Everyone calls me 'Wheezy Bird' because of the way I laugh—a sort of 'giggle, wheeze, giggle, wheeze'. I can't really help it—it's just the noise that comes out when things are funny. Woody thinks I sound like a sea-lion but that's not true because sea-lions don't actually laugh.
Dad says I’m the only *wheezy bird* in the whole of the British Isles. (He’s a birdwatcher and to him, rare birds are way more exciting than nine-year-old girls with freckles and mousey-brown hair.) So I don’t really mind being a *wheezy bird* and it could actually be a lot worse. The lollipop lady calls Helen Butterworth ‘Little Miss Wet Pants’, even though she stopped doing that ages ago.

But then something happened at my school that made me wish people called me my real name—which is actually **WENDY QUILL**.
Then Miss Pinch *wouldn’t* have forgotten who I was and I’d probably be

Miss Pinch *should* know my name because she says it every morning at register. I think she’s got ‘anaemia’ or something—which is actually quite sad, because it’s not nice when you can’t remember things.

---

**A Really Important Fact:**

My big sister Tawny says that ‘anaemia’ is when your blood isn’t working properly—and ‘amnesia’ is when you forget things. But they sound just the same so I think Miss Pinch probably has both.
Anyway, we’d just finished learning
about Romans lying down on cushions and
being sick a lot when they ate their food,
when Miss Pinch said:
‘Children, I have an
**exciting announcement**
to make.’ (Miss Pinch always
has ‘exciting announcements’
to make.) ‘This morning, I will
be giving out parts for our
new school play. Please line
up. And remember to form an
orderly queue.’

Everyone started pushing to the front,
but Tyler Ainsworth grabbed my arm:
‘Hey, Wheezy Bird,’ he said.
‘If it’s Cinderella, you’ll have to be the ugly sister.’ Miss Pinch says I have ‘a talent for answering back’, which I do, because I said: ‘There are actually two ugly sisters in Cinderella, Tyler Ainsworth.’

Then I stared at him very hard. But he didn’t notice that I meant he should be an ugly sister, so I blew a raspberry at him.
instead. (I won’t actually do that again because it’s ‘a hygiene issue’ and ‘could spread germs’.)

‘What’s the play, Miss?’ asked Sophia Nowitsky. (Sophia Nowitsky always asks important questions because she is ‘gifted and talented’.)

‘Oh, silly me,’ sighed Miss Pinch. ‘I’d forget my head, if it wasn’t screwed on.’