

# **HEAD TO HEAD**

A Play

by

**BERNIE CROSTHWAITE**

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

HEAD TO HEAD

Copyright Bernie Crosthwaite 1994

This play is fully protected by copyright.

*It is an infringement of the copyright to give any public performance or reading of this play in its entirety or in the form of excerpts without the prior consent in writing of the copyright owners.*

*No part of this publication may be transmitted, stored in a retrieval system, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, typescript, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owners.*

All rights are strictly reserved. Any enquiries about performing rights, professional or amateur, should be directed, before rehearsal, to  
**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd,**  
**15 Inglis Road,**  
**Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU.**

No performance may be given unless a licence has been obtained.

ISBN 978 1 902472 00 3

Printed and published by  
**SchoolPlay Productions Limited,**  
15 Inglis Road,  
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

## CAST

**Pogo Potter**

**Dezzy**

**J.J.**

**Brat**

**Mr. Potter**

**Mrs. Brattigan**

**Coach Karlsson**

**Miss Umpleby**

**Yusuf *or* Yasmin**

**Referee**

**Players / Cheerleaders / Onlookers *(as required)***

## PRODUCTION NOTES

**HEAD TO HEAD** should be a fast-moving, seamless theatrical experience, so only the minimum of scenery and props is necessary.

Although provision is made to split it into two Acts if this is preferred, there should be no other division into Scenes; the script is divided into 23 sections solely for ease of rehearsal.

Inflatable American Football helmets are available from novelty shops but there are now so many local teams in Great Britain that it is usually possible to borrow authentic helmets. Paper numbers can be sewn on to T-shirts; padding, trousers and black stripes under the eyes can all be improvised.

Do not be put off by unfamiliarity with American Football. The strong dramatic gestures are very easy to pick up once seen. Illustrations in *The Puffin Book of American Football* clarify the visual aspects of the game. The four official signals which are required in performance are illustrated overleaf.

Reference to names such as Cantona, Kevin Butler, Mission Impossible should be changed and updated as required. Furthermore, place names such as Olderton and Newtown may be changed to local ones.

The part of **Yusuf** could be altered to that of a girl, whose name could just as easily be **Yasmin**. Equally, the referee could be played by a girl - making the breakdown of speaking parts 5 male, 3 female and 2 male or female.

B. C.

## **HEAD TO HEAD**

**by Bernie Crosthwaite**

### **ACT I**

- 1.** *A bare stage with stark back lighting to indicate the dream-like quality of this sequence. The PLAYERS (minimum of 4 on each side), dressed in American football outfits, enter and gather round in two huddles. Their movements are very lucid and stylised.*

**Player 1:** Brown 7 -

**Team-Mates:** Go to heaven!

**Player 2:** Give me five - *(They clap hands in pairs).*

**Player 3:** Give me 10! *(They clap both hands in pairs).*

**Player 4:** Go to hell -

**Team-Mates:** And back again!

*(They leap in the air then take up defensive positions. The second team now calls the play).*

**Player 5:** Red 8 -

**Team-Mates:** Don't be late!

**Player 6:** Up above - *(They clap hands high in the air in pairs).*

**Player 7:** Down below! *(They clap hands low in pairs).*

**Player 8:** Turn around -

**Team-Mates:** Don't be slow!

*(They leap up turning in the air then take up offensive positions opposite the first team).*

**Pogo:** Down, set. Hut! Hut! Hut!

*(The centre, PLAYER 7, 'snaps' the ball between legs to POGO, the quarterback. There is a groaning clash of opposing tackles. The quarterback arcs the ball to PLAYER 6, who jinks away from the defence and touches down in the end zone. He boogies with delight. His team leap in the air. We hear the sound of CHEERLEADERS and SPECTATORS celebrating).*

**All:** Touchdown!

2. *(Players exit except POGO. The roars fade away. He stands isolated centre stage. He removes his kit - helmet, shirt and padding, which he tosses into the wings. He has peeled down to a figure in T-shirt and jeans. His movements are restless and fidgety as if he's always looking for somewhere to channel his physical and mental energy).*

**Pogo:** *(To audience).* We can all dream can't we? They call me Pogo 'cos when I was little I was always bouncing. Couldn't keep still for a minute. That's what my Dad says. Don't know what my Mum called me. She died when I was a baby. Yeah, Pogo Potter, that's me, and I want to be a quarterback. *(Mimes taking the ball at the snap, running backwards, then throwing high and straight).* I used to play football - sorry - 'soccer'. Football is something else. Yeah, once upon a time I was soccer mad. *(Chants)* "Ooo-ah Cantona! I said ooo-ah Cantona!" Then one day my mate Dezzy came round.

*(DEZZY enters wearing his trademark, a red and white bandana scarf. POGO mimes dribbling a soccer ball around him. DEZZY waves him away - he's not interested).*

**Pogo:** Come on Dezzy, let's have a game. I bags being in goal.

**Dezzy:** I'm not in the mood.

**Pogo:** OK. You can be in goal.

**Dezzy:** It's boring. This town's boring.

**Pogo:** Yeah, I know what you mean. Nothing exciting ever happens around here. *(Silence).* I did hear something ....

**Dezzy:** What?

**Pogo:** You know that new caretaker at our school, the American guy?

**Dezzy:** Mr. Karlsson? So - what about him?

**Pogo:** He used to play American football.

**Dezzy:** Big deal.

**Pogo:** The real McCoy - the NFL or something. Professional. I heard him telling Miss Umpleby about it. You know that look on her face - like she's just stepped on a slug - *(imitates her).*

**Dezzy:** Yeah!

**Pogo:** He was saying he'd organised a demonstration match on the school playing field. A couple of teams from a university in the States. *(Pause).* Just thought I'd tell you. Not that you'd be interested.

**Dezzy:** When is this match?

**Pogo:** Sunday afternoon.

*(Pause, then they look at each other).*

**Both:** This IS Sunday afternoon!

**Dezzy:** We might as well -

**Pogo:** American football? Pl-eease. *(POGO does some dazzling footwork with the invisible soccer ball).* Come on Dezzy, let's have a proper game of footie.

**Dezzy:** Let's just go and take a look.

**Pogo:** I don't know the rules or anything.

*(J..J. enters listening to her personal stereo).*

**Dezzy:** I can tell you who does.

**Pogo:** Who?

**Dezzy:** J.J. Jones.

**Pogo:** *(Interested now)* J. J. ?

**J.J.:** Hi, you guys. What's the game plan?

**Dezzy:** You like American football don't you J.J.?

**J.J.:** I love it. I watch it on T.V. every week. Kevin Butler's my hero - boy, could he kick. And I love that endzone boogie. *(She mimes a celebratory boogie)*

**Dezzy:** You want to see a match? Live?

**J.J.:** Brilliant! Where?

**Dezzy:** Follow me. Pogo? You coming or what?

**Pogo:** I've got better things to do.

**Dezzy:** Such as?

**Pogo:** Thought I'd clean the fluffy bits out of my tummy button this afternoon -

**Dezzy:** The only exciting thing that's happened in Rotherby for months and you want to have a bath?

**Pogo:** Then there's this video I want to watch -

**Dezzy:** Mission Impossible?

**Pogo:** Our holiday video - Last Year in Skegness.

*(DEZZY and J.J. frogmarch POGO to front of stage. They stand and point at the pitch expectantly. Even POGO is caught up in the atmosphere. Enter BRAT, all styled hair, shades and expensive clothes).*

**Dezzy:** Look who's turned up.

**Pogo:** *(To audience).* Brian Brattigan, known as Brat. For obvious reasons. His mother's got more money than sense. A lot more.

**Brat:** So what's going on?

**J.J.:** A real American football match. Isn't it fantastic?

*(Distant roar of crowd).*

**Brat:** If you say so, J.J. *(He fancies J.J.)*

**J.J.:** *(Shading her eyes).* Just look at that punt!

**Brat:** Why don't you borrow my shades? *(BRAT gives J.J. the sunglasses).*

**J.J.:** These are smart. They must have cost a fortune.

**Brat:** Plenty more where that came from.

*(DEZZY pretends to photograph him. BRAT, thinking the admiration is genuine, preens and poses).*

**Brat:** Want to see my new Rolex, J.J.?

**J.J.:** First down and ten.

**Dezzy:** Who's the one who throws the ball? *(Roar of Crowd).*

**J.J.:** That's the quarterback. If the quarterback's no good your team's chances are zilch.

*(BRAT pushes POGO aside to get a better view).*

**Brat:** Looks dead easy. *(Mimes throw).*

**Pogo:** *(Dreamy, serious).* I'd like to be a quarterback.

**Brat:** You couldn't throw a frisbee.

**J.J.:** Third down and three. Isn't it exciting?

**Brat:** Sure, babe, whatever you say. *(BRAT and POGO glare at each other).*

**Dezzy:** *(Bewildered).* They're lining up again. That's four times.

**J.J.:** Fourth down. If they don't cover the rest of the ten yards on this play *(Cries of disappointment from CROWD)* then they swap over and the other side has a go. *(More CROWD noise).*

**Dezzy:** The quarterback throws wide to the .... to the -

**J.J.:** Wide receiver.

**Pogo:** He grabs it as clean as a shark taking lunch. What a throw!

**Dezzy:** Watch him move!

*(Their eyes swivel in unison as they watch the player sprint down the field).*

**J.J.:** A fifty yard dash and he scores! Touchdown!

*(They leap about celebrating).*

**Dezzy:** Anyone got a pen?

**Brat:** A solid gold rollerball do you?

**Dezzy:** And a piece of paper?

**Brat:** Just the receipt from my new leather jacket. *(DEZZY grabs it).*

**Dezzy:** Let's go and get their autographs!

*(DEZZY rushes off. BRAT puts his arm around J.J. They exit together).*

**3. Pogo:** *(To audience).* I know J.J. deserves better than Brat Brattigan, but how can I tell her that? Anyway, the game was cool - the most exciting thing I'd ever seen. Now I watch American football on TV, read all the magazines. You could say I'm an expert.

