

# **SPIRIT OF THE GAME**

by

**Geoff Francis**

First published in Great Britain in 2010 by Bonobo TV.

This edition 2012

[www.bonobo.tv](http://www.bonobo.tv)

Copyright © 2010 Bonobo TV

The moral right of Geoff Francis to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-907729-08-9

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, organisations, places and events are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
Lightning Source (UK) Ltd, London

# Introduction

When I was seven years old I was asked, 'What are you going to be?' I replied, 'I am going to be an artist or I am going to be Stanley Matthews.' In those days the slightest prowess with a ball earned the accolade - 'Hey, Stanley Matthews!' The comparison made many a young boy feel proud.

Eventually, I have become recognised as an artist and this, in turn, has allowed me to fulfil the other part of my naive prediction.

I wrote a script which I adapted to this short novel. Both have allowed me to engage with and give a voice to the life of Stanley Matthews. It truly has been a privilege.

Everyone I have met along the way who would enthusiastically tell me a story about Stan, has opened their remarks with, 'What a gentleman.' And that's a good place to start. Because that gentleman embodied qualities of sportsmanship which are sorely needed in the modern game. And modern life, too. His personal integrity and humility formed the bedrock of his sporting psyche. Stanley Matthews was the world's most famous player. Bigger than any of those whose reputation is driven by the multinational media machine. He was, without question, the greatest player of his time and probably of all time.

Here is his story for a new generation. Many of those who thought they knew all about Stanley Matthews might be surprised at what is revealed in Jamie Steele's voyage of discovery. I know I was.

Special thanks to all those many people who have been supportive of the project particularly Jean Gough, Stanley Matthews Jnr., Bob Gough, Frances Sherwin, Freddie Francis, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Sir Stanley Matthews Foundation, Kick It Out, John Cross, Lucy Boynton, Geoff Oakey and Paul Windridge.

# Chapter 1

The words of The Who's "*Can't Explain*" throbbed in his ears. He had played the same song a thousand times. Today it matched his mind. Never had the words, recorded thirty years before his birth, had such resonance. He was feeling sad. There were some obvious reasons why, but there was also something deep inside which he couldn't touch, or wasn't willing to examine.

He had played the song a thousand times. Today it matched his mind. Never had the words, recorded thirty years before his birth, had such a resonance.

Jamie could still feel the early morning's chill, despite the car windows being locked against it. He would have run the engine but Carol (a true green) had made off with the keys just to make sure he didn't. At least that's how he saw it. He was \*\*\*\*\* off with the world, big time. Firstly it was morning, early morning, barely 6 o'clock and that would have been reason enough. Many nights recently, proper rest had been hard to come by. He had been on the internet 'til 2, when he had finally found the right images to help him ease his way into sleep. But good and necessary as it was at the time, that always left him tired and somehow sullied the next morning. And this was that morning.

He looked closely at Carol as she stamped her feet on the pavement to keep warm. She was waiting for the woman who was taking over her alternative health clinic to come and collect the keys. He watched how men who passed looked at her. Even those of his own age. None of the girls on the net looked that good. The cold intensified with his tiredness.

At last the woman showed. Carol handed over the keys. He watched her mouth.

*"It's all yours now."*

She smiled and held the woman's hands for a few extra moments then released the keys into them before heading towards the relative warmth of the car. Jamie fired up his laptop. Google Earth opened, he clicked on England and eventually Stoke. As he did, the image flashed momentarily of the statue of a footballer. He typed in the postcode of his current location London NW4. Carol climbed into the driver's seat next to him.



# Chapter 2

Four weary hours later, they drew up outside a terraced house split to two flats. As the right hand front door opened a dread welled in Jamie's stomach. There stood a tall attractive fit black man, who probably even now could have run him close over 100 metres and Jamie was fast! He had liked Amos. He had been around forever, or at least since a year or so since his dad had left - or rather not come back from a tour. His mum had met Amos at a Womad festival. They had even taken him to a few music events. They were occasional friends, just friends. Then they got married! They had certainly kept that quiet.

He felt betrayed, angry and jealous. They kissed with a passion which was restrained for his sake, but his eyes saw how their hands lingered on each other. His face told them that he had recognised their true longing. He dragged his bags out of the boot and into the hall. Amos pointed the way to his room. Jamie shot there as quickly as possible. He shut the door forcefully, rifled in his bags for the station for his iPod; and as soon as he had set it up, slammed in the player, racking it to maximum volume.

*"I'm bleeding for you. You want to cut me into little pieces"*

He closed his eyes to beat away the frustration. An innocent throat was cut in the vision of a fleeting memory. There was no solace anywhere. He sensed the intimacy happening in the next room and there was no place for him. He had to get out of there. He slipped out of the room and downstairs to the front door, pausing just briefly to confirm in his own mind that Amos and his mum had no interest in him.

Headphones in his ears and the message of isolation being repeated with each track, he eventually found himself in a park. He sat down on a bench, drew his knees up to his chest staring but not seeing, listening only to his pain. Suddenly a ball intruded

on his loneliness. A gang of youths gesticulated at him to kick it back. As he went to control the ball it slipped away. Automatically he stretched out his left foot, rolled the ball onto his instep and began to juggle it before sending it back to the group.

They applauded and catcalled, then beckoned him over. They were all wearing blue and yellow United shirts with Allen 9 on the back. By the time the kick-about was over the football bond had been sealed. The lads all looked to be about his age; 15 or 16. Peter was a good ball player and probably intelligent in other ways, Jamie thought. On the other hand Joe was not. He was barely past fourteen, thin and wiry. He was afraid of no one and a real head case. A vicious tackler even in the kick around. The others took their lead from Will, the eldest, turned out he was a few days into his eighteenth year. He was an overweight bullyboy who really was no player at all, but a clogger who could be an effective spoiler, he conjectured. And they seemed to think that he, Jamie, was OK.



# Chapter 3

Jamie was there with the gang at the next United home game, sporting his new Allen 9 shirt as he chanted with them for his newly adopted hero, Allen.

Although he loved the adoration of the crowd, Allen's ear was fixed on one voice only amongst the thousands. United's manager was expelling a constant stream of foulmouthed abuse in Allen's direction. He was a manager of the old school. He still held to the system he had learned in the army - destroy the individual and mould him into someone who has stopped thinking, if ever they could,. That is, someone who stops thinking, if ever they could, and does exactly what they are told. His latest invective spurred Allen to drift to the wing and take the ball past an in form 19-year old fullback from Sierra Leone. The clash was very physical. As the fullback took the ball away, the manager hurled more abuse. Riven with anger, Allen briefly made ape gestures with his arms.



As Jamie took in the events unfolding around him, a big smile crossed his face. He joined the others in making monkey noises. Instantly, the crowd turned on them and he felt some confusion.



Meanwhile, Allen was going all out to get his own back. Within a few seconds he was within lunging distance. The ball was of no interest to him, he took off with both feet catching the fullback right behind the knees. As they hit the ground Allen raked his studs into the vulnerable area where they had landed.

As he went to get up he spotted the referee and a number of opposition players running towards him. He decided it was a good idea to feign injury. The ref stood over him holding back the other players.

*“Can you walk?”*

Allen tentatively put his foot to the turf.

*“I think so ref.”*

*“Then walk down the tunnel. You’re off!”*

Allen’s pretended injury left his mind. He jumped up put his hands to his hips and his face in the ref’s until his captain physically dragged him to the touchline. Even then he was about to return until he caught the boss’s eye. That glare said *“Get out of my sight”*. At that point he set off down the tunnel at speed, but not before he turned to the crowd where the boys were sitting and gave the Allen salute, a vital part of any goal celebration, and now it was his final shot at bravado. He clenched his fist and raised it to shoulder height from the elbow. On first sight, to Jamie it looked like the spoof Nazi salute on the vintage comedy programme *“Allo, Allo”*. Of course he wasn’t inclined to share this with the others who were saluting their hero back.

After the match, it soon became clear that the game was not the only reason they were there. The adrenaline was running high in his veins as he lashed and kicked out at any face or body which was sporting the wrong colours and up for the fray. He felt a release for all the anger he had inside and it felt so good. He was sure he had never felt so free! A policeman’s arms wrestled him to the ground and bundled him into a van.

# Chapter 4

Amos' eyes were cast down. It was a survival strategy. He had learned it long ago and now it had become automatic when in close proximity to uniformed authority in whatever shape or form. Once again, and totally unexpectedly, he was standing at the desk in a police station. Across from him stood a late middle-aged sergeant, a man who had seen it all and was looking forward to retiring in a year or two. Amos was making a case for Jamie to this world-weary man.

*"I grew up in South Africa under apartheid, I know what bad is."* Amos' eyes shifted. *"And I know that boy doesn't have it in him."* He thought again and added *"Not deep down. He's only fifteen years old, he's impressionable and ..."*

Manifesting his weariness the Sergeant replied, *"Spare me the social psychology, I have to deal with the reality every day."*

Amos thought of Carol. *"To me, he is the reality."*

The sergeant searched Amos' eyes, looking hard at him, weighing him up.

*"Well Mr Matkoni, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give that boy of yours the benefit of the doubt and release him with a caution."* Jamie's face reacted. He went to speak. The policeman cast an eye in his direction and continued, *"But it will be your responsibility. I don't want to see him in here again."*

Amos' relief was palpable.

*"Thank you, sir,"* he responded automatically and immediately.

The sergeant gave Amos a worried look. Amos afforded a quick embarrassed smile.

The sergeant passed his paperwork over for signature, then turned his attention to Jamie.

*“Jamie Matkoni, I’m giving you a formal caution.”*

Jamie exploded, *“That’s not my name, he’s not my father, blind are you?”*

The sergeant looked at him. Jamie shut up. He continued, *“Your father has persuaded me that you’d be better off outside a juvenile institution than in. I think he’s wrong!”* Jamie dropped his eyes and glanced at Amos. *“I’m releasing you into his charge.”*

*“But...”*

*“You’re in his charge. You screw up and he’s in trouble as well as you. Do you understand?”*

Jamie could not help but smile at the thought of all the problems he could cause for Amos.



# Chapter 5

Inside the most fashionable club in town, Allen was boosting his punctured ego. He was putting back the beer with some teammates and hangers on. It is an accepted wisdom in such circumstances that the more inebriated a man is, the more devastatingly attractive he becomes to the opposite sex. And for Allen, his status as a footballer inflated his sense of being even more fatally attractive. Despite what had happened with the boss, he was still more than a match for any man in this crowded room.

He began working his magic on a young blonde girl caked in make-up. She was standing at the other end of the bar with another, younger, shyer-looking girl. He could see a couple of guys had been chatting them up for some time. The girl knew she was being eyed up and was relishing the attention. She whispered to her friend, they both looked over at Allen and giggled. She became more animated, dancing provocatively with one of the guys while flirting with Allen over his shoulder.

Across town, Amos and a sullen and resentful Jamie were walking down the steps of the police station. They crossed the car park and climbed into Carol's car.

Allen stepped out of the gents, rubbing at his nose and sniffing hard. He noticed the blonde girl and her mate were now dancing on their own. Both were a little worse for wear. Feeling good, he coolly made his approach.

*“Want another drink, babe? Or do you wanna go somewhere a bit quieter?”*

The girl looked at her mate, who giggled.

*“What about you, darling? You can take your pick of that lot.”*

He indicated his mates, one looked up and, catching on, raised his glass to the girl.

Allen returned his attention to the blonde and whispered something in her ear. She giggled again, squirming as Allen groped at her and went in for a kiss. She responded easily. The guys who had been chatting up the girls up earlier were returning to their quarry with a round of drinks. One of them spotted Allen moving in on his girl. He strode towards them purposefully, but Allen and the girl were too busy with each other to notice him. He grabbed Allen’s shoulder and spun him round.

*“Get your \*\*\*\*\* hands off her.”* He looked at the girl pointedly, *“What you doing? I thought we had something going here!”*

Enraged that he had been manhandled, Allen responded for her, *“Well, obviously the lady’s changed her mind. Ain’t that right, darlin’?”* The girl smiled, stupidly.

The man flew at Allen, landing him a good right hook. Allen stared at him in disbelief. He picked up a high bar stool and smashed it on the ground. Picking up one of the legs, he held it out towards the man.

*“Come on then, you want some?”*

Allen’s mates crowded round, encouraging him. A black bouncer noticed the commotion and speaking quickly into his walkie talkie waded into the trouble spot. As he grabbed Allen and held him back, the other security staff piled in. Their night had started relatively early. But it was often that way when footballers were in.

Amos drove as Jamie sat in the back looking out at the night life spilling onto the pavement as clubs emptied out. With his headphones on and cocooned in the car, what Jamie saw and what he heard were separate channels of life melding in a strange alien romance.

Amos tried to break in.

*“You alright, Jamie?”*

There was no reply.

*“Lucky escape, eh?”* Amos caught Jamie’s eye in the rear view mirror for a fleeting moment. Jamie quickly looked away. *“Suit yourself.”* Amos said, sadly, and carried on driving.

Suddenly Jamie burst out, *“I didn’t ask you to do that you know.”*

*“What?”*

*“Persuade that copper to let me go.”*

*“I didn’t, he persuaded himself.”*

Jamie stayed silent. Taking a chance, Amos continued, *“I let him know how it was.”*

*“How what was?”*

*“Just our circumstances. You know, how you’ve moved from London, and stuff.”*

*“What stuff?”*

*“Does it matter? You’re here now and your mum will be able to sleep, for tonight at least.”*

*“Thanks to Amos the great! Might have known you weren’t doing it for me.”*

Ignoring this reaction, Amos remembered Carol. *“Talking of your mum, better give her a call and let her know you’re a free man!”*

A red light halted their progress. Amos took the opportunity to dial home on his mobile. As the phone rang, the face of Allen,

contorted into an ugly mask, was suddenly pressed hard against the windscreen. He stared in at Amos.

