

# THE SOCCER STAR

DEENA GOMERSALL



*ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAS*

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**A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL**

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# THE SOCCER STAR

**By Deena Gomersall.**

Ever since they were young children, best friends Chris and Danny had supported their local soccer team, Bradfield United. The team was currently lodged in the second division and not really competing but both boys were overjoyed to learn that they had won tryouts with their favorite club.

Chris Lockwood was the more skillful of the two and preferred to play in a striker position while Danny Crompton was useful either in midfield or defense.

The trials went very well for both friends and they signed contracts with the club and, after training, they were put onto the field in the junior squad.

The trainer was delighted with both boys and they became regulars in the first squad junior team. Neither Danny nor Chris could believe their luck; playing for the club they adored was like a dream come true. Their fathers and grandfathers had supported the team before them.

Chris' dad, Ronald, could no longer attend the games as he had a heart problem but he was immensely proud of his son's achievements. He loved his only son very dearly and he would have been proud of anything he did but, to play for United made his aging heart glow.

Both boys made an immediate impact in the team and by the time they were nineteen they had made the first team squad playing against players they had long idolized.

Chris was the sort of boy who never bragged about his talents but his friend and teammates knew he possessed the skills to go all the way to the top.

Both boys found that being professional footballers also brought the attention of girls. Young female supporters often hung around to talk to the good looking players with their healthy bodies and muscular legs and Chris and Danny often had their choice.

Although Danny had his fair share of the girls, it was Chris who reigned supreme in this department too. He was a very good-looking boy with rich brown hair, dark bushy eyebrows, thick muscular legs and an athletic body. The other players were quite used to the girls queuing up just to see him and there was some friendly jealousy because he always seemed to have a different girl every week.

It was usual when the team played at home that after the match, the two friends would dress up and go clubbing in the town center. Often, each would take a girl home.

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In their first full season playing for the first team, Chris notched up twenty two goals. With Danny playing brilliantly in defense , Bradfield finished the season in their best position for eight years, coming in sixth.

Things were looking rosy, their team was playing well, the boys were successful in their chosen career and they were able to build up their bank balances to be able to enjoy the finer things in life.

In spite of having his pick of the girls, Danny had only really ever had his heart set on one, his school days' sweetheart, Kirsty Hamilton. During the off season that year he and Kirsty shocked everybody by suddenly getting married.

It was soon discovered that there was more than simple love involved with the impulsive wedding. Kirsty was five months pregnant.

Danny and Kirsty bought a home together and Chris moved out from his parents house and bought a luxury apartment flat. He also bought for his parents the council home they had lived in for over thirty years.

Success continued and at the end of their second full season in the first team Chris was his club's top scorer with thirty goals; the season after that, he broke the club's record with forty-one. Unfortunately, his Dad was not there to share the excitement with him; after his long illness. William had passed away just a month earlier.

Chris' Mum Rosy still had two of his sisters, Kate and Linda, living at home with her. The third sister, the second eldest, had moved out to live with her boyfriend.

Chris was not tied down to anyone and continued to play the field, happy with his freedom and the privacy of his apartment where he could take his current girlfriend when the occasion suited him.

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The pre-season was underway for Chris and Danny's third season in the first team. Extensive training began to get the players fit and, beginning the following week, the first of four pre-season matches was to be played.

Both Chris and Danny were now twenty-three years of age and as they had once idolized players from the stands, the Bradfield fans now idolized them.

It was an exciting time for Chris. Having broken the club's scoring record the season before, he now wanted to continue and score even more goals. The players were brimming with confidence and felt sure that this year they would be successful in their push for promotion; everyone was geared up and ready.

Chris glowed with pride when he learned that he had been selected as the new team captain. Danny was equally proud that Kirsty was pregnant with their second

child. Once again, life was great for the two boys. Chris even intimated that he might settle down with his current girlfriend, Franny.

