

The Champ!



ANH★DO

NUMBER ONE BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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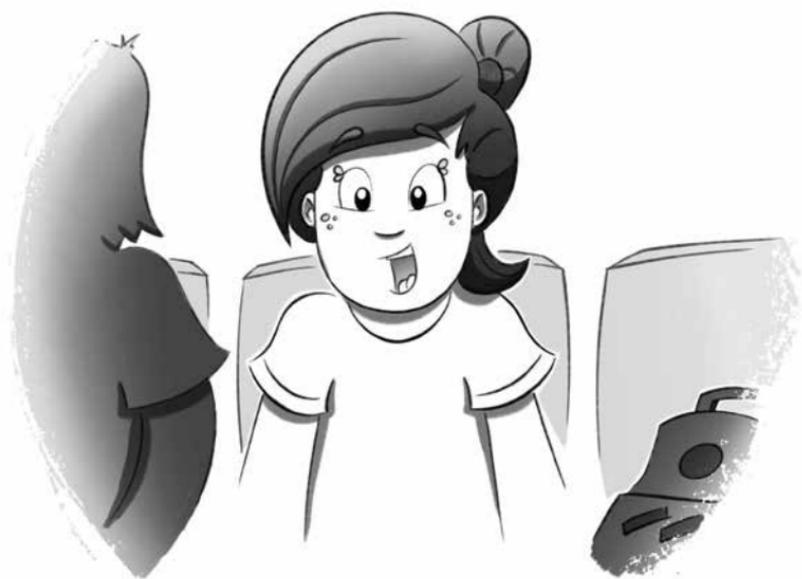
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CHAPTER 1

Summer was on the edge of her seat.



'GOAL!' screamed the crowd.

'Noooo!' yelled Summer, throwing her hands up in frustration.

'Whoops,' said **Wilbur**, Summer's best friend. His hotdog had fallen out of its bun in all the excitement. He quickly picked it up and put it back as if nothing had happened.



'Come on, Carl! Score us the winner!'
Summer called.

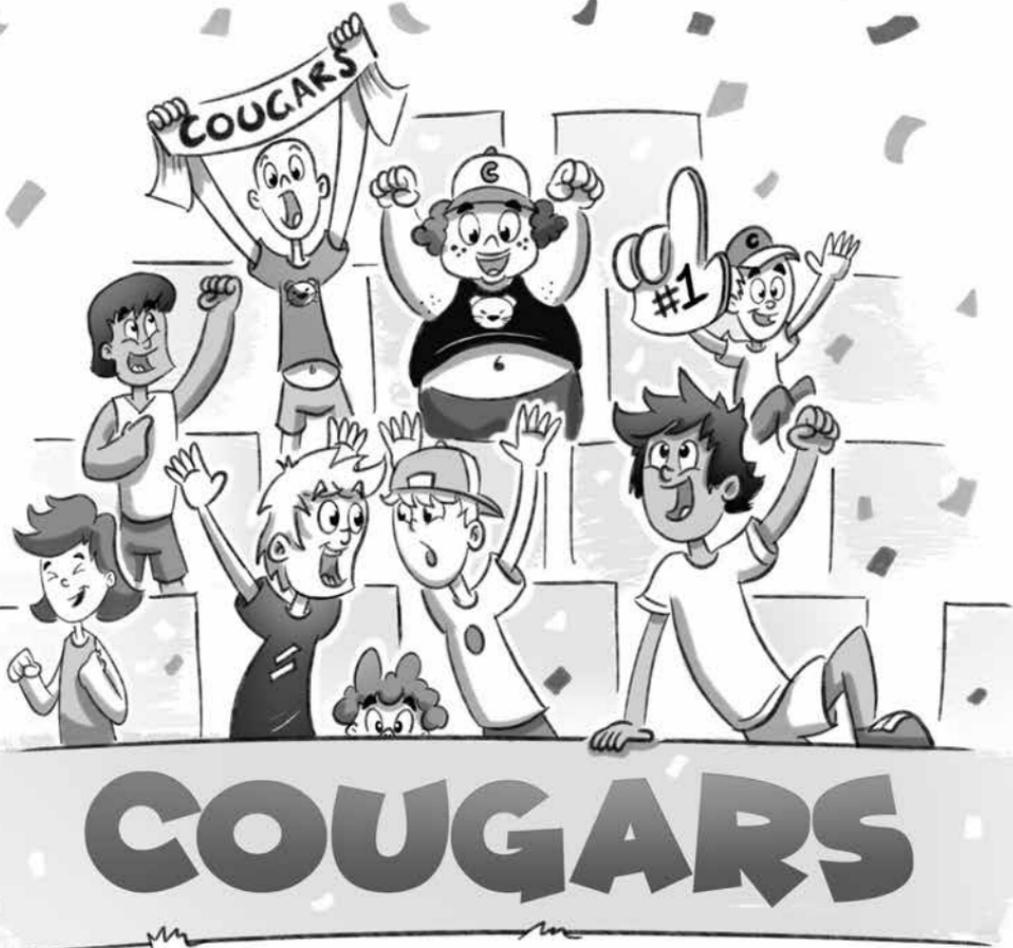
Summer's older brother, Carl, was a striker for the **ROCKSTONE ROBINS**, and today they were playing their rivals, the Clifton Cougars. Summer desperately wanted the Robins to win. The score was two-all, and time was nearly up.



