

ROS ROBERTS

KNOWING the SCORE

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PACK

4X LESSON PLANS AND IDEAS

SUITABLE FOR: AGES 9+

EXPLORE THEMES OF:

- **The power of forgiveness:** Discovering the strength in forgiving others and finding peace within oneself, as characters navigate through conflicts and past hurts.
- **Courage in facing challenges:** Learning from characters like Gemma, who show bravery and determination in overcoming obstacles and pursuing what's right.
- **Love conquers all:** Exploring the enduring nature of love amidst difficulties, portraying how love can help overcome hardships and bring people closer together.
- **Wealth in relationships:** Understanding that true happiness lies in meaningful relationships rather than material possessions, as characters find joy in the company of loved ones.
- **Tennis being more than a sport:** Exploring the deeper significance of tennis beyond just a game, as characters find connections, growth and healing through their involvement in the sport.

SUBJECTS: • English • PE (Physical Education) • PSHE

ABOUT THE BOOK:

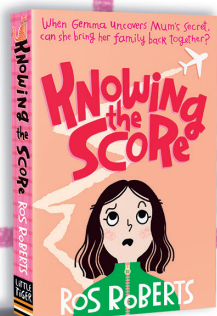
"I pick up scraps of information but it's like a jigsaw, all broken up, thousands of pieces that I can't ever start putting back together. But I want Gran and Uncle Joe in my life too. I guess this is the summer I give tennis a go?!"

Gemma's mum won't talk about the fallout with Gran and her brother Joe, so when an opportunity arises for Gemma to stay with Joe, she jumps at it, determined to uncover the story behind the difficult relationship.

Joe is the perfect uncle and even signs her up for a fun tennis camp, but Gemma can't shake the feeling that he and Gran are keeping secrets ... and that some of them relate to her. As the truth emerges, can she find a way to bring her family together?

A heartfelt story of complex families, forgiveness and new beginnings, for fans of Jacqueline Wilson, Lisa Thompson, Susin Nielsen and Cath Howe.

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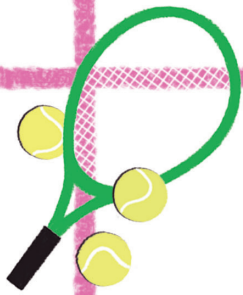


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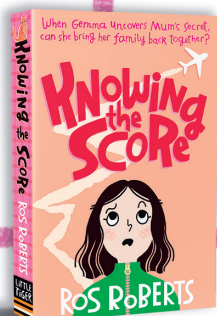
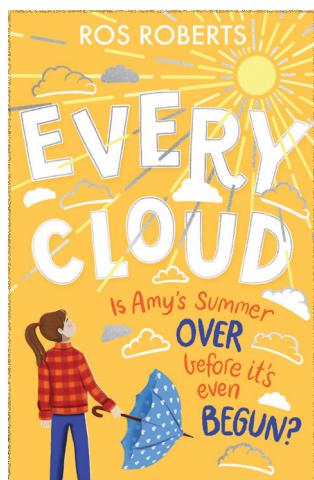
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR – ROS ROBERTS

Ros Roberts lives in the North of England with her family, two dogs and Carrot Cake the cat. She loves the rain, eating brunch, TV and playing tennis. Ros spent many years working as a primary school teacher and is very happy to be back in the classroom running writing workshops. She has also worked in a ski resort, art gallery, aquarium and at Wimbledon – her favourite place on the planet! *Knowing the Score* is her third book. *Digger and Me* was shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award and *Every Cloud* received a Carnegie nomination.



Illustrations © Thy Bui (*Digger and Me* and *Every Cloud*)

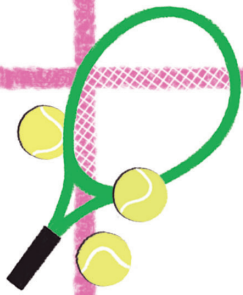
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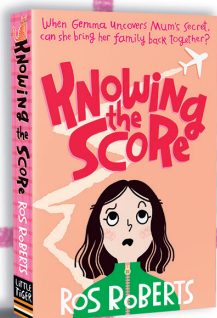
Objectives: Learn the basic rules and techniques of tennis; recognise the importance and multifaceted benefits of sports and activity in promoting physical health and mental well-being.

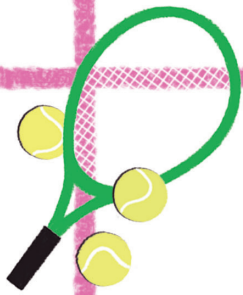
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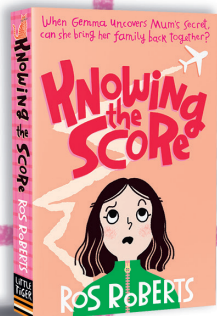
- **ACTIVITY 4: CHARACTER CONNECTIONS**
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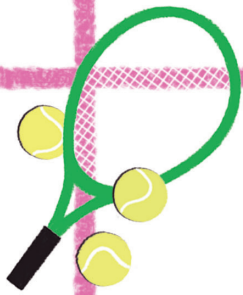
Objectives: Explore the dynamics between Gemma, her mother, Uncle Joe and Gran; dissect the relationships and conflicts among multiple characters in the story by constructing a character web.

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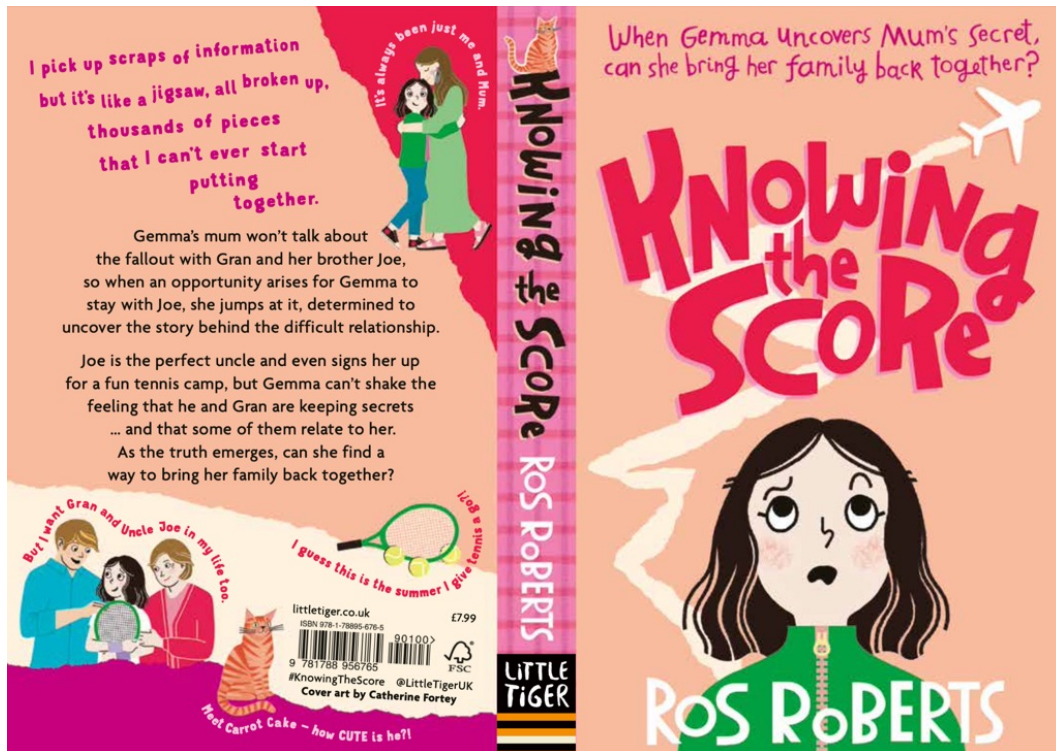




