

UP'N UNDER

John Godber

Phil enters with a hot-water bottle, wearing a dressing gown.

PHIL: It's a very funny thing, when I was playing at school I never got nervous. I never had a thought about the game but tonight I'm like a bag of nerves... I've been to the toilet... back to bed... I'm going to the toilet again in a minute.... I'm sweating, sweat's dripping down my brow, even my palms are wet... I'll have to hope that I can, well... drift off to sleep.

He falls asleep and suddenly wakes.

And there i was, playing at Wembley in the Challenge Cup Final against the mighty Featherstone...There was hundreds and hundreds of bloated red faces looking down on me...I was on the wing and hundreds of yards away from the rest of the team. Featherstone looked massive... I gazed up and caught flashes of their kneecaps... They ran through to score, I glimpsed sight of hairs on the palms of their hands. We were losing... we needed a try. There was five minutes to play... there was an incident off the ball...'Gerroff me, fat pig.' I saw a gap, big as an ocean opening up in front of me...'pass the ball...pass the ball!' And then it came out of a blur, the ball... God , I was nervous...ilsaw it coming towards me... daren't take my eye off it...I caught it and i ran...but the faster I ran the slower i went...I looked around for someone to pass to...but they were all having lunch...sat down having lunch in the middle of Wembley Stadium...'Go on, Phil,' they said, ' Go on...run mate, run'... and i was on the underground, going down the Piccadilly Station, running and they were all running after me... then a policeman stopped me and i tried to explain but he wanted my name and where I lived...I hit him...and ran... It was like running in a dream...jumping over buildings and landing at different places... but wherever I landed they were still there, coming around the corner...i ran up an alleyway...I was cornered...I ran towards them...I just closed my eyes and ran...