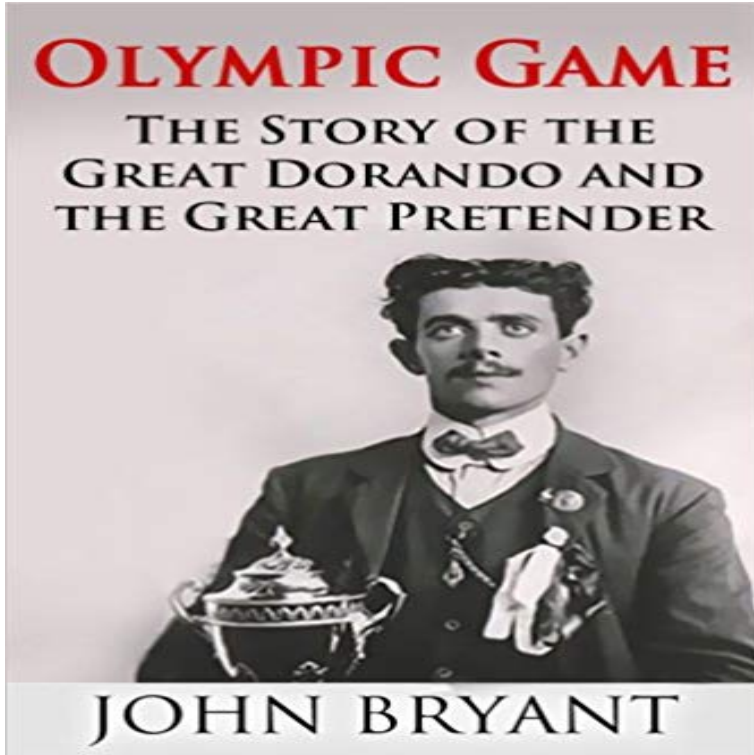


Olympic Game: The Story of The Great Dorando and The Great Pretender



The Italian always dreamed about the Olympics. He hungered for his fifteen minutes of fame. He dreamed of riches, gold but most of all the headlines and the glory that went with it. Way back in 1908 Dorando Pietri, from a tiny north Italian town, had captured worldwide headlines in the first London Olympics, when he dramatically collapsed within yards of the Marathon finish. Eager officials hauled him to his feet and practically pushed him over the line. He was disqualified from winning the Gold medal. But he was awarded a special gold cup by the Queen Alexandra and was hailed as the hero of those first London Olympics. Nearly forty years later, in the summer of 1947, in a London that was still recovering from the blitz, a diminutive and slightly balding cafe owner turned up and announced to the world I am the Great Dorando. He stepped out of the shadows to haunt the Olympic Games staged defiantly in this austere city still patching itself up from the ravages of war. He swanned his way around town cashing in on the Olympic fever that was building up in the press. He would boast colourfully of the exploits of forty years before. He told how there on a scorching hot day in July 1908 he had staggered into the stadium at Shepherds Bush looking near to death and stolen the headlines around the world. By the time he strutted around Britains capital two world wars had wiped the name and the memory of Dorando from the headlines. But here was the legend and his story rising from the dead. But could this man be a pretender, a fantasist, a hoax? This is the remarkable and true story of how a Birmingham cafe owner engraved for ever his name into the history of the Olympic Games. As a life-long athlete, Oxford Blue, country champion, British Universities student international, and coach to an Olympic athlete, John Bryant has an unrivalled insight into the world of athletics and the minds of runners. Since

1971, John Bryant has worked as a Fleet Street journalist where he was Editor of the Daily Telegraph, Deputy Editor of The Times and Consultant Editor of the Daily Mail. Currently he is chairman of the Press Association Trust and chairman of the London Marathon Trust. He is the biographer of Chris Brasher and lives in Kingston-on-Thames. Endeavour Press is the UK's leading independent publisher of digital books.

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