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Opening extract from

Scrum !

Written by

Tom Palmer

Published by

Barrington Stoke Ltd

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Scrum!

by

Tom Palmer

Illustrated by Dylan Gibson

To my Aunty Margaret, who lives in one of the great rugby towns, Warrington.

Thanks to David Luxton and Rebecca Palmer for helping with the book.

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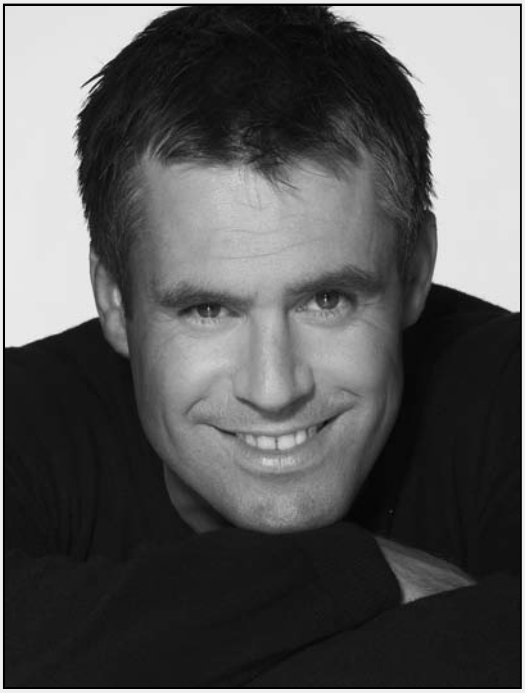
Foreword

This story is about a boy who struggles with hard choices. He feels he has to choose between two dads, two homes and two rugby codes. Tom Palmer has worked hard to make sure the book is easy to read, because some people struggle with reading.

I struggled with reading when I was young and even when I got a bit older, because I'm dyslexic. I was a bit like Steven in the book – I tried to cope on my own. Also like Steven, I found out that it always helps to speak to someone when you've got a problem. Now I work with a charity called Dyslexia Action. They help kids and adults get to grips with reading, so if you know anyone who finds it hard, spread the word. Then they can read great books about rugby too – and other things they like.

Keep reading and keep playing!

Kenny Logan



Kenny Logan is a Rugby Union legend who won over 70 caps in his career. He is the patron of Dyslexia Action.

Dyslexia Action

This book is about two types of rugby – Rugby League and Rugby Union. To find out more about them, turn to page 72!

Chapter 1
BMW

Steven Webb timed his run just right.

Half the players were in a scrum round the ball. They threw it out and his mate Nash got hold of it. Nash threw it to Steven just as Steven got to the perfect speed to catch it.

Now he had to get past three tackles.

The first tackle was easy. Steven slowed his pace right down, then jumped over the arms of the prop who was there to stop him.

In the second tackle the other player got hold of Steven's legs but Steven was stronger. He carried on running and the other player slipped down his legs and let go.

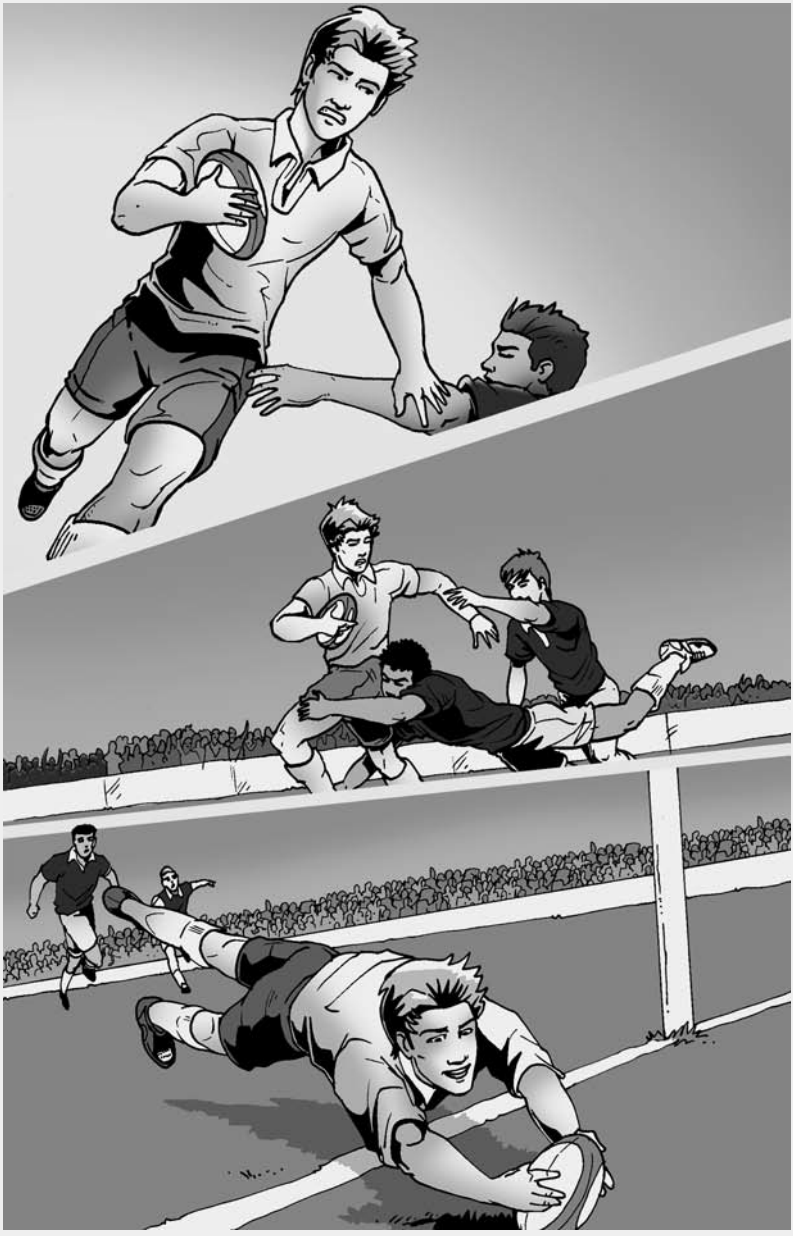
One more tackle to face and Steven would score the try that would win the game.

Steven saw the other player come from the left. He stepped up his pace until he was running fast. Very fast.

That was all it took. Pace.

The other player, a winger, was left behind. He was so far behind that Steven could run back to the middle and dive over the goal line between the posts.

They won the game.



“That was fantastic, son,” said Steven’s dad in the car on the way back to Leeds after the game. He was on a high.

“You were the best player on that pitch by a mile,” his dad went on. “It’s only a matter of time before some club comes and snaps you up. Some Super League club.”

Steven smiled and looked at his dad. He loved this. His dad was so sure that one day Steven would be a famous Rugby League player.

They were on the way to Steven’s mum’s house. It was what they did every Saturday. His dad would collect him, take him to the game, then leave him at his mum’s afterwards.

His mum and dad had split up when Steven was four. He was 14 now, but he saw them both almost every day. Even though they lived apart, they were still friends.

In fact Steven still hoped they'd get back together one day, even though he would never say. He was sure his dad wanted that.

"Will you come in and tell Mum about the game?" Steven asked.

"Sure," Dad said, with a grin.

But when the car turned off the main road, Steven felt it stop with a jolt as his dad hit the brake.

"What's up?" Steven asked.

He saw his dad look at the parking space in front of the house.

There was another car there. A BMW.

"Is that *his* car?" Dad asked in a low voice.

Steven nodded.

“Then I’m not coming in.”