

GOOD MORNING CHILDREN

Miss Platt: Good Morning. I am a teacher at a school in London in 1927, and my name is Miss Platt. I have a large class, and I think I am very patient. I don't get paid very much but there are one or two pupils who make my job worth while. With so many children I have to be very strict.

Stephen: My name is Stephen. I was brought into this world in 1917. I go to an 'orrible school which gives you the ruler, which I reckon's worse than the cane because you can't write for weeks even if you've had just 2 strokes on your hand. I live in a flat. It's got dry rot, wet rot, hot rot, cold rot, top rot, bottom rot, and all the other rots. My best friend is John, he's the same age as me and likes the same things as me. I hate all school subjects. You can't do nothing except work. I'm good at spelling and blowing my nose.

David: My name is David. I'm not very good at mental arithmetic or geography, but my teacher doesn't usually ask me too many questions because I always look like I know what the answers are, a great skill. However in handwriting lessons I display my talents with great confidence.

Gabriel: My name is Gabriel. I am very scared today because the teacher said she would get me caned if I stepped out of line once more. I have to sit near the front so the teacher can see what I am doing; I think that she is just waiting for me to be naughty so she can get me caned! I have a friend called Paul who I like. He was caned yesterday.

Sam: My name is Sam Spruell. I haven't got many friends but am quite popular in class. My mum's got a very big swelling on her tummy. I'm not sure what it is but I know that I'm going to have a new brother or sister. And soon we're moving back to Scotland where my granddad lives. I'm reasonably good at my work but I can't do 6 times table. I sit in the corner where Miss Platt can see me clearly. I think that's a great shame. My friend James hasn't got any shoes but I have; I've even got a proper hanky.

John: I like sitting where I am in the classroom. My best friend is a girl. She's the one with one hair band. All the boys think I am a sissy just because I'm friends with a girl. I don't like the boys in my class. All they ever do in the playground is beat each other up and pick on other people such as me. But I don't like all that rough and tumble stuff. I just want to be with my friend. The teacher's very strict and pokes you with a long pointed stick.

Katie: Hallo. My name's Katie. I'm bottom of the class but that is because my teacher doesn't like me. I hate the teacher. She always asks me to do things she knows I can't do and embarrasses me in front of the whole class. I want to move schools but I'm not allowed. My best friend's called Katherine. I call her Kate. She hates school too. She sits next to me and deliberately makes her work bad so she can say the teacher picks on her because she does bad work. At playtime we occasionally play this game where we hide in a small corner and think of really nasty things to do to the teacher. That's all we dare do. I wish teachers were nice.

Lucy: My name is Lucy. I'm quite good at work and I think the teacher likes me. I enjoy doing work and Miss Platt always gives me good marks, but I do try hard. She sometimes calls in the headmaster to cane people, but they deserve it and I take pleasure in watching them get what they deserve for stealing etc. I'd never steal or answer back the teacher. She's so nice.

Will: Hello, I'm Will. I like sitting where I am in front of the boys. It makes me feel boss. The teacher is really strict, and in mental arithmetic, the old crone blurts out the numbers. She stretches out her bony scrawny finger and with glowing eyes she points at the most dumb unsuspecting child, who wouldn't have a clue. That way she can give a sharp painful clip around the ear, and this is repeated to every child who is unfortunate enough to not know the answer.

Toby: I like sitting at the back because I cannot be heard, but the teacher keeps moving me to the front because I am small and she cannot hear me. I think I am smart because I came first in an alphabet test yesterday. My best friend is called David but I am not sure what he thinks about school. I do not think he likes it.

Kate: My name is Kate and I was moved into the front row this year. I know my 5, 6, 8 and 10 times tables and I can guess parts of the other ones. I am always helping people end their tables when the teacher tells me to. My best friend is my enemy in work and she is called Lucy. She is top of the class and I am second. For a little bit of chocolate she helps me with my homework. I don't want long hair, but my mum said it looked nicer. Today I'm not wearing my white pinafore because last night when I came in the dog jumped up and got me all muddy. I'm not very happy today because I've been punished by the headmaster for not wearing a proper uniform. I'm really clever, but if anybody teases me I call them nasty names and they cry, but I don't mind because the teacher likes me.

Sarah: My name is Sarah and I am sometimes quite shy. I don't have school lunches because my family can afford to give me my own. I am not very good at school work, but then I have not been in this school very long and I hardly know anyone.

Paul: My name is Paul and I am seven years old. I don't like school much but our teacher is nice and I've got one very good friend called Tom. I am very poor, well I think so anyway, I'm not very clever, but I get on fine with everyone else.

Victoria: My name is Victoria Isles. I come from a family that my mum says is rich. I don't have any friends because all the people in school are clever. When I am eleven I am going to run away and be a nurse. I don't like my family and the only one I like is my cat. If I'm nice to him, he talks to me. I sit near the front because my eyesight isn't very good, and I like to hear the teacher so I can do well. I'm very good at my reading and sums, because I am so good and try so hard. Some of the children in my class are very poor. Sometimes they don't even have shoes. However, my daddy is very clever, so we are not so poor. He even bought me a really smart uniform. Most of the children can't afford one.

