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opening extract from

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written by

Helena Pielichaty

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Do Goalkeepers Wear Tiaras?

Helena Pielichaty



WALKER BOOKS

For Robert Tingle and St Oswald's Primary School, New Longton – a promise kept

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☆☆ The Team ☆☆

- ☆ **Megan "Meggo" Fawcett** GOAL
- ☆ **Petra "Wardy" Ward** DEFENCE
- ☆ **Lucy "Goose" Skidmore** DEFENCE
- ☆ **Dylan "Dyl" or "Psycho 1" McNeil** LEFT WING
- ☆ **Holly "Hols" or "Wonder" Woolcock** DEFENCE
- ☆ **Veronika "Nika" Kozak** MIDFIELD
- ☆ **Jenny-Jane "JJ" or "Hoggy" Bayliss** MIDFIELD
- ☆ **Gemma "Hursty" or "Mod" Hurst** MIDFIELD
- ☆ **Eve "Akka" Akboh** STRIKER
- ☆ **Tabinda "Tabby" or "Tabs" Shah** STRIKER/MIDFIELD
- ☆ **Daisy "Dayz" or "Psycho 2" McNeil** RIGHT WING
- ☆ **Amy "Minto" or "Lil Posh" Minter** VARIOUS

Official name: Parrs Under 11s, also known as the Parsnips

Ground: Lornton FC, Low Road, Lornton

Capacity: 500

Affiliated to: the Nettie Honeyball Women's League junior division

Sponsors: Sweet Peas Garden Centre, Mowborough

Club colours: red and white; red shirts with white sleeves, white shorts, red socks with white trim

Coach: Hannah Preston

Assistant coach: Katie Regan

☆☆ Star Player ☆☆

☆ **Age:** 9

☆ **Birthday:** 2 February

☆ **School:** Mowborough Primary

☆ **Position in team:** goalkeeper (yay!)

☆ **Likes:** football, hot chocolate with marshmallows, football, **The Simpsons**, football

☆ **Dislikes:** Miss Parkinson (my form teacher) and people who are mean about other people

☆ **Supports:** England and England Women and the Parrs

☆ **Favourite player(s) on team:** Petra Ward (she's also my best friend), but for pure legendary skill, Gemma Hurst

☆ **Best football moment:** when Hannah Preston (best coach ever) took a penalty against me

and I saved it. That's when I knew I wanted to be a goalkeeper.

☆ **Match preparation:** I get really bad pre-match nerves so I do deep-breathing exercises

☆ **Have you got a lucky mascot or a ritual you have to do before or after a match?** I wear my lucky red bandana

☆ **What do you do in your spare time?** I watch football on TV with my dad. Hang out with Petra and a few others

☆ **Favourite book(s):** **Michael Owen's Soccer Skills** by Michael Owen

☆ **Favourite band(s):** Sugarbabes

☆ **Favourite film(s):** all the Shrek films

☆ **Favourite TV programme(s):** **The Simpsons** and **Match of the Day**

Pre-match Interview

Hello. My name is Megan Fawcett and I'm the goalie for the Parrs Under 11s, the best football team in the world. Don't worry if you have never heard of us; I won't be offended. Perhaps you've never heard of Donny Belles or Dick, Kerr's Ladies either? Nothing would surprise me.

Anyway, I am going to kick off the series by explaining how the team got together in the first place. I hope you'll enjoy the story, even if you're a bit weird and don't like football.

Love and penalty saves,
Megan F xxx

1

It was a Wednesday afternoon and I was sitting in the bottom cloakroom with Tabinda, getting ready for football practice. I was feeling nervous. I always feel nervous before football practice but today I was more nervous than usual; my hands were trembling.

I don't think Tabinda had noticed. She was busy stuffing her shin pads down her socks, her long dark plaits almost touching the floor as she concentrated. I had already shoved my shin pads down my socks. Now all I had to do was make sure my tiara didn't fall off. "Is this on straight?" I asked.

She nodded, then did a double take and scowled. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"Getting ready for football practice. What are you doing?" I replied.

