



Enid Blyton Stories

The Naughtiest Girl in the School



Elizabeth pushed open the door and went into the big drawing room. It was a lovely room, with a few beautiful pictures on the walls, and glowing cushions on the chairs and the couches. The two mistresses were sitting on chairs near the window. They looked up as Elizabeth came in.

‘Well, Elizabeth! We are very glad to see you at Whyteleafe School,’ said Miss Belle. She was young and pretty, but Miss Best was older, and, except when she smiled, she had rather a stern face.



‘Sit down, Elizabeth,’ said Miss Best, smiling her lovely smile. ‘I hope you have made a few friends already.’

‘No, I haven’t,’ said Elizabeth. Miss Best looked at her in surprise, when she answered so shortly.

‘Well, I expect you will soon make plenty,’ said the headmistress. ‘I hope you will be very happy with us, Elizabeth.’

‘I shan’t be,’ said Elizabeth in a rude voice.



‘What a funny little girl!’ said Miss Belle and she laughed. ‘Cheer up, dear – you’ll soon find things are very jolly here, and I am sure you will do your best to work hard, and make us proud of you.’

‘I’m not going to,’ said Elizabeth, going red. ‘I’m going to be as bad and naughty and horrid as I can possibly be, so there! I don’t want to go to school. I hate Whyteleafe School! I’ll be so bad that you’ll send me home next week!’



The little girl glared at the two mistresses as she said all this, expecting them to jump up in anger, instead they both threw back their heads and laughed and laughed!

‘Oh, Elizabeth, what an extraordinary child you are!’ said Miss Belle, wiping away the tears of laughter that had come into her eyes. ‘You look such a good, pretty, little girl too – no one would think you wanted to be so bad and naughty and horrid!’



‘I don’t care how you punish me,’ said Elizabeth, tears coming into her own eyes – but tears of anger, not of laughter. ‘You can do all you like – I just shan’t care!’

‘We never punish anyone, Elizabeth,’ said Miss Best, suddenly looking stern again. ‘didn’t you know that?’

‘No, I didn’t,’ said Elizabeth in astonishment. ‘What do you do when people are naughty, then?’



‘Oh, we leave any naughty person to the rest of the children to deal with,’ said Miss Best. ‘Every week the school holds a meeting, you know and the children themselves decide what is to be done with boys and girls who don’t behave themselves. It won’t bother us if you are naughty – but you may perhaps find that you make the children angry.’



‘That seems funny to me,’ said Elizabeth. ‘I thought it was always the teachers that did the punishing.’

‘Not at Whyteleaf School,’ said Miss Belle. ‘Well, Elizabeth, my dear, perhaps you’d go now and tell the next child to come in, will you? Maybe one day Whyteleaf School will be proud of you, even though you are quite sure it won’t!’



Elizabeth went out without another word. She couldn't help liking the two headmistresses, though she didn't want to at all. She wished she had been ruder to them. What a funny school this was!

She spoke to Helen outside the door. 'You're going in now,' she said. 'The Beauty and the Beast are waiting for you!'

'Oh, you naughty girl!' said Helen, with a giggle. 'Miss Belle and Miss Best – the Beauty and the Beast! That's rather clever of you to think of that, Elizabeth!'



Elizabeth had meant it to be very rude. She did not know enough of other children to know that they always loved nicknames for their masters and mistresses. She was surprised that Helen thought her clever – and secretly she was pleased.

But she stuck her nose in the air and marched off. She wasn't going to be pleased with anything to anybody at Whyteleafe School!



She wandered round by herself until the supper bell went at seven o'clock. She felt hungry and went into the dining hall. The children were once more opening their tins of cakes, and a lively chatter was going on. It all looked very jolly.

There were big mugs on the table and big jugs of steaming hot cocoa here and there. There were piles of bread again, butter, cheese and dishes of stewed fruit. The children sat down and helped themselves.



Nobody took any notice of Elizabeth at all, till suddenly Helen remembered what she had called Miss Belle and Miss Best. With a giggle she repeated it to her neighbour and soon there was laughter all round the table.

