



Kgothatso Montjane, Tennis Queen

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This storybook is about Kgothatso Montjane.

She was born in 1986 in Polokwane, in a township named Seshego.

This girl was born with an illness that affected her hands and feet.

But she grew up to be a famous tennis star!



Because of Kgothatso's illness, doctors had to cut off her one leg below her knee. Other children did not want to play with Kgothatso because of her disability.

But her mother did not treat her differently, and Kgothatso had housework chores like other children.



Kgothatso's mother sent her to the Helen Franz Special Needs School. This is a school for learners with disabilities.

It was at this school where she showed her talents for sports.

At the school, they introduced her to Ballroom and Latin American dancing.



One of Kgothatso's schoolteachers chose her to represent their school at a tennis camp in Johannesburg.

Kgothatso had never played tennis!



Kgothatso played well at the tennis camp. This was the start of her journey to become an international wheelchair tennis player.

She got a donation of a wheelchair and tennis kit. She was on her way to becoming one of Africa's best disabled sportspeople.



Kgothatso began competing in wheelchair tennis competitions around the world. She won competitions in Belgium and Switzerland.

In South Africa, she was honoured three times as the disabled sportswoman of the year.



In 2013 and 2014, Kgothatso took part in wheelchair tennis tournaments in Australia, France, and America.

She played singles tennis, as a solo player. She also played doubles tennis, which is a pair of players against another two players.



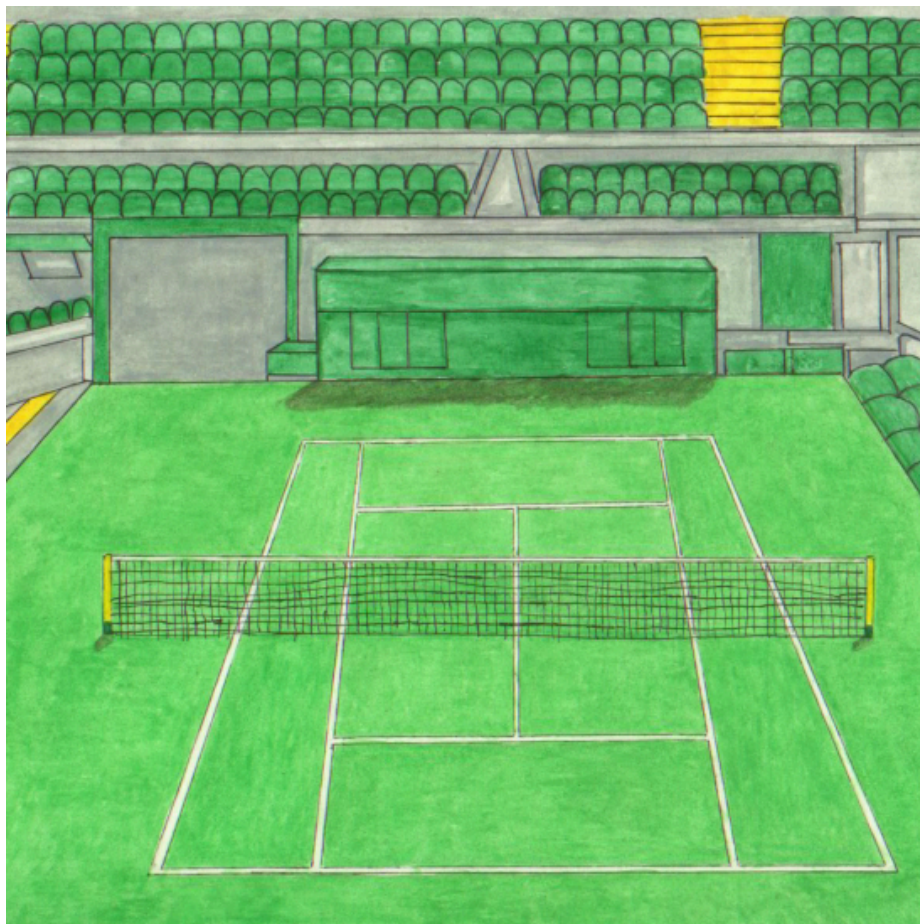
Kgothatso competed in the Paralympic Games, which is the Olympic Games for disabled sportspeople.

Training for these competitions was hard work, but Kgothatso never quit.



