

Nana's teapot

by Kyle Mewburn

Chapter One

Every Sunday, Wyn visited her Nana. It was Wyn's favourite part of the whole week because they always had a proper afternoon tea, like proper Ladies used to do when Nana was growing up.

Wyn loved pretending to be a Lady! She put on her very best dress and her shiniest shoes. Combed her long hair back tightly and tied it in place with a satin ribbon. All the way to Nana's house she was extra careful not to stand in any mud puddles, or to stop and play with any stray cats in case she got dirty or mussed her hair.

Nana opened the door after just one knock.

"Wyn dear! How lovely to see you!" Nana said, as if she was surprised. "Hurry on through now. The kettle's just about to boil."

Wyn had to smile. Even though Nana had her best dress on too, she always looked like she'd just tumbled out of a haystack. There were leaves and twigs (and sometimes even spiders) hanging in her hair. Her glasses were sitting crookedly on her nose. And she always had a grease-stripe or a soot-stain on her cheek.

But Wyn's smile quickly turned into a gasp of wonder when she saw the kitchen table laid out like Nana was expecting The Queen to turn up

unexpectedly. It was the only time Nana used the fine lace tablecloth she'd crocheted when she was at school.

"In my day the only thing schools thought they needed to teach girls was how to be a Lady," Nana always said with a sigh.

Wyn wished *her* school was more like that, instead of forcing her to do all that icky stuff like making papier-mâché or compost. That wasn't very Lady-like!

There were two places set with proper tea cups and saucers, and a bigger plate for food. All the crockery was made of delicate porcelain, with pictures of farmers cutting straw on them, all painted in red. There was a silver teaspoon on each saucer and a silver knife on each plate. A crystal milk jug and sugar bowl with tiny silver tongs to grab the sugar cubes. And a saucer covered with thin slices of lemon.

But best of all was the tall silver tower loaded with the most delicious-looking food. The bottom tray was piled with triangle sandwiches of mashed egg or grated cheese or tuna paste, all with their crusts cut off. On the next tray were sultana scones and fresh pikelets with strawberry jam and whipped cream. Then brandy snaps and chocolate éclairs.

And right on the very top were two special cupcakes, one for Wyn, and one for Nana.

Everything made fresh that morning by Nana.

It looked so mouth-watering, Wyn could hardly control herself! But she folded her hands on her lap and managed not to do more than lick her lips in anticipation.

Just like a real Lady would do.

Chapter Two

"So how's school going, Wyn dear?" Nana asked as she placed a tiny footstool before the tall crockery cupboard.

"Alright, I guess," Wyn said as her tummy grumbled.

"I never used to like school much either," Nana chuckled, heaving herself onto the stool. "I much preferred being outside in the sunshine playing with my friends. I never understood why *I* needed to learn how to sew and cook when I was going to be a pilot and fly round the world like Jean Batten. I bet she never sat at home sewing!"

Nana reached up and carefully removed a woolly bundle from the very top shelf. Even though Wyn had seen the teapot a hundred times, she couldn't help gasping when Nana took off the tea-cosy. The teapot was a million colours. It was like looking at a rainbow through a kaleidoscope.

It was by far the most precious thing Wyn had ever seen!

"I would have loved to do woodwork with the boys," Nana said as she poured boiling water into the teapot to warm it. "But of course girls weren't allowed to do woodwork in those days."

When the teapot was warm, she poured out the water then carefully spooned in tea from her silver tea caddy.

"One for each person and one for the pot," Nana said in a voice which made Wyn think she didn't even realise she was saying it.

By now the kettle was rattling furiously on the coal-range. Nana hurried over to fill the teapot with boiling water, then covered it with the tea-cosy to keep the tea warm.

"Lucky your Grandad didn't expect me to be a Lady!" Nana laughed as she flipped the egg-timer which told her when the tea was ready. Three

minutes and not a second longer! "He always said I should learn how to do as many things as I could so I wouldn't have to rely on anyone else. He was a real handyman, your Grandad was. He taught me how to weld and fix a car engine. That was almost unheard of in those days. My, we used to have such fun together."

Nana didn't say anything else for a few seconds.

Wyn knew it was because she missed Grandad a lot.