*(Enter MR. POTTER wearing an apron and carrying a bag).*

**Pogo:** Hi, Dad.

**Mr. Potter:** I'm rushed off my feet in there - coachload of tourists from Florida wanting "the real taste of England".

**Pogo:** But we don't do spaghetti bolognese.

**Mr. Potter:** Jumbo haddock, chips and mushy peas.

**Pogo:** Mum was American wasn't she, Dad?

**Mr. Potter:** That's right. Chicago.

**Pogo:** She'd have been pleased if I got in an American football team wouldn't she?

**Mr. Potter:** Her father used to play it. Never seen the game myself.

**Pogo:** My grandad played American football? Cool!

**Mr. Potter:** *(Sighs, remembering).* She'd have been pleased all right. No question.

**Pogo:** One day I'm going to be a quarterback. He's the one who calls the plays, whether to throw the ball to the receiver or run with it himself. *(Mimes).* That's what I call power.

**Mr. Potter:** I wish you'd stop dreaming Pogo, and start living in the real world.

**Pogo:** The quarterback's the star of the gridiron. You need a throw as straight as an Amazon spear and hands like magnets.

**Mr. Potter:** Hands like magnets, now that would be useful. Where have I put my Town Crier's bell?

**Pogo:** If you saw it, Dad, you'd understand. It's magic. It's like playing chess with armour on.

*(MR. POTTER shakes his head and turns to go).*

**Mr. Potter:** I nearly forgot. *(Gives him the bag).* Happy Birthday son. I know it's a bit late. You know how it is, too much to do, too little time.

**Pogo:** It doesn't matter. I wasn't expecting anything. *(He tears open the package. It's an American football jacket. He puts it on. It's a few sizes too large. But from now on it will be his talisman).*

**Mr. Potter:** Is it the right size?

**Pogo:** Perfect. It's fantastic! Thanks Dad.

**Mr. Potter:** I'd better get on. And if you're not too busy ironing your grids and quartering your backs you COULD go and help J.J. in the chippie. She's holding the fort while I go and cry. Oyez! Oyez! Now where's my bell?

*(Enter YUSUF).*

**Mr. Potter:** Yusuf! What can I do for you?

**Yusuf:** I have a letter for you, Mr. Potter.

**Mr. Potter:** It got delivered to your shop by mistake did it?

**Yusuf:** No. It's from my father.

**Pogo:** Yusuf, what's the matter?

*(YUSUF runs off).*

**Mr. Potter:** Why would he write to me? He only lives next door and I see him every day. *(Reads).* "Dear Mr. Potter, we have sold the shop. It is no longer profitable, so I have decided to sell up and go. It has all been very sudden. Hussein's Supermart will soon become, I believe, a shop selling sporting goods. I am sorry to go but that is the cut-throat world of trade for you. Your friend, Mohammed Hussein." I don't believe this. Another business down the tubes. That's the third one this month.

**Pogo:** I thought the Supermart was doing well.

**Mr. Potter:** These days nobody's safe. Welcome to the real world, Pogo.

*(MR. POTTER exits).*

**Pogo:** *(Jogging).* I'm going to get in top physical shape. But a quarterback needs brains too, a memory like an elephant, and the ability to take split-second

decisions. *(Pulls a notebook from his pocket).* I'm making my own  
playbook - shotgun formation, twin set, play action - I've gotta learn  
them all.

*(Enter DEZZY with a paper round bag across his chest).*

**Pogo:** Hey Dezzzy! Give me five!

**Dezzzy:** Like the jacket!

**Pogo:** Birthday present from my Dad.

**Dezzzy:** Wow, it's wicked! And I've got more good news for you.

**Pogo:** What?

**Dezzzy:** Have you seen the paper?

**Pogo:** Why?

**Dezzzy:** You're not going to believe this. *(He gives him a copy of the local paper,  
"The Rotherby Echo". Pogo flicks through it).*

**Pogo:** What is it? Miss Umpleby's got engaged? *(They laugh).* Triple murder at  
the Knitting Circle? *(DEZZY shakes his head).* I know - the headmaster's  
flipped at last - he was seen running naked down the High Street shouting  
"I am a jelly baby!"

**Dezzzy:** Much better than that. It's really going to shake this place up.

*(MR. POTTER approaches, ringing a brass handbell and dressed in full Town  
Crier regalia).*

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez!

**Pogo:** You mean it's not going to be completely boring round here any more?

**Dezzzy:** Just picture it .... Rotherby, a small sleepy town ....

**Pogo:** So old-fashioned it's still got a Town Crier.

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez!

**Dezzzy:** Your dad looks really cool in that gear.

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez!

**Pogo:** Just a two-bit place without even an ice-cream parlour or a bowling alley....

**Dezzzy:** But now ....

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez! Here is the Rotherby news. *(Opens scroll).* Attention  
all young sports fans. Mr. Bud Karlsson is holding trials for a new junior  
American football team, to be known as the Rotherby Rockets. If you're  
lean, keen and mean, come along to the school playing field on Monday,  
straight after class. Oyez! Oyez!

*(MR. POTTER exits ringing his bell).*

**Pogo:** Am I dreaming?

**Dezzy:** It's true! (*He points at the newspaper. They leap about in delight and exit chanting "Rockets! Rockets!"*).

4. *The fish and chip shop, Potter's Plaice, represented by a wheel-on counter with a till and a single gymnastic bench which remains on stage until indicated.*

**Pogo:** (*Chants*). "Ooo-ah Joe Montana, I said ooh-ah Joe Montana!" Hi, J.J.  
Get me a crocodile sandwich and make it snappy.

**J.J.:** Crocodile's off.

**Pogo:** No sweat. A mega cod special, large fries and a pint of milkshake.

**J.J.:** There you go.

**Pogo:** Cold mushy peas and curry sauce?

**J.J.:** You can't afford mega anything.

**Pogo:** Hold on, I live here. This is my dining-room.

**J.J.:** Then don't eat the profits. That's the first rule of business.

**Pogo:** You're very money-conscious all of a sudden.

**J.J.:** You probably haven't heard ....

**Pogo:** What?

**J.J.:** My Dad's sold his garage.

**Pogo:** But he's the best mechanic in Rotherby. That place was his pride and joy.

**J.J.:** He just said it wasn't making a profit any more. He sold it for peanuts.

**Pogo:** To go with his monkey wrench, eh? (*J.J. glares at him*). I'm sorry, J.J.  
Forget I said that. This is serious. You're not alone though. Dad says  
businesses are failing all over town. It makes you wonder how long our fish  
and chip shop can carry on.

**J.J.:** Don't say that. I need this job.

**Pogo:** Let's look on the bright side. I've got news that'll definitely cheer you up.  
(*Shows her the paper*).

**J.J.:** Rotherby Rockets? Brilliant! I'm gonna try for kicker. (*They mime*).

**Pogo:** The centre snaps the ball. Pogo Potter, starting quarterback for the  
Rockets, takes it cleanly and holds it steady for J.J. Jones, the girl with the  
golden boot. (*J.J. kicks*). Field goal! Three points on the board for  
Rotherby!

**J.J.:** I must tell Brat. He wants to be quarterback. I think he'll be really good.

**Pogo:** Brat Brattigan? Brat? Quarterback for the Rotherby Rockets? You cannot  
be serious!

**J.J.:** He's very strong ....

**Pogo:** But can he take split-second life or death decisions?

**J.J.:** He'll look wonderful in tight white trousers ....

**Pogo:** What about me?

**J.J.:** How about baggy shorts?

**Pogo:** No, me. Pogo Potter, Quarterback. It's in my blood. (*She looks unconvinced*). What you see before you is an athlete in superb physical and mental condition and when the going gets tough, the tough get -

(*Enter MR. POTTER*).

**Mr. Potter:** Into the kitchen, Pogo Potter. There's washing up to do and you can make some chips for tomorrow.

**Pogo:** But Dad, I've got to train for the football trials -

**Mr. Potter:** And when you've done the chips you can put the rubbish out in the back yard. Get a move on you two. I've got a business to run!

(*MR. POTTER and J.J. exit with counter*).

5. *Classroom, represented by the bench plus a blackboard or other marker such as a sign, "Rotherby High School".*

**Pogo:** (*To audience*). It'll be different when I get in the team. I'll make Dad understand. I'll make him really proud of me.

(*Enter DEZZY, J.J. and BRAT*).

**Brat:** I've got tickets for the .... [*Insert name of favourite band or singer*] concert next week, J.J. Wanna come?

(*J.J. looks delighted. They sit on the bench together. Enter MISS UMPLEBY, a severe-looking teacher*).

**Miss Umpleby:** Dreaming again, Pogo?

**Pogo:** Sorry, Miss Umpleby.

**Miss Umpleby:** Stop staring out of the window and come and sit down. (*POGO sits next to BRAT*). There's a dangerous virus going round this class.

Symptoms: One - a powerful urge to smack hands on greeting.

*(DEZZY and J.J. demonstrate. BRAT claps POGO's hand so hard he has to blow on it and grimaces with the pain).*

**Miss Umpleby:** "To give it 5" is the technical term, I believe. Two - a tendency to describe everything as a "long throw", a "fumble" or a "touchdown".

