

A Royal Shakespeare Company Production

PIANO/VOCAL

Roald Dahl's
Matilda
THE MUSICAL



MUSIC & LYRICS BY TIM MINCHIN

MATILDA THE MUSICAL

ACT 1

A bell rings. Lights up. A long table with the word "Birthday" emblazoned on it moves forward, with little hands creeping along the bottom. The table stops and the hands hit the ground. The children begin to pop up from behind the table and speak. They are all dressed in costume: Eric as Batman, Tommy as the Incredible Hulk, Lavender as a Princess, Nigel as Spiderman, Bruce in army gear, Amanda as Superwoman, Alice as Wonder Woman, Hortensia as a queen.

ERIC

My mummy says I'm a miracle!

TOMMY

My daddy says I'm his special little guy!

Ow! AMANDA

I am a princess!

BRUCE

And I am a prince.

ALL GIRLS

Mum says I'm an angel sent down from the sky!

ERIC, TOMMY, and BRUCE

My daddy says I'm his special little soldier. No one is as handsome, strong as me.

BRUCE

It's true he indulges my tendency to bulge.

ERIC, TOMMY, and BRUCE

But I'm his little soldier.

Hup, two, four, free.

ALICE and HORTENSIA

My mummy says I'm a miracle, One look at my face and it's plain to see. Ever since the day doc chopped the umbilical cord, It's been clear there's no peer for a miracle like me.

Ow!

NIGEL, TOMMY

My daddy says I'm his special little soldier.

No one is as bold or tough as me. Has my daddy told ya One day when I'm older, I can be a soldier

NIGEL

And shoot you in the face!

A party entertainer enters with balloons.

PARTY ENTERTAINER

One can hardly move for beauty and brilliance these days. It seems that there are millions of these "one in a millions" these days. Specialness is *de rigueur*. Above average is average. Go fig-ueur! Is it some modern miracle of calculus That such frequent miracles don't render each one un-miraculous?

CHILDREN

My mummy says I'm a miracle. One look at my face and it's plain to see. Ever since the day doc chopped the umbilical cord, It's been clear there's no peer for a miracle like me.

LAVENDER

My mummy says I'm a precious barrelina. She has never seen – a! Prettier barrelin– a! She says if I'm keen, I have to cut down on the cream, But I'm a barrelina – So give me more cake!

Four COUPLES, crouched down behind the table, begin to stand and speak.

COUPLE 1

MAN: Take another picture of our angel from this angle over here. WOMAN: She is clearly more emotionally developed than her peers. BOTH: What a dear!

COUPLE 2

WOMAN: That's right, honey. Look at mummy. MAN: Don't put honey on your brother. WOMAN: Smile for mummy! Smile for mother! MAN: I think he blinked. WOMAN: Well, take another!

COUPLE 3

MAN: Have you seen his school report? He got a C on his report!

ALL COUPLES: What?

MAN: We'll have to change his school. The teacher's clearly falling short.

COUPLE 4

WOMAN: She's just delightful. MAN: So hilarious. WOMAN: And insightful.

COUPLES

Might she be a little brighter than her class? Oh, yes, she's definitely advanced!

The couples and the children overlap the next two verses, as children split themselves among five couples and execute rote choreography.

[COUPLES

Take another picture of our angel from this angle over here. She is clearly more emotionally developed than her peers. What a dear!

That's right, honey, look at mummy. Don't put honey on your brother. Smile for mummy, smile for mother. I think he blinked. Well, take another!

CHILDREN

My mummy says I'm a miracle. One look at my face and it's plain to see. Ever since the day doc chopped the umbilical cord, It's been clear there's no peer for a miracle like

me.]

CHILDREN

My mummy says I'm a –

CHILDREN and COUPLES

Miracle!

CHILDREN

That I'm as tiny and as shiny as a –

CHILDREN and COUPLES

Mirror ball!

CHILDREN You can be all cynical, But it's a truth empirical. There's never been a miracle, a miracle, a miracle As me.

A curtain is wheeled in with the words "5 YEARS AGO" painted on it. It is flanked by AMANDA and ERIC in lab coats over their costumes. MRS WORMWOOD is behind the curtain. A DOCTOR enters.

MRS WORMWOOD

Look, is this gonna take much longer, doctor? I've got a plane to catch at three. I'm competing in the Bi-Annual International Amateur Salsa and Ballroom Dancing Championships in Paris.

DOCTOR

You're getting on a plane, Mrs Wormwood?

MRS WORMWOOD

Of course I am. I always compete, doctor. But this time, I've got a secret weapon. Rudolpho! He's part Italian, you know. Very supple. Has incredible upper-body strength.

DOCTOR

I think we should have a talk.

MRS WORMWOOD walks out from behind the curtain, heavily pregnant.

MRS WORMWOOD

So, what is it? What's wrong with me?

DOCTOR

Mrs Wormwood, do you really have no idea?

MRS WORMWOOD

Gas?

DOCTOR

Mrs Wormwood, I want you to think very carefully. What do you think might be the cause of - this?

MRS WORMWOOD gasps.

MRS WORMWOOD

Am I . . . Am I . . . Look, am I fat?

DOCTOR

You're pregnant!

MRS WORMWOOD

What?!

DOCTOR

You're going to have a baby.

MRS WORMWOOD

But I've got a baby! I don't want another one. Isn't there something you can do?

DOCTOR

You're nine months pregnant!

MRS WORMWOOD

Antibiotics, or . . . Oh, my good Lord! What about the Bi-Annual International Amateur Salsa and Ballroom Dancing Championships?

DOCTOR

A baby, Mrs Wormwood. A child. The most precious gift the natural world can bestow upon us has been handed to you. A brand new human being! A life. A person. A wonderful new person is about to come into your life to bring love, and magic, and happiness, and wonder!

MRS WORMWOOD

Oh, bloody hell!

MRS WORMWOOD walks back behind the curtain.

DOCTOR

Every life I bring into this world Restores my faith in human kind.

NURSE

Push, Mrs Wormwood, push!

MRS WORMWOOD

I'll push you in a minute!

DOCTOR

Each newborn life a canvas yet unpainted, This still, unbroken skin, This uncorrupted
mind.

*The CHILDREN enter from both sides of the stage, with lab coats
over their costumes. The DOCTOR and the CHILDREN sing into their
stethoscopes.*

DOCTOR and CHILDREN

Ev-er-y life is unbelievably unlikely. The chances of existence almost infinitely small.

DOCTOR

The most common thing in life is life . . .

*The curtain is wheeled away to reveal MRS WORMWOOD. A NURSE is
holding a baby, which cries.*

DOCTOR

And yet every single life, Every new life Is a miracle!

Miracle!

MR WORMWOOD enters, puffing on a cigarette.

MR WORMWOOD

Where is he? Where's my son?

DOCTOR

Mr Wormwood! Are you smoking a cigarette?

MR WORMWOOD What? Oh, of course. [*He throws the cigarette into the audience.*]

I'm sorry, doctor. What am I thinking? This calls for a proper
smoke. [*He takes out a cigar and takes hold of the*

baby.] Oh, my word, he's an ugly little thing. DOCTOR

This is one of the most beautiful children I've ever seen.

MR WORMWOOD *unwraps the blanket that the baby is swathed in.* MR WORMWOOD

Oh, my good Lord. Where's his fingie?

DOCTOR

His what?

MR WORMWOOD

His fingie. His whatchamacallit. His do-dah. What've you done with his fingie?

DOCTOR

This child doesn't have a "thingie" -

MR WORMWOOD

What? A boy with no fingie? Look what you've done, you stupid woman. This boy's got no fingie.

DOCTOR

Mr Wormwood! This child is a girl. A beautiful, beautiful little girl.

MRS WORMWOOD

Is there still time for the Bi-Annual Inter-Championship Amateur Sausage -

MR WORMWOOD Dance competition's over. You missed it. [*He brings out a load of cash and starts leafing through it.*] Look, I don't suppose we

could exchange it for a boy, could we?

