

Chapter 1

We're a team

'Here, Mum,' said Harry. 'Here's a cup of tea.'

'Thanks, Harry,' said his mother.

Harry Archer watched his mother. Her hands were bad today, he thought. He helped her take the cup. She was always bad on cold days. And this April was very cold.



Cambridge University Press

978-8-483-23835-6 - Cambridge Discovery Readers: Harry's Holiday: Level 1

Antoinette Moses

Excerpt

[More information](#)

‘Are you OK now?’ Harry, asked. ‘Do you need the bathroom?’

‘No, I’m fine, Harry,’ said Mrs Archer. ‘Come and sit down. The football is starting in five minutes.’

‘Yeah,’ said Harry. ‘And it’s a big game. Arsenal against Chelsea. I can’t wait!’

Mrs Archer laughed. ‘You’re just like your dad. When you were a baby, your first word ...’

‘... was football,’ said Harry. ‘I know, Mum!’

‘Your dad laughed and laughed.’ His mother smiled.

Harry smiled too.

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He thought about his father. 'Do you think Dad is watching this game?' he asked.

'Of course he is. He's an Arsenal fan¹, like you,' his mum replied. 'He always watches his favourite team.'

'Where is he today?' Harry asked. He looked at the photo on the wall of his dad next to a ship.

'Lagos, Nigeria,' said his mother. 'They're leaving on the ship today.'



'Hmm,' thought Harry. He looked out of the window. 'It isn't raining and cold in Nigeria.'

'He's going to be home for Christmas this year,' his mother told him.

'That's great,' said Harry. 'It isn't easy without Dad.'

'No,' replied his mother. 'It's hard for you. But I can't ...' She stopped and looked down at her hands. Harry didn't say anything.

'It's all right, Mum,' said Harry quickly. 'We're fine, you and me.'

'But it isn't all right,' she replied. 'You don't do things that other teenagers do.'

'They don't do anything interesting,' said Harry.

'But other teenagers play football, talk to their friends, go shopping and other things. You're always at home. 'It's Saturday today, there's a big game, and you're here watching it with me.'

'It's OK,' said Harry. 'I don't need a football ticket. It's a lot of money.'

'I know,' said his mum, 'Perhaps you can stop eating chocolate for a month to get the money for a ticket?'

Harry laughed. 'I don't know, Mum ... a month is a long time!'

'I know it's hard for you,' said his mum. 'But when my arthritis is bad, I can't do anything.'

'And that's why Mrs Stevens comes here,' said Harry.

'Yes,' said his mum. 'Mrs Stevens cleans the kitchen and the bathroom, but she doesn't buy food or cook. You do all that. And you do everything at the weekends.'

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‘Mum, it’s all right,’ said Harry. ‘We’re OK, you and me. We’re a team.’

‘Yes, but I often think about all the things you can’t do,’ his mum replied. ‘You can’t play football after school. You can’t go to the cinema. You can’t—’

‘Shh, Mum,’ said Harry. ‘The football is starting ...’

Twenty minutes later, Chelsea got a goal. Arsenal 0 Chelsea 1.

‘One goal is OK,’ said his mother. ‘Arsenal are going to win this game. I know it.’

She looked over at Harry. His eyes were almost closed. He was tired.



LOOKING BACK

- 1 Check your answers to *Before you read* on page 4.

ACTIVITIES

- 2 Complete the sentences with the names in the box.

Harry's dad (x 2)	Harry (x 3)
Harry's mum (x 2)	Mrs Stevens

- Harry gives his mum a cup of tea.
 - is never good when it's cold.
 - The first word said was football.
 - is on a ship in Nigeria.
 - is going to be at home at Christmas.
 - can't do anything when her arthritis is bad.
 - comes to the house to clean.
 - is very tired.
- 3 Underline the correct words in each sentence.
- Harry helps his mum take the cup of tea / coffee.
 - The football game on TV is starting in five / ten minutes.
 - Arsenal are playing Manchester United / Chelsea.
 - There is a photo of Harry's dad next to a car / ship.
 - Harry is at home with his mum / dad on Saturday.
 - Harry says other teenagers do / don't do interesting things.
 - Mrs Stevens cleans the bedrooms / kitchen.

4 Who or what do the underlined words refer to?

Harry's dad	a football ticket	Harry's mum
Harry (x 2)	Mrs Stevens	Harry and Harry's mum

- 1 He helped her take the cup. (page 5) *Harry's mum.*
- 2 'You're just like your dad. (page 6)
- 3 'He's an Arsenal fan.' (page 7)
- 4 She doesn't buy food or cook. (page 8)
- 5 'It's a lot of money.' (page 8)
- 6 'We're a team.' (page 9)
- 7 He was tired. (page 9)

5 Match the questions with the answers.

- 1 What are Harry and his mum going to watch on TV? a
 - 2 What is Harry and his dad's favourite football team?
 - 3 When is Harry's dad going to be home?
 - 4 Who buys and cooks the food?
- a Football.
b Harry.
c Arsenal.
d Christmas.

LOOKING FORWARD

.....

6 Tick (✓) what you think happens in Chapters 2 and 3.

- 1 Harry wants to win a holiday for his mum and dad.
- 2 Harry plays football after school and doesn't look after his mum.

Chapter 2

The competition

It was Wednesday morning and Harry and his best friend Tom were in their classroom.

'And Harry Archer runs up to the ball and he kicks it and —' Tom shouted.

As Harry kicked the ball to Tom their English teacher Mr Francis walked in and caught it.

'Well done, Mr Francis,' said Tom.

'No balls in the classroom, Harry,' said Mr Francis. 'You know that.'

'Sorry, Mr Francis,' said Harry.

'You can play football at break, lunchtime and after school,' said Mr Francis, 'but not in the classroom.'

'Harry never plays football after school,' said Zoe and laughed.

Harry's face went red. Everyone in the class knew that he was different². He went home after school and didn't play with them, or go out. But only Tom knew the reason. He didn't want everyone else to know.

'Shh!' Tom told Zoe.

After class, Zoe went up to Harry and said sorry. Harry knew that Zoe's family had problems too. Her family lived in Harry's street. He sometimes saw a police car in front of their house.

'That's OK, Zoe,' said Harry.

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'I've got a football magazine,' said Zoe. 'It's my brother's. Do you want to read it?' She gave it to Harry.

'Hey, thanks, Zoe,' said Harry and he took the magazine.

Zoe liked Harry. He had a nice smile. He was smiling now, with the magazine in his hand. Zoe smiled too and left the room.

'Zoe likes you,' laughed Tom.

'Don't be stupid,' said Harry.

Tom took the magazine. 'Look, there's a picture of Arsenal here.' Then he stopped.

'Hey, Harry,' he said. 'Look at this advert. It's a competition³. It says that you can win a holiday in Spain and it's easy. You never have a holiday.'

Harry didn't reply.

