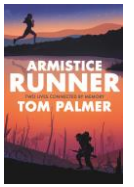


Armistice Runner by Tom Palmer



LITERACY & DEMENTIA RESOURCE : PUPIL'S TEXT

Text from chapter 3

"As soon as she walked into her grandparents' house, Lily understood.

Things had changed.

There were two bin bags in the hall, full of rubbish and tied at the top. The house smelled funny, not like its usual comfortable smell of Gran's home-cooked dinners or furniture polished until it gleamed.

Granddad had his arms open wide in welcome, but his eyes looked weary to Lily. His skin was grey and crumpled. Lily felt pain rising from her stomach to her chest. She clutched the present of a wrapped red scarf that she'd bought for her gran tighter in front of her.

"What's that weird smell?" Tim asked.

"I've let the place go, Timmy." Granddad tried to smile. "Need to concentrate on your gran. I keep the front room, kitchen and bedroom nice. The rest will have to go to the dogs."

"What have you done to Meg and Gus?" Tim asked.

"Tim," Mum rebuked.

"It's OK." Granddad sighed. "Tim can ask what he wants. There's no point avoiding the truth."

Granddad looked at Lily as he replied in a softer voice. "The dogs live in the back garden now. In the shed. Keeps them out of our way."

The dogs lived outside! Lily had to stop herself gasping. She couldn't believe it. All the time she'd been growing up, Meg and Gus had been in the house. She loved them and they loved her. They felt almost like cousins to her, rather than animals. But now they were outside. In the cold.

"Come on in," Granddad said.

Gran was in the front room. There was a fire burning in the hearth, a neat stack of tinder and logs next to it, and a painting of hills on the wall above the fireplace. Lily smiled. Granddad was right.

This room felt good. This room hadn't changed.

But Gran had. She looked smaller somehow. Lily hesitated for a half-second before going to give her a big hug. Tim stayed by the door and put his hand into his mum's.

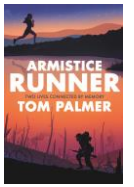
They sat down in a circle of chairs and sofas.

Dad tried to start a conversation with his mum. But she seemed to be half dreaming, miles away.

After a few attempts, Dad stood up, rubbed his face and left the room."



Armistice Runner by Tom Palmer

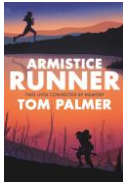


LITERACY & DEMENTIA RESOURCE : PUPIL'S READING COMPREHENSION

1. Who was Lily visiting?
2. What did the house used to be like when Gran was well and what is it like now?
3. How does Grandad seem to Lily and how does she cope with this?
4. What does Grandad mean when he says, "the rest will have to go to the dogs" and what do you think Tim think he means?
5. Where do the dogs live now and how does this make Lily feel?
6. What makes Lily smile as she enters the room?
7. Why does Lily hesitate before hugging Gran?
8. How do we know how Tim is feeling?
9. Why does Dad leave the room?



Armistice Runner by Tom Palmer



LITERACY & DEMENTIA RESOURCE : TEACHER'S NOTES

It is suggested that the accompanying powerpoint is read through in class first.

This may be a subject very close to home for some pupils that teachers are not yet aware of so sensitivity needs to be shown.

This could be used in conjunction with cross-curricula PHSE.

Warm up questions

Can anyone in the class explain who is affected by dementia and alzheimers?

- Mostly older people although it can in rare circumstances affect the middleaged

Can anyone explain how they are affected, what symptoms they have?

- Loss of recent memories, confusion, crossness

What abilities might people with dementia still have?

- They have all their physical skills early on and they still love their relatives even if they might not remember exactly who they are.

What can we do to help people with dementia?

- Lots of love and patience, lots of visits to check they are ok

Is there a cure?

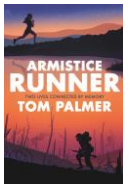
- No

Is there anything we can do to try to keep good mental agility when we are older?

- Eat well. Do not take drugs. Do fun quizzes and sudoku. Try new things.



Armistice Runner by Tom Palmer



LITERACY & DEMENTIA RESOURCE : TEACHER'S READING COMPREHENSION MODEL ANSWERS

1. Who was Lily visiting?
Lily was visiting her grandparents. We know this from the text where it states that "she walked into her grandparent's house".
2. What did the house used to be like when Gran was well and what is it like now?
When Lily's gran was well the house was well cared for, such as the "furniture polishes until it gleamed". The new change of "funny" smell implies that it used to smell fresher. But now Lily has found it is not as clean as before for example, granddad is struggling to put the rubbish out, keep it fresh and as clean as before.
3. How does Grandad seem to Lily and how does she cope with this?
Grandad is as friendly as ever with Lily, but we know he appears to Lily to be tired as his eyes are described as "weary". His skin looks "grey and crumpled" suggesting that he is less well-care for. This realisation gives Lily a physical pain "from her stomach to her chest" and an emotional pain that she copes with by hugging the present she has brought with her.
4. What does Grandad mean when he says, "the rest will have to go to the dogs" and what do you think Tim think he means?
When Grandad says "go to the dogs", he means he will stop looking after those rooms and that they will fall into disrepair. However, Tim is worried about the dogs, Meg and Gus, and that they might be going somewhere.
5. Where do the dogs live now and how does this make Lily feel?
We know from the text that the dogs live in the back garden and sleep in the shed. This makes Lily feel sad as they feel to her more than just animals, like her relatives and she was worried about them in the cold.
6. What makes Lily smile as she enters the room?
Lily smiles as she enters the room as she has found it kept nicely as her Grandad says. It hasn't changed because the fire is still burning, with wood ready to keep it alight and the familiar painting on the wall has remained.
7. Why does Lily hesitate before hugging Gran?
Lily's Gran seems smaller to her. She hesitates before hugging her because she is shocked that she has changed.
8. How do we know how Tim is feeling?
Tim is feeling anxious and perhaps too scared to come in. We know this because the writer describes him as putting "his hand into his Mum's" and that he has stayed by the door as if he doesn't want to come into the room.
9. Why does Dad leave the room?
Dad leaves the room after making a few attempts at starting a conversation because his Mum is not responding and seems to be "half dreaming, miles away". In the text the writer adds that he rubbed his face as he left the room, which might suggest that he was upset and perhaps even crying.

