

# Fight of the Past

By the P5 Class at St Mary's Primary School  
with Mike Nicholson



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## **Chapter 1**

### **The Arcade Game**

Shoulders hunched. Eyes fixed on the screen. Hands twitching this way and that. Fingers flicking on the buttons. It was as though Oscar was connected to the arcade game.

It was Saturday morning in the Town Centre. But it was already no ordinary Saturday.

Oscar had left his house in Carbrain as normal. He had passed his school, its doors shut for the weekend. Same as usual. The roads and the underpass, the houses and the trees were all as you would expect to find, and it took him ten minutes to reach the Town Centre, just as it always did. Once there he had seen the fancy new buildings as well as the older part. He had looked up and remembered his sister Hannah telling him that the top floor of the Town Centre was supposed to be flats but that had never happened. She thought that people should live there even now. He wasn't bothered. He just wanted more fun things to do. If it was his choice he would bring things like adventure parks and a cinema to Cumbernauld.



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So it was Saturday morning. Nothing much to see. Nothing of interest. Same old Cumbernauld. To Oscar it was just the place where he lived.

He had entered the old Town Centre, using the stairs to go up because there was a broken escalator. He was looking forward to his favourite shop; Castle Comics. He had at least an hour there before Hannah was due to meet him. But when he arrived something was different. Very different.

The shop Oscar knew so well had gone. In its place was an arcade he had never seen before. At first he thought he'd come out on the wrong level, but he was definitely in the right place. He hadn't heard that Castle Comics was closing. There had been no sign last week. But here was a fully functioning games arcade instead. Above the door it said; "Death Night Arcade - experience the time of your life".

Oscar had stepped through the door, curious to see what was on offer. Immediately he was faced with flashing lights from the machines which lined the walls or stood like standing stones in between. There were choices to be made; would he dodge the gorilla in Donkey Kong? Should he ride the car in Street Racer or hitch a lift on a unicorn in Magical Land? He wandered between the games but it was a machine with a picture of an old watch on the side which caught his eye. The watch face was set into a large shield. Across the top it said; "Fight of the Past".

new game  
machine  
Coolest  
Ever-  
So many new  
features

~~Bland~~ New Arcade  
IN Edinburgh

Come and  
Join the  
Game.



Arcade  
[icon of a screen with a yellow square]



NEW  
MACHINE  
Out



On the screen was an army of Roman soldiers. In the foreground two of them were holding swords ready to do battle. He was curious to see how it worked so he popped his money in the slot. Quickly he was completely hooked, controlling one of the soldiers and fending off blows from the other. The soldier just kept coming at him, his body armour clanging over his red tunic. Each time he attacked, his sword crashed down from above, or sliced up from below, but Oscar blocked every attempt to injure his soldier. As he did so his score increased, the numbers flying on the screen.

Every now and then a message popped up on the screen;

“YOU’RE ON FIRE - KEEP IT UP!”  
“CAN YOU KEEP GOING?”

Now here he was transfixed, with his score going up and up. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands... millions. The digits building and building. As he continued to battle it was as though he was unstoppable.

The Roman soldier rained down ten more blows in quick succession but again Oscar fought him off. Then the soldier stepped back as if he’d had enough. A new message scrolled across the screen.

WINNER... WINNER... WINNER

His score now stood at an incredible 2017201019671958173115611314142.



COME And Play

WINNER

KK

the  
GAME

NEXT  
LEVEL



GAME



2017

2010

1967

1958

1751

0561

1314





Oscar was wide-eyed. “That’s the *biggest* number I’ve ever seen in my life!” he thought. He was sweating after allof the effort and was about to turn away thinking it was all over when there was a clashing noise of sword on shield. As he turned back the Roman soldier looked out at him and the message on the screen changed.

CAN YOU MAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

“I bet I can!” said Oscar grinning, confident after his display of swordsmanship. “What happens now?”

## Chapter 2

### The Code

As if in answer to his question, a slip of paper like a little raffle ticket appeared out of the slot where he had put his coin a few minutes before.

He reached down and found it had a message: YOUR CODE TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

Turning it over he found his enormous score from the game he had just finished. 2017201019671958173115611314142

Oscar looked blank. It was such jumble of numbers. How could that be a code? Was he supposed to key it in somewhere? Then he spotted that the first four digits looked familiar.

“2017,” he said aloud. What if the next four digits were a year as well? “2010?” he wondered.





LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2.





Sparks! Flashes! Crackles! And then it was as though he was in some strobelight tunnel of rainbow colours while images of faces and places whirled all around him.

It stopped.

Disorientated and dizzy Oscar tried to make sense of where he was. It was dark. A night sky above, but the glow of a strange blue light. It was coming from between giant metal plates stuck together like broken tiles. And then looking up he realised that it was the surface of a giant figure. A humongous four-armed mermaid loomed above him; the Arria statue. It towered so high over him that he felt like a midget. How had he ended up here? Then at the base he saw words in the metal: “a new beginning of people and place” and the year. 2010. The same year he had just said.





He was still clutching the piece of paper in his hand. After 2010 were four more numbers. Was it another year? Could this be his way through the code? Oscar spoke out again. “1967?” he said cautiously.