'COME ON, REDS!' Wilbur shouted enthusiastically. He turned and added quietly to Summer, 'We are the Reds, right?'

'We sure are!' She chuckled. Wilbur could be a little bit vague at times.

Summer and Wilbur watched as Carl **swerved** past a Cougars defender and unleashed a vicious shot at goal ... but the goalie dived and tipped the ball over the crossbar.



A disappointed **Ooooooooooh!**
rippled through the Robins fans.

The Cougars supporters roared like
lions.

‘Cougars don’t **ROAR**,’ Wilbur said
indignantly. ‘And there aren’t any cougars
in Clifton, anyway. At least there are
robins in Rockstone.’



Summer laughed. 'You're right. Robins may be less powerful, but at least our name is **factual**.'

Summer and Wilbur had been best friends their whole lives. They'd been neighbours, too, when they were younger. But after Summer's parents had died in an accident, Summer and Carl had moved across town.

Summer was glad Wilbur had come to the game with her today. Nobody understood her as well as he did.

Suddenly, an air of **EXCITEMENT** swept through the crowd. Carl raced towards the goal again, beating one defender, then two, sidestepping a third ... before he rifled a shot past the keeper into the top corner, almost breaking the net.

GOOOOAAALL!!!



The stands **erupted** as the referee blew the final whistle.

YYEESSSS!!!

Summer jumped to her feet, cheering.

Beside her Wilbur had also leapt up, sending his hot dog flying again.

Wilbur was filming the whole thing on his phone. 'This will look awesome on FaceSnap!' he said, a huge grin on his face. Wilbur loved posting his favourite moments on social media.



‘Wow!’ said Summer. ‘Wasn’t that amazing?’

‘Amazing,’ agreed Wilbur. ‘I can’t wait for the second half!’

Summer looked at him quizzically. ‘The Game’s finished,’ she said.

‘I’m joking!’ Wilbur smiled. ‘It was awesome. And Carl was **incredible!**’

Carl’s teammates swarmed around him, lifting him up on their shoulders and

carrying him **off the ground**. As they neared Summer and Wilbur, Carl climbed down and came over to the fence.



‘Hi guys,’ he said with a **BIG smile**.
‘Enjoying the front-row seats?’
‘Absolutely.’ Summer beamed at her brother.