The first pre-season game against Westborough City went well with a 4-1 win, with Chris scoring two of his team's goals and Rob Murray and Wayne Simpson getting the others.

The second game went much the same way. This time, the game ended 4-0 against Weighbridge Athletic. Chris had hit a hat trick and even Danny notched a rare goal.

The season started in a similar vein and after the first five games, Bradfield was leading the league. By the three-quarter mark, Chris had already hit thirty-three goals, the team was still leading the field, they were in the quarterfinals and Chris heard that scouts from the national team were coming to watch the next game with a view to selecting him to play for his country.

That made the game even more important than it already was. The game was away against second-place Warley Town. It was expected that Warley would be closely watching Chris through the entire game, so they carefully drew up new tactics.

As anticipated, Chris found two defenders on him every time he had control of the ball but he still managed to get a shot on target so that Bradfield went in at the half-time up 1 to 0.

Chris was guarded even closer in the second half.

In spite of having two players cutting down his field, Danny managed to send a crossover from the wing. Chris went to collect it at the same time as Warley's giant fullback came in with a two-footed tackle that caught Chris clean on his shin.

The star forward went down with a cry of pain, clutching his shin. The bone was broken clean in two and the ragged break had torn and protruded through his skin.

The game stopped abruptly; not a person in the entire stadium failed to hear the sickening crack. The trainer was quickly on the scene and did as much as he could to try and alleviate the pain and to keep Chris stable. A stretcher was called for and Chris was taken off the field. Shortly after, he was on his way to the hospital.

The terrible injury had taken the heart out of both teams and some players had been physically sick on seeing the protruding bone hideously peering out from Chris' shattered leg.

So sickened by it was the defender guilty of the tackle that he asked to be substituted.

With five minutes still to go, Warley tied the score and thus the game ended.

It was in the dressing room that the players learned the full extent of Chris Lockwood's injuries. The break was so bad that he was going to need a steel plate screwed into his shin to hold it together. He would be out of the game for at least two seasons.

All of the team's players visited regularly, not least Danny who came every day but nobody could raise the demoralized player's feelings.

It wasn't just the idea of being out of his beloved sport for two years; he had hoped to bring his team promotion in his first year as their captain and he had been on the verge of international team call up. That had now been taken away from him.

Chris had not only been a great player but he was also inspirational. He was a play maker and, with his happy go lucky personality, he would lift the team's spirits when they were at their lowest. Everyone missed his presence.

The team's performance quickly slumped and, in quick succession, they were out of the running for the cup. Hammered 5-1, they slipped to third place in the league.

As much as the team players loved and respected their top striker, what with things going badly on the field and with other matters arising, the visits ebbed off. Only Danny continued to visit regularly and he, too, would soon have to limit his time as Kirsty was closer to giving birth and he was needed more at home.

By the end of the season, missing Chris' goal scoring prowess and demoralized, Bradfield missed out on promotion to the first division by one point.

Then the most dreadful thing happened. As Kirsty went into labor and was rushed into the hospital, complications set in and she began heavy internal hemorrhaging.

It became touch and go. Kirsty died as her infant was delivered.

Danny, of course, was deep in grief with the loss of his beautiful wife and became a recluse for a while in his own home. His mother took daughter Angela to live with her during his grieving.

Chris heard of the tragedy within the hospital but, restricted as he was, he could do no more than send a message of condolence to his best friend.

The few players that still visited him occasionally gave their thoughts and time to Danny, so Chris was left with just his Mum and sisters as visitors along with the managing director, Arthur Jenkins who still visited his star when time allowed.

Time went by and the sadness Danny had in his heart eventually lifted and he gave more thought to his daughter Angela and his baby son Scott.

Just as he was getting back onto his feet and planning to visit his old mate, yet another body blow arrived to Danny and to everyone else involved with Bradfield United. The injury to Chris' leg was bad. The way it had snapped meant that the bone would never knit back together again strong enough for him to play professional soccer. Chris Lockwood's career was over.

