

SCHOOL SWAP

Chapter 5

“I WISH I WERE YOU!”

Mr Jones’s long hands stung as Jay slammed them down onto the desk for the tenth time. He held his breath.

“Anything?” Mr Jones asked.

Jay shook his head. “It’s not working, Sir.”

Mr Jones stood straight. “But we’re doing everything exactly the same.”

Playtime chatter drifted in through the windows.

“Well, not exactly,” said Jay. “I was standing on the other side of the desk.”

“Yes, but my body was on the side you are on now,” replied Mr Jones. “Still, it has to be worth a try.”

They quickly swapped sides. “Ready?” said Mr Jones. “Three... two... one...”

“I WISH I WERE YOU!”

Jay stared, willing his mind to swirl back into his own body. He stared and stared until his eyes ran, but still nothing.

“It’s not going to work!” he moaned.

“IT HAS TO!” shouted Mr Jones, slamming his fist into the desk this time. “I have to get back to my body. I can’t leave her another day!”

Jay was about to ask if he meant the mysterious Alice when the bell rang and his question was replaced by an even worse one.

“You know what this means?” he asked.

Mr Jones shook his head.

“It means you’re going to have to try out for the football team for me.”

“KICK THE BALL!” screamed Jay from the sideline.

He watched in despair as his mates laughed while Mr Jones tried, and failed, to kick the ball. It was torture.

“KICK IT! IT’S CALLED FOOTBALL FOR A REASON!”



Mr Singh, the Year 3 teacher, wandered up. “I thought you hated football, Samuel,” he said.

“What?” grunted Jay. “No, love it, can’t get en–NOOOOOOOOOO NOT YOUR HAND!”

“Oh dear,” said Mr Singh. “Jay really does seem to have lost form. I thought he’d definitely make the team, but...”

“I’m sure he’s just having an off day... TACKLE HIM!”

Mr Singh gave Mr Jones’s body a confused look. He’d never seen him jump up and down on the spot pulling at his hair before.

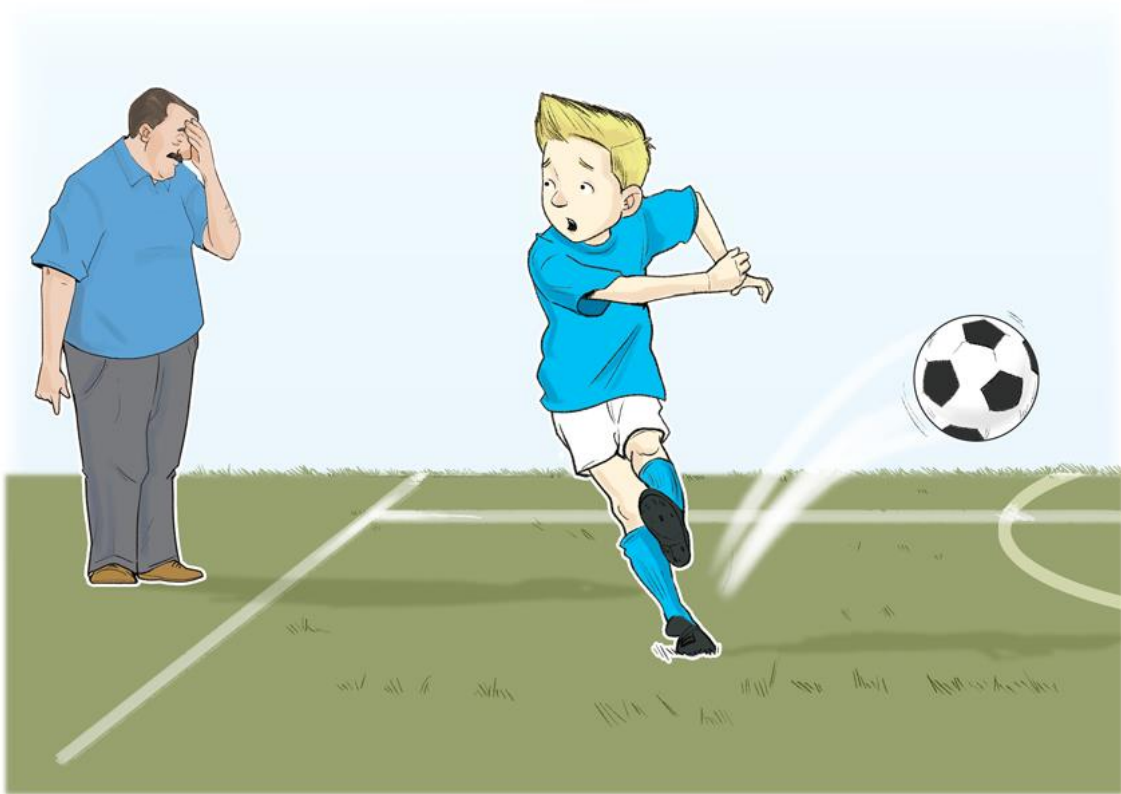
“Calm down, Sam; you’ll give yourself a heart attack,” he said. “It’s just a game.”

“Just a game?” Jay grabbed Mr Singh by the shoulders. “JUST A GAME? IT’S THE MOST IMPORTANT GAME OF MY LIFE!”

Mr Singh didn’t say anything, but pulled away and moved further down the line, giving Jay a very nervous sideways glance.

The torture continued as Jay watched Mr Jones finally get possession of the ball and take a shot at a goal.

“THAT’S YOUR OWN GOAL!” screamed Jay, sinking to the floor, sobbing. He was lost in misery until he felt a tap on the shoulder.



He looked up. It was Mrs Yoko, the head teacher. Quickly, Jay got up to his feet, wiping the mud from his knees. He thought she would be cross about his un-teacher-like display of emotion, but she looked worried.

“Samuel,” she said, “we’ve just had a call from your mother’s care home.”

“My mother?” Jay wondered what was going on.

“Yes,” she continued. “Alice’s carers say she is more confused than normal and calling out for you. I think you should go.”

Of course. Alice was Mr Jones’s mum, the lady in the photo. But how could Jay get the real Mr Jones to her?

Just then, the final whistle went and the players started to trail from the pitch. Jay called to his mud-splattered body.

“Oh dear, Jay; you don’t look well.”

Mr Jones looked confused. “I’m fine,” he said.

Jay shook his head. “No, Jay. You look REALLY ILL!”

Mrs Yoko looked too. “Actually, Jay, you don’t look yourself.”

“Well...” Mr Jones said, “I don’t feel quite myself today.”

“That settles it,” Jay said to Mrs Yoko. “I’ll nip to the office and call Jay’s mum and then I’ll head off to see mine.”

He strode away, Mr Jones following, his football studs clicking on the playground.

“Hang on!” Mr Jones called. “This isn’t the way to the office.”

“We’re not going to the office,” explained Jay. “We’re going to see your mum. She’s not well.”

Mr Jones went pale and started running towards the car.