Anne: My name is Anne and I live down the road from the school. I know the alphabet and I can count up to 53. In class I sit near to my friend Sylvia, and near to the boiler which is nice in winter, especially when I haven't got any shoes. I sit in the middle of the class so I can get away with more things than people at the front. Our teacher is really strict but she is quite nice, and if I don't come in it is because I have been helping my mum. My mum is going to give me a brother or a sister soon. I hope it's a girl because then I can tie her hair up in a ribbon.

MORNING SCENES

Mum: Now Ruth are you sure you've got everything? (RUTH NODS) Good, now hurry up and finish your breakfast. The girl next door said she would walk with you to school.

Ruth: But I don't want to go to school. Especially not with the girl next door.

Mum: Why ever not? She's a perfectly nice girl.

Ruth: But I don't like her and anyway I still don't want to go to school.

(KNOCK ON DOOR)

Mum: That must be her now. Are you ready?

Ruth: Yes (MUM OPENS DOOR)

Ngaio: Hello Mrs Greeves, I'm Ngaio the girl from next door. Is Ruth ready?

Mum: Yes. Does she need anything special for school today?

Ngaio: (THINKS) Has she got a handkerchief?

Mum: No, wait a minute and I'll get one. (GETS HANKY) Here you are. Now enjoy yourself and I'll see you tonight. Bye!

Ruth and Ngaio: Bye

Ngaio: Where did you used to live?

Ruth: In the country.

Ngaio: What was it like?

Ruth: It was very quiet and peaceful. We lived all on our own in a little house on a big hill. I had to climb down the hill and along a country track to my school. It was three miles away from home.

Ngaio: Weren't you tired when you got there?

Ruth: Sometimes I used to go to school in a pony and trap round the roads with my older brother. He's left school now.

Ngaio: What happened to the pony while you were in school?

Ruth: He stayed in a field near the school, and then after school we'd put the harness on him again and drive home.

Ngaio: This is all going to feel very different then. (RUTH NODS SADLY)

Ruth: The streets are so dirty and noisy, people shouting and boys ringing bicycle bells for no reason.

Ngaio: You'll get used to it though. (THEY GO)

Mother: Hurry up! You've got to get to school!

(KIDS RUSH IN WHILE MUM IS COOKING)

Kid 1: Do we have to go to school? (WHINE, MOAN,ETC)

Mother: Yes you do, so hurry up and go!

Kid 2: Hey look at that!

(POINTS BEHIND MUM)

Mother: What?

(MUM TURNS. KID 2 DIPS FINGER IN MIX AND RUNS)

Mother: Get to school both of you.

2)The Street

K1: I don't want to go to school today

K2: Neither do I, we've got handwriting today

K1: Yeah, and Geography

K1: Hey, why don't we go to the park instead!?

K2: What and not go to school? Mum'd kill us!

K1: Yeah, well she won't find out, will she!?

K2: Great! Let's go then!

Nosey Neighbour: 'Ere what are you doing, aren't you supposed to be in school? It's a bit late isn't it?

K1: Yeah, we are. We're just going.

(HE STARTS OFF)

NN: Should'nt you be going THAT way?

K2: Oh, er yes we must have got lost. Thanks.

(HE CHANGES DIRECTION)

NN: Hurry up then, or you'll be late.

K1: (WHISPERS) We can go to the park the other way.

(NN HEARS BUT SAYS NOTHING)

(CHILDREN FILE INTO SCHOOL. THE HAT MONITOR CALLS OUT)

Monitor: "Hats Off"

(BOYS TAKE THEM OFF AS THEY GO BY MONITOR)

PUPILS MARCH INTO ASSEMBLY WITH ROUSING MUSIC.

Sam: We all marched in and out like an army. Some children could afford piano lessons and they played marches.

David: Piano lessons were an extra, and we envied the piano players, even the bad ones.

Headmaster: Good morning children.

All: Good morning sir.

Headmaster: We shall all sing together.

Hymn. Onward Christian soldiers.

Headmaster: I have to say that yesterday was not a day for the school to be proud of. In fact there was a theft in the premises. Sam Spruell come forward. Now Sam's pencil case and pocket money were taken from his desk at lunchtime. Now Sam was extremely upset about the whole thing. You all know he is leaving the school today. We do not want him to leave with a bad memory of the school. Someone climbed in through a classroom window during the break, and rifled through his desk. If the culprit has the courage to come forward with the stolen goods, the punishment will not be as severe as if he denies it. Will the thief please step forward, or expect the worst.

SILENCE.

I shall have to name him then. Step forwards Marlow. Hold out your hand. And let this be a warning to any other greedy or selfish boy or girl in the school.
(BEATS HIM. MARLOW CRIES)

David: I felt physically sick watching this beating. Not that Marlow didn't deserve it. He did. He was supposed to be a friend of Sam's. But because I felt ashamed at having to watch the beating and see Marlow crying.