*“Oj! Black \*\*\*\*\*! Get the n\*\*\*\*\* out, we’ll show him whose country this is!”*

Jamie was thrilled to recognise his hero, but confused as Allen dragged Amos from the car. He could hear Carol’s voice through the phone which had fallen onto the front seat.

*“Hello?... Amos?...”*

Amos was pushed to the ground. Footballers’ legs in fashionable shoes were kicking every part of Amos’s exposed body. He tried to protect himself, curling into a tight living football.

Standing in the middle of the room, the phone clutched to her ear, Carol could hear the distant sounds of the beating.

She screamed, *“Amos! What’s going on?”*

In a state of hysteria she forced herself to disconnect, then dialed 999

Jamie watched from the car, shocked but excited. He kept looking down at the phone but couldn’t pick it up. The two girls were among the on-lookers. People hurried by, no one tried to intervene. Police sirens closed in. The blonde ran off and the thugs started to scatter leaving Amos lying in the road, struggling for consciousness. Allen grabbed the arm of the other girl. As the Saturday hero of the terraces ran past the car he looked Jamie full in the eyes. Jamie stared back into eyes full of menace. Then thinking quickly he gave the ‘Allen Salute’. Allen smiled at him and turned towards the girl. Jamie could see her face, showing all her panic and all her young age.

*“Come on!”*

She resisted. She was frozen. One of the others grabbed her other

arm and she was lifted off the ground. As they ran with her between them, she was screaming with pain and fear, but their faces were wild, frenzied and hot.

The police van pulled up. Officers hit the ground running. The majority scattered in pursuit of the thugs. One went immediately to Amos and radioed for an ambulance. A WPC headed towards Jamie in the car.

Back in Stoke, a PC and a WPC were trying to calm a distraught Carol.

*"My son is with him. All I could hear was shouting. Oh my god, he's only fifteen!"*

The PC's walkie-talkie crackled into life, he left the room to respond.

The PC returned. *"They've found them. Your son is fine, but I'm afraid your husband's in a bad way though. They're taking him to St Peter's."*

*"But that's nowhere near here!"* She burst into fresh tears.

*"Come on love, get your coat we'll take you to the hospital."*





# Chapter 6

Jamie sat, small and alone, as people rushed around him in the busy A&E department. It was Saturday night and it was hectic and yet if you were waiting everything ground so very slow there.

The police car pulled up. Carol got out and dashed into the hospital. Jamie saw his mother rush in and jumped up in relief.

*“Mum!”*

She looked him over quickly relieved to see that he was not injured.

*“Are you okay?”*

*“Yes, but...”*

*“Where’s Amos?”*

*“They’ve taken him to...”*

She did not wait for his reply and sped off to the reception desk.

*“I need to see Mr Matkoni.”*

The automatic standard reply came back from the other side of the desk, *“I’m afraid only relatives...”*

*“I’m Mrs Matkoni.”*

She looked the nurse squarely in the eye. She was not a woman to be thwarted. The Nurse immediately directed her towards Amos. Jamie watched sullenly from his seat. As Carol rushed off he went to follow her, then thinking better of it he headed off towards the exit.

He sat on a bench in the hospital grounds, his knees up to his

chest. Through the windows his attention was caught by activity in the corridor as a stretcher was wheeled along. Jamie recognised Carol walking alongside it. As he watched, Amos was lifted onto a bed. Carol fussed around him making him comfortable, then settled herself into a chair obviously intending to stay a good while. A nurse pulled the curtain behind the bed and he was excluded from even being a distant observer of his mother's life. He thought of the gang fighting the opposition and the boys applauding his juggling skills.



# Chapter 7

The iPod was racked so high, Daltrey's voice almost threatened to tear the posters off the walls.

The walls of Jamie's bedroom were adorned by pictures of his football heroes with Allen in pride of place. In moments like this he would try to lose himself in thoughts of his father.

Behind the door hung a Who tour jacket his dad had left behind years earlier. He tried it on. It was still too big. Carol knocked on the door, but there was no way Jamie was going to hear. She was assaulted by the sound as she entered.

*"Could you turn that off, please?"*

*"Don't you like it? Rather I'd play Bob \*\*\*\*\* Marley?"*

*"What you play in your own room is up to you. I don't interfere with you in your own space."*

*"So what you doing here then?"*

*"I want to talk about last night."*

*"You know what happened. I can't tell you anything the police haven't."*

*"You didn't tell them anything anyway!"*

*"Nothing to tell."*

*"I think there is. I think you know who did this, Jamie. They're friends of yours aren't they?"*

*"In my dreams."*

He put the iPod back on to cover his sense of guilt.

*"I can't believe you said that."* She had to shout to be heard above the music but she was angry too. *"Why do you have to keep playing that music anyway?"*

*"Because."* Jamie responded to her anger, *"Because my dad, my real dad, was their roadie!"*

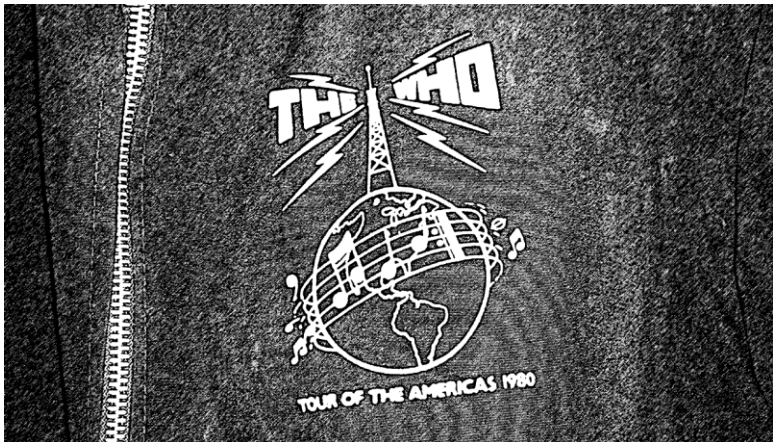
*"They weren't the only band he worked with."*

*"No, but they were the best."*

She had to leave. Her anger was growing. She had cleared every vestige of Jamie's father from out of her life long ago. As she went to the door, she was faced by the only physical souvenir left by her former husband. She threw Jamie a sharp barb.

*"There's nothing special about a roadie you know! I can't believe you said that, after all Amos has done for you."* She slammed the door behind her.

*"I didn't mean it!"* He called after her. Then in quieter tones *"...like that!"*



# Chapter 8

He could see for miles across the city.

From the top of the multistorey car park he imagined he could see over the six towns. He wondered what sort of close community was once at its heart. A heart cut through by fast roads he could see. Roads which were so hard to exit and so aggressively driven. Grey concrete lay everywhere. Grey under grey skies. The gang pulled on cans of beer. When they had taken a couple of swigs an impromptu game of football commenced. Even with an empty can as the ball, Jamie outstripped the others. He ran rings round them giving a commentary as he played.

*“.....and Allen swerves past one past two and smashes the ball past the helpless goalkeeper into the far corner...”* which was, in fact, the ‘B’ of the initials ‘BNP’ graffitied in huge letters on the grey wall. He then assumed the inflammatory Allen posture. The boys sat down and began to talk. Will set about the subject which exercised him most.

*“So, what are we going to do for money?”*

There were shrugs all round. Peter hesitantly volunteered, *“My brother reckons there’s this old bloke who lives in Weggerton Street who’s got some good stuff, like really valuable, stashed in his house.”*

He was right to be hesitant. Immediately Will rubbished him, *“Weggerton Street! That’s a \*\*\*\* hole. There can’t be anything worth having there.”*

But Peter persisted *“It’s true. My brother was certain.”*

Will became even more sceptical, *“Your brother, Colin! What does he know?”*

Joe, who was always up for anything illegal, came to Peter's aid, "*Well it's got to be worth a try. What have we got to lose?*"

Jamie asked the vital question, "*Do you know the number?*"

*"I think it was ten."*

*"You'd better be sure!"* concluded Will, throwing a mobile at Peter.



# Chapter 9

Joe's boot kicked in the door of 10 Weggerton Street and the boys rushed in. Jamie pulled up short. The rugs on the floor were thread-bare, there was only a single-bar electric fire, a radio, but no television. A single framed photograph of two men in RAF uniforms was propped up on the mantelpiece. Jamie had never seen a home with so little in it and for a moment there he felt a little bit sad.

*"I reckon Colin got it wrong, there's nothing here. Let's go! I don't want to get caught for nothing."*

The others ignored him. Will was adamant, *"There's got to be something and if there isn't...."*

He and Joe began to wreck the place. Jamie watched for a moment before picking up the photograph, he looked at it briefly then smashed it down breaking the glass. Will grinned at him in approval. Amidst this they barely heard Peter's triumphant voice coming from upstairs.

*"Up here, I found it!"*

Without caution, they all dashed upstairs to find Peter pulling two battered old cases out from under the bed.

*"They're \*\*\*\*\* heavy."*

*"Probably stuffed with notes"*, countered Will with a new found confidence in the mission.

*"They're locked! I bet he's a old miser."*

Must be to live like this, thought Jamie.

Joe, looking for more opportunity to destroy something, ventured,

*"Maybe we should pull up the floorboards?"*

Will looked at him and nodded his head slowly in agreement. But before they got the chance, the barking of an old dog came from downstairs. As one in a whispered chorus they all agreed, "\*\*\*\*!"

Peter and Will grabbed the cases and ran. As they descended the dog's barking intensified. But it was too old and arthritic to climb up the stairs on its own. Peter jumped over the dog easily and was out of the front door in a flash, followed by Joe. Will, who was in front of Jamie, put the boot into the dog.

"No!" shouted Jamie, as the animal let out a chilling squeal of pain.

The boys scattered as an old man came up the path as fast as he could, which was not fast at all. Joe and Will twisted him around and pushed him into a bush. Jamie paused. Looking back at the senseless dog, he was torn between helping it and escaping. He knew he couldn't afford any more trouble with the police. So off he ran following the others.





# Chapter 10

They had agreed, in the event that they had to split up, to meet up on the waste ground. Will, Peter and Joe arrived well ahead of Jamie. When he arrived they had broken the cases open and the contents were being strewn everywhere. Will was incandescent.

*“Look at this \*\*\*\* .... This ain’t \*\*\*\*\* treasure!”*

They turned on Peter.

*“You’re brother’s a \*\*\*\*\* , man!”*

Jamie arrived breathless. He was seething. He made straight for Will and pushed him hard in the shoulder.

*“Get off, will ya. What’s the matter with you?”*

*“What did you have to do that for, you \*\*\*\*wit?”*

*“What?”*

Jamie was pumping adrenaline.

*“The dog! Why did you have to kick the dog?”*

*“It’s only a dog....”*

*“An old dog! It wasn’t any threat.”*

*“Oh, \*\*\*\* off.”*

*“\*\*\*\* off yourself.”* He glared hard at the others. *“In fact \*\*\*\* off the lot of you.”*

Will saw that Jamie was highly charged and thought better than to

challenge him. He was still an unknown quantity and he was a sight quicker on his feet than Will. On top of that he was mad.

*“Come on, there’s nothing worth having here anyway.”*

He looked first at the content of the cases then directly at Jamie. So as not to lose face as he walked away. When he was at a safe distance, he said loudly, *“A \*\*\*\*\* dog! Next thing you know he’ll be worrying about that black \*\*\*\*\* his mum’s shacked up with. He deserved the kicking he got. Perhaps this little Southern \*\*\*\*\* needs one too!”*

Will started chanting. The others joined in readily, *“Allen for Engerland, Engerland! No surrender. No surrender. No surrender to the IRA!”*

Jamie took no notice and began returning the strewn contents into the cases.

Carrying the two suitcases, he tentatively approached the open door of 10 Weggerton Street. He looked in. The old man was sitting at the foot of the stairs stroking the head of the whimpering dog. At first he didn’t see Jamie.



Jamie’s voice was tremulous as he spoke.

*“Saw some boys running away from here. They dropped these.”*

Tom didn't look up, his attention fully on the dog.

*"Oh...yes...thanks."*

Jamie put the cases down and came warily closer, scared of intruding but wanting to see what damage Will had inflicted.

*"Will he be okay?"*

*"Don't know, son. It's just a matter of time I guess."*

*"What about if we got a vet or something?"*

*"It'll just cause him more pain if we move him. He's quite old, you see."*

*"Well can't the vet come here then?"*

*"I haven't got a phone, and even if I did, I haven't got the money."*

Jamie's voice was breaking, betraying his agitation.

*"Got it! There's a thing my mum uses. 'Rescue' something. She always gives it to me when I've been hurt. I'll get some. I'll be back soon."*

He turned and ran out full pelt towards his home. He was half glad to be physically free from the guilt of his involvement in the dog's suffering and equally glad to be able to express the physical need to do something positive about it.

The words pulsed through his earpieces and down to his feet as he ran.

# Chapter 11

He returned breathless with a small brown dropper bottle in his hand. The dog was now propped on a cushion. Jamie offered the bottle to Tom who was clearly uncertain.

*"It's okay, just herbs and things and a bit of brandy."*

Hesitating for a moment or two he finally decided to trust the boy.