The same tornado of lights and faces engulfed him and settled this time to reveal a sunny day and a huge crowd. People of every shape and size, happy, smiling and excited, and all squashed together trying to see something. There was a sea of red, white and blue. A parade’s worth of Union Jack flags being waved enthusiastically.

“What’s happening?” he shouted above the cheering to a man in a smart suit beside him.

“It’s the big opening,” said the man. “The Town Centre. The Queen’s sister’s cutting the ribbon.”

Oscar looked up at the Town Centre. He knew it as an old building with a new set of shops alongside. It didn’t look old any more. It was fresh and the familiar outline somehow seemed wild and unusual, like an upside down boat. He’d never thought of that before. Everyone else was looking at the building in wonder too.





Town Centre



AND I AM



Four more digits and another year. “1958,” said Oscar, growing in confidence. This time after the blur of lights the scene was even closer to home. He recognised houses that he’d passed earlier that morning. He’d hardly noticed them then, but now somehow here in 1958 they looked brand new and the shapes amazed him. There were pointed roofs like shark’s fins and diamonds, buildings which looked like the bodies of robots or rockets pointing skywards, distant high rises like giant cupboards leading somewhere new, and houses connected by tunnels in the air like Tower Bridge in London. Even though he had gone back in time it was as though he was looking at the future.

What would he encounter next? “1731!” he shouted.





## **Chapter 3**

### **The Journey Continues**

Grass. Lots of it. But one building in front of him. Or rather a building site. Stones as old as a castle wall were being moved into position. He realised that he was watching Cumbernauld House emerging from the work of men in ragged clothes, hauling stones with ropes and using old tools to chip blocks into shape. This was different from any 2017 building site. Not a machine in sight. He was getting further and further away from the time he knew.







“1561,” he said. Lights ricocheted again but there was a sense that he hadn’t moved very far. He still stood on a grassy slope but the building site and half built house had gone, and in the distance was a castle instead. He recognised the hillside. This was the best place to come on snowy days; Cumbernauld Field.

He was standing at a place where knew there was usually an ancient tree. Here in 1561 it had been replaced with a group of people. There were long dresses and lace. Velvet jackets and buckles on shoes. A small ceremony was underway and a voice spoke out strongly. “I plant this tree for the Scots!” There were murmurs of approval from those around who bowed to the woman who had spoken. Mary Queen of Scots had made her mark in Cumbernauld.







Looking at his slip of paper once more, Oscar realised that he had nearly reached the end of the numbers. No sooner had he shouted “1314” than he flinched from the roar of an army of men. He was amidst a clash of chain mail, metal helmets and long wooden handled spears. The soldiers all looked towards a king on horseback, who proudly held a yellow and red Lion Rampant flag. Oscar noticed the large rock beside which the king had positioned himself; the Carrick Stone at Greenfaulds. His aunt’s house normally looked out at it. But not today in 1314.

There was a cry from the king. “We march on Bannockburn! Forward to battle!”

There was a roar from the swarm of rough bearded men with ugly scars and a fearless bloodthirsty look in their eyes, as they followed their leader, Robert the Bruce, the Earl of Carrick, King of Scotland.

Oscar struggled to take it all in. This morning he had walked to the town centre in Cumbernauld hardly noticing where he was. Now he had seen a swirl of kings and queens, and of futuristic buildings and battles; moments of history and new beginnings. All of them on his doorstep.

As the army marched off Oscar looked down again. There were only three numbers left not four. How could that be? The only years he knew had four digits. Was he near the end of the game? What would happen if he said the last three numbers? Feeling nervous, his voice trembled as he said “142”.





## Chapter 4

### The Next Level

Oscar was on a hillside. Mist swirled around him. He felt cold and alone. A long high mound of earth was in front of him and stretched into the distance like an earthen wall. He heard a scrape of metal and turned. A figure appeared through the mist. It was the Roman Soldier from the game.

Oscar felt a million miles from where he'd begun just minutes before. In reality he had travelled only a mile or two but had journeyed two thousand years. Suddenly his fascination with the game had ended. He wanted back to *his* time. To 2017. He wanted the shark fin houses and the underpasses and the shops of the town centre.

"2017!" he shouted. But nothing happened. "2017!" he said desperately. But this wasn't a game anymore.

The Roman soldier walked slowly closer. His armour clanged like a blacksmith's hammer.

"Ready to play?" he said as he raised his sword.

Oscar was lost for words and looking at the slip of paper he had run out of numbers. It fell from his grasp and blew away on the breeze.





Back in the Town Centre, Oscar's sister Hannah had finished at Fame at the Tryst for another Saturday morning. Her flips and chin-ups at gymnastics were over for another week. It was time to find her brother and head home.

Just like him she was confused to find that Castle Comics was not where she thought. She looked into the door of what seemed to be a new arcade but couldn't see Oscar. However she guessed that it was the sort of place where he might have come. She moved slowly between the machines looking for him, when something caught her eye. A machine with a watch on a shield and pictures of Roman soldiers.

There was a demonstration game playing on the screen. It looked like a Roman soldier with a large sword was approaching a young boy. A young boy like Oscar.

As she drew nearer and peered closely the screen changed and a message flashed.

GAME OVER

Hannah didn't usually play these games but something made her reach for her purse as the machine gave another message:

NEXT PLAYER PLEASE



Fight of the PAST!

GAME  
OVER!

50p  
50p  
can be used

