Sol grinned. "Is it your birthday?" he said.

"No, Sol!" laughed Mr Reed. "It's not my birthday!"

Abdul turned to Sol. "You *always* say that, Sol!" he said.

"Yes," said Nora. "But one of these days he'll be right."

"Any other guesses?" said Mr Reed.

"Is it macaroni cheese for lunch, Mr Reed?" said Shakira.

Mr Reed smiled. He knew that Shakira would ask that. Because there was nothing she liked better than macaroni cheese.

"No, Shakira," said Mr Reed. "It's not macaroni cheese. Sorry."

"Oh," said Shakira. She sounded disappointed.

"It's baked potatoes!" said Josh. "It's *always* baked potatoes on Thursday!"

"You should know that, Shakira," said Callum. "Your mum's the school cook!"

"Oh yeah!" said Shakira. "I forgot!"

Sol grinned. "You forgot your mum's the cook?" he said.

"No!" laughed Shakira. "I forgot it was Thursday!"

"Anyone else like to guess what the news might be?" said Mr Reed.



Everyone looked at Mr Reed. They all shook their heads. They wished Mr Reed would hurry up and tell them.

"It's Sports Day next Friday," said Mr Reed.

"YEEEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAAAH!" sang everyone in Mr Reed's class.

Well, *nearly* everyone. Sol didn't join in. He had just remembered something. Something that had happened at a Sports Day when he was very young.



He had been running in the egg-and-spoon race. He was winning. But then he tripped and fell over. He landed face first on the egg. The egg broke. Sol ended up with egg on his face. Everyone else laughed. But Sol didn't. He cried.

It had happened a long time ago. But even now Sol could still remember how he had felt. And that was why he wasn't excited. Sports Day brought back bad memories for him.

"Penny for your thoughts, Sol?" said Mr Reed. He could tell that Sol was worried about something.

"Pardon?" said Sol.

"Is there something you'd like to share with the class?" said Mr Reed.

Sol shook his head. "Not really," he said.

"Are you sure?" said Mr Reed.

Sol nodded. It was bad enough just *thinking* about the time he tripped and got egg on his face. The last thing he wanted to do was to remind everyone else!

"OK," said Mr Reed. "In that case, we need to start planning!"

"Planning?" said Abdul. "Planning what?"

"Sports Day!" said Lou.

"Oh, right," said Abdul.

Samir put his hand up. "Excuse me, Mr Reed," he said.

"Yes, Samir?" said Mr Reed.

"Can grown-ups come and watch?" Samir spoke in a soft voice. He hadn't been at Wigley Primary for very long. He was still a bit shy.

Mr Reed smiled. "Of course they can, Samir," he said.

Samir looked pleased. Noodle licked his hand. It tickled, so Samir laughed.

Marty put his hand up. "Excuse me, Mr Reed," he said.

"Yes, Marty?" said Mr Reed.

"Can Daniel come too?" Marty asked.

"Daniel?" said Mr Reed.

Marty nodded. "Daniel the spaniel," he said.

"Of course!" laughed Mr Reed. He had forgotten that Marty had a puppy. Which was amazing. Because Marty hadn't always liked dogs. Or at least he didn't *think* he liked them. But then Noodle the doodle had joined the class and Marty had soon changed his mind. Now

Marty loved dogs so much that he had one of his very own!

"As long as Daniel doesn't poo everywhere!" said Shakira.

"Can my grandpa come and watch, Mr Reed?" asked Josh.

Mr Reed smiled. "Of course he can, Josh," he said.

"As long as he doesn't poo everywhere," said Sol.

Everyone laughed. Even Mr Reed.

"WOOF!" said Noodle. "WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!"

"Ah, yes," said Mr Reed. "Thank you for reminding me, Noodle. There's something else I need to tell you."

The pupils all looked at Mr Reed. What was he about to say?

"This year," said Mr Reed, "it's going to be an *alternative* Sports Day!"