



Chapter Four

Danny and Charlotte have stumbled upon what they think is a crime. Someone trying to wipe out whole species of animals in the Amazon rainforest. It seems to be linked to the number of goals Brazil score. Three so far. Having spent the night in the rainforest, they rush back to the city, Manaus, to tell their friend, the journalist, Anton Holt, so that they can stop more carnage.

‘Anton!’

Danny and Charlotte were back in the city. Manaus. They immediately spotted Anton Holt in the media hotel. Tall. Dark hair. Jeans and a jacket.

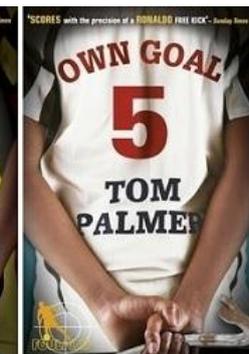
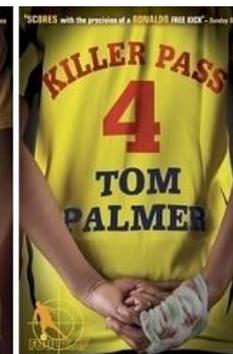
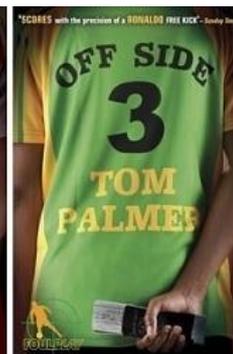
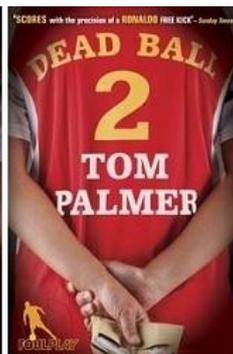
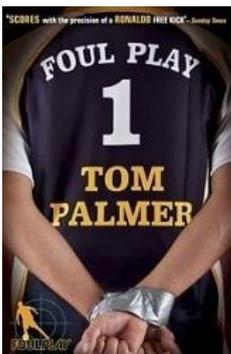
The journalist looked delighted to see them, a big smile on his face. But that smile faded when he heard Danny and Charlotte’s story.

‘We have to tell the police,’ he said, believing every word they said. ‘Now. Come on. The press have a special liaison police officer. She’s great.’

Anton Holt led the two fifteen-year-olds to an office on the 26th floor of the hotel. Danny glanced out of the window at the stunning green view of the Amazon as they explained the situation to the police officer. He wondered how many more birds and other creatures were dying in under that canopy of trees that stretched to the horizon.

The policewoman laughed before they had been able to explain.

‘No, no, no,’ she shook her head. ‘This is a little bit crazy. We have riots around the stadiums. We have transport workers for the strike. And other things we are asked to do. A few dead birds? No-one else has reported this. Children, go and enjoy the football. Forget about birds.’



Danny watched Charlotte try again to convince the policewoman, but she would not change her mind.

'I have a photograph of the woman we think is behind it,' Charlotte said. 'Look.'

'No,' the policewoman pushed Charlotte's camera away. 'This is not important.' Then she left the room.

Danny could see that Charlotte was furious.

In the lift back down, Anton frowned. 'Let me think about how I can help you,' he said. 'Let's talk after the match. But I need to be at the stadium now. I've got a match report to write.'

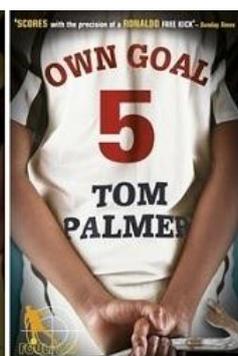
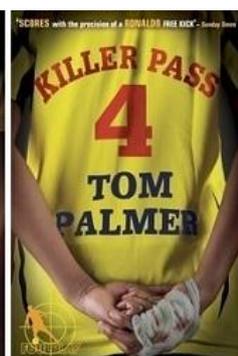
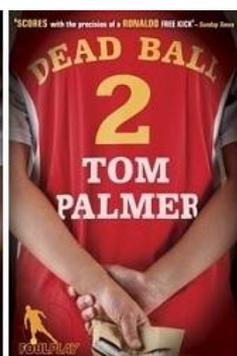
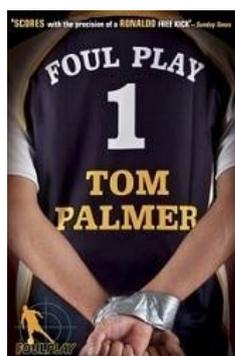
'We can't miss the game either,' Danny said. 'We have been offered the chance to interview Raheem Sterling. For *First News*.'

