

Part six: don't *talk* to strangers

When his mum went out to do her Saturday morning shift in the pub, David went out to play football in the back garden.

Football Focus was not on the television for another hour, so all he could do was play football.

But he quickly became bored.

So bored that he decided to take a risk. He wanted to make something happen, make things change. So, on purpose, he kicked his ball over the fence to the garden that he now knew was the old man's.

Would it come back? He wasn't sure.

But seconds later, it did. A perfect ball, landing at his feet.

David found it hard to believe that it was the old man kicking the ball back to him. But it had to be. And if he'd been good enough to play in an FA Cup Final sixty years ago, maybe he was still good enough now.

David and his mystery football partner kicked the ball to and fro for a while. He desperately wanted to tell the old man about the wall. But he also wanted to do what his mum had told him. That being: don't speak to anyone about it.

Don't speak, he thought. *But what if...*

Quickly David went into the house and got a large piece of paper and a rubber band. He wrote something on the paper, then wrapped it round the ball with the rubber band. Then he kicked the ball over the fence.

This time the ball did not come back straight away.

David heard a rustle of paper.

Then the ball came back, but without the piece of paper.

That night David's mum had to do an extra shift at the pub. She phoned him at home and told him to make his own dinner. She said she'd be back late, but that they'd use the extra money to go on a surprise trip the next day.

David agreed and put the phone down so he could listen to the football on the radio.