

# Not now, Brody

Mrs Wilson was really very nice. Brody's mum was determined that this was so, having met her once at the supermarket, and there was no persuading her otherwise. It annoyed Brody because all the kids knew that the only reason Mrs Wilson had started working as a midday supervisor at the school was that she loved to lord it over children.

Mrs Wilson was a demon in the lunch hall, brandishing her cleaning spray like an automatic weapon, wiping you off your table the moment the last spoonful of dessert reached your mouth. Brody had often wondered if someone would keel over one day from disinfectant

poisoning. It was as though Mrs Wilson was on a mission to erase every last trace of forensic evidence of these verminous children from the school hall.



Outside, she patrolled the playground with the grimness of an army major whose latest bunch of recruits was a terrible disappointment. Brody knew his class wasn't particularly bad. Nor were any of the other classes actually, though Mrs Wilson maintained the whole lot of them were disobedient and rude. If you fell over and grazed your knee, she would march you inside, and while you were pinned to the chair she'd give you a lecture about how the children in previous years had been so much less rough, so much politer. If you believed what she said then the year-group who'd just left had been actual angels. But Brody had a brother in that year, so he knew this wasn't true. When he asked his brother, his brother said Mrs Wilson had always told children the same thing. It was pathetic, Brody thought. Did she really think kids didn't talk to each other?

Brody had got stuck in the chair once – only once, mind you – and had been on the receiving end of this tirade while Mrs Wilson swabbed his leg with enough antiseptic to sanitise an entire hospital. He was sure she used as much as possible because she knew it hurt. And there was no gentle dabbing either. It was rub, rub, rub! None of the other midday supervisors were like that. Since then, Brody had always got up as quickly as he could, dusted himself off and run on, even when his eyes watered with the pain. You didn't want to get caught.

The trouble was, it was more or less impossible to

avoid Mrs Wilson. She seemed to be everywhere, storming across the hall or playground like she'd just been waiting for an excuse. One thing Brody particularly hated about her was the way she would make up rules on the spot, always things you weren't allowed to do or games you weren't allowed to play. It was no use appealing to the other supervisors either, even though some of them were teaching assistants. They just did what adults always do and stuck together.

"You need to listen to what Mrs Wilson tells you," they would say. "If she doesn't want you do something, there's bound to be a good reason."

Nobody ever specified what this reason might be, and Brody was sure he'd once seen Miss Taylor raise an eyebrow at Mrs Halliard when she said it. He hoped one of the teachers might say something, even perhaps Mr. Pewsey, if everyone else was too chicken. But the headteacher just wrung his hands and approached Mrs Wilson with a face like a dog that expects to be kicked. No, it was a part of Brody's life at St. Andrew's Primary that Mrs Wilson was a law unto herself.

The day that changed was a Wednesday in May. The willows were in full leaf, which was more significant than it might seem, and the air was still and hot. The Reception children finished their lunch first, and came out in their sun hats to play on the main part of the playground,

followed soon after by the Year Ones. The younger children didn't generally play on the field at lunch play, so they were unaware of the presence of a very unusual visitor inside the school grounds.

... Read on in *Unlucky for Some*.