The DOCTOR exits and MR WORMWOOD hurries after him.

MRS WORMWOOD

This is the worst day of my life!

Oh, my undercarriage doesn't feel quite normal. My skin looks just revolting in this foul, fluorescent light. And this gown is nothing like the semi-formal, Semi-Spanish gown I should be wearing in the semi-finals tonight!

RUDOLPHO enters from behind a gap in the curtain behind her. He dances with the hospital bed that MRS WORMWOOD is lying on.

MRS WORMWOOD

I should be dancing the Tarentella Qui mon fella Italiano.

RUDOLPHO exits the same way he came.

MRS WORMWOOD

Not dressed in hospital cotton, With an owchie . . . front bottom. And this –

The DOCTOR, MR WORMWOOD, and a male nurse enter.

DOCTOR

Miracle!

MRS WORMWOOD

Horrible –

DOCTOR

Miracle!

MRS WORMWOOD

Smelly little –

DOCTOR

The most beautiful miracle I have ever seen!

MR WORMWOOD

I can't find his frank 'n' beans!

Parents wheeling strollers enter alongside their CHILDREN.

DOCTOR

Ev-er-y life is unbelievably unlikely.

CHILDREN

My mummy says I'm a miracle.

DOCTOR

The chances of existence almost infinitely small.

CHILDREN

My daddy says I'm his special little guy.

DOCTOR

The most common thing in life is life –

CHILDREN

Hup, two, four, free!

*The Birthday table is wheeled back in by other children.
CHILDREN and COUPLES arrange themselves behind it.*

DOCTOR

And yet, every single life, Every new life Is a miracle! Miracle!

Miracle!

*The DOCTOR runs behind the table with the others. The group sets
off party poppers down the line.*

COUPLES, CHILDREN, and DOCTOR

My mummy says I'm a miracle, One look at my face and it's plain to see. Ever since the
day doc chopped the umbilical cord, It's been clear there's no peer for a miracle like me.
My mummy says I'm a miracle. That I'm as tiny and as shiny as a mirror ball. You can be
all cynical, But it's a truth empirical

There's never been a miracle, a miracle, a miracle as . . .

*The woman from COUPLE 1 blows on a birthday cake as the table
splits in two and MATILDA stands from behind it, holding a
collection of books from one hand.*

MATILDA

My mummy says I'm a lousy little worm.

My daddy says I'm a bore. My mummy says I'm a jumped-up little germ, That kids like me should be against the law. My daddy says I should learn to shut my pie-hole. No one like a smart-mouthed girl like me. Mum says I'm a good case for population control. Dad says I should watch more TV.

MR WORMWOOD kicks her out of the way, talking on the telephone.

The scene switches to the Wormwood's living room. MATILDA's brother, MICHAEL, lies lazily on a recliner. MATILDA sits to the side, reading a book.

MR WORMWOOD Get out of it! Yes, sir. That's right, sir. One hundred and fifty-five brand new luxury cars, sir. Are they good runners? Oh, let's put it this way. You wouldn't beat them in a race! [*He laughs then peters out.*] No, sir. Yes, sir. They are good runners, sir. Yes, sir. Indeed, sir. So, erm . . . How much,

exactly are we talking about?

MRS WORMWOOD enters and screams.

MRS WORMWOOD

Harry!

MR WORMWOOD [*to the phone*] Hang on.

MRS WORMWOOD

Look at this. She's reading a book. That's not normal for a five-year-old. I think she might be an idiot.

MATILDA

Listen to this: "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom . . . "

MRS WORMWOOD screams again.

MR WORMWOOD

Stop scaring your mother with that book, boy.

MATILDA

I'm a girl!

MRS WORMWOOD

And she keeps trying to tell me stories, Harry. Stories. Who wants stories? I mean, it's just not normal for a girl to be all . . . "thinking".

MR WORMWOOD [*to the phone*] I'm gonna call you straight back. [*to MRS WORMWOOD*] Would you please shut up? I am trying to pull off the biggest business deal of my life and I have to listen to this. It's your fault. You spend us into trouble and you expect me to

get us out. What am I? A flaming escapologist?

MRS WORMWOOD

"Escapologist", he says! What about me, then? I've got a whole house to look after! Dinners don't microwave themselves, you know! If you're an escapologist, I must be an acrobat to balance that lot. The world's greatest acrobat! I am off to bleach my roots . . . and I shan't be talking to you for the rest of the evening, you horrid little man!

MR WORMWOOD

But I'm gonna make us rich!

MRS WORMWOOD

Rich? How rich?

MR WORMWOOD

Oh, very rich. Russian businessmen: very, very stupid! Your genius husband is going to sell them one hundred and fifty five knackered old bangers as brand-new luxury cars.

MATILDA

But that's not fair! The cars will break down. What about the Russians?

MR WORMWOOD

"Fair." Listen to the boy.

MATILDA

I'm a girl!

MR WORMWOOD

"Fair" does not get you anywhere, you thickheaded twit-brain! All I can say is, thank heavens Michael has inherited his old man's brains, eh, son?

MICHAEL

[*dully*] Michael.

MRS WORMWOOD

Hmm. Well, I shall take your money when you earn it, and I shall spend it. But I shan't enjoy it, because of the despicable way in which you have spoken to me tonight.

MRS WORMWOOD exits.

MR WORMWOOD [*to MATILDA*] This is your fault. With your stupid books and your

stupid reading.

MATILDA

What? But I didn't do anything. That's not right.

MR WORMWOOD "Right"? [*He laughs.*] "Right"? I'll tell you something.

You're off to school in a few days' time. And you won't be getting "right" there, oh no. See, I know your headmistress.

Agatha

Trunchbull.

Behind MR WORMWOOD and MATILDA, the scene changes from a living room to MATILDA's bedroom.

MR WORMWOOD

And I've told her all about you and your smarty-pants ideas. Great, big, strong, scary woman she is. Used to compete in the Olympics, throwing the hammer! Imagine what she is going to do to a horrible, squeaky little goblin like you, boy.

MATILDA

I'm a girl!

MR WORMWOOD

Now, get off to bed, you little bookworm.

MR WORMWOOD exits while MATILDA runs into her bedroom, flings the door open, and climbs onto her bookshelf. She opens a book.

MATILDA

Jack and Jill went up the hill To fetch a pail of water. So they say. The subsequent fall was inevitable. They never stood a chance. They were written that way: Innocent victims of their story.

Like Romeo and Juliet, 'Twas written in the stars before they even met. That love and fate and a touch of stupidity Would rob them of their hope of living happily. The endings are often a little bit gory! I wonder why they didn't just change their story. We're told we have to do what we're told, but surely,

Sometimes you have to be a little bit naughty!

Just because you find that life's not fair, it Doesn't mean that you just have to grin and bear it. If you always take it on the chin and wear it, Nothing will change. Even if you're little, you can do a lot. You Mustn't let a little thing like "little" stop you. If you sit around and let them get on top, you Might as well be saying you think that it's okay, And that's not right. [She flicks on the light of the vanity in her parent's bathroom, which has risen from the stage. It is delineated into "His" and "Hers" sides.] And if it's not right, You have to put it right.

MATILDA picks up various bottles from the vanity and reads from their labels.

Platinum blonde hair dye. Extra strong. Keep out of reach of children. Hmm.

Oil of Violets hair tonic. For men. Yep!

MATILDA starts pouring the hair dye into the Oil of Violets bottle.

MATILDA

In the slip of a bolt, there's a tiny revolt. The seed of a war in the creak of a floorboard. A storm can begin with the flap of a wing.

The tiniest mite packs the mightiest sting. Every day starts with the tick of a clock. All escapes start with the click of a lock. If you're stuck in your story and want to get out,

You don't have to cry, you don't have to shout –

'Cause if you're little, you can do a lot. You Mustn't let a little thing like "little" stop you. If you sit around and let them get on top, you Won't change a thing.