Headteacher: You will bring back Sam's money and pencil case after dinner, or you will have another beating in the afternoon. Sit down. And now to brighter things, we have a scholarship girl in our midst. Lucy has done very well indeed and will be given a place at the Central School. Her name will be written on our board of honour in gold letters. She has a scholarship certificate here which I shall ask her to receive, and let us all give her a clap.

(PRESENTS CERTIFICATE)

Toby: Little squirt. Teacher's pet.

John: Little swot. We'll get her at break.

Headteacher: Now will Joel come and see me after assembly as I have some boots presented by the Church Charity which might fit him. You children are lucky that there are people in the parish who care for the poor and needy in our midst.

Joel: Last time I got boots, my father had to take me to the relief office and they gave us a ticket. You could take the ticket to the shoe shop and buy boots with it. I wanted shoes, but you could only get boots on relief. My brother hammered iron studs on the heels and toes, and I could only wear them at weekends. The rest of the time I have to wear jelly soled plimsolls.

Headmaster: And now school, dismiss to your classrooms.

(THEY MARCH OUT TO MUSIC AND SIT DOWN, CHATTERING TILL JOS ENTERS AS TEACHER AND THEY STAND)

JOS: Good morning children. Hankies out.

Katie: We each had a hanky pinned to our blouse. If you didn't have one you were in terrible trouble.

Kate: Some boys and girls didn't have a handkerchief just a bit of dirty old sheet. The teacher could be very cruel to them.

Nathan: You had to wrap your gobstopper up in a corner of the hanky first. Keep it till play time. (HE DOES SO)

Teacher: Stand up. Hanky's out. One, two, three and blow.

(THEY DO. SHE TAPS DESK WITH RULER)

Teacher: Big deep breath children, IN and Out, In ..Out.

Kate H: This was to clear our heads for the day's work.

Teacher; All together now.

SONG: All things bright and beautiful

All creatures great and small

All things wise and wonderful

The Lord God made them all.

(CLASS SING)

(TEACHER CALLS THE REGISTER)

Teacher: As you know today is Sam's last day. We're all going to miss you, and I am sure we all hope that you will be very happy in your new school. Enjoy your last day, and forget about yesterday's nasty incident.

Sam: (TO HIMSELF) I'm really going to miss my best friends, Danny and James. We've had the odd argument but we've always been friends at the end of the day. I suppose that life won't be the same without Cyril the wierdo. He has always been a character to remember. Oh but I won't miss Knuckles the Bully. He almost broke my arm one day. No I won't miss him! Nor will I miss Mr. the Headmaster. Once I had five strokes of the cane from him but it felt more like ten. I suppose I am quite glad to leave but I don't know what it will be like in Scotland.

(MORE REGISTER)

Teacher: Ruth is our new girl. She comes from a very different sort of school out in the country. So it's going to be very strange. Enjoy your first day, Ruth, and I hope everyone will make you very welcome.

(ALL CLASS STARE AT RUTH, WHO LOOKS DOWN)

Ruth: (TO HERSELF) My last school was small and friendly. We had just one teacher and the whole school was not much bigger than the class I'm in now. I think I'm going to miss the country a lot.

Teacher: Has anyone seen William?

Paul: He's late Miss.

Teacher: Yes I can see that.

David: Here he is Miss.

(WILL COMES IN EXHAUSTED)

Teacher: Where have you been Will. Late again!

Will: Well you see Miss it started when I was in the Park walking with marbles in my hand you see because I had played marbles that morning you see Miss. A kid came up to me. Big kid Miss. You see Miss. He took my marbles and punched me in the face. I tried to go home but this dog, a Dobermann Pincher, was after me Miss. A big dog Miss. He chased me three times around the park but very sadly cut his paw in the brambles and gave up Miss. I ran home and got a plaster and Mum slapped me cos I was late. Then I went to school and here I am see you miss.

Teacher: This happens to be the same excuse that you have used for the last three weeks running. Bend over. This is for your own good.

3)The Park

(KIDS ARE CHATTING WHEN FRIEND COMES UP BEHIND)

Friend: Boo!

K1: Aargh!

F: Ha! You thought I was the School Board Inspector, ey didn't you?

K2: Don't do that. What are you doing here anyway?

F: I'm hopping the wag, aren't I?

K1: So are we, we don't want to go to school today.

F: Nor do I cos yesterday I came in late for Maths, and I had this BRILLIANT excuse, but he wouldn't believe me. And he said he'd give me six of the best today! So there's no way I'm going to school today.

K2: Hey! You've got a football.

F: Yeah do you want a game? (FREEZE)

(NN dial's the phone)

NN: Excuse me, is that the School Board Inspector?

SBI: Yes, can I help you?

NN: Yes, I've just seen two boys going off to the park, when I really think they should be at school. Would you mindchecking up on this?