*"Go on then."*

*"Me?"*

*"It's your stuff."*

Jamie gently dropped a couple of drops into the side of the dog's mouth. Laddie licked his lips and for the first time the old man allowed himself to cast his eye over the damage the gang had caused. Jamie followed his gaze and suddenly felt very guilty.

*"I'll help you tidy up if you want."*

*"It isn't your problem."*

*"Yes it... I want to. Kitchen through here is it? I'll get you a cup of tea then we'll make a start, eh?"*

*"Okay, lad."*

As Jamie was about to put the photo of the two men in RAF uniform onto the mantelpiece. He stopped to look at it and the old man asked,

*"Don't suppose you know who that is?"*

*"It's you, isn't it?"*

*"It is, but what about the other one?"*

Jamie couldn't resist the sarcastic tone which entered his voice. It came with his age.

*"Why, is he famous?"*

*"He certainly is. Do you like football?"*

Jamie nodded.

*"Know much about it?"*

*"A bit. I play for the District."*

*"Where?"*

*"I'm a winger."*

*"Different role in those days but that man was the greatest winger ever. What if I told you he was the oldest man to play for his country at forty two. To win a cup winners medal at thirty eight and didn't stop playing in the old First Division, which is now the premiership, until he was fifty."*

*"You're kidding me. My uncle Terry's not that age and he can't run for a bus! Nah."* Jamie thought again, *"Really? And he was your friend?"*

*"My friend? Yes, and my boss. I was his driver."* He went to one of the cases and opened it. *"I wasn't a footballer myself, but of course I used to watch him play whenever I could. The whole world knew who Stanley Matthews was."*

Tom followed Jamie with his eyes. A possible respect was forming, although he still didn't trust him.

# Chapter 12

Will and Joe hung back as Peter rang on the bell to Jamie's flat. A window slid open and Carol, dressed in white therapist uniform, leaned out.

*"Hello, Peter."*

*"Is Jamie in, Mrs Matkoni?"*

*"No, sorry. I haven't seen him since this morning. Actually, I thought he was with you."*

*"Thanks. Sorry to hear about Mr Matkoni. Sounds bad."*

Will nudged Joe, *"Reckon he'll need a lot of her witchcraft. 'Spect she knows about black magic too."*

They sniggered at their own innuendo before they all ran off. Carol watched after them, genuinely surprised at their attitude. They didn't run far, deciding to hang out by some garages close to Jamie's place with the intention of ambushing him on his way home. As Jamie rounded the corner Will grabbed him and pushed him against a wall. The others gathered around menacingly.

*"You \*\*\*\*\*. You've grassed us up to that old git, haven't ya?"*

*"No, I haven't."*

*"Don't lie. Peter saw you go back with the stuff and you've been gone ages. We know cause we've been to your house."*

Jamie cast a sharp glance to Peter, who lowered his gaze.

*"Don't be stupid. If I'd grassed you up, don't you think the police*

*would have been round to see you all by now? 'Specially with our reputation.'*

Peter, swift to redeem the situation he had brought about, said, *"He's right, Will."*

Will was stumped. Pushing his face up close to Jamie's, he threatened, *"You'd better not be lying, 'cause if I find you are your life won't be worth a toss! You got that?"*

He gestured with his fingers then slapped Jamie for good measure.



# Chapter 13

Tom fed Laddie small titbits by hand. He was so relieved to see the little mouth gently take them.

*“You feeling a bit better, boy?”*

As he got up a flicker of pain crossed his face. He steadied himself on the arm of the chair and rubbed at his heart.

*“Might have a drop of that stuff myself.”*

He picked up the bottle of rescue remedy Jamie had left and took a swig.

Peter and Jamie were passing a ball between them. Peter was burning with curiosity.

*“So why did you go back? I saw you, and you had the cases.”*

*“Yeah, so Will said!”*

*“Yeah... sorry about that.”*

*“S’alright. Dunno really.”*

*“I just had to know if Laddie was alright.”*

*“Laddie?”*

The game stopped.

*“The dog.”*

*“Oh right. But why did you take the stuff back?”*



*"I just got the feeling that his whole life was in them cases! You saw his house. He didn't have anything worth shit."*

*"I s'pose but it was only newspaper cuttings, old Stoke programmes and stuff."*

*"Exactly. Stuff he'd collected all his life. About this bloke called... shit, can't think what he said his name was now, but anyhow, from what he told me this bloke was really cool."*

*"You wanna stop winding Will up? He thought you'd found something worth money in the cases."*

*"Will's a \*\*\*\*-stirring \*\*\*\*\*. Come on it's getting dark. I've gotta get home."*

They left the waste ground where they had been kicking about and started walking home along the canal path.

*"So what's so cool about this bloke in the suitcase? Was he famous?"*

*"Yeah, I can't remember exactly, but he won everything and not just when he was young. He was still playing when he was fifty."*

*"No way!"*

*"Straight up! That's what Tom said."*

*"Who's Tom?"*

*"The old bloke."*

*"He's gotta be having you on or he's going senile."*

*"I don't think so. That's the sort of stuff that was in the cases. Cuttings and things. Said he played for England when he was forty two."*

*"Pure fantasy man. Even if it's half true he must have been some sort*

*of superhero.*

”

They crossed an iron bridge and started to climb towards the Britannia Stadium. In the near distance Jamie saw three statues of a footballer. They stood eerily in the fading light as the boys approached them. Something drew Jamie to check them out.

*“Over there, those statues.”*

They walked around the plinth. Jamie read the plaque.

*“The three ages of Sir Stanley Matthews’. That’s him!”*

As he looked up at the statue. The oldest age loomed over him, watching him, almost alive.



# Chapter 14

*"It's only me... Mum?"*

Jamie called up the stairs as he came through the door. He turned on the hall light and picked up a copy of the local evening paper lying on the doormat. On the front cover was a picture of Allen doing his famous salute on the pitch, and a headline that read *'Allen England's weapon of mass destruction'*.

*"That today's paper?"*

He instinctively put the paper behind his back as he flashed back to Allen and his cronies pulling Amos out of the car. Unsure and uncomfortable, he called back, *"Nah, it's an old one Peter gave me, it's got some stuff on Allen, that's all."*

*"Ok. I'm back to the hospital. I've left you some dinner in the microwave."*

She kissed him on the cheek as she passed him on her way out. Jamie took his meal into the living room. Carol had left the TV on for him. The face on the screen was of the girl he had seen Allen and his team mate carrying off. She was wearing school uniform and to Jamie she looked younger than him. He turned up the volume. *"Local police are becoming anxious over the whereabouts of 15 year old Jane Burtenshaw who..."*

He switched channels.

# Chapter 15

Tom opened the door to Jamie.

*"I wondered how Laddie was?"*

*"He's improving. Would you like to see him?"*

Jamie nodded and followed Tom into the sitting room. Laddie looked up from his place on the settee and wagged his tail.

*"I was wondering if we'd see you again."*

Jamie didn't need to respond. He sat himself next to the dog and stroked his head. He did not raise his eyes to engage with Tom. After a while he spoke.

*"You know that stuff you were telling me about... what's his name....."*

*"Stan?"*

*"Yeah that's it, Stan."*

*"Yes."*

*"Well, was it really true?"*

*"Why shouldn't it be?"*

*"It's just I was telling one of my mates, and he couldn't get his head around it all."*

*"I expect there are a lot of things your friends can't get their heads around."*

Jamie looked at him quizzically, uncertain of where this last remark

was coming from. He paused. *"Well, is it all true?"*

Tom was irked at this and answered impatiently, *"Of course it's true."*

Jamie waited expecting him to continue. *"Could you tell me more?"*

*"Yes."*

Again, Jamie waited for him to continue but again he didn't. Jamie laughed nervously. *"Okay! Will you tell me more?"*

*"Maybe."*

*"Please."*

*"You really want to know?"*

*"I really want to know."*

A smile broke across the old man's face highlighting the wonderful laughter lines around his eyes and mouth. *"Okay."*

The old man got up, went to the hallway and unhooked an old raincoat from the stairs. He put it on and pulled out an even older cap from the pocket. He gestured with it.

*"Come on then."*

Jamie got up, patting Laddie as he did. Tom spoke reassuringly to the dog. *"Won't be long lad. There are things this lad needs to know."*

*"Where we going then?"*

*"You'll see."*

Tom could not walk very fast or far so Jamie had his first ride on a bus in years.

Tom took a very logical start to the journey through Stan's life. First off, Jamie found himself staring at a plaque on the front of a neat terraced house in Seymour Street., Hanley. It read, 'Sir Stanley Matthews was born here 1st February 1915. Footballer and gentleman'.

*"Footballer and gentleman."* Tom read the words outloud with real pride in his voice.

*"What's that about then, 'Gentleman'?"*



*"Well, firstly, he was a gentle man..."*

*"Soft, you mean?"*

*"You think it was soft in those days, do you? How soft do you think you need to be to last at the top of your profession for thirty five years?"*

Jamie remained quiet.

*"He was gentle in the way he dealt with people. he had time for everyone. And he remembered things about them, made the feel special."*

*"Well he must have had a lot of time to waste then!"*

*"He had integrity".*

Jamie shrugged. The word didn't compute for him.

*"He acted on what he believed. Played by the rules."*

*"And people gave him respect for that? Rules are for fools. Look at Allen, he doesn't bow to anyone and look what he's got."*

*"You want to be like him?"*

*"Doesn't everyone?"*

It was Tom's turn to shrug.

*"Not you. Not older people, your time's gone."*

*"Thanks!"*

*"You know what I mean. You've got to grab what you can now."*

*"Look what that's done to the world."*

*"Yeah, save the planet, I learn that stuff in school. But that's what older people have done. They've had theirs and we want ours."*

*"It won't work. The earth's not big enough for the Allens with their twenty sports cars and all the rest."* The old man had not come out and left his precious dog for an argument. He responded tetchily. *"Anyway, I thought you wanted to know about Stan?"*

*"I do."*

*"Well let's move on, eh."*

They climbed the hill slowly with the old man having to stop occasionally for breath. He led them through cobbled alleyways

between back-to-back terraces formed long before even he had been born. They turned a corner and the space opened in front of them, some grass with a large 1960s tower block and in its shadow a school which, according to the local authority sign, announced itself as St Luke's Primary School, but Tom identified it as having once been Wellington Road School.

*"This is where Stan went to school, and this is where at eleven he changed from centre half to outside right. Come on."*

He led the way across the school playground to the door.

*"He was the most perfectly balanced player of all time, and his sudden bursts of speed over twenty yards or so was one of the delights of the game."* He chuckled at the memory. *"They called him 'The Wizard of Dribble'."*



He stopped at the door looking round for Jamie, then shuffled in, obviously a regular visitor. Jamie took a quick look around before following and was amazed to find himself in front of stained glass window erected in memory of Stanley Matthews.



*"Imagine being that loved!"* He said involuntarily.  
*"I don't need to imagine it. I saw it with my own eyes."*

They thanked the teacher then set off to find another bus. As it swung past King's Hall, Tom told him how four thousand people had held a meeting there in 1938 to protest at Stanley's possible transfer.

*"He meant that much to the town."*

The bus climbed up and out above the city and stopped just past a pub. They walked a short distance to a secluded sky blue house.

*"That was Stan's last house. Sadly Mila, Stan's second wife, died there from a sudden heart attack and six months later Stan was dead too."*

*"So what did he die of?"*

*"Stan? Well those who knew him best would tell you he died of a broken heart. She was a lovely girl"*. He remembered fondly.

By the time they had reached the old Victoria Ground Jamie had become fully engrossed in Tom's stories of Stan. Whatever plans there had been for redeveloping the site had long ago been abandoned and it had become a wasteland. The only vestige of the glory days were the steps to the Boothend, the place where the real Stokies used to gather. As they both stared out across the ground it seemed to Jamie that he had fused with the old man's memories and he could hear the echoes of bygone crowds chanting Stan's name.

*"Hard to believe this was a football pitch, but it was. You know Stoke were near the bottom of the Second Division when Stan went back to them in nineteen sixty one. The team was transformed and this old football ground's gates rose from nine thousand to thirty six thousand. The following year they were promoted and Stan scored the winning goal that took them up!"*

Some boys were playing football in a makeshift goal made from bricks and a plank of wood.

*“This is where Stan played his last game in professional football. It was a glorious night. The world came to his retirement party. The greatest players from more than one generation made it there.”* His voice breaking, he continued, *“I could see the tears in his eyes as they carried him off on their shoulders.”*



The ball fell at Jamie’s feet. He returned it, perfectly weighted, to land on the head of the boy who was standing at the pile of bricks which served as the far post. He nodded it down into the goal and signaled thumbs up to Jamie.

*“Bet you couldn’t do that again,”* Tom said. Jamie replied confidently and without a second thought. *“I wouldn’t if I were you.”*

Then both of them looked up towards The Britannia Stadium. Jamie could see how Tom’s face had become pale and noticed him rubbing his chest.

*"Think we should be getting back to Laddie."*

Back at Weggerton Street, Jamie set about making a mug of tea for them both and sat on the settee stroking Laddie. Tom sat on the other side of the fire place in the only arm chair.

*"He seems a lot better."*

*"Fingers crossed, eh?"*

He crossed his fingers. Jamie held his crossed fingers up too.

*"He didn't deserve what happened."*

*"That Will's a \*\*\*\*\* nutter..."*

Jamie pulled himself up short realising that he'd just given himself away.

*"It's okay, son. You didn't think I'd recognise you when you brought the cases back, did you?"*

Jamie looked down at his trainers. For the first time he really was ashamed of himself.

