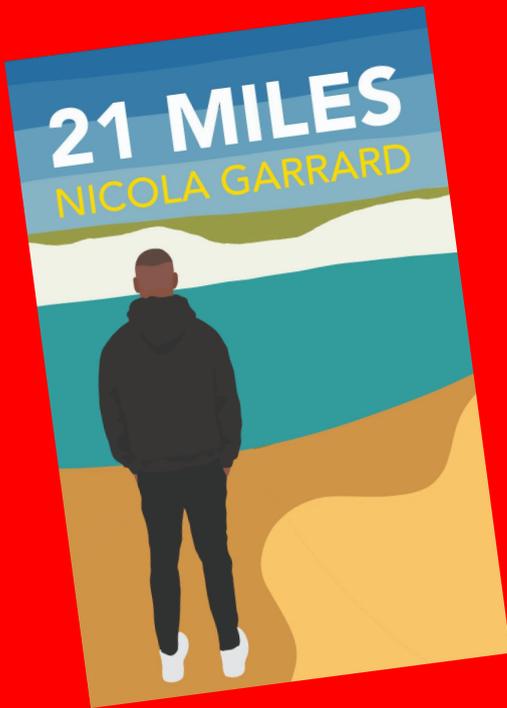


**Nicola Garrard**

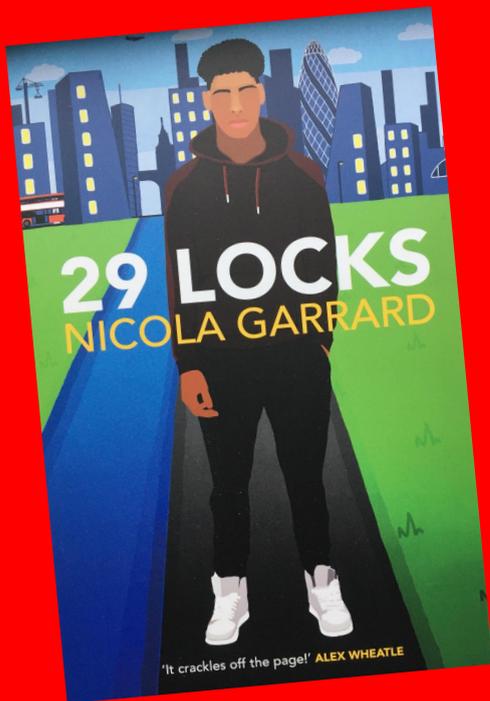
**#TeamDonny**

**Teaching Resources**



# 21 MILES

1. What do you think of when you hear the word 'refugee'?
2. How do you think countries decide who is a refugee and who isn't? What makes a refugee a refugee? Research the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.
3. What benefits are there to countries who accept refugees?
4. What's the difference between political refugees and economic refugees?
5. Are climate crisis refugees (people fleeing the impacts of climate change such as wildfire, droughts and flooding) economic or political? Should the countries causing the most damage to the environment take responsibility for helping those most affected?
6. What questions would you like to ask a refugee?
7. If you are a refugee or have parents who are refugees, what would you like non-refugees to know?
8. The young people Donny meets in Calais all have different reasons for leaving their countries. Discuss why Ishmael, Ahmed, Taz, Amin, Hamza and Raheem left their homes.



# 29 LOCKS

## Part 1: Discussion Time

**Read pages 149-153. Donny and Zoe are from very different backgrounds. Donny grew up in a city and has experienced poverty and crime. Zoe is from a wealthy family in a rural area and has experienced expensive restaurants and luxury holidays abroad.**

What do you think makes them become best friends?

What do they have in common?

Do you have friends from very different backgrounds? What do people gain from making friends with people from different backgrounds?

**Donny and Zoe both experience 'grooming', where adults try to lure young people into abusive and exploitative relationships. Donny is groomed to join a drugs gang (see pages 37-40 and 114 onwards) and Zoe is groomed online by a man posing as a modelling scout in order to sexually abuse girls (see page 165).**

What tactics do the adults use to gain Donny and Zoe's trust?