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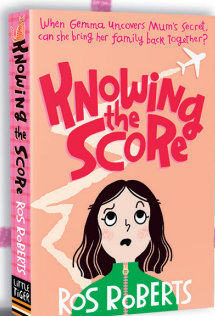
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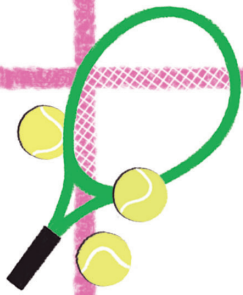
PRE-READING: COVER AND INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Can you identify the author and illustrator of the book? Look for their names on either the front or back cover. Have you read any other books by this author or illustrator before? If yes, what are they?
2. What genre(s) do you think this book might be? (e.g. fantasy, adventure or something else entirely?)
3. The title of the book is 'Knowing the Score'. What does this mean? Do you think it could have more than one meaning? Why do you think the author selected this particular title for the book?
4. As you look at the front cover, what's the first thing that catches your eye? Did you notice the girl in the middle, the aeroplane flying high above her or was there something else that stood out?
5. Let's take another look at the book's front cover. What emotions do you think the girl might be experiencing based on her expression? Does she seem happy, worried or maybe something else?

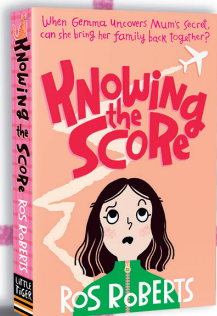


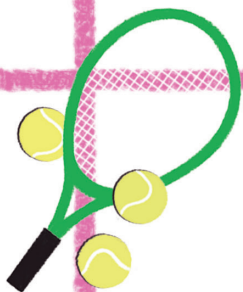


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6. Based on the clues on the cover, what do you think the story might be about? Make some predictions about the adventures the characters might go on and the challenges they could face along the way.
7. Now, let's read the blurb together. Taking into account this additional information, what impression do you get about Gemma's Uncle Joe? How do you think he will play a part in the story?
8. Since the book talks about family and secrets, what do you think might happen to Gemma by the end of the story? How do you think her family members could be affected or changed by the events?
9. What part of the blurb interests you the most? Are there any questions it doesn't answer?
10. How do you feel about reading this book after looking at the cover and reading the blurb? If you could talk to the author or illustrator, what would you ask them about the book?





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EXTRACT 1: A SPORTING SURPRISE (FROM CHAPTER TWELVE: p61–63)

"Can I ask you something?" I say.

"Anything." He reaches up to a cupboard and gets a packet of biscuits, shakes a few on to a plate.

"What will I do when you're at work? You said I'll be out all day. Am I coming with you?"

"Well, I wanted to talk to you about that." Joe smiles, and suddenly I see Mum, so clearly. They smile in the same way. One side lifts more than the other. Like it's a bit wonky. "I've taken the last two weeks off. Thought we could do some sightseeing in Chester; go to the zoo, stuff like that. Maybe even go to London."

I raise my eyebrows. Wow, Joe is really taking this uncle stuff seriously. I take a biscuit, bite into the big, oatly chocolate chunks.

"But I do have to work for the first half of your stay," he says. "So I've booked you into this great tennis camp for those two weeks. I hope that sounds like fun. You play each day and then there's a little tournament at the end. It's only down the road and my friend Sophie can pick you up if I can't collect you, and take you back to hers. Her son Bradley is playing too."

I stop chewing. The biscuit goes into a ball. I persuade my mouth to swallow it and put the rest of it down.

"Tennis?" I say. "I've never played tennis before."

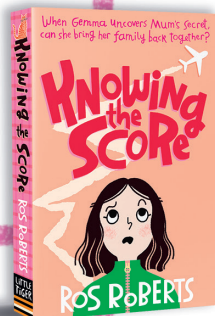
"Oh," says Joe. "I kind of thought you might have at um ... school... Oh."

I stare at Joe, hoping he hasn't actually booked it, paid for it, that maybe he is joking.

"Um," he says, "I can cancel it."

"No," I say. "It's fine."

I feel sick. Like, really sick. I went to a gymnastics camp one summer and it was the worst thing ever. Everyone could do walkovers and vaults and I couldn't even do a backward roll. A few of the girls laughed at me, little sniggers whenever I tried something new. It was even worse than the netball trials.



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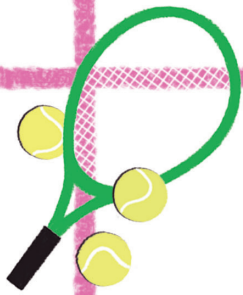


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(EXTRACT 1 CONTINUED...)

I break the leftover biscuit in two and tidy up the loose crumbs.

"You've never played?" says Joe, tilting his head, pulling his hand through his floppy hair.

I really don't know what the big deal is.

"Nope," I say.

"Any ball sports?"

"Not really. Bit of netball. I can swim like a fish, though.

Is there a swimming camp?"

He smiles and shakes his head and says, "Don't think so."

I don't want to go but I really don't have much choice – Joe has booked this tennis thing, paid for it, made plans. He has to work. He thought it was a great idea.

"I'm sure it will be fun," I say. The words come out dry and a bit whispery so I force a smile.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does Gemma react when Joe mentions the tennis camp?
2. Imagine yourself in Gemma's situation. How would you feel if you were told you had to go to tennis camp? Would you be excited or apprehensive?
3. Find at least two ways where Gemma's body language conveys her displeasure about going to tennis camp, rather than her verbal responses or actions.
4. How do Gemma's past camp experiences impact her hesitation to attend tennis camp?
5. Can you remember a time when you felt nervous or unsure about trying something new?
6. What advice would you give to Gemma about going to tennis camp?
7. Why did Joe think a tennis camp would be a good idea for Gemma?

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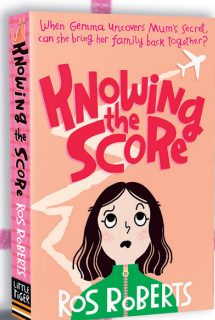
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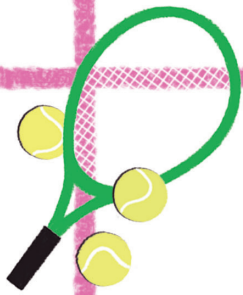


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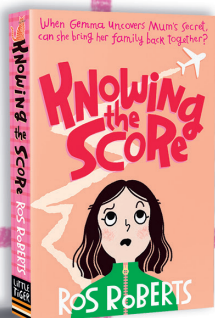
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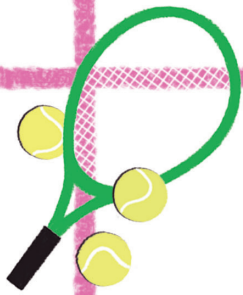
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8. What alternative camp does Gemma say she would prefer to attend instead of tennis camp?
9. Would you tell Joe you're not going after he's booked the camp or would you go along with his plans?
10. Do you think Gemma will eventually enjoy tennis camp? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 1: FACING FEARS

