

B O O K O N E
KICK-OFF

Script
ROB WILLIAMS

Art
BEN WILLISHER

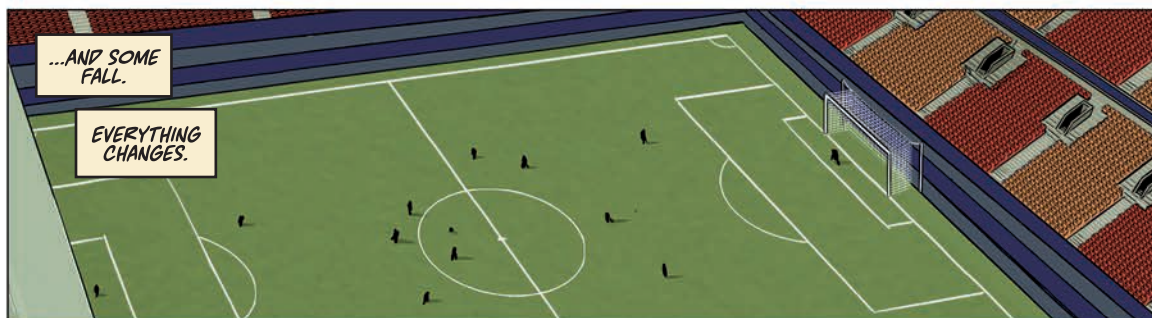
Letters
JIM CAMPBELL



THE COUNTRY
CHANGES.

CITIES CHANGE.

FOOTBALL
CLUBS RISE...



...AND SOME
FALL.

EVERYTHING
CHANGES.



EXCEPT
THIS.



OI,
YOU!

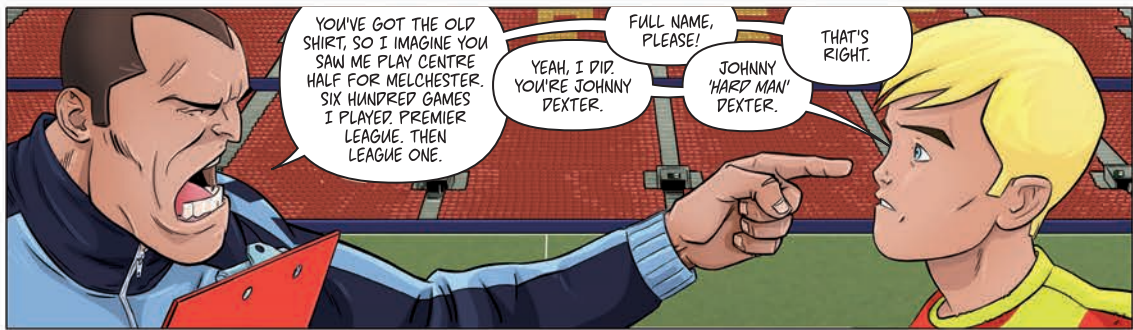
DO I
KNOW YOU,
SON?

NO...

BUT YOU
WILL.

I'M HERE
FOR THE ROVERS
YOUTH TEAM
TRIAL.

I'M ROY
RACE.





OOOPS.
SORRY.



HOPE I HAVEN'T
REARRANGED THAT
BEAUTIFUL NOSE
OF YOURS,
LIKE.

KICK THE
BALL BACK, EH?
WE'VE GOT A TRIAL TO
PLAY HERE. YOU KNOW,
FOR PROPER GOOP
FOOTBALLERS.

ONES
WHO WERE
ACTUALLY PICKED
TO BE HERE.

MY NAME'S VIC GIATHRIE.
I'M THE ROVERS' AND THE
WELSH NATIONAL TEAM'S
UNDER-17 CAPTAIN. WHAT
DO YOU WANT TO
BE WHEN YOU
GROW UP?

OOO, HANG
ABOUT, I THINK
BLONDIE'S
GOING TO
CRY.



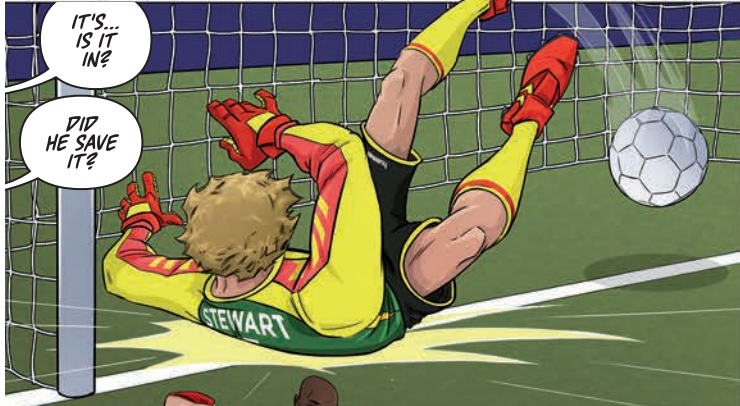
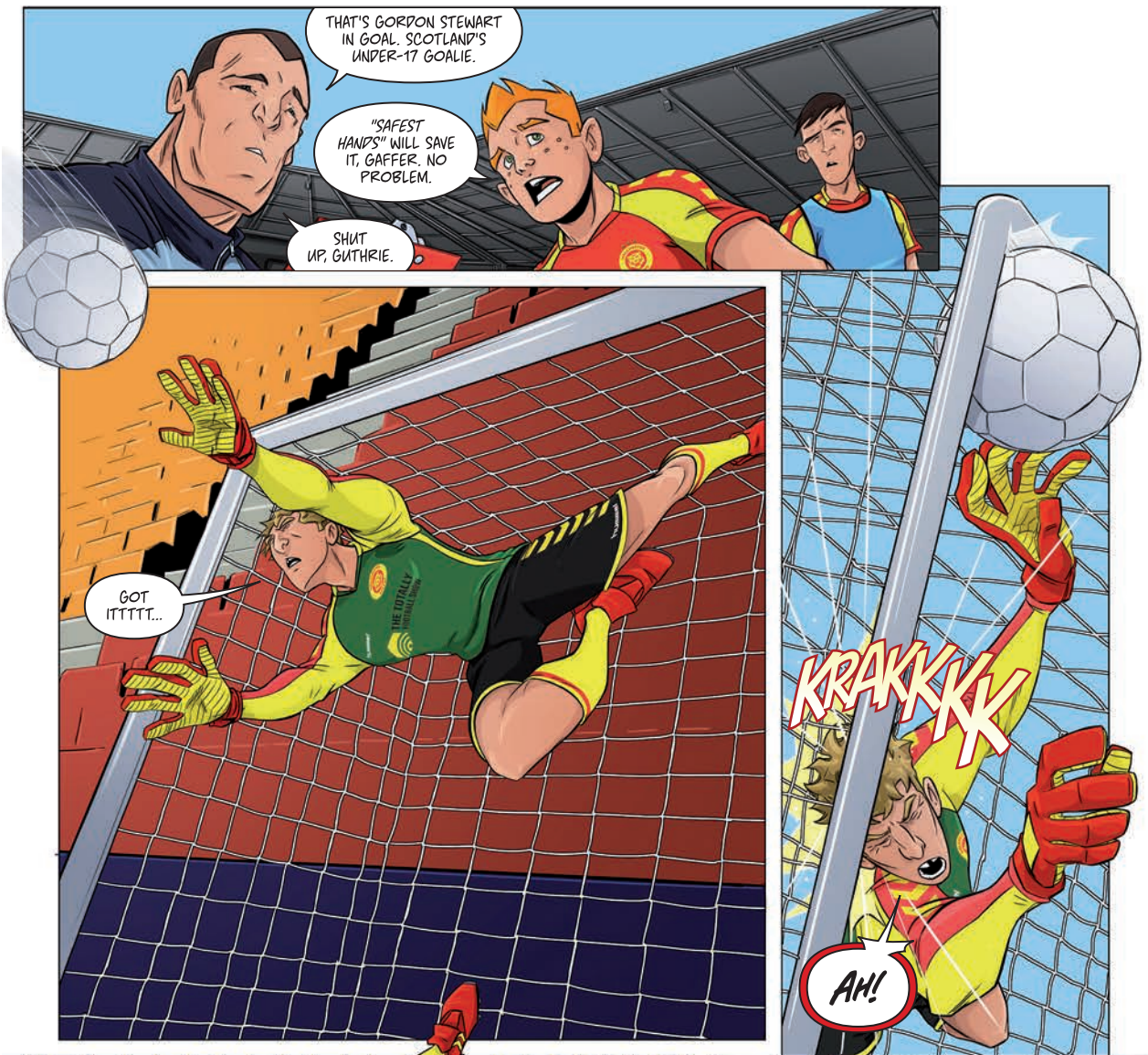
HA.

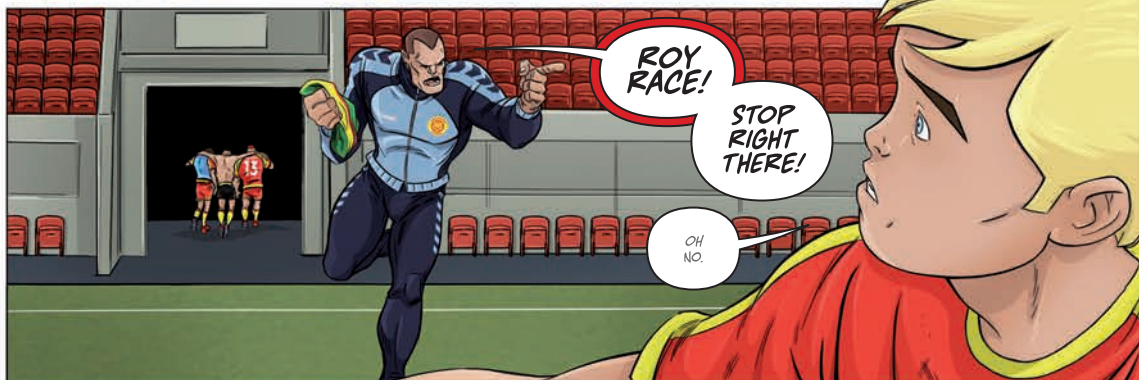
MISSED.



"HANG ON, HE'S GOING
FOR GOAL..."

"FROM THE
HALFWAY
LINE!"





YES!

I'M A STRIKER, GAFFER. I SCORED A HAT TRICK FOR GRIMROYD IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE MOOR CUP FINAL! I CAN PLAY IN THE HOLE TOO, I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, I SWEAR!

YES, YES. GOOD FOR YOU. YOU'RE PLAYING IN GOAL.

OOOOF.. WHAT?

IT'S A GOALIE I'M SHORT OF. THANKS TO YOU. POOR DEAD GORDON. WHO YOU KILLED. YOU'RE IN GOAL.

BUT...

I'M NOT A GOALIE! I'M RUBBISH IN GOAL!

THEN THIS TRIAL ISN'T GOING TO GO WELL FOR YOU, IS IT LAD?

NOW, THIS GRACEFUL, FAST, ENORMOUSLY SKILFUL BOY COMING TOWARDS YOU WITH THE BALL IS PACO DIAZ. HE'S FROM ZARAGOSA IN SPAIN.

I SUGGEST YOU STOP HIM SCORING IF YOU WANT TO STAY WITH MELCHESTER ROVERS!

OK...

GETHIM
GETHIMGETHIM
GETHIM..

GETTTTTT...

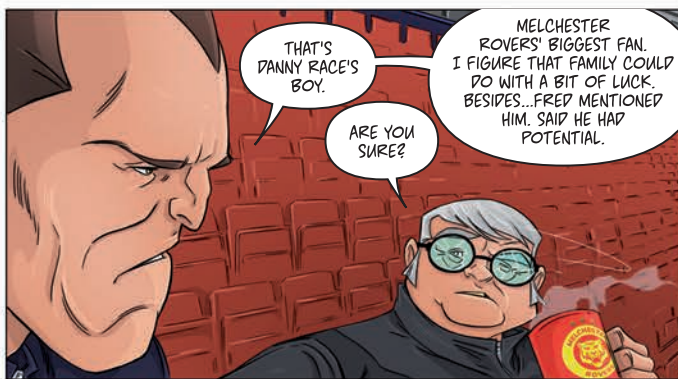






I'VE KNOWN YOU LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THERE'S USUALLY A REASON FOR YOU EMOTIONALLY BULLYING A PROSPECT.

YOU DON'T BOTHER WITH THE ONES WHO DON'T INTEREST YOU.



THAT'S DANNY RACE'S BOY.

ARE YOU SURE?

MELCHESTER ROVERS' BIGGEST FAN. I FIGURE THAT FAMILY COULD DO WITH A BIT OF LUCK. BESIDES...FRED MENTIONED HIM. SAID HE HAD POTENTIAL.

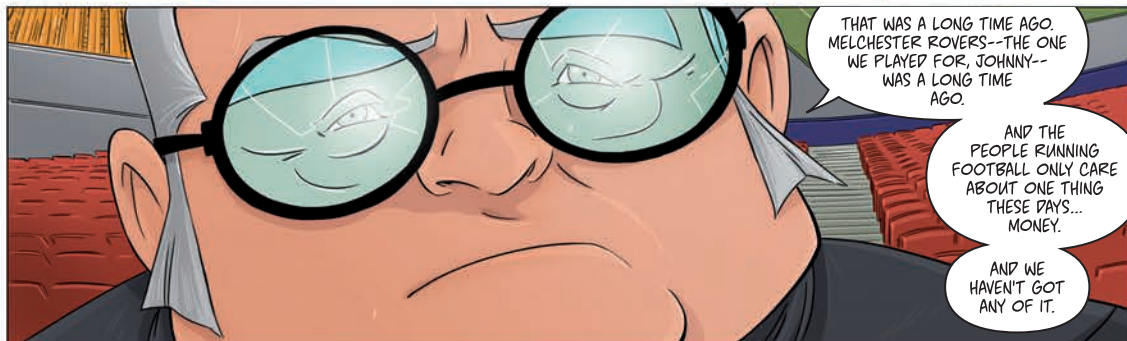


WELL, FRED KNOWS HIS STUFF. I HOPE HE'S GOOD. WE'RE GOING TO NEED THE YOUNGSTERS, JOHNNY. SOON.