*"Have you ever had a dog of your own?"*

*"No. We had a kitten once when I was about five."*

*"In London?"*

*"Yes. It was run over not long after we got it. I don't really remember it. I remember I cried."*

*"That's the thing when a friend dies."*

Jamie hugged Laddie.

*"You're not going to leave us now, are you boy?"*

Tom got up unsteadily and leaned on towards the mantelpiece. He started poking about in a pot.

*"I've something here I want you to have. Might not seem much, but to me it's very special. Ah, here it is."* He pulled a small round badge with a black and white image on it out of the jar. *"When people used to write to Stan he would always reply personally, and with the reply he would send one of these badges, which he'd had made up."* He handed the badge to Jamie who was not impressed. Badges were not cool.

*"Oh, mmm... thanks."*

*"About six weeks after Mila died, he asked me to take him to the airport. His daughter, Jean, and her husband, Bob, were taking him away for a break to Spain. He'd been sorting through stuff in the house and tucked in the corner of a drawer he had found this badge. The last one. I don't know why but as we said goodbye at the airport he pressed it into my hand."*

*"What, like a lucky charm or something?"*

*"Maybe, and now I want you to have it."*

Jamie was uncertain. *"No. It's yours. It's special for you."*

*"I'd like you to have it. Stan had a fall when he was away. I collected him from the airport in a wheelchair. It was the last time I saw him. He died very soon afterwards. He couldn't be alone and apart from Mila, you see."* He thought hard.

*"So that little badge may not look special, but it really is. Please keep it."*

Jamie was embarrassed.

*"Thanks"* he said and slipped the badge into his pocket.

# Chapter 16

The gang sat in a crowd with England flags draped on them. Jamie was proudly wearing an Allen England shirt. The crowd was singing the national anthem.

<i>God save our gracious Queen,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Long live our noble Queen,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>God save the Queen!</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Send her victorious,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Happy and glorious,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Long to reign over us,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>God save the Queen!</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>O Lord our God arise,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Scatter her enemies,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>And make them fall</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Confound their politics,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Frustrate their knavish tricks,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>On Thee our hopes we fix,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>God save us all!</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Thy choicest gifts in store,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>On her be pleased to pour;</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Long may she reign,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>May she defend our laws,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>And ever give us cause,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>To sing with heart and voice,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>God save the Queen!</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Not in this land alone,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>But be God's mercies known,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>From shore to shore!</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>Lord make the nations see,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>That men should brothers be,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>And form one family,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>The wide world over.</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>From every latent foe,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>
<i>From the assassins blow,</i>	<i>NO SURRENDER!</i>

*God save the Queen!  
O'er her thine arm extend,  
For Britain's sake defend,  
Our mother, prince, and friend,  
God save the Queen!*

**NO SURRENDER!  
NO SURRENDER!  
NO SURRENDER!  
NO SURRENDER!  
NO SURRENDER!**

**NO SURRENDER TO THE IRA!**

Most of the crowd who could hear looked at them with distaste, but some smiled in unspoken acquiescence.



# Chapter 17

Jamie was in action on the pitch. On the touchline were Will's father and grandfather. Both not shy in shouting their opinion of the ref's decisions. Peter's style didn't suit the heavy pitch. It was a little too delicate for this sort of game. Clogger Will was in his element cheered on by his undiscerning relatives. Tom's pale face was being battered and reddened by the weather.

*"He's good, Stan!"*

Jamie had just left two defenders for dead and cut inside.

Rough, ready and beer-bellied the two generations of Wills' sires were inciting the boys to mete out rough treatment to two Asian lads in the opposing team. This barely covert hatred soon became overt racial abuse. Responding to this, Will got himself red carded for an elbow in the face. At his dismissal, the level of aggression rose. Jamie was by no means immune. Committing several fouls, he was lucky to only end up in the ref's overworked notebook. Threats of violence were made against the referee by grandfather and father alike. They followed this through by posturing towards the father and uncle of one the Asian boys. When the two Sikhs stood up to them, father and son turned on each other in a 'handbags at ten paces' fashion. Then both chased Will and clouted him for good measure. Jamie, who knew he had played well, emerged from the dressing rooms and walked towards Tom with a smile on his face.

*"Well? What do you think?"*

*"I'm impressed. And disappointed. You're too good a player to play like that."*

*"What do you mean?"*

*"Think about it. Stan was never warned, never mind booked, in thirty*

*five years despite lots of provocation.”*

Jamie looked round. He saw the other boys with their fathers. *“I’m going to get a lift.”*

*“Okay, son.”*

Jamie ran off looking back at Tom, who stared back at him, expressionless.

Inside his van, Will’s father passed around cans of beer to the boys.

*“So what’s it like having a black man for a dad, eh?”*

*“He’s not my father.”*

*“Well, he sleeps with your mum.”*

He smirked at his father and winked.

*“Reckon there’s some witchcraft involved. Mind you, she’s a bit of a witch herself, isn’t she? Believes in potions and herbs...”*

*“Bet he’s an animal”* chipped in the grandfather, delighting in Jamie’s visible discomfort.

*“What?”*

*“Bet it’s a noisy place that bedroom of theirs!”*

Getting carried away Will’s father started to indulge his own sad fantasies.

*“Would be if I were there!”*

*“What? Even after a black man’s been there?”* Slurred the elder, drunkenly. Jamie cringed inwardly and sucked on his can.



# Chapter 18

The flat was in darkness by the time Jamie returned, slightly the worse for wear. He looked down the corridor towards his mother's bedroom door, his mind befuddled and in utter confusion. He closed the door to his room, slumped on the bed, and racked up the sound in his headphones.

Tom searched payphone after payphone to find one which worked or didn't refuse to take anything but a credit card. As he made the call his nostrils were assailed by a mixture of stale and fresh urine.

*"Bob, I'd like someone to have a look at this boy. There's almost something of Stan about him."*

*"What do you mean?"*

*"I can't put my finger on it, but when you see him you'll know what I mean."*

*"I can't do anything for the next few weeks."*

*"It needs to be sooner than that."* Tom rubbed at his chest.

*"I'll tell you what, I'll try to get Jimmy to catch one of his school games. How's that?"*

*"Thanks, Bob."*

*"No, thank you and listen, you take care, Tom."*

# Chapter 19

Jamie's face was about to collapse. He was fighting so hard to hold back the tears. Earth fell onto a coffin and a pious voice canted, 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' The wreath told the story. Tom was the one in the coffin. Jamie fondled the badge. He took it out from his pocket and looked at it from time to time. When the mourners had dispersed, a homely middle-aged woman approached him.

*"You must be Jamie."*

Jamie nodded, but dared not speak. He didn't want to cry.

*"Dad told me all about you."*

Jamie wondered what the word 'all' had included.

*"He left some things he wanted you to have."*

His voice breaking Jamie managed to extract the words, *"I don't want anything."*

The woman put a comforting hand on his shoulder. *"Please, come round to his house. Tomorrow. Please."*

Jamie nodded.

*"Twelve o'clock. You know the address."*

*"Okay."*

*"And thanks for coming today, it would have meant a lot to him."*

He nodded again and turned away wiping his nose on his sleeve. Tom's daughter watched as he walked out through the cemetery gates.

By 12 o'clock most of Tom's meagre possessions had gone. The two suitcases were sitting in the middle of the floor. The woman and a man of similar age were shifting the rest out into a beaten up old van. On seeing Jamie, the woman stopped.

*"He wanted you to have these. God knows what you'll do with them, but I guess he thought you'd appreciate it."*

*"Thanks."*

He picked up the cases and began to walk down the hall then turned. The woman had resumed her cleaning. He watched her for a minute before blurting out, *"What's going to happen to Laddie?"*

*"Oh, he's coming with us - unless you want him?"*

*"Really?"*

*"Why not? We're both at work all day. You'd better ask your mum first, though."* She pulled a pencil and paper from her bag and wrote down a phone number. *"This is my number you can come and get him tomorrow if you like."*

Jamie rushed out, hope was rising for the first time since he had left London. But it was not to last long.

Carol's voice was raised.

*"For the last time Jamie, we live in a flat, it's not right for a dog. Laddie will be much better off with Mr Boothby's daughter."*

*"How do you know that?"*

*"How do you know otherwise?"*

*"Cause she doesn't really want him."*

Her voice softened. *"I'll tell you what, when Amos gets out of hospital we'll ask him what he thinks. Okay?"*

*"Amos! What's it to do with him? Tom was my friend. Laddie is my friend!"* He could resist the tears no longer. *"What does he care about him.?"*

*"He cares about you."*

*"His kind don't care about anything except poncing off us!"*

Jamie stormed out of the kitchen, Carol sat at the table, tears forming as she heard his bedroom door slam and the inevitable music put on at top volume. Jamie sat on his bed engulfed by anger and loss. *"\*\*\*\*\* Amos! Won't be him on his own with no one giving a \*\*\*\* about him."* The tears rolled. His eye strayed to the cases. He pulled one onto the bed and began to look through the contents. He fondled the fragile old paper. Suddenly he spotted a photograph of the 1938 England Team in Berlin giving the Nazi salute. Through his tears he scrutinized the faces in the photograph. *"It's him, I guess he knew what these blacks were all about even back then. Sorry Tom, but Stan was one of us after all."*



His attention was wrapped in the image when a soft firm voice in a Stoke accent said,

*"No, you've got it wrong, son."*

Jamie turned to see the smartly dressed gentleman from Tom's photo. He was shocked out of his tears.

*"Stan!"*

*"The only reason we gave that salute was because we were ordered to by the Foreign Office. We didn't believe in National Socialism and nor would you if you really knew what it meant. It was a movement that released hatred in people who didn't know they had it within them."*

Suddenly there was a clattering of stones at the window. Jamie jumped out of his skin. He looked around the room. It was empty. Unnerved he walked backwards towards the window, turning only when he banged into the sill. Will, Peter and Joe were throwing stones up from below.

*"Oi, You coming or what?"*

*"What?"*

Jamie opened the window.

*"You coming?"*

*"Where?"*

*"The match, you twat!"*

*"Yeah",* he said in a shocked daze. *"Hang on."*

His eyes were slightly bloodshot from crying and he was more than a little shocked. He joined the others who were propping up various front walls. Will put his arm forcibly around Jamie's shoulder. More controlling than comforting, he marched him off. The others followed.

The first stop was a corner shop. The plan was for Peter and Joe to keep the shop keeper's attention diverted while Jamie and Will stole

cans of beer. But the shop keeper twigged at the last moment and they were forced to make off empty handed.

However, by the time they had turned up for a youth cup match, they were half cut. As they approached the ground they passed a young lad holding out some black and white wrist bands under a banner announcing 'Kick Racism Out of Football'. Joe and Peter held the boy's arms down while Will stuffed the wrist band in his mouth. Buoyed by the booze and camaraderie Jamie joined in the laughter as they entered the ground. It was obvious to him that he needed to fit in again. These were the only guys who were truly on his side. And if that meant following Will's lead so be it. He knew he was being carefully scrutinized by Will and Joe so he put himself at the forefront of the abuse and taunting as they stole the supporters' scarves and hats and hassled any black and Asian players or on-lookers they could.



# Chapter 20

Carol heard the door slam.

*“That you love?”*

*“Yeah.”* Jamie walked in sniffing the air. *“Something smells good.”*

Carol noticed he was not wearing his usual colours.

*“I thought you were a United fan?”*

*“I am.”*

*“But aren’t they blue and yellow?”*

He grinned back stupidly. *“I’m starving!”*

*“Get one of those pizzas out of the freezer and I’ll heat it up for you. This is for tomorrow. I thought we’d have a family celebration.”*

*“Family? Is dad coming home?”*

*“Yes, the specialist rang this afternoon and he said Amos is definitely on the mend and he can come home tomorrow! Isn’t that great?”*

*“Yeah. Great.”*

*“I thought you’d be pleased.”*

Jamie moved in close to her face. She could smell the drink on his breath.

*“Pleased? What, that you’ve replaced my dad with a \*\*\*\*\* darkie? When are you gonna get it through your head that Amos never has been and never will be my dad!”*

Carol slapped him hard across the face. Jamie stared back at her in angry defiance. This was the first time in fifteen years that she had hit him. She was instantly full of remorse. The pain she felt inside was enormous.

*"Oh God. I'm sorry it's just... I just don't understand what's happening to you!"*

*"You and him - that's what's happening to me! You could have just stayed friends with him. Then I wouldn't 've had to have anything to do with him. Why did you have to marry him?"*

*"I love him. And he loves me. You can understand that can't you, love?"*

*"You once told me you loved my dad!"*

*"And I did! It just didn't work..."*

*"Do you know what everyone says about you?"*

*"By 'everyone' I assume you mean those misfits you hang out with at the football."*

*"The only misfits round here's you and Amos!"*

Jamie stormed back out of the house.



# Chapter 21

Jamie ran not caring where he was going. A sudden chill stopped him in his tracks. He turned round slowly to see Stan smiling at him.

*“Are you for real?”*

*“Stanley Matthews. And you’re Jamie, they tell me.”*

Who are they? thought Jamie.

*“No, hang on. What I mean is, you’re dead! Aren’t you?”*

*“That’s an interesting one. I guess technically I’m dead but as you can see not gone. You have to be forgotten to be gone.”*

*“But why are you here?”*

*“This is where my father’s barber shop used to be”. He laughed.*

*“They called him the fighting barber on account of his being a boxer as well. And a very good one too. He was a very big influence on my life.”*

Jamie was stunned for the second time today. He heard himself start babbling. *“My dad travels the world with rock bands. He’s pretty cool!”*

*“Musician is he?”*

*“No, he’s a roadie.”*

*“What does that mean?”*

*“He sets up the equipment.”*

*"Oh."*

*"But he's a good one, he does it for a lot of big bands like The Who."*

*"So I expect you get all sorts of VIP treatment at the concerts then?"*

*"No! I don't get to go to any."*

*"What, he never takes you to see them?"*

*"No. In fact I can't remember when I last saw him."*

Stan saw the difficulty the boy was having and changed the subject.