If this was happening to someone you know, what advice would you give?

**Read pages 51-53. Like Donny, over 300,000 children have a parent in prison and over 80,000 children are looked-after (living with foster parents or in children's residential homes.) These children sometimes do less well in school and are more likely to grow up in poverty. They are also more likely to have behaviour difficulties, sometimes get into trouble and often have complex emotional needs.**

What do you think could be done to help children affected by poverty and the problems Donny experiences?

**Talk about the scene in Donny's school when he truants in Chapter 9 (from page 123)**

What could his teachers have done differently?

What could your school do better to help children like Donny?

**Read pages 37 to 40. Is Olu a good or a bad character, or somewhere in between?**

**Which character is your favourite in the novel and which character do you most identify with? Can you explain why?**

**Donny's experience of life is affected by his ethnicity and being a teenage boy. People make assumptions that he might be dangerous, which he uses to his advantage in Chapter 16.**

Have you ever experienced being treated differently because of your appearance, age, sexuality, religion, disability, gender or ethnicity? How did it make you feel?

What can we do to make sure that racism and prejudice are challenged?

**Some young people who live in areas with high levels of crime choose to carry knives.**

What motivates them to carry a weapon?  
What are the consequences of carrying a weapon?

**Donny experiences pressure to join a drugs gang in Peckham and later in Hackney.**

What are the pressures on young people to join a gang?  
If you knew someone who was affected in this way, how would you advise them?  
How can we help young people like Donny who are vulnerable to becoming involved in gangs?

**If you could walk into any scene in the novel, which would it be? What would you say or do?**

**Read this extract from Scottish poet Tom Leonard's poem 'This is the Six O'Clock News'**

thirza right  
way ti spell  
ana right way  
to tok it. This  
is me tokn yir  
right way a  
spellin. This  
is ma trooth.

**Donny tells his 'truth' in MLE (Multicultural London English) Read the Note on the Text and Glossary on page 277 and try the following tasks:**

In what other contexts have you heard the language Donny uses?  
What are your attitudes to MLE and have they changed since reading 29 Locks?

Are non-Standard English speakers discriminated against? Discuss the potential damage caused by stereotyping British regional accents and dialects.

**By the end of the novel, Donny learns how to 'code-switch' between Standard English and MLE and uses this skill to his advantage.**

Why is it important to become proficient in both Standard English and your regional accent and dialect?

## **Part 2: Creative Writing Exercises**

### **The Story behind the Story**

Tell or write the untold stories hidden from view in 29 Locks:

- Tell Bossman's story. What was his childhood like? What has happened to his mum? How did he get into drug dealing?
- Tell the story of how Olu and Mama Folu become close again. What did they say or do to repair their broken relationship?
- Tell the story of how Kasim got into a Premiere League youth development squad.

### **The Story of my Life**

Write down a list of four or five interesting events or experiences in your life.

Call each experience 'The Story of . . .'

They could be funny, silly, frightening, lucky, unlucky, amazing, but NEVER ordinary! Examples: The Story of the £5 Tooth Fairy, The Story of the Locked Park Gates, The Story of When I Nearly Drowned, The Story of the Angry Auntie

- Show your list to a partner and ask which one they find most interesting
- Pick your favourite and tell/write it. (You can steal someone else's story if they have a good one!)

## Part 3: Drama Exercises

### Hot Seating Character Interviews

Split into two groups of 4. One group picks a character each from the following:

Olu

Donny

Kasim

Zoe

The other group thinks up 3 questions to fire at each of these characters.

The first group must then answer the questions 'in character'.

### Improvised Drama

In pairs, act out the following scenes:

Mama Folu and Olu talking when they meet again for the first time after he leaves.

At the end of the story, Olu promises to talk to Donny and keep in touch.

Improvise one of these meetings where Olu talks about Michael and tells him about university and his hopes for the future.

Zoe confronting her mum and dad when they tell her off for running away. What criticisms might she have about them? What fears might they have had for her safety?