- Start by asking students to think about a time when they felt nervous or hesitant to try something new and discuss these experiences in pairs or small groups. Subsequently, invite them to share their experiences with the entire class, provided they feel comfortable to do so.
- Responses may include situations where they encountered challenges such as trying something different, speaking in front of an audience, learning what to do for the first time or participating in a new hobby.
- Next, draw a circle on the board and label it as the 'comfort zone'. Explain to the class that the comfort zone is like a psychological safety net where we feel comfortable and secure. It's where we tend to stick to familiar routines and avoid situations that make us feel anxious or scared.
- Discuss elements that typically fall within our comfort zones, such as familiar activities and environments. These may include hobbies we enjoy, places we feel at ease, routines we follow daily and interactions we have with close friends or family members.
- It's also important to remind students that everyone's comfort zone is unique and can vary from person to person. Therefore, what feels comfortable or challenging for one person may be different for another.
- Share the provided extract with the class and facilitate a discussion about Gemma's reaction upon learning she's going to tennis camp. Emphasise that this experience is outside her comfort zone, prompting visible changes in her body language, such as raising her eyebrows, stopping chewing, swallowing hard and her responses becoming short and hesitant.
- Sketch another circle on the board to represent Gemma's comfort zone, then place 'tennis camp' outside of it. As a class, compile a list of items that you believe would belong within Gemma's comfort zone, as well as those that would be outside of it.

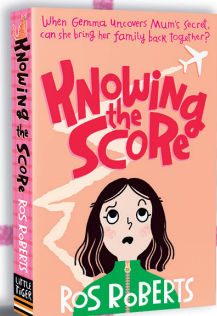




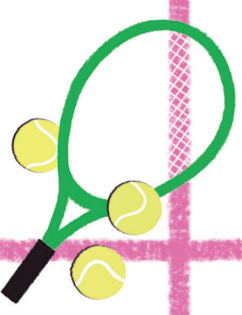
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- Encourage students to reflect on how they would feel in a similar situation and brainstorm strategies to help Gemma cope with stepping outside her comfort zone. This could involve discussing the importance of staying open-minded, setting small achievable goals, practising positive self-talk and seeking support from friends or other adults.
- Distribute the activity sheet to students, which features a circle representing their own comfort zone and additional space surrounding it.
- Next, instruct students to identify and list activities, situations or experiences that they perceive as falling within their comfort zones inside the circle.
- Then, have them jot down activities or experiences that they would like to try that lie outside their comfort zones in the space surrounding the circle and how they can overcome these challenges.
- Finally, end the lesson by discussing what they have written and emphasising the importance of personal growth and resilience in facing new challenges, while reminding them that feeling nervous is natural, but encouraging them to push past their comfort zones and seize opportunities.



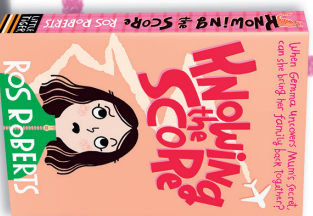
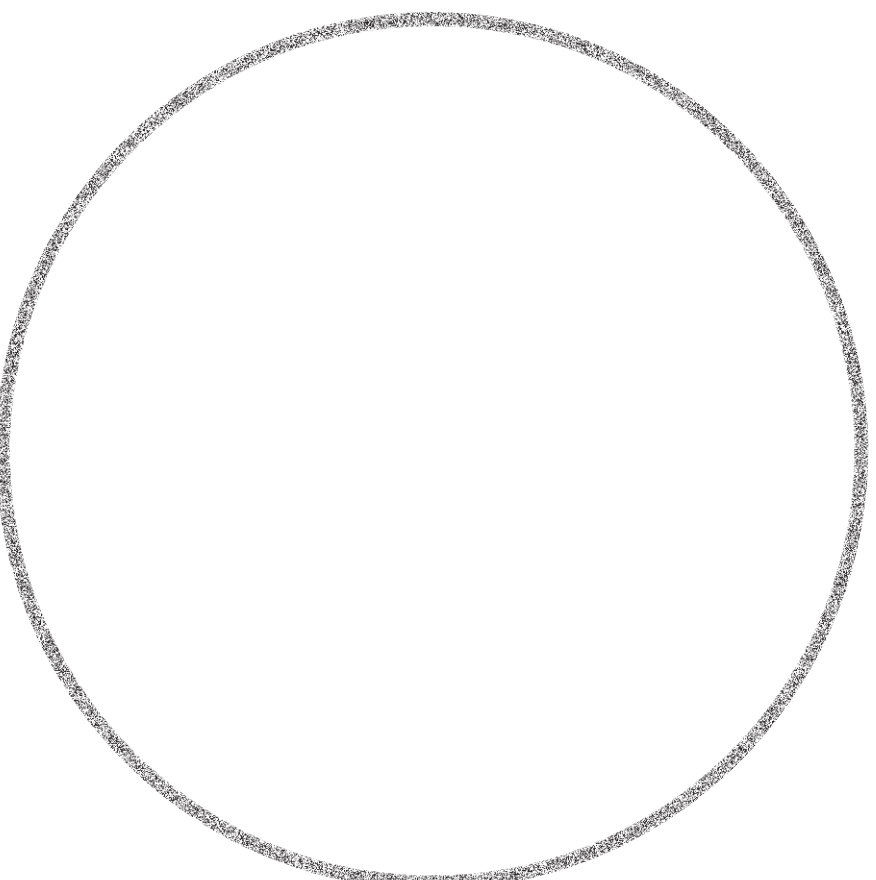
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ACTIVITY SHEET 1: MY COMFORT ZONE

INSTRUCTIONS: Inside the circle, write down activities or experiences that you usually find easy or comfortable to do.

Around the outside of the circle, list the things you'd like to try that would require you to step outside your comfort zone.



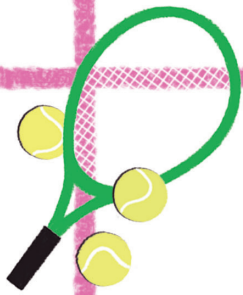
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EXTRACT 2A: SCORING SYSTEM (FROM CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: p129-130)

After lunch, we sit with Jake and watch the other four play a game.

"They all know how to score," he says. "I'm going to talk you through it and then we'll have a go. OK?"

They start a proper game with scores and serves.

Bradley and Sarah playing Raj and Minxie. Pam helps them to stand in the right position and gives them tips.

Minxie is a different person. She runs and chases and shouts "good shot" to Raj. When Pam tells her to stand closer to the net to volley, she says, "Oh, of course."

She does a really good return and when Jake says, "Good shot, Minxie," she looks over and beams a huge smile and bounces back to wait for the next point. It's like someone's flicked a switch in her.

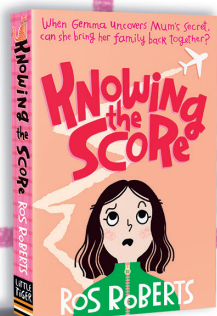
Scoring is so confusing. The points aren't one or two but fifteen and thirty and forty and something called deuce and advantage. And some players switch places and some don't. Some move back, some stay still.

"You have to defend and attack," says Jake.

"It's like chess," says Max. "I'm good at chess."

"No, you're not," says Finlay. But Jake has seated them well apart and Max doesn't hear.

