

Wendy and the *waentjie*

By Mikayla Joy Brown

Today was the big day – the race of the *waentjies*! All the neighbourhood children would race against each other with their *waentjies*. A *waentjie* is a small cart with four wheels.

“It’s my favourite time of the year!” Wendy declared as her mother tied back her curly hair.

“Whatever happens, remember, you are stronger than you think,” her mother said, kissing her on the head.

“Yes, Mommy,” Wendy replied.

She gobbled up her porridge, put on her favourite takkies and rushed out the door. She could not be late for the race. She and her partner were competing against five other teams.

Each team was made up of two people: a pusher and a sitter. The sitter would sit in the *waentjie* and be pushed by the pusher. The fastest team to push the *waentjie* down the road, would win.

Wendy’s teammate was her best friend, Joel. But when Wendy saw Joel, she immediately knew something was wrong.

“I tripped over my shoelace and fell. My ankle is too sore to run,” Joel cried.

Joel always pushed Wendy in the *waentjie*. She had never tried pushing him before.

“Ha-ha! You’ll never be able to push the *waentjie*, Wendy!” Robbie teased. He was always mean to Wendy.

Wendy wanted to cry, but then she remembered her mother’s words: “You are stronger than you think.” All of a sudden, Wendy felt a surge of boldness!

“I am not a quitter! I will push you, Joel!” Wendy declared.

So Wendy and Joel lined up with the other teams at the end of the street. Uncle Henry stood ready with a red flag.

“On your marks, get set, go!” Uncle Henry shouted, waving the flag wildly.

Wendy rushed forward, pushing the *waentjie* with all her might. Her eyes were fixed on the finish line. She was in front! She was going to win! Suddenly, the *waentjie* became heavier. Wendy looked down and saw that one of the wheels had popped off! Oh no! How could she push a broken *waentjie*? The other teams raced past her.

Wendy wanted to give up, but her mother’s words once again echoed in her mind: “You are stronger than you think.” So Wendy pushed the *waentjie* with all her might, across the finish line. She had made it, but she was last.

“*Wêla-kapêla!*” Robbie laughed in her face.

Wendy felt her eyes well up with tears. She had tried so hard to win. At the prize-giving, she was, however, very surprised!

“We have a new prize,” Uncle Henry exclaimed. The prize for determination goes to ... Wendy Williams!”

There were shouts of joy! Wendy *was* a winner! She may not have come first, but she learnt that believing in yourself is always rewarding. The neighbourhood never forgot how Wendy Williams pushed a broken *waentjie* from start to finish.