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Opening extract from

# Secret FC

Written by

**Tom Palmer**

Illustrated by

**Guy Parsons**

Published by

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## LILY ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 26 |
| Height | 132cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 9 |
| Speed (1–100) | 73 |

## ZACK ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 15 |
| Height | 136cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 6 |
| Speed (1–100) | 81 |

## JAMES ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 23 |
| Height | 152cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 8 |
| Speed (1–100) | 86 |

## BATTS ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 12 |
| Height | 140cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 6 |
| Speed (1–100) | 76 |

## KHAL ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 21 |
| Height | 148cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 7 |
| Speed (1–100) | 89 |

## MADDIE ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 16 |
| Height | 138cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 7 |
| Speed (1–100) | 68 |

## MR EDWARDS ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 14 |
| Height | 170cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 7 |
| Speed (1–100) | 64 |

## MRS BAKER ▶



| | |
|---|---|
| Goals Scored | 9 |
| Height | 165cm |
| Skill (1–10) | 5 |
| Speed (1–100) | 58 |



# 1. The Railway Children

It was the first day back at school after the summer break. Six weeks of fun and holidays over. Finished.

But Lily, Zack and Khal weren't sad to be back. They were over the moon.

The three of them stood in the playground and looked round the school grounds. Nothing had changed. Kingsfolly Junior School was just as it had always been.

The school building was old and brown. The small car park was packed with teachers' cars. The woods over beyond the playground

were as dark and creepy as ever. And the playground itself was marked out as a football pitch, ready for the first game of term.

"Kick off at morning break?" Lily asked.

Zack and Khal nodded.

Zack was short and stocky, with dark hair in tight plaits. Khal was tall and had a thin face.

"Yeah," Khal said. "I can't wait."

"Nor me," Zack agreed.

Lily pushed her curly blonde hair away from her face. "It's been a long time since we played football," she said.

And it had been a long time. A very long time.

Kingsfolly Junior School was in the middle of the city. The triangle of ground on which it sat had a very busy road on one side, and several railway tracks on the other two.





Trains thundered past the school every couple of minutes.

The part of the city Lily and the others lived in was so built-up that there was no room for fields and parks. No room for football. There were just houses and shops and warehouses and roads and railways, all packed in together.

There was only one place children could play football without being flattened by trains and cars. The school playground.

And that was why they were all so excited about being back at school. They hadn't played a proper game of football for weeks!

Every time they'd passed Kingsfolly in the holidays they'd gazed at the playground and wished they could go in and play. But there was no way they could get over the 4-metre fence that protected it from the outside world.

Zack rubbed his hands together and grinned. "Did you see that Jag in the car park?" he asked.

"No," Khal said. "No kidding? A Jag?"

Another voice spoke over the racket of shouting and screaming in the playground. "I saw it. It's an F-type."

A girl with long dark hair in dreadlocks came and stood next to Lily. She was Lily's best friend, Maddie.

"Do you reckon it's his?" Lily said.

"Whose?" Zack asked.

"His!" said Lily. "The new Head Teacher. Mr Whatshisname."

"Edwards," said Maddie. "Mr Edwards. Has anyone seen him?"

Everyone shook their heads.





"Well he must be cool if he's got an F-type," Khal said, just as the school bell went off.

"We'll find out in assembly," said Lily. "It starts in five minutes."

And the four friends headed into the school, full of hopes for the new Head Teacher and the new term.