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'VE GOT ANOTHER DEPRESSING BOARD MEETING TO GO SIT IN ON.

YOU'RE STILL THE MANAGER, RIGHT? THEY CAN'T FIRE YOU AFTER FOUR GAMES OF THE SEASON!

YOU'RE A LEGEND AT THIS CLUB! YOU'RE THE MIGHTY MOUSE!



THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. MELCHESTER ROVERS--THE ONE WE PLAYED FOR, JOHNNY-- WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

AND THE PEOPLE RUNNING FOOTBALL ONLY CARE ABOUT ONE THING THESE DAYS... MONEY.

AND WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY OF IT.



WHAT IDIOT SUGGESTED YOU PLAY IN GOAL, RACE?

WHAT... YOU DID...

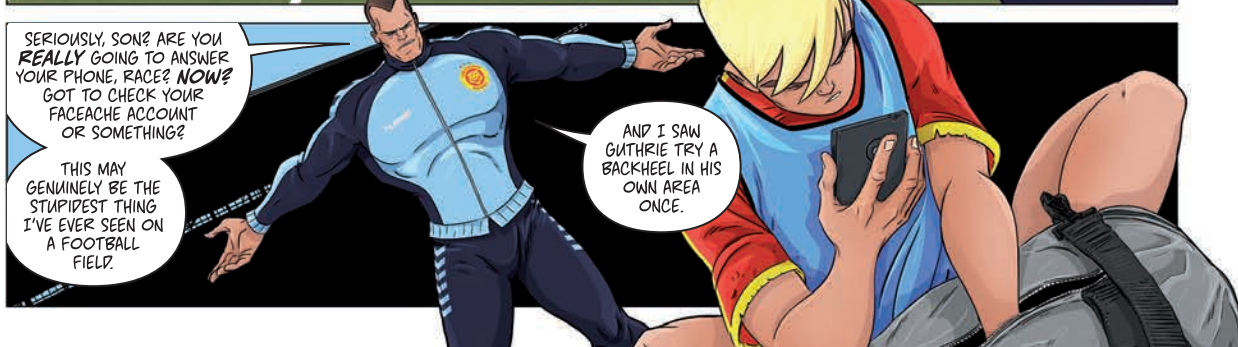
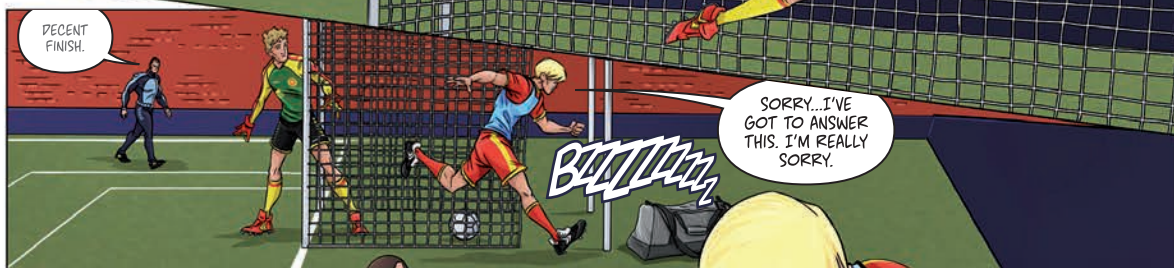
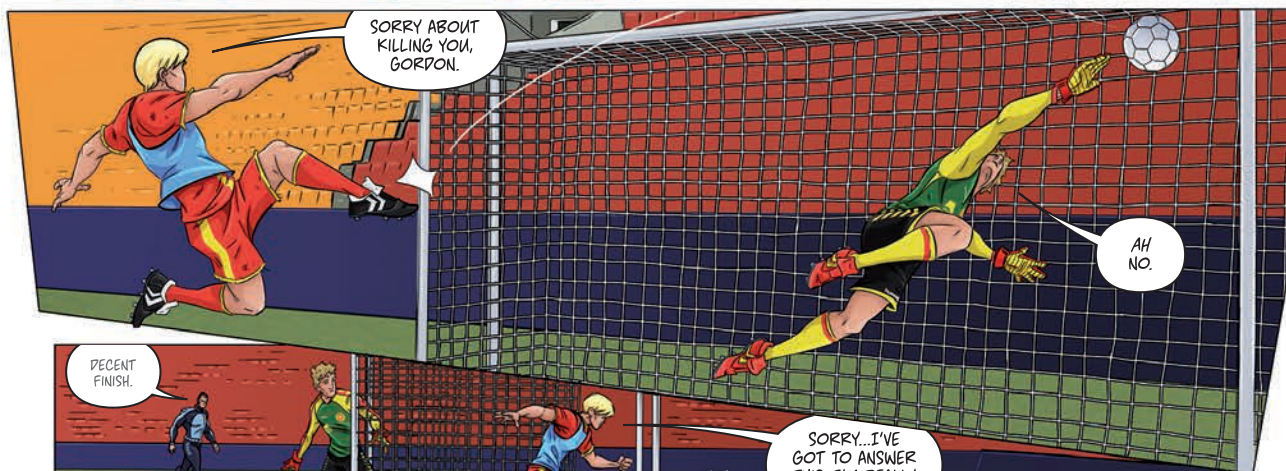
GORDON STEWART'S ALIVE, OUR PHYSIO TELLS ME. GIVE HIM BACK HIS GOALIE'S SHIRT.

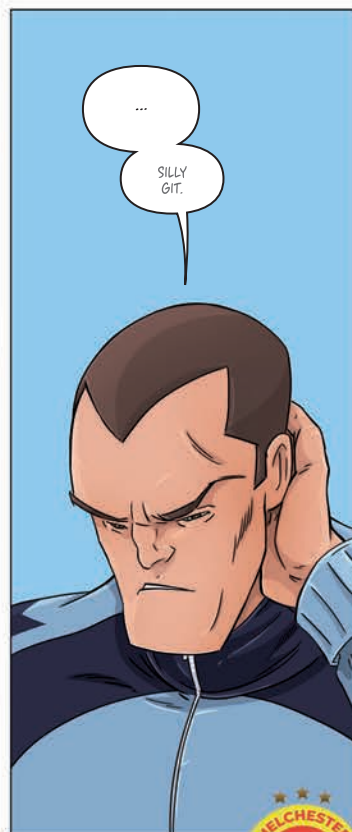


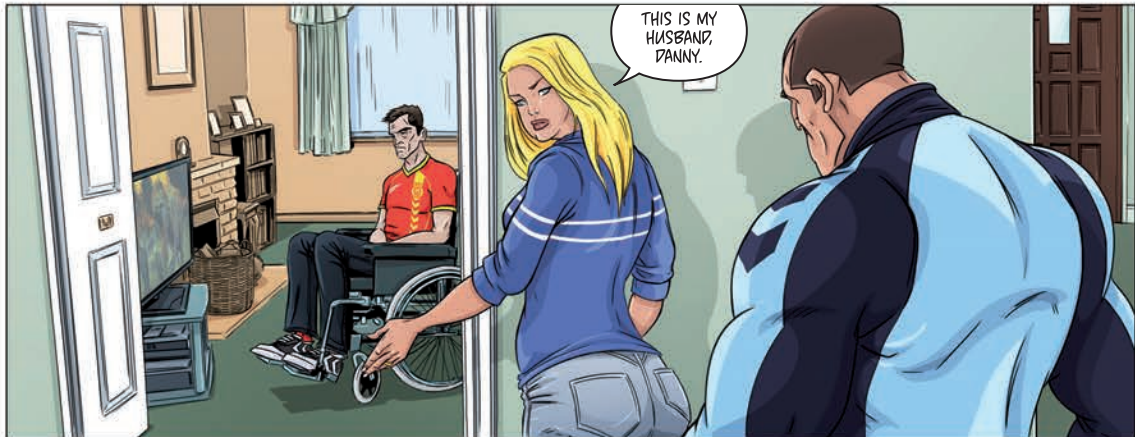
I'LL GIVE YOU THE LAST TEN MINUTES UP FRONT, RACE. SHOW US WHAT YOU CAN DO.

REALLY?

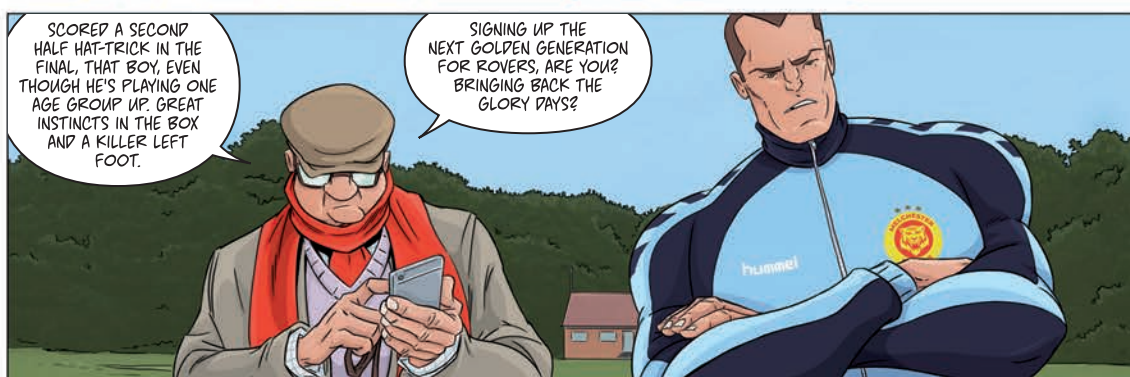
THANKS. I'LL NOT LET YOU DOWN, GAFFER!

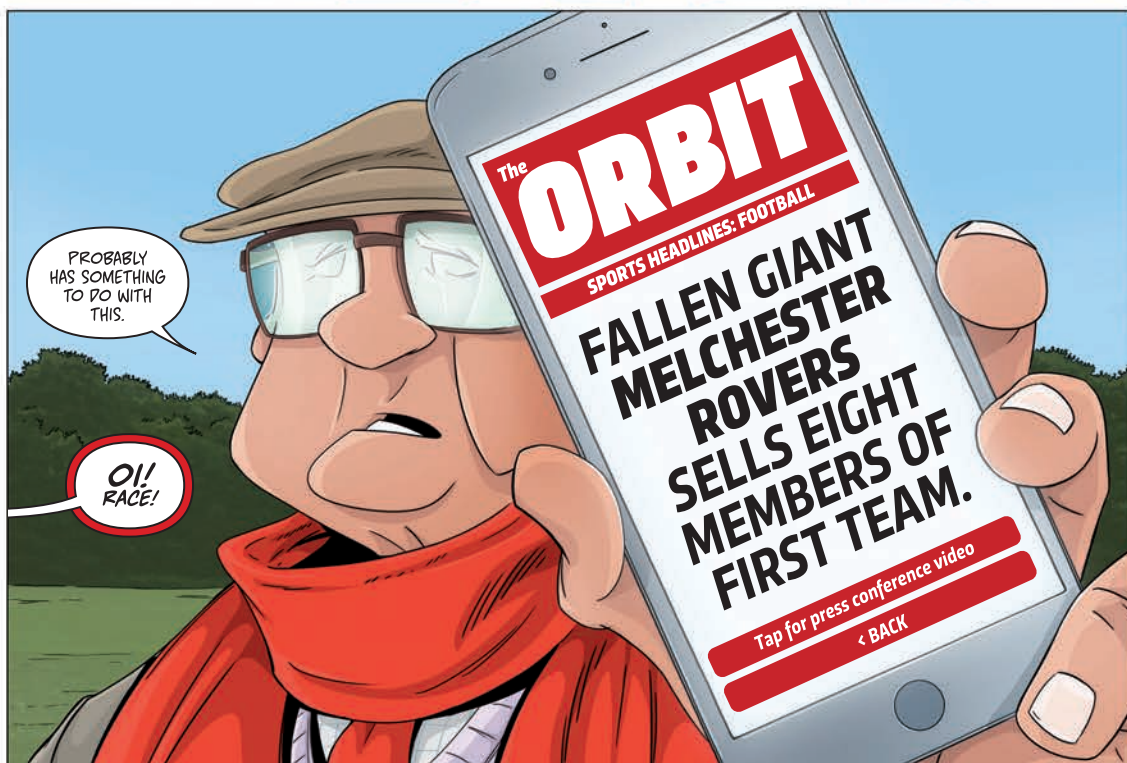
















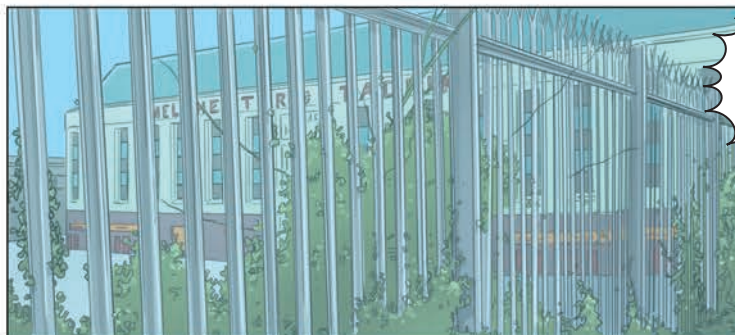
LONG WAY
TO GO, ROY
RACE.

