

Save the Planet! – Day 2

'Great tapping H. Gives me an idea actually'.

Wednesday night. England's must-win game against the mighty Estonia.

Freddy and Wil had planned a sleepover at their house.

'Hardy always wants to do sleepovers, doesn't he?'

'Well, yes, but maybe that's because he doesn't really have anyone to talk to, most of the time, does he?'

'No. Except that cousin of his'.

'Which cousin?'

'Can't remember his name. Cool guy. Small'.

'Hmmm..'

They were all piled in the same bed.

Well, not all of them, but Wil, Freddy, and Hardy were spread out over a huge double bed, and Michael was getting ready to join them, putting on his favourite football pyjamas.

'Shhhh!' he said, 'it's about to start!'

As the national anthems faded away, and the little radio crackled slightly under the strain of the noises coming from the stadium in Tallin, the commentators began describing the kick-off.

'I always watch the football at my place', said Hardy, looking scornfully at the radio.

'Yes, well, sorry, you'll just have to listen to it, here, we don't have that kind of posh TV', said Wil apologetically.

'It's sometimes better on the radio, anyway', said Freddy.

'How can it be better?' said Hardy, 'have you seen those replays on Sky, where they do that 'whoosh' thing, then the instant replay, then the split screen, the split sound. And the commentators, professional, smooth, cool. And Andy Gray.'

'Well, open your ears!'

Hardy looked at Freddy as if he was mad.

'No, listen, and imagine being there!'

They all lay still for a few minutes, trying to conjure up the image of their beloved England playing so far away.

'You're right', said Hardy, his eyes tightly shut, 'I can really imagine it, long throw in, onto Crouch's head, then JoJo Cole onto the chest like he did against Sweden in the World Cup, then... GOAL!'

'You're not imagining that, we've scored!'

All hell broke loose in the bedroom.

Freddy jumped up in one movement, so that he was standing on the bed, then took a flying leap onto Hardy, who was still lying with his eyes shut. Not for long though, as Freddy's full weight landed on him. He opened his eyes with a start.

'Hey! Ow! That hurt!'

Wil decided that attacking something or someone was obviously the only way to celebrate. So he attacked Michael, who had started to get up. Not content with pulling him back down, Wil also started bashing Michael with one of the pillows.

'Yes! One-Nil! Football's coming home!' said Michael.

Or rather he said *'Esh! Wunnil! Foopall's cubbig obe!'* through the mouthful of cushion Wil had given him.

They settled down again to listen to the rest of the half.

As the half-time whistle went, footsteps. Coming up the stairs. Coming closer. They straightened the duvet out as much as they could, arranged themselves into four straight lines, and started whistling innocently. A stray feather settled on Wil's nose. He stuffed the pillow under himself to conceal it.

He whistled a little louder, turning his mouth upwards as far as he could, whilst still whistling, to try to dislodge the feather.

No luck.

The feather, which had been perching elegantly on his nose, seemed to have worked its way round to his nostril. There was no way he could avoid it now.

Achoo! he sneezed a sneeze like no other. One of those sneezes that jolts your whole body.

As Wil's whole body jolted, so the pillow they had been fighting with was compressed. Quickly, violently, so that the two ends of it split, almost at the same time, sending feathers and dust flying out from beneath Wil's back in two opposite directions. It looked like he himself had split open at the waist.

Wil and Freddy's mother entered the room.

'OK, boys, lights out now!' she busied herself with plumping up the duvet, plumping up the remaining pillows, and wondering in the half light of the room, what all those itchy things were she kept brushing up against.

'But Mum, you said we could listen to the football', protested Freddy.

'You did listen to it', said his mother, jabbing at various switches on the radio until it went silent, *'it's too late now, go to sleep boys'*.

'Aw Mum...'

'I said, go to sleep, goodnight!'

'This is even better!' said Hardy from beneath the duvet.

'Eh, what?' said Michael, who in the darkness had got round the wrong way and was now becoming disorientated by the overwhelming smell of Hardy's feet.

Hardy had sneaked the radio off the table, and had turned it back on very quietly. Pressed to his ear, only he could hear it, but at least he could relay the news to the others.

'Still one-nil to England, but it sounds like they're playing well. Oh, here's a chance, Beckham with the first time cross into Crouch, and, and...they've scored!'

'Yesss!' said Freddy, subconsciously clenching his fist under the bedclothes, and then consciously using it to thump his brother.

'What was that for?' moaned Wil.

'Just celebrating!' said Freddy sarcastically.

Michael, his head now just poking out from the right end of the bedclothes said, *'umm...eh...what?'*, very quietly.

Hardy continued his commentary for a few more minutes.

Michael snored extravagantly.

Wil said quietly, *'this is a really exciting match, isn't it'*.

No-one answered.

Wil snored expansively.

'Another goal!' whispered Hardy, *'and another brilliant Beckham cross!'*

'How do you know it was brilliant, you can't see it!'

'I can imagine it, just like you said! Three-nil, not bad. Oh, wait a minute, they're bringing on Kieron!'

'Hey, I like Dyer, he looks like me!' said Freddy drowsily, *'can I listen for a bit?'*

'Sure, here, take the radio, you need to hold it close'.

Freddy took the radio from Hardy and lay down on the bed with it flattened against his right ear.

Hardy, lying between the prostrate figures of Michael and Wil, waited for the commentary to come from Freddy.

Nothing.

Freddy snored massively.

'Hey, give me back my radio if you not going to listen to it!' said the last remaining awake person.

'I said, give me back my daddio, if you really didn't miss it!'

And a few seconds later...

'I read about a lady-o, a lady-o, a lady...SNORE!'

With the radio buzzing in the background, the four tired friends drifted off to their assorted lands of nod.

But one dream stood out.

Freddy, standing on a platform somewhere. Or was it a stage? That's right, a stage! Lots of people. Hundreds. Maybe thousands. Waving and shouting. Freddy waving back. And bowing. And behind him, just like yesterday. Hardy's incessant drum-drum-drumming...