Just because you find that life's not fair, it Doesn't mean that you just have to grin and bear it. If you always take it on the chin and wear it, You might as well be saying you

think that it's okay, And that's not right. And if it's not right, You have to put it right . . .

[She re-enters her bedroom and jumps onto the bed.]

But nobody else is gonna put it right for me. Nobody but me is gonna change my story.
Sometimes you have to be a little bit naughty!

Matilda lies down and flicks off the light. The vanity rises again, signifying morning. MR WORMWOOD, towel wrapped about his shoulder, enters the bathroom with MICHAEL.

MR WORMWOOD

In business, son, a man's hair is his greatest asset. Good hair means a good brain. Now, the secret to my success in business is

-

MICHAEL

Secrets.

MR WORMWOOD Yes. Yes. Secrets. The secret to my success is this. Oil of Violets hair tonic for men. Stand back, son! Your old man is going to work. [*He pulls the towel over his head and starts massaging vigorously*].

Oh, yeah. Oh, that's where it's at! Oh, right. That's the bananas right there. [*He rips the towel off to reveal that his hair is green.*] Let me tell you something, son. A man in business simply cannot fail to get noticed when he

looks like this.

MICHAEL

Secrets!

MRS WORMWOOD enters and screams.

MRS WORMWOOD

Your hair! It's . . . green!

MR WORMWOOD

Good Lord, woman, have you started already? It's not even eight
thirty!

*MATILDA enters from her bedroom. MR WORMWOOD takes a mirror that
MRS WORMWOOD brandishes.*

MR WORMWOOD

Oh! My hair is green!

MRS WORMWOOD

What on earth did you do that for? Why would you want green hair?

MR WORMWOOD

I don't want green hair. I didn't do anything!

MATILDA

Maybe you used some of mummy's peroxide by mistake.

MRS WORMWOOD

That's exactly what you've done. Oh, you stupid man.

MR WORMWOOD

Oh, my hair! Oh, my lovely hair! Oh, my good Lord. I've got my deal today with the Russians. What am I gonna do?

MATILDA

I know. I know what you can do.

MR WORMWOOD

What? What is it? What can I do?

MATILDA

You can pretend you're an elf!

MR WORMWOOD

Yes! That's it! I can pretend I'm an . . . What are you talking about? You fool! The boy's a looney.

MR WORMWOOD and MICHAEL exit. MRS WORMWOOD brushes past MATILDA with a sound of utter disgust.

MATILDA

Mum, would you like to hear a story?

MRS WORMWOOD

Don't be disgusting! Go on. Creep on back to that library of yours or something. The sooner you're locked up in that school, the better.

MRS WORMWOOD exits. MATILDA collects her books. The scene changes to the library. MISS HONEY is browsing the stacks. MRS

PHELPS enters.

MRS PHELPS

Matilda! What a pleasure to see you. Here in the library again,
are we?

MATILDA

Yes. I mean, my mum wanted me to stay at home with her. She hates it when I go out. She misses me so much. Dad too. He loves having me around. But I think it's good for grown-ups to have their own space.

MRS PHELPS

Your parents must be so proud to have a girl as clever as you. And do you tell them lots of stories like you do with me? I love your stories, Matilda! And that's not a hint, by the way. But if you did happen to have a story you wanted to tell -

MISS HONEY

Good-bye, Mrs Phelps. See you next week.

MRS PHELPS

Good-bye, Miss Honey. And good luck with the Tolstoy.

MISS HONEY laughs and exits down the stairs at the front of the stage.

MRS PHELPS

As I was saying, Matilda. I'm not hinting, but if you did happen to have a story you wanted -

MATILDA

Who was that?

MRS PHELPS

That lady? That was Miss Honey. She's going to be your teacher.

MATILDA

That lady? That lady is my -

MRS PHELPS

Yes, your teacher. Now, look. Are you going to tell me a story or not?

MATILDA

Once upon a time -

MRS PHELPS screams and exits. She re-enters carrying two square blocks, one larger than the other. She puts down the large block

*and MATILDA stands on it. MRS PHELPS retreats to the smaller
block and sits down.*

MATILDA

Once upon a time, the two greatest circus performers in the world - an escapologist who could escape from any lock that was ever invented, and an acrobat who was so skilled it seemed as if she could actually fly - fell in love, and got married. They performed some of the most incredible feats together anyone has ever seen. And people would come from miles around: kings! queens! celebrities! and astronauts! But not just to see their skill, but also to see their love for each other, which was so deep that it was said that cats would purr as they passed them, and dogs would weep with joy.

*A model of a grand old house rolls in from the back of the
stage.*

MATILDA

The moved into a beautiful old house at the edge of town, and in the evenings, they would walk and take the air. And each night, the children of the town would wait in anticipation, hoping for a glimpse of the shiny white scarf that the acrobat always wore, for then they knew that they had only to cry, "Tricks! Tricks!" and the great performers would instantly oblige with the most spectacular show, just for them.

But although they loved each other, although they were famous and everyone loved them, they were sad.

*MATILDA collects two dolls from the house. She uses them to
carry on a conversation.*

ACROBAT [*off-stage*] We have everything . . .

MATILDA

"We have everything that the world has to offer," said the wife.

ESCAPOLOGIST [*off-stage*] We have everything . . .

MATILDA

"But we do not have the one thing in the world we want most."

ACROBAT and ESCAPOLOGIST [*off-stage*] But the one thing . . .

MATILDA

"We do not have a child."

ESCAPOLOGIST [*off-stage*] Patience, my love.

MATILDA

"Patience, my love," the husband replied. "Time is on our side.
Even time loves us."

MRS PHELPS

Oh, Matilda!

MATILDA

But time is the one thing no one is master of. And as time passed, they grew quite old, and still they had no child. At night, they listened to the silence of their big, empty house, and they would imagine how beautiful it would be if it was filled with the sound of a child playing.

MRS PHELPS

Oh, Matilda, this is very sad!

MATILDA

Do you want me to stop?

MRS PHELPS

Don't you dare!

MATILDA Their sadness overwhelmed them, and drew them into ever more dangerous feats, as their work became the only place they could escape *the inescapable tragedy of their lives!* And so it was, they decided to perform the most dangerous feat ever known to man!

"It is called," said the husband, announcing the event to the world's press, who had gathered to listen with bated breath - [*The voice of the ESCAPOLOGIST echoes her words.*] - "'The Burning Woman, Hurling Through the Air, with Dynamite in Her Hair, over Sharks and Spiky Objects, Caught By the Man Locked in

a Cage', and it is the most dangerous feat ever known to man!

A crowd cheers. MATILDA and ACROBAT [*off stage*]

"It is our destiny - "

MATILDA

- said the wife, smiling sadly and slipping her hand into his.

MATILDA and ACROBAT [*off stage*] "It is where the loneliness of life has led us."

MATILDA pauses for several moments, holding the dolls in front of her contemplatively.

MRS PHELPS

Well, what happens?!

MATILDA

I . . . I don't know. Not yet, anyway.

MRS PHELPS

What? But I . . . Isn't there some more? I mean . . . Well, I suppose your mother will be waiting for you. Is she here? I'd love to meet her, actually -

MATILDA grabs her books and runs off the front of the stage.

MATILDA

Bye, Mrs Phelps! See you tomorrow!

MRS PHELPS

After your first day of school!

MRS PHELPS exits as a siren wails and the scene changes to Crunchem Hall Academy. A large iron gate made of square holes of various sizes rolls in from both sides of the stage. MATILDA's classmates enter hesitantly from the front of the stage.

NIGEL

My mummy says I'm a miracle . . .

TOMMY

My daddy says I'm his special little . . . guy . . .

LAVENDER

I am a princess . . .

ERIC

And I am a prince . . .