SBI: Right, thank you, I'll be along in a moment.

NN: Thank you, Bye.

(K1&2&F are playing football, SBI enters)

F: Hey! The School board man. (He runs off)

K1 What's up?

(SBI catches them from behind)

K2: Help! Murder!

SBI: Alright, Alright, come on you two, what are you doing?

K1: Er Well It's a half day!

K2: Yes Er a half day

SBI: Oh yes don't give me that, I know when it's a half day. You can't fool me! Where do you live?

K2: (TOUGH) Why should we tell you. (TO AUDIENCE) You got a double punishment if your parents found out. A beating from them and from the headmaster.

K1: And your name in the punishment book.

SBI: Don't you be so cheeky with me! Where do you live?

K1: 13 Elm Street Sir.

SBI: Right we're off to see your mother.

(HE DRAGS THEM OFF)

K2: No, please don't! She'll kill us.

(SBI PUTS HAND ON EACH SHOULDER AND MARCHES THEM TO MUM.)

SBI: Knock Knock.

Mum: Hello.

SBI: These your boys m'am?

Mum: No,No.... WHAT! David, what have you done?

K1: Sorry Mum, we didn't mean it. Please don't kill us!

SBI: I found them playing truant in the park.

Mum: Oh officer, I'm so sorry, they're usually such good boys, I promise they won't do it again. Please don't report them!

SBI: Well, I'll overlook it this time but it's the last warning, next time I'll put them in the punishment book. But I'll leave them for you to deal with this time.

Mum: Thank you Officer, they'll never do it again.(TO THE BOYS) Come 'ere you two.

(SHE BEATS THEM VIGOROUSLY)

CLASSROOM TEACHER IS WRITING ON THE BOARD.

Sam: (HAND UP)Er Miss.

Teacher: Stand up.

Sam: Can I go to the toilet please Miss?

Teacher: No, Sam. You should have gone in playtime.

Sam: So I just sat there and busted.

David: Sometimes you couldn't wait so you made a run for it. (DAVID AND TOBY RUN ACROSS) It was a long way from the school building across the playground.

Toby: And if it was raining you got soaked through running there and back.

JOHN, NATHAN AND PAUL STAND)

Paul: We had a great time in the school loos.

John: Remember the time we tried out that Fred Astaire tap dancing routine.

Nathan: Watch this fellas (STARTS DANCING AND SINGING. OTHERS JOIN IN WITH ACCOMPANYING FLUSHINGS. SINGING IN THE RAIN)

Joel: (enters) Oh right.

ALL: Hi Joel. Like our rhythm? (FREEZE)

(JOEL EXITS AND WHISPERS TO TEACHER)

Joel: Know what I've just seen. John Nathan and Paul tap dancing in the toilets.

John: I think we had better go back now.

Nathan: Let's pretend Paul fell over and hurt himself.

Paul: Sorry we're late Miss.

Nathan: Paul fell over. Hurt himself.

Teacher: Now children, we have a little surprise this morning. We are going to see a special performance. The toilet tap dancing extraordinaire. Come up here boys. (PAUSE) We're waiting boys. Step forward.

Nathan: (TO JOEL) We'll get you for this.

John: Paul's hurt himself Miss.

Teacher: There didn't seem to be a problem just now. Come along.

(BOYS DANCE SHEEPISHLY AND EVERYONE TITTERS NERVOUSLY)

Teacher: Kate would you kindly go and get the slipper.

Kate: The big one Miss?

Teacher: And would you boys kindly take a bow?

(BOYS BEND OVER AND TEACHER WHACKS THEM)

Nathan: (TO JOEL) I'll kill you.

John, Paul Nathan: I'm stinging in the rain, stinging in the rain.

Kate H: There was a separate toilet block for the girls. The stench was unbearable. I used to have to hold my nose until I finished.

Ruth: There was a good wall for handstands.

Ngaio: We used to tuck our tunics into our navy blue Knickers. We were even able to do cartwheels in the loos.

Ruth: We would stay there for ages.

Lucy: We used to recite poems in the loos.

(RECITES) I wandered lonely as a cloud

Others: Cloud cloud

Lucy: That floats on high o'er vales and hills. They didn't mind what I recited. I think they rather liked the echo.

Lucy: When all at once... (ETC. + ECHO TO END AND APPLAUSE)

Kate: We used to swap cards and marbles in the loo.

Katie: Look at this marble! (PASSING IT OVER DOOR) It's a new one. I got it last week. Be careful with it.

Kate: Oh no. I've dropped it!

(MARBLE ROLLS ACROSS FLOOR)

Katie: Well go and get it then.

(KATE CRAWLS ACROSS FLOOR IN PURSUIT OF MARBLE)

Teacher: I've had about enough of this. I'm going to see what's going on. I'm going to sort out this toilet business once and for all.

(TEACHER GOES TO TOILET BLOCK AND CATCHES KATE CRAWLING ON FLOOR)

Katie: Hurry up.