‘The Beauty and the Beast,’ went the whisper and chuckles echoed round. Elizabeth heard the whispers and went red. Nora O’Sullivan laughed loudly.

‘It’s a jolly good nickname!’ she said. ‘Belle means Beauty and Best is very like Beast – and certainly Miss Belle is lovely, and Miss Beast isn’t! that was pretty smart of you, Elizabeth.’



Elizabeth smiled! She really couldn't help it. She didn't want to – she wanted to be as horrid as possible – but it was really very pleasant to have everyone laughing at her joke.

'It's strange, though,' she thought. 'I meant to be horrid and rude, and the others just think it's funny. I guess Miss Belle and Miss Best wouldn't think it was funny, though!'



Nobody offered Elizabeth any of their goodies, and she did not like to offer hers, for she felt sure everyone would say no. The meal went on until half past seven, and then after grace was said the children all got up and went to the playroom.



‘When’s your bedtime?’ said Nora to Elizabeth. ‘I expect it’s eight o’clock. You’d better see. The times are on the noticeboard over there. My bedtime is at half past eight, and when I come to bed I expect all the rest of you to be safe in bed.’

‘I don’t want to go to bed at eight o’clock,’ said Elizabeth indignantly. ‘I go to bed much later than that at home.’

‘Well, you shouldn’t, then,’ said Nora. ‘No wonder you’re such a crosspatch! My mother says that late hours make children stupid, bad tempered and slow.’



Elizabeth went to see the times for going to bed. Hers was, as Nora had said, at eight o'clock. Well, she wouldn't go!
She'd be naughty!



So she slipped out into the garden and went to where she had seen two or three big swings. She got on to a swing and began to push herself to and fro. It was lovely there in the evening sunshine. Elizabeth quite forgot the she was at school and she sang a little song to herself.



A boy came into the place where the swings were and stared at Elizabeth. 'What are you doing here?' he said. 'I bet it's your bedtime!'

'Mind your own business!' said Elizabeth at once.

'Well, what about you going off to bed and minding yours!' said the boy. 'I'm a monitor and it's my job to see that people do what they're told!'



‘I don’t know what a monitor is, and I don’t care.’ Said Elizabeth rudely.

‘Well, let me tell you what a monitor is,’ said the boy, who was just about Elizabeth’s size. ‘It’s somebody put in charge of other silly kids at Whyteleaf, to see they don’t get too silly! If you don’t behave yourself I shall have to report you at the Meeting! Then you’ll be punished.’



‘Pooh!’ said Elizabeth and she swung herself very hard indeed, put out her foot and kicked the boy so vigorously that he fell right over. Elizabeth squealed with laughter – but not for long!