Then the egg-timer ran out of sand and Nana sighed as she poured the tea through a tea-strainer that looked like a tiny silver tennis racket.

They chatted for a long time about school and the olden days. And before they knew it, the teapot was empty and all the food was gone. All except the cake crumbs stuck to Nana's lipstick and the blob of whipped cream clinging to the tip of her nose.

Wyn helped Nana tidy up and put everything back where it belonged.

Nana did the washing up, Wyn did the drying.

Last but not least, Nana carefully cleaned her teapot, covered it with the tea-cosy, then returned it to the very top shelf. Wyn so wanted to touch the teapot, but she didn't trust herself. It looked so fragile and her Mum always said she was a clumsy clod.

As soon as everything was back in its proper place, the kitchen no longer looked special enough for The Queen. It looked just like any other kitchen.

Which meant it was time to kiss Nana goodbye and go home.

Chapter Three

But one Sunday, the phone rang just as Nana put the teapot back on its shelf.

"Oh dear," Nana cried as she climbed down from the stool. "Who on earth could be calling me on a Sunday?"

She hurried down the hall and a few seconds later Wyn heard her laughing.

Wyn sat twiddling her thumbs a bit. Then she straightened her hair and retied her ribbon. And finally she pretended she was entertaining Prince Charming. But it wasn't much fun with everything cleared away. With every passing second she was becoming increasingly bored. Until she was so bored she felt like she was going to explode!

And that's when Nana's teapot started calling her.

She knew it wasn't *really* calling her. But the longer she sat there, the louder its voice seemed to get.

"Touch me!" it whispered. "Pick me up! What harm can it do?"

Before Wyn knew what she was doing, she was standing on the stool.

But no matter how high she stretched, she couldn't reach the teapot.

She knew she should sit down again before it was too late. But instead of sitting down, she hoisted one leg up onto the bottom shelf. The cupboard groaned and creaked so loudly as she heaved herself up she thought she was going to be too heavy and go crashing right through. But she didn't.

There were lots of knick-knacks and egg-cups on the shelf, so she had to be very careful where she put her feet. But finally she felt steady enough to stand upright.

One hand clung tightly to the edge of the cupboard to stop her tipping over, while the other inched its way towards the top shelf.

She couldn't see the teapot. The top shelf was too high. So she had to blindly grope along until her finger touched something woolly. She tried to grab it, but it was just out of reach.

She pushed herself up onto tippy-toes. (Finally all those ballet classes were coming in handy!) Stretched her arm up as high as it could go ...

"Gotcha!" she whispered as her fingers wrapped round the handle.

She promised herself she'd hold it for just a few seconds, then put it right back. Nobody would ever know.

Her hand was shaking as she gave the tea-cosy a gentle tug.

But nothing happened! (In all the excitement she didn't notice she'd stuck her pinkie through a stitch, and that's what was stopping the tea-cosy from coming off.)

She tugged a bit harder. Then harder still. With each tug she got more and more annoyed. Finally she gave such a fierce tug ...

... the teapot flew right out of her hand!

Her eyes grew wide as two saucers. Then everything seemed to happen in slow-motion. The teapot flipped once ...

Twice ...

Then started to fall.

It fell so slowly, almost floating, for a few eyeblinks she imagined it was going to land softly on the floor like a feather ...

Then ... SMASH! It hit the tiles and shattered into a million pieces.

Chapter Four

All that was left of Nana's precious teapot was a spout, a handle and a million tiny fragments of coloured porcelain. It looked like someone had smashed a rainbow with a very big hammer.

Wyn's heart sank to the soles of her feet.

"What am I going to do now?" she wondered.

She felt like running away. Far away. Like to the other side of the world. It would be better for everyone if a clumsy-clod like her went to live in the jungle with the orangutans. At least then she couldn't break any more precious things. But as she jumped down from the stool, a completely different thought popped into her head.

If she could put Nana's teapot together again somehow, maybe she wouldn't have to go live in the jungle after all. It sounded liked a pretty far-fetched plan. But she was desperate!

Wyn stood dead still to listen. Nana was still talking on the phone, but it sounded like she was nearly finished. There was no time to lose.

She hurriedly swept up as many pieces as she could find.