Kate: Where's it gone?

Teacher: Lost something have we?

Kate: No, I've found it now.

Katie: Have you found it yet? Why don't you talk to me?

Kate: (WHISPERS) The teacher's here Katie.

Katie: Don't be silly.

Teacher: Is that you Katie?

Katie: Oops. My head's stuck Miss.

(KATIE'S HEAD IS WEDGED UNDERNEATH THE DOOR)

Teacher: Get up. Don't be ridiculous.

Katie: I can't Miss. I'm stuck

Teacher: Well I'll get it out for you. Now if we push it this way and pull it that way; give it a twist here and then push. There.

(SHE ROUGHLY REMOVES KATIE'S HEAD. KATIE EMERGES WITH HEAD AT ODD ANGLE)

Teacher: Are you alright? Well if we twist your head in this way, and rub it the other. Move it over here. There that's better, isn't it? Now what were you doing? I think that this is a matter for the headmaster.

Head: This is one of those days!

(Teacher takes Kate and Katie to the Head. They knock)

Yes, next!

Come in and tell me what you have been doing.

(Kate and Katie go in)

Well this is too much I am very surprised at you I don't want to hear of anything like this ever again. Such good girls. This has been getting out of hand. What would your parents say I am considering six of the best? Marbles you say? I shall have to write to your parents. The discipline in this school... we shall have to look into this.

Katie: Fifteen minutes later.

Head: Thank you. I hope this never happens again.

CLASSROOM AGAIN.

Miss Platt: Kate would you come to the front please?

Kate: Yes, Miss

Miss Platt: I'd like you to go the dairy for me, if that's not too much trouble.

Kate: No, Miss Platt.

Miss Platt: Good. Can you get me a pint of milk and an ounce of cheddar please.

Kate: Yes of course Miss.

Miss Platt: Lovely dear. Here's the money. Hurry along now.

(SHE DRAWS KATE ASIDE AND WHISPERS)

And don't let any of the other teachers see you.

Kate: No Miss. (WALKS AWAY) I don't know why, but Miss Platt seemed to like me. Well, more than she liked the other children. I really liked her too. She always trusted me with money and I loved running errands for her.

Miss Platt: Oh I do like that child. She's such a pleasant girl and very trustworthy and obedient unlike the other children in the class.

Kate: I used to like running errands for Miss Platt. The street was always deserted as all the other children were in school.

Miss Platt: Hello dear.

Kate: Here's your milk and cheese.

Miss Platt: Thank you Kate.

MATHS LESSON

Teacher: Now it is time for our mental arithmetic lesson. Sit up straight and fold your arms. I want silence as we are now going to do some addition with these numbers. 2,4,7,9,3,8.
John. (POINTS AT HIM WITH A GLARE)

John: (STANDS) Err

Teacher: Don't umm and err about it. We've done a lot of work on this. Now what's the answer? (JOHN IS SILENT) Sit down and listen to other people's answers. I'll expect you to be able to do it by the end of the lesson. (TURNS TO KATIE) Now Katie, tell everyone the correct answer.

Katie: Yes Miss. It's 33 Miss.

Teacher: Well done Katie. (TURNS TO JOHN) Now you follow her good example. 2,2,6,9,4.
Marlow.

Marlow: Yes Miss?

Teacher: The answer

Marlow: (SMILING) 20 Miss.

Teacher: No Marlow. Sit down and have another think. (TURNS TO JOHN) Now do you know the answer John?

John: (STANDING) Yes Miss.

Teacher: Well?

John: 23 Miss.

Teacher: (LOOKS SUSPICIOUSLY AT PERSON NEXT TO HIM) I saw you tell him the answer. Stand in the corner.

Gabriel: Bbbbuttt.

Teacher: Don't answer back. Do what you're told to and speak when you're spoken to. Now then everyone. Seven times table.

(THE CLASS RECITE TABLES IN SING SONG STYLE)

Now we're going to do some writing. Ink monitor please.

Ink Monitor: Yes Miss. (PLACES INKWELL INTO EVERYONE'S DESK).

Kate: (WHISPERING AT HER) Teacher's pet. (TICKLES HER AND SOME SPILLS) Miss. She's spilt ink all over me. My mum'll killme. It's not fair.

Ink Monitor: It wasn't my fault Miss.

Teacher: Put those down. I see I shall have to choose a new Ink Monitor.

Kate: (giggling) That'll teach her. Still, my mum will kill me.

Teacher: Please copy out this poem and we shall all recite it together. (THEY DO SO, BUT ONE BOY FLICKS INK PELLET ACROSS ROOM AND IS SEEN) Stand up Stephen. Now go to Mr. Hunt's room and tell him why you've been sent there. (HE DOES)

Stephen: You had to stand up in front of the next door class and tell the teacher why you were there. He gave me the cane in front of everyone. My sister was in the class and saw it. She told my mum and she gave me another beating.