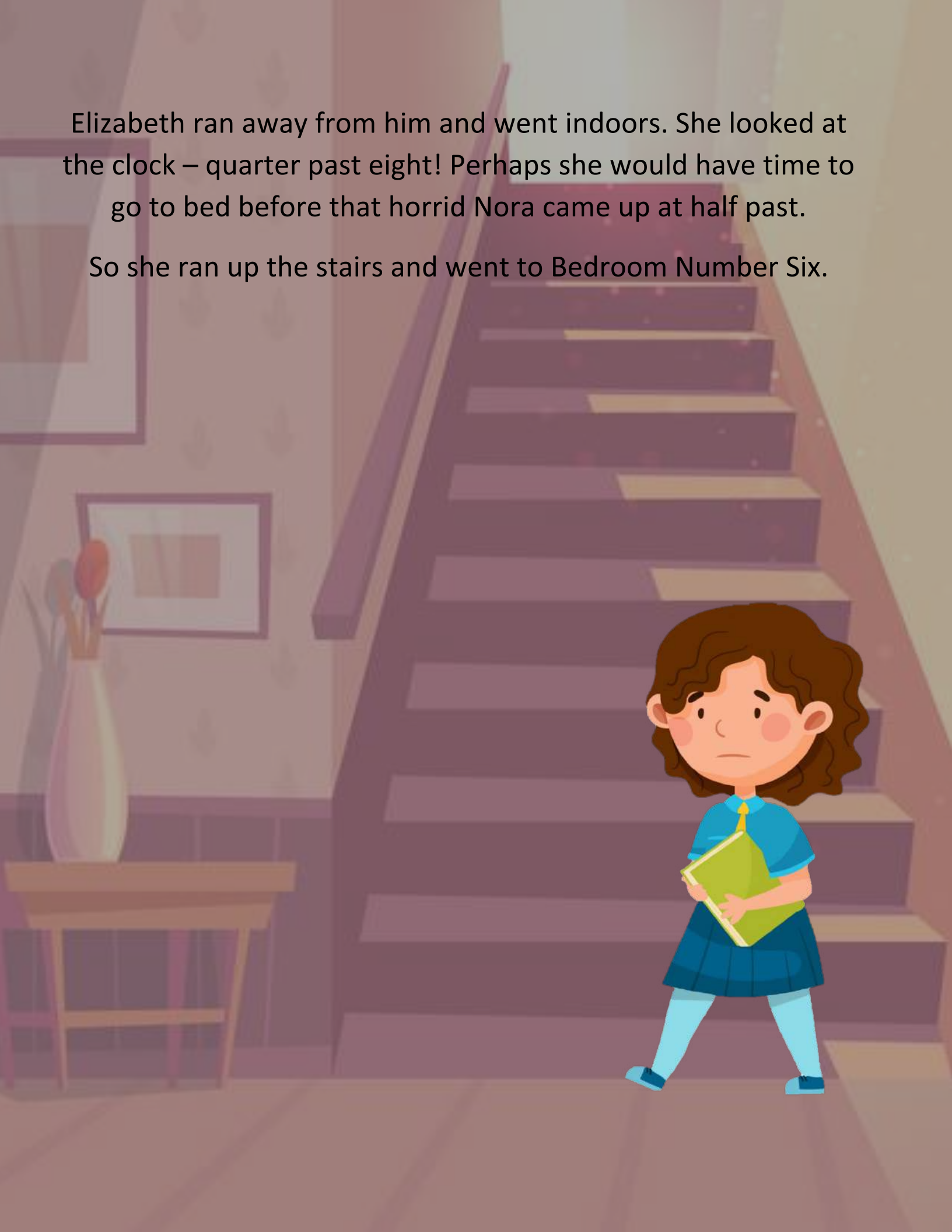


The boy jumped up, ran to the swing and shook Elizabeth off. He caught hold of her dark curls and pulled them so hard that the little girl yelled with pain. The boy grinned at her and said, 'Serve you right! You be careful how you treat me next time, or I'll pull your nose as well as your hair! Now – are you going in or not?'



Elizabeth ran away from him and went indoors. She looked at the clock – quarter past eight! Perhaps she would have time to go to bed before that horrid Nora came up at half past.

So she ran up the stairs and went to Bedroom Number Six.



Ruth, Joan, Belinda and Helen were already there half undressed. Their curtains were pulled around their cubicles, but they were talking hard all the same. Elizabeth slipped into her own cubicle.



‘You’re late, Elizabeth,’ said Ruth. ‘You’ll get into trouble if you’re caught by a monitor.’

‘I have been,’ said Elizabeth. ‘But I didn’t care! I was on the swing and I put out my foot and kicked him over!’

‘Well, you’re very silly,’ said Ruth. ‘You will get into trouble at the Meeting if you don’t look out. And that’s not pleasant.’

‘I don’t care for any silly Meeting,’ said Elizabeth, jumping into bed. . .



Elizabeth wondered where she was when she awoke the next morning, but she soon remembered. She was at that horrid school!

A bell rang. Nora sat up in her bed and spoke to the others. 'That's the bell for getting up,' she said. 'Stir yourselves! You've got half an hour.'

Elizabeth thought she wouldn't get up. She lay there warm in her bed and looked at the white ceiling. Nora's voice came sharply to her.