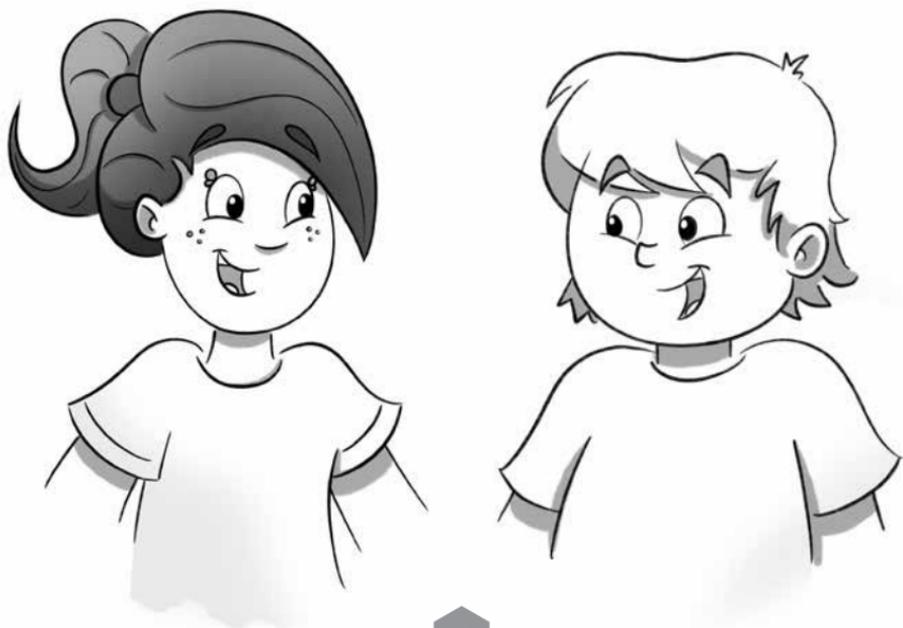
‘Nice goal!’ said Wilbur. He and Carl high-fived.

‘Did you guys hear the big news?’ said Carl. ‘The **Gladiator Games** are coming to town next month.’

Summer’s eyes lit up. ‘Here? To Rockstone?’

‘Yes, to Rockstone!’

Summer looked over at Wilbur. ‘Wow! We’ve been wanting to go to the Gladiator Games since we were in kindergarten!’



They grinned at each other.

Carl's teammates were hollering at him. 'You two have fun,' he said as he ran to join his team. 'I'll be home in a bit, little sis!'

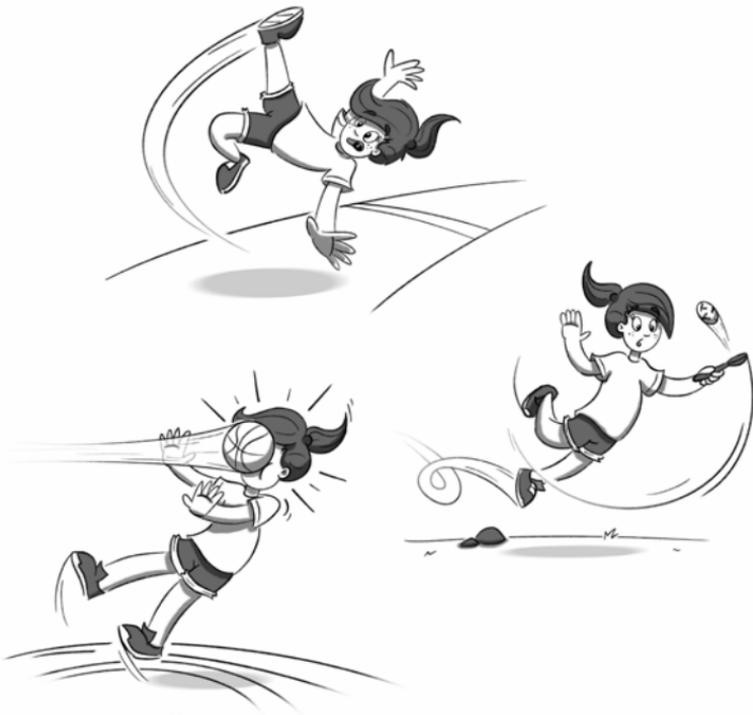
The Robins took off, whooping together.

Summer watched them go, a bit longingly. She **wished** she could be part of a team like that. She would love to charge down the field like Carl did, defenders diving at her feet. To watch the ball smack into the net and know she had won the match for her team.

But it was just a **dream**. Summer had never been very good at sport. She tried hard, but she always seemed to be the last person picked for every team.



She sort of understood why ...



‘Hey,’ said Wilbur.

