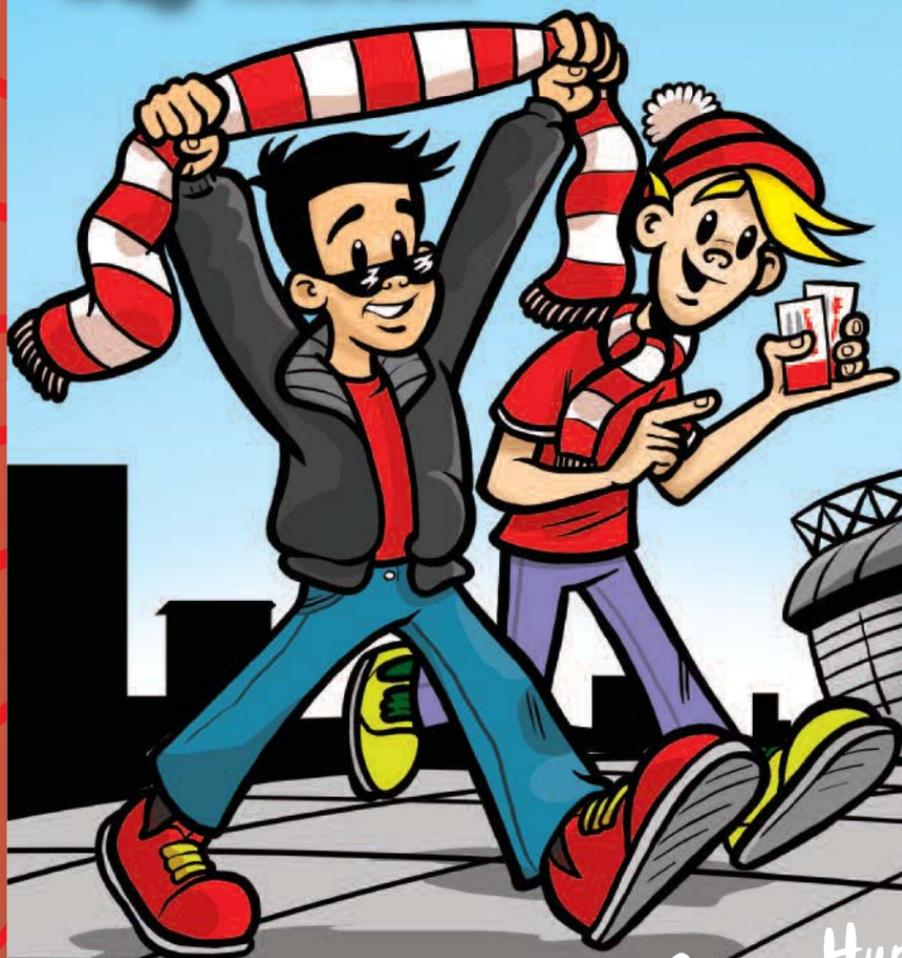


Mystery Mob and the Big Match



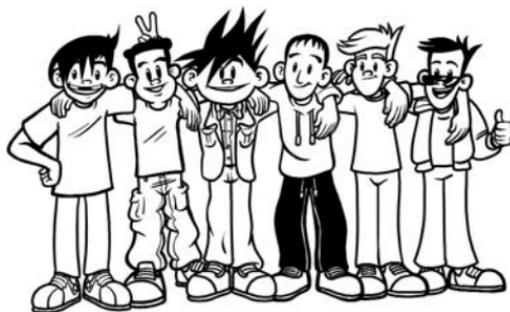
Roger Hurn

RISING★STARS



Mystery Mob and the Big Match

Roger Hurn



Illustrated by

Stik

RISING★STARS

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Meet the Mystery Mob

Name:

Gummy



FYI: Gummy hasn't got much brain – and even fewer teeth.

Loves: Soup.

Hates: Toffee chews.

Fact: The brightest thing about him is his shirt.

Name:

Lee



FYI: If Lee was any cooler he'd be a cucumber.

Loves: Hip-hop.

Hates: Hopscotch.

Fact: He has his own designer label (which he peeled off a tin).

Name:

Rob



FYI: Rob lives in his own world – he's just visiting planet Earth.