By the time she stood up again, her pockets were bulging. There was no way of knowing if she had every piece. And not enough time to check everywhere because there was still something important she had to do.

"Cheerio then!" she heard Nana say.

Oh, oh! Wyn didn't have much time left! She looked around frantically, searching for something that was roughly the same size as Nana's teapot. She thought about using a mixing bowl or a preserving jar, but Nana might need them and wonder where they'd got to.

She heard the phone tingle softly as Nana put the receiver down.

Nana was going to be there any second.

There must be something ...

AHA!

Wyn hurried over to the queue of plant pots in the corner. There was a sickly-looking plant in one. But most just had stumps of dead stalk sticking out of the soil. (Nana was never very good with plants. "That woman could make plastic flowers wilt," Wyn's Dad always said.)

Wyn snatched up a pot and covered it with the tea-cosy. She fished around in her pocket. Found the spout and handle. Poked them through the holes at either end. And stuck them into the soil.

Perfect!

She clambered up the cupboard and carefully slid the cosy-covered pot onto the top shelf. But there was no time to admire her handiwork. She heard Nana's footsteps approaching down the hall.

Wyn scrambled down and jumped to the floor - just in time!

When Nana came through the door, she found Wyn standing red-faced beside the cupboard looking slightly suspicious.

"What are you up to, Wyn dear?" Nana asked.

"I was just putting everything back in the right place for you, Nana," Wyn said. She felt horrible lying to Nana. But it felt better than telling the truth.

"What a very polite young lady you are," Nana beamed. "How about we pop down to the dairy and treat ourselves to ice-creams?"

"OK," Wyn said, relieved. But as they left the kitchen, she glanced back over her shoulder and felt her stomach knot with panic.

The cosy-covered pot plant didn't look like Nana's teapot AT ALL!

Hopefully Nana didn't look too closely.

Chapter Five

Wyn spent hours trying to piece Nana's teapot together again. But it was like trying to do a million piece jigsaw puzzle without the picture. Every piece seemed to fit everywhere. And nowhere.

In the end she had to give up.

"What am I going to do now?" she sighed. "Maybe I should just tell Nana what happened and hope she forgives me?"

But that was the last thing she wanted to do. Nana would be very disappointed Wyn broke her teapot. But she'd be even more disappointed Wyn lied to her. It all seemed hopeless ...

Then she had a brainwave.

"I know! I'll make a new one for her!"

She'd seen the teapot so many times she remembered *exactly* what it looked like. But she decided to do a drawing of it just to be sure.

She got out her coloured pencils and her drawing pad. She wasn't very good at drawing, so the first teapot she drew looked more like a duck wearing a colourful cardigan than Nana's teapot.

She angrily tore out the page and crumpled it into a ball.

Then she started all over again.

It took ages. But each drawing got a little better, until they started looking more and more like Nana's teapot. Finally, after filling an entire block, she did one that looked just like the original. She smiled with satisfaction.

But as she studied her drawing carefully, her smile faded.

"And now what?" she wondered sadly as she realised how enormous her task was. It was one thing drawing a teapot. Another thing altogether to make one! She might be a bad drawer. But she was even *worse* at crafts. Especially if she had to get her hands dirty. Yuck!

Maybe she could get someone to make a teapot for her? She took out her pen and made a list of everyone she knew who might be able to help.

There was her Mum, of course. She did pottery classes at school every Wednesday night. But she quickly crossed her off the list. For one thing she

wasn't very good. Everything she made was wobbly. For another thing, Wyn would have to tell her precisely why she needed a teapot exactly like Nana's.

Maybe it would be better if she bought a new teapot? There were lots of pottery shops in town. But a few moments later, she reluctantly crossed that idea off her list too. Even if they had a teapot exactly like Nana's, they'd probably want loads of money for it. It would take Wyn years to save enough.

There was one other person she knew who might be able to help - Miss Clay, her art teacher.

But she didn't want to ask her except as the *very* last resort.

Wyn wasn't Miss Clay's favourite student. Not by a long shot! In all her other classes Wyn was the perfect student - quiet, diligent, helpful ... Lady-like. But as soon as she got her hands dirty, she kicked up such a fuss she was usually sent outside.

Wyn was sent out of Art class almost every week. Which was why she tried very, *very* hard to think of *anyone* else she might ask.

