#### SYNOPSIS: DIVIDED CITY by Theresa Breslin (Characters when first mentioned are in **Bold**)

The story is set in modern Glasgow, in late May, and the action takes place over a week and a half.

**Graham**, a keen Rangers supporter, lives on the outskirts of the city and is taking a short cut via a lonely dark street to catch the bus home after school football practice. He is a slightly over-protected only child and his parents don’t know he takes a short cut so he can spend his bus money on chips. He witnesses a gang of boys stabbing an Asylum seeker, **Kyoul,** and goes to help him after the gang has run away.

**Joe**, a keen Celtic supporter, is used to being out and about on his own and lives near the city centre. He is also going home from the same football practice but he stops off at his Granny’s hairdressing shop. His **Granny** and his **Aunt Kathleen**, who works there, like to go the Bingo on a Friday so they pay Joe to clear up the place for the busy weekend ahead.

Both Graham and Joe are very good football players but, have discovered when they play together on the same team, their combined skills are better than very good – they’re brilliant.

Joe sensed a slight hesitation on Graham’s part to shake hands with him when they first met and suspects it’s because he mentioned the name of his church as *St Veronica’s* and wonders if Graham doesn’t want to be friends with someone who is a Catholic.

Graham *did* hesitate when meeting Joe, because in his mind was the thought of his Grandad’s attitude to Catholics. Graham loves his **Grandad Reid** (a passionate Orangeman) and goes to the Rangers’ match with him every Saturday.

Graham calls an ambulance and goes with Kyoul to the hospital. He leaves quickly so that his parents won’t find out what has happened, but not before Kyoul has persuaded him to take the mobile phone he is carrying back to **Leanne,** the girl he has fallen in love with. Graham tries to do this the next morning. He gets lost and wanders into the Garngath (the Garngad), a predominantly Celtic supporting area. He is nervous as he is wearing Rangers colours underneath his now hastily zipped-up jacket. He is set upon by **Jammy** but is bailed out by Joe who lives there and the boys set out for Leanne’s house together to return the phone. Leanne begs them to visit Kyoul secretly in hospital which they do, twice, but are almost caught by a nurse who wants to find out information about Kyoul as the police are investigating the stabbing attack. **Mr Sinclair**,a patient, helps them out, and ultimately helps Kyoul by offering him his flat to live in; as he knows that he himself is dying.

Meanwhile Graham’s **Grandad Reid**, a proud and lifelong Orangeman, hopes that Graham will march in the forthcoming Orange Walk. **Graham's Mum,** a secretary in a law firm and his **Dad**, a dentist, have told Graham it is up to him to decide if he wants to take part.

Joe looks after his **Dad**, who doesn’t go out of the house on his own and waits for Joe to take him to the Celtic matches. Joe’s dad, an educated and thoughtful person, who is suffering depression after the death of Joe’s Mum a few years ago, and Aunt Kathleen and her husband **Uncle Tommy** (a Partick Thistle supporter) have tolerant attitudes, unlike Joe’s **Uncle Desmond** and one of Joe’s cousins, Jammy,who hangs about Joe’s house, and reacts aggressively to situations.

Graham’s parents have a conversation together, where Graham’s dad points out that it is deprivation that divides cities and is the root cause of much trouble.

When Joe finds out Graham is thinking about taking part in the Orange Walk the boys have an argument but set it aside to play football together as they desperately want to be included in the team which is due to play the next Sunday.

After the incident at the second hospital visit Graham is so terrified the police will recognise and arrest him that the following Friday night he allows Joe to try to dye his hair a different colour. Just before this happens Leanne lets the boys know that Kyoul is safe.

In the hairdresser’s shop what should have been blond streaks come out bright green. Graham is furious. He yells at Joe and runs off. Joe shouts back and decides to go with Jammy to throw stuff at the Orange Parade the next day. Joe’s Dad senses something is wrong and speaks to him putting forward a more reasonable point of view.

Joe changes his mind and pulls Jammy away from causing trouble at the Orange Walk but when he is on his way home and told by a policeman to avoid the route of the Walk he suddenly gets angry and decides that *he* can walk where he wants. He is just about to cross in front of the marchers when his dad grabs his shoulder and stops him. Joe is amazed and pleased that his Dad has managed to get himself out of the house. They go home together.

The next day, Sunday, before the Youth Team play, Joe makes a huge effort to be friends with Graham. Graham accepts his apology and tells Joe he is going to tell his parents and the police about the stabbing. Joe offers to go with Graham when he is doing this. Their friendship is cemented by a handshake and they run off to play their first team game together.

So… despite differences of religion, tradition and home circumstances, Joe and Graham are united by their love of football, and the club they hope to play for - a new Glasgow City Youth Team - and ultimately the story is about friendship.

Theresa Breslin