DON'T
GET CARRIED
AWAY.



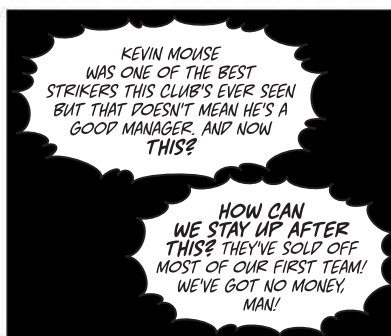
THE FALL
FROM GRACE OF
THE ONCE-GREAT
**MELCHESTER
ROVERS**
CONTINUES.

ONCE ONE
OF THE PREMIER
CLUBS IN ENGLISH FOOTBALL,
REGULARLY CHALLENGING FOR
TROPHIES, RECENT YEARS HAVE
SEEN FINANCIAL TROUBLES
AND RELEGATION AFTER
RELEGATION.



NOW, AFTER
LOSING THE FIRST FOUR
GAMES OF THE NEW SEASON, AND
WITH FANS DISTRAUGHT AT THE STATE
OF THE CLUB, IT APPEARS THINGS
ARE ABOUT TO GET EVEN WORSE
FOR THE ROVERS.

EIGHT MEMBERS
OF THE MELCHESTER FIRST
TEAM HAVE BEEN SOLD IN WHAT
CRITICS ARE DESCRIBING AS A
'CUT-PRICE FIRE SALE BY OWNER
BARRY 'THE MEAT' CLEAVER.



KEVIN MOUSE
WAS ONE OF THE BEST
STRIKERS THIS CLUB'S EVER SEEN
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S A
GOOD MANAGER, AND NOW
THIS?

HOW CAN
WE STAY UP AFTER
THIS? THEY'VE SOLD OFF
MOST OF OUR FIRST TEAM!
WE'VE GOT NO MONEY,
MAN!



WE'RE GONNA
GET RELEGATED! WE'LL
FLY DOWN THE LEAGUES
LIKE THIS. BE OUT OF
BUSINESS IN NO
TIME!

THIS IS
THE END OF
MELCHESTER
ROVERS!

AND WHAT MAKES THINGS WORSE FOR ROVERS FANS IS THE RISE IN FORTUNES OF LOCAL RIVALS **TYNECASTER**, WHO CURRENTLY SIT ATOP THE PREMIER LEAGUE ON GOAL DIFFERENCE.



BOUGHT BY SAUDI PRINCE BASSAM SIRAJ ANTOHN JUST TWO YEARS AGO, TYNECASTER HAVE BROUGHT SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST PLAYERS TO THE PREMIER LEAGUE.



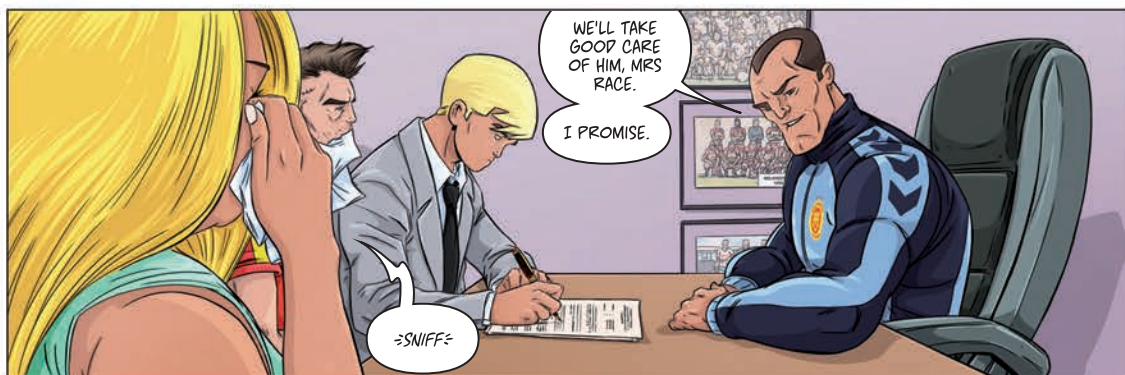
THE LATEST ADDITION? £175 MILLION BRAZILLIAN SUPERSTAR STRIKER **HUGO**, AS REVEALED JUST PRIOR TO THE TRANSFER WINDOW CLOSING.

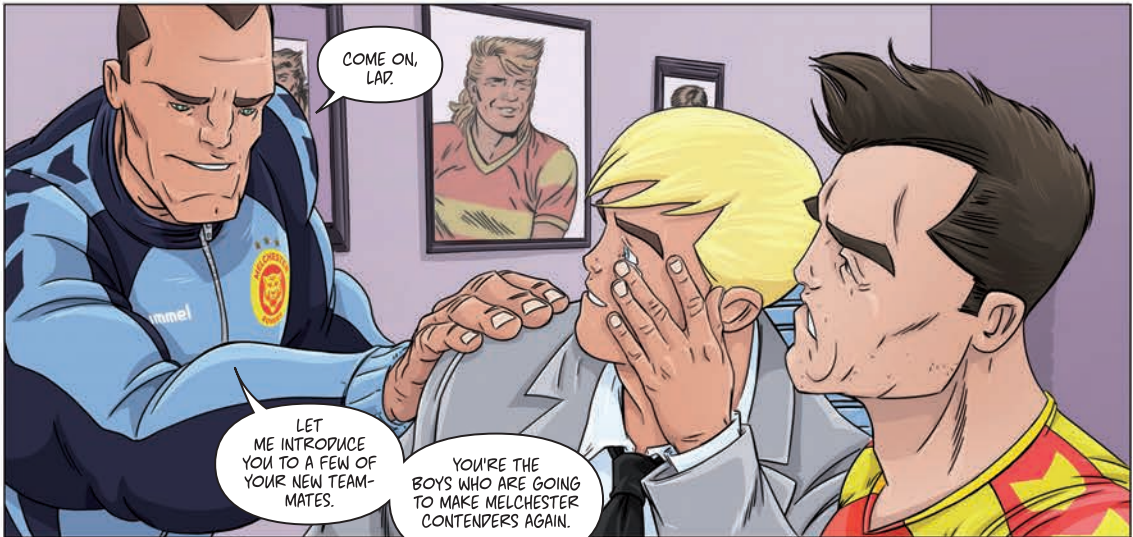
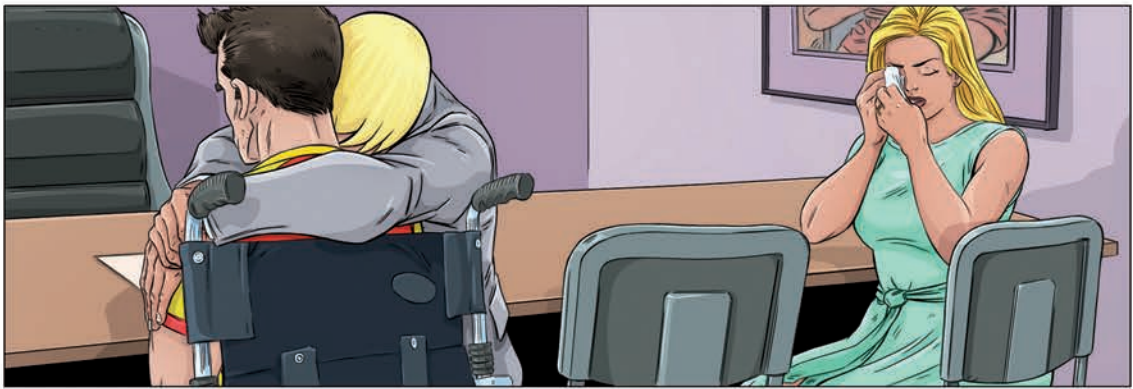


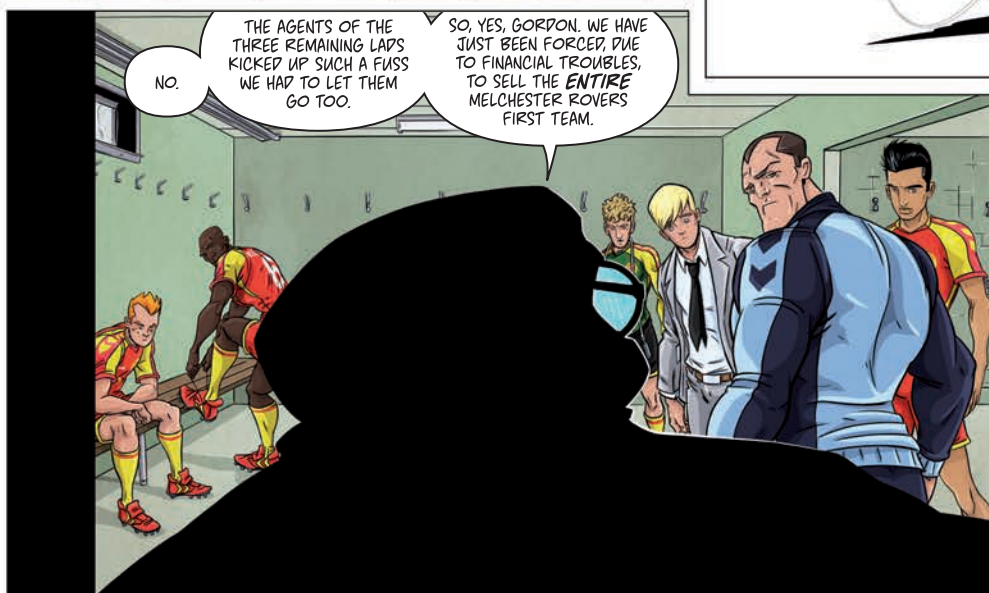
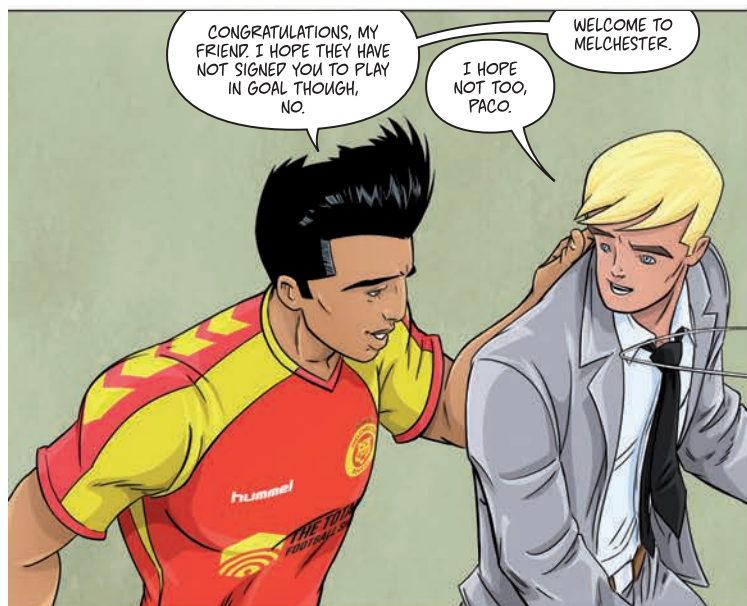
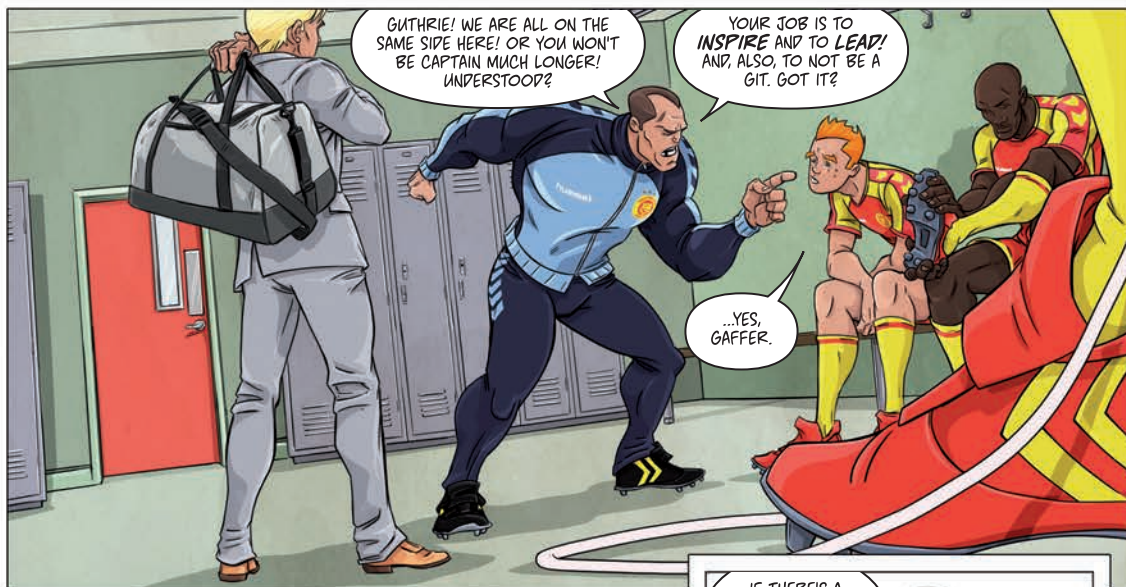
I VERY PLEASED TO JOIN THE TYNECASTER AND COME HERE BECAUSE WE WANT WIN **CHAMPIONS LEAGUE!**

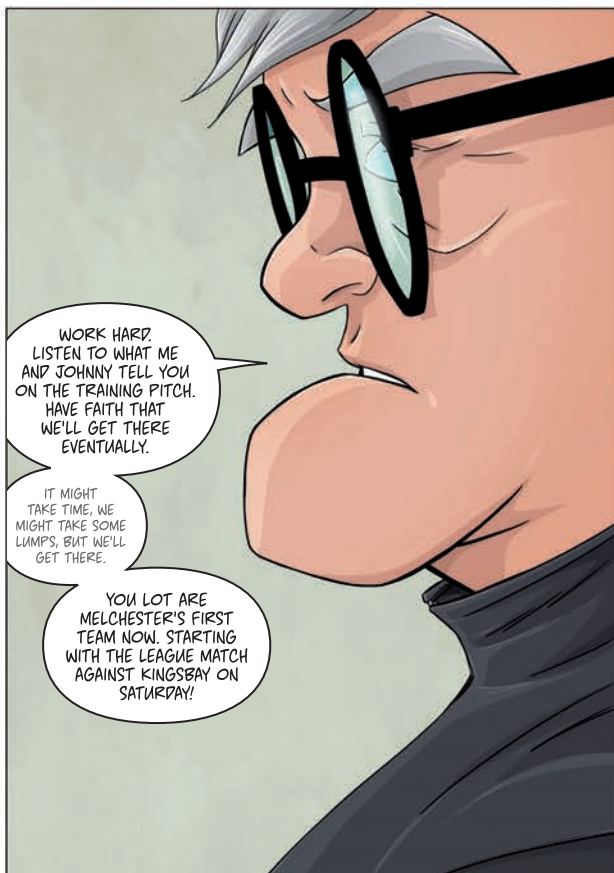
YAYYYYYY!





