

This extract is from  
'Goodnight Mister Tom' by Michelle Magorian.



Willie sat in the front row and shared a double desk with Patsy Finch, a dark-haired, easygoing nine-year-old with light brown eyes. Although their desks were joined they had separate benches which folded up and down. Each desk had an inkwell hole and a long groove for pencils and pens. Some 5 of the pupils had white porcelain inkwells, which were filled with pale blue watery ink, and then slotted into the holes.

It was Willie's first proper desk. He felt so exhilarated with it that he tingled every time Mrs Hartridge asked them to take a book out or put a book away.

10 To his left in another double desk sat eleven-year-old Fred Padfield and Zach. Fred had been moved from the third row to the front for being lazy. Zach sat on his left by one of the windows. Carrie and Ruth Browne, one of the evacuees at the Vicarage, sat behind them and behind Willie and Patsy sat Ginnie and Herbert Woods, one of the absent children. George, who was now 15 twelve, sat behind Ginnie in the third row and the eldest in the class sat in the fourth row.

A long-funnelled stove stood opposite the corridor between the four rows of desks. On it was perched a large saucepan of simmering milk and surrounding it was a square fire-guard where several pairs of steaming socks 20 were hanging. To the left of the stove was the door which led into a hallway.

There were three large windows in the classroom. Two at the back and one on the left. The panes were criss-crossed with wood and had looked very pretty when the first snow had settled in the corners. On the right of the room beside the panelled wall stood the nature table.