*"So you like football then?"*

*"Love it. It's my dream. Tom came to see me play once. I've got a game on tomorrow, don't s'pose you'd like to..."*

Stan smiled at him.



# Chapter 22

Allen was sitting in a smart cafe with a group of friends. He watched unashamedly lustful as a pretty waitress threaded her way through the tables. He caught her eye and smiled, she looked away embarrassed. He said something quietly to the other men, they laughed loudly. She looked over again. Allen signalled to her.

*“Can I help you sir?”*

*“What do you reckon guys, can she help us?”*

*“She can help me, anytime”*

The group laughed again. The waitress remembering how hard even this job had been to find smiled tightly, as if she hadn't heard this line of banter before.

*“What can I get you?”*

*“I'm Mark Allen, the footballer.”*

*The girl looked back blankly at him.*

*“So?”*

*“So sit down, I'd like to buy you a drink.”*

*“No thanks.”*

*“I don't think you know who I am.”*

*“You're Mark Allen, the footballer.”* He grabbed her arm. Now she was alarmed.

*“Yeah, and I asked you to sit down.”*

*“Or what?”*

*“Or what?”*

*“I’ll call security.”*

Allen and his cohorts feigned horror. But when a doorman glanced over, he immediately let go. She walked off, rubbing her arm. At the counter another waitress was getting bills together.

*“You lucky girl. That’s Mark Allen.”*

*“Don’t tell me, the footballer!”*

*“Gorgeous, isn’t he? Mmm drop dead.”*

The first waitress tore off the bill and grabbed a plate. She went back to Allen’s table.

*“What is it that makes you think you can do what you want just cause you’re a little bit handy with your right foot?”*

*“Not just my right foot, darling.”*

*“My little brother idolizes you! He should see you now.”* She slammed the bill down in front of him. *“And guess what? I don’t care who you are. All I care about is the fact that you’re leaving.”*

Allen pulled out a picture of himself, applied his signature and handed it to her. *“Here. That’s for your brother.”*

She shredded the image slowly in front of his face.

# Chapter 24

Jamie and Peter were walking to school.

*“You going to your Nan’s for Easter?”*

*“Nah, me mum can’t get the time off work. What you doing?”*

*“I dunno yet.”*

Suddenly Will and Joe jumped them. They engaged in a bit of friendly rough and tumble, although Will always tried to make sure it was rougher with Jamie than the others. A group of schoolgirls were watching the display as they stood chatting at the gate. Seeming to be unimpressed they still nudged each other as the boys approached. One was more obvious in her interest.

*“Hello Jamie.”*

Jamie was embarrassed. It was yet another opportunity for his mates to take the \*\*\*\*. Will seized the opportunity.

*“You girls coming to the game after school?”*

*“We might come and check your legs out, if you’re lucky.”*

*“Looks like you’re in there, Jamie.”*

But he did not hear. Jamie was totally distracted. He was certain he had recognized the face of Jane Burtenshaw in the group of girls, but when, as he continued on into school he looked again, she had gone. His body was chilled through.

# Chapter 24

The hospital bag was on the floor. Carol was plumping the pillows on the settee trying to make Amos comfortable. Her eyes were puffy and it was obvious that she had done a lot of crying.

*“You want to tell me what’s up?”*

*“It’s Jamie.”*

*“We’ve talked about this, love. You’ve got to give him some space. He needs time to adjust.”*

*“I am, but I’m scared to say anything anymore. Everything just seems to upset him. Last night we had a row and he called you a... Amos, I slapped him. Truth be known, I’m ashamed of him.”*

*“It can’t be easy for him.”*

*“How can you be so understanding?”*

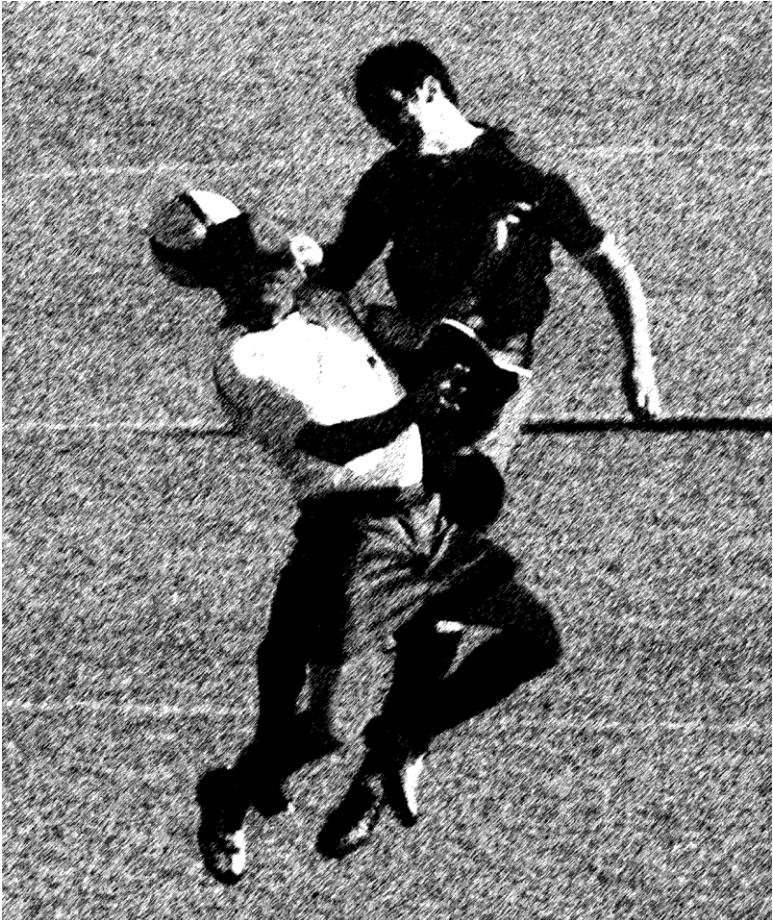
*“I’ve got a pretty good idea of what he might be going through. Trust me, it takes a strong character to deal with it.”*

That night Jamie looked down the corridor towards Carol and Amos’ bedroom door. He had to recognise that there was another man in her arms. It was a reality he could not avoid. He closed his door, put the iPod in its station, wracked up the volume and let them know he was there.

Jamie and Peter were trying to take the scarf off of a Moslem girl’s head. It was having their desired effect. She was annoyed and not a little distressed. Peter was called out. Emulating Allen, he argued aggressively face to face with the teacher. Finally he was sent out of the room. As he left, Jamie gave him the Allen salute which he returned. They called to each other, *“No surrender, No surrender*

to Al Qaeda". The teacher was left helpless in hopeless disgust, unable to express his feelings in any way physically and so wanting to at least bang their heads together.

The game was at its climax and Jamie was the hero of the moment, scoring the winning goal. Stan stood watching from the touch line in the middle of all the drunken fathers and smiling amusedly as Jamie's teammates celebrated in various styles. But the smile faded as Jamie ran round the pitch giving the arrogant Allen Salute. Stan shook his head and turned to walk away. From the pitch Jamie saw and recognised what he had done.



# Chapter 25

Jamie and Stan were dribbling a ball down the street.

*“What about your Mum. Does she ever watch you play?”*

*“She used to when I was smaller, but now she won’t come without Amos.”*

*“Amos?”*

*“He lives with Mum now.”*

*“And he doesn’t like football?”*

*“I don’t know, he might but...”*

Stan held the ball still beneath his foot and waited for Jamie to continue. Jamie looked around like he might be overheard.

*“He’s black.”*

*“Right.”*

Stan dribbled off with the ball, leaving Jamie looking after him. He passed close to Will’s father and grandfather who were returning from a match. Their team had lost and they had been drowning their sorrows substantially. The wizard of the dribble had never been more appropriate a title. He dribbled the ball between them, but they could see only the ball.

*“Did you see that?”*

*“How the \*\*\*\*...”*

They spotted Jamie.



*“\*\*\*\*\* voodoo in’ it! You’ve seen his father!”*

*“You wanna watch it, Dick. He’s probably got a little straw dolly at home.”*

*“Yeah, with your face on it.”*

Stan was laughing but saw the distress in the boy as he asked.

*“Now do you get it?”*



# Chapter 26

Carol and Amos sat opposite each other at the kitchen table. Each one's hand was holding the other's gently, intimately. It matched their conversation as Carol shared her disquiet over Jamie.

*"I'm not sure we should have left London."*

*"Is that all you're not sure about?"*

*"What do you mean?"*

*"I mean us. Stoke isn't the only change. At best I could have only been a shadowy figure in Jamie's life and suddenly I'm married to his mum! I'd challenge any son not to be thrown by that, especially one who never even had to share his mum with his real father."*

Carol was silent, unsure of how to respond or even if she could. She squeezed Amos' hand tighter.

*"Am I less than a mum because the man I've come to love is not his father? As far as I'm concerned his real father doesn't deserve the title. I'm proud our love grew out of friendship."*

Amos smiled.

*"It's the best way for it to survive."*

He pulled her close and kissed her.

*"Of course there is always the chance that he might think you've fallen prey to racial stereotypes!"*

He grinned broadly. Carol laughed out loud.

*"Is that so?"*

She snuggled into him. He winced from the pressure of her body on his bruises.

*"Come on, where's Mr Macho then?"*

*"He's the guy you didn't marry. I'm the beat up old man."*

They laughed together and caressed each other.

*"Think I should get a younger model?"*

*"Think you could find one? Fifty's not the best time to go looking you know."*

She suddenly became serious and tender. She kissed him passionately.

*"I'd never need to. I've never felt like this about anyone and I'm scared because I think Jamie can see that. And if he does..."*

Just then Jamie came in. He glanced at them then turned and left before they could even say hello.

*"Jamie!"*

She moved to get up, but Amos held her back.

*"And if he does he will feel totally left out. Strange place, strange dad, strange mum."*

He soothed her with continued caresses.

*"What can I do? What they did to you frightened me. I know we've known each other a long while. But I feel like I've just found you. Really found you. And I don't want to lose you." Her eyes began to water with tears. "Because you're all I've ever wanted."*

*"You'll never lose me. Unless of course you decide you want to," he smiled.*

*"But I don't want to lose him either. And since the wedding, well it's almost like he thinks I've stopped loving him."*

*"Clearly he does."*

Carol was shocked at his frankness.

*"You will lose him for a while. It's bound to happen."*

Carol began to cry.

*"But you won't lose him forever, I promise."*

At this she kissed him more passionately. Amos winced in pain but she didn't see.



# Chapter 27

Carol pulled their car up to the front steps of the Faculty of Political Sciences at Keele University. Amos climbed out slowly and stiffly. Jamie, seated in the rear, watched as he was greeted enthusiastically by a well-dressed woman and then by various students on their way into the building. He gave one a high five. Clearly, they were pleased to have him back.



## Chapter 28

Jamie was lying stretched out on the settee. The television was on but he wasn't watching it. He was thumbing through some of the stuff about Stan. Amos entered. He looked in earnest at Jamie who wouldn't look up. Amos sat deliberately in the chair opposite. He was now in Jamie's eyeline.

*"Can we talk?"*

There was no reply

*"I was thinking about going to see Tom's daughter."*

Jamie threw him a sharp glance.

*"Mind if I turn that thing off?"*

*"Whatever."*

*"I thought she might let us take the dog out every now and again. Would you like that?"*

*"S'pose."*

*"Okay."*

Amos stood, disappointed in Jamie's reaction. As he went to leave, he spotted Stan's face on the front of one of the magazines.

*"Ah, the black man with the white face."*

*"What?"*

*"That's Stan Matthews isn't it?"*

*"How do you know?"*

*"That's what we used to call him in Soweto. 'The black man with the white face.'"*

*"Soweto?"*

*"Yeah, he came to South Africa every summer for twenty-five years and taught the kids in the townships how to play his 'beautiful game'. In Ghana they crowned him King of Soccer."*



Jamie was surprised.

Amos' enthusiasm was transparent.

*"In my opinion he is the reason an African team will be world champions before much longer!"*

*"In your dreams!"*

*"Maybe, but if... no, when, it happens it will be because Stan planted*

*the seed. He got the money to set up the first all black South African team to tour abroad."*

Jamie resented Amos' knowing so much about Stan. But Amos knew that he had Jamie's attention. He lowered himself gingerly onto the edge of the sofa as he continued to reminisce.

*"It wasn't easy for him you know. At that time, people were discriminated against in their own country because their skin was black. Because of this there was a ban on sporting contacts with South Africa. The people who ran international sport thought it was the best thing to do. Stan thought differently. He chose to teach black kids how to beat the whites at their own game."*

*"How come you know so much about it then?"*

*"I grew up when all this was happening. My brother was one of Sir Stan's Men. He went to South America with them. They went to see their black heroes like the Brazilians play, and to play other youngsters there. Unfortunately all their games had to be played behind locked gates."*

*"Why?"*

*"Because the powers that be in International Sport decreed it."*

*"That's just stupid."*

Amos shrugged.

*"You'll find all sorts of people enjoy wielding power on both sides of a problem. 'Might is Right' and 'Rules is Rules' are convincing arguments for those who don't want to be bothered to find another way."*

*"So?"*

*"So I suppose Stan wanted to find another way. A way which took account of the small people in the middle."*



There was silence as Jamie took this in. Could it be that he would have to see Amos with new eyes? Surely not.

