

HATTIE HARRY, THE TENNIS FIEND by CLARE PRICE

Rosie and her friend Pips have been selected to play in the school tennis tournament against Stones Girls. Rosie has all the tennis kit and considers herself a rather good player. The scene opens at the courts.

ROSIE.

(Arrives on the tennis court with her kit bag and racket. She takes out of her bag a small towel, wipes her hands and places it neatly on the chair at the back of the court. She drinks from a bottle of water, unzips her racket and places it by the chair)

Hello! (She waves at her school friend in the next court and runs over to chat to her through the netting)

Miss Appleby said it was going to be a tough tournament, the Stones Girls are really fit. They haven't seen us though Pips have they.

She says they have a new tennis coach who makes them play every morning before school! *(Looks at the sky)*

It's a lovely day for it. Not a cloud in sight. *(Looks at watch and removes it)*

They're late aren't they. I think they'll be a push over, I'll just put this in my bag.

(Runs confidently to the chair and places her watch in the bag. Returns to chat to Pips. Limbers up while talking)

I'm playing someone called Hattie Harry. I think I played her last year. You know that thin girl with spots and braces. *(With confidence)*

She'll be no contest. All that skiving off choir has made all the difference to my play. *(Looks)*

I think the Stones Girls have arrived. Yours looks okay. Speak to you later.

(Runs to the net. Pauses and looks at the very large and imposing Hattie. Puts her hand out to shake Hattie's, who has a vice-like grip, causing Rosie to wince)

Hello, I'm Rosie. Shall I serve the first warm-up? *(Pauses)*

No, maybe you had better. They're some tennis balls in the sack over there.

(Rosie gets into position muttering to herself)

She's certainly grown. In fact she's double her size. *(She feels for her racket, still keeping her eyes on Hattie as if scared to turn her back towards her. Weakly calls)*

I'm ready. *(Waits for the first shot. To herself)*

God help me. *(Hattie serves an ace shot which is so fast Rosie doesn't have time to move. She waits for Hattie's next shot. This time Rosie leaps in the air and mimes hitting the ball back. A volley of shots continue as Rosie leaps across the court this way and that hitting different shots. Then she slips near the net after missing an impossible shot. Exhausted she looks up at Hattie)*

I think I've pulled a muscle. *(Hattie offers help but Rosie looks terrified)*

No need to help. I think I can manage. *(Getting up awkwardly and limping)*

I think we'll just say you won. *(She goes to shake Hattie's hand but thinks better of it and waves. Collecting her racket she limps to the chair and sits, and pours the remaining bottle of water over her face. Collects her things into the bag. Stands to leave the court. Calls weakly to Pips)* Pips, I thought I'd get to choir early tonight.