"It is a bit like chess," laughs Jake. "You have to position yourself carefully and decide when it's the right time to move. Tennis is just a little more active."



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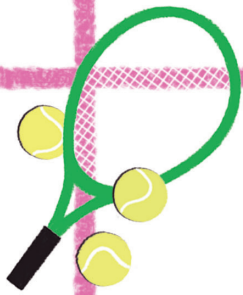
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EXTRACT 2B: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TENNIS (FROM CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: p145-146)

There are so many new words to learn. Baseline, tramline, service line. Stance, follow through, split step. We do forehands, backhands and the volley, when you hit it before it bounces. Sarah has an amazing volley and Pam uses her a lot to demonstrate.

"Not too close to the net," she yells as we all have a go. "Take a step back, Max!"

My trainers are starting to rub in a new place. And my hand is sore where I've gripped the racket. But the more we play, the easier some things get.

"You're really connecting with the ball now, Gemma," says Pam and I smile. "Third day of tennis. Impressive."

I want to ask so many things. How the racket should swing through, how exactly to do the "split step" but it's hard. If I ask, we stop playing and then Minxie gets all pouty and Bradley looks fed up and the twins mess around. I try to remember stuff to ask Joe.

"You mustn't stand in no man's land," says Pam as we play a game.

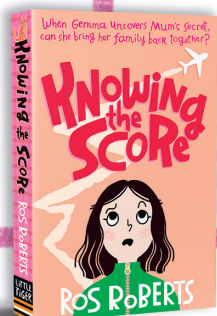
"Sorry," I say. "I'm not sure where no man's land is." Minxie sniggers again.

"No man's land," says Pam, "is the space in between the two back lines. If you're there, the ball will land right at your feet. Make sure you are either back on the baseline or moving up the court. Don't worry! You'll soon get it, Gemma."

"I'm so glad you ask stuff," says Flori. "I haven't a clue." She tries to hit a backhand return but her shot goes way up high and lands over the netting. Minxie laughs, very loud.

I stare at her. I stare at her hard.

Sarah mutters, "Just ignore her."



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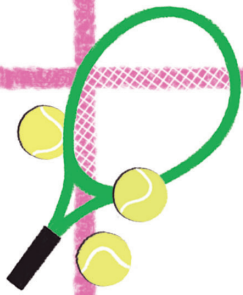


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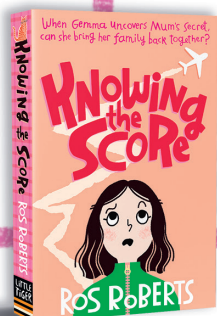


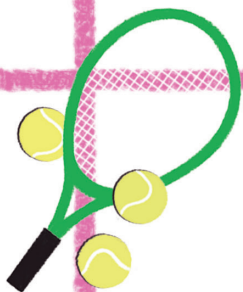
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. From the first extract, could you explain the tennis scoring system using your own words?
2. How does Minxie behave differently when playing tennis? What has caused this change?
3. What does Jake liken tennis to? Do you think this is a good analogy (a comparison between two things)?
4. How do the children feel about learning tennis? If you were to rate their confidence levels on a scale, who would you consider the most confident, the least confident and those in between?
5. In the second extract, what new tennis words does Gemma learn? Do you know the meaning of them?
6. What does it suggest about Gemma if her trainers are rubbing her feet and her hands are sore?
7. Gemma observes that 'the more we play, the easier some things get'. Have you noticed similar improvements in things when you practise them? Why do you think this happens?
8. Have you played tennis before? If not, would you like to try it based on what you've read in these extracts?
9. What do you think are the benefits of playing tennis for physical health and fitness?
10. How might learning to play tennis help you in other areas of your life, such as teamwork





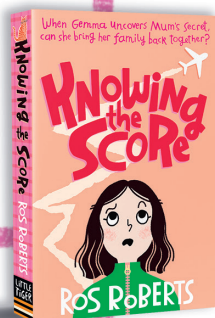
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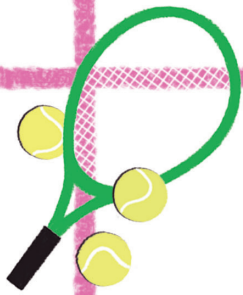
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ACTIVITY 2: MINI TENNIS

Note: Please ensure you have a variety of tennis equipment on hand for this lesson, including rackets, tennis balls and cones or markers for setting up specific areas to hit into.

- Present an image of a tennis court on the board and ask if any students can identify the sport commonly played on this type of court.
- Once you have identified it as tennis, find out if anybody has played it before and what prior knowledge they have collectively, recording their range of responses on the board. Some students may be familiar, while others might be entirely new to the sport, echoing the experience of the main character, Gemma.
- Provide a brief introduction by explaining that tennis is a racket sport played individually against a single opponent (singles) or between two teams of two players each (doubles), where players hit a ball over a net into specific areas of a court. Following this, read the two extracts in which we see Gemma learn how to play tennis, including details about the scoring system, different strokes and the areas.
- Distribute the activity sheet displaying the tennis court diagram and describe its layout, including the singles and doubles sidelines, baseline, service boxes and net. Point out the area known as 'no man's land', mentioned in one of the extracts. Ask students to identify these features using different colours.
- Use the extracts and court diagram to help students understand the scoring system used in tennis, which is based on points, starting from 15 (1 point), then 30 (2 points) and 40 (3 points). Winning a game requires winning the fourth point with a clear-point lead and the first to win 6 games wins the set.
- You could also take the opportunity to clarify the concept of deuce and advantage scoring.
- Optionally, after this, students could engage in a fun finger version of flick tennis using their activity sheets and a small rolled-up piece of paper as the ball to recreate a miniature version of the game.
- Next, tell the students that they'll have the opportunity to explore tennis further through some hands-on practical sessions to learn the essential skills and lead them to either the school hall or outdoors.