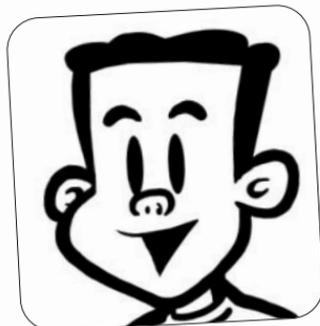
Loves: Daydreaming.

Hates: Nightmares.

Fact: Rob always does his homework – he just forgets to write it down.

Name:

Dwayne



FYI: Dwayne is smarter than a tree full of owls.

Loves: Anything complicated.

Hates: Join-the-dots books.

Fact: If he was any brighter you could use him as a floodlight at football matches.

Name:

Chet



FYI: Chet is as brave as a lion with steel jaws.

Loves: Having adventures.

Hates: Knitting.

Fact: He's as tough as the chicken his granny cooks for his tea.

Name:

Adi



FYI: Adi is as happy as a football fan with tickets to the big match.

Loves: Telling jokes.

Hates: Moaning minnies.

Fact: He knows more jokes than a jumbo joke book.

1

We're All Going to Wembley



It's Cup Final day.

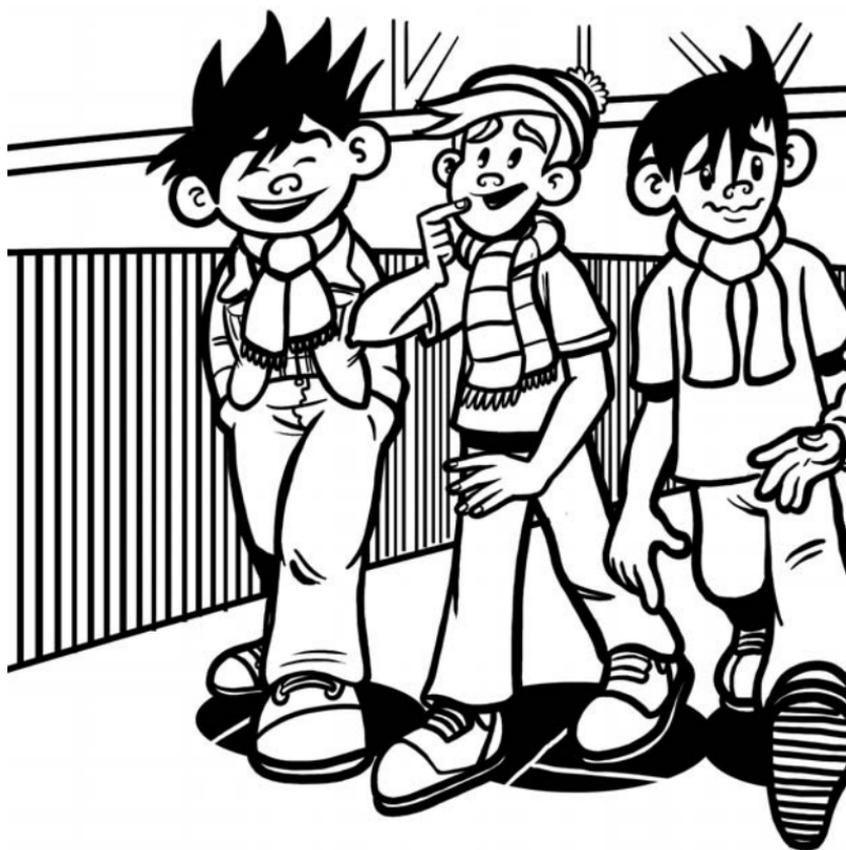
The Mystery Mob have tickets for the match. They can't wait for it to start. Gummy, Dwayne, Chet and Adi support United, but Lee and Rob are City fans.

Adi Hey Rob, what's the difference between United and a drum?

Rob I don't know.

Adi You can beat a drum but nobody can beat United!

Rob You wish.



Lee Hey Adi, Rob and I call United's striker the wonder striker.

Rob Yeah, we wonder how come he's so useless!