BIG KIDS enter menacingly behind the gate.

ALICE

Mum says I'm an angel . . .

AMANDA

Mum says I'm an angel . . .

NIGEL

Mum says I'm an angel . . .

*BIG KIDS approach and start climbing onto the gate and grabbing
the CHILDREN from behind it.*

BIG KIDS

And so you think you're able To survive this mess by being a prince or a princess. You
will soon see there's no escaping tragedy. And even if you put in heaps of effort, You're
just wasting energy, 'Cause your life as you know it is ancient history. I have suffered in
this jail. Have been trapped inside this cage for ages, This living 'ell. But if I try I can
remember, Back before my life had ended, Before my happy days were over, Before I
first heard the pealing of the bell. Like you, I was curious, So innocent I asked a
thousand questions.

But unless you want to suffer, listen up And I will teach you a thing or two. You listen
here, my dear, You'll be punished so severely if you step out of line. And if you cry it will
be double.

You should stay out of trouble And remember to be extremely careful.

NIGEL Why?

BIG KIDS

Why?

BIG KID [*BEN*] Why? Did you hear what he said?

BIG KIDS

Just you wait for phys-ed!

CHILDREN

What's phys-ed?

BIG KIDS

Physical education!

BIG KID [*BEN*] It's the Trunchbull's speciality.

*The CHILDREN reach out from behind the gate as the BIG KIDS
carry them away.*

ALICE

My mummy says I'm a miracle.

Ahh!

BRUCE

My daddy says I would be the teacher's pet!

Ahh!

LAVENDER

School is really fun, according to my mum.

Ahh!

AMANDA and ERIC

Dad said I'd learn the alphabet!

BIG KID [*BEN*] The alphabet? You've gotta learn to listen up, kid.

Two BIG KIDS start climbing on the gate, flanking alphabet blocks as they are pushed through the gate when they are mentioned in the song.

OLDER KIDS

And so you think you're **A**-ble To survive this mess by **B**eing a prince or a princess. You will soon (**C**) see there's no escaping trage**D**y. And **E**ven if you put in heaps of e**F**fort, You're just wasting ener**G**y, 'Cause your life as you know it is "aitc**H**"-ent history. I have suffered in this **J**ail, I've been trapped inside this (**K**) cage for ages, This living 'e**L**L. But if I try I can reme**M**ber, Back before my life had e**N**ded, Before my happy days were **O**ver, Before I first heard the **P**ealing of the bell. Like you, I was (**Q**) curious, So innocent I (**R**) asked a thousand questions,

But un**S**s you want to suffer, listen up And I will **T**each you a thing or two. Yo**U** listen here, my dear, You'll be punished so se**V**erely if you step out of line. And if you cry it will be (**W**) double. You should stay out of trouble, And remember to be e**X**tremely careful.

ERIC Wh**Y**?

BIG KIDS

Why?

BIG KID [*BEN*] Why? Why? Did you hear what we said?

The gate rolls away. Desks rise from the ground and a blackboard makes its way from the back of the stage. Upon the blackboard is written the alphabet.

BIG KIDS

Just you wait for phys-ed! Just you wait for phys-ed.

BIG KIDS and CHILDREN

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X.

CHILDREN

Why, why, why, why, why, why, why, why?

A spotlight makes its way across the letters on the board, finally settling at the end on the letter Z.

BIG KIDS

Just you wait for phy-Zed! *The BIG KIDS exit and MISS HONEY enters.* MISS HONEY

Good morning, children! My name is Miss Honey. And today is a very special day: your first day of school! Now, do any of you know any of your two times tables?

MATILDA raises her hand.

MISS HONEY

Wonderful. Matilda, isn't it? Please, stand, and do as much as you can.

MATILDA

One times two is two. Two times two is four. Three times two is six. Four times two is eight. Five times two is ten. Six times two is twelve. Seven times two is fourteen. Eight times two is sixteen. Nine times two is eighteen. Ten times two is twenty.

Eleven times two is twenty-two. Twelve times two is twenty-four.

MISS HONEY

Well, my word . . .

MATILDA

Thirteen times two is twenty-six. Fourteen times two is twenty-eight. Fifteen times two is thirty. Sixteen times two is thirty-two.

MISS HONEY

Stop. Stop! Good heavens. How far can you go?

MATILDA

I don't know. Quite a long way, I think.

MISS HONEY

Do you think you could tell me what two times twenty-eight is?

MATILDA

Fifty-six.

MISS HONEY.

Yes. Yes! That is v- . . . How about this. Now, this is much harder, so don't worry if you don't get it. Two times . . . four hundred and eighty-seven. If you took your time -

MATILDA

Nine hundred and seventy-four.

MISS HONEY

Twelve sevens?

MATILDA

Eighty-four.

CHILDREN No way! [*They start chattering.*]

MISS HONEY Let's leave maths for the time being . . . and look at reading. Now, can anyone read this? [*She underlines the sentence on the*

board.] *MATILDA, LAVENDER, and NIGEL raise their hands.*

NIGEL

Ooh, me, me, me, miss! I can! Me, me, me, me.

MISS HONEY

Very well. Nigel.

NIGEL leans forward in concentration and groans in agony several times. He screams and turns around, hitting ERIC's cap against ERIC's desk. He bites the cap, screaming through his teeth.

MISS HONEY hurries to pull the cap from NIGEL's mouth.

MISS HONEY Okay. Yes, yes. I think we'd better leave it there, Nigel. We don't want to burst a blood vessel on your first day.

Lavender?

LAVENDER

Is the first word . . . "tomato"?

MISS HONEY

No. But the "tomato" is a very good word.

LAVENDER

Yesss!

MISS HONEY

Matilda?

MATILDA

"I can now read words."

MISS HONEY

So, Matilda. You can read words.

MATILDA

Yes. Well, I needed to learn to read words so that I could read sentences. Because basically a sentence is just a big bunch of words. And if you can't read sentences, you've got no chance with books.

MISS HONEY beckons MATILDA to the back of the class. MISS HONEY

And . . . have you read a whole book? Yourself, Matilda?

MATILDA

Oh, yes. More than one. I love books. Last week, I read quite a few.

MISS HONEY

A few! In . . . in . . . in a week. My, my, that is good. Er, what books did you read?

MATILDA *Nicholas Nickleby . . . Oliver Twist . . . Jane Eyre . . . Tess of the D'urbervilles . . . The Lord of the Rings . . . Kim . . . The Invisible Man . . . The Secret Garden . . . Crime and*

Punishment . . . and . . . Cat in the Hat!

The school bell rings and all the children march out. The desks descend into the ground. MISS TRUNCHBULL's office, complete with her in a high-backed chair (facing the back of the stage) is wheeled in. MISS HONEY faces the audience and raises her fist.

MISS HONEY

Knock on the door, Jenny. Just knock on the door. Don't be pathetic! Knock on the door, Jenny. There's nothing to fear. You're being pathetic! It's just a door. You've seen one before. Just knock on the door.

Look at you trying to hide, silly. Standing outside the principal's office like a little girl. It's just pathetic!

Oh! Right.

Look at you hesitating. Hand's shaking. You should be embarrassed. You're not a little girl.

It's just pathetic.

Knock on the door, Jenny. What are you waiting for? Just knock on the door . . .

Perhaps I'll wait. She's probably having a meeting or something and won't want to be interrupted. If anything, caution in these situations is sensible. One should avoid confrontation when possible. I'll come back later, then.

But this little girl . . . This miracle . . .

Knock on the door, Jenny. Just knock on the door. Don't be pathetic!

MISS HONEY knocks three times and winces.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Enter!

MISS HONEY turns and sees MISS TRUNCHBULL watching various video screens playing footage of her Olympic games while an announcer narrates dimly in the background. She stands paralyzed in fear.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Don't just stand there like a wet tissue. Get on with it.