**All:** *(Shout)*. Woo! Woo! Woo!

*(MISS UMPLEBY silences them with a glare).*

**Miss Umpleby:** Three - according to the many despairing teachers who have approached me as your form mistress - a total inability to do any work! *(Silence)*. Now our new caretaker, Mr. Karlsson, informs me - informs you'll notice, not asks or requests, but informs me that those wishing to take part in his American football trials are to be allowed out of school ten minutes early. *(The commotion they make on hearing this news is silenced by another glare)*. First it was nylon stockings, then burger bars, and now .... this! *(She waves DEZZY'S American football magazine in the air then hands it back with disdain)*.

**Miss Umpleby:** *(Resigned)*. Very well, those of you who have caught the disease may go.

*(DEZZY and J.J. rush off. BRAT trips POGO up before he too hurries off).*

**Miss Umpleby:** Pogo Potter!

**Pogo:** Yes, Miss Umpleby?

**Miss Umpleby:** I didn't think you'd fall victim to the malady, Pogo. I urge you to consider your position before it's too late.

**Pogo:** But quarterback's the most important person in the team.

**Miss Umpleby:** Are you listening to me?

**Pogo:** Of course I am. You want me to consider my position. Well .... all right .... if I'm really not good enough for quarterback I would consider playing tight end.

**Miss Umpleby:** *(Sighs)*. I see. Very well. I'll put you down under Lost Causes. *(Writes)*. "A tragic case. Severely affected by the disease. Brain damage - probably permanent." We'll see about this, Mr. Karlsson.

*(POGO and MISS UMPLEBY exit along with blackboard).*

6. *DEZZY, J.J. and others enter wearing a ragbag of training outfits, followed by BRAT in shiny new helmet and ludicrously padded football shirt, and finally POGO. They jog about puffily then line up and perform a few feeble stretches on and around the bench. They look at their watches, mutter "Where is he? He's late" etc. Enter COACH KARLSSON).*

**Coach:** It ain't my fault I'm late. That pesky Miss Umpleby gave me a heap of hassle just 'cos I asked for a few extra minutes to sort out the prime beef from the bum steers. Where's my indigestion mixture? My stomach's burning like I swallowed a jalopeno pepper. *(Gulps a dose of medicine).* Now, you kids warmed up?

**All:** Sure, yeah.

**Coach:** You look about as ready to go as hibernating hedgehogs. *(They smarten up slightly).* When I played offensive tackle with the Packers .... *(Pause).* That's the Green Bay Packers I'm talking about.

**All:** Wow. Really. Well smart etc.

**Coach:** Before I broke my leg that is and ended my career. *(He rubs his leg, the memory still upsets him).* Why, we weren't just a team, we were a mean machine. And you kids are going to be the same, right here in Rotherby, England.

**Dezzy:** What brought you to a dump like this, Mr. Karlsson?

**Coach:** Hey? Whoah now, it ain't so bad. It's kinda quaint, with your market place and your Town Crier - *(POGO imitates his Dad - they all cheer).* There's a kinda peaceful feeling round these parts. I like that. But as far as football's concerned, it's time to drag Rotherby kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century. What d'ya say? *(Cheers).* And I'm the man to do it. *(Misty-eyed).* I'm gonna train up the finest team in the Junior American Football League. I wanna pass on my skills to a new generation. It's the most important thing in my life. *(Pause).* I guess it's my .... second chance. O.K. Let's get started. Are you ready?

**All:** Yes. Suppose so. All right etc.

**Coach:** *(Loud)* I said are you ready?

**All:** Yes!

**Coach:** *(Shouts).* Yes! Yes! Yes!

**All:** *(Shout back).* Yes! Yes! Yes!

**Coach:** Let's warm up. We'll start with Jumping Jacks. One! Two! Three!

*(He demonstrates then the PLAYERS jump and stretch with little sense of rhythm or co-ordination, apart from POGO who is doing the exercises with hyperactive energy).*

**Coach:** What's your name?

**Dezzy:** Dezzy, Mr. Karlsson.

**Coach:** Stretch those arms, Dezzy. Hey, son -

**Brat:** Brian Brattigan to you.

**Pogo:** Known as Brat.

**Dezzy:** For obvious reasons.

**Coach:** Take that helmet off, Brat. We don't train kitted up. I've seen more effort from a horsefly stuck in a honey jar. *(To EVERYONE)*. Change to Windmills. Now! Twist and touch, twist and touch. *(Demonstrates, expelling his breath with an aggressive grunt)*. Ooo-ooo!

**All:** Ooo-ooo! Ooo-ooo!

**Coach:** Not bad, what's your name?

**J.J. :** J.J., sir.

**Coach:** Get to it, J.J. And call me Coach. You sure got enthusiasm, son.

**Pogo:** Pogo Potter, Mr. Karlsson - I mean - Coach. Pleased to meet you. *(He stops to shake hands with Coach Karlsson)*.

**Coach:** I never told you to stop, Pogo Potter.

**Pogo:** Sorry, Coach.

**Coach:** Can you throw a ball, Pogo?

**Pogo:** Just let me try. *(He takes a ball and throws it with a professional-looking action)*.

**Coach:** That action of yours - reminds me of Joe Montana, one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time.

**Pogo:** You really think so?

**Coach:** He was a legend. *(To everyone)*. Running on the spot. Take yourselves to the limit. Try harder, harder! You at the back! Lift those knees! Good work, Pogo.

*(BRAT pushes POGO, looking at him with hatred)*.

**Coach:** O.K. Ease up. *(They collapse in untidy heaps, panting with exertion)*. Now for the major question. You wanna win?

**All:** *(Mutter)*. Yeah. Course we do. Why not? etc.

**Coach:** I said - do you want to WIN?

**All:** Yes!

**Coach:** You want to win real bad?

**All:** Yes! Yes! YES!

**Coach:** If you wanna join my team you gotta be hungry. Football's all about territory - don't give an inch of yours, but take as much yardage off the enemy as you can. I know what I'm talking about. I was part of the Packers

defensive team in the very first Super Bowl, 15 January 1967.

**Pogo:** You beat the Kansas City Chiefs 35-10.

**Coach:** Correct, and every point was paid for in blood, sweat and tears. I'll never forget it. Best day of my life. (*Emotional*). Broke my leg in a tackle the very next season.

**J.J.:** You'll be on the winning side again, Coach. (*They all agree*).

**Coach:** I've still got a memento of that victory. (*Takes a Super Bowl ring from his pocket*). All the players in the winning team are presented with a ring like this. This ring is so precious to me - I can't tell you .... But I'm gonna let you all look at it. Hold it in your hands and dream. Pass it round.

**Dezzy:** Will we have enough players for a full squad, Coach?

**Coach:** I guess not enough for separate offence and defence - most of you are going to have to play both ways, with maybe a couple of specialists, a kicker (*J.J. looks keen*) and of course, a quarterback.

(*POGO and BRAT vie for attention. POGO receives the ring, examines it reverently then passes it to BRAT who looks thoughtfully at it, then places it secretly in POGO'S pocket*).

**Coach:** You all seen that ring? Just pass it over here then we'll get down to some serious work. (*Silence. No-one has the ring*) You hear me? Quit the horsing around - where's my ring?

(*They start to hunt for it*).

**Coach:** If anybody's taken it .... O.K. line up here and turn out your pockets.

(*They line up facing the audience and turn out their pockets one by one. POGO empties his pocket last, pulls out the ring and looks at it incredulously*).

**Coach:** Pogo Potter ain't it? And I thought you had the makings of a quarterback. You ain't nothing like Joe Montana. You're just a sneak thief!

**Pogo:** I don't understand.

**Coach:** I wouldn't have a thief in my team in a trillion years.

**Pogo:** I looked at the ring and then I gave it to - (*He stares at BRAT who turns away*)

**Coach:** You're out, Pogo Potter. You'll never make this team, no where, no way. The rest of you kids, ten circuits round the playing field. Go!

(*They exit. POGO is left alone and wretched. He tears off his beloved American*

*football jacket and throws it on the ground in frustration. He is about to leave it there, but returns to it, dusts it off carefully and exits).*

7. *MRS. BRATTIGAN'S car, represented by a cut-out attached to their waists which they walk across front of stage as though driving along.*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** I'm so proud of you, Brian. Captain, did you say?

**Brat:** Quarterback.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** But it's the same thing?

**Brat:** Near enough.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Ooo - American football - I've seen it on the telly - all those muscles!

**Brat:** That's padding, Mum.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** All the same we'll have to build you up with lots of protein.

**Brat:** Yeah, let's stop for steak and chips at that place.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** *(Laughs).* Greedy boy! You've just had a pizza as big as a planet.

**Brat:** But Mum -

**Mrs. Brattigan:** I tell you what, how about a nice new pair of trainers? You've had those old things for at least a fortnight.

**Brat:** Great! I've seen the ones I want. They'll cost you.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Nothing but the best for you, Brian. Who's Mummy's little baby-waby then! *(She swerves the car dangerously as she tries to kiss him. Sound effect of squealing tyres).*

**Brat:** Keep your eyes on the road, Mum!

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Don't worry. Most people get out of MY way if they know what's good for them. Now where am I taking you tonight?

**Brat:** Youth Centre.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** We'll have you there in less time than it takes to sing my favourite song.