Danny knew how his friend would be feeling, he had loved soccer and he had loved playing for his home team. It had been an immense honor to him to be captain and, right when he had a chance of playing for the national team, his hopes and dreams had now become as shattered as his leg.

Danny could not bring himself to see Chris face to face and so he phoned him at the hospital where he was still recovering.

"Hi buddy, it's me, Danny. How are you coping, big guy?" he asked.

"Danny! It's great to hear from you, but never mind about me, what about you? I can't express how sorry I am about Kirsty. She was really special."

“Yeah, tell me about it. Still, life goes on.”

There was a pause and Chris presumed that his friend was shedding silent tears. The hurt and loss was still there.

“Anyway. I just want to let you know how sorry the lads and I are about the news of your leg. You must be gutted.”

“Like you said, life goes on, mate. Keep it under your hat but I may play a part in Bradford yet. Arthur Jenkins is working on me joining the backroom staff or something.”

“That's great news. Listen, I really must get down to visit you as soon as I can. It's a bit tricky right now as looking after Angela and baby Scott is full time work, but I'll get there.”

“That sounds swell but put your kids first, mate. I'm going nowhere soon, just come over when you have the time.”

Danny's intentions and promises were good but his two children really did not allow him much free time. Before he realized it, training was back for a brand new season followed by a tour of Belgium and Holland playing demonstration matches.

It was from Holland that Danny phoned his friend again but he was surprised by Chris' voice. It sounded as if his health had taken a set back. His voice was soft and weak. Well, not “weak” perhaps, but definitely softer.

As they returned from their tour, two weeks before the start of the new season, a dispute erupted with the team's directors and manager.

The manager wanted money to buy a quality striker to replace Chris Lockwood but the board of directors told him that they simply couldn't afford it. Lockwood had been homegrown talent. To buy a worthy replacement in the present market would be take millions.

The manager gave an ultimatum.

“The fans here have waited for many seasons to see us get into the top flight. If we do not have a worthy goal scorer, we simply will not be able to live with the top teams of the division. Either you buy or I go.”

Arthur Jenkins wasn't over worried, he felt he had the situation in hand if the manager walked out and he didn't like ultimatums.

“I'm sorry, Ken, but the money simply isn't there. If you feel that you have to leave us, I'll be sorry to see you go, but we cannot come up with the kind of money you are talking about.”

Ken Bailey was as good as his word and tendered his resignation. He was an honest man and didn't like letting the supporters down. He knew the team would miss Chris and he didn't believe he had what it took to drive them along and get 100% out of them.

The team was stunned as they turned up for training. There was no new replacement striker, no inspirational Chris Lockwood and now, no team manager.

Arthur Jenkins addressed his demoralized troops. “We actually have a bright new player who has joined us for only 500,000. Cheap because of his inexperience and because he is still a teenager. But remember, Chris Lockwood joined us as a teen along with Danny and look what a great asset they both proved to be.”

“But we are still without a manager and with just a green striker.” Gary Ford spoke up for the rest of the lads.

Jenkins replied, “I’m sure that you will all be pleased to know that Chris Lockwood is returning as your new coach. We have already signed an agreement with him.”

This news had the effect of raising the team’s spirits instantly. If anyone could get them back on track and give them a lift, it was Chris.

“Just one thing though, lads. Chris has been through a lot since February and he is not the same person you may remember him being. All I ask is that you accept him as he is now, give him a chance.”

That statement was baffling to the squad but they rationalized that perhaps, due to his long incapacity, he had put on weight. Possibly, due to all his set backs, he had become more withdrawn, not as bubbly as he had been before. They would soon meet him again when he took over the reins officially at the beginning of the following week.

Everyone was eager to see him again except for Danny. Danny was feeling guilty about not having visited him for such a long time and not even keeping in touch. He had just been so busy.