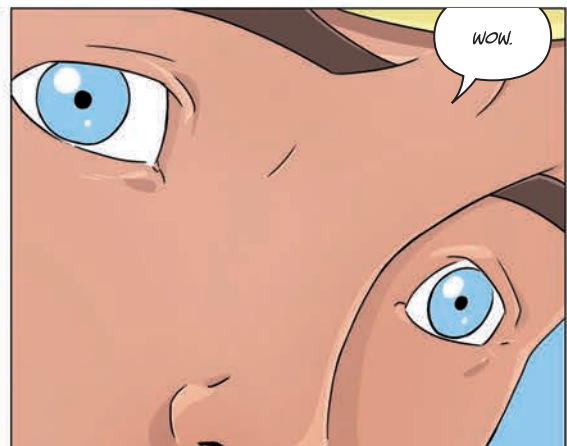
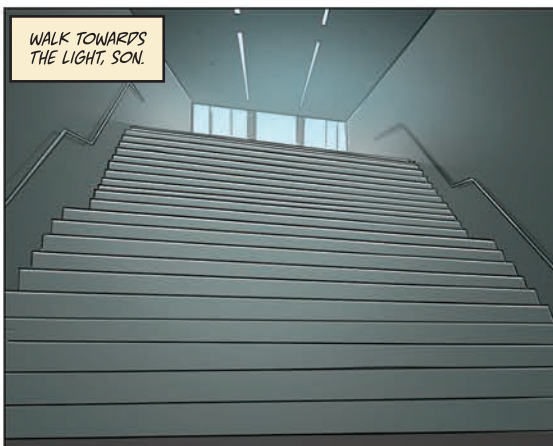
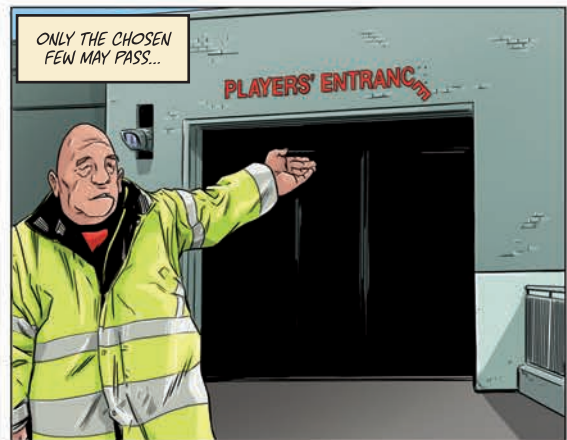
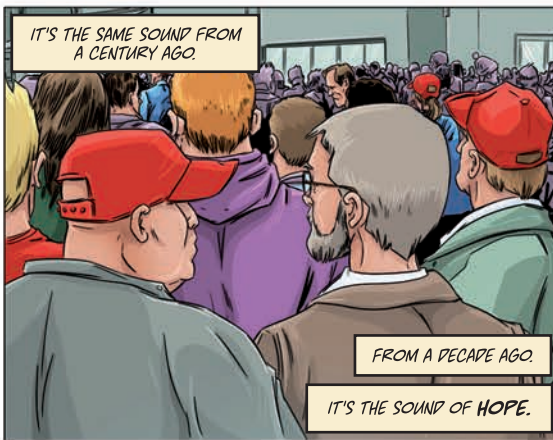
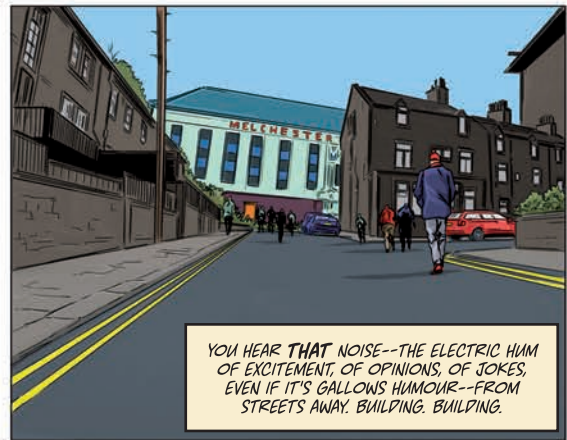
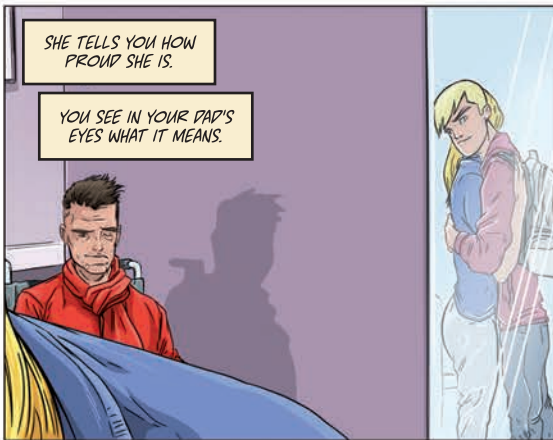
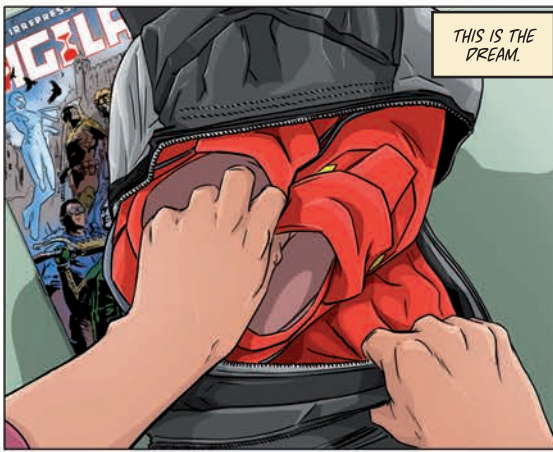


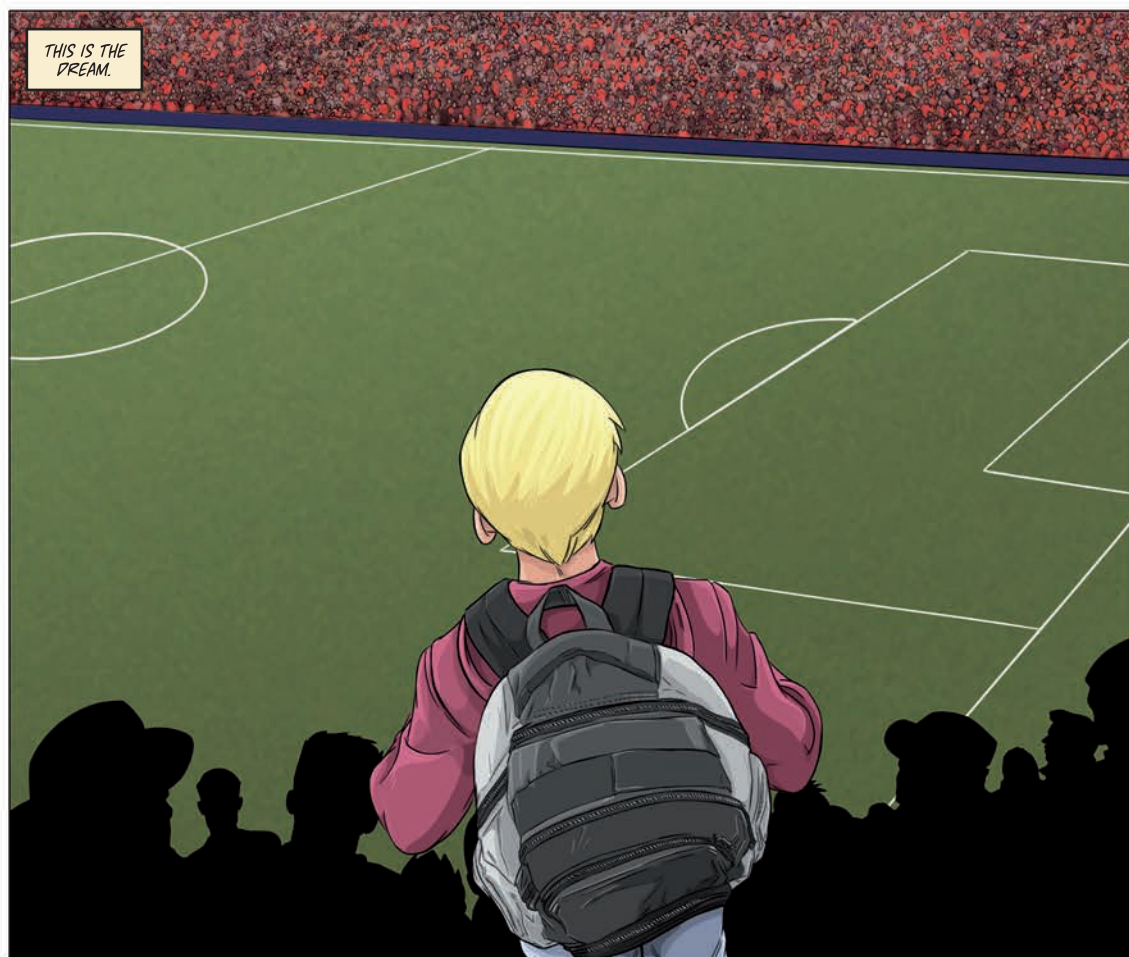




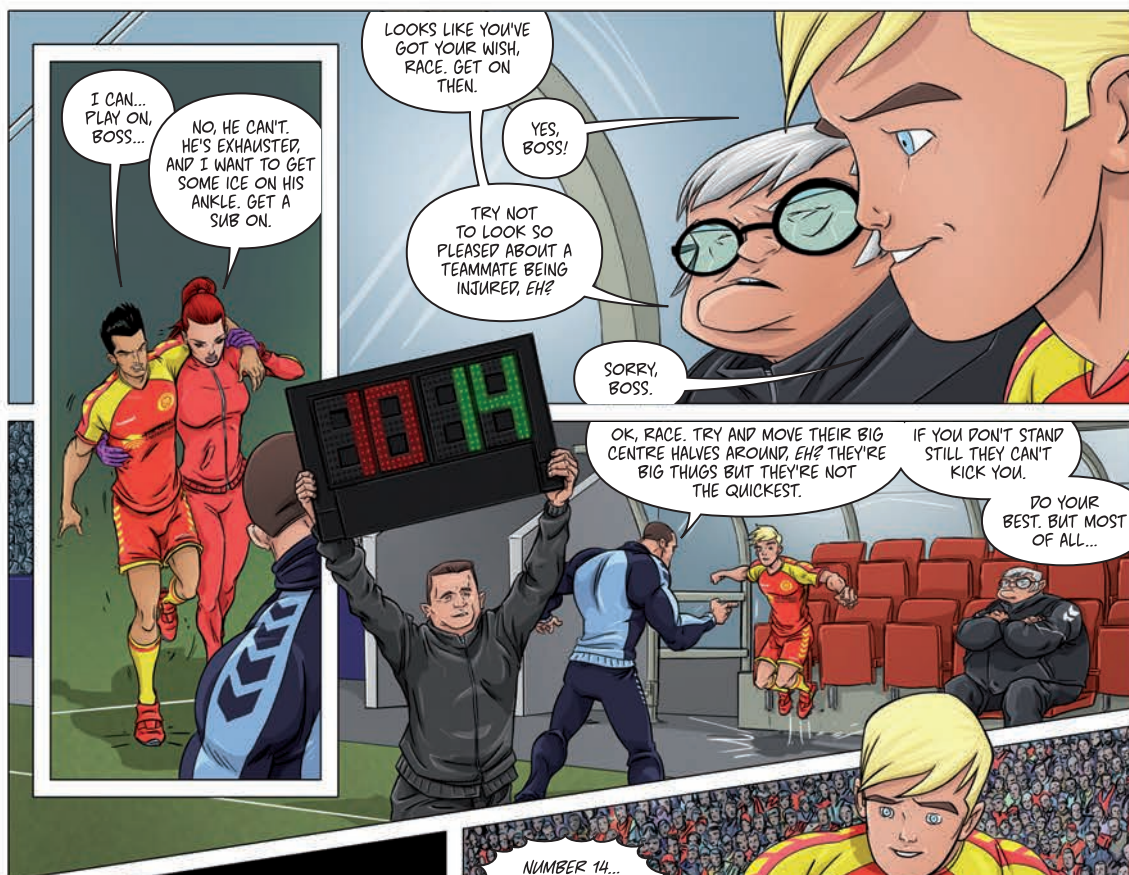


HALF TIME!
GO HAVE AN ORANGE SLICE AND A DRINK OF WATER!