Charlotte nodded. 'Okay. We do the *First News* job. Then, as soon as the game is over, we find a way of telling the world about all the animals dying.'

Danny felt desperate about the animals, but could feel a thrill of excitement about the game bubbling inside him. But he swore to himself that, as soon as that was done, they would get back on the case.

The Manaus stadium was spectacular. It looked like a huge basket illuminated by strings of lights. Danny and Charlotte walked towards it, watching the sun set over the city and the Amazon rainforest beyond. They could smell fried foods for sale along the side of the road and hear dozens of different languages being spoken.

Danny knew it was an amazing opportunity. This was something most people – let alone children – would never experience. Watching England play in the World Cup finals. In the middle of the Amazon rainforest.



In fact, he and Charlotte were so distracted, they didn't notice that two men in Brazil tops, one carrying a Brazil flag, were following fifty metres behind them. Their faces were painted green, yellow and blue too.

The game was awesome. Danny was thrilled with England's start. Even more so that Raheem Sterling was playing so well and that they were going to get a chance to interview him about it later.

But when Italy scored the opener, Danny felt gutted. All that excitement drained away and he was left with that football feeling he knew well. Despair. England couldn't lose! It'd be a terrible start to the World Cup.

Charlotte noticed how crestfallen Danny looked.

'Don't worry,' she said, as England kicked off after the goal. 'We'll come back. Sturridge looks sharp.'

Danny shrugged. But sixty seconds later he was on his feet.

'YEAAAAAHHHHHH!!!!!!'

Sturridge had scored.

'See,' Charlotte smiled.

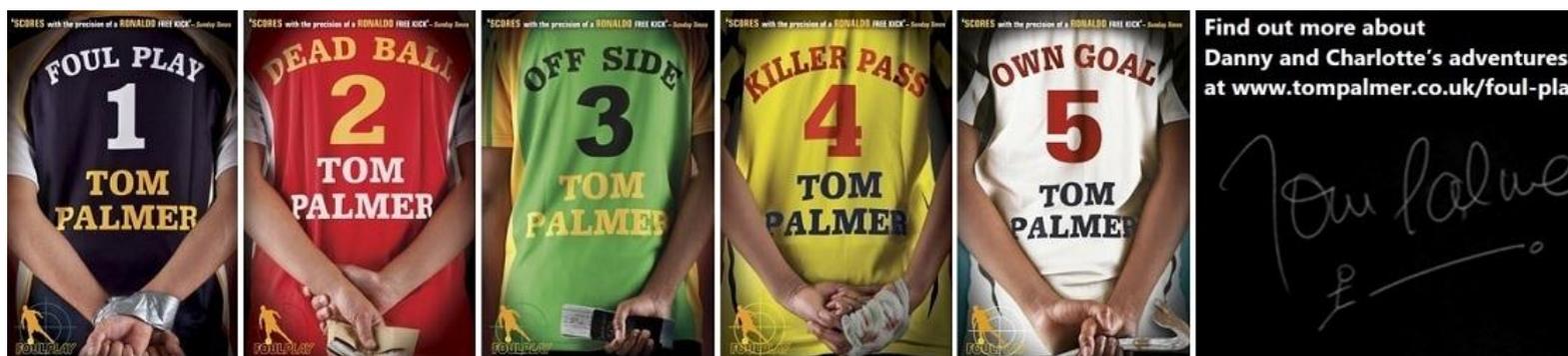
When Balotelli scored Italy's second – a bullet header, Cahill not challenging him in the air – Danny put his head in his hands. Charlotte said nothing. She never really knew how to talk to Danny when he had his football head on.

But after ten minutes of tense silence, she checked her watch and spoke. Gently.

'We should go to the media suite to register for our interview with Rahim Sterling.'

Danny nodded. 'I know. I need the loo first.'

'Fine,' Charlotte said, standing. 'But hurry up.'



Danny smiled. England might be losing, but at least he was going to be able to meet his new hero.