*(Sings). "Money can't buy everything it's true,  
But what it can't buy I can't use!"*

**Both:** *(Sing). "So gimme money, that's what I want,  
That's what I want, that's what I want!"*

*(She accelerates. They exit to a squeal of tyres).*

8. *Rotherby Youth Centre: bench plus juke box or sign. POGO stands dejectedly in a corner. J.J. and DEZZY enter, very pleased with themselves.*

**Dezzy:** Here's to the Rockets' number one kicker! (*High five*).

**J.J.:** And the fastest wide receiver in Rotherby!

*(They smack hands again. POGO approaches them).*

**Pogo:** You're both in the team? (*They nod*). Congratulations.

*(Embarrassed silence).*

**Pogo:** You don't seriously think I stole that ring do you?

**J.J.:** It was in your pocket, Pogo.

**Dezzy:** Why did you do it?

**Pogo:** I didn't.

**J.J.:** We don't know what to think.

**Pogo:** I'm not a thief! Someone planted that ring on me.

*(They turn to walk away).*

**Pogo:** Just tell me one thing - who's going to be quarterback?

*(BRAT enters. J.J. runs to him).*

**Dezzy:** That's the only bluebottle in the vick.

**Pogo:** You're joking!

**Dezzy:** Ask Coach Karlsson. (*POGO moves away, devastated*).

**Brat:** Hi, team-mates.

**J.J.:** What took you so long?

**Brat:** Had a power shower, put on some talc, body spray, hair gel - it takes time to smell this good, you know. Have you all missed me then? (*J.J. smiles*).

**Dezzy:** (*Aside*). Yeah .... like a boil on the bum.

**Brat:** (*Sees POGO*). What's this place coming to, letting criminals in?

**Dezzy:** He says he didn't steal that ring.

**Brat:** It was in his pocket wasn't it?

**J.J.:** (*Hesitates*). True .... But I still don't understand - Pogo's not like that.

**Brat:** I guess the temptation was just too strong. Anyway why should we worry about scumbag over there. Is anybody hungry?

**Dezzy:** Sure - Potter's Plaice is still open.

**Brat:** That greasy joint in the High Street?  
**J.J.:** Do you mind, I work there!  
**Brat:** Best chips in town. (*Hugs J.J.*). We can't go there though. Pogo's Dad owns it doesn't he?  
**Dezzy:** So what?  
**Brat:** We'd be giving our hard-earned money to criminals wouldn't we?  
**J.J.:** Hold on, Brat, that's not fair ....  
**Brat:** Potter's Plaice .... Hmm. That's just the sort of property my Mum likes - small business, good position. And going cheap.  
**Dezzy:** I didn't know they were selling up. (*J.J. looks horrified*).  
**Brat:** They will. You'll see. Don't worry J.J. Stick with me and you won't need to work in that rathole ever again.  
**J.J.:** And what if I like working there?  
**Dezzy:** Now listen Brat. Tell your Mum to keep her hands off. She already owns half the property in town. Potter's Plaice is ace and the chips are fantastic.

(*DEZZY exits*).

**J.J.:** Is that really what your Mum does for a living? Buying up small businesses?  
**Brat:** She's gotta keep me in designer clothes somehow.  
**J.J.:** Some of us have to work hard for things like that.  
**Brat:** Come on J.J. Don't be touchy. I'm taking you to that concert, remember? (*Makes her smile despite herself*). Nothing much doing here. Fancy a Chinese takeaway? Yeah? Why don't you wait for me outside?  
**J.J.:** I'm paying for my own, O.K.? (*J.J. exits*).  
**Brat:** (*Sarcastically*). What a shame, poor old Pogo Potter, all alone. But then nobody likes a thief.  
**Pogo:** Is that why you're sitting by yourself?  
**Brat:** Prove it scumbag or I'll smash your face in!  
**Pogo:** There's something you don't know about me. (*POGO takes up a martial arts stance and performs some dazzling chops and kicks with hands and feet*). I've got a black belt.  
**Brat:** (*Backs away*). Big deal. (*Looks at his watch*). Just look at the time. Mustn't keep J.J. waiting. Slap up meal then I'm off home to bed. Gotta get plenty of sleep now I'm the star of the Rotherby Rockets. (*Exits hurriedly*).  
**Pogo:** (*To audience*). I've had this black belt for years. It's real leather. Dad bought it at Marks and Spencers. (*Does a few more chops*). How can I prove Brat planted Coach Karlsson's ring on me? Even my friends don't trust me any more. J.J.'s going out with a cheat, but I can't say anything to

her - why would she believe me? And what's more - I'm out of the squad. I want to be a Rotherby Rocket more than anything in the world. I want Dad to be proud of me. And Mum too. I don't really remember her. *(Takes a photo out and looks at it)*. All I've got is her picture. Somehow I've got to get back in the team. *(Exits along with juke box)*.

9. *(Enter MR. POTTER as Town Crier)*.

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez! Here is the Rotherby News. Brattigan's, the new health and fitness centre, opens today, offering a wide range of equipment with the emphasis on torturing - sorry, tautening and toning. You can become a member for a mere £2000 a year. If you join today you will receive a free can of Lucozade. Oyez! Oyez! After a shaky start the Rotherby Rockets are creeping up the Junior American Football League. You can see the teams in action again this Sunday when they take on the Olderton Otters. Kick-off 2 pm. Oyez! Oyez! Would Pogo Potter, last seen hanging from the bathroom doorway please contact his father who is dangerously annoyed about the state of his room. Oyez! Oyez!

*(Exits. POGO enters jogging, looking fit and determined)*.

**Pogo:** Look at that. *(Flexes biceps)*. Pure muscle. And I've grown too. That hanging upside down really works. They're bound to have some injuries soon, then I'll be called up - defensive lineman, cornerback, I'll do anything, just as long as I'm a Rotherby Rocket. *(Jogs)*. I've seen every match this season. J.J.'s a great kicker. Dezzzy's brilliant as wide receiver. But Brat - all brawn and no brain. Just wait till I get in the team.

10. *Potter's Plaice. J.J. is reading the Rockets' playbook behind the counter.*

**Pogo:** Hi, J.J. Need any help?

**J.J.:** Pogo? What's all this?

**Pogo:** I'll put the tomato sauce out.

**J.J.:** Hold on, that's my job.

**Pogo:** Don't worry, I'm not going to stash a bottle of ketchup in my pocket.

**J.J.:** I didn't mean ....

**Pogo:** Why won't you believe me, J.J.?

**J.J.:** I want to believe you.

**Pogo:** I swear I didn't pinch that ring. What else can I do to convince you?

**J.J.:** Here's the Rockets' playbook - it's almost like a bible to the team. Tell the truth, Pogo.

**Pogo:** *(He puts his hand on the book).* I swear by the all-powerful Coach Karlsson that I did not steal his ring and that's the truth.

**J.J.:** The whole truth?

**Pogo:** I'll tell you that as soon as I can prove it. Do you believe me now?

**J.J.:** I'm not sure.

**Pogo:** J.J.!

**J.J.:** I want to, but Brat says - oh I don't know. Put it this way - I've got an open mind.

**Pogo:** I guess that'll have to do for now.

**J.J.:** Are you coming to the match tomorrow?

**Pogo:** Have I ever missed?

**Both:** Rockets! Rockets!

**Pogo:** Let's play ball.

*(J.J. throws the ball, POGO catches it, runs to the end zone for a touchdown. They celebrate).*

**J.J.:** I'm going for the extra point.

*(POGO holds the ball steady on the floor. J.J. kicks it. MR. POTTER enters and catches the ball in his stomach).*

**Pogo:** Hi, Dad. Bye Dad.

**Mr. Potter:** Not so fast. Bounce back here, Pogo Potter. I want a word with you.

**Pogo:** I'll clear up my room later - I need to do some throwing practice.

**Mr. Potter:** You've got to get this American football nonsense out of your head, Pogo. You didn't even make the team.

**Pogo:** I can explain about that.

**Mr. Potter:** Your school report was terrible. It's time you settled down to some real work.

**Pogo:** Like you did when you were young?

**Mr. Potter:** That's enough cheek.

**Pogo:** J.J., do you know what my Dad was in the distant days of his youth?

**Mr. Potter:** Don't you go telling - I'm a respectable businessman now.

**Pogo:** (*Mimes*). Vroom! Vroom!

**J.J.:** You rode a motor-bike, Mr. Potter?

**Mr. Potter:** Certainly not. Dangerous smelly things.

**Pogo:** There's a photo in the family album to prove it.

**Mr. Potter:** Well .... what if I did?

**Pogo:** Riding over the horizon on his Harley-Davidson, all dressed in leathers and studs, long greasy hair flying out under his skull and crossbones crash helmet. Eric Potter - Rotherby's one and only Hell's Angel!

**J.J.:** You, Mr. Potter? I don't believe it!

**Mr. Potter:** I was young, daft. I've learnt the error of my ways. And I want you to learn the error of yours before it's too late.

**Pogo:** Vroom! Vroom!

**Mr. Potter:** I give up. Go on, the pair of you.

*(They exit laughing. MR. POTTER puts a colander on his head and relives his youth charging round on an imaginary motorbike).*

**Mr. Potter:** Vroom! Vroom!

*(Enter MRS. BRATTIGAN).*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Mr. Potter I believe?

**Mr. Potter:** (*Brakes sharply*). That's me. (*Removes colander*). Cod and chips is it? Or I've got a lovely bit of rock salmon.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Brattigan's the name. Petula Brattigan.

**Mr. Potter:** Eric Potter.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** I'm opening a new health club right next door.

**Mr. Potter:** I know. Used to be Mr. Hussein's Supermart.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Something like that.

**Mr. Potter:** Open all hours. Very convenient. We all miss it round here.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Sport and health - that's where the money is these days.