Teacher: All together now. (THEY RECITE POEM)

ALL: (RECITE)

Quinquireme of Nineveh from Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores

Dirty British coaster with a salt caked smoke stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road rail, pig lead,
Firewood, iron ware, and cheap tin trays.

THE SCHOOL INSPECTOR

Teacher: Ivory, apes and peacocks. Where is the cargo from then Joel?

Toby: Liverpool Miss.

Teacher: No Joel. Try a little further East. (LONG PAUSE FROM JOEL)

Joel: Sheffield?

(LAUGHTER FROM CLASS, QUICKLY SMOTHERED AS INSPECTOR ENTERS AND CHILDREN RISE)

Inspector: Good morning children. You don't mind me interrupting this lesson for one moment do you Miss Platt?

Teacher: ugh...no...carry on...

Inspector: (BOLDLY STRIDES INFRONT OF THE CLASS) Be seated class. Now let us see who can pick out the rhyming words in verse one.

k1: It's Palestine and wine sir.

Inspector: Thank you. Now let us look at this sequence. "Sandalwood, cedarwood and sweet white wine." What kind of language is the poet using here?

NO ONE PUTS THEIR HAND UP. TEACHER LOOKS NERVOUS

Inspector: Come along now class. Is this something you have not covered yet Miss Platt?P□

k2: (NERVOUSLY PUTS UP HAND) er... er... its an....er....alliteration sir!

Inspector: Yes, now spell it.

k2: er..er...A L...er...L I T E R A T I O N. Sir.

Inspector: Well done. Very good Miss Platt. You have obviously tutored your pupils to a satisfactory level. Good bye.

Teacher Phew! (RUSHES TO K2 AND GIVES K2 A BIG HUG OF GRATITUDE)

Teacher: Now these children will have their cod liver oil and malt to build up their strength. Paul, Toby, Joel, Lucy.

THEY RELUCTANTLY LINE UP FOR A SPOON.

Teacher: Class dismiss.

THEY FILE OUT IN ORDERLY WAY AND THEN ERUPT INTO:

PLAYGROUND: A COLLAGE OF GAMES WITH FREEZES.

Ngaio: Do you want to play hopscotch?

Ruth: Alright. (STARTS PLAYING)

Bully #1: So you're the new girl are you?

Ngaio: Leave her alone.

Bully #2: No, why should we?

Ruth: What have I done to you?

Bully #1: Isn't she sweet.

Bully #2: Poor little country girl. Can't get used to the big city.

Ngaio: Who asked you to come and interfere with our game anyway?

Bully #2: (TO BULLY #1) She's probably never even been to school. Too busy playing with her animal friends.

(RUTH STARTS CRYING. BULLIES LAUGH)

Ngaio: Never mind, take no notice of them. Let's go inside.

(FOOTBALL GAME, SKIPPING RHYME, HOPSCOTCH, FIGHT, ALL TOGETHER)

Nathan: I bashed his head and socked his leg.

David: Wow! Wow!, etc.

Gabriel: Hallo you two. Guess what I saw last night?

David and Nathan: What?

Gabriel: It was that um boy who got expelled.

David and Nathan: Knuckles.

Gabriel: Yes that's the one. I saw him with these really big boys.

David: Wow!

Gabriel: They looked really menacing. They were talking.

Nathan: What about?

Gabriel: They were talking about Mr. Bramberry's sweetshop.

David: Gorr... What happened next?

John: Hello you lot. You know Mr. Bramberry's sweetshop. It's been burgled.

All: Knuckles.

John: Even the gobstoppers were taken!

Gabriel: The cheek. He stole my favourite sweets!

David: That knuckles is unbelievable.

Nathan: We can't let this happen in our neighbourhood. Let's sort this out. Looks like a job for Cooper's criminal catchers.

ALL: One for all and none for you.

Nathan: Anyway John, What's with the hard hat?

John: I'm feeling hard today.

Paul (ENTERS) Hello. Someone's looking for you. (POINTS TO GABRIEL)

Gabriel: (IN TERROR) Knuckles. He's going to kill me. I knew it.

Paul: His eyes were glowing.

Gabriel: NO!

Paul: His knuckles were white!

Gabriel: Ugh!

Paul: And his mouth was foaming!

Gabriel: What am I going to do?

David: Oh no.

Nathan: (CALMLY) Relax. It's gonna be just fine.

John: Calm down.

Nathan: We'll camouflage you.

Gabriel: Ugh!

David: Let's have a meeting.

Nathan: Yes. This calls for a meeting.

All: (WHISPER)

Toby: (TAPS GABRIEL ON BACK) I've been looking for you everywhere. (PAUSE) Is this your ball?

Gabriel: (SHAKING, TURNS ROUND) Phew!

KNUCKLES: (OFF) NO, THAT'S MY BALL!!!!!!

ALL: KNUCKLES!!!!!(THEY ALL RUN)

Sarah: (ADMIRING LUCY'S CERTIFICATE) You're really clever Lucy. Getting that scholarship.

