

FRANK LAMPARD

FRANKIE'S MAGIC FOOTBALL

OLYMPIC FLAME CHASE





CHAPTER 1

“Wow, Frankie,” his mum gasped.

“This place looks amazing!”

The school hall was packed with other families. Frankie spotted his teacher, Mr Donald, beaming with pride.

The hall did look great. The whole school had made decorations themed around the Olympic Games. Five interlocking

coloured hoops hung from the ceiling in the shape of the Olympic rings. A spinning globe showed all the different cities where the competition had taken place. There was even a special display about the latest Games.

“Did you know,” said Louise, “the first modern Olympics were held in Athens, Greece, in 1896?”

“I didn’t,” said her father, smiling.

“But the Games are much older than that,” Louise continued. “They began in ancient Greece, in the eighth century BC.”

“Fascinating,” said Frankie’s brother, rolling his eyes. “I can’t

believe I have to come to school on a Saturday!”

Frankie’s dad put an arm around Kevin’s shoulders. “Don’t you want to watch your brother in the sports day?”

Kevin glowered. “I can think of a million things I’d rather be doing.” He began to count on his fingers. “Washing dishes, weeding the garden, cutting my toenails, cutting *the dog’s* toenails . . .”

Max yipped near Frankie’s ankles. “Don’t worry, boy,” said Frankie. “We won’t let him near your claws.”

“Can I go outside?” said Kevin. “It’s really hot in here.”

“Just you stay out of trouble,”
said Frankie’s mum.

Kevin smirked and ran off.

*He doesn’t know how to stay
out of trouble,* thought Frankie.

He caught sight of Charlie and his family coming towards him, their cheeks pink with the heat. Charlie wafted his face with one of his hands.

“You’d be cooler if you took off your gloves, Charles,” said his dad.

“But would I be ready to stop a football?” said Charlie.

“Suit yourself,” replied his dad.

“Though I’m not sure you’re allowed to wear them for the shot-put.”

Charlie frowned. "I hadn't thought of that . . ."

As part of their Olympics term, everyone had been trying out new sports. At first Frankie hadn't been too keen – playing other sports meant *not* playing football – but he'd really enjoyed the running and the high jump. Today all the training would be put to the test in the sports day. Five schools from across town were competing, and there was going to be a medal ceremony at the end, just like in the real Olympics. Charlie's event was the shot-put. Louise was doing long jump, and Frankie would be

taking part in a football obstacle course – a test of sprinting, dribbling, heading and shooting. He couldn't wait!

As they left the hall through the double doors at the back, Frankie saw the school's Olympic torch burning on its stand in the playground. Mr Donald had told them that the real torch was lit every four years in a place called Olympia in Greece. Runners then carried it in a relay to whichever country was hosting the Games. Sometimes they ran thousands of miles! The torch never went out and symbolized the spirit of the Games.

Mr Donald clapped his hands.
“Right, parents, please take your places on the sports pitch. Kids – go and get ready. The games will begin in twenty minutes!”

Frankie and his friends warmed up round the side of the school in the shade. They used his magic football, passing it between them, dribbling it around, and heading it back and forth.

“Are you sure it’s safe to have your football in school?” said Charlie, stretching to catch it. “You know what it can do.” The ball had taken them on adventures all

around the world – Australia, Brazil and even Lapland.

“I didn’t want to leave it at home in case Kevin got his hands on it,” said Frankie.

“Good thinking,” said Louise. “But the last thing we need today is a magical adventure.”

“As long as we’re careful, it should be—”

Something hit him on the shoulder and Frankie cried out.

His arm was soaked, and on the ground he saw a blue scrap of rubber.

“Is that a water balloon?” he said. A red one shot past and

splatted into the wall near Charlie's head.

"Who's throwing them?" said Louise.

Frankie heard a chuckle and he knew at once who it belonged to. Kevin appeared on the flat school roof with his friends Rob and Matt. They each had a carrier bag filled with bulging water balloons.

"You shouldn't be up there," called Louise.

"Don't get your knickers in a twist," said Kevin. "We found the caretaker's ladder. We're just having a bit of fun."

