

:(Sad

JOEY HEARD Mum's footsteps and glanced at the clock on his screen. He typed as quickly as he could with two fingers.

Have 2 go. Told Mum I'm in bed.
Back online tomorrow.
Does Yanni play soccer too?
C U L8ter
😊 Joey

"Joey, are you still emailing Nathan?"

"No, Mum. I'm finished," called Joey, scurrying into bed, hoping she couldn't hear him. His head throbbed as he thought about Nathan's latest message.

Why did Nathan like this Yanni kid so much already? Nathan had only just moved away. It was supposed to be hard to fit into a new school and find new friends, but all Nathan ever talked about was Yanni.

Joey rolled over. Maybe Yanni would turn out to be very uncool and Nathan would stop liking him. What if Yanni collected Barbie dolls? That would be funny. Or he could be the kind of kid who still sucks his thumb and takes a teddy to bed, Joey thought.



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That night, Joey dreamed he and Nathan were playing soccer for the Linfield Under 9s. Yanni was there, worse luck.

“Pass the ball to me, Nathan!”
Joey panted.

But Nathan passed to Yanni instead. Then Yanni scored and gave everyone a high five, except Joey.





At half time, Nathan came over to Joey, holding a rope. Just when Joey was about to ask why, Nathan said, “Come on, Joey. Good dog,” and began to tie him to the goal posts.

“Nathan, what are you do-
WOOFing?”

Joey tried to speak again.

“WOOF!”

Nathan patted Joey’s head and went back onto the field, leaving Joey staring at his new tail. If he could only get onto that field, he’d sink his doggy teeth into Yanni’s stupid ankles.

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In the distance, Yanni scored again and the team went wild. “WOOF!” Joey barked in disgust, straining at the rope and growling fiercely.

“You were growling, Joey,” said Mum when she woke him the next morning. “Now be a good doggy and go and have a shower. There’s a nice bone in the fridge for your breakfast.” She laughed all the way to the kitchen.