‘Elizabeth Allen! Are you getting up or are you not?’

‘Not,’ said Elizabeth cheekily.

‘Well, I’m in charge of you five and it’s my job to get you down to breakfast in good time,’ said Nora, poking her nose round the corner. ‘Get up, you lazy creature!’

‘Are you a monitor?’ asked Elizabeth, remembering the boy of the evening before.

‘I am,’ said Nora. ‘Come on, get up, Elizabeth, and don’t make yourself a nuisance.’



Elizabeth still lay there. Nora nodded to Ruth, and the two went beside Elizabeth's bed. Together they stripped all the bedclothes off the lazy girl and then tipped up the mattress. Elizabeth gave a shriek and slid on to the floor. She was very angry.

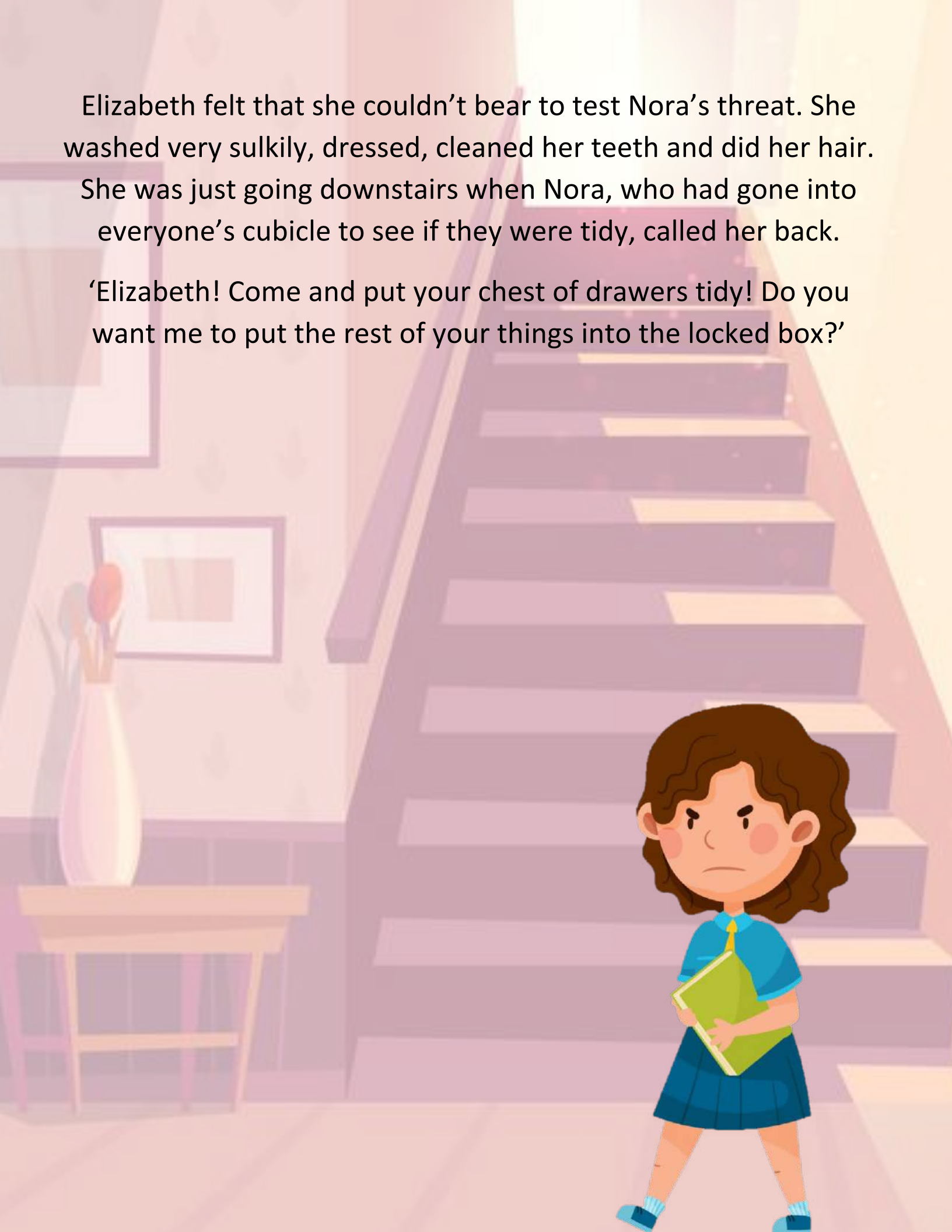


She rushed at Nora – but Nora was big and strong, and caught hold of the angry girl’s arms at once. ‘Don’t be silly now,’ she said. ‘Get dressed and hurry up or I’ll give you what for! Monitors do that sometimes, you know!’



Elizabeth felt that she couldn't bear to test Nora's threat. She washed very sulkily, dressed, cleaned her teeth and did her hair. She was just going downstairs when Nora, who had gone into everyone's cubicle to see if they were tidy, called her back.

'Elizabeth! Come and put your chest of drawers tidy! Do you want me to put the rest of your things into the locked box?'



