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Opening extract from

Even Stevens FC

Written by

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Published by

Frances Lincoln

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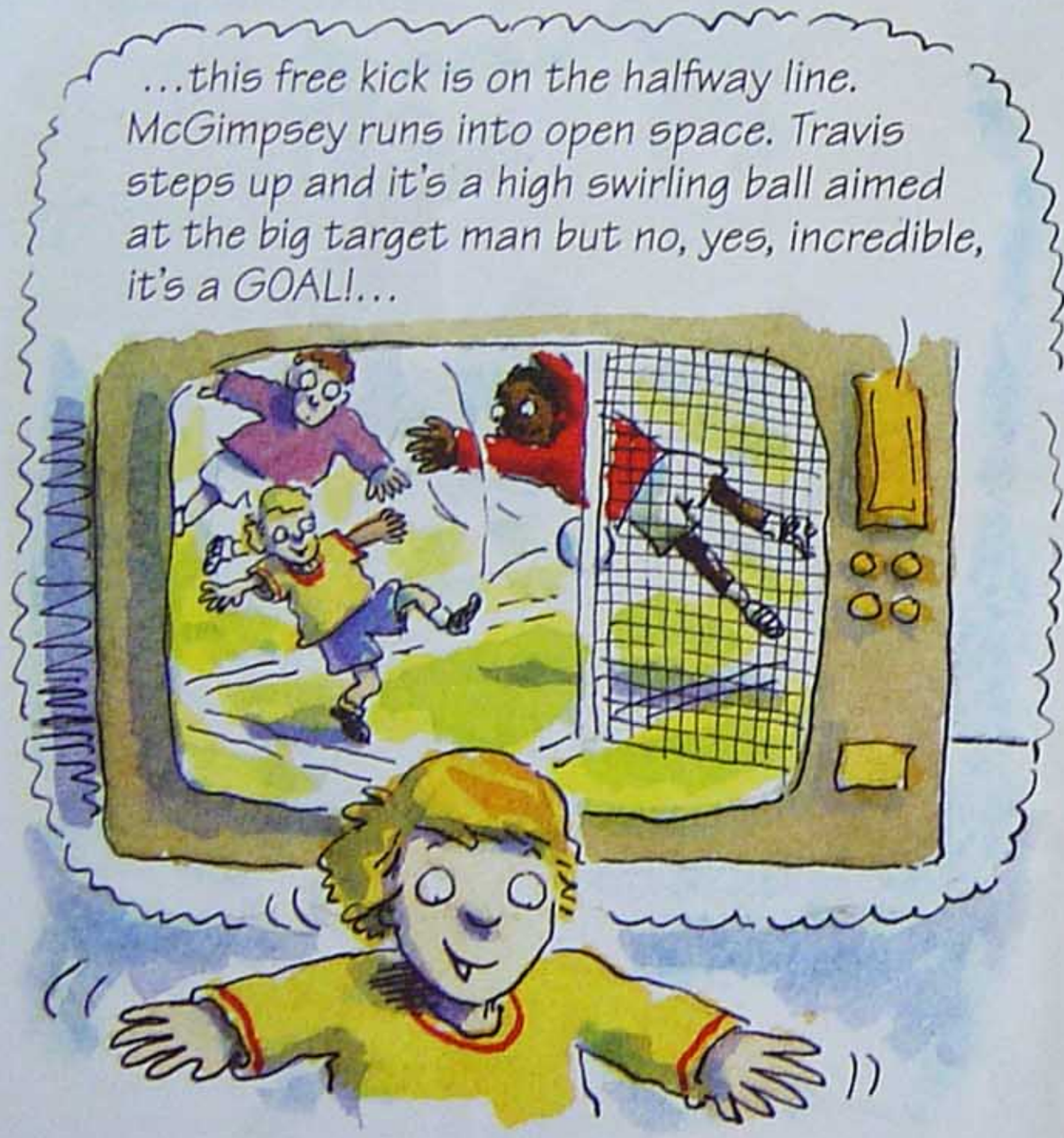
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Wayne's ambition was to be a professional footballer. Every day he watched his *Goals of the Century* video and imagined being on television.

What Wayne imagined...

...this free kick is on the halfway line. McGimpsey runs into open space. Travis steps up and it's a high swirling ball aimed at the big target man but no, yes, incredible, it's a GOAL!...