It was the Monday morning before the start of the new season. All of the first squad and reserve team had turned up at the ground to commence training. They had met the new teenage striker, Bobby Goulding and were eagerly awaiting their friend and new manager, Chris Lockwood, to turn up.

Some suspected that he may still be on crutches; others believed, although the break was going to prevent him from playing again, by now he should be back on his feet.

It was Arthur Jenkins who brought the team’s new team manager into the changing room.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and gasped as Chris made his appearance behind Jenkins. It was not the fact that he had put on weight since they had last seen him, nor that he had let his hair grow out. It was that he was wearing a sleeveless, white shift dress with spaghetti straps that amazed them.

He was wearing white, low-heeled casuals on his feet, a pinkish red nail polish on his fingers and a touch of lipstick.

Jason Harding, the team’s black midfielder, began to laugh.

“Great get up, Chris.” He applauded. “Same as ever, always the one to do anything for a laugh and raise our spirits.”

The rest of the team began laughing with him, though Danny was astounded that his mate would turn up like that. He felt embarrassed for him.



Neither Chris nor Arthur Jenkins joined in the laughter; they stood silently with straight faces until the clamor died down.

“Men, I told you that Chris would appear differently to you. This is the way she will be turning up to work from now on,” Arthur informed them.

“Did you just say SHE?” one of the players asked.

“Yes I did and she would like you to refer to her not as Chris, but as Kristina from now on.”

Most of the players remained bemused, they were trying to figure out if this was not just one huge joke. Surely not Chris! Chris would never be the sort of person who wanted to live as a woman, he was too...well, too *manly*.

Danny remained in silent disbelief. This was his best friend, he knew Chris better than anyone. It could not be that he wanted to live as a woman. But, if somehow he really did, why had he never confided in his best friend about it?

The other players were outraged and disgusted, many voiced their opinions vocally.

“Is this some sick joke?” asked Craig Dwyer.

“For fuck sake, get that dress off and get into something masculine, Chris,” Elliot Walsh demanded.

“I thought you had damaged your leg, not your head,” Jason Harding quipped.

The general feeling in the dressing room was that the players were not prepared to allow some fairy faggot run their team for them. All the while, Chris stood and listened to the players who had, at one time, respected him so much, now call him a variety of disrespectful names.

“Kristina is still the same person that did so much for this soccer club and was a friend of every one of you. Perhaps you do not fully understand the enormous decision it takes to decide to become a woman or how much courage it has taken her to come in front of you today,” Jenkins told them.

“Never would have been a friend o' mine had I known he



was a sick transvestite homo,” Jason shot back.

“Is this what you are?” Danny spoke for the first time. “Are you a transvestite? Do you just get a kick out of dressing as a woman? And if he does, sir, isn't it going to bring shame and disrespect to the club's good name?” he asked, turning to Jenkins.

Kristina shot a look at her friend. “No, I'm not just a guy with some kind of fetish, Danny. I'm taking hormones in readiness for sex reassignment surgery.”

“You're changing sex!? You're going to become a woman?” Danny questioned incredulously. “I thought I knew you, Chris but you are...just sick. You are disgusting,” he blasted in hurt tones as he got up and walked out of the dressing room.

Arthur Jenkins remained unfazed by the rebellion. “You gentlemen are here to train. That's what you get paid for, so get out onto the pitch and start doing just that. If anyone has a problem with your new manager then I'll be happy to put you onto the transfer list.”

The players filed out, many shooting looks of disgust at the person before them who now asked to be called Kristina. They were mumbling to themselves and far from happy.

“I knew this would be a bad idea, Arthur. I'll understand if you want to get yourself a new coach. The team must come first and the season starts on Saturday.”

“You remain just where you are. I've accepted you and if they cannot, then that's their problem. They'll come 'round, they just need time.”