She thought and thought and thought. She thought until her brain felt like it was going to explode.

Finally she had to admit defeat.

She was going to have to ask Miss Clay after all.

Chapter Six

Wyn was on her best behaviour all Art class. She didn't complain once. Not even when they made hand-print patterns. She just gritted her teeth and squelched her hands right into the yucky, smelly, absolutely *disgusting* paint.

But she was relieved when the lesson was over.

As everyone hurried outside for lunch, Wyn pretended she was still washing her hands. She kept wringing them under the water until she was alone with Miss Clay.

"If you keep cleaning your hands much longer, Wyn, they're going to shrivel up like old prunes," Miss Clay said.

Wyn felt her face burning with embarrassment as she turned off the tap. She daredn't look up once the whole time she was wiping her hands.

She waited until she heard Miss Clay tidying up.

This might be a bad idea after all, Wyn thought.

She noticed Miss Clay glancing at her out of the corner of her eye. She was relieved to see Miss Clay wasn't looking like she thought Wyn was peculiar. She was just curious.

Wyn breathed in deeply, trying to calm her nerves.

"Excuse me, Miss Clay," she began in her most polite voice.

"Yes, Wyn?" Miss Clay asked, raising her eyebrows suspiciously.

Wyn felt the words dancing right on the tip of her tongue. But instead of spitting them out, she swallowed them down.

"Would you like some help tidying up?" she asked. (She had to say *something!!*)

Miss Clay's eyebrows disappeared into her hair. Then she smiled.

Wyn could tell she wasn't fooled.

"If you haven't got anything better to do with yourself," Miss Clay said. "I can always use some help."

It took ages to tidy the Art room. Wyn never realised how messy her class left things. Mainly because she was always kicked out before it was over.

"I think that's tidy enough, Wyn," Miss Clay finally said. "It'll look like a bomb-site again in another hour anyway."

She went to sit on the bench near the window, then patted a spot beside her.

"So why don't you sit down and tell me why you're being so helpful?"

Wyn felt like running. But it was too late now. So she sat down and pulled out her drawing of Nana's teapot.

"That's a lovely drawing," Miss Clay said. "Very detailed, too. It must have taken you ages."

Wyn nodded. She was very surprised when tears started trickling down her cheeks.

"I imagine there must be a very special reason why you drew it so carefully," Miss Clay said. Then she gave Wyn a sympathetic look. "Would you like to tell me about it?"

As soon as Wyn opened her mouth, the whole story came spilling out, right down to the most awful detail. When she was finished, she felt like a heavy weight had lifted off her shoulders.

She chewed her bottom lip while she waited for Miss Clay to say something. For some reason it suddenly felt important that Miss Clay didn't think she was horrid for lying.

She expected Miss Clay to insist she tell Nana what happened.

Instead she said : "Well, it looks like we're going to have to make a new teapot for your Nana, doesn't it?"

Wyn was ecstatic!

Until Miss Clay added : "If you come back after school, I'll be happy to teach you how to do it."

Chapter Seven

Wyn fretted all afternoon. She dreaded the thought of trying to make a teapot. But she dreaded telling Nana what she'd done even more. So when the bell finally rang, she swallowed her doubts and wandered over to the Art room.

"I've set up a workspace for you in the corner, Wyn," Miss Clay said as Wyn entered. "I'll be with you in a minute."

When Wyn saw the two pottery wheels, her face crinkled like she'd swallowed a stink-bug. What did you get when you mixed clay with water, then put it on a spinning wheel? Sloppy, mucky mud flying all over the place, that's what!

"It could be worse, Wyn," Miss Clay laughed.

She didn't say *how* it could be worse. And Wyn didn't really want to know.

"So let's get potting!" Miss Clay said.

She sliced off two hunks of clay with a thin piece of wire.

"OK," she said, handing one piece to Wyn and keeping the other for herself. "First we've got to wedge the clay to make sure there are no air bubbles in it. Have you ever kneaded bread, Wyn?"

Wyn grimaced and shook her head.

"It's easy," Miss Clay said, smiling. "You just have to keep squashing it down with your hand. First one way, then the other. Like this."

It looked easy enough. But Wyn couldn't bring herself to touch it.

