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Opening extract from

# Contact

Written by

**Malorie Blackman**

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Published by

**Barrington Stoke Ltd**

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*For Neil and Lizzy, with love as always*

## CONTENTS


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Five-a-side | 1 |
| **2** | Caution | 8 |
| **3** | Tackle | 15 |
| **4** | Fixture | 22 |
| **5** | Kit | 24 |
| **6** | Pitch | 29 |
| **7** | Kick-off | 33 |
| **8** | Player | 37 |
| **9** | Team | 42 |



## CHAPTER 1
# FIVE-A-SIDE

Beep! Beep! Beep!

Someone wanted to talk to Cal.

"Answer call," Cal said. He wondered if he'd ever finish his homework.

The map of Neptune's blue-green clouds that he'd been studying vanished in a flash and his best friend Jenna's face appeared instead.

“Cal, I’ve got some bad news,” Jenna said. For once she wasn’t smiling.

“Hello to you too!” Cal said. “What’s the matter?”

“It’s about our football match tomorrow.”

“What about it?” Cal asked. He was on high alert.

“Jacob’s been asking questions,” Jenna said. Her face was grim.

“Oh no!” Cal’s heart sank.

Jenna shook her head, and her lips screwed up with fury.

Jacob was Jenna’s twin brother and Cal knew that Jenna hated him even more than Cal or any of their other friends did. Jacob never thought of anyone but himself. He set

a new standard for being totally and utterly selfish.

"I told him that it's a five-a-side game and we already have ten players, but he says we have to let him sit in as a reserve."

"And what did you say?" Cal asked.

"I told him that he couldn't, of course," Jenna said. "But you know what Jacob's like. That won't stop him. So I thought I'd better call everyone before the game to warn them."

Cal was angry now. "How did Jacob find out about the game in the first place?" he demanded.

"Hey! Don't bite my head off," Jenna snapped back. "I didn't tell him."

Cal took a deep breath, then another, in an effort to calm down.

Jacob knew about their game ...



It was dangerous enough to play football the way they played it. Now that Jacob had found out about it, they'd have to worry about him as well.

"What's Jacob doing now?" Cal asked.

"He's calling everyone to try to find out who else is playing," Jenna said. "He's hoping that someone will say it's OK for him to sit in as the reserve."

"Did he ask where we were playing?" Cal asked.

"Yeah, but I told him not to be so nosy," Jenna said. "I said if he wasn't playing then he didn't need to know."

"That won't stop him," Cal said.

"I know." Jenna sighed.

Cal clenched his fists inside his Non-Contact suit. How on earth had Jacob found out about their football match? It didn't make sense. None of the team would have told him – Cal was sure of that. They all had too much to lose if anyone outside the team found out what was going on.

Jenna turned away from her screen to listen to something Cal couldn't hear. "I've got to go," she said, as she turned back to face him. "Dad's calling me. See you tomorrow."

"Maybe we should cancel tomorrow's match – just to be on the safe side?" Cal said.

"No way! You can't do that," Jenna said. "We only get to play once a month as it is. I've been looking forward to our game since the day after the last one!"

"It's better to postpone the game tomorrow than risk being found out," Cal said.

“That would be much worse – we’d never get to play again.”

Jenna pursed her lips. “I suppose so,” she agreed. “Look, call me tomorrow morning and let me know what’s happening.”

“Disconnect call,” Cal said.

Jenna’s face vanished.