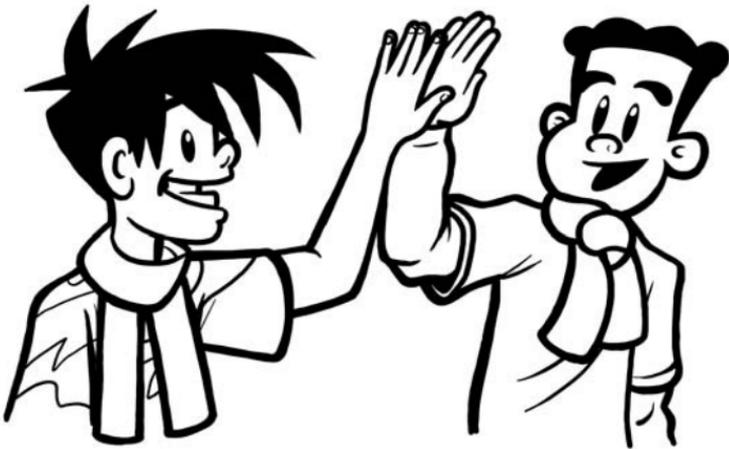
Adi Grrrr!

Dwayne You know, I'd love to stand here all day joking with you lot, but we've got a game to watch.



Chet So what are we waiting for?

Gummy Let's go.



There's a massive crowd outside the ground, and Rob and Lee soon get split up from the others.

Rob Where are the others?
I think we've lost them.
I wanted to wish them luck – not.

Lee Don't worry. We'll go to the office
and ask them to put out
a message on the tannoy
telling the others not to look
for us – we'll meet up with
them by the Bobby Moore
statue after the game.

Rob and Lee go in through the turnstiles for the City fans. The inside of the stadium is massive, and Rob has no idea which way to go.





Rob Er ... where's the office?

Lee Hmmm, it's along this corridor.

Rob Hey, how do you know
stuff like that?

Lee It's easy. There's a sign with a big arrow on the wall behind your head. It says: 'To the Office'.

The boys run down the corridor and up the stairs, following the signs to the office.



2

Stop Thief!



At the top of the stairs the boys find another long corridor with lots of doors.

Rob I wonder which one is the office?

Lee It'll say on the door.

The boys walk along the corridor reading the signs on the doors. Then Lee stops suddenly.

Lee What was that?

Rob What was what?

Lee I thought I heard a noise coming from this room here – the Trophy Room. It sounded like something heavy falling over.

Rob You're right! I can hear someone moving around in there.

Lee The Trophy Room – hey, that's where they keep the FA Cup!

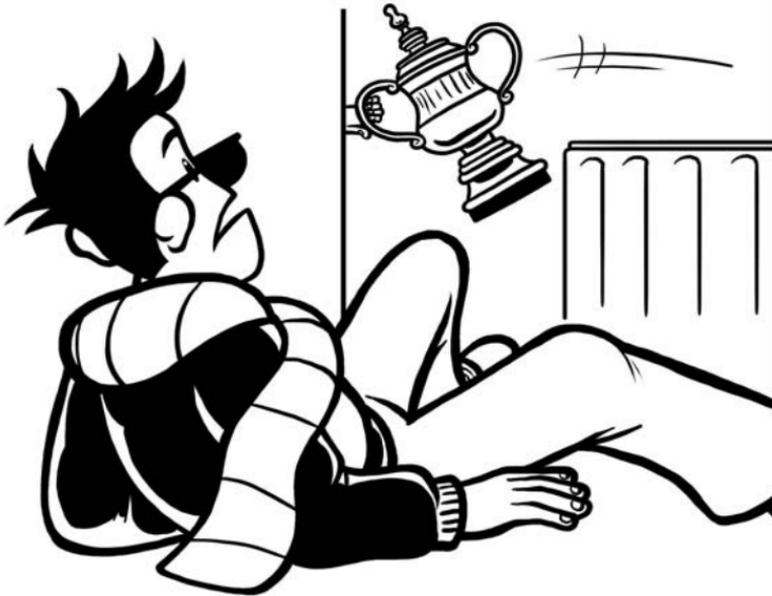
Rob So ... do you think someone's trying to pinch it?

Lee Well, there's only one way to find out.



The two boys creep up to the door and pull it open. It's very dark inside the room. Before they can switch on the light to see what's going on, something leaps out of the shadows and knocks them over.