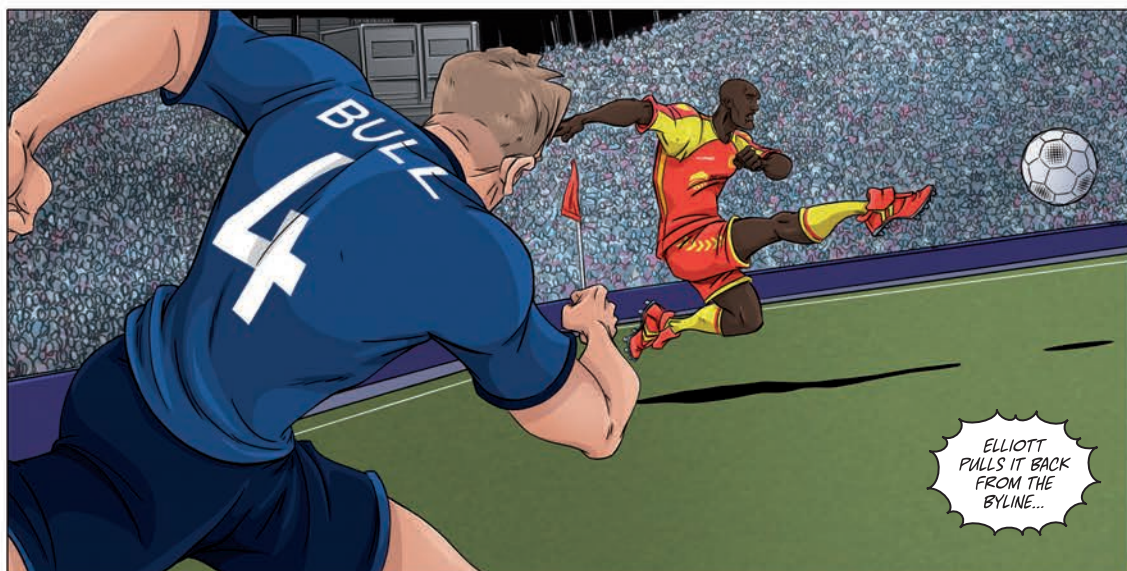








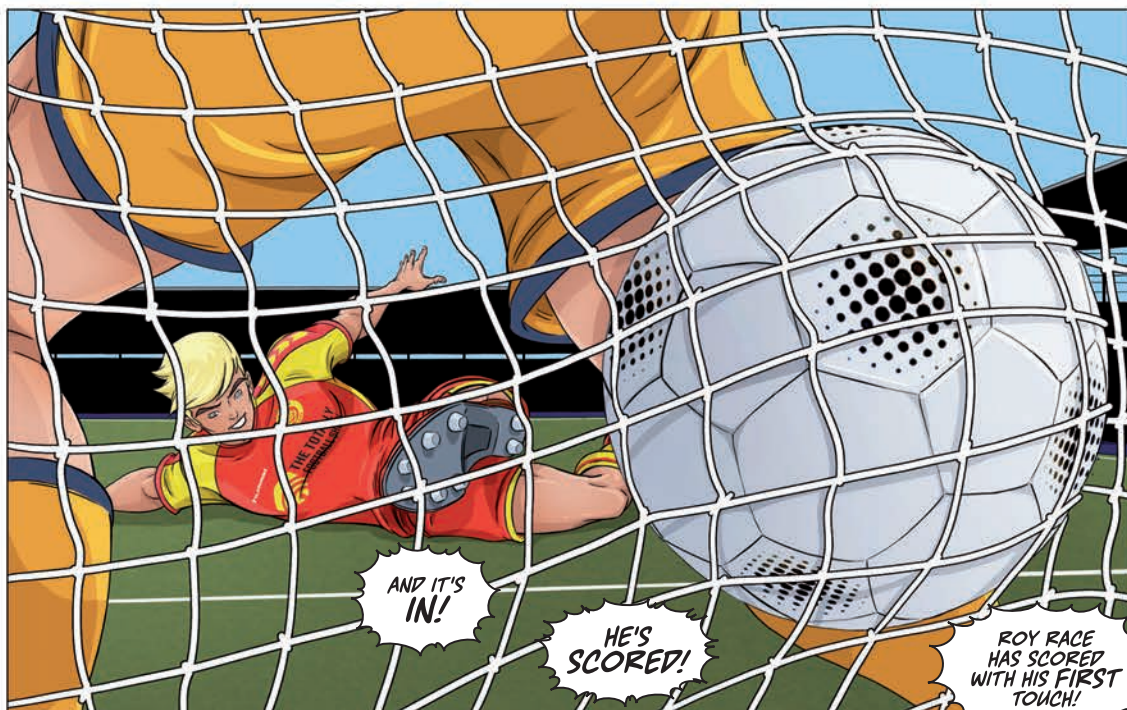




ELLIOTT
PULLS IT BACK
FROM THE
BYLINE...



RACE
GETS A
CHANCE!



AND IT'S
IN!

HE'S
SCORED!

ROY RACE
HAS SCORED
WITH HIS FIRST
TOUCH!



THERE'S HOPE FOR ROVERS HERE. THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE GOT THE RESULT, BUT THEIR YOUNGSTERS HAVE CAUSED KINGSBAY REAL PROBLEMS AT TIMES.

AND THAT WAS A REAL FINISHER'S GOAL FROM THE LOCAL LAD!



HAH! ALL ABOUT THE CROSS, RACE!

ABSOLUTELY.

AND ME TELLING YOU WHERE TO PUT IT.

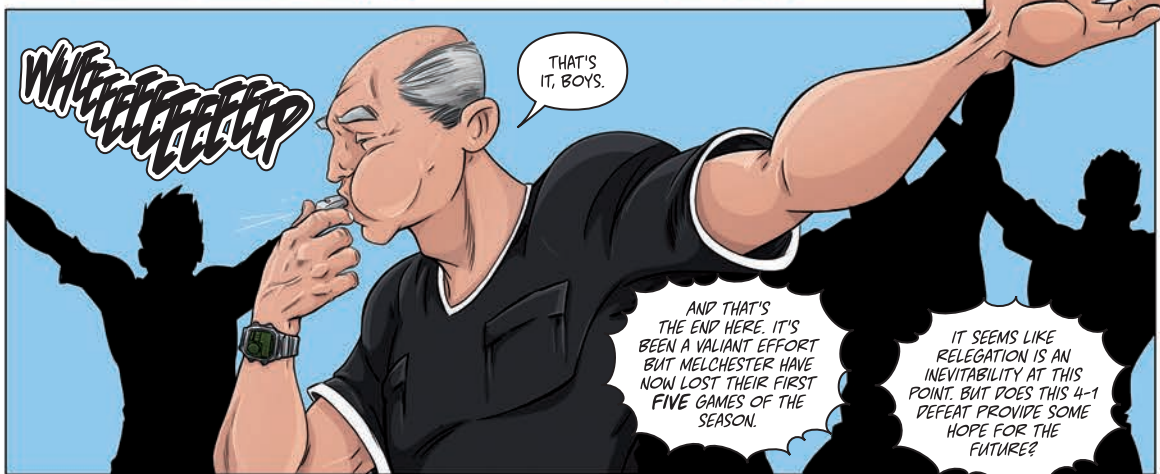
OI!



LUCKY, ROY.

IF YOU SAY SO.

FINE BY ME. KEEP BEING LUCKY.



THAT'S IT, BOYS.

AND THAT'S THE END HERE. IT'S BEEN A VALIANT EFFORT BUT MELCHESTER HAVE NOW LOST THEIR FIRST FIVE GAMES OF THE SEASON.

IT SEEMS LIKE RELEGATION IS AN INEVITABILITY AT THIS POINT. BUT DOES THIS 4-1 DEFEAT PROVIDE SOME HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?



WELL DONE, LADS. IT MAY NOT FEEL LIKE IT NOW BUT YOU GAVE THEM A GAME AND A HALF.

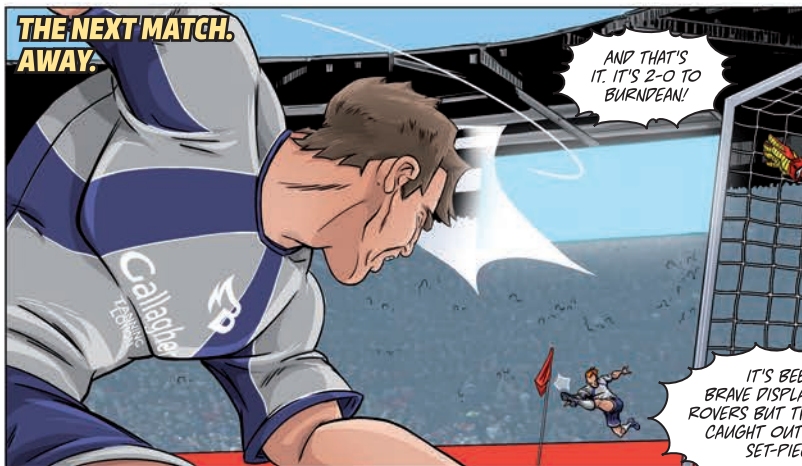
YOUR PACE, BOYS. YOUR MOVEMENT. EXCELLENT. EXCELLENT. AND THAT'S HOW WE'RE GOING TO PLAY.

KEEP THE BALL ON THE FLOOR. PASS AND MOVE.



THE MELCHESTER WAY.

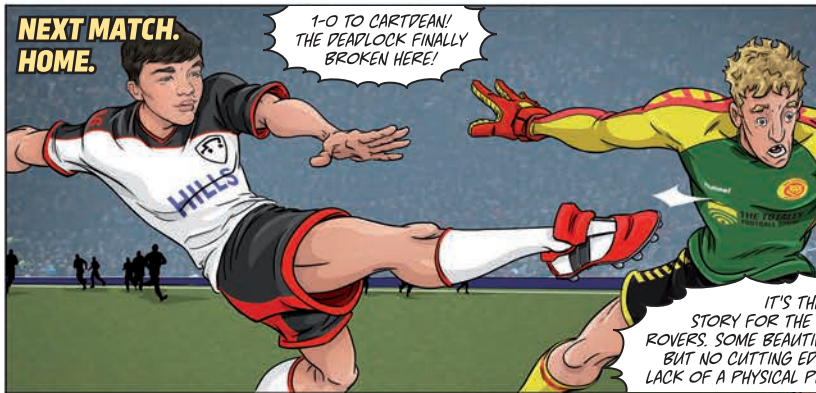
WE ARE ONLY GOING TO GET BETTER, BOYS. TRUST ME.



THE NEXT MATCH. AWAY.

AND THAT'S IT. IT'S 2-0 TO BURNDEAN!

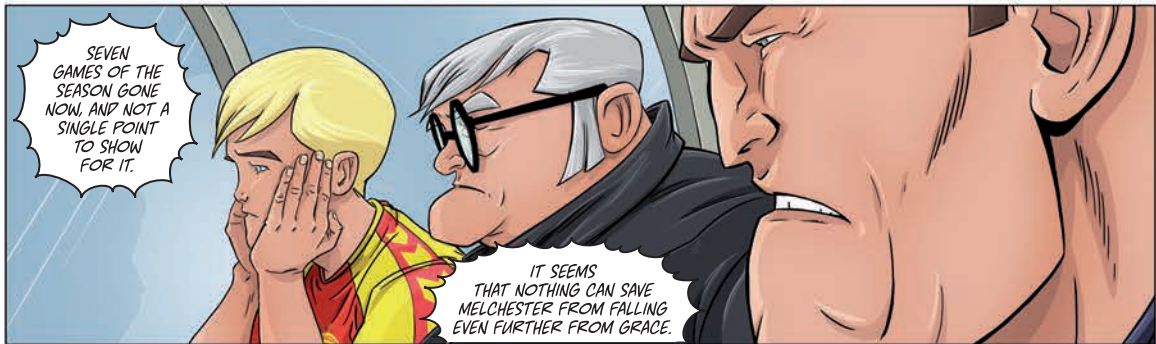
IT'S BEEN A BRAVE DISPLAY BY THE ROVERS BUT THEY'VE BEEN CAUGHT OUT ON TWO SET-PIECES.



NEXT MATCH. HOME.

1-0 TO CARTDEAN! THE DEADLOCK FINALLY BROKEN HERE!

