



Story outline

Dan's dare

Hi, I'm Dan.

The other day I was around at my friend Zak's house and we were playing in his garden. He's got a massive garden and it's great for playing football in. I love football.

Anyway, I was in goal when Zak had a shot and missed. The ball went behind the shed and landed in a massive patch of mud. Well, neither of us really wanted to get it, but Zak dared me to. He said he bet I couldn't get it without getting my new trainers muddy. They *are* new and I didn't really want to get them too dirty, but I knew I could do it. And I did! I slipped at one point and nearly fell in the mud, but, in the end, it was quite easy. Zak and I had a good laugh about afterwards.

A bit later, it was Zak's turn in goal and I had a long shot. Well, I got it all wrong and the ball sailed right over the fence and into the neighbour's garden! We looked over the fence and could see that it had landed in a patch of brambles, right next to the kitchen window of the house. Zak said that his neighbour was an old lady who was really grumpy and didn't like anyone going near her property, but then he dared me to get the ball. I said that I'd got it before when it had gone in the mud and that it was his turn, but he said that I had to get it because I'd kicked it over the fence! Then he started calling me chicken and said that if I didn't get the ball, he'd tell everyone at school that I was afraid of an old lady. I didn't like him laughing at me – it made me feel all hot and embarrassed – so I did it!

I climbed over the fence and ran across the lawn to where the ball was. It didn't feel right being in someone else's garden without their permission. But when I found the ball, it was really stuck in the brambles and when I tried to get it out with a stick, the old lady suddenly appeared at the window! She looked really angry – and I felt pretty scared – so I left the ball and started to run back to the fence, but my foot got stuck on a bramble! It ripped a hole in the side of my trainer and cut my foot, too!

When I got back into Zak's garden, he started moaning that I'd left the ball behind. We started to get into a big argument, but then Zak's mum appeared with the ball in her hands! The old lady from next door had brought it round. Zak's mum said that Mrs. Wilson – that was her name – lived on her own and was really frightened when she saw me in her garden. She made us go round to apologise. Actually, it wasn't so bad because Mrs Wilson was really nice to me. I felt awful that I'd made her feel like that, but, when we were on our own again, Zak said that it was all my fault!