They pick themselves up and dash back out of the room. But all they can see is the big silver Cup vanishing round the corner.



Rob Wow! Did you get a look at the thief?

Lee No. I only saw his hand. But I think he's wearing a fur coat.

Rob What makes you say that?

Lee Well, there's all this brown hair on the floor.

Rob Hey, that's a clue.



Lee What do you mean?

Rob Well, all we've got to do is look for someone wearing a hairy brown coat with lots of bits missing, and that'll be the thief.

Lee No, all we've got to do is look for someone carrying the FA Cup. And he's got a head start on us – so let's move.



3

More Trouble



At that moment, a man comes along the corridor. He looks important. He also looks surprised to see Lee and Rob standing outside the Trophy Room. He glares at them and strides into the room.

Lee He's come to fetch the Cup.
Rob But it's been stolen.
Lee Right. And he'll think we took it.
Rob But we didn't.





Lee I know that, but he'll never believe us.

Rob So what are we going to do?

Lee We're going to have to catch the thief ourselves. And we've got to do it before the match starts.

Rob Why?

Lee Because if we don't we'll miss the game. And anyway – what if City win and there's no Cup to give them?

Rob You're right. That would be terrible.

Lee Only one thing could be worse.

Rob What's that?



Lee We find the Cup and United win.

Rob (shocked) Don't even think that.

The boys hear a roar of rage from the Trophy Room. Then the man in the jacket and tie storms out into the corridor. His face is red with anger.

Man You! Boys! What have you done with the FA Cup?





Lee We didn't touch the Cup, honest.
But we saw the thief who took it.

Rob No we didn't. But we did see
his fur coat and one of
his hands.

Man What? Are you mad, boy?
You're in big trouble,
the pair of you. Just stay there
while I phone for the police.

Rob Sorry. No can do.
We've got a thief to catch.

Lee Don't worry. You wait here.
We'll be back soon with the Cup
and the real thief. Then you can
hand him over to the cops.



4

Monkey Business



The boys race off hot on the trail of the thief. Soon they find themselves outside a small gym.

Lee This must be where the players come to warm up.

Rob But they're all out on the pitch waving to the fans at the moment.

Lee So the gym should be empty – but I can hear someone inside.

Rob Yes, and look! There's another long, brown hair on the door handle. Maybe we've tracked the thief down at last.

They step inside the gym.
Rob can't believe his eyes.

Rob There's the thief, sitting on that exercise bike.

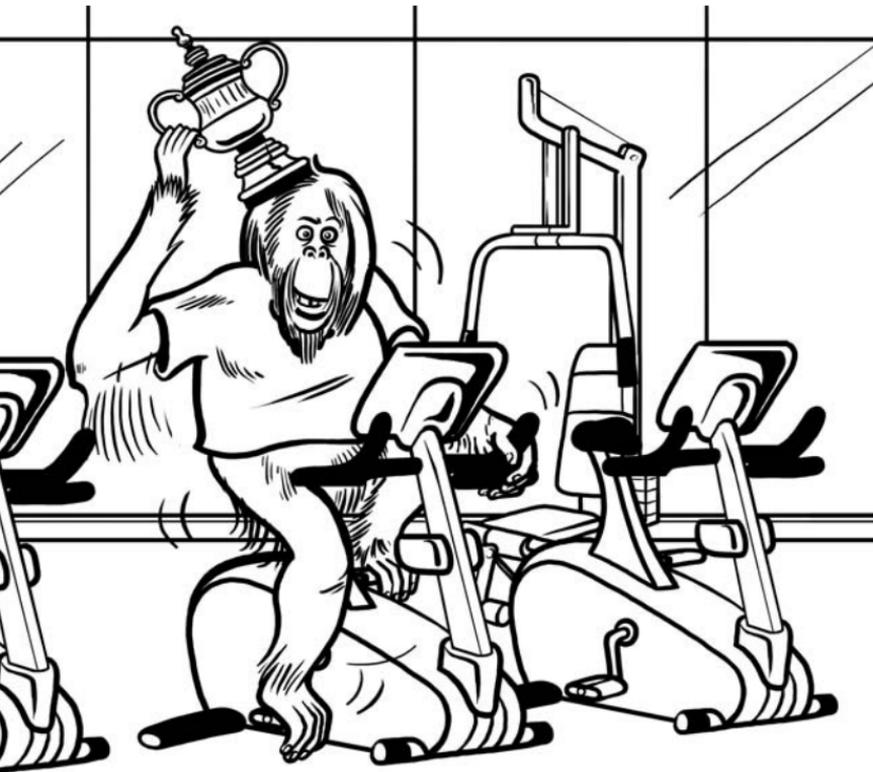
Lee It's Chuckles – United's pet mascot. And he's got the FA Cup on his head!