*“So, where did you get these?”*

*“Those suitcases Tom left me? They’re full of stuff like this.”*

*“About old footballers?”*

*“No. Just him.”*

*“Really, that must be quite something. I’d like to have a look sometime.”*

*“Maybe.”*

*“Okay. When you’re ready.”* Amos started to leave.

*“Okay. South Africa wouldn’t beat England.”*

*“Maybe not, but Nigeria or Cameroon?”*

He smiled to himself and left Jamie to ponder.



# Chapter 29

*“Tom told me a lot of amazing stuff about what you did. Was it true?”*

*“He wasn’t the sort of man to lie. Nothing is so amazing when you’re living it somehow. But when I look back I was lucky. Seem to have given pleasure to a good number of people.”*

*“Yeah, but that sort of stuff lasts in peoples’ memories for ever.”*

*“Tom told me of that time when you and Tom Finney were doing some sort of promotion at Manchester United’s training ground and he spotted an old man in tears standing on the terrace. He said he went across to him and asked him what was wrong. The old man told him nothing, he was just so moved to see two of the greatest players to tread the turf stood there in front of him. When Tom asked if he’d like to meet you the old man said no, just to look was enough.”*

*“I hadn’t heard that one. Football can bring up some strange emotions. When it’s played right, it really can bring people together.”*

Jamie studied Stan’s feet. For a man of his height they were very small. Perhaps that was part of the wizardry. Stan studied Jamie who was now searching Stan’s face.

*“Would you show me?”*

*“Show you?”*

*“Yeah, you know. How to do it right.”*

Stan smiled his agreement. With the invisible maestro in charge of his training there were a lot of bemused faces as Jamie listened and responded to an unseen instruction.

*“Enthusiasm is the key to success in everything. It was taking*

*care of my diet that kept me playing so long. I learned that from a vegetarian osteopath who took care of difficult injuries I had in my late thirties. I fasted every Monday. And if I had a particularly difficult game coming up, I would fast a few days before it."*

This instruction initially caused some concern for Carol. But once she could see the pattern her grounding in alternative therapies made her realise what he was trying to achieve.

One day as he practiced the 'Matthews' Swerve' Jamie managed to trip himself up and twist his ankle. Stan made him take his shoe off and performed reflexology on his foot.

*"Mila taught me how to do this."*

Sitting on the doorstep with his trainers off, Stan put lead weights in each shoe then handed them back to Jamie who put them on and tried to run.

*"I used to walk to the match wearing lead weights in my shoes. When I ran out on the pitch in ordinary boots, I felt like I was flying."*



## Chapter 30

Carol was taking a break after a long morning of aromatherapy massage. Recently her hands had been getting tired much quicker. Two sessions were normally enough. She had done three already and it was only one o'clock. Sitting on a park bench she was indulging in a little gentle healing on her own aching limbs. She was surprised to see Amos approach carrying a picnic basket in one hand and a blanket in the other. He held them aloft looking rather pleased with himself.

*"Lunch?"*

*"How lovely."*

They spread the blanket out.

*"You know I went to see Tom's daughter yesterday."*

*"Oh yes, how did it go?"*

*"Not good news I'm afraid. She's told me they're going to have to give Laddie up, cause they're out at work all day."*

*"Where's he gonna go?"*

*"Well, he's too old to re-home, so it seems they might have to consider having him put down."*

*"That's dreadful."*

*"Yes. Look I know we live in a flat, but it's an old dog and it's not like it'll be running around all over the place and jumping on the furniture. What do you reckon?"*

*"Oh, I don't know..."*

*He'll just need a couple of gentle walks each day and, well, I think it might be really good for Jamie, give him some responsibility."*

*"Oh... alright!"*

Amos smiled very pleased with himself.

Jamie entered the kitchen drowsily. He went to the fridge and pulled out a carton of carrot juice. He sat down at the table and poured out a pint of juice. Carol looked at him quizzically.

*"Go easy on that love. You don't want to be turning orange again now do you?"*

*"Mum?"*

*"Yes?"*

*"We ever been to Blackpool?"*

*"Once when you were really young."*

Her mind flashed back to a short break there when he was a toddler and his dad was still around. It had been a very unhappy and argumentative time.

*"You wouldn't remember."*

*"Could we go again?"*

*"I suppose so. Can I ask why?"*

*"I thought it would be interesting."*

*"Uh huh. I'll ask Amos if he's up to driving yet."*

*"Can't we take the train? Then he wouldn't have to come."*

She looked hard at Jamie.

*"He probably wouldn't enjoy it."*

*"For that you can go and ask him yourself. He needs a reason to get back behind the wheel."*

*"I'm sure he won't want..."*

As they spoke Amos entered.

*"There you go, you can ask him now."*

*"Ask him what?"*

There was silence as Carol looked at Jamie.

*"Jamie wants you to take us to Blackpool."*

Jamie stared daggers back at her. Amos too was reticent and exchanged glances with her. Amos bit his lip, and ran his hand across his mouth.

*"I'm not sure I feel up to it."*

*"That's okay,"* said Jamie, in relief.

But that was not the end of it. Carol looked hard at Amos.

*"Don't give me that look."*

She renewed it.

*"Okay, okay. I'll do it."*

# Chapter 31

As she lay in bed Carol watched Amos. Amos sat on the bed and Carol began to massage his injuries. But he was not responding initially. His muscles were tensed. Clearly, he was animated by something which was making him more than a little restless.

*“Have you seen what that boy has in those cases?”*

*“No, I only know they’re heavy, when I have to shift them to clean.”*

*“You clean his room?”*

*“Only when he’s out. I just shift a few things around and make his bed. We both pretend it doesn’t happen.”*

*“Just, it looks like...”*

He turned around smiling. Her fingers were doing the trick.

*“I know what it looks like. But when I do shift those cases it near breaks my back.”*

*“I’m not surprised. It’s heavy, it’s full of paper-cuttings and programmes, books and magazines.”*

*“Well, lets hope it stays in the cases and doesn’t get spread around to add to the rest of his clutter.”*

*“Well if it did, it wouldn’t be a bad thing.”*

The remark shifted Carol out of her delightful contemplation.

*“I’ve just told you the problems I have keeping that room clean.”*

He snuggled closer to her.

*"I didn't mean it like that. It's all about one man, Stan Matthews, and that's one influence I wouldn't mind him coming under."*

*"It would be hard to overestimate what he did for my country. In his very own way he put a dent in the apartheid regime, just by being who he was and being there with us in the townships. He strengthened our hope for the future."*

*"What, the old Stoke footballer?"*

Amos smiled. *"You know, probably his greatest footballing moments were with another club, not Stoke."*

*"Oh, I thought he was born and died here."*

*"When I saw the programmes I realised."*

*"Realised what?"*

*"Where do you think he spent fourteen years of his life?"*

*"How should I know!"*

*"You should. Come on, guess!"*

And he began to hum, *"I do like to be beside the seaside".*

*"Blackpool!"*

They kissed in a relaxed manner.

*"What's going on in his head?"*

*"He's fifteen years old. Who knows, but it's starting to look very interesting."*



# Chapter 32

Amos was up well ahead of the rest of the household. He stepped out of the house and headed off down the street singing the South African Anthem.

When Jamie finally closed the front door Amos was already in the car. He opened the back door of the car to be greeted by a huge sloppy kiss.

*“Laddie!”*

*“Thought he might fancy a run along the beach before he settles into his new home!”*

Jamie couldn't help smiling broadly. Carol squeezed Amos' knee as the car pulled off. The journey took just over an hour, renewing Amos' confidence with every mile. They approached the town via the North Shore and into the Golden Mile.

Suddenly a gang of England supporters in replica shirts spilled into the road ahead. Amos braked sharply. A cyclist nearly ran into the back of them. As he cursed loudly, close-shaved heads turned around to stare into the car.

Amos had stalled. He quickly put the car into gear. But the engine would not turn. Then suddenly it lurched alive. When he was in control again, Amos moved away sharply, ignoring the cyclist. Jamie watched the departing scene through the rear window. One supporter in an Allen t-shirt stood out in the crowd. Amos breathed deeply and regained his composure.

*“Okay. Where to? The tower, pleasure beach, water park?”*

*“Bloomfield Road.”*

*"Where?"*

*"The football ground."*

*"Which football ground?"*

*"Blackpool FC."*

They had to drive round a new traffic system. From inside the car Jamie was looking out at the name "Blackpool FC.' After one circuit Amos stopped the car in front of the club shop.

*"Do you want to get out to see if you can find whatever it is you're looking for?"*

*"Okay."*

He got out of the car, smiling as he looked ahead.

*"Would you like us to come with you?"*

*"That's okay."*

Jamie approached the entrance to Blackpool FC offices. Everywhere there were images of Stan and the 1953 team. He peered through the glass doors. The desk was unmanned. Stan was stood on the stairs beckoning to him. He entered quickly and climbed the stairs. Stan led him a short way along the corridor to the Stan Matthews Suite. They looked out over the ground.

*"So, that's Amos is it? He looks familiar."*

*"They all look the same if you ask me."*

Stan gave him the look which had withered many a player who had just fouled him.

*"What? I didn't mean that. I am trying to get to grips with it but it's not easy you know."*

*“What?”*

*“A black man and my mum!”*

*“What if Amos were white but ten years older than her, how would you feel then?”*

*“I wouldn’t like it, but he’s... Anyway, we should stick with our own. That’s what I think!”*

*“Really? And where does love come into this equation?”*

Jamie rolled his eyes.

*“Okay, so it doesn’t mean anything much at your age but when you reach my age...”*

*“Stan, you died ten years ago! Even you aren’t your age.”*

Stan laughed.

*“It’s very real. It can enter your life in the most unexpected form and it really doesn’t recognise borders.”*

Jamie was struck by the sincerity in Stan’s words. He was drawn to listen closely to what this special man had to say, his cynicism unwillingly dispelled.

*“Take it from me, son. Neither of them want to cause you any hurt. They’d travel a very long way to avoid it. Trust me, I know.”*

*“When I was fifty three I was managing Port Vale for free. I took the team to Czechoslovakia. We were assigned a really lovely and sophisticated young woman as our cultural guide. I don’t know how it happened, anyone would’ve told you I’m not a ladies’ man - and she was thirteen years younger than me, but we fell in love.”*

Stan was staring fixedly at the pitch.

*"It was 1968, everything was changing. Love was everywhere and the possibilities seemed endless for everyone! My upbringing was Victorian, you know women only got the vote two years before I joined Stoke but it got to me too! I went back to Prague to be with her and then suddenly, something happened to make me realise that the world hadn't changed as much as everyone had hoped. The Russians invaded.*

*"I came out on the last train. I went home and tore myself apart. Mila was left there. I was back in Blackpool, Sir Stanley Matthews, the first footballing Knight, the first European footballer of the year, role model to millions of people and here I was wanting to quit my marriage for a married woman thirteen years younger than me who filled my life and heart completely.*

*"The press would have destroyed me. It wasn't enough what I had done on the pitch. Suddenly I got a call - she was out and in Germany. Within days I was with her. We spent the next seven years dodging the press, hiding our love from the wide world when all I wanted to do was to shout it out! I was as proud of my love in her as anything I achieved in football."*

Stan went quiet.

*"Then what happened?"*

Stan jolted back to his memories.

*"My divorce came through after seven years."*

*"And?"*

*"Eventually we were able to come back to Stoke, and live openly, honestly. So you see, I've been there. I know what your mum and Amos are going through. There was a poem that Mila loved. It's about a man who goes to a well. There is a snake there. The man is delighted by its beauty. Then suddenly, irrationally, he throws a log at it and then regrets. It is too long to remember it all but one line sticks in my mind."*

*“And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords of life”.*

*“My life would have been so much poorer without Mila. Don’t let other people’s prejudice impoverish yours.”*

Amos was lazily checking his rear view mirror as Jamie suddenly appeared. Looking pleased, he climbed into the car.

*“You done already?”*

*“Yes, thanks.”*

As he settled into the back seat with Laddie he spotted a ‘Kick Racism’ poster in the window of the Sales office.

*“Oh, hang on. Mum, you got a couple of quid I can borrow?”*

Amos reached into his pocket.

*“There you go.”*

Jamie walked towards the shop, leaving Carol and Amos exchanging questioning glances. Until Jamie emerged wearing a wristband.

*“Where to now?”*

*“I don’t mind, wherever.”*

*“You must have wanted to come to Blackpool for a reason.”*

*“That’s right.”*

Amos smiled and off they drove to the seafront.

# Chapter 33

For Allen it was a quick movement, part of everyday business as he lashed his elbow into the face of an opposing player. But to the player whose career it was to end it seemed like a silent slow motion film shot by Reifenthal. It was a movie he would play again and again. The crowd roared as Allen and he went for a high ball together, the graceful bodies seem to hang in the air, effort etched across their faces. Allen had led with his elbow. Sharp pain returned him to real time and the baying of the onlookers. Blood poured from his face. Allen was shown the red card. He had returned to his fallen opponent. There was no remorse. Allen shouted abuse at him and stamped on his ankle. It cracked. The referee and linesman interceded. Allen spat in their faces. A policeman ran up and Allen struck out again.



Jamie, Carol and Amos wandered past the tourist shops. Carol stopped by a poster of a gorilla saying 'Make My Day' come and visit me at Stanley Park Zoo.

