

“What is this?” asked Dee quite rudely.

“Oh I am sorry, I have had it for quite some time but I forgot to hand it in,” replied the old man. “Goodbye.”

“Wait! How long have you had this for? We don’t rent out video tapes, haven’t done for a very long time now. I will need to see your member’s card.”

The old man turned back to face Dee.  
“Of course little lady. Here you go.”



“This is very, very late. You are going to have to pay a fine.”

“But I have very little money. Surely you can forget about a fine this time?” he begged.

“No! I don’t care how poor you are, you will have to pay a fine!” Dee snapped.

“Little lady you have no manners, and I have no time for this,” he said quietly as he left his card and tape on the counter top.

“Oi, you - get back here!” shouted Dee.

But it was too late. He had left.



“Who are you talking to?” said a voice.

It was Tandy.

It had been a hard practice.

“I just know we can win,” said Lisa.

“I can almost smell it. Everything has to be perfect,” she said. “The moves, the costumes, everything.”



“When will the costumes come?” said Tandy.

“Tomorrow, I hope,” replied Lisa.

“There are new dresses for you, me, Gina and Franky. Craig and Matt have got fantastic trousers and T-shirts. Watch out Monica Bleaks. Her Razor Edge team doesn’t stand a chance. We’re going to blow their socks off.”

The two friends laughed.



But then Dad came back from the shop.

“Here you are,” he said, “go and find some treasure.”

“A metal detector,” gasped Tom, “come on Jake, let’s go!”

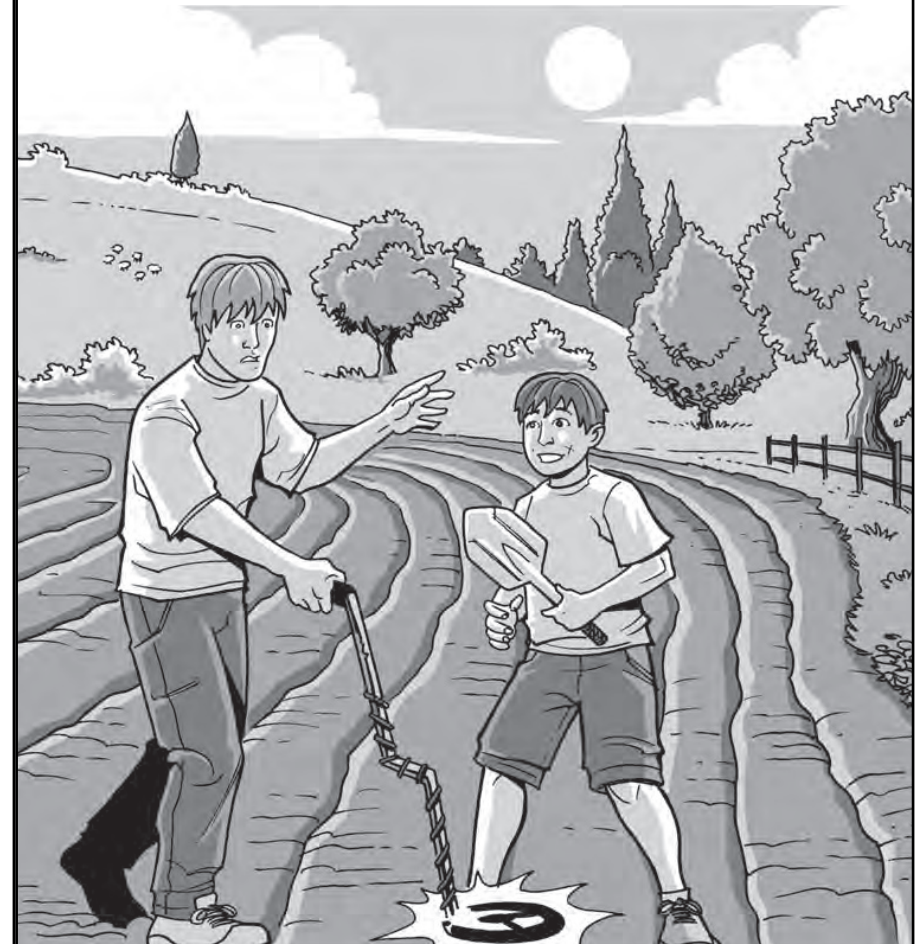


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Tom scoured the field.

Jake scoured the field.

The metal detector finally beeped.





Suddenly, a voice spoke. It was the Sat Nav. "Take the next left," it said.

Dad was puzzled. "I don't remember a turning here," he said.

"Turn left," repeated the voice.

The Sat Nav screen flashed on and off. The voice repeated the message.

Dad slowed the car. On the left was a narrow track. It led into the darkness.

"Turn left," said the Sat Nav.

Ed had a strange feeling. "I'm sure this isn't right," he said.

Dad drove the car down the track. It was steep and rocky. The old car rattled and shook.



But Jack has a big secret.

He is an actor but his starship  
STEALTH (Space Tripping Extra  
Atomic Laser Time Hopper) is real.



A few weeks ago, aliens from the planet  
Zargon kidnapped Jack.

They took him to their planet but Jack  
outwitted them and kept their ship.



"You will be part of a crack team,"  
Mr Conor said. "This is an exciting year  
for the Games. We are using robot  
helpers for the first time. You will be  
working with them as part of the team."

"Robots?" Tom said. "Why do you need  
them? I mean, loads of people want to  
help at the Games."

"Ah, but can they speak 300  
languages?" Mr Conor said. "These  
robots are super helpers. They can  
clean. They can cook like chefs. They  
have minds like sat navs when it  
comes to directions. In fact, it's hard  
to think of anything they can't do..."

"Can they tell jokes?" Ricky said.

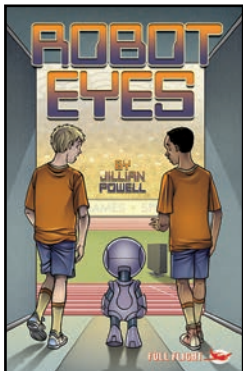
Tom kicked him. He had a feeling this  
robot thing was Mr Conor's baby.

"It's all good!" Tom said and Mr Conor  
nodded.

"So then, boys. We kick off tomorrow!"  
he said. "You will find your helper kits  
next door. T-shirts, armbands..."

"Do the robots wear T-shirts then?"  
Ricky said.

Mr Conor looked hard at Ricky.





One Saturday they had spent a lot of time in the park. Joe had run well.

He and Kat were talking about their school's sports day. It was in two weeks.

"I think you will win every race this year!" grinned Kat.



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As they walked down Track Street, Kat spotted something on the ground. It was an old blank DVD case.

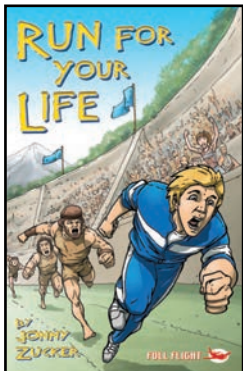
She picked it up. Inside was a DVD. Again, it had no writing on it.

"I wonder what it is," said Joe.

"There's only one way to find out," replied Kat.

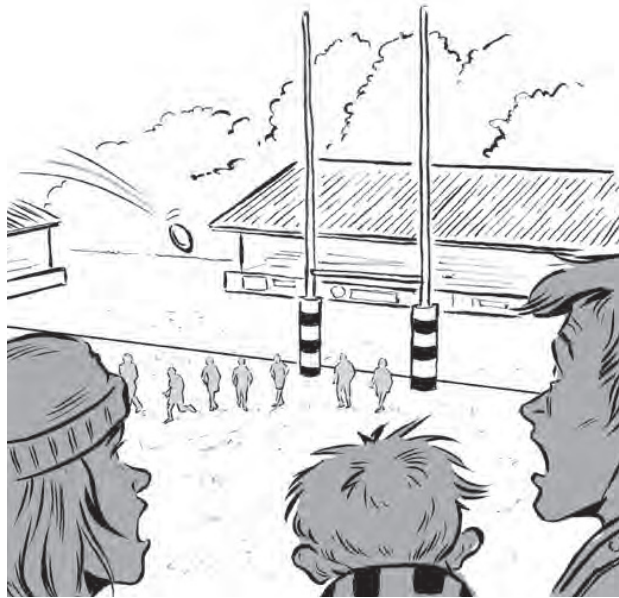
Back at Kat's house, they loaded the DVD. Instantly, pictures of people running and jumping and throwing things appeared on the screen. But they were not wearing modern sports clothes.

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She ran at the ball, kicking it high in the air.

The crowd held its breath, as the ball curved through the air.



Then let out a groan, as it landed on the pitch, just short of the bar.

Anna groaned too.

It was the only kick she had missed in the entire match.

The final whistle blew and the teams walked off the pitch.

Anna's friend Joe was in the crowd.

He patted her on the shoulder, as she went by. "Never mind, Anna," he said. "You played really well."

But Anna was too upset to speak and headed straight for the changing rooms.





Lots of aliens live here happily.

I should know - I'm one of them.

But apart from me, you get a lot of Venusians (who want to live in a cooler climate);

a lot of Plutonians (who are looking for a warmer one);

and a lot of Martians (who like having a free bus pass for the over 60s).



My job is to make sure that all these aliens live happily alongside humans - and don't get found out.

The number one rule is to never, ever, ever tell humans that aliens exist.

So I spend a lot of my time with the newest arrivals giving lessons in basic human behaviour. Stuff like: watch football, don't snack on litter or cat food, don't chase sticks in the park, and always hide your tentacles.



Becky was shy and nervous, and hated take-off and landing. Gemma was quite the opposite.

Gemma held her sister's hand tightly. "We'll be down soon," she whispered. "Just hang on in there, Becky!"

Becky just nodded. She thought she might be sick if she tried to speak.

Outside the plane, there was a flash of lightning. The passengers could hear the crash of thunder even above the noise of the engines.

The plane bounced up and down. Becky's face was looking very green.

The captain spoke again.

"Don't worry, It feels worse than it is! Once we're through the clouds it will be smoother. Landing in five minutes."

It was too much for Becky. She reached for the sick bag and opened it just in time.

There wasn't much that Gemma could do to help. She looked straight ahead. You didn't feel so sick if you did that.