Kristina joined the players on the pitch and tried to run them through a series of training courses with the team trainer and try out different techniques and maneuvers but she was largely ignored. The team did their own thing and at the end of the day they showered, changed and went home, still without a word to their former friend.

The same behavior happened the following day and, as Kristina was passing by the bath and shower room, she saw a hand written sign stuck to the wall: “Team managers and other ponces KEEP OUT”.

It took a lot of will power for Kristina to go into work on Wednesday. She arrived before anyone else.

Walking around the ground she loved so much, she went into the stand where she used to watch United play. She sat down in one of the plastic seats; she was wearing a smart, white, double breasted coat that hid her cotton and lace blouse and simple black skirt. She crossed her bare legs and hooked her linked fingers around her knee, reflecting.

She, her dad and Danny used to come here starting when she was seven. It had always been exciting on big match days. Back then, she never would have dreamed she would become a star player or be appointed as team manager. She certainly never dreamed she would be sitting one day up in the West stand in a blouse and skirt.

Great days, happy days. She reflected back on the great players of the club's past and of her own teammates and the great games she had played in. How she loved this club, how her Dad had.

"I hope you are not ashamed of me, Dad," She said aloud. "You would have been so proud that I was team captain but would you also be proud that I am now the team's manageress?"

Kristina looked into the bright blue sky as if awaiting her Dad's blessing or condemnation. There was no sign, no sudden icy wind or bright ray of sun, nothing.

"What really hurts is that I have lost my best friend in all this," she continued.

"And what hurts me is that I have lost mine, only mine has gone without a trace," a voice said from behind, making her jump.

Kristina turned her head to see her friend Danny.

"Why Chris? Why have you done this to yourself?" Danny asked, obviously confused by his friend's change of gender. "You were always such a man, a ladies man. Hell, I was constantly jealous of your pick-up talents."

"I guess I was living a lie, Danny. As long as I can remember, I have always felt different. Maybe it was because I was brought up among three sisters and had no brothers. I don't know, but I have always had a strong feminine side about me."

"But, you're not the least bit feminine. You have always enjoyed dating and fucking girls. You, you aren't bisexual, are you?"

"No, I have never been with another man...or even fancied one. I was happy dating girls, even making love to them. I could never have had an affair with a man. I honestly am not homosexual. I did often wish I could be just like my sisters though and wear the pretty things they wore."

"So, how long have you been secretly crossdressing?"

"I haven't. I was born male and, as much as I wanted to, I had always felt wearing women's clothes, like dating men, would be wrong. I suppressed my feelings for years. I wore female clothing for the first time after coming out of the hospital. It was there that I decided to become a woman."

"But you've never seemed any different to any of the other guys. Why did you hide it all these years?"

"Afraid of coming out, afraid of the stigma or the self admittance. The biggest reason, though, was my love for soccer. I always wanted to become a player and it was always my dream to play for United. As you know only too well, it is only a few years ago that the world stopped frowning on girls who loved and wanted to play soccer and only recently that girls have been allowed to form teams and play in leagues of their own without scorn or ridicule.

"No, if I wanted to make my dream a reality, I had to suppress my feminine side and work on being masculine. Now that the break has ruined my career so that I can never play soccer again, there is nothing to really hold me back anymore, especially now that Dad is gone and I only have females in my family."

"I take it your mum and sisters all know what you are doing then?" Danny asked.

“Oh yes. We have no secrets. Mum was far from sure that I was doing the right thing, Adele thought it amusing but both Kate and Linda encouraged me. Indeed they've supplied me with many of their old clothes to get me started.”

Danny looked down at his friend's naked legs that were just on the plumpish side due to the breakdown of his muscle tone and lack of exercise during his long hospital confinement. His face was also on the chubby side and he had a slight paunch. Danny also noticed that his friend's previously hirsute legs were now smooth and devoid of any hair.

“So what do you do, shave your legs?” he questioned.

“I use depilatory cream actually,” Kristina replied.