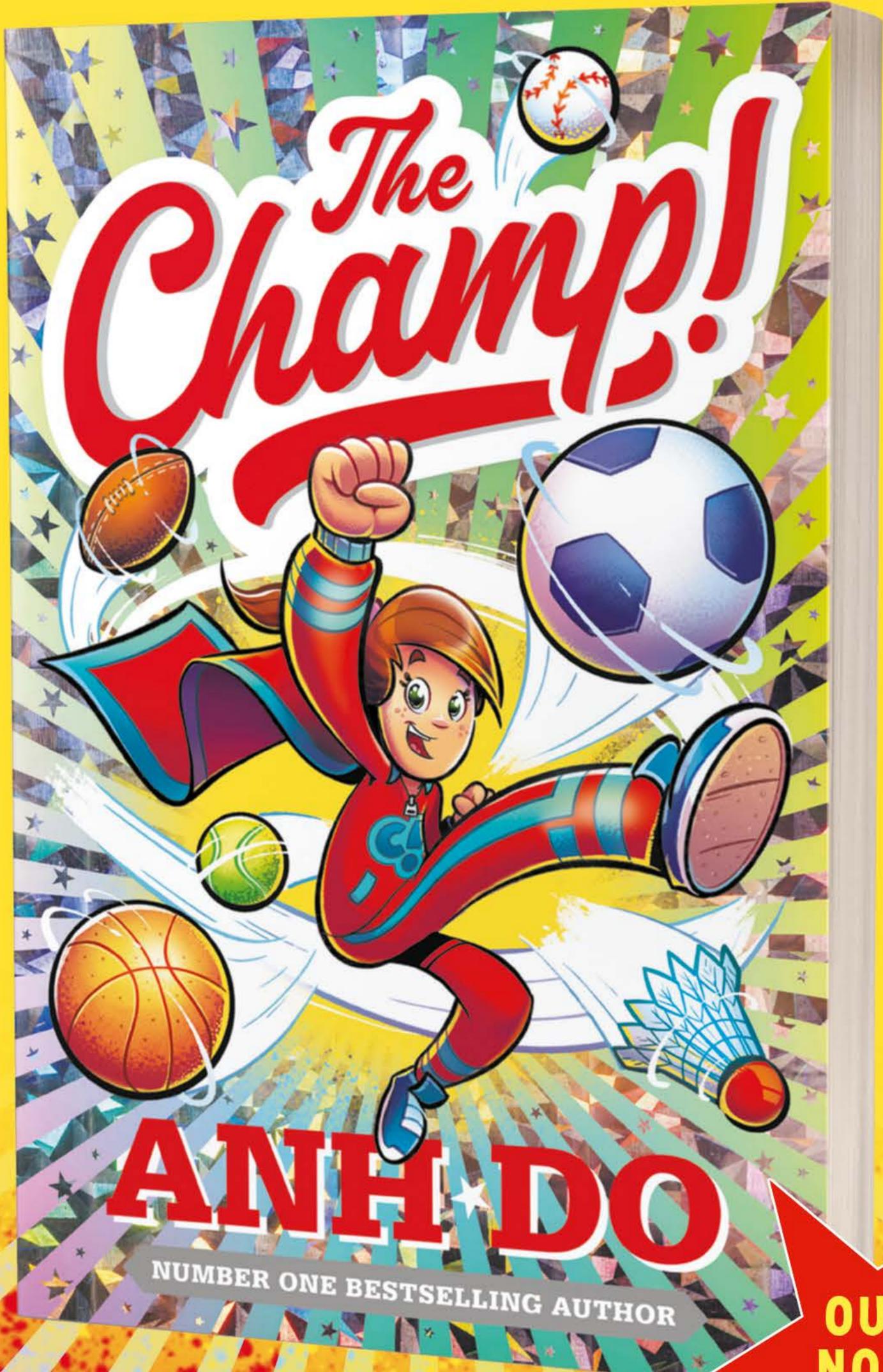
She turned to see him smiling at her.

‘Wanna walk home with me?’ he asked.

‘Sure.’ Summer smiled back. She might not have Carl’s **sporting abilities**, but at least she had Wilbur. He was always on her team.

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