



Foul Play: The World Cup Mystery

A classroom read by Tom Palmer

Episode 22 (July 6th)

They travelled to Sir Richard's house in a hire car. Anton was driving. He used several techniques to lose anyone who might be following them. Techniques Danny told him about.

Danny knew a lot about crime – *and* how to solve it.

Why?

Because Danny had read dozens of crime stories to his dad. His dad loved detective books, but he usually forgot the details of each story. Danny, however, remembered everything. How to avoid detection. How to follow someone without being seen. How *not* to be followed yourself.

He realised that reading books had done him some good. A lot of good.

When they arrived at some traffic lights near the house, Danny slipped out of the car. They had decided *he* would plant the bug. He knew what the garden was like and he was the fastest runner.

And, if he didn't come out of there in sixty seconds, Anton would go in with his camera and make sure whatever happened next was front page news.

Running along the side of the garden wall, Danny felt sick. The last time he had been here Sir Richard had come close to killing him. He wanted to turn and run the other way. But something inside him gave him the strength to go on. He had to plant this bug: it could be the difference between a terrible thing happening – or not.

Danny moved quickly into Sir Richard's garden. The gate was open, like the last time. He saw the back window of the house. Near the shed. He crept, keeping low, avoiding being seen. He hoped.

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Once he was there, he stuck the small plastic disk Anton had given him to the window. It was hard to believe that what was little more than a sticker would be able to pick up any conversation in the house. But he believed it would. He trusted Anton.

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Once Danny had joined Dad and Anton in the car, they tuned in the receiver to pick up the conversations they were after. Then they waited, barely daring to move inside the small VW.

After half an hour of silence and shuffling sounds, they struck gold: the conversation that turned all their thoughts about Sir Richard's plans on their head.

'So everything is ready, Joseph?' That was Sir Richard's voice.

'Yes. We have finished the job.' Another voice. Obviously someone called Joseph.

'Tell me again what will happen.'

The man called Joseph explained. 'We have placed the device inside the top section of the trophy. It will not go off at all unless you press *this* button.'

Danny imagined Sir Richard looking at a small handset. Maybe like a TV remote control.

'But when you do hit this button,' Joseph said, 'the trophy will explode.'

'Good,' Sir Richard said.

'When will you do it, Mr Gaw?' Joseph asked.

'The moment the winning team holds the trophy aloft. Then it will be seen on every TV screen in the world.'

Danny, his dad and Anton sat staring at each other. They were too shocked to speak. *Now* they knew what Sir Richard was really up to.

He had placed a bomb in the World cup trophy. And after the final, just as the winning captain lifted it above his head to celebrate, it would explode.

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It was terrible.

'We have to tell the police,' Danny said. He knew his dad had been right about trying to involve the police. This was too serious for them to prevent.

But Dad was shaking his head.

And Anton weighed in. 'The police said that if we go to them again with our "crazy stories" they will deport us.'

'So what now?' Danny asked. 'Do we just let him do this?'

Nobody spoke.

And that gave Danny time to think. About whether they *could* do anything. And about the other thoughts in his head. That it had been so easy to get the information they wanted. That Sir Richard had not sounded like he normally did when he was explaining his plan. That something was not quite right.

Whatever it was, Danny knew they had four days to sort it. Or there would be a major catastrophe.

Note for teachers:

There are still five days left for you to enter the competition to win a visit by Tom Palmer and 100 copies of his novel, *Foul Play*. See episode 20 and its attached exercise for more information.

On Monday next week – with the last episode – a pack of ideas for following up on *Foul Play: The World Cup Mystery* will be available on the National Literacy website.

Episode 23 will be published at 8 a.m. on Wednesday 7th July at www.literacytrust.org.uk/worldcup. The story will be published every school day until Monday 12th July. Only four episodes left! Thank you for reading.

(This story is being written every evening and uploaded each morning. Please accept that although every effort has been made not to have grammatical or spelling errors we cannot guarantee that there will be none.)

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