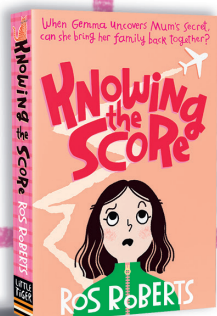




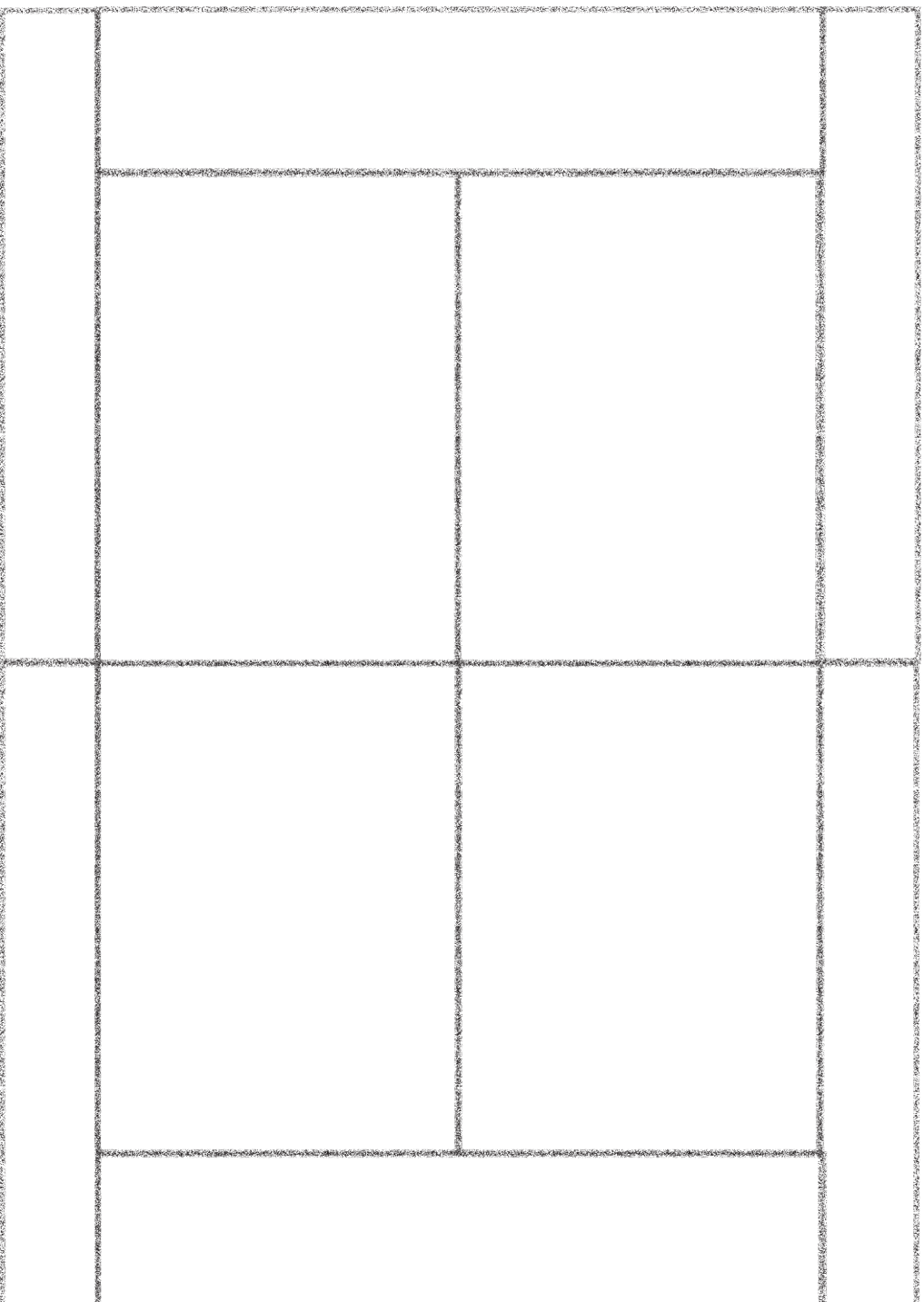
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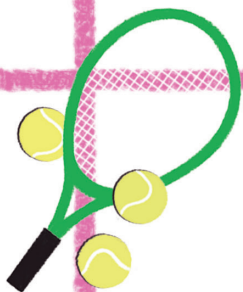
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- There, set up a variety of skill stations where students can practise fundamental tennis strokes including forehand, backhand, volley and overhead smash. Before letting them engage in the activities, provide a brief demonstration on how to properly execute each stroke. Ensure that safety is followed at all times and remind students to be aware of their surroundings and to handle equipment safely.
- Divide the students into smaller groups and assign each group to start at a different skill station. Allow them a set amount of time to practise at each station before rotating to the next one.
- As students practise at the skill stations, circulate around each area, offering guidance and feedback on their techniques. Foster a supportive atmosphere where students can help and encourage each other as they practise. Encourage them to share strategies that have helped them improve their own strokes.
- Depending on their skill levels and progress, you may need to adjust the difficulty levels of the skill stations. You can modify the distance, speed or complexity of drills to challenge students appropriately.
- To finish, gather the students together to celebrate their progress and accomplishments and engage them in a discussion about the benefits of playing tennis, both physically and mentally.



INSTRUCTIONS: Look at the diagram of the tennis court layout below. Using different coloured pencils or pens, identify and label the following features: Singles sidelines, Doubles sidelines, Baseline, Service boxes, Net and 'No man's land' area.





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EXTRACT 3A: PARENTAL PRESSURES (FROM CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: p118–119)

"Minxie was wrong about Pam," I say. "I like her."

Joe smiles. "Minxie is wrong about a lot of things. Don't be too hard on her. She's had a rough time the last few years."

"Does that mean she's allowed to be unkind and rude?" I say, shoving a large piece of cod in my mouth,

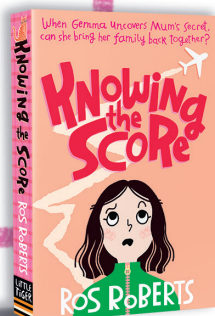
the batter crunching around it. So yum.

Joe looks at me, smiles a little as if my comment surprised him and shakes his head. "No, no, it doesn't." He loads up his fork, the peas topping each layer. "I don't think she really wants to be there. Her dad, Geoff, is chairman of the club. She's a nice player but he is desperate for her to be brilliant. She's had loads of coaching."

"Mmm," I say, reaching for the ketchup. "That's a bit like Surinder's mum with netball. Her mum makes her go to all the sessions. She had to miss a party last week for a match. They had the biggest row."

Joe puts his cutlery down. "That's tough," he says. "I hope her mum listens to what she has to say."

"Sometimes," I say, "but not always."



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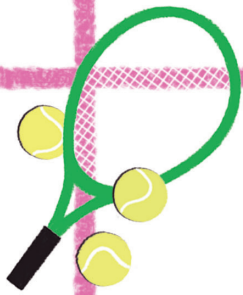
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EXTRACT 3B: SKETCHBOOK SECRETS (FROM CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE: p295-296)

I look round and see Minxie, sitting on her own in the clubhouse. Pam passes round a plate of cakes so I take two and go inside. I pass Minxie a chocolate cupcake.

"Thanks."

"Are you OK?"

"Yep." She picks at the cake, peels off the wrapper, wipes her eye fast. I bite into mine and we sit for a minute, just quietly eating.

"It must be hard," I say. "With your dad being so ... keen." I wonder if this is how Mum felt when she didn't want to play. I wonder how many tears she wiped away.

Minxie lines up the crumbs that have fallen on the table.

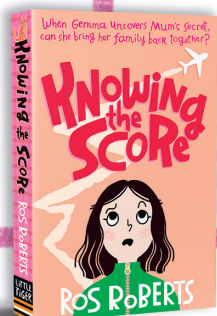
"I don't want to play any more," she says. "He needs to get it."

"Ooh, I think he did this afternoon." She smiles at that, fiddles with the edge of her sketch pad.

"Can I see?" I ask.

Minxie nods and slides it over to me and folds her arms, lays her head down on them but tilts it so she can watch. I open the first page. They are designs for long evening dresses. One has a slit right up to the thigh and little jewels across one shoulder seam. Other pages have jackets and evening tops. Guys beachwear. Handbags, hats, scarves.

"These are incredible," I say.