Most clubs have people dressed up as animals for their mascots, but United's mascot is a real orang-utan.

Lee He must have given his keeper the slip when the teams went out on to the pitch. But how are we going to make him hand over the Cup to us?



Rob I know. I'm smarter than a monkey. I'll ask him who's going to win the game and then, while he's thinking about it, I'll grab the Cup.

Lee Brilliant! But there's just one thing wrong with your plan.

Rob What's that?

Lee Orang-utans don't speak English.

Rob So what are we going to do?

Lee No problem. Orang-utans love bananas. We'll swap him a bunch of bananas for the FA Cup.

Rob But where are we going to get a bunch of bananas from?





Lee United's changing room.
All footballers have bananas
at half-time. Bananas give them
energy for the second half.
So they're bound to have loads
in there.

Rob Changing rooms – here we come!

Going Bananas



The boys return from United's changing room with a big bunch of bananas.

Rob Oh no. Chuckles is on top of the wall bars! How did he get up there?

Lee Duh, he's an orang-utan, not a hot-air baboon – he climbed. So you'll just have to climb up after him.

Rob I can't climb up carrying a bunch of bananas. I need to use both hands.

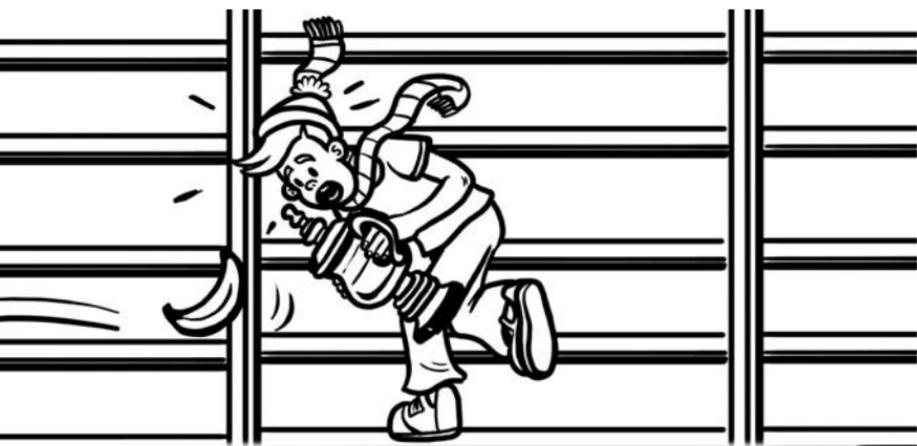
Lee No you don't. If Chuckles can do it, then so can you.

Rob Are you trying to make a monkey out of me?

Lee No. You can do that all by yourself.







Rob tries to climb up the wall bars.
He has the bunch of bananas
tucked under his arm.

Lee Keep going. You're nearly there.

Rob Here you are, Chuckles.
Give me the FA Cup
and I'll give you these bananas.

Lee Great! He's giving you the Cup.
Let him have the bananas.
But don't forget to hold on to
the bars with one hand,
or you'll ...

Rob AAAARRRGHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

BOING! Rob falls from the top of the wall bars, but he lands on a trampoline. He bounces up and down like a rubber ball. The FA Cup flies out of his hands, but Lee dives and catches it.





Rob Great save!

Lee Too right. And if City ever need a new goalie, they know where to find me.

Rob You wish! Now if I can just stop bouncing, we can put the Cup back where it belongs.

Lee Good plan. And if we hurry we'll still get to our seats in time for the kick off!



