

Playing the game

- Read the story extract and highlight the words that you think describe the characters' actions, thoughts and feelings. Use a different colour for each.

The joyful laughter, shouts and thudding of running feet boomed in his head, thrusting the barb even deeper into the wound. He didn't care that the wetness of the dewy grass was seeping through his tracksuit bottoms. No one would notice when he stood up anyway. He swallowed hard as the tears stung his eyes. He could bowl a ball with the best of them. Joe wasn't the only one.

A group of friends shoving and poking each other playfully, assembled close by to watch the game. He looked up and squeezed out a smile, but no one responded. Defeated, he stiffened his back and turned his head away. Nobody cared about him. Wiping the tears away with the back of his hand, he lunged forward and angrily ripped and tore at the clumps of damp grass.

"What are you doing over here?" chirped a familiar voice behind him.

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