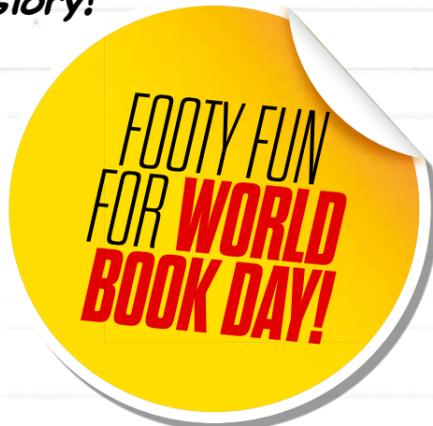


Get into reading with MOTD mag's new serial story!

part three

MISTER MANIAC



Remember, with that cold, you are not to play in the game. That is final!"

The words of his mother barged into Charlie's head as he fastened his captain's armband into place, just above the elbow, in the school changing rooms.

But Charlie didn't have time for thoughts like that. For starters, he had a match to win: against Frecklington High's arch-rivals Sharp Edge Academy, no less.

Then there was the mysterious case of Mister Maniac. Charlie and best friend Jimmy sensed something wasn't right about him, but they had no evidence.

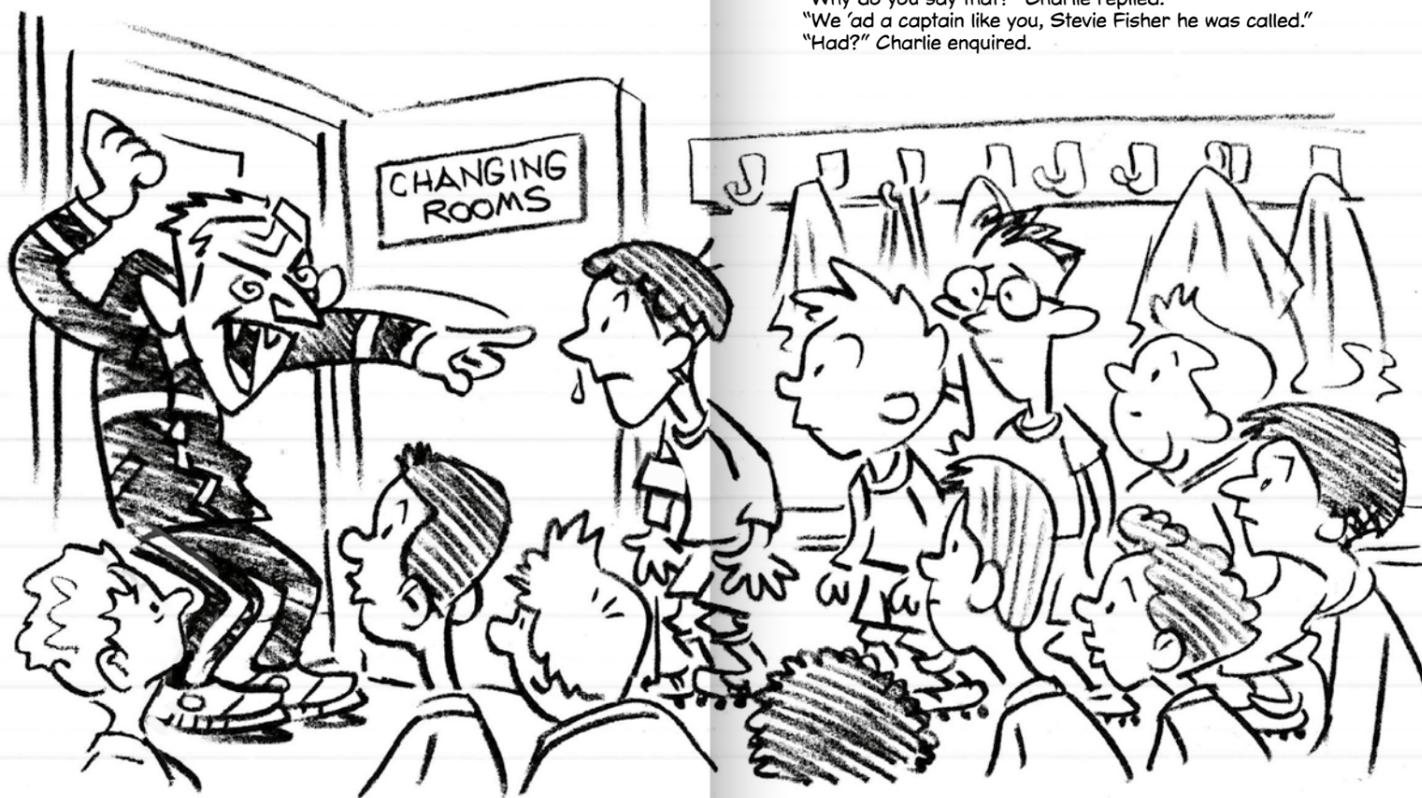


Would the game against Sharp Edge, Maniac's former school, give the boys any clues to a secret double life of their new head coach?

Could they convince one of his old players, their own sworn enemies, to co-operate and come clean about his clandestine activities?

Before Charlie could finish that investigative train of thought, a darkness and what felt like a chill descended across the room.

Maniac had entered. The entire team froze, took what appeared to be an enormous collective gulp and lowered their heads.



"This team," Maniac croaked, "is not for losers. Losers will be punished."

Eyes shifted nervously. If a pin had been dropped, the team would've heard it.

"Today against Sharpe Edge Academy you are playing not just for pride, but for honour. To lose would bring shame on the school, yourselves and your worthless, dimwitted families. Understand?"

A hushed murmur, the sound of fear, greeted the so-called team talk.

"Good. And Charlie Burrows, report to my office first thing tomorrow morning."

This last line stung Charlie like an arrow in the chest. And it was still stinging when Jimmy walloped a long-range drive into the back of the net. 1-0 Frecklington.

But Charlie's mind was not on the game.

"What could he want with me?" he thought frantically. "Will I come out of there alive?"

As he trotted back distractedly for kick-off, Charlie absent-mindedly shoulder-charged into the squat, ginger midfielder terrier from Sharpe Edge who he'd been tussling with all game.