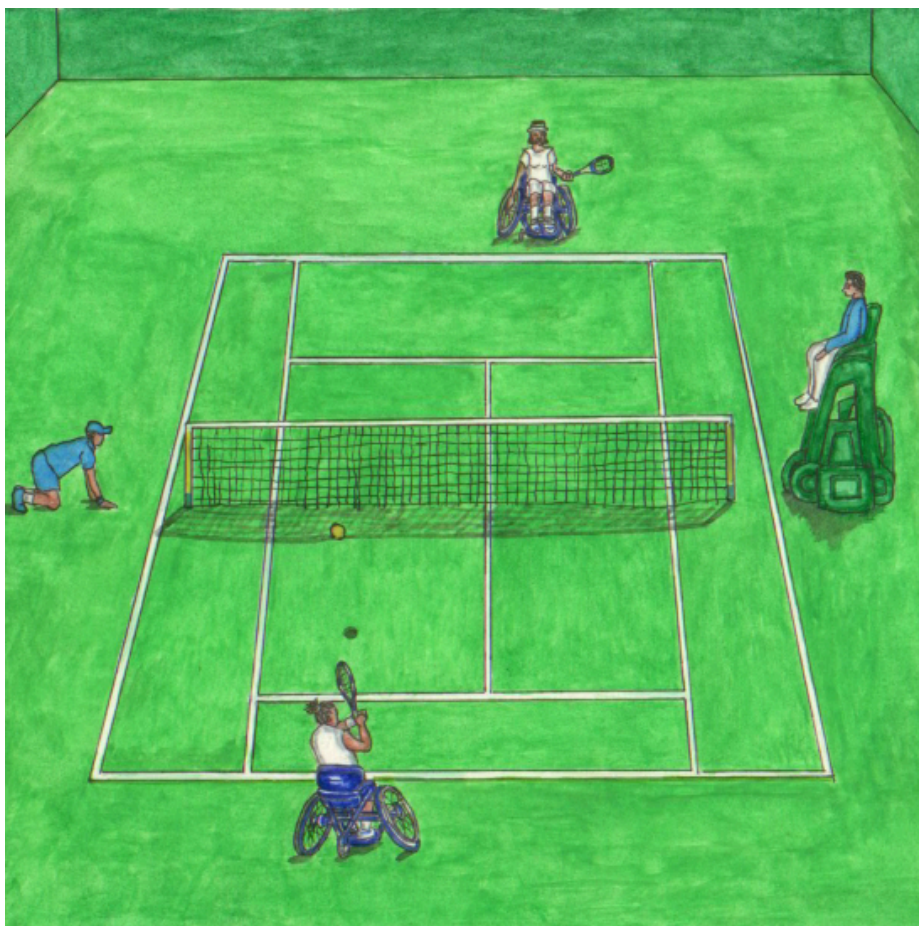
Kgothatso also worked hard in her studies. She went to the University of Venda and studied a degree in Recreation and Sports Science.

At the university, wheelchair tennis was the only sport that was available for disabled sportspeople.



Wimbledon in England is where one of the most famous and oldest tennis competitions is held every year.

In 2018, Kgothatso became the first Black South African woman to qualify for the championships in Wimbledon.



Kgothatso had to travel to England for the Wimbledon tournament. But there were no funds to pay for the flight and accommodation.

Kgothatso was worried that she would not be able to go because of lack of funds. Fortunately, she received help from a group of businesswomen.



The four most important international tennis competitions are known as Grand Slams. Wimbledon was Kgothatso's fourth Grand Slam in 2018.

She was the first African wheelchair tennis player to compete in four Grand Slam tournaments in the same year.



Kgothatso is the top wheelchair tennis player in South Africa and Africa. She is one of the top five wheelchair tennis players in the world!

In addition to her success, Kgothatso helps to support other players with disabilities. She shows that you can achieve anything, even if you have disabilities.

—Questions

1. Who is Kgothatso Montjane? Explain.
2. How did Kgothatso start playing tennis?
3. What is the name of Kgothatso's school, where she learnt Ballroom and Latin American dancing?
4. When did Kgothatso compete in four Grand Slam tournaments? Why is this important?
5. Do you believe that you can achieve anything, even if you have disabilities? Explain.
6. What difficulties might a person who uses a wheelchair face?
7. Why do you think Kgothatso's mother chose not to treat Kgothatso differently?
8. What things make people to treat others differently?

—This storybook was created and written in Setswana, as part of the Zenex Ulwazi Lwethu reading materials project in 2021.



Ulwazi Lwethu is a Zenex Foundation funded and initiated project to develop a series of graded and leisure African language readers and teacher support materials. This project is targeted at teaching and supporting learners in the Foundation Phase to improve their home language reading and understanding. The readers have been originated in nine African languages in collaboration with Molteno Institute for Language and Literacies, Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development, Room to Read South Africa, and Saide. All resources are developed as Open Education Resources (OER).



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