"It's not going to bite," Miss Clay encouraged.

Wyn took a deep breath and picked up the clay. It was cold and sticky, just like she'd imagined. She poked it one way. Then prodded it the other.

"You'll have to use more than two fingers if you want to do it properly," Miss Clay said. She wasn't smiling any more. She was rolling her eyes. "Or are you just wasting my time?"

Wyn gulped. It was now or never. She picked up the clay with both hands. Closed her eyes. Then squashed it down on the table with all her might.

SQUELCH! went the clay. YUCK! went Wyn.

"That's better!" went Miss Clay.

Back and forward Wyn kneaded the clay. First one way, then the other. After a while it stopped feeling quite so icky.

"That looks about right," Miss Clay finally said.

Wyn breathed a sigh of relief. Maybe the worst was over?

"Now we have to centre it on the wheel," Miss Clay explained. "That means making sure the clay's in the exact middle."

She slammed her clay down roughly in the middle of the wheel.

Wyn placed hers gently in the centre, then patted it like it was a puppy. Miss Clay sat at her wheel and pushed the pedal. As it started spinning slowly, she grabbed a wet sponge and squeezed some water onto her clay.

"Now cup your hands over the clay and pretend you've caught a strange creature and it's really terrified so it's trying to wiggle out of your grasp. You don't want to hurt it. But you don't want it to escape either. So you've got to hold it gently but firmly until it settles down."

Wyn watched the clay wriggling and wobbling under Miss Clay's grasp. It didn't look like she'd ever control it. But a few seconds later, as if by magic, it was spinning smoothly in the very centre of the wheel.

It didn't look *that* difficult.

Chapter Eight

Everything started going haywire right from the beginning. Wyn pushed her pedal too hard. And she used much too much water. The wheel spun like a whirligig, spraying sloppy mud in every direction.

Wyn lunged forward to try and stop it. But that only made it worse.

As her fingers went squelching through the spinning clay, thick globs of clay went shooting off in every direction. She just wanted it to stop. But in her panic she forgot all about her foot on the pedal. All she could think of doing was squeezing the clay tighter.

She leant forward. Her foot pushed down even harder on the pedal.

Then everything began spinning out of control.

By the time the clump of clay went sailing off the wheel and landed with a PLOP! in Wyn's lap, she looked like she'd just lost a mud fight. She was splattered with clay from head to foot.

Wyn felt like giving up. It was no use.

When she glanced down and saw how filthy she was, she felt tears welling up in her eyes. Then Miss Clay suddenly appeared beside her.

"Have another go," she said, clumping a fresh piece of clay in the middle of Wyn's wheel. "But this time don't use so much water. And don't push your pedal so hard. It's not a race."

Wyn sniffed, trying to halt her tears.

"You can't get any dirtier, Wyn," Miss Clay said, squeezing her shoulder in encouragement. "So you might as well keep trying."

As Wyn wiped away her tears, her fingers painted muddy stripes across her cheeks like an Indian brave about to go into battle.

Then she slowly ... carefully ... *delicately* pushed the pedal.

Everything went better the second try. The third try was better still.

By the fourth attempt Wyn had forgotten all about how dirty she was. She didn't even notice if she was getting dirtier or not. She was too busy concentrating on getting the clay to do what she wanted it to do.

It was a struggle. Sometimes she won. But most times she lost.

"I think that's enough for one day," Miss Clay finally interrupted.

When Wyn felt a wave of disappointment, she frowned in surprise. That was the last thing she expected. She was even more surprised when she looked at the clock and saw two hours had vanished.

Wyn started to feel optimistic. Maybe everything was going to work out after all? But all her hopes came crashing down when she looked at the things she'd made that afternoon. They were terrible! Even worse than Wyn's Mum's! There wasn't a single piece that looked like anything, let alone a teapot.

"You've done brilliantly, Wyn," Miss Clay said when she saw Wyn's face droop with disappointment. "But you can't expect miracles."

Wyn nodded her head sadly.

"So," Miss Clay said. "Same time tomorrow?"

But Wyn shook her head.

"Can we make it the next day?" she asked. "There's something important I've got to do tomorrow."

Chapter Nine

Wyn decided to tell Nana everything. She didn't want to. But from the look of things, it would be a hundred years before she learnt how to make a teapot.