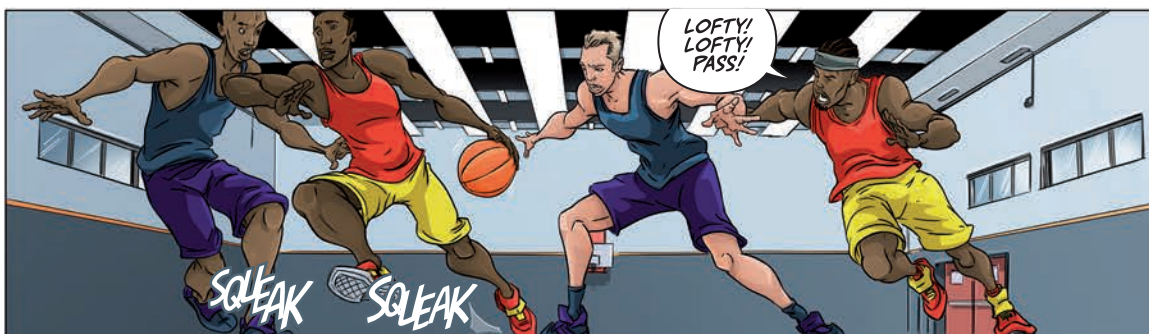
IT'S THE SAME STORY FOR THE YOUNGSTERS OF ROVERS. SOME BEAUTIFUL FOOTBALL PLAYERS, BUT NO CUTTING EDGE UP FRONT AND A LACK OF A PHYSICAL PRESENCE AT THE BACK.



SEVEN GAMES OF THE SEASON GONE NOW, AND NOT A SINGLE POINT TO SHOW FOR IT.

IT SEEMS THAT NOTHING CAN SAVE MELCHESTER FROM FALLING EVEN FURTHER FROM GRACE.





LOFTY!
LOFTY!
PASS!

SQUEAK

SQUEAK



THAT
BALL...

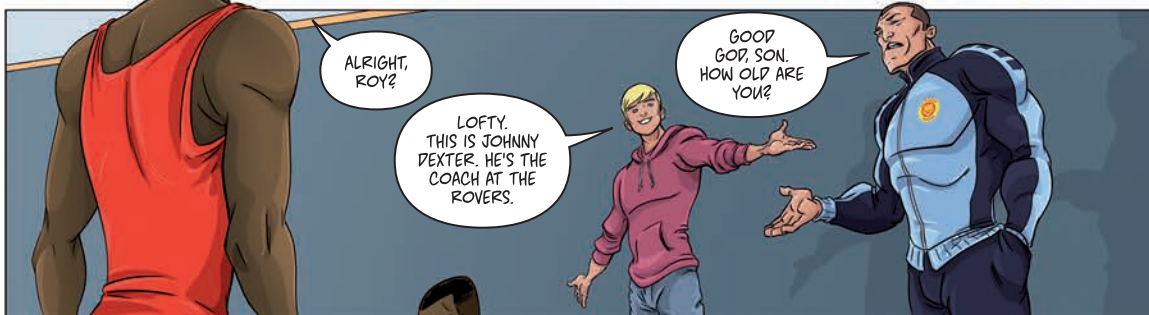
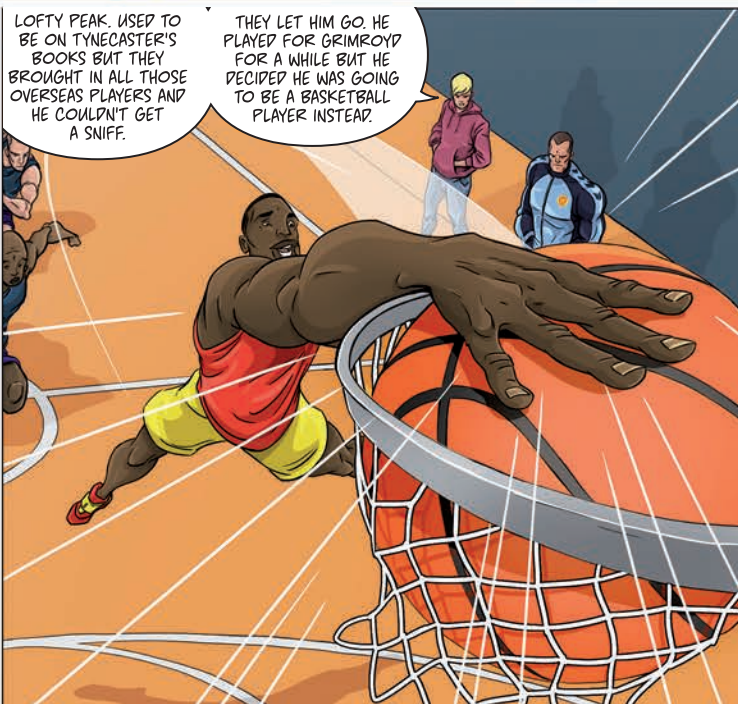
...WHY
AREN'T THEY
KICKING
IT?

IT'S
BASKETBALL,
GAFFER.

I DO NOT
APPROVE.

LOFTY PEAK. USED TO
BE ON TYNECASTER'S
BOOKS BUT THEY
BROUGHT IN ALL THOSE
OVERSEAS PLAYERS AND
HE COULDN'T GET
A SNIFF.

THEY LET HIM GO. HE
PLAYED FOR GRIMROYD
FOR A WHILE BUT HE
DECIDED HE WAS GOING
TO BE A BASKETBALL
PLAYER INSTEAD.



ALRIGHT,
ROY?

LOFTY.
THIS IS JOHNNY
DEXTER. HE'S THE
COACH AT THE
ROVERS.

GOOD
GOD, SON.
HOW OLD ARE
YOU?



SEVENTEEN.

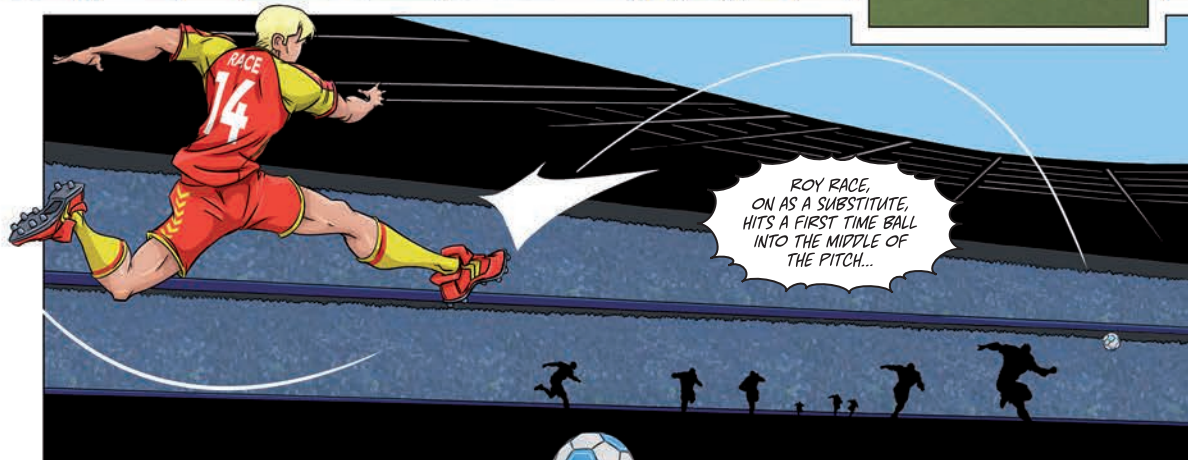
I ASKED
HOW OLD YOU
WERE NOT HOW
MANY FEET TALL
YOU ARE.

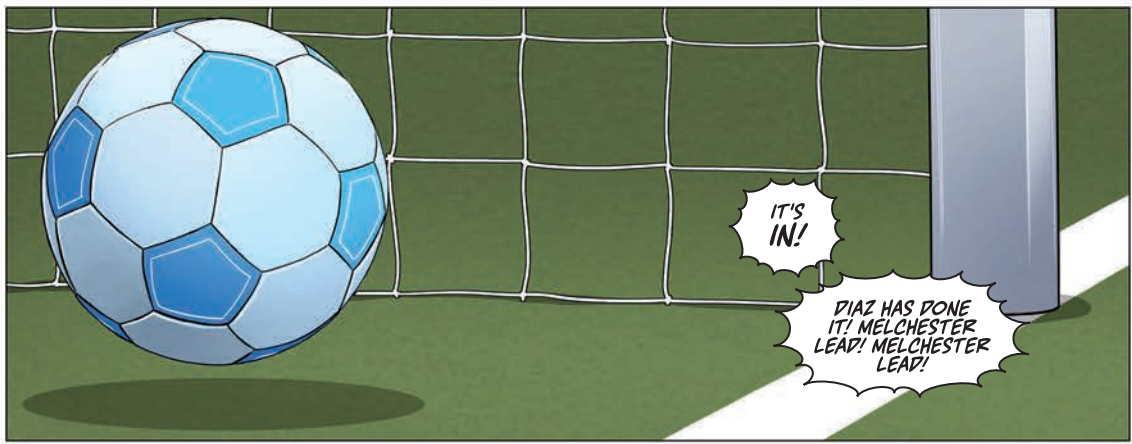
YOUR
NAME'S NOT
REALLY LOFTY,
IS IT?

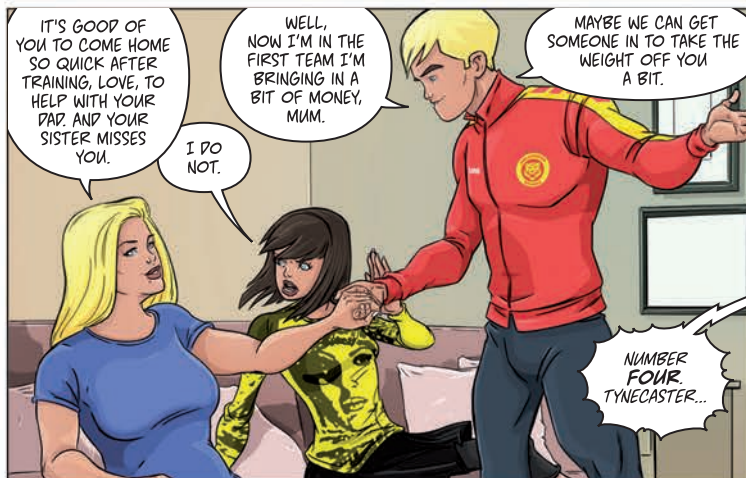
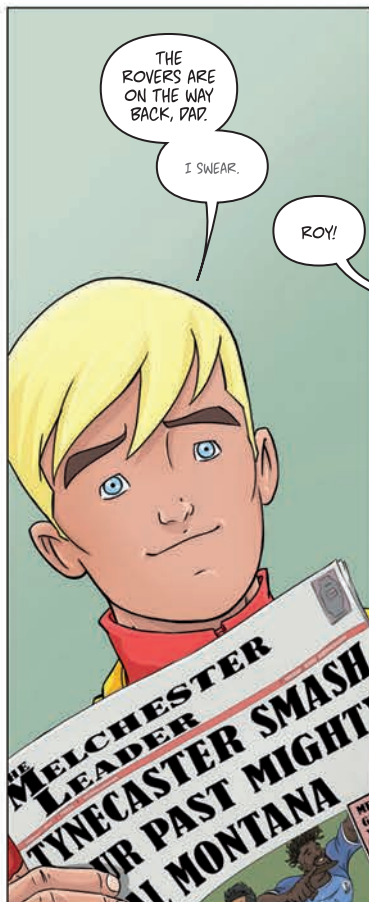
NICKNAME.
MY SURNAME
IS PEAK,
THOUGH.

YOU HAVE
THE ELBOWS, SON.
AND THE HEAD. AND I
HEARD GOOD THINGS
ABOUT YOU DOWN
THE YEARS.

WOULD
YOU LIKE A
TRIAL WITH **THE**
MELCHESTER
ROVERS?









OH...

MY...

"DAYS..."

WELCOME TO THE TAYR STADIUM. HOME TO TYNECASTER AND THE GLAMOUR TIE OF THIS, THE 3RD ROUND OF THE FA CUP.

MELCHESTER, AS A CITY, HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF THE HOMES OF ENGLISH FOOTBALL AND HERE, TWO OF THE GAME'S BIGGEST RIVALS COME TOGETHER IN A SNAPSHOT OF THE STATE OF THE GAME IN 2018.



ON ONE SIDE YOU HAVE THE MILLIONAIRES OF TYNECASTER. GLOBAL SUPERSTARS ON RELEASE CLAUSES NEARING £200 MILLION AND WAGES OF £350,000 A WEEK.

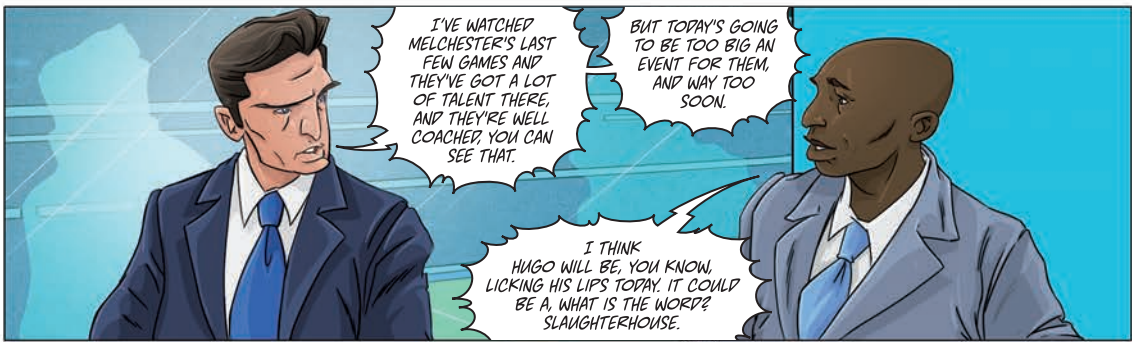
TYNECASTER AND MELCHESTER WERE ALWAYS THE FIERCEST RIVALS BUT IN PAST DECADES THEY WERE OPERATING ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD.

