

The Boy at the Back of the Class

By Onjali Rauf

I don't like maths. Simple maths is fine, but this year we're learning about long division and square numbers and all sorts of things that my brain doesn't like doing. Sometimes I ask for help, but it's embarrassing putting your hand up too many times to ask the same

question. I'm lucky because Tom and Josie and Michael always help me with the things I get stuck with. They're my best friends and we do everything together.

Tom's got short spiky hair and a side-smile and a big Adam's apple that looks like a ping-pong ball got stuck in his throat. He's the smallest in our group but he's also the funniest. He only joined our class last year after his parents moved here from America, but we became friends instantly. He has three older brothers who all tease and bully him. Not seriously - only for a joke. But I think they steal his food too which is why he's so skinny and always super-hungry. I once saw him eat a whole pizza with extra toppings and a double cheeseburger for lunch and still not be full up! So, I hide my snacks and chocolate bars from him when I can.

Josie has large, brown eyes and at least a million freckles across her face. She's tall and gangly and is always chewing on her hair. She's the fastest girl in our year and can kick a football past any goalie from the other side of the pitch. She's the coolest person I know, and I've known her since we were three. Our mums say we became instant friends the first day we started nursery, so they decided to become friends too. I don't really remember much about myself at that age, but Josie is in all my school memories. We even got our first detention together last year - all because of a hamster called Herbert. Josie had heard one of the upper

1. Where did Tom's parents move from? (Retrieval question.)
2. What adjectives does the author use to describe Josie? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (Retrieval question.)
3. What does 'insightful' mean? (Vocabulary question.)
4. Why does Michael often trip up or bump into things? (Inference question.)
5. What was the name of the class hamster? (Retrieval question.)