



## Chapter One

Charlotte felt Danny's hand grip her arm as their plane shuddered, then lunged, its lights flickering on and off. She ignored him and continued to stare out of a small window, at clouds piled like mountains of cotton wool. When the Boeing 777 slipped down through the clouds, all Charlotte could see was white. It was like a foggy day back home in the UK.

But Danny and Charlotte were *not* in the UK. They were thousands of miles away from home, passengers on a plane that was about to land at an airport in the centre of the famous Amazon rainforest. Brazil.

Danny looked at his hand, hesitated, then drew it away from Charlotte's arm. Charlotte turned and smiled at him. "You're not a great flyer, are you?"

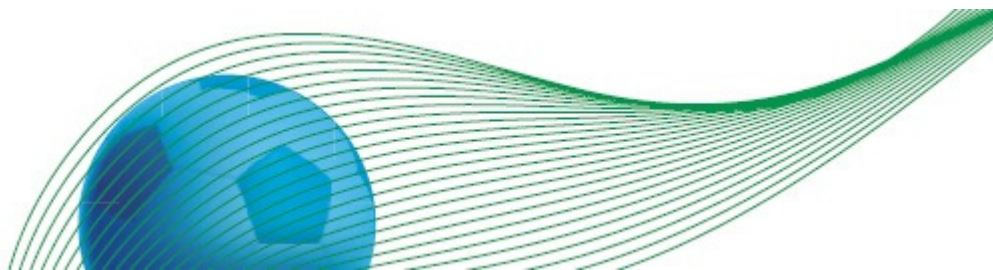
Danny shook his head, aware that the plane was still falling down through the clouds. He hated planes.

Suddenly, the clouds disappeared and the two fifteen-year-olds could see only green. A beautiful panorama of dark green. Millions of trees on thousands of hills. A wide river running through them.

"It's beautiful," Charlotte gasped. She rubbed her eyes, already thinking about how she could put this into words. She was cross that she had left her notebook in her suitcase.

"Can you see the stadium?" Danny asked, looking past her. Charlotte sighed. "No, I can't see the stadium," she said. "But I *can* see the Amazon rainforest. I *can* see one of the greatest wildernesses a human being can see. A wilderness that is filled with tens of thousands of species of animals and insects and birds. But, no Danny, I can't see the football stadium."

Danny scanned the Aeroporto Internacional Eduardo Gomes, then the luggage belt as it hauled a line of rucksacks and suitcases in a solemn circle. Men snatched bags from it, piling them onto trolleys. Very quickly Danny saw his own rucksack and lifted it from the belt. There was still no sign of Charlotte's bag.



## *Foul Play: Brazil* By Tom Palmer

But Charlotte didn't seem bothered. She was busy people watching. Men and women pushing past each other. Trolleys screeching, loaded down with bags. Some were dressed in interesting tops with leaf patterns and others wore large white hats. She took a sly photograph of one woman whose hair was in long dark plaits: she looked beautiful. Again Charlotte wished she had her notebook.

"I could write an article already," she said to Danny. "And we've only been here five minutes."

Danny wasn't listening. He was still watching the luggage belt. But writing articles was the reason why Charlotte and Danny were in Brazil. They had won a competition to be journalists, for the children's newspaper, *First News*. Their job was to cover the World Cup in Brazil, to write about the tournament and the country.

Then Danny pounced, lifting a black bag from the luggage belt and presenting it to Charlotte.

"Thanks," she said. Charlotte took the bag and backed away from the crowd. She opened it quickly. She wanted her notebook now.

But when she unzipped the bag, she knew that something wasn't right. The first thing she saw was a sheet of paper with pictures of at least twenty creatures on it. Each with a red circle round it. Spiders. Birds. Even a monkey. Next to that – packed between clothes – she saw several small clear plastic bottles filled with liquid and powder.

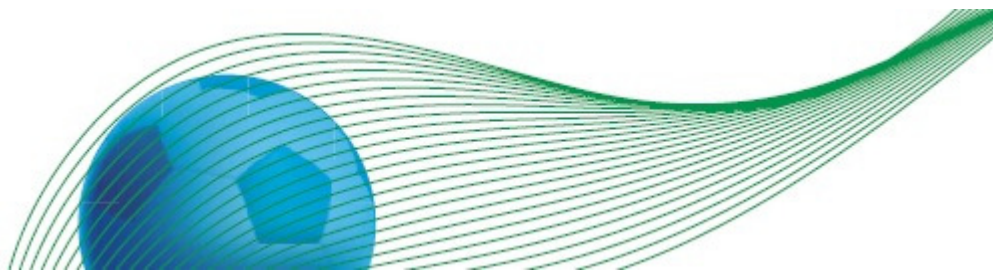
What were these doing in her bag? Had someone planted them there?

Then, with a jolt of shock, Charlotte understood. This wasn't her bag. She felt herself flush red and snapped shut the suitcase.

"Put it back," she whispered to Danny.

"What?"

"Put it back. It's not mine. There's weird stuff in it."



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Danny returned the bag to the luggage belt. Almost immediately he saw a woman with spiky blonde hair pick the bag up, then stare at both of them. The woman had sharp piercing eyes and very pale skin. Like a ghost, Danny thought.

“What did you say about the bag?” he asked Charlotte.

“It had funny stuff in it. Like liquids and pictures of animals. Bizarre. But forget that. We’re here! We’re in Brazil! Can you believe it?”

Soon Charlotte’s real bag appeared and Danny handed it to her.

Over the next month Charlotte and Danny would have some amazing adventures. They would see things most other people would never see. They would go to places most other people would never go. And they would not be allowed to forget the contents of that other black bag. Because what Charlotte had seen inside would drag them into terrible danger.

Dangerous to them. Dangerous to the world’s best 900 footballers. Dangerous for millions of creatures that were living in the Amazon rainforest.

They just didn’t know that they were in danger yet.

The two children walked towards the arrivals hall to begin their World Cup adventure.



**Read the Chapter 2 of Tom Palmer’s *Foul Play: Brazil* on Wednesday 11 June.**