Elizabeth went back and tidied her things. It was quicker to do that than argue with Nora. She wondered if Nora would notice that she had put socks on instead of the long blue stockings!



But Nora didn't notice. She was in too big a hurry to get down to breakfast in time, and besides, she didn't dream that anyone would wear socks instead of stockings at Whyteleafe School!



But a great many of the other children noticed Elizabeth's bare legs at once and giggled. Miss Thomas noticed them too and called to Elizabeth.

'You've put the wrong things on, Elizabeth. You must change your socks for stockings afterwards.'



But Elizabeth didn't! When she went up to make her bed afterwards, she didn't change at all. Nora saw that she hadn't and spoke to her.

'For goodness sake put stockings on, Elizabeth. Really, I shouldn't have thought anyone could be quite so silly as you seem to be!'

'I'm not silly,' said Elizabeth. 'I prefer socks. Stockings make my legs too hot. And I'm going to keep my socks on.'



Ruth spoke to Nora. ‘Nora, Elizabeth is really babyish,’ she said. ‘And the babies at Whyteleafe are allowed to wear socks, aren’t they? I’ve seen them in the Kindergarten, with their deal little bare legs. Well, why not let Elizabeth keep her socks, to show that she is really only a baby, though she’s getting on for elven? You can easily explain that to Miss Thomas.’