She'd never visited on a weekday before. But she imagined any day was much the same for Nana. She'd probably be sitting on the sofa knitting or reading or somesuch stuff that ladies do.

Nana would insist on making a cup of tea eventually.

("Old ladies and their tea!" Wyn's Dad often exclaimed in exasperation when he got home from his work at the Rest Home. "I've had so many cuppas today, if I pricked myself I'd probably bleed tea instead of blood!")

And that's when Wyn would confess everything.

She was surprised when nobody answered her knock. Even more surprised when she heard a radio playing loudly in the garage. She couldn't think of a single reason why Nana would be in the garage, but she decided to check anyway. Whoever was there might know where Nana was.

She couldn't see much at first. But as her eyes adjusted to the gloom, she saw two legs in greasy blue overalls and big workboots poking out from under Nana's car.

Even though the car was almost as old as Nana, Wyn had never heard Nana mention it needing repairs. It just seemed to keep going - like Nana.

"Excuse me?" Wyn called loudly, trying to make herself heard above the music.

The mechanic mustn't have heard her though, because he didn't move.

"Excuse me!" Wyn yelled louder. And just to be sure, she tapped the mechanic's legs.

The legs jerked in surprise. Then started sliding out from under the car. Wyn's jaw dropped to the ground when the mechanic sat up.

"Nana?" Wyn asked.

"Wyn dear!" Nana cried. "What a lovely surprise!"

Then her face clouded with doubt.

"It's not Sunday, is it dear?" she asked.

"No," Wyn explained. "It's only Thursday."

"Phew!" Nana chuckled as her fingers painted a grease stripe across her forehead. "For a moment there I thought I might be losing my marbles."

"What are you doing under there, Nana?" Wyn asked.

"I'm just giving old Bessie here a bit of TLC," Nana said. "You can give me a hand if you like."

Helping Nana fix a greasy car was the *last* thing Wyn wanted to do. But she couldn't say no. Especially not when she had a confession to make.

So she nodded.

"Lovely!" Nana said, holding out her hand. "Help me up, dear, and I'll show you how to adjust the spark-plugs."

They spent the rest of the afternoon working on Nana's car.

At first Wyn tried really hard not to get her hands greasy, but it wasn't long before everything was covered in grease-spots. So she gave up trying to stay clean. And it was a lot more fun after that.

She learnt how to replace spark-plugs, change the oil, check the battery and adjust the fanbelt. Wyn wasn't sure she'd ever use her new knowledge, but it was fun helping Nana.

Finally Nana wiped her hands on her overalls and put away her tools.

"It's about time for smoko, don't you think, dear?" she said. "How about we wash up and have a lovely cup of tea?"

Wyn gulped. There was no escape now.

Chapter Ten

As Wyn loitered in the bathroom, washing her hands extra thoroughly, she imagined Nana gasping in surprise when she lifted the tea-cosy and found a plant pot instead of her precious teapot.

She waited and waited. But nothing happened.

Maybe Nana had fainted in shock?

She took a deep breath, then walked into the kitchen.

What a surprise she got when she found Nana sitting at the table already sipping her tea. *not* from a dainty porcelain cup, but from an enormous mug. She wasn't using a saucer, either. The only saucer to be seen had two squeezed teabags on it.

"You're not using your teapot?" Wyn asked, relieved.

"Oh dear, no," Nana laughed. "I only use that on special occasions. Biscuit?"

Wyn almost gasped when Nana offered her store-bought biscuits. But she took one anyway. Fixing cars was hungry work.

Then Nana told Wyn all about Bessie.

"It was the first car your Grandad and I ever owned," she said. Then she knocked on the table. "And with any luck, it'll be the last too."

Wyn breathed a sigh of relief.

Maybe there was still time to replace Nana's teapot after all?

Every afternoon after school, Wyn went straight to the Art room and practised on the pottery wheel. Miss Clay said teapots were very difficult, so she suggested Wyn start off with something easier.

It wasn't long before she was making lovely cups and bowls. When they were finished, she gave them to her Mum for her birthday.

"That's it," her Mum said. "I'm giving up pottery. There's no point me making wonky things when we've got a real artist in the family."