MISS HONEY

Yes. Yes. Yes, Miss Trunchbull. There's, erm . . . In . . . In . . . In my class, that is, er, there is a little girl called Matilda Wormwood. And -

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Daughter of Mr Harry Wormwood who owns Wormwood Moturs. Excellent man. Told me to watch out for the brat, though; says she's a real wart.

MISS HONEY

Oh no, Headmistress. I don't believe Matilda's that kind of child at all.

MISS TRUNCHBULL turns off the screens with a remote and wheels around, holding a magnifying glass.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What is the school motto, Miss Honey?

MISS HONEY

"Bambinatum est magitum."

MISS TRUNCHBULL

"Bambinatum est magitum." Children are maggots! In fact, it must have been her who put that stink bomb under my desk this morning. I'll have her for that. Thank you for suggesting it.

[She turns the screens back on.]

MISS HONEY

But I didn't . . . ? Miss Trunchbull, Matilda Wormwood is a genius!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Nonsense. Haven't I just told you that she is a gangster?

MISS HONEY

She knows her times tables.

MISS TRUNCBULL

So she's learned a few tricks.

MISS HONEY

Oh, but she can read!

MISS TRUNCBULL

So can I!

MISS HONEY

I have to tell you, Headmistress, that in . . . in . . . in my opinion, this little girl should be placed in the top form with the eleven-year-olds!

MISS TRUNCBULL What? [*She flicks the screens off again.*] But she is a squib. A shrimp. An unhatched tadpole. We cannot simply place her in the top form with the eleven-year-olds. What kind of society would

that be? What about rules, Honey? Rules?

MISS HONEY

I believe that . . . Matilda Wormwood is an exception . . . to the rules.

MISS TRUNCBULL

An exception. To the rules. In my school?

Look at these trophies. See how my trophies gleam in the sunlight? See how they shine? What do you think it took to become English Hammer Throwing Champion 1969?

[*She stands and approaches MISS HONEY menacingly, towering over her.*] Do you think in that moment, when my big moment came,

That I treated the rules with casual disdain?

Well? Like hell!

As I stepped up to the circle, did I change my plan? Hm? What? As I chalked up my palms, did I wave my hands? I did not! As I started my spin, did I look at the view? Did I drift off and dream for a minute or two? Do you think I faltered or amended my rotation? Do you think I altered my intended elevation?

As the hammer took off, did I change my grunt
From the grunt I had practiced for many
a month? Not a jot! Not a dot did I stray from the plot. Not a detail of my throw was
adjusted or forgotten.

Not even when the hammer left my hands
And sailed high up, up above the stands
Did I let myself go. No, no, no, no [*ad lib.*]

[*She turns and walks back to her desk. She daintily reaches up and captures a figurine of a
woman throwing the hammer.*]

If you want to throw the hammer for your country,
You have to stay inside the circle all
the time. [*She murmurs along to the music.*] And if you want to make the team,
You don't need happiness or self-esteem.

You just need to keep your feet inside the line.

[*She presses an intercom on her desk.*] Sing, children. Two, three, four.

*CHILDREN and BIG KIDS appear in the boxes to the upper left and
upper right of the stage and sing.*

MISS TRUNCHBULL and CHILDREN

If you want to throw the hammer for your country.

BIG KIDS

Bambinatum est magitum.

MISS TRUNCHBULL and CHILDREN

You have to stay inside the circle –

MISS TRUNCHBULL

– all the time.

BIG KIDS

Circulum, maggitum, maggitum.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

And if you want to teach success,
You don't use sympathy or tenderness.

CHILDREN and BIG KIDS

Tenderness.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

You have to force the little squits to toe the line!

[She grabs a baton with a yellow ribbon attached to it and starts twirling to the music.] Sing,
Jenny! Two, three, four!

MISS HONEY, BIG KIDS, and CHILDREN
If you want to throw the hammer for your country,

BIG KIDS

Bambinatum! Bambinatum! Gloria Magitum!

MISS HONEY, BIG KIDS, and CHILDREN
You have to stay inside the circle all the time.

BIG KIDS

Circulum est Deus! Deus!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

**Apply just one simple rule To hammer throwing, life, and school – Life's a ball, so learn
to throw it, Find the bally line and toe it,
And always keep your feet inside the line!**

[She throws the baton across the stage, does a jeté to catch it, and points her finger at MISS
HONEY.]

Now get out.

*MISS TRUNCHBULL carries the ribbon back to her desk and sits
down. She starts the video screens playing again.*

MISS HONEY

I have to tell you, Headmistress, that it is my intention to
help this little girl. Whether you like it or not.

MISS HONEY exits off the front of the stage. The scene changes to the Wormwood's living room. MRS WORMWOOD and MICHAEL down sit in armchairs. MATILDA sits down reading a book. MR WORMWOOD

paces the stage.

MR WORMWOOD

Stupid, nasty, stinking, slimy . . . Great, big, question-asking . . . How dare they speak to me like that! Who the hell do they think they are? Flipping, filthy, nasty, stupid Russians!

MRS WORMWOOD

Don't tell me. We're not rich.

MR WORMWOOD

It's the mileage. They took one look at the mileage on the first car and they said that these cars were all knackered. I told them, I said, "Hey. The reason the mileage is so high is a manufacturing mistake."

MATILDA

Is that true?

MR WORMWOOD

Of course it's not true.

MATILDA

So you lied?

MR WORMWOOD

Of course I lied!

MATILDA

And they didn't believe you?

MR WORMWOOD

Of course they didn't believe me: I've got - green - hair!

MICHAEL

I've got hair.

MR WORMWOOD runs over and grabs MATILDA's book.

MR WORMWOOD

What's this? Another flaming book? What's wrong with the telly?

MRS WORMWOOD

She's got no respect, that one. With her, it's all "books" and "stories".

MATILDA

Oh, no, it's a lovely book. Honest. You should read it. I'm sure
you'd -

MR WORMWOOD "Lovely"? Here's what I think of your lovely - [*He
starts*

pulling at the book as though to tear it apart.] MATILDA

No, it's a library book! It's from the library!

MRS WORMWOOD

You show the little brat! Go on, then!

*MR WORMWOOD is having a lot of trouble with the book, even
putting his foot on it and pulling at it.*

MR WORMWOOD

Oh, this is thick! How do you do this? Come on!

Finally, he grabs an individual page in glee.

MR WORMWOOD

Look what I've just found! Look at that! They're individual!

*He rips out several pages and throws them dramatically on the
ground.*

MR WORMWOOD Now, get out of here, you little stink worm! [*to
MICHAEL*] Get

up, boy.

MICHAEL gets up and MR WORMWOOD sits down on his recliner.

*MICHAEL sits on his lap. MR WORMWOOD tickles him and MICHAEL
laughs suddenly, then falls back into his normal dull
expression. MATILDA collects the remains of her book.*

MATILDA

Do we have any super glue?

MR WORMWOOD

In the cupboard. And, while you're at it, why don't you stick
your stupid book to your stupid head?

*The Wormwoods laugh. Their furniture is wheeled off the stage
and a hat rack with MR WORMWOOD's hat and an umbrella is brought
center stage. MATILDA opens a cupboard at the front of the
stage.*

MATILDA

Just because you find that life's not fair, it Doesn't mean that you just have to grin and bear it. If you always take it on the chin and wear it,

Nothing will change.

[She puts the book in the cupboard and hurries to the hat rack with a bottle reading "sooper gloo". She uses the umbrella to bring down the hat and starts lining it with glue.]

Even if you're little, you can do a lot. You Mustn't let a little thing like "little" stop you.

If you sit around and let them get on top, you Might as well be saying you think that it's okay, And that's not right!

MATILDA hides the glue behind her back as MR WORMWOOD enters.

She holds the hat out to him. He takes it and squashes it firmly down onto his head.

MR WORMWOOD

I've got my eye on you, boy.

MATILDA

I'm a girl!

