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Opening extract from

United Here I Come!

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For Lynne and Abby

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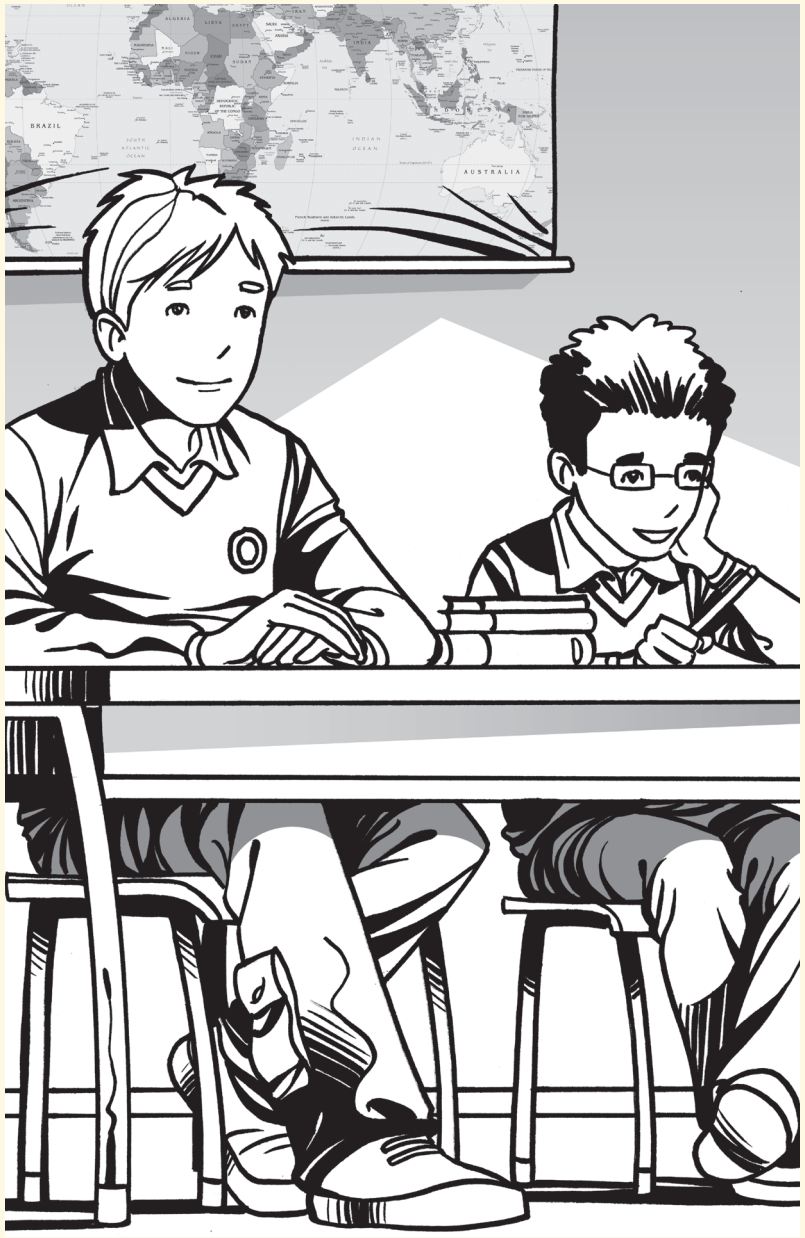
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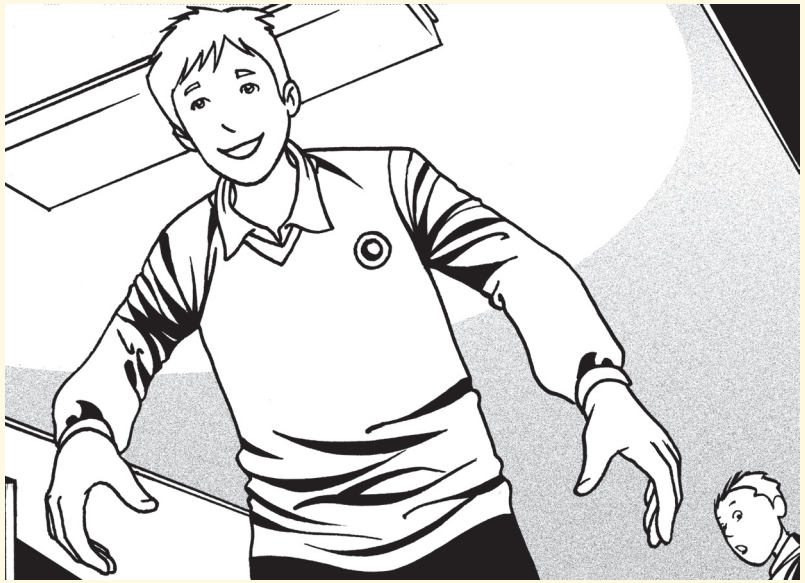


Chapter 1
Primary School

The very first day at Hawks Meade Primary School my teacher, Mrs Green, sat me next to Jimmy Ford. My name is Jack James. All the kids with names that began with J sat together.

I've sat next to Jimmy since we were both five years old and he was a big lad then. He

was tall, wide and clumsy. But the thing that everyone noticed about him most was the size of his hands. They were as big as a man's hands even at Junior School.



In those days Jimmy only had one thing on his mind. That was football. He was mad about the game. He could tell you who was the leading goal scorer, which goal-keeper

had saved the most shots and who was going to win the League.

To the other lads Jimmy was a joke because he didn't have a clue about playing football. Whenever we played football at school, Jimmy was last to be picked. He was so clumsy. If the ball was passed to him, he fell over. His feet were so big, he was always tripping over them.



“You’ll never make a footballer, but with hands like that you might make a good boxer one day, Jimmy,” Mr West said after a games lesson one day.

“I don’t want to box, Mr West,” Jimmy said, “I want to play football and one day I’ll play for United.” He was not joking. “United, here I come,” he said, and he punched his fist in the air.



We were playing football at the time and it seemed as if Jimmy had made the best joke ever. The game stopped when he said that. At least 10 players rolled over and over on the pitch, laughing till the tears ran down their faces.

But Jimmy just did not know what they were laughing about.



Other kids used to ask me why I stayed friends with Jimmy.

"We're both into the same things," I would tell them, "football, football and football." At least it got a laugh.