She frowned at me and didn't say anything for about ten seconds. "OK, Megan, I give in. Why are you wearing fairy wings and a tiara?"

I tugged at the elastic holding my wings together and shrugged. "To see if Mr Glasshouse even notices."

Tabinda understood immediately. "Nice one."

"I thought so."

"Ready, then?"

"Ready."

Together we left the cloakroom and trudged out onto the school field to join the others in the squad, our boots making a click-clicking sound on the floor.

An hour later we left the school field and trudged back into the cloakroom, our boots making a click-clicking sound on the floor. I pulled off the wings and threw the tiara into the bottom of my kit bag and looked at Tabinda.

Tabinda looked at me. "Well, you tried," she said.

"I did," I agreed.

2

The next day I returned the wings and tiara to my best friend, Petra. "Sorry, one of the wings got a bit bent. Reece Gilbert cropped me and I went flying."

Petra laughed and hung the wings off the back of her chair. "Went flying! Good one."

"Oh yeah," I said. I hadn't even realized I'd made a joke. That shows how fed up I was.

"Did it work? Did Mr Glasshouse notice you?" Petra asked.

I shook my head.

She looked at me, her head crooked to one side, the way she does when she's being sympathetic. "Don't give up, Megan. I bet he did notice but just didn't say anything so the others wouldn't get jealous. Bet you anything you'll be on the

team this time. Or on the bench at least."

"I won't be," I said. "It's a cup match. He won't risk it."

"Wait until you've seen the noticeboard at break. You never know."

So I went to the noticeboard at break. The team list was up. Mr Glasshouse had even used clip-art of a couple of trophies to decorate it.

The list went like this:



CUP MATCH



ROUND 1:

Mowborough Primary v. St Martin's Primary
Wednesday 7 February, 4.15 p.m.

TEAM:

Boy in Y6	Girl in Y6	Girl in Y6
Boy in Y6	Boy in Y6	Boy in Y6
Boy in Y5		

SUBS:

Boy in Y5	Girl in Y6

Just so you know, I'm in Year Three. So's Tabinda. 'Nuff said.

Petra linked her arm through mine and steered me away from the noticeboard. "My dad's got a sumo outfit from this party he went to at Christmas if you want to try that next time."

"I'll pass," I said, "but thanks."

3

Mum was not that sympathetic when I told her I hadn't made the team. "Well, just keep trying," she said, spooning our cat Whiskas his Whiskas into the cat bowl.

"But I'd just like to know what it feels like to run out onto the pitch against another team. Even for, like, ten minutes or something."

"Yes, well, at least you can run..." Mum began.

Here we go, I thought. My mum's a nurse. Having a mum as a nurse is good for things like if you cut yourself or break something or you wake up covered in yellow crusty blobs. It's not good if you feel sorry for yourself because you haven't made the footy team. "There was a little girl in a wheelchair in A and E this morning," Mum said. "She couldn't have been older than five. Sweet

little thing, but she'll never be able to walk... She was born with ..." Mum came out with this complicated word ending in "itis".

"You can still play football if you're in a wheelchair!" I pointed out. "In a gym, not on grass, obviously, but you can still play. I've seen it on telly."

Mum gave me a bit of a look.

"I'll go and do my homework," I said.

Dad was more understanding. He played football for his school, right up to Year Eleven, and he still has a kick-about with the lads down at the station where he's a fire officer. "That's a shame," he said when I told him.

"I know."

"Chin up, petal, eh? He's bound to notice the Fawcett flair at some stage."

So I kept my chin up. I attended football practice every Wednesday. I wore sensible clothing. I tried as hard as I could during the drills. I dribbled. I volleyed.

I controlled the ball (most times). I went anywhere I was told during the short matches at the end. I ran and fetched the ball if it went miles out of play – unlike some Year Sixes I could mention. I kept my chin up and my head down.

I might have continued like that right through Year Four, Year Five and into Year Six if it hadn't been for Faye Pratt dropping a brick on her foot.