"Spect you're a bit nervous, ain't ya?" grunted the terrier. "Why do you say that?" Charlie replied. "We 'ad a captain like you, Stevie Fisher he was called." "Had?" Charlie enquired.



an internet browser and searched the name Stevie Fisher.

The search results, and newspaper headlines that followed, turned his blood to ice, as the information pummelled him like a boxer, knocking him sideways.

True enough, Fisher had been the Sharpe Edge Academy captain. True, too, that he'd gone missing just one month before. True as much that he was the tenth school captain to have gone missing in the county that year.

A sudden thumping noise startled Ms Kindle from reading her weekly gossip magazines. She turned around to see Charlie face up on the library carpet. The boy was out cold.



"Yeah. 'Ad." "Where did he go?" Charlie was becoming intrigued. "So you haven't heard the rumours? Every school where Mister Maniac has taken charge of the school team, the captain has disappeared shortly afterwards. Why do you think Maniac was booted out of our school in the first place?"

If Maniac's calls for a meeting stung, this new piece of information burned through him like a laser.

So much so that the rest of the game vanished in a fug of terror. No matter that they'd beaten Sharpe Edge 1-0, or that Jimmy had got the winner.

When the final whistle blew, Charlie didn't stop for handshakes or three cheers. He hopped straight on his bike and raced around to the library, pulling up a chair at the ground floor bank of computers before Ms Kindle could even ask to check his library card.

His nerves on edge and fingers twitching, Charlie frantically opened

TIME TO GET EVIL!

Have you got an evil character you want to introduce to Frecklington High School? Send a sketch or description to shout@motdmag.com and you could win a prize!

MOTD supports World Book Day. Head to worldbookday.com for more!

NOW YOU CONTROL THE PLOT!

What should Charlie do first? Tell best pal Jimmy about his discovery – or show up for his meeting with Mister Maniac? Tell us at motdmag.com – and learn more about Mister Maniac!