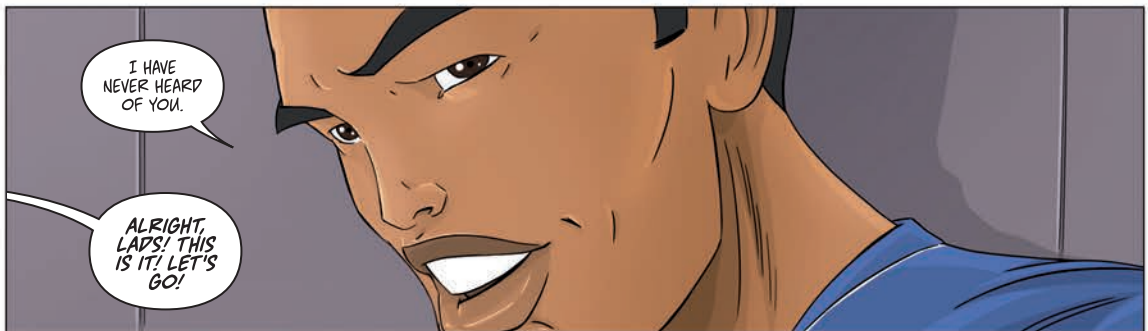


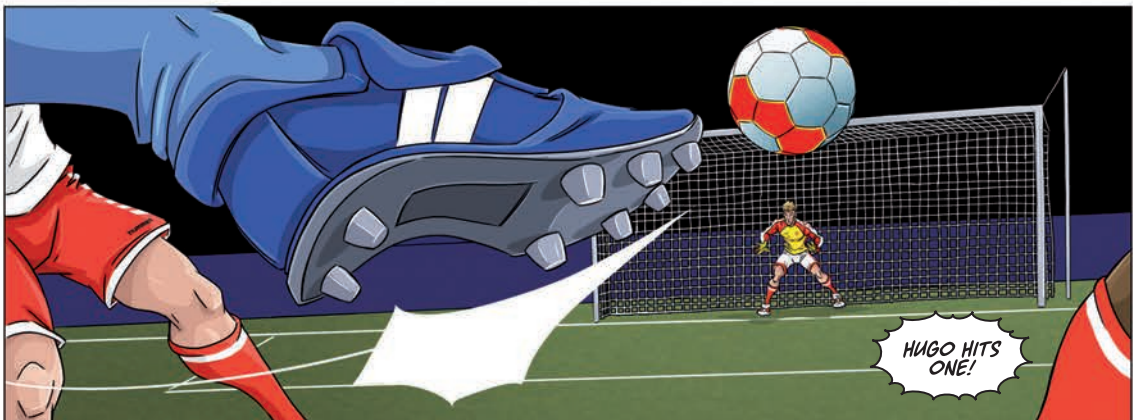
NOW MELCHESTER SIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TABLE TWO DIVISIONS BELOW TYNECASTER AND ARE ATTEMPTING TO BUILD THROUGH A YOUTH MOVEMENT THAT SURELY WILL TAKE TIME TO PAY DIVIDENDS.

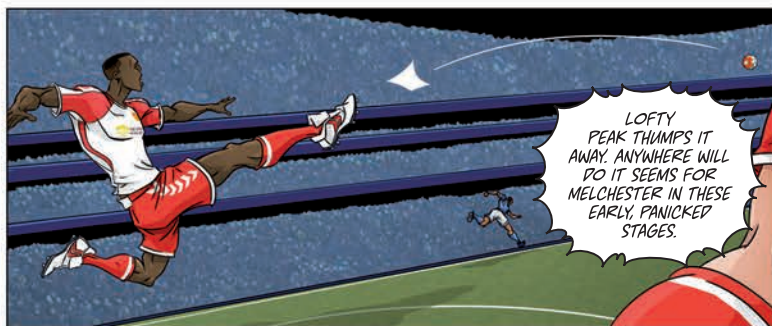
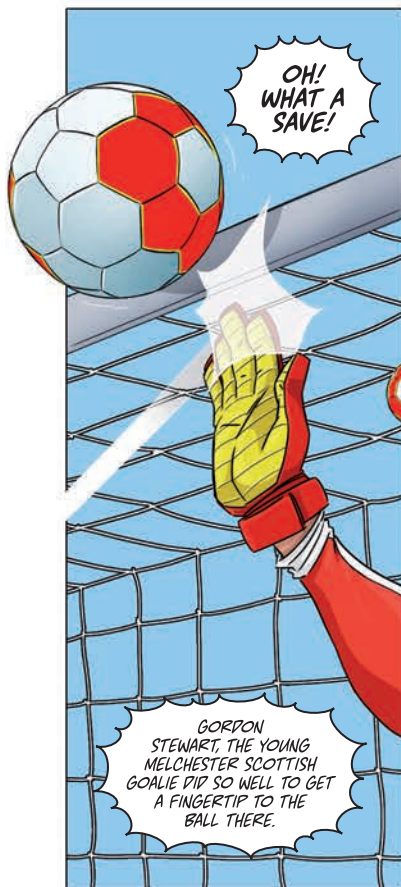
MONEY TALKS IN MODERN FOOTBALL, AND ONE SIDE HERE TODAY HAS IT AND THE OTHER DOES NOT.

THIS GAME IS THE EPIHOME OF DAVID VS GOLIATH.









AND RACE
HIIIIITS IT...

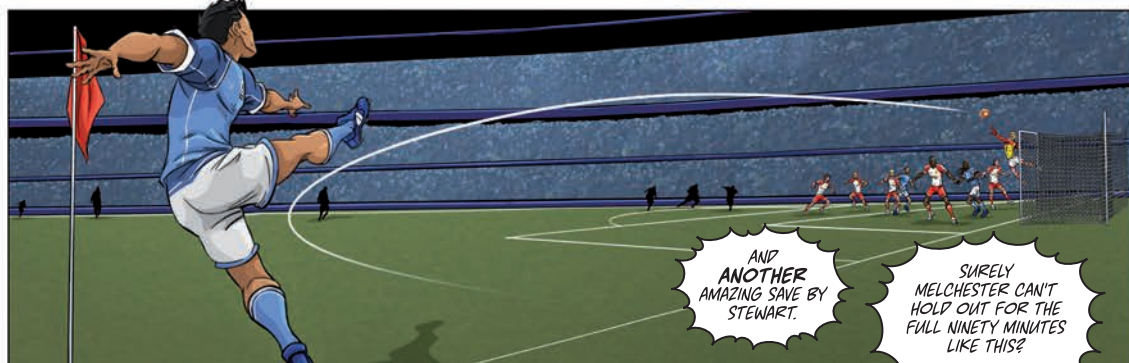
OH!
OH MY
WORD!

THAT...THAT IS
UNBELIEVABLE!

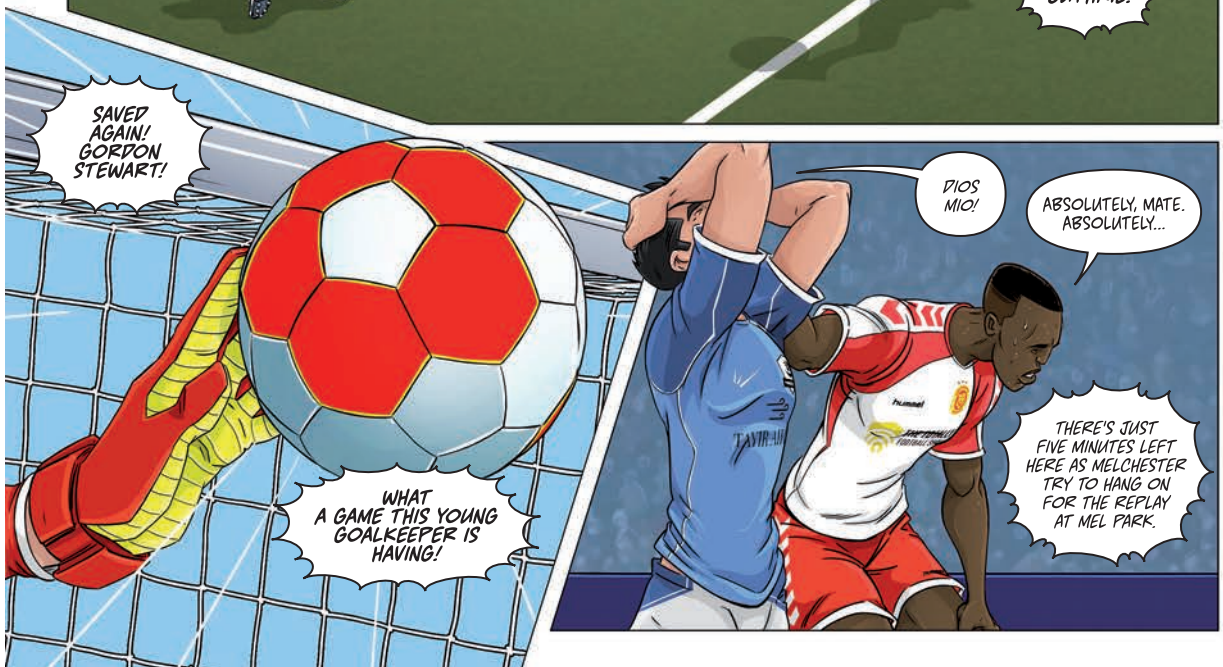
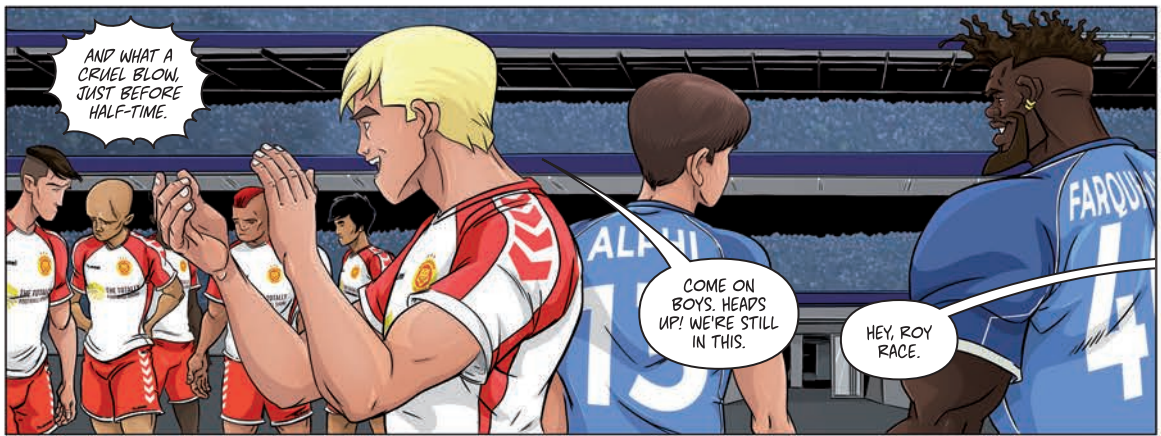


