
FLOUR
Mc TAVISH

Praise for *Good Dog McTavish* and *McTavish Goes Wild*

"McTavish is an irresistible character, his gentle guiding of the Peacheys is very funny indeed, and this beautiful story will leave all readers smiling" Andrea Reece, Lovereading4kids

"A hilarious story about a special rescue dog who makes a difference in surprising ways" *Scotsman*

"Full of Meg's wry humour and beautiful prose, this is a story for the young and young at heart" Books Are My Bag

"Common sense has rarely been so charmingly conveyed" *New Statesman*

"Warm family drama full of wry humour and a really excellent dog" *Bookseller*

"A witty, stylish, often hilarious delight" *Literary Review*

"This brilliantly charming and heart-warming short novel is full of spark, keen observations and sly humour" BookTrust

"[A] very funny story of a highly intelligent dog subtly leading his less than clever humans into having fun" *Primary Times*

"A laugh-aloud, entertaining story with larger-than-life characters, especially the captivating dog. I can't wait to hear more about him" *Primary Times*

"What a lovely short story. Recommended to boys and girls, especially those who like dogs" Lovereading4kids reviewer Tomasz, age 11

McTAVISH TAKES THE BISCUIT

Meg Rosoff

Conkers

For Alex



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The Peacheys Cook

"What's for dinner?" asked Ollie.

"Whose turn is it to cook?" asked Ava.

Betty stuck her head out of the kitchen.

"It's mine," she said. "On the menu tonight is vegetarian lasagne with a salad of baby greens and for dessert, caramel chocolate tart with cream."

"Great," said Ollie.

"Yum," said Ava.

Ever since Ma Peachey decided that mothers should not be responsible for all the daily chores of family life, the Peachey children had taken over their share of the cooking.

They learned that making a meal wasn't difficult. You didn't have to be old and experienced to make lasagne or chocolate brownies. You didn't have to be married or very clever to roast a chicken or make fruit crumble. You just had to be able to read a recipe, measure ingredients and follow directions.

In no time at all, all three Peachey children were making delicious meals. The Peachey family had never eaten so well.

Today was Wednesday, so it was Betty's turn to cook.

"I have a great deal of work yet to do," Betty told Ava and Ollie, "so please go away."

Only McTavish was allowed to stay in the kitchen while Betty mixed flour into melted butter, then slowly added milk to make a sauce for the lasagne. McTavish paid close attention as she whisked together the oil, vinegar, mustard and salt to make a dressing for the salad.

McTavish the rescue dog was often called upon to rescue the Peachey family. But in cases where rescue was not actually required, he still found ways to help.


FLOUR
MUSTARD
VINES

While Betty was cooking, McTavish helped by clearing up anything that fell on the floor. McTavish was faster and more effective than a hoover and, although certain things (like lettuce) were not to his taste, he was excellent at clearing up bits of cheese, cake or bacon.

His services came in very handy when any of the Peachey children cooked. They were all very inventive when choosing recipes, but not always very tidy.

An average week might begin on Monday with Ava's roast vegetable couscous followed by a special Moroccan milk pudding with rose syrup. Not to be outdone, Ollie would follow on

Tuesday with roast chicken, mashed potato and beans, with crème brûlée for dessert. Betty always cooked complicated vegetarian dishes on Wednesday, while Ma Peachey preferred a simple dinner of spicy tomato pasta with fruit salad for Thursday. Pa Peachey was supposed to cook on Friday, but he grumbled about it so much that the rest of the family just made sandwiches on Friday nights and ate in front of the telly.

"I don't like to cook," Pa Peachey said.

"You like to eat," Betty observed.

"That's different," he said, which Betty had to admit was true.

Cooking became so competitive in the

Peachey family that even breakfast was exciting.

Instead of a bowl of cereal, breakfast might be a stack of pancakes with fruit compote and genuine Vermont maple syrup. Or porridge with blueberries and figs. Betty had even started making sourdough bread every week, because – she said – it made much tastier toast. Which it did. Once you'd eaten homemade sourdough toast with butter and jam, it was difficult to eat anything else.

As week followed week, the Peacheys became more and more particular about their food. The problem with eating good healthy

homemade food every day is that you don't really want to eat boring meals or junk food any more.

So it happened that one fine morning, Pa Peachey sat down to breakfast, picked up a piece of toast from his plate and gasped.

"What is this?" he demanded.

"It's toast," Ava said. "A little bit like bread only browner."

"Toast? You call this toast? This is not toast. Is it homemade? Was the bread lovingly shaped by the hands of a member of our very own family? Was it kneaded until smooth and put in a warm place to rise for as long

as it needs? No, it was not." Pa Peachey held the toast at arm's length as if it might be dangerous. "This is poison."

"Poison?" said Ollie, looking confused.

"This is not bread," Pa Peachey said. "It is a cheap stand-in made and sold by money-grubbing manufacturers who do not care what real bread tastes like. You might as well eat an old sponge."

Ollie stared at his father. Then at his toast. Then at his father again. "It doesn't taste as good as Betty's bread," he said. "But—"

"I know what you're going to say," Pa Peachey said. "But any toast is *not* better than

no toast. This so-called 'toast' is packed with chemicals, preservatives and sugars, prepared in a fraction of the time it takes to make real bread, then packaged in plastic that is guaranteed to destroy the oceans."

Pa Peachey swung his gaze to his youngest child and pointed an accusing finger.

"You!" he said to Betty.

"Are you blaming Betty for the destruction of the oceans?" Ollie asked.

"My sourdough bread is still rising. It will not be ready till tonight," Betty explained.

"One day of supermarket bread will not kill us," Ava said.

"Perhaps," said Pa Peachey. "But this toast is fit only for a dog."

Everyone looked at McTavish, who felt deeply offended. He thought Betty's sourdough bread was much better than supermarket bread.

"Betty is only nine years old," Ma Peachey said. "She has school and homework and friends and chores. It is a special treat for us when she makes sourdough bread. It is not her job."

"Why don't you make the bread yourself?" Betty asked Pa Peachey. "Then you could be certain of having it for breakfast every day."

"Maybe I will," Pa Peachey said with

a thoughtful expression. “After all, if the youngest member of the family can make bread, it must not be very difficult.”

Ollie and Ava turned to look at Betty.

Betty frowned.

McTavish blinked.

Ma Peachey looked nervous.