

I don't really want to be here!

I didn't want to come this morning. It's not fair. Dad's at work, Shaun's away with the scouts until tonight, and Mum thinks I'm too small to stay home on my own, so here I am in church with her. I'm not really **with** her. She's up there in the choir - next to the big lady in the silly blue hat. Mind, I'd rather sit with her there than be here with old Mrs. Perry. She's smelly! Mum says it's mothballs. I wish she wouldn't keep leaning over me. Every time we stand up to sing she leans right over to see if I've got the right number in my book and I keep getting the smell of her mothballs. I wonder if mothballs hurt? She's leaning the other way now. I can come up for air.

There's none of my friends here today and I didn't want to go out to Sunday Club with the little ones. The minister's been talking for such a long time. I don't think many people are listening to him. I'm sure I heard Mr. Jackson snore behind me but I daren't look round. Mum will say I'm fidgeting. She told me, *No wriggling, no giggling.* Last time I came with her she said she'd never bring me again because I didn't keep still. I suppose I did frighten the lady in front when I said out loud, *'there's a big spider!'* What a fuss. It wasn't really that big, and it jumped from her hair to her collar so it didn't even tickle her neck. Perhaps that spider's still here. Everything else seems to be the same.

I hope we'll sing another hymn soon. I still don't think it's fair. I'd really rather not be here! My bottom's sore. These pews are hard. I wonder why they call them pews? Perhaps it's because they're so hard that when people stand up, they rub their bums and all say - "phew"! Mum's glaring at me again. I'm sure she thinks I'm fidgeting, but it's Mrs. Mothballs, not me. Hey, there's another little spider crawling up the back of Mrs. Meredith's coat. It's going right up in her hair. I mustn't laugh.

I wonder why the minister wears that long black thing. If I had to wear a nightie in the day, I'd have a nice bright one with flowers all over it. I think that collar must hurt his neck. Mum says it's called a "dog collar", but it doesn't seem to have a lead - unless it's that leather belt round his middle. Perhaps Mrs. Minister takes him for walks before church. He's funny when he says the prayers. I think he's practicing to be an angel. He looks just like the one in my book at home - except that one's white instead of black. He kneels down, puts his hands together and looks up into the roof. I wonder if he's seen that enormous cobweb. I'm sure he wouldn't keep his hands like that if the spider dropped on him. I suppose he's looking up because God is up there -somewhere in the stratosphere.

Mum's looking at me again. She can't be listening either. She likes the singing best. I don't know why. The songs the choir sing are all dreary or screechy. They sang a long one before the minister started talking - he called it an anthamum or something like that - must be an antha that mum's sing.

That very big lady next to mum - the one with the big blue hat - I don't know her name - she sings so loud. She pushes her chest out and opens her mouth so wide. I wonder if she goes to hockey matches... I can just see her running up the field, singing and pushing everybody else aside. I wonder how loud she'd sing if a mouse popped out?

That man in front of me - next to Mrs. Meredith - her spider's going down the sleeve of her coat now - I don't think he's Mr. Meredith, but I'm sure he keeps trying to look round at me. I think he's worried I might do something awful. He gave me such a glare when I dropped my coin. It didn't make much noise. Not nearly as much as his stick made when it fell down - just as I went under the pew for my twenty pence. I didn't touch it. I'm sure I didn't.

The minister's closed his book. He must have run out of things to say. We've had four hymns so there's only one left. Wouldn't it be funny if everybody stayed asleep and the minister had to sing on his own. We must be nearly at the end now.

Mum said we come to church because Jesus is here. I can't see him though. But I think I can feel him. It's a sort of holy feeling - it make me feel small but its very loving and peaceful. I'm sure he's here somewhere. Perhaps he's hiding behind one of those pillar things, so he can have a giggle without anyone seeing. Dad says God has a sense of humour because he made people different - and odd! I wish I could find Jesus. I think he would laugh about the spiders - and the silly pink hat ... That would be cool - and maybe I wouldn't really mind being here after all.