*“How about the zoo? I haven’t been for years.”*

It took Carol by surprise when Amos responded with a vehement negative.

*“Freedom is precious. Animals put on show for our entertainment. Kept in cages day after day. That’s no sort of life.”*

His gaze became distant, South African music in his head and the image of Mandela leaving prison after 27 years.

*“Oh come on, lighten up will you?”*

*“No, he’s right mum. I went once with the school. Do you remember? I’ll never go again. I don’t want to be a part of their misery.”*

He looked closely into Laddie’s brown and misting eyes.

*“Sorry... did you two just agree on something?”*

She peeked into a fortune-tellers booth.

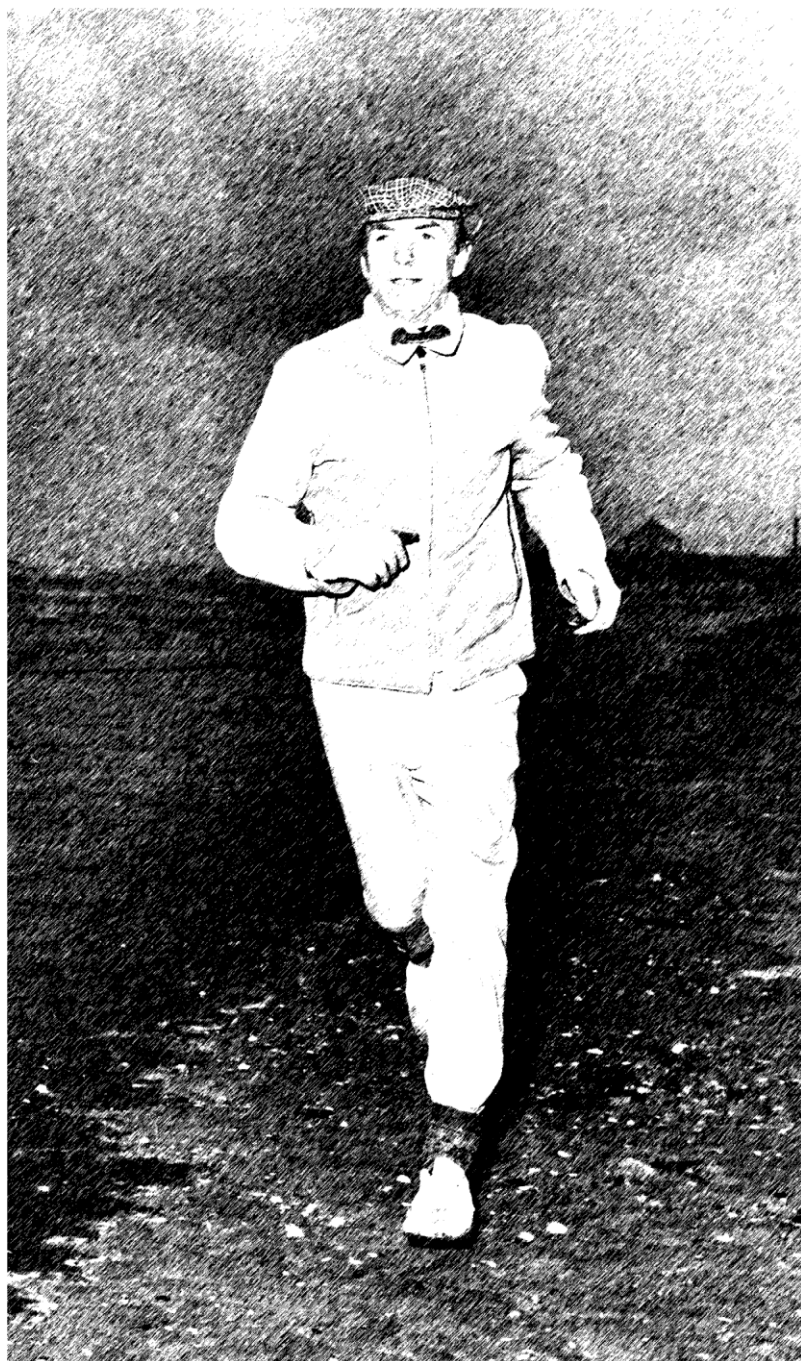
*“Perhaps I should pop in here, and find out what other surprises you two have in store.”*

Jamie allowed himself a small smile to Amos.

They stayed that night at Stan’s old hotel which was now called the Feng Shui. At six the next morning, a keen old dog and a very bleary-eyed boy left the hotel heading along the south shore to Squire’s gate and St Anne’s beach.

Stan was waiting in a track suit with a flat cap. They started sprinting together, while Laddie sniffed around. Stan pulled up but Jamie kept going.

*“Come back. What have I told you?”*





*“Sorry.”*

*“Just short sprints.”*

*“Sorry.”*

*“You only need to be super fast over seven or eight yards. By that time your opponent is left for dead.”*

*“Okay.”*

He started to jog.

*“Hold on!”*

Jamie looked round.

*“Just walk a bit.”*

Jamie strode out.

*“Hey, slow down. It isn’t a race now. Take some time for you.”*

They walked side by side. He went to speak then saw Stan’s gaze was fixed out to sea.

*“Go!”*

They sprinted some more. Stan’s gaze was again out to sea.

*“I love this place. What do you see out there?”*

Jamie was uncertain as to what to say. He scanned the horizon for ships or birds.

*“I can’t see anything, just the sea.”*

*“Just the sea? Always the same is it?”*

*"Pretty much."*

*"That's the problem in life. We work so hard to make everything constant."*

Jamie scrutinised Stan's face.

*"You're right, son. For most people the sea is always the same and yet if you really look, it is always different. Each wave creates a new shore. You have to look close though."*

*"Go!"*

They sprinted again and pulled up.

*"Sometimes in the mornings the sea mists are so thick I wouldn't be able to see you walking there. Then you really are alone. The person I've always tried to be, the Stan Matthews the world thinks it knew, dissolves and I'm alone with the real me."*

He paused. Stan's eyes had become distant and it had unsettled Jamie.

*"Sounds a bit frightening."*

Stan smiled. *"It can be temporarily, but what's inside isn't. The really scary stuff is what we create outside, or others create for us and expect us to live up to. It's a big responsibility."*

*"But everyone wants to be famous, that's cool isn't it?"*

*"Is it?"*

*"Go!"*

They set off again sprinting down the beach. Carol and Amos watched Jamie from the prom.

*"You'd almost think that dog was another human being the way he*

*talks to it all the time.*"

*"Do you think it's weird?"*

*"No."*

They approached Jamie. Pushing his luck, but feeling confident, Amos asked, *"Fancy a kick about?"*

Stan stood next to Amos. This was a big decision for Jamie.

*"Are you sure? What about your injuries?"*

*"I'll go in goal."*

He peeled off his top and threw it down for a goalpost. As he did a group of women from Liverpool whistled and catcalled their admiration. Jamie was flustered by this but eventually did likewise. The girls catcalled again delighting in his youthful embarrassment.

*"Ok!"*

*"Alright!"*

Stan smiled and wandered a short distance away before sitting down and watching them play. Amos was slow going down because he was still stiff. The two of them laughed about it. As the two men in her life became hot and sweaty Carol set off to find some refreshment for them. Whilst she passed close by them one of the women asked.

*"They belong to you?"*

*"My son and my husband."*

*"Lucky girl!"*

*"Thank you."*

She continued to the beach, beaming. The women laughed goodheartedly and continued to watch cheering at appropriate moments.

The atmosphere for the return journey to Stoke was light. Nothing seemed likely to affect it until over the radio Jamie heard, *“Police today were questioning four premiership footballers in connection with the disappearance of school girl Jane Burtenshaw.”* A quietness surrounded him. He knew there were secret things that he knew about that night which he could not share. Not yet and probably not for a very long time.



# Chapter 34

Amos opened the door to the flat and let Carol and Jamie pass. The local paper lay on the doormat.

*“Pick that up will you, love?”*

Jamie picked up the paper. Allen was all over the front page. The picture showed him attacking another player. The headline, *‘The Ugly Face of the Beautiful Game’*.

Jamie and Peter were sitting in silence near the canal. Laddie was plodding around as always seeking out any olfactory messages left by dogs and other mammals. Both boys were skimming stones at a distant petrol drum. Peter was the first to speak.

*“What’s wrong?”*

*“What d’you mean?”*

*“You’ve been strange.”*

Jamie wondered if somehow he had discovered about Stan.

*“It started when we robbed that old bloke. You’ve not wanted to join in, and since he died, well, when you’re with us you’re, you’re...”*

Jamie looked away and skimmed another stone.

*“Just like you are now. Distant. I tell you it’s really \*\*\*\*\* us off.”*

Jamie looked straight at him. Peter dropped his eyes.

*“Well not me maybe, but it’s put the \*\*\*\* up Will.”*

*“That figures.”*

*"He keeps saying, you're going to drop us in it... from a big height."*

*"He's a prat!"*

Jamie looked at Laddie and remembered the boot and the dog's pain.

*"He's a prat of the first order."*

Jamie threw the stone hard. It hit the target which rang into the distance.

*"There's a lot more going on in this world than will ever enter that dangerously empty thing Will keeps on his shoulders."*

He hit the target again and its emptiness resounded even louder. Peter was taken aback by the unrestrained anger in Jamie's voice. They fell silent again.

*"You even talk different. Where do you get this stuff?"*

*"What do you think about.... Oh, forget it."*

*"Nah, come on."*

*"The way, Will, I was going to say, thinks."*

They responded in one voice.

*"But he doesn't!"*

They had laughed together. The tension was broken.

*"His attitude is mad."*

*"That's his Dad, isn't it."*

*"Yeah, but we're allowing his Dad to set the pattern of our lives. A fearful man who has a drink to save himself from thinking!"*

Jamie looked across to Laddie.

*"...And look at the harm we cause on the way."*

Peter called Laddie across and began to pet the dog who responded with an appreciative lick.

*"I don't know where all this stuff's coming from. You're beginning to sound like my granddad. But I tell you, if Will could hear you he'd be \*\*\*\*\* himself even harder."*

*"Yeah, well I ain't scared of him anymore."*



## Chapter 35

Stan called Time Out from the morning's training.

*"I've something I'd like to tell you and then I have a favour to ask."*

Jamie looked questioningly in response.

*"When my father was dying, he asked two things of me, one of which was easy. To look after my mum. The second proved a good deal harder."*

Stan's mind was drifting back. Stan was on the pitch after the 1953 Final holding his medal up to the sky. Jamie was all ears.



*"Well, what was it?"*

*"To win the FA Cup. Happily for me and for him both happened. That medal was for Dad. I knew somehow he'd rest easy now."*



*“But you said he died years before that?”*

*“That’s true, but a dying wish unfulfilled somehow has a hold on the dead and the living. So what I’m going to ask you now are two very special favours. When my Mila died, it was very sudden. I was away in hospital having a check up. She had a heart attack watching the telly... why ever did she have to keep smoking?”*

*He cleared his throat with a little cough. “She loved her garden, the original ‘green fingers’ she was. Anyway, she’d been on at me for ages to help her put up this bird table she bought and I hadn’t done it. When she went I gave up the will to live, let alone put up a bird table, but do you know that was my dying regret.”*

He looked at Jamie who was already on his wavelength, but decidedly uncomfortable.

*“A Begonia at the base would be a lovely finishing touch. She loved them.”*

*“Let me get this straight. You want me to put up a bird table and plant flowers...”*

*“Begonias”*

*“...Begonias, in someone else’s garden?”*

*“That’s it. At least that’s the first thing!”*

*“Let me guess. The second is to break into the Stoke ground and retrieve your ashes from under the centre spot.”*

Stan replied, deadpan.

*“Only half of them. The rest are in the garden with Mila’s.”*

*“I’ll get arrested! I’ll be in trouble and so will Amos!”*

A broad grin broke out on Stan’s face. He had successfully wound

Jamie up and it delighted him.

*“No. It’s a lot more difficult than that, son!”*

That was how, under the cover of night, Jamie found himself digging around in Stan’s old garden. Absorbed in the task at hand and intent on carrying out his promise to Stan, he was unaware of the man giving his dog a late night walk. The man watched him for a few minutes before moving quietly off. Jamie put the finishing touches to his chore, packed his tools away in a hold all and hurried out of the garden.

Mission accomplished, he headed off up the little road that led to the house. The police car was parked, lights off at the end of the lane. As Jamie approached the two officers got out of the car. A torch shone into his face and his heart dropped. Busted again !

Amos approached the front desk of the police station and came face to face with the Sergeant who had cautioned Jamie a few months before.

*“We meet again, Mr Matkoni.”*

*“So I see.”*

*“I thought you were based in Leeds?”*

*“Transfer, sir. First day today. It’s always nice to see a familiar face on your first day, don’t you think.”*

*“What’s he charged with?”*

*“Trespass and theft.”*

*“Theft?”*

*“That’s right, Sir. He was caught red handed with his bag full of gardening tools.”*

Amos was lost for words.

In the dawn light, an elderly couple gazed in amazement at the bird table planted in the middle of their lawn. The old lady noticed the golden plaque on it.

*“What does that say, dear?”*

*“For Mila!”*

Amos ran to pick up the phone.

*“Hello?”*

*“Sergeant Morris here, sir. You’ll be pleased to know that the charges against your son have been dropped. No further action will be taken.”*

*“Really?”*

*“Yes, sir. It would appear that your son was actually doing a good deed.”*

*“He was?”*

*“Yes, the couple who own the house said all their garden equipment was accounted for and they were very happy with their new bird table!”*

Amos was bemused.