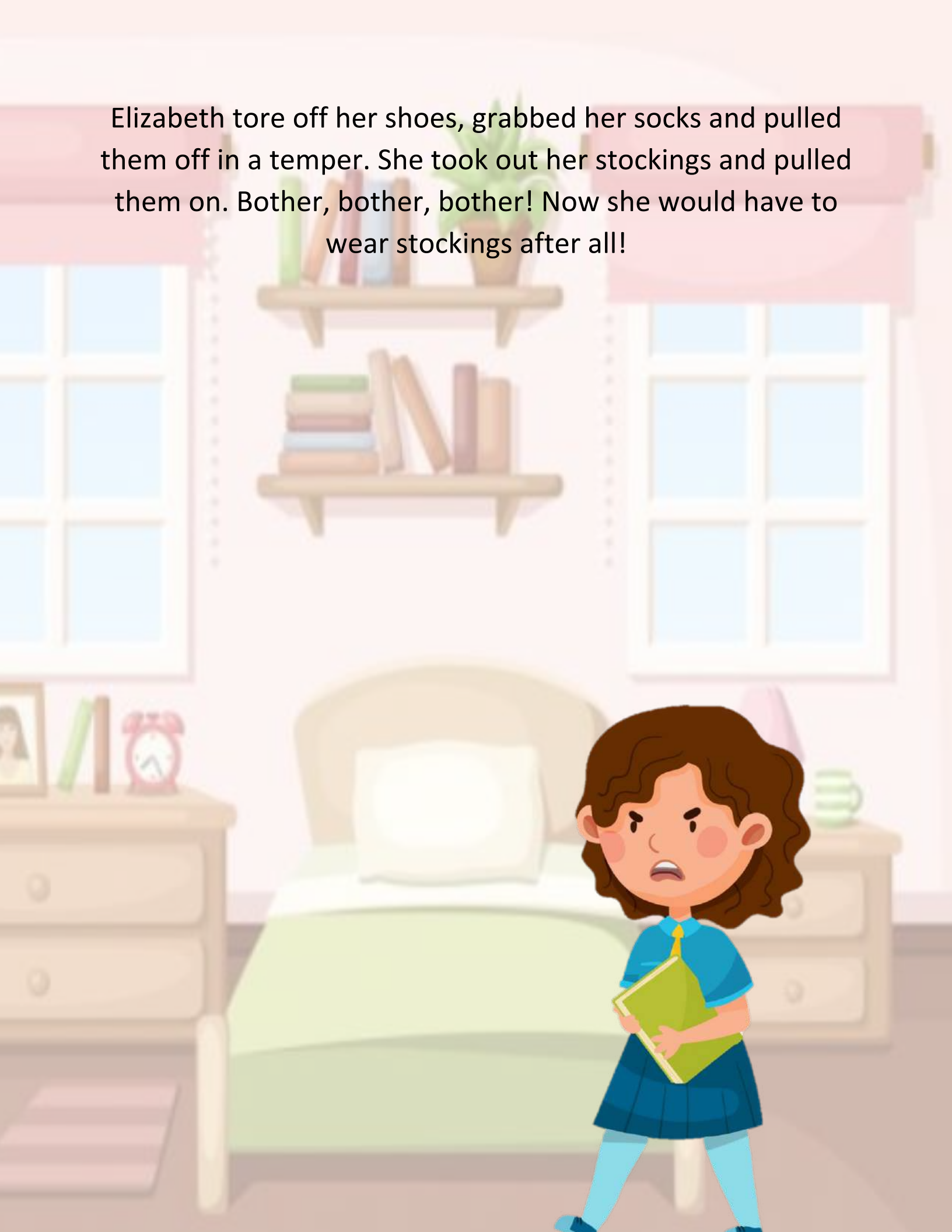
‘That’s a good idea,’ said Nora, with a laugh. ‘All right, Elizabeth – keep your socks on, and we’ll explain to everyone that we’re letting you because you’re really not much more than a baby!’



The girls went out of the room laughing. Elizabeth put on her bedspread and stood thinking. She didn't she wanted to keep her socks on now! If only the younger children wore them, because they were the babies of the school, she didn't want to. The babies would laugh at her and so would the others.



Elizabeth tore off her shoes, grabbed her socks and pulled them off in a temper. She took out her stockings and pulled them on. Bother, bother, bother! Now she would have to wear stockings after all!



She flew downstairs to the gym, where she had been told to go after making her bed and tidying her cubicle. All the others were there. Elizabeth had felt sure that they would all make remarks about her stockings being on after all – but nobody took any notice of her at all.



Hymns were sung and prayers said. Miss Best read part of a Bible chapter in her rather stern voice. Then she called the names of all the girls and boys to see that they were there.

Elizabeth had a good look around. The boys and girls were in separate rows. There were a good many masters and mistresses.



The matron of the school, who looked after the children when they were ill, stood on the platform with some of the other mistresses, a fat, jolly-looking person, dressed like a nurse, in apron and cap. The music master played the piano for the singing and again when the children marched out. He made up a fine marching tune, and Elizabeth liked it very much for she loved music.



She wondered if she was supposed to learn music at Whyteleaf. Miss Scott had taught her at home; but Miss Scott was not musical and Elizabeth had not enjoyed her lessons at all.

Out marched the children to their classrooms.



‘You are in Miss Ranger’s class,’ said Ruth, poking Elizabeth in the back. ‘Come with me and I’ll show you.’

Elizabeth followed Ruth. She came to a big sunny classroom and into it poured six boys and nine girls, all about Elizabeth’s age.



‘I bags this desk,’ squealed Ruth. ‘I like to be by the window!’