MR WORMWOOD exits. The hat rack is taken away. CHILDREN and BIG

KIDS run in, creating pandemonium. Eventually, they quieten down, but LAVENDER continues to jump up in down next to MATILDA, who is reading.

LAVENDER

Matilda? Can I ask you a question? Do all those brains in your head give you a headache? I mean, it's got to hurt, all squished in there.

MATILDA

No, it's fine. I think they just - fit.

LAVENDER Right. Well, I'd better hang around just in case. If they start to squееееее out of your ears, you're going to need help. [She holds her hand out to MATILDA, who takes it.] I'm Lavender, and

I think it's probably for the best if we're best friends!

NIGEL runs in up the steps stage left, screaming.

NIGEL

Hide me! Someone poured a whole can of syrup onto Trunchbull's chair. She sat down, and when she got up . . . her knickers stayed stuck to the seat! Someone told her I did it, but I never! And now she's after me!

MATILDA

That's not fair! That's not fair at all!

BIG KID

You're done, kid. You're -

BIG KIDS

Finished!

BIG KID [*RYAN*] Once Agatha Trunchbull decides you're guilty, you're -

BIG KIDS

Squished!

BIG KID [*TAMIKA*] Yesterday, she caught Julius Rottwinkle eating a gobstopper

during science. She just picked him up, swung him around, and threw him out the -

BIG KIDS

Window!

MATILDA

Don't listen to them. That didn't happen. They're trying to scare us.

NIGEL

Oh, Matilda! They say she's going to put me in Chokey!

MATILDA

What . . . What's Chokey?

NIGEL

They say it's a cupboard in her office that she throws children into. They say she's lined it with nails, and spikes, and bits of broken glass.

BIG KIDS

There's a place you are sent if you haven't been good,

BIG KID [BEN] And it's made of spikes and wood.

BIG KIDS

And it isn't wide enough to sit.

BIG KID [TAYLOR] And even if you could,

BIG KIDS

There are nails on the bottom,

BIG KID [TAYLOR] So you wish you'd –

BIG KIDS

Stood! When the hinges creak and the door is closed,

You cannot see squat –

BIG KID [TAMIKA] Not the end of your nose.

BIG KIDS

And when you scream, you don't know if the sound came out, Or if the scream in your
head even reached your mouth!

Auuurrrgh!

*MATILDA gazes at their dramatic display non-chalantly and holds
out a palm to them.*

MATILDA All right. [to Nigel] When did this happen?

NIGEL

Twenty minutes ago. But, why?

From offstage, MISS TRUNCHBULL blows on her whistle.

NIGEL

Oh, no, she's coming!

MATILDA

You'd better hide! Quick, jackets!

NIGEL lies down on the ground. The CHILDREN and BIG KIDS take off their blazers and throw them on top of him. They line up at the back of the stage. MISS TRUNCHBULL runs in, blowing on her whistle, and chases ERIC down until he is pulled into formation by two BIG KIDS.

MISS TRUNCHBULL [to MATILDA] You! Where is the maggot known as Nigel?

MATILDA

He's over there, under those coats.

The CHILDREN and BIG KIDS hang their heads. MISS TRUNCHBULL walks heavily toward the coats.

MATILDA

Where he's been for the last hour, actually.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What? An hour?

MATILDA

Oh, yes. You see, unfortunately, Nigel suffers from the rare, but chronic sleep disorder, narcolepsy. The condition is characterised by the sufferer experiencing bouts of chronic fatigue, and falling suddenly asleep, often without knowing, or any warning at all. You see, he fell asleep, and we put him under the coats for safety. Didn't we? Didn't we?!

CHILDREN and BIG KIDS

Yes!

BIG KID [RYAN] Narcolopsy!

MATILDA

He'll probably think he's in bed when he wakes up.

NIGEL sits up, yawning and stretching.

NIGEL

Is it time for school yet, mum? Hello! What am doing here? Well, this isn't my room at all! Oh, hello, Miss Trunchbull.

Angrily, MISS TRUNCHBULL looks from NIGEL to MATILDA and back.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Amanda Thripp.

The CHILDREN and BIG KIDS step back, leaving AMANDA in a spotlight.

AMANDA

Yes, Miss Trunchbull?

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What have I told you about wearing pigtails? I hate pigtails!

MISS TRUNCHBULL hurries over to AMANDA. The BIG KIDS and CHILDREN scurry away.

AMANDA

But my mummy likes them! She says they make me look pretty!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Then your mummy is a twit!

MISS TRUNCHBULL grabs AMANDA by the pigtails and swings her around and around. The stage goes black. When lights come up again, AMANDA is gone. The BIG KIDS and CHILDREN take up various positions around the stage and audience, pointing in every which way. The announcer from MISS TRUNCHBULL's videos starts commentating. Flashbulbs go off. A spotlight searches the theater. All the while, AMANDA's screams get louder.

BIG KID

Here she comes!

"AMANDA" drops from the rafters above the audience into a pile of coats underneath her. AMANDA stands up and screams in triumph. MISS TRUNCHBULL flails victoriously, then starts blowing her whistle. The CHILDREN and BIG KIDS line up again.

MISS TRUNCHBULL [to MATILDA] You! What is your name?

MATILDA

Matilda. Matilda Wormwood.

MISS TRUNCHBULL So you're Wormwood, are you? I might have known.

Well, Matilda Wormwood. You have just made a very big mistake.

[Daintily, straightening her collar, MISS TRUNCHBULL exits off the front of

the stage.] LAVENDER

Just so you all know, she's my best friend!

BIG KIDS and CHILDREN

Wow!

BIG KIDS and CHILDREN run off. Spangly ribbons are strung across the stage. MR WORMWOOD enters with a lackey, who sits on a tyre behind him. The lackey is wearing a shirt that reads "Wormwood Moturs".

MR WORMWOOD Brand new stock, sir! Oh, yes. Completely different cars, sir. Green hair? Yeah, it was, er - [*He gestures to the lackey.*] - National Green Hair Day! A celebration of all the wonderful green things in the world, like, er, oh, like lettuce, and snot. Tomorrow at one? Absolutely, sir! Yeah. Bye-bye, sir. Dosvedoodah. [*He throws the phone to the lackey.*] Now, that is how you do it! [*He tries and fails to pull his hat off, tugging on it several times.*] Hat seems to be, er . . . [*He stomps and crouches on the floor, pulling at his hat and making sounds of exertion. He flails around the stage.*] Oh, my head! [*He finally gives up and straightens up casually.*]

I think I'm gonna keep

this on. Looks like rain.

MR WORMWOOD grabs his suitcase and exits along with the lackey. The scene changes to the Wormwood's living room. MRS WORMWOOD has her leg raised up and RUDOLPHO is holding it against his back. MISS HONEY enters and knocks.

MRS WORMWOOD

Who is it?

MISS HONEY

Oh, er, hello. It's Miss Honey. Matilda's teacher?

MRS WORMWOOD

Bit busy right now!

MISS HONEY

Oh, it will only take a moment.

MRS WORMWOOD

Oh, come in if you must.

MISS HONEY enters and turns away in shock.

MRS WORMWOOD

This is Rudolpho! Oh, it's nothing like that. He's my dance

partner. We're rehearsing.

RUDOLPHO saunters over and holds his arm out to MISS HONEY.

RUDOLPHO

Ciao.

MISS HONEY

Oh, parle Italiano? Ciao, Rudolpho. Piacelli. Come stai?

RUDOLPHO

Wot? Who is this, babe? You know what interruptions do to my energy flow. [*He sits down in a zen position.*] MRS WORMWOOD

What do you want, Miss Chutney?

MISS HONEY

Oh, it's Miss Honey. Erm, well, as you know, Matilda is in the bottom class. And . . . And children in the bottom class aren't really expected to read.

MRS WORMWOOD

Well, then stop her reading! Lord knows we've tried.