*“Right. Well thank you, Sergeant, though I’m not sure it’ll do his street cred much good!”*

# Chapter 36

It was about 15 minutes into the match. Jamie was in good form. The usual suspects were stood along the touchline mouthing off their opinions. Serene in the middle stood Stan.

Amos parked up some distance from the pitch. Turning to Carol he asked,

*“You ready for this?”*

*“Are you?”*

He nodded and got out of the car. Going round the other side, he opened the door for her.

*“Thank you, kind sir.”*

She took his arm and they walked, huddled close together, towards the play. As they got closer they could hear a series of offensive remarks aimed in their direction and emanating from the touchline. They joined the crowd remaining slightly distanced from the others there.

*“Hey black boy. Your dad’s here.”*

Jamie looked to see what had happened. He was about to react when Stan caught his eye. He was shaking his head and mouthing, *“No fuss. Ignore him.”* Jamie acknowledged. The barracking of Jamie, Carol and Amos increased as the touchline fathers swigged more from their cans. Jamie was clouted by Will as they went for the same ball together. Jamie stayed down a little while. With a grin on his face Will offered his hand. Jamie calmly pushed it aside, shaking his head. He was inspired and playing a blinder but the touchline was becoming quite ugly as the match drew to a close. Stan had taken a position between the fathers,

Carol and Amos. As the whistle blew an ugly remark was made about Carol sleeping with a black in tones just loud enough for Amos to hear. He had started to make a move on the two protagonists when Jimmy stepped forward to speak with the pair of them.

*“You’re Jamie’s parents I believe?”*

He offered his hand, at the same time raising his voice so the others could hear.

*“I’m with the Stan Matthews Foundation, I’d like to talk to you about involving Jamie in what we’re doing. As I’m sure you’re aware he’s head and shoulders above these other lads. Can we go to your car?”*

The mutterings were silenced momentarily as he escorted them off.

*“I think he could be a great asset. As well as the future stars like Jamie, we’re set up to help the kids who don’t always get picked but still want to play the game Stan loved.”*



# Chapter 37

Outside FA Headquarters, Allen, wearing dark glasses, was being ushered into a car. Cameras flashed and microphones were thrust in his direction as voices called out for his attention.

*“Allen, over here. What do you think of the ban?”*

A TV reporter did his piece to camera, *“Today the FA took the unprecedented step of banning the current England International, Mark Allen, for twenty eight games for bringing the game into disrepute when he deliberately broke the leg of his fellow International Bradley Johnson by stamping on it in that ugly incident which has shocked even the football world. We understand the police are considering bringing charges of grievous bodily harm and racist assault.”*

Jamie and Stan watched on a small portable telly in the corner of Jamie’s room.

*“That’s England’s chances gone.”*

*“Perhaps I should make a comeback?”*

*“If only. What kept you playing so long anyway?”*

*“You play because it expresses something in you. Your body and mind take pleasure in what you are doing. People who have never kicked a ball can identify with what you’re doing.”*

*“Seems you did that!”*

*“I’ve been lucky. A lot of people seemed to get pleasure from what I did.”*

*“Could you feel it?”*

*“You can certainly feel something. When you’re on the field and one hundred thousand pairs of eyes are watching your every move.”*

*“Not all of them are on your side though!”*

He laughed and began to leaf through the memorabilia. Jamie was enthralled and wanted more.

*“So, can you feel when they want you to do it right?”*

*“Oh yes. The best time by far was the nineteen fifty three Cup Final.”*

*“Tell me about it.”*

*“It started long before the game. I was thirty eight, I already had two losers medals and everyone was saying it was my last chance to get a winners. Good wishes came from all over the world. It was the first Final to be televised. I think the whole country stopped.”* He fondled the 1953 programme. *“There was no way we were going to lose. Although, for a long time, I thought otherwise. At half time we were two one down. Their fullback, Bell, had been badly injured and there were no substitutes in those days, so they moved him onto the wing and blow me, just after the restart - he scores. Stan Mortensen pulled back a goal from my cross, then hit an incredible free kick with two minutes to go. The atmosphere was fantastic and so was what happened next.*

*“Our inside right put a beautiful pass to the edge of the box. I was onto it quickly, I took it inside and was looking for Morty. I panicked a bit, went to the right of the defender. Morty was going for the near post, drawing players onto him, but he had shouted to Bill Perry to fill in behind. It was the simplest of passes and I slipped making it. The next day in all the papers it was hailed as the Matthews’ Final and has remained so ever since. I have always been embarrassed by that. How can one man score a hat trick in a Cup Final and it forever be known by another man’s name?”*

*“Yes, but you were the reason for all that feeling.”*

*“As a footballer you’re just one of twenty two men, all with different skills. If your opponent does something really well, learn from it, use it to improve your own game. Skill is what counts. You have to give credit to whomever it’s due, no matter who they are. That’s true in football and it’s true in life. Prejudice will get you nowhere, just leave you in the same place.”*

Jamie looked up at his Allen poster. He got up and went across to it. He started to remove it from the wall.

*“Amos told me what you did for the South Africans.”*

*“Some really good players there.”*

There was a sharp knock at the door. Amos head poked round. He spotted the poster coming down.

*“Your mum’s been slaving over a hot oven and has produced a feast. You hungry?”*

*“You bet!”*

Amos pulled into the Britannia Stadium Car park. Carol leaned forward and surreptitiously kissed Jamie on the cheek.

*“Good luck!”*

Jamie smiled. Amos offered his hand.

*“Good luck, as if you need it!”*

Jamie took the hand briefly, then opened the door. As he turned to close it he leaned in towards Amos.

*“You really love her, don’t you?”*

*“Never a doubt. From the very first.”*

Jamie turned and walked towards the statues of Stan. Amos called



him back.

*“There is something else that man”, he pointed at the statue, “did. He stopped people like me from becoming anti white.”*

*“What?”*

For a moment he was certain that Amos could see Stan who was sitting on the bench by the statue.

*“How could that be?”*

*“Because we were able to say to ourselves that there are white people who care about the plight of black people, and are willing to prove it. He did that by being there with us year after year, Stanley Matthews, the most famous footballer in the world. You can’t imagine what that does for your self-esteem to have your hero on your side.”*

*“I wouldn’t bet on that. Guess you just have to decide who really is a hero.”*

Jamie turned away leaving Amos slightly bemused. And what he saw next only served to compound his confusion. Jamie stopped at the statues and studiously examined them. He sat on a bench and looked away towards the ground several times. He appeared to be talking to thin air.

*“You know, I reckon that sculptor was right. One leg is shorter than the other! The key to Matthew’s magic is revealed after all these years!”*

He ducked Stan’s clip around the ear and scurried in towards the entrance to Stoke City’s ground, hop-along style.

In Allen’s agent’s office, football photos adorned the walls. The agent was speaking to a TV producer on the phone.

*“No... no, I understand. It’s the same story I’m getting everywhere... Richard & Judy cancelled yesterday and even The Sun said they’d*

*get back to me."*

He put down the phone and dialled again.

*"Allen, I'm sorry, the Jonathan Ross show's just cancelled your appearance next week... Yes, but if you'll excuse the phrase. You can't get arrested."* There was a burst of expletives down the line. The agent put down the receiver. *"You've had your fifteen minutes you \*\*\*\*\*!"*

Stoke council had long ago declared Stan's birthday, February 1st, Sir Stan Matthew's Day. To celebrate, the Stanley Matthews Foundation were hosting an open day at Stoke City. Jamie had been chosen to play in a fund raiser against a team of celebrities from football and music. He was showing off some Matthew's magic to the delight of Carol and Amos. Jimmy was taking care of them quite royally. He was introduced to everyone including the first team manager. Jamie looked over from the pitch and saw Amos give him a thumbs up and then the next time he looked he had disappeared.

On the far side of the field a substitution was being made. Jamie could not tell at this distance who exactly was going off and who was coming on. He was just pleased it wasn't him being substituted. He was enjoying himself too much. With his first touch the substitute scored. It was a stunning free kick. As the scorer turned, a beaming Jamie recognised Amos.

Stan smiled quietly to himself. *"I thought he looked familiar."* He recalled the day in South Africa when a small black boy had dribbled round him with consummate ease. The tannoy announced *'The scorer was Amos Matkoni'*. Father and grandfather's faces fell as one.

# Chapter 38

Jamie was standing across the desk from Bob, the Foundations Manager.

*“Congratulations!”*

Jamie looked uncertain.

*“Sir?”*

*“Old Tom did us a real favour when he told us about you. It might even be that he’s done the game a favour too. He’d be proud of you, proud of the sheer enthusiasm and self motivation. The way you’ve been training, it could have been Stan out there himself.”*

Jamie gulped.

*“Where did you get some of those ideas?”*

Jamie was searching for an answer as Bob waved the question away.

*“That was the Stoke Manager at the game yesterday. He was impressed, wants to put you in the youth team next season.”*

A huge grin broke out on Jamie’s face.

*“In the meantime, we rather hoped that you’ll stick around here. As you know we’ve got big plans for the foundation what with the new training schemes we’re offering this year. How’d you fancy a summer job here at the foundation coaching other kids?”*

*“Really?”*

*“As you know we’re a charity so the money won’t be huge.”*

*"I don't care about the money. This is the best day ever!"*

*"Good. Start on Monday then, eh?"*

*"Thank you. I can't wait to tell Stan, I mean mum and Amos."*

He started to rush out.

*"You'll be in charge of the first ever Stan Matthews Eleven Girls Team."*

Jamie's face dropped, but fortunately Bob couldn't see. Three minutes later he was staring at the statues. Stan's second request echoing through his mind. *"No it's a lot more difficult than that, son. I want you to pass on everything I've taught you about doing it right. Promise me you'll find a way to do that for me."*

He reached into his pocket and pulled out the badge Tom gave him. He looked at it long and hard. The monochrome face of a younger Stan Matthews than the one he knew was grinning back at him. Just as Stan had nearly sixty years before, he raised the badge to the sky.

*"But they're girls Stan. Girls!"*

Outside United's ground the press had gathered awaiting a spokesman's statement.

*"I can confirm that today the club has terminated the contract of Mark Allen."*

Journalists shouted out after him. *"Have you had any enquiries from other clubs?"*

*"No further comment. He's no longer a United Player. What I can say is he's not the sort of player the game needs. I hope the rest of the football world will be as brave as United have been today."*

He turned and left the press to their frenzy.

The group of girls were gathered around Jamie. He felt quite uncertain and intimidated, but was making a good fist of not showing it to them as he introduced them to Stan's training regimen. Stan looked on from the terrace with Tom by his side.

*"Okay, let's go, and remember, enthusiasm is the key to success."*

The girls broke out into pairs. An odd number had turned up for the session, so Jamie paired with a West Indian girl about his age. She appeared quite shy and retiring, but once she had the ball at her feet she became as feisty as she was attractive.

On three occasions she succeeded in dribbling around him. Feeling that he was losing the attention and the respect of the rest of the group, he went in firmly to tackle her and they tumbled to the turf.

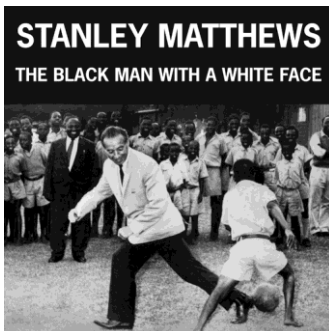
Embarrassed at his lack of discipline, Jamie offered his hand. She took it. As he pulled her up, their faces came close enough to share a breath. Their eyes engaged. The girl smiled, Jamie blushed and dropped his head.

He glanced at Stan sitting with Tom in the stand. Stan shrugged his shoulders. He turned to Tom.

*"This time he's on his own!"* He shook his head, *"Football I understand."*







Written with his daughter, Jean Gough, just a decade after Sir Stanley Matthews' death, this volume celebrates the influence Stan had in Africa. In the year that South Africa hosted the World Cup Finals, it highlights his work for over a quarter of a century in Soweto, the legacy of which is recognised here by one of the world's foremost statesmen, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

From Jean's unique viewpoint, we gain insights into '*Stan the Man*'. We also learn what he meant to those who watched him from afar and those who played with him, and against him. From his family, to the H.M. The Queen and Prince Philip, he was loved and admired not only for his extraordinary skill, but also for his natural humility and openheartedness.

*On the plane home I was very moved when the captain of the team, Gilbert Moilola, sat beside me, took my hand and said, "Stanley, you are a black man with a white face".*

*"And so on behalf of our people I want to pay a very, very warm tribute to him and to say that he would not have known just how incredibly significant what he did to our self-esteem, what he did, made a contribution to people not becoming anti-white because they were able to say there are white people who care about the plight of black people."*

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

*"The man who taught us the way football should be played"* **Pelé**

*"I grew up in an era when he was a god to those of us who aspired to play the game. He was a true gentleman and we shall never see his like again"*

**Brian Clough**

Available as printed copy or e-book at: [www.bonobo.tv/shop-books.htm](http://www.bonobo.tv/shop-books.htm)

Original screenplay for Spirit of the Game © Geoff Francis 2005  
Design & graphics Paul Windridge: [www.rarecompany.co.uk](http://www.rarecompany.co.uk)

Edited by Jacky Walker

Photographic reference for illustrations  
courtesy of the Sir Stanley Matthews Foundation

Thanks to The Matthews family, John Cross, Stoke Sentinel,  
Freddie Francis, Dee Hellier, Andrew Titcombe & Lucy Boynton

© [www.bonobo.tv](http://www.bonobo.tv) 2010



9 7 8 1 9 0 7 7 2 9 0 8 9



