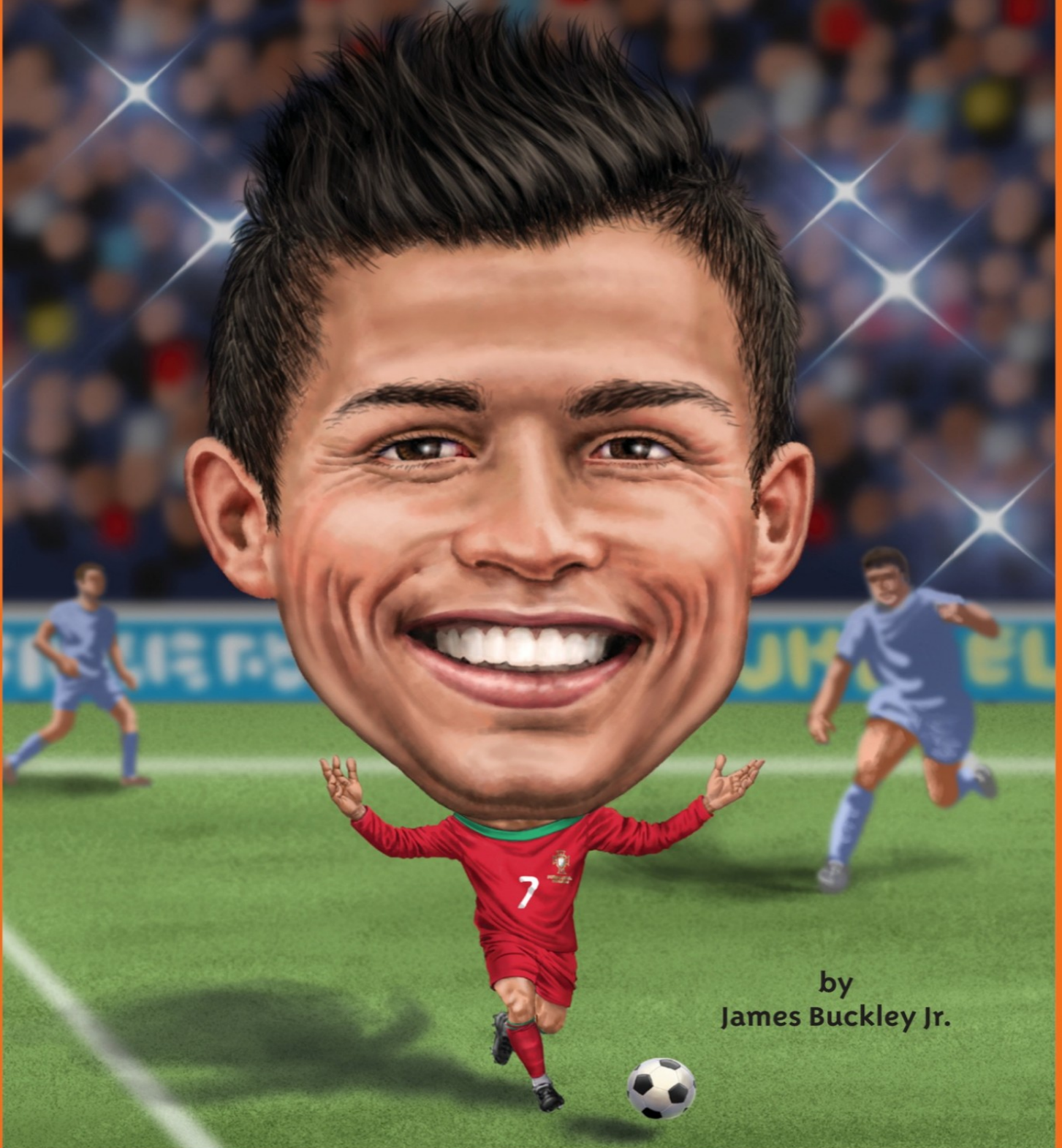


The #1 New York Times Best-Selling Series



Who Is Cristiano Ronaldo?



by
James Buckley Jr.

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illustrated by Gregory Copeland

Penguin Workshop

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

ISBN 9780593226346 (paperback)
ISBN 9780593226353 (library binding)
ISBN 9780593226360 (ebook)

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To the Renegades, who keep me young as we all try to “be
like Ronaldo”—JB

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Who Is Cristiano Ronaldo?

The world's greatest soccer player was crying. He was not sad. He was shedding tears of joy. At a star-studded ceremony, Cristiano Ronaldo had just won the 2013 Ballon d'Or (French for "Golden Ball"), a trophy given to the year's top player. He had won the award before, in 2008, but it had been five long years since he had taken home this important honor. This time, he did not come onto the stage alone. His three-year-old son, Cristiano Jr., had scampered up to follow his dad.

Tears flowed as Cristiano spoke in Portuguese, his native language. He thanked his mother, Dolores, and his family. He thanked his teammates and coaches. And for the first time on any stage, he tearfully thanked his son for being in his life.



A
OR

For soccer fans, seeing Cristiano Ronaldo cry was not that unusual. For a decade, he had been part of some of the greatest teams and championships in world soccer, first for Sporting Lisbon in Portugal, then for Manchester United in England. Since 2009, he had been with Real (say: ray-AHL) Madrid in Spain. He had helped his teams take home trophies that brought tears of joy. He had also wept in disappointment when he could not help his national team from Portugal do the same.

Why all the tears for a game? For billions of people around the world, soccer is much more than a game. For Cristiano Ronaldo, too, it is an obsession. From almost as soon as he could walk, he had a burning desire to be the best in the game. It took a lot of hard work, a lot of talent, and a bit of luck, but now, on this stage in Switzerland, he could say that he had made it.

On the awards show stage, Cristiano stood proudly with his son by his side. They were like an island amid a sea of cheering fans. His story, however, begins on another island entirely.