



# ***Prologue***

Hi! I'm Luci. Luci Rankin. Mitchell's pretty good at telling stories, but now it's my turn to tell you about a Legends event.

We've just come back from camp. It was *fan-tastic!* Just like last year's camp, only it wasn't a surf camp like last year. And I'm not saying it was great *just* because I managed to win the first of the Legends events.

Now, just in case you haven't caught up with this whole Legends thing, let me put you in the picture.

I go to a school called Sandhurst. Every year they have a big sporting competition

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called the Legends Cup. Girls and boys get to compete in a whole range of different events. Just like Mitchell, I was new to the school last year. We both won the Legends competition — there's an overall winner for the boys and one for the girls — and were crowned Legends of Sandhurst at this awesome party at the end of the year. But there were at least two people not happy at that party — Travis Fisk and Mia Tompkins.

Poor Mitchell has to compete against the toughest kid in the school, Travis Fisk. Although Mia (my main rival from last year) has changed schools, a new girl called Karla Harris has arrived and looks like taking Mia's place as a fierce sporting opponent.

And I thought last year was tough!

Well, this year is an extra-special year for the Legends comp. It is the Anniversary Legends year — celebrating 70 years of Legends at Sandhurst. The school has made special gold trophies for each winner. There

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are going to be seven events during the year, and the boy and girl to win the most points overall will be given the Golden Legend of Sandhurst title.

The group of kids that I hang out with at Sandhurst include Becky, Mitch, Bryce, Bubba and Rat. The people I'd prefer to stay away from at school are Travis Fisk and Richard Mazis — two bullies whose main aims are to give us a hard time. Then there's Karla, who's come to Sandhurst this year. It's hard to know whether she's our friend or not. There's a list of names at the start of this story explaining who's who, just so you don't get confused.

What I like about the Legends is that anything can happen. Becky and I had spent most of the trip home from camp trying to imagine how the soccer program would pan out. Instead of thinking about the Legends, though, we should have been thinking about our next indoor soccer game.



# Chapter 1

## *Indoors*



Becky and I had joined an indoor soccer team called the *Sweet Strikers* to help improve our soccer skills. The team was made up of Sandhurst students, so it was always fun to play. Becky and I had been working on a special move over the summer and we'd decided to use it at our next game.

The Indoor Soccer Centre was always crowded — even more so on the weekends. It was a pretty relaxed atmosphere, but players were definitely there to win.

We needed space to make our move work. Becky had given me the nod which meant,

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‘Let’s do it’, as we suddenly found ourselves alone with no opposition within five metres. I lay the ball off in front of Becky. She stopped, with the ball at her feet. Then I ran behind Becky as she pushed the ball into the space in front of her and a little to her right. I ran onto it, one touch to set, then SMASH!

A moment later the buzzer sounded for the end of the first half. The spectators were on their feet clapping and smiling as we headed off the court. It was polite applause, though. We were down 5 to 2. With a player short, we would tire quickly in the second half, so things would only get tougher.

As we grabbed a drink from our water bottles, Becky nudged me.

‘Look,’ she said.

‘Yeah, I know. They’ve been here since just after the start,’ I replied, turning to wave quickly at Mitch, Bubba, Bryce and Rat. It was nice that they’d turned up to watch.

‘No, behind them. Over to the right.’



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I looked again. It was Karla.

‘What’s she doing here?’ I moaned.

‘Who cares,’ said Becky. ‘You reckon she wants to play with us?’

It sounded crazy but it just might work.

‘Why not? We’ve got nothing to lose — except a game of soccer.’ I called to our coach, jogging over to the other side of the centre. ‘Hey Gemma, I think we’ve found another player.’

Becky and I climbed the few rows of seats to where Karla was sitting.

‘Hi, Karla,’ I said.

Karla nodded.

‘Do you feel like a game?’ I asked, tentatively.

‘What, against the Hoods? You’ve gotta be joking,’ she laughed.

Most of the opposition team were Wetherhood school players. Sandhurst played sport against them and they were a tough bunch of kids.

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‘Why?’ asked Becky.

‘Why what?’ said Karla.

‘Why wouldn’t you play against them?’

Karla looked at Becky then over at me.

A smile spread across her face.

‘Yeah, why not? I’m an ex-Hoods student, but now I belong at Sandhurst. I’ll just go and slip into my pretty little *Sweet Strikers* uniform, shall I girls?’ Her tone had changed. ‘You idiots,’ she said. ‘I didn’t come here to play your sissy soccer. I came here for a break, a fag and a bit of time out. Now shove off.’