**Mr. Potter:** And what about Mr. Hussein - how will he support his family now?

**Mrs. Brattigan:** That's hardly my problem.

**Mr. Potter:** I can't understand why he left so suddenly. The shop was doing well and he was happy here.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** He recognised a good offer when he saw one.

**Mr. Potter:** A good offer? I hear the Husseins are living in a bedsit with barely enough money to pay the rent never mind start a new business.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** I haven't come here to talk about Mr. Hussein. As I said, he accepted my offer and that's that. I'm hoping you will do the same. I want to open a sports shop. *(She looks around)*. Right here.

**Mr. Potter:** Not so fast, Mrs. Brattigan. I'm not selling. Potter's Plaice is my life.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** That's what Mr. Hussein said. And Mr. Jones with his filthy little garage. They all say that - at first.

**Mr. Potter:** I won't change my mind.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** This is my offer. *(Hands him a document)*.

**Mr. Potter:** What? It's an insult!

**Mrs. Brattigan:** What do you expect? It's a buyer's market. *(MR. POTTER tears the paper in half and hands it back)*. That's your answer is it?

**Mr. Potter:** Me and my wife bought this place just after we got married. You could skate on the grease on the floor. The fryer was so rusty the chips tasted like girders. We ripped out the lot and started again. Now look at it - the cleanest chippie in Rotherby. Sit down fish suppers or high speed takeaway, at prices people can actually afford. When she died I thought about giving it up, but I've lived in Rotherby all my life, and I've built up a name for quality and value. I couldn't throw all that away. And I've my son to think of. It's a struggle to keep going but we manage. I'm standing my ground. This is Potter's Plaice. It'll never be a branch of the Brattigan Empire.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** *(Pause)*. I see. I'll put it very simply so you'll understand. I'm going to get you out of here, Mr. Potter. I want these premises. And I always get what I want. *(Pause)*. Always.

*(MRS. BRATTIGAN exits)*.

**Mr. Potter:** Oh heck. What have I done now?

*(MR. POTTER exits along with counter)*.

**11.** *THE ROTHERBY ROCKETS run on chanting in American army style. POGO trails on behind, a baseball cap pulled well down. He stands aside watching the practice with intense interest.*

**All:** Rotherby Rockets are keen and mean  
The best offence you've ever seen  
Defence always stands its ground  
Rockets fly faster than the speed of sound!

*(Enter COACH KARLSSON).*

**Coach:** We're playing a big match tomorrow not the first round of the Over Sixties Ludo Competition. Get those bodies working. I want application ....

**All:** You got it!

**Coach:** I want perspiration ....

**All:** You got it!

**Coach:** And most of all - I want inspiration!

**All:** *(Cheers and whistles).*

**Coach:** Offensive line - T formation.

*(They hurry into their offensive positions).*

**Coach:** Where's Brat? *(They look around and shrug their shoulders).* This ain't the first time he's been late. What's that son of a gun playing at? I don't need this hassle. Now I gotta find somebody else at quarterback.

*(POGO rushes into position at quarterback).*

**Coach:** Hell, my stomach feels like it's full of vinegar. *(Gulps medicine).*

**Pogo:** Down, set. Hut! Hut! Hut!

*(Enter BRAT).*

**Brat:** What's going on? *(BRAT pushes POGO out of the way).* I'm the starting quarterback of the Rotherby Rockets, not you, scumbag. Red 52. Down, set. Hut! Hut! Hut!

*(COACH blows his whistle).*

**Coach:** Good to have the pleasure of your company, Brat.

**Brat:** I suppose it is.

**Coach:** Don't get lippy with me, boy.

**Brat:** I had to go shopping with my Mum. Like my trainers? They only cost £200. But I'm here now so let's get on with it.

**Coach:** You missed the warm-up.

**Brat:** Who cares?

**Coach:** I do, if it means my starting quarterback pulls the muscles in his throwing arm the day before a big match, which, if we win, will put us second in the league table, right behind the Steelbridge Serpents.

**Brat:** I'm the only quarterback you've got. And I say I don't need a warm-up.  
What are you going to do about it?

**Coach:** Don't push me too far, son.

**Brat:** I'm not your son, old man.

**Coach:** You call me Coach. Show a little respect around here.

**Brat:** Respect? For some old has-been? The Green Bay Packers? How do we  
even know you played for them anyway? You could have stolen that ring.

*(COACH KARLSSON grabs BRAT).*

**Coach:** Why you little ....

**Brat:** Mind the fabric, old man, it was expensive. *(He pulls free).*

**Coach:** You're out of the team, Brat!

**Brat:** Fine by me. But don't think I'm finished. I was going to tell you this after  
the match tomorrow but you've asked for it - I've had an offer from the  
Steelbridge Serpents. *(Shocked reaction from COACH and PLAYERS).*  
Yeah, the Serpents - best team in the league, favourites for the title.

**Coach:** Take your fancy sneakers and pricey clothes and hightail outa here!

**J.J.:** Brat! You can't do this!

**Brat:** I'm sick of this small-town outfit. I'm ready for the big time. I'll put in a  
good word for you, J.J. - they need a decent kicker. You could be a  
Serpent like me.

**J.J.:** A snake in the grass, you mean? I'm a Rocket and proud of it.

**Brat:** Hey, J.J., don't get mad. We're still a twosome, aren't we?

**J.J.:** I don't know what I ever saw in you, Brat! *(She turns from him).*

**Brat:** Scumbags all of you! *(Exits).*

**Pogo:** Coach Karlsson? *(He pulls off his baseball cap).*

**Coach:** What is it? Pogo Potter? What are you doing here?

**Pogo:** Looks like you need a new quarterback ....

**Coach:** Listen, I wouldn't have you in my team if you could throw a hundred yard  
touchdown pass. I told you. I got no time for thieves. Out of my way, I got  
work to do. Dezzzy - I'm putting you in at quarterback. You'll be wearing  
the number 12 shirt this Sunday. Don't let me down.

**Dezzzy:** I won't, Coach!

**Coach:** Heck my insides are starting to burn like I swallowed a firecracker.  
Come on kids, we gotta revise the whole game plan!

*(They all exit except POGO).*

**Pogo:** *(To audience).* Why am I wasting my time? Brat stole that ring yet I'm the

one who takes the rap. All right. I'll show them. I'll show them all.

*(Exits).*

**END OF ACT I**

## ACT II

12. (*MR. POTTER and MISS UMPLEBY enter from opposite sides of the stage pushing supermarket trolleys or carrying wire baskets. They mime selecting things from shelves, represented by the bench facing end on. They turn a corner and bump into each other.*)

**Miss Umpleby:** Hello, Mr. Potter.

**Mr. Potter:** Miss Umpleby.

**Miss Umpleby:** How's business?

**Mr. Potter:** (*Dejected*). Could be better.

(*Pause*).

**Miss Umpleby:** I'm glad we've bumped into each other. I wanted a word.

**Mr. Potter:** What's Pogo been up to this time?

**Miss Umpleby:** Nothing.

**Mr. Potter:** (*Relieved*). That's good.

**Miss Umpleby:** No - I mean he literally does nothing. For the last week or two he's shown no interest in anything - not his work or his friends or even that wretched American football.

**Mr. Potter:** Now you mention it, he has been a bit off lately. I've had a lot on my mind or I'd have noticed sooner.

**Miss Umpleby:** I'm hoping it's just a stage he's going through.

**Mr. Potter:** That'll be it. We all go through stages. You'll never guess what I got up to when I was a lad.

(*They exit, MR. POTTER muttering "Vroom! Vroom!" as they go.*)

13. *Youth Centre. Enter DEZZY and J.J.*

**Dezzy:** Good game.

**J.J.:** Great game you mean.

**Dezzy:** We'll show Brat Brattigan we can do it without him.

**J.J.:** You're a much better quarterback than he ever was.

**Dezzy:** Thanks, J.J. But I'd still rather be at wide receiver. (*Mimes receiving the ball, running on the spot and scoring a touchdown*). Your field goal, J.J.,

that was something else.

**J.J.:** And it won the match! (*Mimes field goal*). It's nearly the end of the season.

**Dezzy:** I can't believe we've come this far.

**J.J.:** Second in the league, one match to play.

(*POGO enters carrying drinks*).

**Dezzy:** Hi, Pogo. Haven't seen you down here for ages.

**Pogo:** Large cokes all round.

**J.J.:** You won the lottery or something?

**Pogo:** I had some money coming to me. Why shouldn't I share my good fortune with my friends?

**Dezzy:** Let's call it a celebration.

**Pogo:** Sure. What are we celebrating? (*DEZZY and J.J. look at each other incredulously*).

**Dezzy:** We won today.

**Pogo:** Yeah? I didn't know. I don't bother with American football anymore.

**Dezzy:** Are you crazy? You don't realise what this means?

**Pogo:** Nope.

**J.J.:** We're just one point behind Steelbridge Serpents.

**Dezzy:** We play them on Sunday ....

**J.J.:** The decider ....

**Dezzy:** The show-down ....

**Both:** Head to head!

**Dezzy:** Don't you see, my friend, if we win we'll be the champions!

(*POGO gets up abruptly and exits. J.J. and DEZZY shrug their shoulders then exit along with jukebox*).

**14. Enter MR. POTTER as TOWN CRIER.**

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez! Here is the Rotherby news. The Rotherby Rockets make a bid for the championship of the Junior American Football League. They meet the favourites, the Steelbridge Serpents, next Sunday for what promises to be the most hotly-fought match of the season. Oyez! Oyez! Would Pogo Potter who hasn't been seen at home for more than five minutes at a time, please report to base for clean socks. Oyez! Oyez! The Ladies'

Knitting Circle will be holding a spelling bee to raise money for the deaf ....