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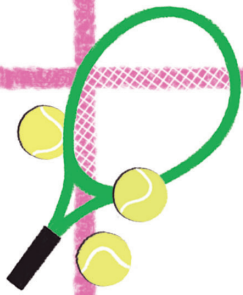


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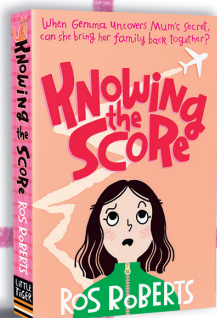


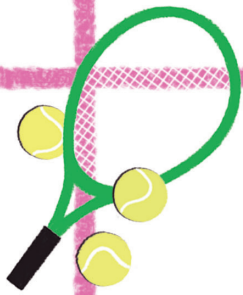
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who does Gemma say she likes in the first extract? What does this show about Gemma and how is she different from Minxie?
2. What does Joe tell us about Minxie's family situation and her involvement with the club? How does this help us understand why Minxie might act the way she does?
3. If someone is going through a tough time, does that justify being unkind or rude to others? Why or why not?
4. Gemma says that Surinder's situation with her mum is similar to Minxie and her dad. How could Surinder's mother better support her daughter's interests while still encouraging her to participate in netball?
5. In the second extract, Minxie's dad sees that she doesn't want to play tennis. Can you think of ways in which he could show understanding and empathy towards her desire to pursue fashion design instead of tennis?
6. How do you think parental pressure affects children's self-esteem and confidence?
7. Have you ever felt pressured by your parents to do well in an activity or subject? How did it make you feel?
8. Do you think it's fair for parents to push their children to excel in sports or other activities?
9. How can parents find a balance between supporting their children and putting too much pressure on them?
10. Why is it important for parents to listen to their children's dreams? What are your aspirations for the future?



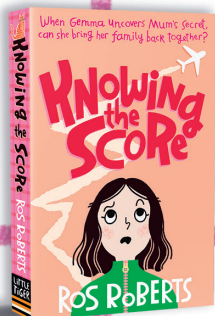


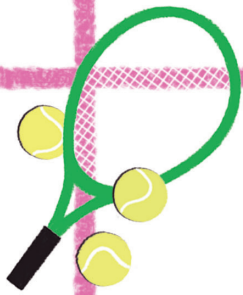
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ACTIVITY 3: BE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

- Begin by reading the first provided extract aloud to the class. In this part of the story, Joe talks to Gemma about Minxie's challenges with her father's expectations while playing tennis.
- Encourage students to share their thoughts on how Minxie might feel about her father's expectations and how it affects her enjoyment of tennis.
- Facilitate a conversation using questions such as: What do you think Minxie might be feeling? Have you ever experienced something similar where a parent wanted you to do well in a particular activity? Invite them to share any experiences they have had or examples they have seen in stories or movies.
- Introduce the theme of parental pressure and expectations. Explain to the students that parental pressure occurs when parents or carers want their children to succeed in something, even if they may not want to do it themselves. Draw parallels between Minxie's experience and Surinder's situation with her mother, illustrating how both characters navigate parental pressure in different contexts.
- Discuss the reasons behind parental pressure, including the sense of personal investment that arises from dedicating substantial time, effort and resources, such as financial support; societal pressures to conform to certain standards of success; a desire to ensure their children have better opportunities compared to what they had or simply wanting what they believe is best for their children's future.
- Talk about how parental pressure often stems from a place of love and concern for their children's well-being. However, it's also essential for parents to recognise the individual needs and interests of their children and to support them in pursuing paths that match their own passions. Ask how Minxie's dad and Surinder's mum could change their approach to avoid putting pressure on their daughters.
- Then, transition to reading the second extract, which reveals Minxie's true passion for fashion design.
- Emphasise how Minxie's passion for fashion and her sketchbook serves as an outlet for her creativity and individuality, allowing her to express herself authentically.

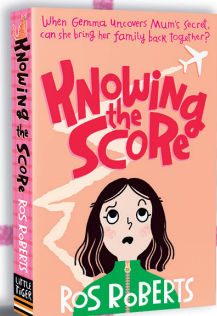




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- Also, highlight Gemma's praise ("These are incredible," I say.) of Minxie's sketches and its significance in validating Minxie's talents and how this moment shows the importance of supportive friendships in nurturing individual interests despite external pressures. Encourage students to consider how they can be supportive friends like Gemma, recognising and celebrating their peers' passions.
- Next, lead students to reflect on their own interests and aspirations. What do they enjoy doing? What dreams do they have for the future? Provide them with an activity sheet where they can jot down their thoughts. This will prompt self-reflection and help them to identify what motivates and inspires them.
- As an extension activity, students could also create a collage or drawing that represents their own interests and aspirations, incorporating themes of creativity, individuality and self-expression.
- Conclude by reminding them that they have the right to pursue what truly makes them happy and fulfilled, encouraging students to continue embracing and exploring their passions and to communicate openly with their parents, friends or trusted adults, such as teachers, about their aspirations.



INSTRUCTIONS: Think about the activities, hobbies and dreams that bring you joy and inspire you for the future. Use the space below to write down your thoughts and ideas.

ACTIVITY SHEET 3: MY ASPIRATION EXPLORATION



ACTIVITIES OR HOBBIES: List some activities or hobbies that you enjoy doing in your free time. These could be anything from sports and arts to gaming or reading.

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DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE: Reflect on your aspirations and dreams for the future. What do you hope to achieve or experience as you grow older?

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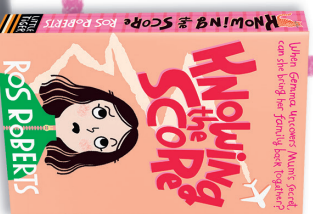
REFLECTION: Take a moment to think about how pursuing your interests and aspirations makes you feel. Why are these things important to you?

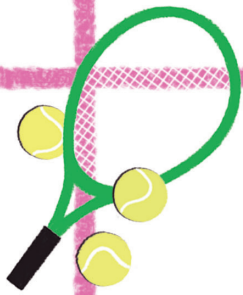
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DRAW OR DOODLE: If you'd like, draw or doodle something that represents one of your favourite activities or dreams for the future in the space provided below.

-

Remember: Your interests and aspirations are unique to you and it's okay if they change over time. Take this opportunity to explore what brings you joy and inspires you to reach for your dreams!





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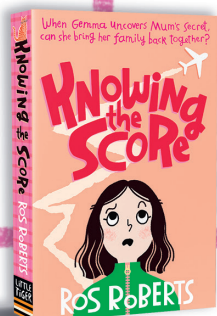
EXTRACT 4A: FAMILY FALLOUT (FROM CHAPTER TWO: p14–15)

Things are tricky between Mum and Gran. They always have been. There was a big fallout years and years ago, after Mum came back from America. I don't know what about. Mum hates talking about those days. I pick up scraps of information, scramble with tiny memories of things. But it's like a jigsaw, all broken up, thousands of pieces that I can't even begin to put together.

I asked her about it once. We had been at the cinema for my birthday, watching a film about a lost dog crossing America. On the bus home, I asked Mum about her trip to America, and what happened when she got home.

She looked at me, gasped a little and then stared out at the dark night and said, "America is a great place." She didn't talk much again that night, even though it was my birthday.

I only see Gran twice a year, at Christmas and near my birthday. We meet at the shops or the cinema or a café. She's funny, Gran; she makes me laugh. We talk about all sorts of things: school, swimming, food. But we never talk about things that matter. We never talk about my mum or the fallout or why we hardly ever see Uncle Joe. It's like we've put all that stuff in a box and shoved it away in a cupboard.



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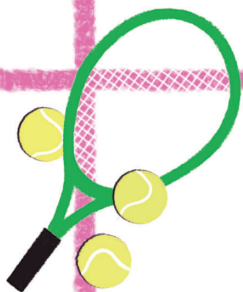


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EXTRACT 4B: BUILDING BRIDGES (FROM CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE: p203–204)

"He was a tennis player, my dad, wasn't he?"