We stared at her.

‘What?’ she yelled.

‘But you don’t need a uniform,’ said Becky. ‘You can play—’

‘Becky, forget it. Nice attitude, Karla,’ I mumbled, turning away.

‘Straight back at ya, girlfriend,’ she hissed.

‘Wow, what did we do to deserve that?’ Becky asked.



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I hadn't come across anyone like Karla before. That girl was a real Jekyll and Hyde character.

'I guess that was a no then,' Mitch said.

The boys had been watching.

'Doesn't matter, we've got a plan,' he added, nodding to Bryce.

'C'mon, you two!' Gemma called out.

'Yeah, well it'd better be good,' said Becky.

'And quick,' I added.

'Becky, you go goalie and get Katie to go man-on-man on that little red-haired kid,' said Bryce. 'Luci, you sit up as high as you can and play the lone striker. Then—'

'Then?'

'Then we might actually stay until the end,' said Bubba, crunching down on a handful of chips.

'Don't let Karla take your chips,' I said.

Bubba was looking less sure of himself as we returned to the team huddle.

I relayed the plan to Gemma.

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‘It’s worth a try, I suppose. Good idea, Luci.’

‘Actually—’

‘Yeah, smart thinking, Luci,’ Becky interrupted, grinning. ‘C’mon, *Sweet Strikers*. We gotta score the first two.’

We jogged back to the centre of the pitch.

‘Katie, hassle your opponent. Get in her face,’ I said.

Katie was looking a bit anxious.

‘I know it’s not your style, but do it for the team,’ I added.

Katie had good skills and pace, but preferred to stay clear of the physical stuff. Becky took her place in goals and gave me the thumbs up.

I was still seething about Karla’s attitude. My first tackle was hard, and clumsy. The referee blew her whistle and motioned me over.

‘Any more slack tackling like that and you’re off, got it?’ she said.



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‘Bitch,’ said Wetherhood’s number 27 who I’d steamrolled.

I wasn’t having much fun tonight.

But my aggression had a positive effect. The Wetherhood players were looking for revenge. I held onto the ball, hoping for a bad tackle. It came. I was thrown off my feet and slid a few metres across the pitch.

‘Enough!’ yelled the referee, pointing at the kid who’d flattened me. ‘Off!’ she said.

I checked for broken bones, got up, re-adjusted my shirt and hurled a loose hair tie to the sideline. I stole a glance at Karla. She was smiling, a bag of chips in her hands.

‘Forward!’ Becky yelled at me.

I pushed on to the circle. Becky put the ball out to my right. I trapped it, then spun it back to evade the defender in front of me. I dribbled the ball back to the left and blasted away at goal. I don’t think the keeper even touched it. I heard Bubba cheering from the sidelines.

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I stayed high, up near the goal we were attacking. Becky pulled off a couple of saves but kept on throwing the ball over to team-member Penny who was under pressure. Our plan was in motion.

The Wetherhood players were pushing forward with Becky's short throws. Suddenly she belted a perfect pass over everyone's heads and onto my feet. I was one-on-one with the goalie. The goalie came out screaming. I put my foot on top of the ball and rolled it a metre to my right, into open space. The goalie couldn't stop her charge. I jumped her flailing body and calmly slotted the ball into the open net. I felt good as I jogged in to pick up the ball. The others had run down and were slapping me on the back.

'Guess we won't get away with it again,' I said as Becky patted me on the back.

No one scored any more goals, but we came off at the end of the game a lot happier than at half-time. And we were a lot happier



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than the Wetherhood team too, which was strange given that they'd still won the game.

'Pity there wasn't a third half,' Rat said. 'I reckon you had 'em on toast. I know a few of those girls. They were starting to play the man, not the ball—'

'Don't you mean the girl, Rat?' Bubba asked.

'Man. Girl. What's the diff?' said Rat.

'Well, for a start—' began Bubba.

'Go on, Bubba,' I teased.

Poor Bubba's face turned bright red.

'Anyway, Bubba, what happened to your chips?' I asked.

'My chips? Oh, yeah. Well, Karla was hungry—'

'And you gave her the whole packet?' Becky asked.

'I know. And it was a twin pack. I hadn't even taken the collector cards out.'

Rat stared at him, shaking his head, but smiling.