RUDOLPHO dances across the back of the stage.

RUDOLPHO

I'm in the zone, doll! I can feel it in my hips. Don't waste this. [*He slides down on his thighs stage left.*] MRS WORMWOOD

Look. I'm not in favor of girls getting all clever-pants, Miss Hussy. A girl should think about make-up and hair dye. Looks are more important than books. Now, look at you, and look at me. You chose books. I chose looks!

RUDOLPHO Babes, I'm on fire, here! Please! [*He dances backwards and MRS*

WORMWOOD follows along.]

MISS HONEY

But Matilda can calculate complicated figures in her head in an instant!

RUDOLPHO

Calculate this! [*He does a split in front of MISS HONEY.*] MRS WORMWOOD

Fantastico!

MISS HONEY Her mind is incredible. With a little help from us, she could go to university
before she –

MRS WORMWOOD *Mind?* Her mind? You really don't know anything, do
you?

Somewhere along the way, my dear, You've made an awful error. You oughtn't blame
yourself now, come along. You seem to think that people like people what are clever. It's
very quaint, it's very sweet, But wrong.

People don't like smarty-pants what go 'round Claiming that they know stuff we don't
know.

Now, here's a tip:

What you know matters less Than the volume with which what you don't know's
expressed. Content has never been less important, so

You have got to be LOUD!

Girl, you've gotta learn to stand up and stick out from the Crowd! A little less flat, a lot
more heel. A little less fact, a lot more feel. A little less brains, a lot more hair. A little
less head, a lot more derriere.

[She gets on all fours as RUDOLPHO rides her like a horse.] Whoa! Neigh!

*RUDOLPHO starts dancing with and carrying around MISS HONEY,
which he continues to do throughout the song. MISS HONEY, dazed,
follows the dance as best she can.*

MRS WORMWOOD

No one's gonna tell you when to shake your tush. Well, you got a light. Don't hide it
under a bushel. No one's going to look if you don't stand out. No one's going to listen if
you don't shout. No one's gonna care if you don't care, So go and put some highlights in
your hair. 'Cause you've gotta highlight what you got. Even if what you got is not a lot.

You gotta be loud!

You gotta give yourself permission to shine. To stand up and be proud!

Whee!

A little less zzz, a lot more zing. A little less shh, a lot more schwing. A little less dressing like your mum. A little more bah-da, ba ba ba-da bom!

[*She takes a mirror from the armchair.*] Oh, I look nice. [*to MISS HONEY*] You don't!

No one's gonna tell you when to wiggle your bumba.

RUDOLPHO

No one's gonna love you if you don't know the rumba.

MRS WORMWOOD

Everybody loves a little something exotic.

RUDOLPHO

But learning a language is over the top –

MRS WORMWOOD

It doesn't really matter if you don't know much!

RUDOLPHO

As long as you don't know it with the volume up.

MRS WORMWOOD puts a number on RUDOLPHO's back as though they are competing in a dancing competition.

MRS WORMWOOD and RUDOLPHO

The less you have to sell, the harder you sell it. The less you have to say, the louder you yell it. The dumber the act, the bigger the confession.

The less you have to show, the louder you dress it.

RUDOLPHO whips off MRS WORMWOOD's skirt to reveal a shorter skirt made of tassels beneath it.

MRS WORMWOOD and RUDOLPHO

You gotta get up! You gotta get up and be loud!

A table with the word "Contest" emblazoned on the side is wheeled in. Four judges in outrageous costumes sit behind it.

JUDGE

Your judges!

Two other dancing teams come in and join MRS WORMWOOD and RUDOLPHO in the competition. They dance to the same routine until MRS WORMWOOD and RUDOLPHO overtake them with more complicated choreography.

MRS WORMWOOD

*I'm the best! I'm the best! I'm the best!
Three judges hold up signs reading "10" as MRS WORMWOOD sits on the table. She holds up the final "10".*

MRS WORMWOOD

Ten! Of course! I mean, what else?

**You gotta be loud! Stand out from the crowd! Are you listening? You gotta be loud!
Stand up and be proud!**

BACKGROUND SINGERS

Loud, loud, loud, loud! Loud, loud, loud, loud! Loud, loud, loud, loud!

MRS WORMWOOD

You gotta be loud!

The other dancers and judges exit, leaving MRS WORMWOOD and RUDOLPHO in a dramatic position. They then saunter off. MISS HONEY is left in a pile stage right.

MISS HONEY

Stop being pathetic, Jenny. Just get on your feet, Jenny. You are going to march in there and give them a piece of your mind.

Leave it alone, Jenny. The more that you try, The more you'll just look like a fool. This it not your problem. You've not got the spine. You are a teacher. Just go back to school!

But this little girl . . . This miracle . . . She seems not to know that she's special at all.
And what sort of teacher would I be

If I let this little girl fall? I can see This little girl needs somebody strong to fight by her side. Instead, she's found me. Pathetic, little me. And another door closes. And Jenny's outside.

*MISS HONEY exits behind the stacks as the library scene rolls
in. MRS PHELPS is sitting on a block and MATILDA is standing on
one, holding the two dolls.*

MATILDA And so, the great day arrived! It was like the entire world had gathered to see *The Burning Woman, Hurling Through the Air, with Dynamite in Her Hair, Over Sharks and Spiky Objects, Caught By the Man Locked in a Cage*. Everything was arranged by - [*She pulls her coat over her head to simulate a hunchback, and grabs a large book.*] - the Acrobat's sister, a frightening woman who used to be an Olympic-class hammer-thrower, who loved nothing better than to scare the children of the town. People whispered that in her dark and brooding heart, she resented the sister,

both her success and her love.

*The ESCAPOLOGIST starts to walk in from the back of the stage.
He stands up on a block.*

MATILDA

Suddenly, out came the Escapologist, dressed as usual in his tights and spangly costume. But there was no sign of the Acrobat, and no glimpse at all of her shiny white scarf. And instead of a musical fanfare, there was silence, as he solemnly strode into the room.

MATILDA and ESCAPOLOGIST

Ladies and gentlemen! Boys and girls! *The Burning Woman, Hurling Through the Air, with Dynamite in Her Hair, Over Sharks and Spiky Objects, Caught By the Man Locked in a Cage* has been . . . cancelled!

MRS PHELPS

No!

MATILDA

Yes! The audience gasped so loud that a passing aeroplane caught it on its instrumentation and recorded it as an atmospheric phenomenon.

MATILDA and ESCAPOLOGIST

Cancelled, because my wife is . . . pregnant!

MRS PHELPS

Oh, Matilda!

MATILDA

Absolute silence. You could have heard a fly burp. Then suddenly, the audience jumped to its feet and roared in appreciation!

An audience cheers. The ACROBAT enters from the back of the stage, and the ESCAPOLOGIST takes her by the hand. They embrace and exit out the back of the stage.

MATILDA

The great feat was instantly forgotten, and the applause went on for nearly an hour.

MRS PHELPS

So it has a happy ending!

MATILDA Forgotten, by everyone except, that is - [*She pulls her coat over her head.*] - the Acrobat's sister. When all had quietened

down, she stepped forward and produced . . . a contract.

MRS PHELPS

A . . . A contract?

MATILDA and the ACROBAT'S SISTER [*off-stage*] "A contract was signed to perform this feat, and perform this

feat you shall!"

MRS PHELPS

No!

MATILDA and the ACROBAT'S SISTER [*off-stage*] "I have paid for the posters, publicity, the catering, the

toilet facilities. If I give the crowd their money back, where is my profit?! A contract is a contract is a contract! My hands are tied. The Burning Woman, Hurling Through the Air, with Dynamite in Her Hair, Over Sharks and Spiky Objects, Caught by the Man Locked in a Cage will be performed, and performed this day, or . . . off to prison you both shall go!"

MRS PHELPS

No! No!

MATILDA holds her a dramatic pose, holding the large book above her head.