“Don't you feel strange or embarrassed walking about in women's clothes and high heels?” he asked seriously.

“I did at first, certainly going out into public for the first time. I began to get used to it after a little while, especially when I was assured that people weren't perceiving me as a man in drag but really took me to being a woman. I was dead nervous about turning up in front of the players on Monday.

“I haven't dressed overly feminine yet and I have never worn high heels, just flats or one-inch heels like these. I am supposed to dress in public as a woman as part of the condition or they would refuse the surgery...I have to be able to pass comfortably in public.”

“You can't seriously be considering having a sex change though, Chris. You're my best friend, we grew up as kids together. I know you, it just isn't you.”

“I know that it's hard for you to accept but it's even harder for me to become a woman. If you are still my best friend I really need your support and understanding right now, please. It's such a major upheaval for me and there's so many different things I have to adapt to.

“My sisters are giving me great help and encouragement as well as beauty and dressing tips but I'd really like to think I had you on my side too. It has really hurt the last few days when you have been refusing to even talk to me.”

“I'm sorry, Chris, but you have to understand how hard all of this is on me. You should have told me, confided in me sooner. Give me a bit of time, mate. I just need more time to fully absorb it all. I'm losing my best buddy here.”

The two walked back out of the stand together and towards the main offices.

“What do you call really feminine anyway?” Danny asked.

“Huh?”

“You said that you haven't dressed overly feminine yet but what do you call wearing dresses and skirts? Don't you consider them feminine??

“Oh, I see. I mean anything revealing or scanty, or what may be called femininely sexy. I wear skirts but I don't have too much of a problem with that. After all, I've been used to running around in soccer shorts for long enough. I keep the hem of my skirts moderately long though, I haven't the legs to wear anything too short.”

“You do seem to have put some weight on...and your leg muscles have gone. You used to have the best-developed set of legs in the team.”

“The hormones break down masculine muscle mass and fatty deposits build up in certain places. It's supposed to be around my breast area and hips but I'm getting it on my thighs, calves and butt, too. Plus, I have extra weight from lack of exercise and the hormones also cause extra weight at first. I'm hoping to use the gym to work out and tone myself up a bit though.”

“Er, Chris...your chest. Is it, er...are they...?”

“I have started breast development, yes, Danny. They aren't much just yet, just an A supplemented by some inserts in my bra to give me a bit more shape. I've been on hormone treatment since the middle of March. Oh, by the way, don't forget, it's Kristina now.”

“Fucking hell man, I can't get my head around this. The kid I've know and grown up with since infancy wears dresses, is developing tits and wants to be called Kristina, It's all too much to accept just yet.”

Danny was much less hostile that day and tried to be more cooperative and understanding but he was greatly saddened with the knowledge that his friend was changing sex.

New trouble arrived later in the day as Kristina sat in her office. Two players, Rob Murray and Elliot Walsh came in and asked to be placed on the transfer list.

Kristina stopped her work on the computer and turned to face the men.

“Is this because of me?” she asked them outright.

“Yeah, because of you, and don't be surprised if others join us. Once this thing leaks to the press, we are all going to be a laughing stock. We'll be humiliated on the field by opposing players and have to bear the taunts of both the opposing and our own fans.”

“You are surmising and you are also thinking only of yourselves. Neither of you can have the heart and desire to play for this team if you have to run from the shame you say I am bringing to the club. We don't need players like you.

“I love this club and I would do anything for it, neither of you can deny that I gave it 101% on the field as a player.”

“If you really love the club, stop poncing about like a woman. We love the club, too, and we don't want to stand idly by and see you destroy it.”

“I'm sure not everyone will be as bigoted as you. Let's wait and see, shall we? Meanwhile, if you insist, then I will put you on the list but, until you move to another club you are contracted with us. We have our first game on Saturday and, no matter what your feelings are about me, I expect everyone to go out and do their utmost for the club.”