

Semi-Finals Week – Day 6

‘Let’s go and get Jaz. He’ll know whether we’re going’ .*****Michael, Freddy and Wil arrived outside Jaz’s house, pushing Clara reluctantly in front of them. ‘You absolutely HAVE to apologise’, said Freddy firmly, ‘we’ve gone through the whole season without criticising anyone, and we’re not going to start now’. ‘I only said that he might not have scored’, replied Clara, changing her story, obviously realising that she had gone too far. ‘You know what you said’, replied Freddy. He rang the bell then pushed Clara on to the doorstep.*****‘What do you want?’ said Jaz as he opened the door, then made as if to close it again. ‘No! Don’t shut the door! I’m really sorry for what I said. It was wrong. We all need to work on our game...can we come in...please?’ Clara actually did look really sorry. ‘Oh, hi guys’, said Jaz as Freddy and Wil stepped forward, ‘OK then, come in’. ‘We need your help, we really do’, said Freddy, again pulling out his crappy attempts to calculate the results of the league. ‘Alright, you’d better come upstairs’ .*****Semi-Finals Week 193 ‘Did you see the match last night?’ said Michael as they climbed to the third floor, ‘I couldn’t watch, but I listened on the radio’. ‘I watched it’, replied Jaz, ‘I’ve got Sky, Sky One, Sky Plus, Sky Minus, Sky Two, Sky Three, Sky Sports One, Two and Three, Sky Blue, Sky Green and Sky Pink, Sky Active, and Sky Sitting Around Doing Nothing Much at all.’ ‘I feel sorry for Alex Ferguson’, said Wil thoughtfully, ‘they didn’t deserve to lose three-nil like that, and he’s getting on a bit’. ‘Who’s getting on a bit?’ ‘Sir Alex. I mean, he’s like someone from the olden days. He’s at least sixty-five’. ‘No, he’s older than that. Must be eighty. Not many chances left for him’, said Michael. ‘Well, my grandma’s ninety-seven, and she still jogs three miles a day’, said Jaz. Freddy thought to himself at the ridiculousness of the conversation they were having, although he then thought about the little old lady he often saw struggling up and down Lancaster Road in the mornings. She could be at least ninety-seven, come to think of it. ‘Come on, we need some answers here. We’ve tried, but we still don’t know who won the league’. ‘OK, let’s have a look over here’. Jaz thumped away at his keyboard a few times, and the screen showed up a massive table of numbers, with team names down one side, dates across the top, and a bewildering variety of colours and shadings all over it. It was almost six months since they had been in Jaz’s house trying to recruit him for the team. The house was still cold and seemingly empty, except for the big room on the top floor, which was like Jaz’s studio, his bed dwarfed by the giant computer screen on the wall, and the various bundles of cables and keyboards and clutter. ‘Right’, said Jaz, tapping again at a few keys on one of his several keyboards. Friday 4 May 2007 Semi-Finals Week 194 The screen flashed once, then some more numbers appeared. ‘OK’, said Jaz, punching in a few more numbers. The screen beeped, went blank for a second, and revealed another set of numbers. ‘Oh no!’ yelled Jaz, reaching desperately for his mouse. The screen buzzed, went blank, flashed twice, said ‘Attention – System Error!’ then went silent. A puff of smoke emerged out of the back. ‘Aha!’ said Jaz, as the screen roared back into life. ‘So both teams won nine, that’s a total of twenty-seven points. Both drew against each other, so that’s another two points. And both lost a game, so no points there’. Jaz scribbled something on a piece of paper, then tapped away again at the keyboard. The screen beeped. Twice. ‘Now, we both have a win percentage of 82%’. ‘What does that mean?’ said Wil. ‘Well it means that we won 82 out of 100 games’, replied Jaz carefully. ‘That’s impossible’, said Wil, ‘we didn’t play 100 games!’ ‘Well, OK, if we had played 100 games, we would have won 82 of them’, explained Jaz patiently. ‘Well, I don’t get it!’ said Wil, turning away from the screen. ‘We know that we’re equal on points, but we need to know the goal difference’, said Freddy. ‘Ok, that’s what I’m working on now’, replied Jaz, hitting the keyboard manically. The screen produced several farty noises. ‘Oh this is not looking good’, he said after what seemed to Freddy like absolutely ages. Semi-Finals Week 195 ‘If you add our goals for, take away our goals against, divide the answer by the number of goals Butterfield scored, then multiply that answer by the number of matches, take the square root of the number of days of the week, then subtract the number you first thought of...’ The screen...blew up. Jaz dusted himself off as the pile of cables and keyboards was sent crashing towards him. ‘Well, I think we’ve done it’, said Freddy, looking again at his scrap of paper. ‘we scored a total of thirty goals, with nine against...and I reckon...’ he scratched his

head a couple of times, 'I think that they had a goal difference of nineteen'. After some more head scratching, and some more extensive calculations from Jaz, they were really no further to confirming the outcome. 'C'mon, we should go. We'll find out soon enough', said Michael, getting up to leave. ***** As they got back outside, there was one commotion up the street, and there was another commotion down the street. Up the street, an old man, shouting Freddy's name. Down the street, three young girls, shouting Wil's name. 'Freddy, Freddy, lad, we've done it! We've done it!' 'Wil, (giggle giggle)... Wil! (giggle giggle smirk)... Wil... come here!' Up the street, getting closer, a wheezing Mr Andrews, waving a brown envelope. Down the street, getting much closer, the three giggling girls, waving a pink envelope.

'Freddy, my lad', said Mr Andrews, handing Freddy the envelope, 'confirmation from the league... we won it on goal difference... you're going to Athens!' 'Wil, my darling', said one of the girls, handing Wil the pink envelope, 'we love you SO much, you're going to come to our party next week, and you'll be the only boy there!' 'YES!' said Freddy in triumph, holding the envelope high above his head. 'Oh no!' whispered Wil in embarrassment, stuffing the envelope deep into his pocket. *****