*(Enter MRS. BRATTIGAN)*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Moonlighting I see, Mr. Potter? Isn't the cafe doing very well?

**Mr. Potter:** I see this job as an honour, a privilege. I don't do it for the money.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** *(Horried)*. They don't pay you?

**Mr. Potter:** 50p and a yard of ale.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** *(Laughs)*. Well I hope you can live on it. You'll soon have to.

**Mr. Potter:** I'm not selling, Mrs. Brattigan. I've got roots here and they go deep. I'll stand my ground and there's an end to it.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** On the contrary, this is just the beginning. I offered you a fair price.

**Mr. Potter:** Less than half what it's worth!

**Mrs. Brattigan:** I'm a businesswoman. I drive a hard bargain.

**Mr. Potter:** You won't get my shop for a bargain price so look elsewhere.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** It's Potter's Plaice I want. Like I told you, I always get what I want. *(Pause)*. And when stubborn people like you stand in my way they live to regret it. *(MRS. BRATTIGAN exits)*.

**Mr. Potter:** You don't frighten me! *(Rings his bell with extra force)*. Oyez! Oyez! The Deaf Lady Bees are holding a Knitting Circle to raise money for spells! Oyez! Oyez! *(Exits)*.

15. *Potter's Plaice. Pogo enters, looks furtively round, opens the till and stuffs some notes in his jacket pocket. He jumps in alarm on hearing MR. POTTER come in.*

**Mr. Potter:** At last! I've been looking for you all over. Sit down Pogo, I want to talk to you.

**Pogo:** I've changed my socks.

**Mr. Potter:** Never mind your socks, Pogo. This is important. *(Sighs)*. I don't know, you spend all your life working hard to keep your family, then greedy fly-by-nights think they can take it all away from you just like that.

**Pogo:** *(Guilty, thinking he's referring to the stolen money)*. I'm sorry Dad. I'll try to explain ....

**Mr. Potter:** It's that Petula Brattigan. She wants this place and she wants it cheap. Now she's started threatening me.

**Pogo:** You've been watching too many thrillers, Dad.

**Mr. Potter:** I'm warning you to be careful.

**Pogo:** What's going to happen to me? You think Petula Brattigan's going to send a gang of heavies to duff me up? No worries. (*Mock American accent*). Don't try anything you guys. You could find I'm too hot to handle. (*Mimes ferocious karate kicks and chops*).

**Mr. Potter:** Take something seriously for once in your life!

**Pogo:** All right, Dad. I'll be careful. I promise. (*Exiting*).

**Mr. Potter:** Where are you going?

**Pogo:** There and back. See you. (*Exits*).

**Mr. Potter:** Remember, keep a sharp lookout! (*Sighs*). I never seem to know what he's up to these days.

(*Enter J.J.*).

**J.J.:** I've done the chips.

**Mr. Potter:** Thanks J.J. I'll just nip out for a paper before we open up. Mind you, trade's been that bad lately I sometimes wonder if it's worth it.

**J.J.:** It's ever since that Health and Fitness Centre opened next door.

(*MR. POTTER looks at the takings and scratches his head*).

**Mr. Potter:** I didn't think business was that bad.

**J.J.:** Are you all right?

**Mr. Potter:** Yes. 'Course I am. Forget the paper. Time's getting on. Let's go and batter some fish.

(*MR. POTTER and J.J. exit*).

**16. MRS. BRATTIGAN'S car. Front of stage.**

**Mrs. Brattigan:** That Mr. Potter at the fish and chip shop - he's proving a little difficult. One of the awkward squad. I've been patient long enough. Time for a little more .... pressure.

**Brat:** Maybe I can help?

**Mrs. Brattigan:** There is something you can do.

**Brat:** What's it worth?

**Mrs. Brattigan:** A bonus of .... say .... £500?

**Brat:** You're on.

*(POGO enters).*

**Brat:** Look who's coming - the Karate Kid. See that puddle ahead? Swerve into it when I tell you! Now!

*(When POGO is level with the car he rears back having been splashed).*

**Brat:** And that's not all you've got coming to you, scumbag!

*(They exit to the sound of squealing tyres).*

**Pogo:** *(Wiping down his clothes).* Is that the best you can do, Brattigan and Son? A dirty puddle? I don't know what Dad was worrying about. *(Takes money from his jacket pocket).* At least the money kept dry. I fancy a slap-up supper. *(Sadly).* But I wish I had someone to spend it with. J.J. perhaps? She's not going out with Brat any more. *(Remembers).* But she's either working all hours at Potter's Plaice or at football practice. American football - what a dumb game! *(Chants scornfully).* "Ooo-ah Joe Montana, I said ooo-ah Joe Montana." Who cares? *(Pause, then he mimes in a dreamlike way).* The quarterback arcs the ball through the air. The wide receiver reaches up, catches it with one hand, as easy as taking an apple from a tree. Liquid poetry. *(Snaps out of his trance).* Who am I kidding? Wise up, Pogo Potter. Coach Karlsson said you'd never make the team. O.K. I've got the message loud and clear. Not wanted on voyage. Surplus to requirements. As welcome as a great white shark in a swimming pool. *(Counts the money).* If you're branded as a thief you might as well be one. Kentucky Fried Chicken then - a whole bucketful, all to myself. *(Exits).*

**17. Potter's Plaice. MR. POTTER and J.J. but no customers.**

**Mr. Potter:** I hope we don't get too many nights like this one.

**J.J.:** Not one of our regulars all evening. Anyone would think they'd been scared off.

**Mr. Potter:** Scared off? (*Worried*). Let's throw in the towel for tonight. I'll start cashing up. That won't take long.

**J.J.:** Shall I do it while you clean the fryer?

**Mr. Potter:** (*Hesitant*). No, J.J. Leave it to me. You .... you get off home.

**J.J.:** Are you sure?

**Mr. Potter:** And mind how you go.

**J.J.:** Goodnight, Mr. Potter. (*J.J. exits*).

**Mr. Potter:** (*Looking at watch*). Pogo's late. I hope he's all right.

*(He clears the till, turns the lights down, yawns with exhaustion and exits. POGO comes in, takes the money from his pocket and counts it).*

**Pogo:** Nearly enough for some new trainers. Good ones, like Brat wears. Why shouldn't I? I don't need to save up for a Rockets kit.

**Mr. Potter:** (*Off*). Is that you, Pogo?

**Pogo:** I'm just coming up.

**Mr. Potter:** About time. It's nearly midnight.

**Pogo:** Goodnight, Dad.

**Mr. Potter:** Goodnight, son. Sleep well.

*(POGO sits down and drifts into sleep. Stark back lighting to indicate the dream sequence. MR. POTTER in his apron and MRS. BRATTIGAN in her power suit enter wearing football helmets. They face each other, spit on their hands and crouch at the line of scrimmage like opposing linemen. Against muffled surreal roars from the crowd they clash in a stylised slow-motion tackle, locked in combat).*

**Pogo:** (*Murmuring in his sleep*). Block her Dad, don't give way, don't let her steal any yardage ....

*(MRS. BRATTIGAN powers past MR. POTTER leaving him reeling. He lunges after her. They exit).*

**Pogo:** She's going for the interception - stop her! Stop her! (*Wakes up*). What's that smell? The fryer must have caught light - (*He darts about checking*). No, nothing. (*Sniffs*). It's strong, like petrol. Dad! Dad! Wake up!

*(He grabs the Town Crier bell from the counter and rings it deafeningly. MR. POTTER enters half-asleep).*

**Mr. Potter:** What's going on? Pogo....

**Pogo:** I can smell petrol - *(Roar of flames in distance. POGO rings the bell)*  
Fire! Fire!

**Mr. Potter:** No, no, not Potter's Plaice! She warned me! She said I'd live to regret it ....

**Pogo:** Leave everything, Dad! Let's get out of here!

*(Exit along with counter).*

**18. Mrs. Brattigan:** *(On mobile phone).* Is that Cardew, Cardew and Botwright? Can I speak to Mr. Botwright please? *(Pause).* Good morning. Petula Brattigan of Brattigan Properties. I'm about to purchase the premises for my new sports shop - what? At the moment it's a fish and chip shop, the one on the High Street. Going rapidly downhill I'm afraid. The owner will be very keen to sell, I'm certain of it. That's right. Just to say I'd like you to draw up all the usual legal documents. I expect to close the deal in a day or two. And you know me - once I've made up my mind about something I don't like to waste time.

*(She ends conversation and puts phone away. BRAT enters).*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Well?

**Brat:** No problem. All those oil cans and cardboard boxes in their back yard - they went up like a roman candle.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Good. Just a frightener this time. It usually does the trick.  
*(Exiting).*

**Brat:** Haven't you forgotten something?

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Oh that. *(She peels off notes from her wallet. BRAT takes the money and kisses it).* You're a true Brattigan. Mummy's little baby-waby-waby.

*(She tickles him. They exit with BRAT trying to fend her off)*

19. *POTTER'S Back yard. Enter POGO and MR. POTTER carrying a broom.*

**Mr. Potter:** (*Looking round*). At least the damage is just to the back yard. At first I thought we'd lost the whole shop. What a mess. Thank God your mother's not here to see this.

**Pogo:** We'll soon have it cleaned up. (*Sweeps*). What did the police say?

**Mr. Potter:** Arson.

**Pogo:** Did you tell them about ....?

**Mr. Potter:** Mrs. Petula Brattigan? How could I? Who'd take the word of Eric Potter, ex Hell's Angel, against the word of a woman who owns half of Rotherby?