Joe leans forward on the sofa and turns the TV off. I've said such a big thing but it's odd because I'd quite like to have seen the girl after the washing powder worked its magic.

"I've no idea, Gemma," he says. "He might have been."

"You know he played tennis. Everyone does. It's this 'in your blood' thing. It's not you, is it, it's my dad? Problems with my dad led to this big family fallout. That's why I don't see any of you, or him."

Joe moves to sit on the coffee table, facing me.

"Now just hold on, Gem. We know nothing about your dad. Nothing. Zip. Your mum came back from America and wouldn't tell any of us a thing. It was part of the problem. She came back and told us she was having a baby but nothing else." He sips his beer again. "But I know about you now, Gemma. Your mum did a great job with you. You're a fab young lady and it's magical for me to spend this time with you. I never thought your mum would quite forgive us enough for this to happen."

He looks down, taps the bottle, bites his lip. I stare at him. Why would Mum need to forgive them? I shake my head a little, try to make the thoughts fall into place.

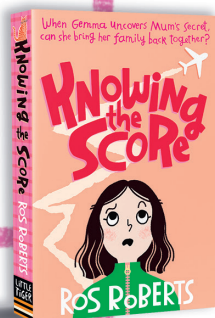
"Was the fallout because of my dad, because of Mum getting pregnant, because of me?"

"NO!" He shouts it, looks almost afraid I should think that.

"It was nothing to do with that. We loved you from the very start."

"Why then?"

Joe stares at me. I know he wants to tell me more. "We all made mistakes. Especially me. Having this chance now, to be with you, Gemma, to build a relationship. That means the world to me."



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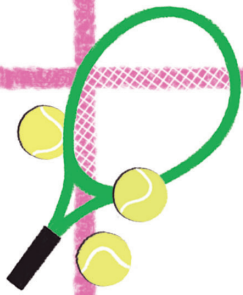


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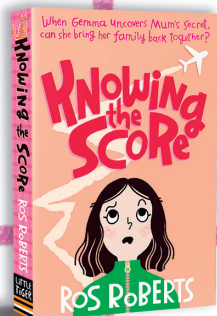


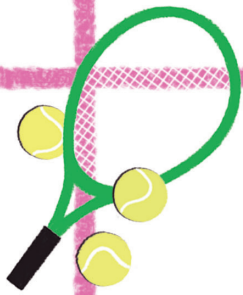
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What makes things tricky between Mum and Gran? What do you think happened to cause this tension?
2. From Gemma's point of view, how does she see the relationship between her Mum and Gran?
3. Why do you think Gemma's Mum doesn't talk much after Gemma asks about her trip to America?
4. How often does Gemma get to visit or spend time with Gran?
5. What do Gemma and Gran usually talk about? What topics does Gemma wish they would discuss?
6. In the second extract, what does Gemma mean when she talks about tennis being 'in your blood'?
7. Can you share an experience when you forgave someone or were forgiven?
8. How can we tell that Joe is shouting the word "No" in the text?
9. According to Joe, what means the world to him, as shown in his conversation with Gemma?
10. Pretend you're Gemma with Uncle Joe, curious about your family's past—what would you ask him?



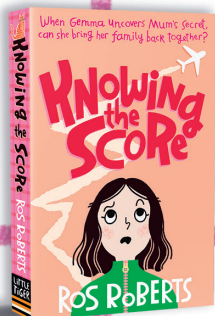


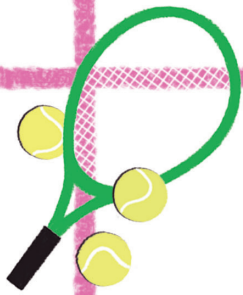
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ACTIVITY 4: CHARACTER CONNECTIONS

- Start the lesson by initiating a discussion on the significance of character relationships in storytelling. Explain to students that while individual characters are crucial, it's the connections between them that progress the plot by driving the narrative forward and adding emotional depth to characters' development.
- Provide a variety of examples from popular and contemporary stories to illustrate this. For example:
 - In the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling, the friendships formed between Harry, Ron, and Hermione drives their adventures and underscores themes of loyalty and sacrifice.
 - In the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series by Jeff Kinney, the interactions between Greg and his family and friends provide humour and insight into the challenges of growing up.
 - In Matilda by Roald Dahl, the relationship between Matilda and Miss Honey showcases the power of kindness and resilience in overcoming adversity.
 - In Ghost by Jason Reynolds, the dynamics between Ghost and his track teammates, as well as his coach, provide support as he navigates challenges both on and off the track.
 - In A Kind of Spark by Elle McNicoll, the bond between Addie and her sister, Keedie, serves as a cornerstone of the story, highlighting themes of understanding, acceptance and familial support.
- Read aloud the two provided extracts to delve deeper into the relationships between different characters, such as Mum and Gran, and Uncle Joe and Gemma.
- Discuss how there are many different relationships in the story, just like a spider's web with numerous strands connecting different characters together.
- Illustrate this concept by drawing a simple character web on the board, placing a central character such as Gemma in the middle and connecting them to other characters (Mum, Gran, Uncle Joe, Surinder Jess and Minxie, etc.) with lines to represent their relationships.
- While doing this, discuss each character connected to the central character and describe the nature of their relationship. Encourage students to contribute their observations and insights.

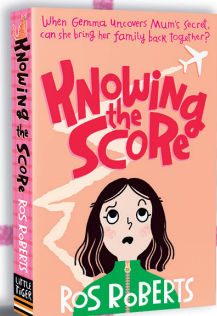




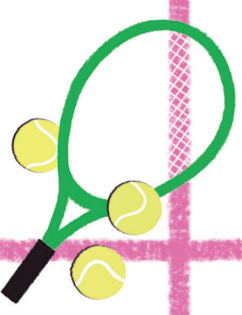
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- Ask students to identify additional characters from the story and add them to the web, connecting them to existing characters based on their relationships.
- Encourage students to reflect on the complexity of character relationships and how they contribute to the overall narrative. Discuss any patterns or themes that emerge from the character web.
- Have students create their own character webs for a central character within the story, such as Gemma's mum, Gran, Uncle Joe, Minxie, Lexi, Sophie or any of the other supporting characters.



ROS ROBERTS *Knowing the Score*

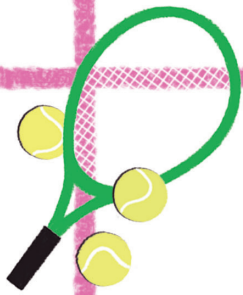


ACTIVITY SHEET 4: CREATING A CHARACTER WEB

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Choose a central character from the story (e.g., Mum, Gran, Uncle Joe).
2. Write the name of your chosen central character inside the middle box.
3. Write the names of other characters in the story in the boxes around the outside.
4. Draw lines connecting your central character to the other characters, representing their relationships. Use arrows or labels to indicate the nature of each relationship (e.g., family, friend, coach, etc.). Consider connecting the supporting characters to each other as well.
5. Write a brief description next to each line to explain the relationship between your central character and the connected character.
6. Feel free to add additional details or insights about the characters and their relationships as you see fit.





