

THE ROCKY ROAD TO SPAIN

ONCE MORE, HEAVE!

MAN, I JOINED HIS TEAM TO BE A FOOTBALLER, NOT A MOUNTAINEER!

CHEER UP, AUGUSTUS. WITH THE PASS BLOCKED, THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN REACH MARNITZ. ANYWAY, IT'S ALL DOWNHILL AFTER THIS!

Skipped by Don Carlos Smith, whose grandfather had once played for England, the Troubadore football team had to beat neighbouring Bindado to qualify for the World Cup Finals in Spain. But Troubadore, a small, poor South American state, was so short of money the team had to walk to Bindado, playing matches on their way to earn their keep. To reach Marnitz, their last call before Bindado, the team and their guide had to cross mountains—and the pass was blocked!

But there were miles of difficult country ahead.

IT IS FORTUNATE YOUR MEN KNOW HOW TO SKI, DON CARLOS!

WE HAVE SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAINS BACK IN TROUBADORE, BUT THE GOING IS NOT AS TOUGH AS THIS!

That night—

WILL WE REACH MARNITZ CITY BEFORE SATURDAY? WE ARE DUE TO PLAY FOOTBALL THERE ON THAT DAY.

IF THE WEATHER HOLDS GOOD, YOU WILL ARRIVE IN TIME!

But, next day.

A BLIZZARD! WE MUST SEEK SHELTER. THERE IS A SKIERS' REST HUT HALF A MILE FURTHER ON.

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO DELAY TOO LONG!

The blizzard raged for days.

WE ARE BEATEN, AUGUSTUS. WE ARE DUE TO PLAY MARNITZ CITY THIS AFTERNOON. WE CANNOT GET THERE NOW.

IF ONLY WE COULD GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM! PERHAPS THEY COULD POSTPONE THE GAME.

WE CANNOT GET TO MARNITZ CITY IN TIME NOW.

THERE IS A VILLAGE OVER THERE AND THE INN HAS A TELEPHONE. YOU COULD SEND A MESSAGE.

It took an hour to reach the village.

HELLO. IS THAT THE MANAGER OF MARNITZ CITY FOOTBALL CLUB? THIS IS DON CARLOS, CAPTAIN OF THE TROUBADORE TEAM. WE HAVE BEEN DELAYED, SIR.

WE WILL NOT ARRIVE IN TIME TO PLAY OUR GAME THIS AFTERNOON. I AM VERY SORRY.

DO NOT BE SORRY, DON CARLOS! THE GAME COULD NOT BE PLAYED ANYWAY.

WE, TOO, HAVE HAD A STORM. OUR PITCH IS FLOODED! THE DIRECTORS OF THE CLUB SAY WE MUST PLAY YOU NEXT SATURDAY!

BUT NEXT SATURDAY WE ARE DUE IN BINDADO TO PLAY OUR VITAL QUALIFYING MATCH TO DECIDE WHO GOES TO SPAIN.

YOU HAVE AGREED TO PLAY US, DON CARLOS. YOU MUST FULFIL YOUR AGREEMENT!