**Pogo:** She can't get away with this. It's not fair.

**Mr. Potter:** Nothing's fair in this world, Pogo, as you'll have to learn.

**Pogo:** (*Quietly*). I have already. You're not going to sell the cafe are you?

**Mr. Potter:** I don't know.

**Pogo:** We must be able to stop Mrs. Brattigan somehow - she can't just invade our territory like this.

**Mr. Potter:** That's how the world is, Pogo.

**Pogo:** I was having a dream last night, just before all this happened. You were wearing a helmet ....

**Mr. Potter:** With a skull and crossbones I suppose?

**Pogo:** An American football helmet.

**Mr. Potter:** I must have looked a right idiot!

**Pogo:** But even odder than that - there was Petula Brattigan wearing a helmet too, and the pair of you charged each other like opposing tackles. But she slipped your grasp. She made twenty yards, the touchline within spitting distance ....

**Mr. Potter:** Never mind dreams, Pogo. We've got a real mess to clear up.

**Pogo:** Don't you get it? All this - it's just like a football match. She's encroached on our half of the gridiron. If we don't stop her, she'll win.

**Mr. Potter:** I don't see how we CAN stop her.

**Pogo:** We change our game plan. We look in the playbook and choose another option - there are hundreds of plays to choose from. Leave it to the quarterback.

**Mr. Potter:** You've got a lot to learn. Which reminds me, it's time you were at school. You're late already. I'll finish this. Off you go.

(*POGO exits*).

**Mr. Potter:** Though I'm beginning to wonder if there's any point.

*(MR. POTTER sweeps and exits).*

**20.** *Classroom. DEZZY, J.J., and BRAT rush in in hyped up mood.*

**Brat:** I hope you lot are ready for the biggest thrashing of your lives. Steelbridge Serpents will walk away with the title.

**Dezzy:** Could be difficult - serpents don't have legs.

**J.J.:** They won't be playing a running game then.

**Dezzy + J.J.:** Rockets! Rockets!

**Brat:** *(Chants).* Steelbridge Serpents are the best .... *(Enter MISS UMPLEBY).*

**Miss Umpleby:** It hasn't escaped my notice that there's an important game on Sunday. How could it when I received this message from Mr. Karlsson? *(Reads).* "Rockets to leave early on Friday afternoon for vital pre-match huddle."

*(DEZZY and J.J. leap up while BRAT sneers at them).*

**Miss Umpleby:** However there is no question of that.

**Miss Umpleby:** *(They sit down. BRAT cheers).* We have our one-minute talks to do. The topic I set you was 'The Best Day of my Life'. Desmond, you can start.

**Dezzy:** *(Stands up and sets his watch).* The best day of my life was when Coach Karlsson picked me for the Rotherby Rockets. Since then American football has been ....

**Miss Umpleby:** Thank you Desmond.

**Dezzy:** But I've only done 7 seconds ....

**Miss Umpleby:** Sit down. *(Pause).* Joanna Jones?

**J.J.:** *(Stands).* The best day of MY life was scoring the winning field goal in the game against Newtown Newts, a distance of 43 yards ....

**Miss Umpleby:** Enough! Brian Brattigan, it's your turn.

**Brat:** *(Remains slouched in his seat).* That's easy. The best day of my life is gonna be when the Steelbridge Serpents thrash the Rotherby Rockets this Sunday afternoon ....

*(Commotion as J.J. and DEZZY argue with BRAT).*

**Miss Umpleby:** Silence! *(Pause).* Pogo. Where's Pogo?

**J.J.:** Haven't seen him all day, Miss Umpleby.

*(Heavy pause).*

**Miss Umpleby:** There's an old saying - "If you can't beat them, give up". What more can I do? Except to wish you good luck. All those involved in the match can go.

*(They all rush out. MISS UMPLEBY picks up a discarded American football magazine, mimes a few moves and cheerleader steps, then exits reading it with great interest. Blackboard and bench off).*

**21. Street. Enter POGO and YUSUF.**

**Pogo:** You overheard them talking?

**Yusuf:** Shouting more like.

**Pogo:** What did Mrs. Brattigan say?

**Yusuf:** I heard her threaten to burn down the shop.

**Pogo:** She knew you lived upstairs?

**Yusuf:** Yes.

*(BRAT enters and seeing POGO and YUSUF draws back into the shadows).*

**Yusuf:** How could my father risk the lives of all of us? She banged the door as she left. I heard the tyres of her car screech as she drove away. Next morning Dad says we must sell up and go. He wants to open another shop but he hasn't got the capital. She must have paid next to nothing for the Supermart.

**Pogo:** And now it's a Fitness Centre making money hand over fist. Mrs. Brattigan's trying the same trick with Potter's Plaice.

**Yusuf:** That's terrible.

**Pogo:** I'm going to stop her but I need your help.

**Yusuf:** What can I do?

**Pogo:** Persuade your father to talk to the police.

**Yusuf:** He's too frightened of Mrs. Brattigan, of what she'll do to us ....

**Pogo:** Look what she's done to you already! She's got to be stopped. *(POGO shows photo).* Tell him to think about my Mum, how hard she worked to make the chippie a success.

**Yusuf:** I'll tell him. I'll make him understand. *(YUSUF exits. POGO makes*

*notes).*

**Brat:** *(To himself).* Mum would like to hear about THAT.

*(Exits. Enter DEZZY).*

**Dezzy:** Pogo? Where have you been all day?

**Pogo:** Thinking. Planning.

**Dezzy:** You missed the one-minute talks at school. Miss Umpleby went crazy. I started telling her about how I was picked for the Rotherby Rockets and ....

**Pogo:** There are more important things in life than American football.

**Dezzy:** *(Shocked).* If you really believe that how come you wear that jacket all the time? Anyone would think it was superglued on.

**Pogo:** *(Peels off his jacket).* Here, you can have it.

**Dezzy:** No way, that was your birthday present.

**Pogo:** Take it. I've got other things on my mind. *(DEZZY puts it on).*

**Dezzy:** You can have my bandana in exchange, no argument all right?

*(Enter J.J. crying).*

**Dezzy:** J.J. - what's up?

**J.J.:** I've lost my job!

**Dezzy:** You mean - Potter's Plaice is closing down?

**J.J.:** No! Mr. Potter says there's been a lot of money missing from the till lately....

**Pogo:** And Dad thinks you took it?

**J.J.:** He said - who else could it be? *(Cries).*

**Dezzy:** I don't believe it.

**J.J.:** I need that job. What am I going to tell my Mum and Dad?

*(POGO exits at high speed).*

**J.J.:** It wasn't me, Dezzy. I'm not a thief.

*(MRS. BRATTIGAN enters in her car and drives straight at DEZZY knocking him down before screeching away. DEZZY cries in pain. J.J. screams. POGO rushes on).*

**Pogo:** Dezzy!

**J.J.:** This car - it came straight at us - it must have mounted the pavement ....

**Pogo:** Hit and run ....

**Dezzy:** The wheel went over my arm. I heard the bone crack.

**Pogo:** Let's get you to hospital. *(Helps him up)*. My jacket ....  
**Dezzy:** I'm sorry, it's ruined.  
**Pogo:** No, Dezzy. I mean they thought it was ME.  
**J.J.:** But who'd want to run you over? *(DEZZY cries in agony)*.  
**Pogo:** The hospital's not far. Can you walk O.K.?  
**Dezzy:** *(Nearly in tears)*. Yeah, but Pogo, it's my throwing arm. What about the match on Sunday?  
**Pogo:** It's going to be all right, Dezzy. I promise. Just another slight change of game plan.

*(They exit)*.

**22.** *Enter MR. POTTER as TOWN CRIER.*

**Mr. Potter:** Oyez! Oyez! Here is the Rotherby news. The event of the year, according to Mr. Bud Karlsson, takes place this afternoon. The championship decider, a head to head clash between the Steelbridge Serpents and our very own Rotherby Rockets. Oyez! Oyez! Calling Pogo Potter! Calling Pogo Potter! Are you receiving me? *(Exits ringing his bell)*.

**23.** *Enter POGO. He stands centre stage in Rockets kit. He has black stripes under his eyes. He carefully ties Dezzy's bandana round his neck. He turns round. He is wearing the number 12 shirt. J..J. and the other PLAYERS join him. Enter COACH KARLSSON. The PLAYERS kneel on one knee as they listen to him.*

**Coach:** We've got a mountain to climb today. But the only way to get to the top of the mountain is to start at the bottom of the valley. Remember, David defeated Goliath with one accurate throw. Dezzy, I'm counting on you.

**Pogo:** Yes coach.

**Coach:** We're one team, one family. Whatever happens this afternoon we play with pride. We'll take whatever they dish out and stand our ground, solid in

defence, swift in our attack. J.J. - I need those extra points.

**J.J.:** You've got them, coach.

**Coach:** Are you ready?

**All:** Ready! 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 - Blast off!

*(The PLAYERS go into a huddle. Enter MRS. BRATTIGAN, dressed as a Steelbridge cheerleader, with BRAT and other SERPENTS. They do aggressive warm-up exercises while MRS. BRATTIGAN urges the cheerleaders on. SERPENTS go into a huddle. Enter MR. POTTER and MISS UMPLEBY).*

**Miss Umpleby:** Mr. Potter. Pogo not here?

**Mr. Potter:** I don't know where he's got to. I never do. I thought I'd come and see what all the fuss is about.

*(The roar of the CROWD. The two teams line up, either face to face or the SERPENTS facing front and the ROCKETS facing the back of the stage in a single line. The REFEREE comes on, dressed in striped black and white top and white cap. He stands facing front between the two teams. MR. POTTER and MISS UMPLEBY stand together and watch the action. MRS. BRATTIGAN grabs a First Quarter sign from the wings and parades it across the stage, before handing it into the wings and rejoining the Cheerleaders. The PLAYERS crouch at the line of scrimmage. The noise of the CROWD rises and falls as the game progresses. The REFEREE blows his whistle to start the match. J.J. stands upright and mimes the kick off; SERPENT stands, mimes catching it and running furiously on the spot, runs it back into the end zone for a touchdown. The CROWD erupts. Plenty of reaction from all participants).*

**Miss Umpleby:** It's really quite exciting isn't it?

**Mr. Potter:** You're right. Even though I've no idea what's going on.

**Miss Umpleby:** Steelbridge have just scored.

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Touchdown!