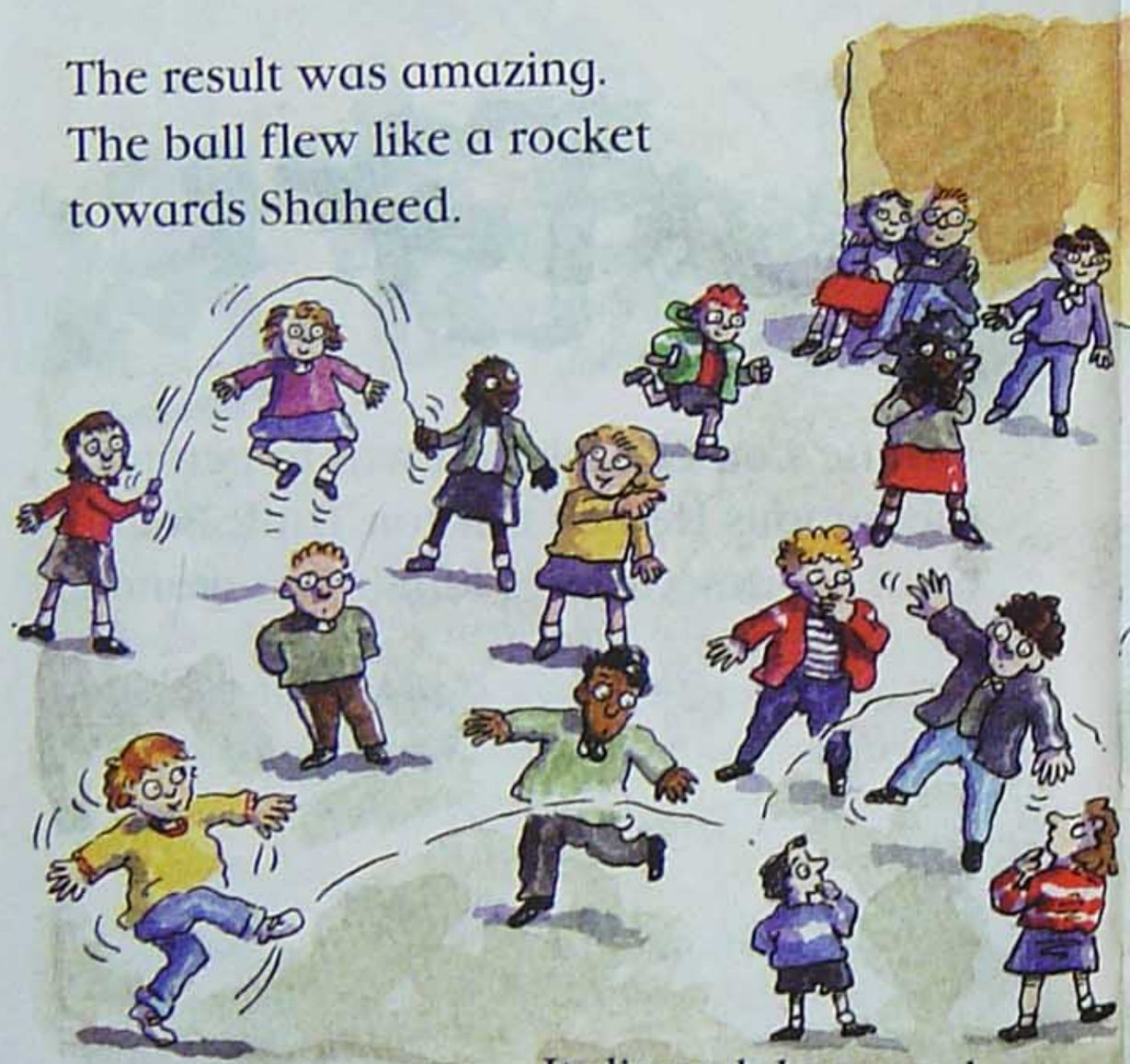
What actually happened...

Wayne's other ambition was to perfect the famous Hedley Carlton Triple-Bounce-Goal, as described to him by his grandad.

I shall never forget that goal. It wasn't just the swerve; it wasn't just the speed; each bounce zig-zagged across the pitch as if the ball had a life of its own.

Wayne decided to have a go. His foot swerved as it approached the ball, then spun back the other way. At the same time it flipped up under the ball.

The result was amazing.
The ball flew like a rocket
towards Shaheed.



It dipped, bounced,
swerved off towards
Roger and Harry.

It bounced again and swerved back
towards the two Shonas.

It bounced again and headed for
Maxine and Lara.

Then it hurtled into the goal,
hitting the wall with a thunderous wham.

From then on, Wayne practised the foot move whenever he could. Under the table, on the bus, at breakfast…
swerve, spin-back, flip-up.
Swerve, spin-back, flip-up.

Chapter 2

Wayne wasn't the only one in his family who liked football. On Saturday mornings Wayne's dad played for a team called Even Stevens.

Everyone in the team lived in Shakespeare Street. It was called Even Stevens because all the players lived in houses or flats with even numbers. They played their matches on the Astroturf behind the Mammoth Hypermarket.