

A GAME OF POLO WITH A HEADLESS GOAT EMMA LEVINE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This extract comes from a book which was written as a spin-off from Emma Levine's television series about strange and unusual sports. It is a **travelogue** in which she describes these sports, the people involved and her experiences of filming them. In doing so, she gives an insight not just into the sports themselves, but into the lives and culture of the people who take part in and watch them.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

travelogue a book that describes a travel experience

BEFORE YOU START READING

1 Do some research.

- Find some information about Emma Levine. You can visit her website by searching for her name.
- Find a newspaper report on a motor race, perhaps a Formula 1 Grand Prix, and make some notes about the way in which it has been written.
- What is the strangest sport or game you know or can find information about?

2 In a small group or with a partner, share your ideas on the following questions.

- Do you prefer to take part in sport or watch it?
- How important is sport in your life?
- Do you think the involvement of money in sport (for example, gambling or excessive pay for sportspeople) ruins sport?

▼ FROM A GAME OF POLO WITH A HEADLESS GOAT BY EMMA LEVINE

Levine travelled throughout Asia researching and filming unusual sports. In this passage she writes about a donkey race in Karachi, Pakistan.

We drove off to find the best viewing spot, which turned out to be the crest of the hill so we could see the approaching race. I asked the lads if we could join in the 'Wacky Races' and follow the donkeys, and they loved the idea. 'We'll open the car boot, you climb inside and point your camera towards the race. As the donkeys overtake us, we'll join the cars.' 'But will you try and get to the front?' 'Oh yes, that's no problem.'

The two lads who had never been interested in this Karachi sport were suddenly fired up with enthusiasm. We waited for eternity on the brow of the hill, me perched in the boot with a zoom lens pointing out. Nearly one hour later I was beginning to feel rather silly when the only action was a villager on a wobbly bicycle, who nearly fell off as he cycled past and gazed around at us.

Several vehicles went past, and some donkey-carts carrying spectators. 'Are they coming?' we called out to them. 'Coming, coming,' came the reply. I was beginning to lose faith in its happening, but the lads remained confident.