Wyn felt very proud.

She kept getting better at making things. And she started looking forward to Art class too. She discovered Miss Clay was a very good teacher.

Wyn didn't get sent out once.

Wyn didn't visit Nana on Sundays anymore. It was too risky.

Even though she missed having proper afternoon teas, she didn't miss it as much as she thought she would. Pretending to be a Lady was hard work, especially for such a clumsy-clod. It was much more fun doing things with Nana. And she never knew what they'd get up to.

One time she found Nana crawling around under the house. Wyn crawled right under with her. She didn't stop for a second to worry about getting dirty.

That's when she found out all about fixing leaky plumbing.

Another time she discovered Nana on the roof with some branches tied to a rope. Wyn climbed straight up to join her. That's how she learnt how to clean a sooty chimney.

Afterwards they always had a mug of tea and some store-bought biscuits while Nana told Wyn stories from the olden days.

Chapter Eleven

Wyn started feeling *very* guilty about Nana's teapot. But with every week that went by, it got harder to confess.

Then one day, after many tries, she finally managed to make her first teapot. It was a very nice teapot. But it didn't look anything like Nana's teapot. It was the completely wrong shape. Besides, now that Wyn thought about it, she realised she didn't want to paint it like Nana's teapot after all. She felt very strongly that she should paint colourful polka dots on it instead. She didn't know why she should feel so strongly about it. But that's just the way it was.

So that's what she did.

Miss Clay was very impressed when it was finished.

"I think I prefer your teapot to the one in your drawing," she said.

Wyn had to agree.

Wyn carefully wrapped her teapot in wrapping-paper she'd made herself in Art class. Then tied it up with some ribbon she'd woven out of different materials. And finally she made a lovely card.

For the best Nana in the world, she wrote on it.

Then she went to visit Nana.

Wyn found Nana in the back yard beside a tarpaulin covered with greasy machinery parts.

"What are you up to, Nana?" Wyn asked.

"That old washing machine of mine has been causing trouble again," Nana explained. "So I took the motor apart. But I'll be blowed if I can remember how to put it back together."

"Maybe I can help?" Wyn said, even though she didn't know anything about washing machine motors.

Somehow they managed to fit all the pieces together. And the washing machine was soon swishing smoothly once more.

When they finally sat down to have a mug of tea, Wyn gave Nana her present.

"What's this for?" Nana asked, surprised. "It's not my birthday ... at least I don't *think* it is."

When she read the card, her face beamed with happiness.

Nana carefully unwrapped the teapot.

"It's beautiful," Nana gasped with astonishment. "Where on earth did you get such a magnificent teapot?"

"I made it," Wyn said. She started to confess, but her words were smothered by Nana's kiss.

"I didn't know you made pottery, dear," Nana said, studying the teapot like it was a real work of Art. "Let alone that you were so talented. I thought you took after your poor Mum in that department. She was always skipping Art class when she was a girl."

Before Wyn could say anything, Nana stood on the stool and started reaching up to the top shelf.

Wyn grimaced as she waited for Nana's astonishment. But she was the one who was astonished when Nana brought down an empty tea-cosy.

When Nana noticed Wyn looking confused, she laughed.

"I know how much you liked that old teapot, dear," Nana confessed. "But I broke it, I'm afraid. I'm such a clumsy-clod sometimes. It fell right out of my hands and crashed to the floor. I didn't have the heart to even look at the poor shattered thing, so I bundled it up and tossed it straight in the bin. I hope you don't mind?"

Wyn could only shake her head.

"Anyway," Nana continued, "I've got your lovely teapot now."

She covered it with the cosy and started climbing onto the stool.

"Why don't you leave it on the table?" Wyn asked. "Then you can use it every day."

"Dear me, no," Nana protested. "It's much too precious."

Wyn couldn't hide her disappointment.

"But I'm such a clumsy-clod, dear," Nana argued. "If I don't put it out of harm's way, I'm bound to break it sooner or later."

"It doesn't matter if you break it, Nana," Wyn said. "I'll just make you a new one."

Nana laughed as she placed the teapot in the middle of the table.

"If you're absolutely sure about that?" Nana said.

Wyn smiled. She *was* sure. In fact, she was looking forward to it already.