ROS ROBERTS

Knowing the Score

POST-READING QUESTIONS: DEEPENING DISCUSSIONS

PLOT ANALYSIS:

- Can you summarise the beginning, middle and end of Knowing the Score in your own words?
- What was the most exciting part of the story for you? Why do you think it stood out?

GETTING TO KNOW THE CHARACTERS

- Who is your favourite character in the story and why?
- How do you think Gemma felt at the start of the book? How did she feel by the end?

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:

- How did Gemma's relationship with her uncle Joe change throughout the story? Can you give examples?
- Were there any characters whose actions surprised you? How did your opinion of them change as you learned more about them?

FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

- How is Gemma's family similar to or different from your own family?
- How did Gemma's friends help her during the story? Do you think having supportive friends is important when facing challenges?

LOVE:

- How does the story show that love can help us get through tough times?
- What parts of the book teach us that love is more important than having lots of money or fancy things?

FORGIVENESS:

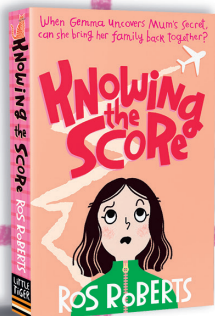
- In what ways do you think forgiveness played a role in the story? Can you give examples of characters forgiving each other?
- How did forgiveness help Gemma and her family come together?

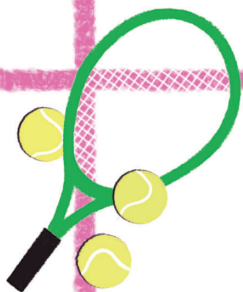
THEMES AND MESSAGES:

- What were the main ideas or themes you found in the story?
- If you were to summarise its main message, what would it be? Do you think it was positive overall?

MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS:

- Why do you think memories are important to the characters in the story? How do they influence their actions and decisions?
- Have you ever experienced a situation where a small thing triggered a memory for you, like when Gemma remembers the gate and the trip to the toy shop? Can you share that experience?





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PREDICTIONS AND SEQUELS:

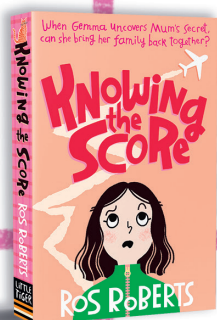
- What do you think might happen next in Gemma's life? Can you imagine a sequel to the story?
- How would you like to see Gemma's relationships with her family members develop further in a sequel?

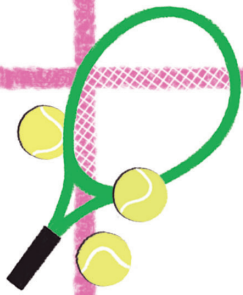
AUTHOR INTERACTION AND FUTURE READING:

- If you could ask Ros Roberts one question about this book or how she writes, what would it be?
- Do you think you'd like to read more books by this author in the future? Why or why not?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

- **Author Study and Q&A Session:** Research the author of the book, Ros Roberts, and arrange an in-person Q&A session or virtual visit where students can ask questions about the writing process and inspiration behind the story.
- **Memory Box Creation:** Invite students to create their own memory boxes and scrapbooks after Gemma sees the photos at Orchard House. They can fill them with mementos, trinkets and written notes that represent significant memories or moments in their lives. This hands-on activity encourages reflection and introspection while also serving as a tangible reminder of the importance of memories.
- **Forgiveness Letter Writing:** In line with the theme of forgiveness, have students write letters from the perspective of one character to another, expressing forgiveness or seeking forgiveness. This activity encourages empathy and understanding of different viewpoints.
- **Courageous Conversations Circle:** Create a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing stories of personal courage, to build empathy and understanding among classmates and develop a supportive and welcoming environment where everyone's experiences are valued and respected.
- **Family Tree Project:** Engage students in researching and constructing their own family trees, reflecting on the diverse dynamics and relationships within their families. Encourage them to explore different structures and types of families, such as nuclear families, extended families, single-parent families, blended families and chosen families.

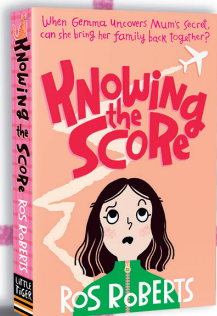


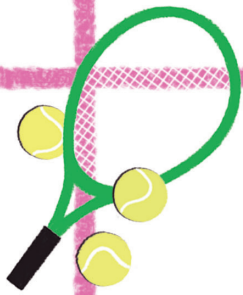


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- **Tennis Tournament:** Host a mini tennis tournament where students compete against each other in singles or doubles matches. Prior to the tournament, students can practise their skills during physical education lessons or after-school tennis sessions, culminating in a friendly competition that celebrates sportsmanship, teamwork and the joy of playing tennis.
- **Act It Out:** Divide students into groups and assign them scenes from the book to act out. Encourage students to immerse themselves in the characters' perspectives, motivations and emotions and enrich their comprehension of them as they bring the book to life through performance.
- **Creative Book Covers:** Encourage students to design their own alternative book covers for *Knowing the Score*, inspired by the original artwork by Catherine Fortey, incorporating symbolism, imagery and typography that reflects the central themes and tone of the story. This activity allows for artistic expression while also encouraging deeper engagement with the text and its underlying messages.
- **Character Interview Podcast:** Task students with creating a podcast where they conduct fictional interviews with characters from the book. They can prepare questions based on the characters' experiences, motivations and growth throughout the story, offering insights into their perspectives and the overarching themes of the book.
- **Character Playlist Creation:** Encourage students to curate playlists inspired by the personalities, experiences, and emotions of the characters in *Knowing the Score*. They can select songs that reflect each character's journey, relationships, and inner conflicts, presenting their playlists to the class and explaining their song choices.





ROS ROBERTS

KNOWING the SCORE

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES - KEY STAGE 2/3

ENGLISH

SPOKEN LANGUAGE

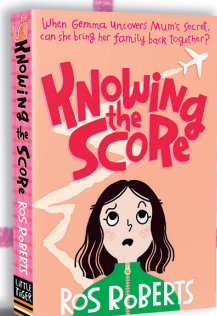
Pupils should be taught to:

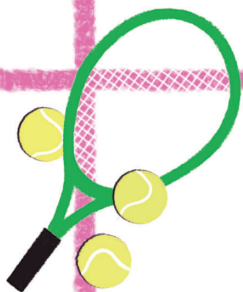
- develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/ improvisations and debates

READING: COMPREHENSION

Pupils should be taught to:

- maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:
 - continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
 - increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions
 - recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
 - identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives for their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
 - predicting what might happen from details stated and implied
 - summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas





ROS ROBERTS

KNOWING the SCORE

WRITING: COMPOSITION

Pupils should be taught to:

- plan their writing by:
 - discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
 - develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Pupils should be taught to:

- play competitive games, modified where appropriate [for example, badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders and tennis], and apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending

PSHE (TAKEN FROM PROGRAMME OF STUDY FOR PSHE EDUCATION: KS1–5)

Pupils learn:

Families and close positive relationships

- R6. that a feature of positive family life is caring relationships; about the different ways in which people care for one another
- R7. to recognise and respect that there are different types of family structure (including single parents, same-sex parents, step-parents, blended families, foster parents); that families of all types can give family members love, security and stability
- R8. to recognise other shared characteristics of healthy family life, including commitment, care, spending time together; being there for each other in times of difficulty
- R9. how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice

