

A NASTY SMILE – READING TEXT

The first person Wendy saw at school was Simon McTavish. He was roaring around the playground whirling his bag above his head. Wendy took a deep breath and walked into school hoping he wouldn't notice her.

"Now then children," Mrs Paterson began. "I've had an idea. And where do I always have my best ideas?"

"In the bath," they chorused.

"Quite right," she laughed. "Well now, I was in my bath last night and I was wondering what we should do for the Parents' Evening this Christmas. Year Three are doing the Nativity play this year. Year Four are cooking the mince pies and Year Five are decorating the hall. What shall we do? I know, I thought Year Six will put on an exhibition of 'Interesting Things' in the front hall, so that people will have something to look at while they're eating their mince pies. Well, what do you think?"

Simon McTavish pretended to yawn noisily, but she ignored him.

"Well then, why don't we all try to bring in something interesting, something from the past maybe, something from a far-off country, something amazing, something special."

Mrs Paterson did go on a bit, but Wendy liked her because she laughed a lot.

Sarah said she had a three-legged milking stool. Sharon had a telescope and Vince said he'd bring in a fox's tail.



"And how about you, Wendy?" she said.

There was only one thing Wendy could think of.

"We've got an old war helmet, Miss," she said. "It's my grandad's. He had it in the war. It's a bit rusty though."

"Like your grandad then," said Simon McTavish and everyone sniggered. Wendy felt the tears coming.

"A helmet will be just fine, Wendy," said Mrs Paterson quickly. Then she turned to Simon. "And Simon McTavish, you've got a brain like a soggy Weetabix."

Now they were all laughing at Simon instead, and Wendy suddenly felt a lot better. But for the rest of the day she kept finding Simon McTavish looking at her. There was a very nasty smile on his face.

Adapted from *Snakes and Ladders* by Michael Morpurgo