About the author



Roger Hurn has:

- been an actor in 'The Exploding Trouser Company'
- played bass guitar in a rock band
- been given the title Malam Oga (wise teacher, big boss!) while on a storytelling trip to Africa.

Now he's a writer, and he hopes you like reading about the Mystery Mob as much as he likes writing about them.

Fantastic football quiz

Questions

- 1 How did Wembley Stadium get its name?
- 2 How many players are there in a football team?
- 3 What is the person in charge of a football match called?
- 4 Why do lots of footballers eat bananas at half-time?
- 5 Which is the best position to play in if you want to win lots of caps for your country? Goalkeeper, midfielder or striker?
- 6 Which football team plays at Old Trafford?
- 7 Which football team's nickname is 'The Gunners'?
- 8 When the World Cup was stolen in 1966 which animal found it again? (Clue – it wasn't an orang-utan!)

Answers

- 1 It's named after the London Borough of Wembley where it is built.
- 2 There are eleven players in a football team.
- 3 A referee is in charge of a football match.
- 4 To give themselves energy – they'd have to be bananas not to eat them.
- 5 Goalkeeper. England, Wales and Northern Ireland's most capped players are goalkeepers.
- 6 Manchester United plays at Old Trafford.
- 7 Arsenal's nickname is 'The Gunners'. They sound like a team of hot shots!
- 8 Pickles the dog. Pickles saved the cup when it was in a pickle!

How did you score?

-  If you scored all eight answers correct then you have golden boots – you're a top striker!
-  If you got six answers correct you're a goal-scoring midfielder.
-  If you got fewer than four answers correct you'll have to spend a bit more time training before you're ready for the big match.

When I was a kid

.....
• Eleven-year-old Ben is a big
• football fan and he loves the
• Mystery Mob's Big Match
• story. Here he gets to ask
• Roger some questions.
.....



Ben Did you play football when you were a kid?

Roger Yes.

Ben What was your team called?

Roger Nottso Athletic.

Ben Why were they called that?

Roger Because we weren't very fit.

Ben What position did you play in the team?

Roger I was a striker.

Ben So did you score lots of goals?

Roger No, I didn't score any.

Ben Why was that?

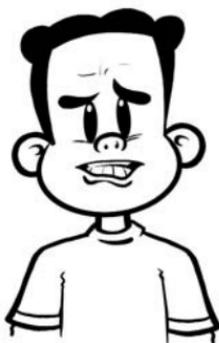
Roger Because I was always on strike.

Adi's favourite football joke



Why is
Cinderella hopeless
at football?

Because she
keeps running away
from the ball.



How to be a footballer

Must-dos and don'ts

-  Play the game because you love it.
-  *Wear fancy football boots – they won't make you play better but you'll look good.*
-  Practise your ball skills every day.
-  *Work on your goal celebrations.*
-  Eat lots of fruit, vegetables and pasta and drink plenty of water.
-  *Learn to like playing in the pouring rain and freezing cold.*
-  Remember, football is a team game – so don't hog the ball.
-  *Make sure you have a cool haircut but don't let it stop you from heading the ball – even if it's muddy.*



Work on keeping fit.



Try not to let the other team kick you – it hurts!



Don't pick the ball up with your hands – unless you're the goalie.



Always try your hardest but don't be a bad loser – learn from your mistakes and play better next time.



Wear shin pads – the colour doesn't matter, but the amount of padding does.



Five fascinating football facts

- 1** When football first started, you could have any number of players in a team – 500 a side was not unusual! There were hardly any rules.
- 2** Football as we know it was first played by children at posh public schools in England.
- 3** Notts County are the oldest football club. They were founded in 1862.
- 4** England won the World Cup in 1966. It's the only time they have won it.
- 5** Football is the world's most popular game. More people play it and watch it than any other sport.



Football lingo



Booking This is what you may get if you foul another player. But if you lose your temper and see red, you'll end up with a red card and be sent off.

