

Sports Day

Tariq's legs were shaking. He was terrified. Everybody else was better than him. Yusuf could run really fast, Euan was brilliant at football, Satish was always charging around the playground and Sam was probably the fastest of them all.



“Ready boys?” asked Mrs Carson.

The boys nodded and grinned. Well, most of them grinned, apart from Tariq who was too frightened. They stepped up to the starting line and Mrs Carson held up the little flag. It was a Union Jack flag that she'd kept since Prince William had visited the town.

“Ready, ... steady, ... go!” called Mrs Carson as she dropped the flag quickly. But Tariq was already away, his feet pounding along the track.

“STOP!” shouted Mrs Carson.

Tariq kept running as fast as he could but looked round anxiously. Something was wrong. No-one else was running.

“STOP!” shouted Mrs Carson again. She looked angry. “Tariq, why didn't you stop when I asked you to?”

Tariq stopped running and headed back towards the starting line. The other boys were staring at him and laughing.

“Do you know why I stopped you?” asked Mrs Carson crossly.

Tariq shook his head.

“You set off before I said ‘go’. That's typical of you Tariq. Were you trying to cheat?” said Mrs Carson, her eyes wide with anger.

“I don't know why he's racing anyway,” said Sam, “he's going to lose because he's a loser.” The other boys sniggered. Tariq felt as angry as Mrs Carson.

“Right, let's try again shall we?” said Mrs Carson.

The boys lined up again and Mrs Carson raised the flag. “Ready ...” Tariq put one foot forward. “Steady ...” Tariq clenched his fists. “Go!”

Tariq paused for a moment then shot forward. He hammered each foot against the ground and ran with huge strides, his anger feeding his energy. He ignored the other runners. He ignored the rest of the school and the parents who were watching, and most of all he ignored Mrs Carson.

Within seconds he burst across the finishing line, ran on for a few metres, then turned and watched as the other four boys crossed the line.

“Who's a loser now?” he asked Sam.