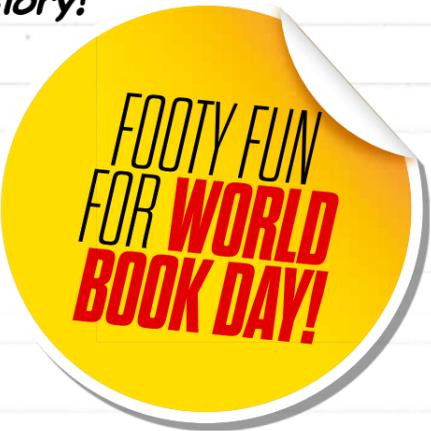


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MISTER MANIAC

part two



Charlie stopped just short of Mr Sternquiver's office and unfurled a wrinkled rag which had once been the pristine, white cotton handkerchief his mother had handed him at the breakfast table.

"Don't sniff, Charlie. It's bad manners," she had said.

Quite why this was true, Charlie didn't know. What he did know, however, was that he had a cold, his third of the term, and with the season just about to start as well.

Talk about rotten luck!

He expelled a deluge of gunk into the cloth, from somewhere deep in the nether regions of his brain, and looked at Jimmy.

"Eww, that is gross," cried Jimmy. "It's a bodily function, Jim, get over it. Are we going in or not?" Charlie replied. "Okay, okay, keep your knickers on."

Jimmy knocked.

They waited for what felt like the entire length of an EastEnders omnibus before a voice finally bellowed out.

"Enter," said the voice, in a tone which made the boys want to do anything but that.

They shuffled in. Immediately they were in the

shadow of the lumbering figure of Sternquiver, who leant over them like a giant, drooping oak tree.

Jimmy came straight out with it.



"Sir, Mister Maniac is harbouring an extensive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction!"

Charlie looked at his shoes and felt a current of nervous heat surge up through his body, like the flow of molten lava in a volcano eruption.

"What did you say, BOY?!" yelled Sternquiver, in the rising pitch of a man very slowly, but very definitely, losing his mind.

Before they knew what had picked them up and dragged them out through the office door and down the corridor, they had been thrust face to face with Mister Maniac himself.

Face to face because, as Charlie had only just noticed, their feet were not touching the floor.

Sternquiver had them by the scruffs of their necks and had yanked them into gassing distance of Maniac's stifling, mouldy breath.

"The boys say you've a stash of weapons, Maniac!"

The tension quickly thickened, like a fug of hot air after one of Eddie Misikin's dirty-bomb trumps in Religious Education.

"Indeed I do, Mr Sternquiver," Maniac replied, almost casually.

As Maniac popped open his locker door, Mr. Archestruce, the woodwork teacher, popped his head over Maniac's shoulder like a jack-in-a-box.

"I've been looking after them, Mr Archestruce," Maniac gestured towards his accomplice.

"Apologise to Mister Maniac at once, boys," Sternquiver demanded. "That's a week's detention for both of you for gross insubordination."

The boys groaned and, as they trudged back with Sternquiver to his office, Charlie chanced one last look back up the corridor. As he did so, something strange happened. Maniac cocked his head to one side, flashed a demonic grin and winked at Charlie, with the sort of evil wink reserved for the world's most dastardly evil geniuses.

Something wasn't right about this, Charlie thought, and he intended to find out what it was.



He shivered, straightened up and let out a sneeze that echoed all the way to kingdom come and back.

Disappointed, and a little dazed, Charlie and Jimmy made their way back to class, their investigation seemingly at an end.

The pair stopped off at the Year 7 pigeon-holes en route where, in amongst the usual junk - new timetables, campaign material for the school council - Charlie uncovered a small, white envelope with his name on it.

"Open it, open it," urged Jimmy who, for some reason, was always excited by post.

"All right, all right," said Charlie and, after grappling for several



seconds with the seal, finally snagged it open to reveal its contents.

On Frecklington High School headed paper, there they were: the fixtures for the new school football season.

Both sets of eyes darted straight for the first line, gasped, and checked again.

Their first fixture of the season was confirmed. They would play local school and arch-rivals Sharp Edged Academy, Mister Maniac's old school.



Charlie stifled a sneeze in his snot-ridden hanky and wondered, with a clear sense of trepidation, whether or not he'd be fit for the game.

To be continued...

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Should Charlie play in the big game? Tell us at motdmag.com - and learn more about Mister Maniac!

YES NO