She put her things into the desk. The other children chose their desks too, but the new ones were told to wait till Miss Ranger came. Ruth sprang to hold the door open as soon as she heard Miss Ranger’s rather loud voice down the passage.



In came Miss Ranger. 'Good morning, children!'

'All the old children can sit, but the new ones must stand whilst I give them their places,' said Miss Ranger. She gave Elizabeth a desk at the back. Elizabeth was glad. It would be a good place to be naughty in! She meant to be bad in class that very morning. The sooner that everyone knew how naughty she meant to be, the sooner she would be sent home.



Books were given out. 'We will take a reading lesson first,' said Miss Ranger, who wanted to make sure that the new children could read properly. 'Then Dictation – then Arithmetic!'

Elizabeth could read beautifully, spell well, and she liked arithmetic. She couldn't help feeling that it was rather fun to do lesson with a lot of people instead of by herself! When her turn came she read very nicely indeed, though she had a great many difficult words in her page.

'Very good, Elizabeth,' said Miss Ranger. 'Next, please.'



Elizabeth got all her dictation right. She thought it was very easy.

Miss Ranger took a red pencil and marked 'VERY GOOD' on Elizabeth's page. Elizabeth looked at it proudly – and then she suddenly remembered that she had meant to be naughty!

'This won't do!' she said to herself. 'I can't get Very Goods like this – they'll never send me home. I'd better be naughty.'



She wondered what to do. She looked at Ruth by the window and wondered if she could flip her rubber at her and hit her. She took her ruler, fitted her rubber against the end of it, bent it back and let it go. Whizzzzzz! The rubber flew across the schoolroom and hit Ruth on the left ear!

'Ooooooh!' said Ruth, in surprise. She looked round and saw Elizabeth's grinning face. Others began to giggle when they saw Ruth's angry look.



Elizabeth grew bolder. She folded up a bit of paper, and flipped it at Helen, who sat in front. But Helen moved her head, and the pellet of paper flew past her and landed on Miss Ranger's desk. She looked up.

'Playtime is for things like this,' she said. 'Not lesson time. Who did that?'



Elizabeth didn't answer. Miss Ranger looked up and down the rows.

'WHO DID THAT?' she said again. The boy next to Elizabeth poked her head with his ruler.

'Own up!' he whispered. 'If you don't we'll all be kept in.'



So Elizabeth owned up. 'I did it,' she said.

'Well, Elizabeth, perhaps you would like to know that I don't allow behaviour like that in my class,' said Miss Ranger. 'Don't do it again.'

'I shall if I want to,' said Elizabeth. Everybody looked at her in amazement. Miss Ranger was surprised.



‘You must be very bored with these lessons to want to flip paper about,’ she said. ‘Go outside the room and stay there till you feel it would bore you less to come back than to stand outside. I don’t mind how long you stand there, but I do mind anybody being bored in my class. Now, children, get out your paintboxes, please.’



There was a clatter as the desks were opened and paintboxes were taken out. Elizabeth loved painting and was very good at it. She wanted to stay. She sat on in her desk and didn't move.



‘Elizabeth!’ Go outside, please,’ said Miss Ranger. There was no help for it then – up Elizabeth got and went outside the door.

‘You may come back when you think you can really behave yourself and not disturb my class,’ said Ranger.



It was very dull standing outside the door. Elizabeth wondered if she should wander away and have a swing. No – she might meet the Beauty and the Beast! Ha ha! She was being naughty all right!

But it was dull standing so long outside a door and hearing happy talking coming from inside, as the children painted blue and pink lupins that Miss Ranger had brought in.



Elizabeth couldn't bear it any longer. She opened the door and went in.

'I can behave myself now,' she said, in a low voice to Miss Ranger. Miss Ranger nodded, without a smile.



‘Take your place,’ she said. ‘There’s no time for you to do any painting – you can do a few more sums!’

‘Sums again!’ thought Elizabeth angrily. ‘Well – I’ll just be bad as soon as I can think of something really naughty again!’





THINK

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