

The summer was over and it was time to go back to school.

“There's so much to organise,” groaned Mum. “I can't believe the holidays are over!”

“I don't know why you're complaining,” said Joe, who was ten. “You don't even go to school!”

“But we have to get you two out of bed each morning,” said Dad. “And out the door, with your homework and clean uniform and a good breakfast inside you, before we go to work.”

Joe was looking forward to school. He wanted to see his friends again. The only thing was this year his little sister, Bella, who was four, was going to school too. Joe wasn't sure about that.

“I hope Bella won't be a nuisance,” he said to Mum.

“Oh, she'll soon make friends,” said Mum. “You'll hardly notice she's there.”

Joe wasn't sure about that!

Bella was very excited. She kept showing everyone her new pencil case and bag and water bottle and Joe felt he'd seen them a hundred times!

Finally, the morning came. The alarm went off and Joe and Bella tumbled out of bed and into their new uniform. Mum shovelled cereal into bowls, and everyone gulped it down.

Then Dad yelled, “I'm late!” and ran to get the bus, and Mum looked at her watch.

“Come on, kids! Let's be quick! I've got work too!”

When they arrived at the playground there were children and parents everywhere. Joe waved at one of his friends.

“Hey, Finn! How are you?”

Bella had been looking forward to school. But now, with big kids running everywhere, and all the noise, she wasn't sure. She took tight hold of Mum's skirt.

“Mum!” she whispered.

Mum was talking to another parent and didn't notice. But Joe did.

“What's up, Bella?”

Bella's bottom lip was wobbling. “I don't want to go to school after all. I want to go home!”

Joe thought quickly. “If you go home, Bella, then nobody will see your new pencil case.”

“That's true,” Bella admitted.

“Also, Mum has given you a box of raisins for your snack.”

Bella loved raisins.

“All right,” she said. “I'll stay!”

Mum took Bella to her new classroom. Joe was so busy that he did not have time to think about Bella until the headteacher, Mrs Smailes, put her head round the classroom door.

“Could you come with me a moment, Joe,” she said.

Joe was a bit worried – what could she want?

“We're having a problem with Bella,” Mrs Smailes explained. “She doesn't like her new teacher and now she says she won't stay!”

In her classroom, Bella was hiding under a table in the dressing up area. She had her head buried under the costumes, and she was howling!

Joe crawled under the table.

“What's the matter, Bella?” he asked.

“I don't like her!” said Bella, pointing at her teacher. “She's a wolf!”

“What?” said Joe.

“It's just my name,” said the teacher impatiently. “I'm Mrs Wolfe.”

“She's not really a wolf,” said Joe to Bella. “She hasn't got a tail.”

“How do you know?”

Joe groaned. He'd known Bella would cause problems at school!

“And she's got big teeth,” said Bella.

Then Joe had an idea. “Even if she is a wolf,” he said, “then maybe she's a *good* wolf. Lots of wolves are. It's only in fairytales that they are wicked.”

Bella wiped her eyes and looked at Mrs Wolfe.

“She does have nice eyes.”

“Thank you,” said Mrs Wolfe, smiling. “Why don't you come out and listen to a story?”

Bella loved stories. She crawled out and gave her hand to Mrs Wolfe.

“I don't think she is a wolf after all,” she whispered to Joe. “Otherwise she'd have claws!”

Joe went back to his classroom grinning. It was going to be interesting, having his little sister in school!