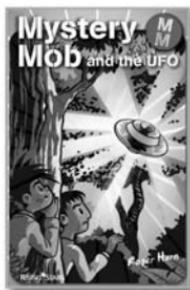
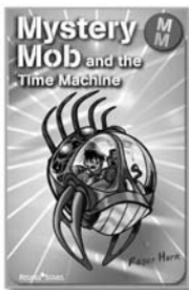
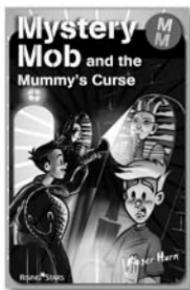
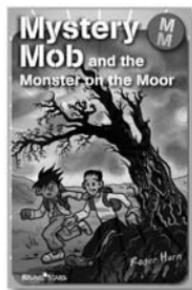
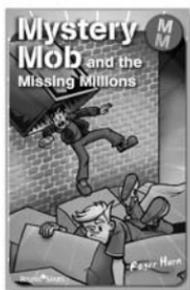
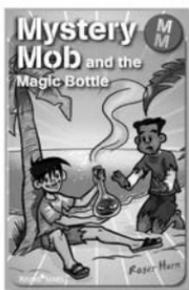
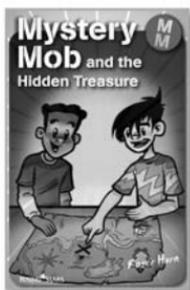
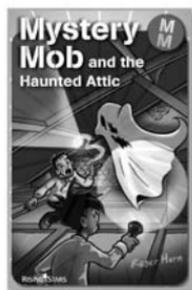
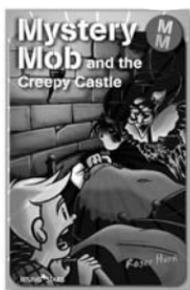
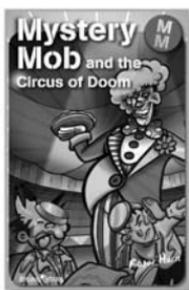
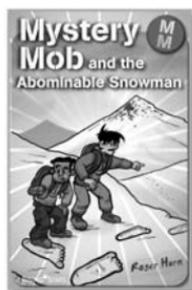
Foul This happens when you deliberately kick, trip or push another player. (Unless your mum is the referee – then it's just an accident and not a foul.)

Hat trick This is when you score three goals – not when you pull a rabbit out of a top hat.

Headless chicken This is a player who runs about all over the pitch but is totally useless and never does anything with the ball. (Just like the referee.)

Marking When you mark a player you try to stop them getting the ball. It doesn't mean you write on them with a felt pen.

Mystery Mob



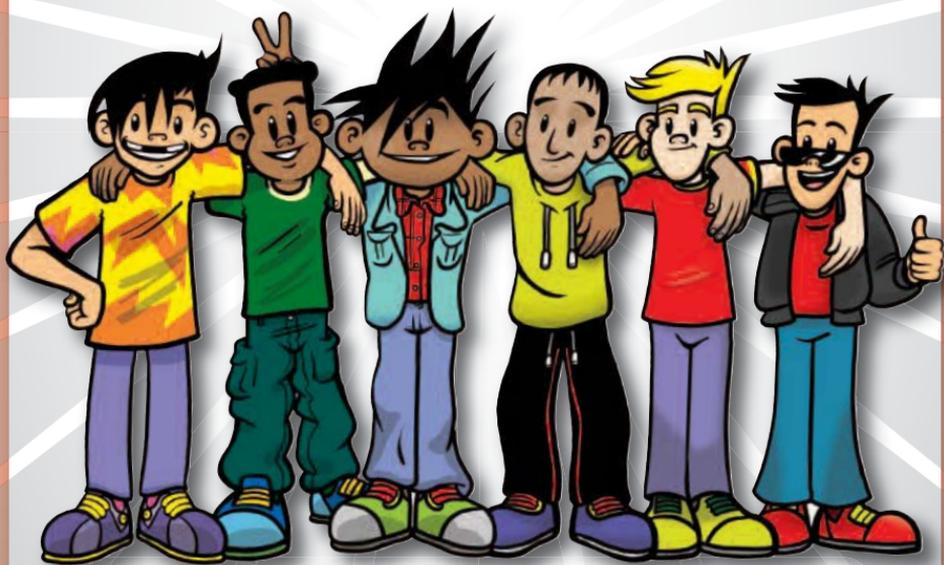
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It's the Cup Final, but Rob and Lee have more on their minds than just football. Someone has stolen the FA Cup! Can the boys save the day?



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