Lucy: Yeh. I've got to get a uniform.

Sarah: We couldn't afford a uniform when my sister got a scholarship so she couldn't go.

Lucy: Well my mum has been saving up and she said by the time I go to the school she'll have enough saved up for the uniform.

Sarah: Oh that's good.

(ENTER BOYS FIGHTING)

Will: Oh look it's that swot girl.

Marlow: Oh yeah, its that cissy girl that got the scholarship.

Toby: Let's see that.

Marlow: Show us.

(THEY GRAB CERTIFICATE, THROW IT AROUND, AND LET IT FALL IN PUDDLE)

Will: Oh no! (LUCY CRIES)

Sara: We'll tell the headmaster.

Marlow: Listen we will get it much neater.

Toby: Don't worry. (THEY RUN OFF WITH IT)

Will: We'll return it in half an hour. It'll be as good as new.

Toby, Will, Marlow: (ALL TOGETHER) We promise.

Marlow: Look we've got to get it dry.

Toby: But how?

Will: By the fire! Climb into the classroom.

(THEY CLIMB IN, HOLD PAPER TO FIRE. GIRLS LOOK THROUGH WINDOW)

Will: There you are. It's nearly dry.

Marlow: Let me have a go. (DROPS IT IN FIRE) Oh dear.
(THE PAPER CATCHES FIRE. THEY WAVE IT ABOUT AND THEN STAMP ON IT TO PUT IT OUT. MARLOW AND TOBY SCARPER)

Will: (APOLOGETICALLY TO LUCY) Here it is. Sorry.

(LUCY CRIES, AND SARA COMFORTS HER. SCHOOL BELL. THEY FILE IN.)

Teacher: Now we're going to have a geography lesson. We all know what the pink areas on the map mean, don't we Paul?

Paul: Yes Miss, the British Empire.

Teacher: Good. And what do we know about the British Empire?

All: The sun never sets on the British Empire.

Teacher: Very good. Nathan, what country is this?

Nathan: India Miss.

Teacher: Yes, now what do we get from India Katie?

Katie: Tea and tigers.

Teacher: Correct. William, where is this? (POINTING AT MAP)

William: Australia Miss.

Teacher: No, that's silly William. Where is it John?

John: Canada Miss.

Teacher: That's right. Who can tell me what we get from Canada. David, sit up straight and cross your arms. Gabriel what comes from Canada?

Gabriel: Lions and (SEES HER FACE) No, timber and beavers Miss.

Teacher: Good. Paul, pay attention and sit up straight. Cross your arms and face the front. Now who can show me where Africa is?

David: We were getting ready for Empire Day. We prepared a show for our Mums and Dads about all the different regions of the Empire, and put it on on 24th May.

Lucy: Our Mums found ribbon for us in red, white and blue and we all had clean pinafores.

EMPIRE DAY PRESENTATION AND SONG.

What is the meaning of Empire Day? Responsibility.
Self sacrifice and duty serve, blended with sympathy,
True to the flag we all adore
Proud of its mighty sway
England expects that every man
Will duty's call obey
On glorious Empire Day.

TABLEAU FROM COUNTRIES IN EMPIRE ENDING WITH BRITANNIA.

LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY

EMPIRE OF THE FREE

RULE BRITANNIA, BRITANNIA RULE THE WAVES
BRITONS NEVER NEVER NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES.

(BELL RINGS FOR END OF SCHOOL)

Kate: Then we had the rest of the day off, after Empire Day.

Katie: Mum used to say:

Mum: How did you get on? How did you do? Take that frock off.

Katie: We'd take our frocks off, and our shoes and socks, and put on old ones to play in the street.

GAMES SEQUENCE. SWAPPSIES

Ruth's Mum: Hello dear. How did you get on? Were you all right.

Ruth: Yes thanks Mum..

Mum: Make any new friends?

Ruth: Yes....Mum You know Ngaio, well she isn't that bad after all.

Mum: I'm gald about that.

Ruth: Well..er.. could I go out and play with her now?

Mum: If you want to, but don't be late for tea.

Ruth: Thanks! Bye.

Mum: Bye. Have a good time.

Ruth: Hey Ngaio wait for me.

SAMS FRIENDSHIP SCENE

Dan: Hi Sam! (SAM DOESN'T ANSWER)

David Sam?

Sam: (GLUM) Oh hallo.

Dan: We'll be sad to see you go.

David: Yeah we'll really miss you.

Sam: (SNIFFS) Thanks.

Dan: Here we've got you a little present.

Sam: What!

David: There have it. It's the three cigarette cards you needed to complete your set.

Sam: Oh thanks. That's brilliant. (PAUSE) Better say goodbye now.

Dan: Alright, bye Sam. We'll write to you in Scotland.

David: Yeah, bye Sam. (SAM WALKS OFF)

Dan: We'll miss him.

David: Yeah. (PAUSE) Hey do you wanna play leapfrog?

IN THE DEN. PAUL, JOHN AND GABRIEL PLAYING PONTOON

Paul: Aw! I'm bust

Gabriel: Bad Luck. I've got a queen and an ace.

John: You always win.

Gabriel: It's just the luck of the draw I'm afraid.

NATHAN ENTERS DEN

Nathan: (CHEERILY) Hello you lot.

Others: (UNINTERESTED) Oh hello.

John: Where were we.

Gabriel: Hum. I'm banker.

Paul: You were the last time!

NATHAN JINGLES MONEY

John: (TO NATHAN) Hey where did you get that?

Nathan: Contacts

All: We're your contacts! You must have stolen it.

Paul: Thief!

Gabriel: Theives aren't allowed in our Den.

John: Yes! The door's over there.

Nathan: Well I'll go to the corner instead. GOES OFF IN A HUFF AND GETS OUT A COMIC

John: I'm banker this time.

Gariel: (LOOKS AT NATHAN) Hey, that's the new Victor.

Paul: Wow! I'll swop it for a liquorice stick and a blue gobstopper.

John: I'll give you a liquorice stick and 2 gobstoppers, both blue.

Gabriel: I'll give you a liquorice stick and 3 gobstoppers any colour you like!

NATHAN SHOVES ALL THE GOBSTOPPERS IN HIS MOUTH

Paul: You're only supposed to take one offer.

John: He really is a thief.

Sweetshop scene

MUM MAKES LIST OF SHOPPING.

Mum: Starch, Cod liver oil, er butter, now what else do we need....that's it I think.

K 1: Mum....

Mum: What's the matter dear?

K 2: Can't we have our pocket money?

Mum: Oh alright here you are.

K 1&2: Thanks Mum

(THEY GET UP TO RUSH OFF)

Mum: But don't go to aunty's until I get back.

K 1&2: Oh Mum (THEY SIT DOWN ANGRILY. MUM GOES OUT)

Mum (TO AUNTY): Can I have some butter and cod liver oil.

Auntie: Is that it?

Mum: Oh and some starch if you have any.

Auntie: Yes, we've just got in a new stock of Robinson's Starch, it's supposed to be excellent.
(GETS STUFF FROM SHELVES)

Auntie: There 5 shillings please

Mum: Do you mind if I put it on the slate?

Auntie: Sorry to have to mention it but I think you owe me for the last deliveries.

Mum: Well come round for tea tonight and we'll talk about it then.

Auntie: Is 6 o'clock all right?

Mum: Fine. Bye then.

Auntie: Yes. Goodbye.

(BACK AT THE HOUSE)

K1: I'm going to buy two gobstoppers and three licquorice boot laces with my penny.

K2: I'm getting some chocolate drops and a ha'penny's worth of treacle toffee.

Mum: I'm back.

K1: Come on let's go now. (THE KIDS RUSH OUT AND ACCIDENTALLY
KNOCK OVER MUM AND SHOPPING)

K2: Oh sorry Mum, bye!

Mum: Oh I give up.

(THEY GO INTO SWEETSHOP)

K1: Hello Auntie

Auntie: Hello Sam

K1: Can I have two gobstobbers and three licquorice boot laces please.

K2: And I'd like eight chocolate drops and a ha'penny's worth of treacle toffee.

Auntie: Certainly boys.

(SHE REACHES TO TOP SHELF FOR SWEETS)

Auntie: Now let me see, that'll be one penny each please. (THEY PAY)

K 1&2: There you are

Auntie: Thank you lads. I'm coming for tea later anyway to see your mum.

K1: Will you bring us a sugar mouse each please?

Auntie: May do!

K2: Come on let's go!

K1: Yeah goodbye Auntie

Auntie: Goodbye for now.

(BACK AT HOME)

Mum: Now don't eat your sweets all at once now will you, and Auntie's coming round for tea soon so she's sure to bring you something! (A KNOCK AT DOOR)

Mum: That must be her now.

(OPENS DOOR)

Auntie: Hello dear.

Mum: Hello do come in. (SHE ENTERS)

Mum: Won't you sit down. I'll make a pot of tea.

Auntie: That would be nice.

Mum: Fine, fine (SHE LEAVES ROOM)

Auntie: (to K2) Now I've brought you both a sugar mouse each

(GIVES ONE EACH)

K1&2: Thank you very much

Mum: (RETURNING) Here it is

Auntie: Ooh lovely.

K1: Look mum, she's given us a sugar mouse

K2: One each!

Mum: That's very kind of you. Now I think you children ought to go out and play now.
(THEY LEAVE)

Auntie: Now to discuss the aim of my visit.

Mum: Of course, how much is it?

Auntie: I'm afraid your bill is now a guinea.

Mum: Oh is it really that much? I don't know if I've got that much.

Auntie: Well you've let it mount up you see, haven't you?

Mum: I'll see if there's any in the tin. (SHE LOOKS)

Auntie: Oh, and I nearly forgot. One penny for the two sugar mice. (MUM IS HORRIFIED)