Charlotte waited at the bottom of the steps, watching Danny weave between face-painted Brazilians towards the toilets. She laughed as a man tried to wrap a Brazil flag around his shoulders. That would make him even more cross than he already was, she thought.

Then a second man was wrapping the flag around Danny's head.

What?

And suddenly Charlotte recognised them. The security men from the Yanomami village. She looked on in horror as the flag was wrapped fully around Danny's head and he was being dragged to an open emergency exit.

Charlotte began to run. Fast. But, by the time she reached the emergency exit, Danny and the men had vanished. And the emergency exit was firmly closed.

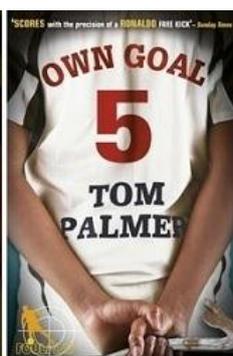
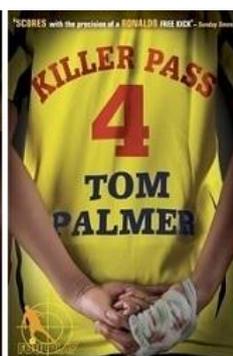
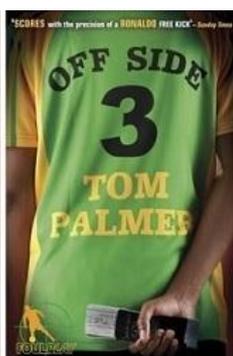
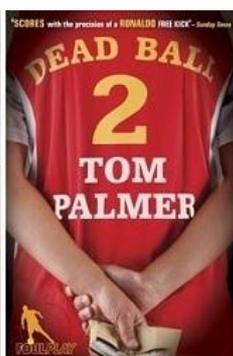
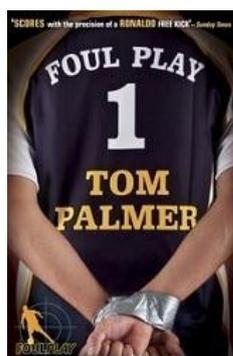
After being bundled into a van and driven for ten minutes – six hundred seconds that Danny counted out – he was walked up a short staircase, then left along a corridor. He heard a door open as he was led into a room and sat down in what felt like a plastic chair.

This was it. Whatever happened next was going to be dangerous. Even deadly.

The flag was taken off his head.

At first the sharp lights in the room blinded him. But soon he could see that he was sitting at a table in a small room – and that someone was sitting opposite him.

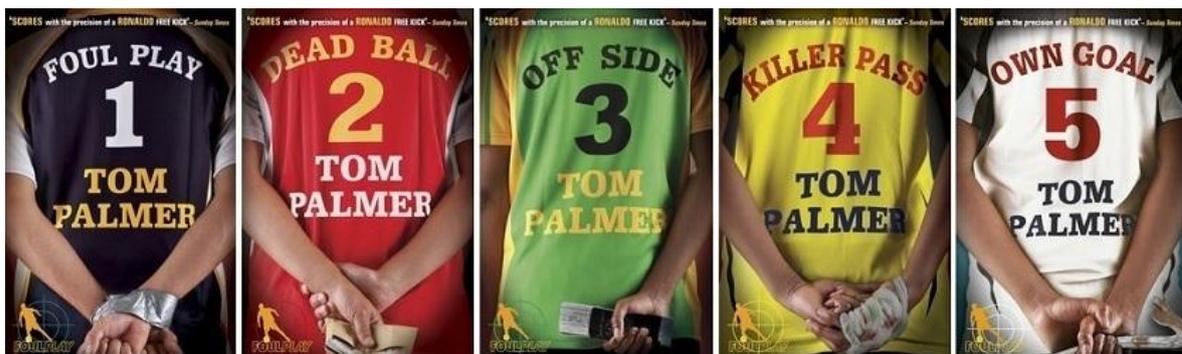
A woman. The ghost woman.



At the end of this week, readers of *Foul Play: Brazil* will be offered three directions the story will take for the following week. Find out more on Friday. Thanks for reading.



Read Chapter 5 of Tom Palmer's *Foul Play: Brazil* on Tuesday 17 June.



Find out more about
Danny and Charlotte's adventures
at www.tompalmer.co.uk/foul-play

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Tom Palmer" with a stylized flourish underneath.