**Miss Umpleby:** And they've just kicked the extra point. That's 7-nothing to Steelbridge.

**Mr. Potter:** Sounds bad.

**Miss Umpleby:** There's plenty of time to go yet.

*(She peels off her coat to reveal a Rotherby Rockets cheerleader outfit. MISS UMPLEBY grabs the Second Quarter sign from MRS. BRATTIGAN and*

*crosses the stage with it then hands it into the wings. She rejoins MR. POTTER. POGO crouches in quarterback position).*

**Pogo:** Down, set. Hut! Hut! *(He looks wildly around for someone to pass it to).*

**Miss Umpleby:** Pass it, Dezzy, pass it before you get sacked.

*(POGO passes long and high; SERPENT stretches out to tackle him. J.J. stands, catches the ball and runs on the spot).*

**Miss Umpleby:** Yeah - straight as an arrow. Pass completed!

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Touchdown!

**Mr. Potter:** Go for it J.J.

*(J.J. kicks. CROWD groans).*

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Missed kick. *(COACH KARLSSON signals from sideline).*  
Time out!

*(The TEAMS go into two huddles. The REFEREE waits, checks his watch. MR. POTTER and MISS UMPLEBY look at the American football magazine with growing enthusiasm).*

**Coach:** They're good, they're very good. That means we gotta be better. Right now we're losing it on the line. Dezzy, I never seen you play so well but cool it, you're worrying about every damn thing on the field. Let your offensive linemen do their job and you do yours. J.J. you missed the extra point but just put it behind you, look up to the top of that mountain 'cos that's where we're heading. 7-6 to them with three minutes to half-time. We're still in there fighting. O.K. let's go!

*(The line reforms. SERPENT leaps up for the ball but fumbles it).*

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Incomplete pass. Second down and ten.

*(BRAT catches the ball, runs on the spot).*

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Touchdown!

*(He blows his whistle for half-time. The two TEAMS go into exhausted huddles, wipe themselves with towels, take swigs of water etc. MISS UMPLEBY and*

*MRS. BRATTIGAN entertain the CROWDS with their Cheerleader routines, each trying to outdo the other).*

**Coach:** You're letting it slide away, too many fumbles, too many yards handed over for free. This ain't a matter of life and death. It's much more important.

*(MRS. BRATTIGAN collects Third Quarter sign, parades it across the stage and hands it in at the wings. The line reforms, the two teams facing the opposite way - ROCKETS facing front, SERPENTS facing back, or in two rows facing each other. At the snap BRAT throws a vicious punch just as POGO is about to pass. POGO folds up and collapses. The CROWD roars. MRS. BRATTIGAN leaps up).*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Go on, Brian, hit him again!

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Personal foul! Defence - Number 60. Fifteen yard penalty!

*(ROCKETS go into a brief huddle to discuss tactics).*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** How many times have I told you, don't get caught! *(She hits BRAT with her pom-pom).*

**Brat:** Get off!

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Isn't that Mr. Potter over there?

**Brat:** Why isn't he at the hospital looking after scumbag?

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Who cares? No doubt he'll creep over later and finally accept my offer. They always do.

*(The line reforms. MISS UMPLEBY takes Final Quarter sign from the wings and crosses the stage. She stands anxiously with MR. POTTER).*

**Mr. Potter:** Is there any hope?

**Miss Umpleby:** 25-18 with very little time left on the clock - it's a tall order I'm afraid.

**Mr. Potter:** Dezy's having a good game though.

**Miss Umpleby:** Yes he's playing brilliantly.

*(POGO receives the ball and holds it steady on the ground. J.J. scores a perfect field goal).*

**Referee:** *(Signals).* Field goal!

**Miss Umpleby:** Well done J.J. What a kick. 25-21. The gap is closing!

**Pogo:** *(To his team).* Third down and five. We HAVE to score this time. The seconds are ticking away. This will be the last play of the match. Red 37. Split formation on two.

**J.J.:** I read you.

*(The stage darkens. The CROWD is quiet with expectation. If the teams have formed a single line they now swing round end on to face each other. REFEREE runs through the middle of the line checking their positions then stands at the back. BRAT and POGO face up to each other in a hostile manner - the final confrontation - then crouch).*

**Pogo:** Down, set. Hut! Hut!

*(In slow motion POGO receives the ball, fakes a pass, jinks around BRAT who attempts to sack him. But POGO fends off the attack, pushes him over and runs into the end zone himself. The roars are deafening. The REFEREE signals a touchdown. The whistle blows for the end of the match. SERPENTS exit. J.J. is congratulated by MR. POTTER and MISS UMPLEBY. POGO stands over BRAT who lies sprawling on the ground).*

**Brat:** I'll get you for that, Dezzzy.

*(POGO pulls off his helmet).*

**Brat:** Pogo .... but I thought .... *(COACH KARLSSON punches the air with delight).*

**Coach:** 28-25 to us in the final seconds. You sure cut it mighty fine, Dezzzy. You had my stomach going there like I'd swallowed a live fish.

*(POGO turns, stopping COACH KARLSSON in his tracks).*

**Coach:** Pogo Potter? Am I seeing things?

**Pogo:** Tell him, Brat. Tell him about the ring.

**Brat:** Tell him what? He knows you tried to steal it.

*(POGO utters some blood-curdling oriental cries and takes up a martial arts stance. BRAT looks terrified).*

**Brat:** All right, all right. I took the ring. I put it in Pogo's pocket so you'd throw

him out of the team.

**Coach:** And I've been blaming Pogo all this time?

*(Enter MRS. BRATTIGAN).*

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Pogo? *(Confused)*. What the .... what a marvellous recovery!

**Pogo:** It wasn't me you ran over, Mrs. Brattigan.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** *(Annoyed)*. It wasn't?

*(Enter DEZZY with his arm in a sling. He gives POGO five with his good hand).*

**Dezzy:** Fantastic.

**Coach:** Dezzy? Hey, what happened to your arm? Hold on here - I'm as mixed up as a rattlesnake cocktail. I gotta get this straight - Pogo played quarterback the whole game?

**Pogo:** Yep. Couldn't let the Rockets down. Not after Mrs. Brattigan's car knocked Dezzy over and nearly killed him.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** That's slander. Why should I do such a thing?

**Pogo:** Because you knew I had evidence.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** Of what?

**Pogo:** Fraud. Arson. Obtaining money with menaces. I've spoken to everyone whose property you've bought up in the last six months. And it's all on this tape. Mr. Hussein, J.J.'s Dad, all of them.

**J.J.:** *(Furious)*. So it WAS Mrs. Brattigan who bought my Dad's garage?

**Pogo:** Petrol's highly inflammable and your Dad had hundreds of gallons stored underground.

**J.J.:** I can't believe I ever liked you, Brat Brattigan.

**Mr. Potter:** You started a fire in our backyard. We could have been burnt in our beds.

**Mrs. Brattigan:** *(Contemptuous)*. No-one's going to believe little people like you. I shall simply deny everything. But just in case, I'll have that.

*(Grabs cassette and makes a run for it along with BRAT).*

**Pogo:** *(Calls after her)*. I dropped a copy of the tape into the police station this morning.

*(The BRATTIGANS stop. They're held firm by ONLOOKERS despite their struggles to get free).*

**Coach:** I want to apologise, Pogo. I guess I read you all wrong. I want you to be part of the Rockets team - officially. What do you say?

**Pogo:** I appreciate it, Coach, but me and my Dad, we run a business together. I haven't been much help up to now so I'm going to be pretty busy evenings and weekends. I've got a lot of paying back to do. Dad, I didn't steal Coach Karlsson's ring, but I did take money from the till.

**Mr. Potter:** It was you? Not J.J.?

**Pogo:** Everyone else seemed to get what they wanted by lying and cheating so I thought I'd have a go. I didn't mean to get you into trouble, J.J. I know what it's like to be accused of something you didn't do. I'm sorry. Sorry for everything.

*(POGO hangs his head. MR. POTTER hugs him).*

**Mr. Potter:** Life hasn't been easy for either of us lately. But I'll tell you one thing, Pogo Potter.

**Pogo:** What?

**Mr. Potter:** Your Mum would have been proud to see the way you played today. I don't think you should give it up.

**Miss Umpleby:** I agree.

**Coach:** So think again, son. I need a quarterback like you in my team.

**Miss Umpleby:** He's got real promise. Even I can see that.

**Mr. Potter:** You join the team, Pogo.

**Pogo:** *(Delighted)*. Do you mean it Dad?

**Mr. Potter:** I was young once you know. *(He grabs an American football helmet and puts it on)*. Vroom! Vroom!

*(POGO, DEZZY and J.J. leap about in celebration. The BRATTIGANS start arguing and hitting each other).*

**All:** *(Chant)*. ***Rotherby Rockets are keen and mean  
The best offence you've ever seen.  
The rest can only stand and stare  
While Rotherby Rockets fly through the air!***

**THE END**







