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written by

Sophie Smiley

illustrated by

Michael Foreman

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Chapter 1

"Goal!"

I flew down the pitch, my arms wide like an aeroplane. My brother, Bobby, charged towards me yelling, "Whaddagoal! Here we go, here we go!"

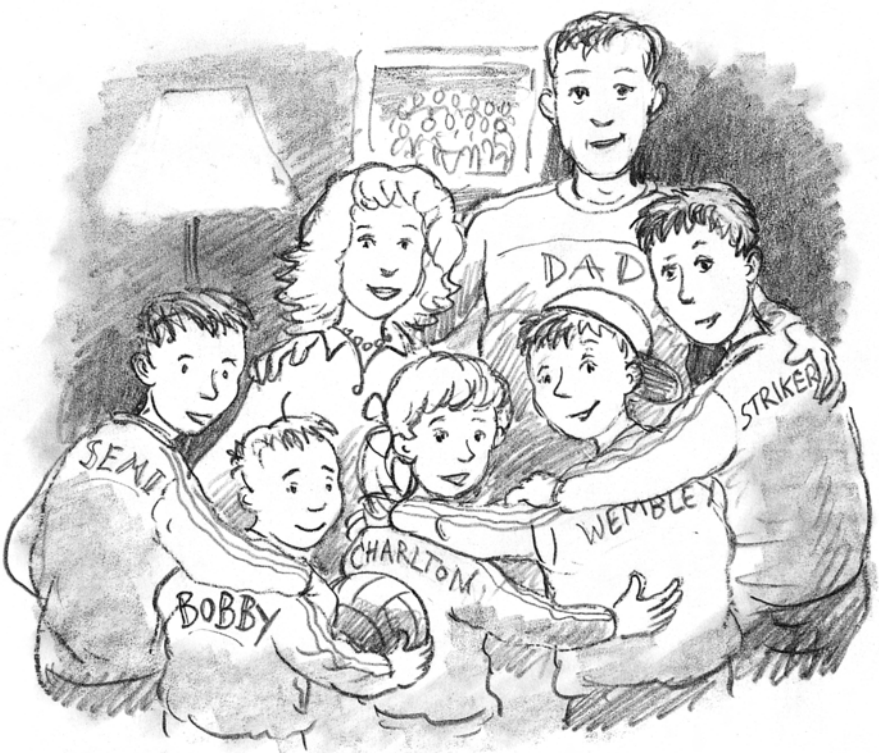
You see, it wasn't just any goal I'd scored; it was the best sort – in the ninetieth minute. The referee's whistle peeped, and we were through to the final.

Mum and Dad invaded the pitch. Then Bobby led the team back to our house singing, "Football's coming home . . ."

That evening we watched the match on video, with lots of shouting: "Good tackle", "What a dive", "Where're your glasses ref?" Everyone erupted when I made my final push down the pitch. We all whooped "Goal!" as the ball bashed the back of the net.

You see, my whole family is football mad. Mum and Dad are so football crazy that they even went to a match on their wedding day. At half-time, Dad asked Mum how many children she wanted, and she said, "Enough for a team!"

And here we are – all with funny football names – and through to the final of the local five-a-side tournament.



My big brother Striker and I play up front (well, with a name like that he couldn't really play anywhere else, could he?); Wembley and Semi are in defence, and Bobby's our goalie. I'm the youngest, then Bobby. We were named after Dad's world cup hero, Bobby Charlton. (Some people think Charlton's a funny name for a girl, but I like being different.)

Well, we'd won the semi final, but we couldn't relax. There was only one week till the final – our biggest match ever. We all had our eyes on the prize, and we were determined to win!

Chapter 2

The next morning Bobby was up early, kicking a ball into our bunk-bed goal. He didn't want to waste a second's precious practice time.

It had rained all night, so later, when we made our way to the park, we had to dodge puddles. The pitch shimmered. Semi sent a ball skimming across the wet turf, and Bobby ran into goal to stop it. Whoosh! He flew flat out.

“Save,” he yelled, as he sank into a ginormous puddle.

“Oh, Bobs,” I called, running to help him. Sitting up, he spurted water from his mouth. His lip wobbled. For a moment, I thought he was going to cry. But his face lit up. He dived back into the water, and made windmill movements in the goal-mouth pool.



Then he snapped his arms together and shouted, “Shark attack!”

But soon he was a very shivery shark.

Wembley splashed across the pitch and picked him up. Bobby’s teeth were chattering. “Ccold,” he stammered.

“Yes, you’re freezing,” said Wembley, peeling off his wet top.

“Knock knock,” Semi distracted him.

“Who’s there?”

“Freeze.”

“Freeze who?”

“Freeze a jolly good fellow!”

Bobby’s chattery teeth chuckled.

Wembley dressed Bobby in a

hoody which came down to his knees. He put a huge pair of gloves on his blue feet, then swung him onto his shoulders. He carried him back to a warm bath singing,

"Freeze a jolly good fellow . . . and so say all of us."



"But what are we going to do?" I wailed to Dad that evening. "How can we win the final if we don't practise? Our pitch is only good for water polo."

"Don't you worry – it'll be better by tomorrow," said Dad.

And I believed him. How wrong could I be?