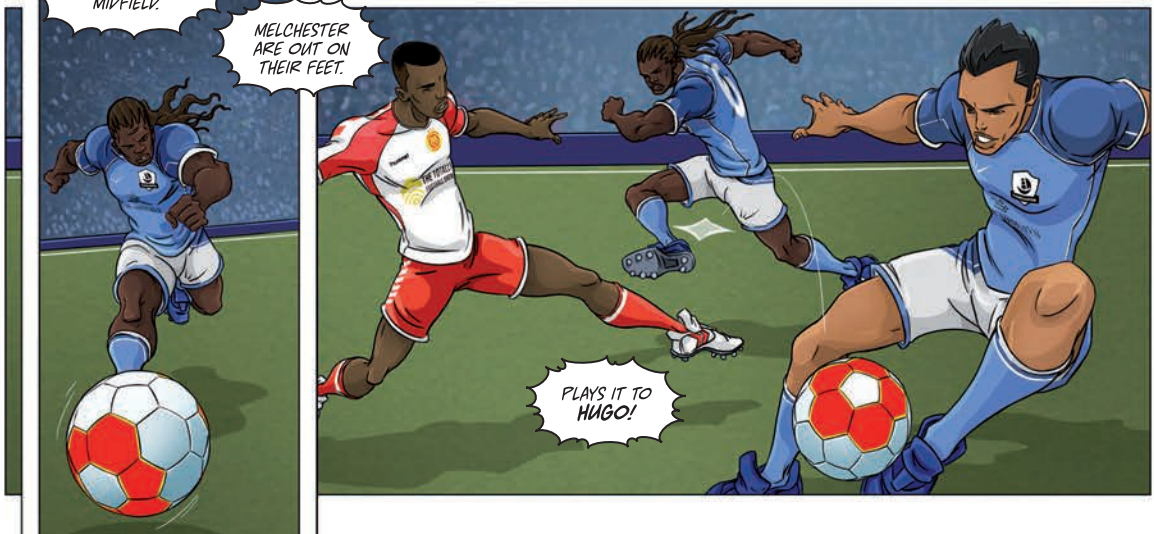
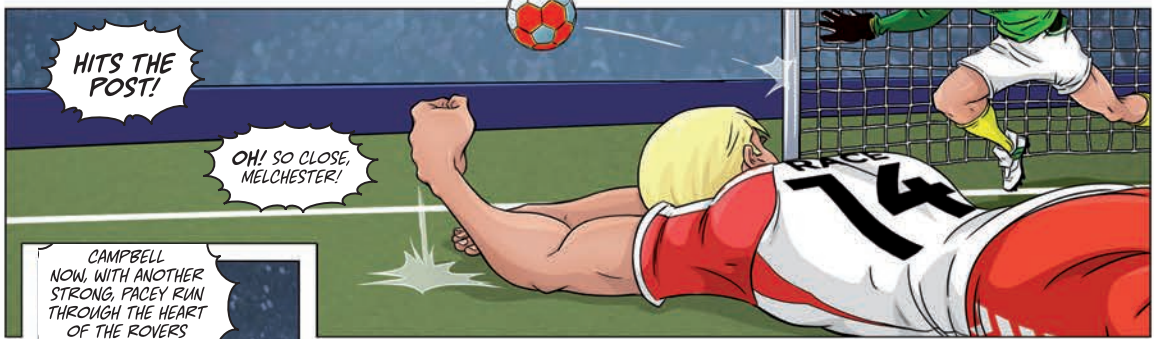
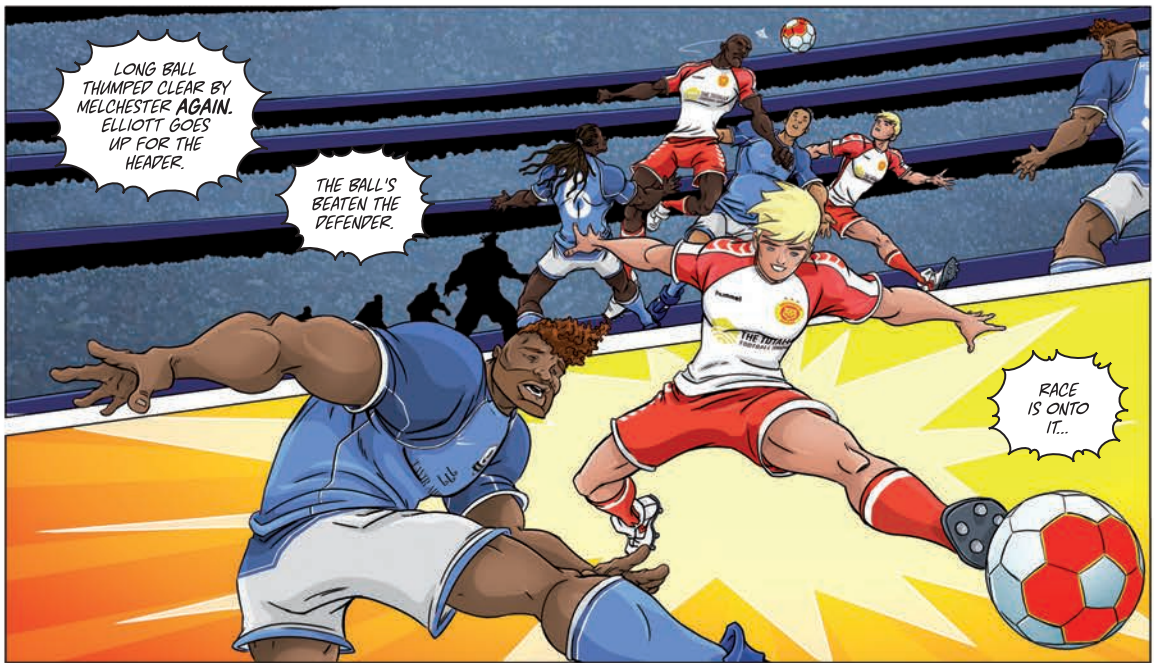


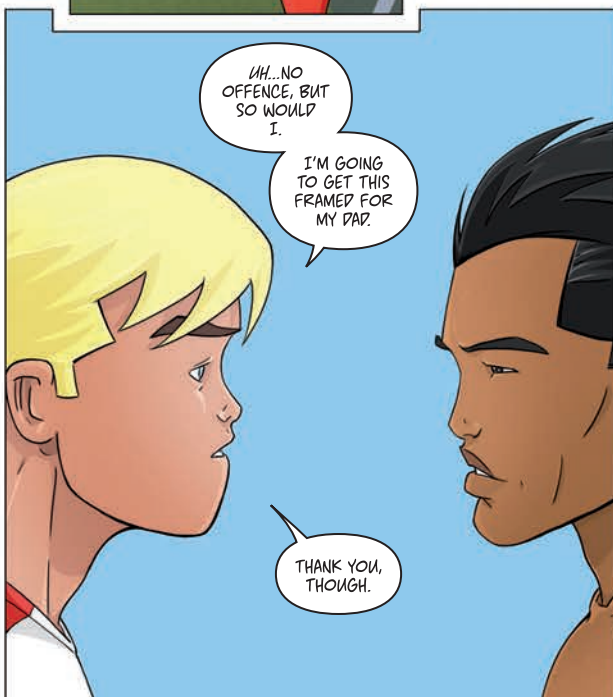
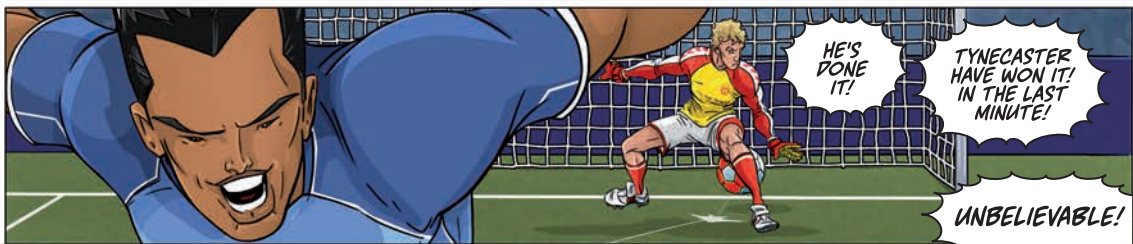


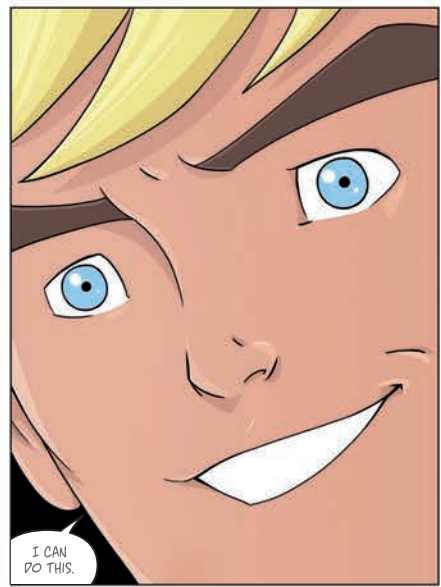








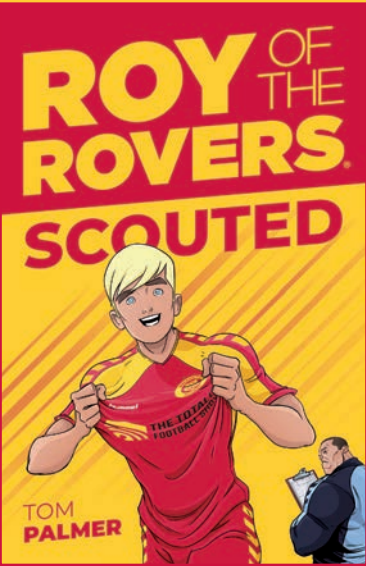




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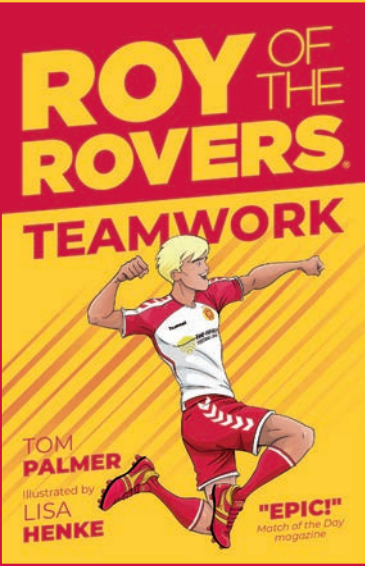
ROY OF THE ROVERS ILLUSTRATED FICTION

SEASON 1



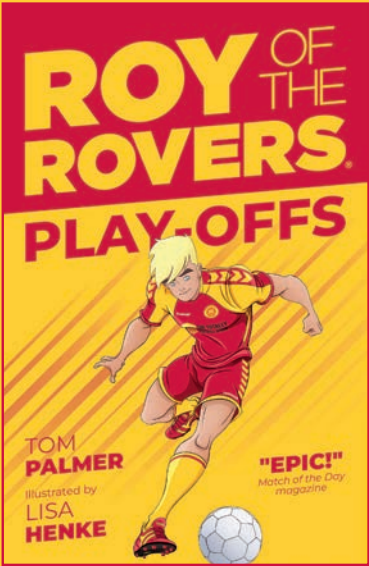
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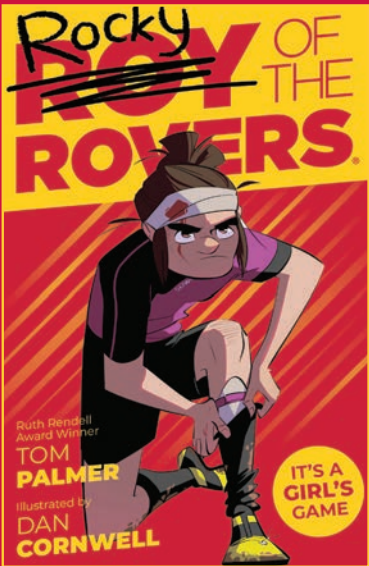
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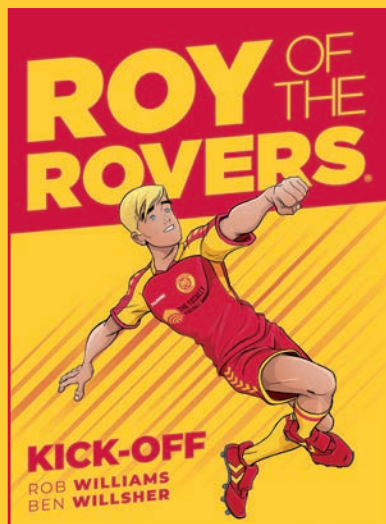


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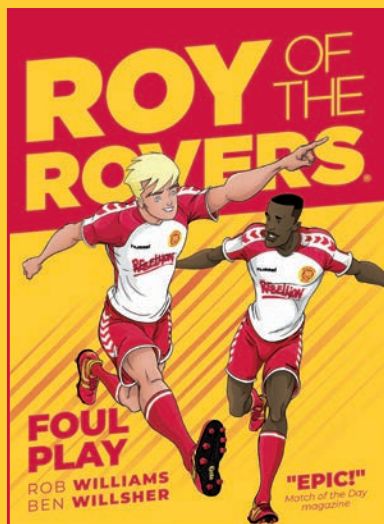
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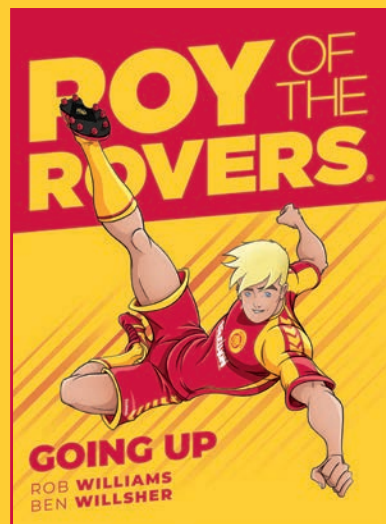
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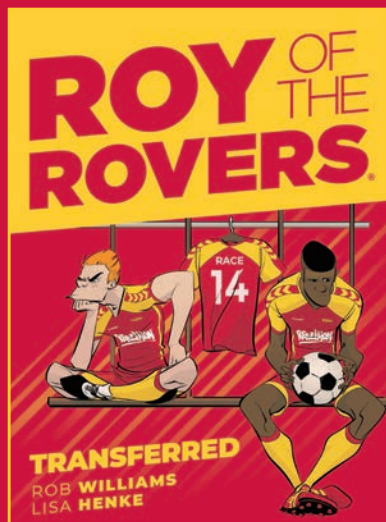
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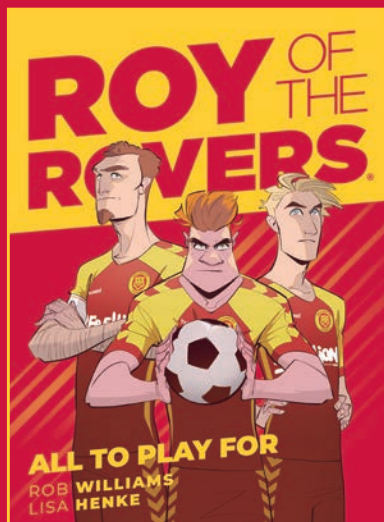
Writer: Rob Williams
Artist: Ben Willsher
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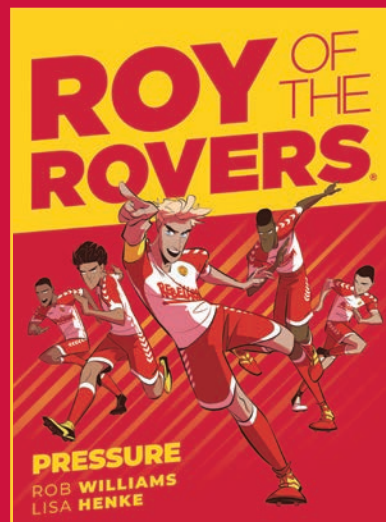
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