MRS PHELPS

Well, what happened next?

MATILDA

I don't know. I'll tell you tomorrow.

MRS PHELPS

What?! I don't know if my nerves will make it until tomorrow.

MATILDA

Mrs Phelps? Are you crying? Maybe I shouldn't tell you any more.

MRS PHELPS

Oh, no, Matilda. We must find out how it ends. And . . . I'm not crying because it's sad. It's just that they want that child so very much. It must be wonderful for a child to be so wanted.

MATILDA

Yes, wonderful. Good-bye, Mrs Phelps.

MRS PHELPS exits with the blocks. MATILDA stands at the front of the stage as her classmates walk in and the desks rise from the ground. They sits and unpack their bags. MISS HONEY enters and erases the board.

MISS HONEY

Matilda? Could I speak to you for a moment, please? I'm afraid I've not been too successful in getting others to recognize your . . . abilities. So, starting tomorrow, I shall bring a selection of very clever books that I think will challenge your mind. And you may sit and read while I teach the others, and, well, if you have any questions, I shall do my best to answer them. How does that sound?

MATILDA stares up at her for several long seconds. She then steps forward and hugs MISS HONEY tightly.

MISS HONEY Matilda, that . . . That is the biggest hug in the world. [*She wraps her hands around MATILDA.*] You're going to hug all the air

out of me.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Matilda Wormwood! Matilda Wormwood!

MISS HONEY steps away from MATILDA as MISS TRUNCHBULL enters by the blackboard.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Where is Ma-

MATILDA holds up her hand.

MATILDA

Yes, Miss Trunchbull.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

So you admit it, do you?

MATILDA

Admit what, Miss Trunchbull?

MISS TRUNCHBULL This clot, this foul carbuncle is none other than a disgusting criminal! [*She takes MATILDA by the wrist and leads her to ERIC's desk.*] A denizen of the underworld! A member of the mafia! [*She shoves ERIC out of his seat so MATILDA can stand on*

his desk.] ERIC

Ah!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

This morning, you sneaked like a serpent into the kitchen and stole a slice of my private chocolate cake from my tea tray.

MATILDA

No, I did not!

MISS HONEY [*placatingly*] Miss Trunchbull. Matilda's been here all morning.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Standing up for the little spit-ball, are you? Well, this crime took place before school started. And therefore, she is guilty!

The room freezes as MISS TRUNCHBULL starts to write the word "GUILTY" on the board. There is a spotlight on BRUCE as he begins to talk.

BRUCE

Okay! Look! All right! I stole the cake. And honestly, I was really, definitely, sort of, almost thinking about owning up. Maybe. But the thing was, I was having a lot of trouble with my belly. You see, the Trunchbull's cake was so good that I'd scoffed it down too quick, and now it was beginning to fight back. [*His stomach growls.*] Oops! See!

BRUCE turns back around and the scene unfreezes. MISS TRUNCHBULL finishes writing the word "GUILTY" on the board.

MATILDA

I'm not guilty! I didn't do anything!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

You are guilty, because you are a fiend. You are a crook. You are a thief! And I shall crush you. I shall pound you. I shall consign you to the seventh circle of hell, child. You shall be . . . You shall be destroyed.

BRUCE turns around and burps for a full ten seconds. The CHILDREN thrash in their seats. The scene freezes again for BRUCE to talk.

BRUCE

It was the biggest burp I had ever done. It was the biggest burp I had ever heard. The biggest burp I had ever heard about! It was like the entire world went silent for that burp to exist.

A purple spotlight starts to make its way from Bruce across the classroom.

BRUCE

As a huge cloud of chocolate-y gas wafted from my mouth and drifted across the class. Past Lavender. Past Alice. Past Matilda. And then, my great, big, beautiful chocolate-y burp,

which now seemed to have a mind of its own, wafted full into the face of the Trunchbull!

The scene unfreezes. MISS TRUNCHBULL grimaces as the purple spotlight leaves her. The CHILDREN, save BRUCE, but including MISS HONEY, hide under the desks. MISS TRUNCHBULL sniffs and licks the air. She then sniffs her way across the room, following the former path of the spotlight. She stops in triumph.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Bruce Bogtrotter.

BRUCE
Yes, miss?

MISS TRUNCHBULL
You liked my cake, didn't you, Bruce?

BRUCE
Yes, Miss Trunchbull! And I'm very sorry -

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. As long as you enjoyed the cake. That's the main thing.

BRUCE Is it?

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Yes! Bogtrotter, it is.

BRUCE
Well, I did. Thank you.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Wonderful. Marvellous. That makes me so happy. It gives me a warm glow in my lower intestine. Oh, cook . . .

The cook enters, holding an enormous chocolate cake on a tray, along with a wooden spoon. She puts it down on the desk behind BRUCE. She exits, not before scratching her behind and wiping her nose.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
What's the matter, Bogtrotter? Lost your appetite?

BRUCE
Well, yes. I'm full.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Oh, no, you are not "full". I'll tell you when you are full. And I say that criminals like you are not full until you have eaten the entire cake.

BRUCE But -

MISS TRUNCHBULL

No "buts". You haven't got time for "but". Eat.

BRUCE

But I can't eat it all!

MISS HONEY

Headmistress, he'll be sick!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

He should have thought of that before he made a pact with Satan and decided to steal my cake! [*sometimes, to be in time with the music*: Well? Come on!] Eat!

CHILDREN

He can't!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Eat!

CHILDREN

He surely can't!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Eat!

CHILDREN

He might explode!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Eat!!

MISS TRUNCHBULL strides to the board. Over the course of the song, she writes on the board: "Copy one million times by tomorrow. I am FULL when and only when the Headmistress says I am FULL. I am GUILTY when the Headmistress says I am GUILTY."

CHILDREN

A single slice, Or even two, Bruce, Might have been nice, But even you, Bruce,

Have to admit Between you and it, There's not a lot of difference in size.

CHILDREN 1

He can't!

CHILDREN 2

He can! Bruce!

CHILDREN 1

He surely can't!

He surely can't!

CHILDREN 2

You are the man, Bruce!

CHILDREN 1

He might explode!

CHILDREN 2

He's quite elastic . . .

CHILDREN 1

He's going to blow. Make him stop!

CHILDREN 2

He's fantastic! Look at him go!

CHILDREN 1

I can't watch!

CHILDREN

I think in effect, This must confirm, Bruce, What we all suspected. You have a worm,
Bruce!

Or maybe your largeness Is like the TARDIS: Considerably roomier inside.

CHILDREN 1

He can't!

CHILDREN 2

He can!

CHILDREN 1

He surely can't! He surely can't!

CHILDREN 2

You are the man, Bruce!

CHILDREN

B-R-O-O-C-E! Bruce! You'll never again be subject to abuse for your immense caboose.
She'll call a truce, Bruce. With every swallow, you are tightening the noose. We never
thought it was possible, But here it is, coming true: We can have our cake and it it too!

The time has come to put that tumbly-tum to use.

No excuse, Bruce. Let out your belt. I think you'll want your trousers loose.

Oh – Stuff it in. (Bruce!) You're almost finished. (Bruce!) You'll fit it in. Whatever you
do, just don't give in. Don't let her win. Come on, Bruce, be our hero. Cover yourself in
chocolate glory!

BRUCE

It's too much! It's just too much!

MATILDA

Go on, Bruce. Do it.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Silence!

BRUCE wilts by the desk. LAVENDER puts the wooden spoon back in his hand. He drops it again. Then after several seconds, he picks it up and returns to the cake with renewed vigour.

CHILDREN

Oh – Bruce! You'll never again be subject to abuse for your immense caboose. She'll call a truce, Bruce. Just one more bite and you'll've completely cooked her goose. We never thought it was possible, But here it is, coming true:

We can have our cake and eat it –

Ah-ah-aah-ah Ah-ah-aah-ah Ah-ah-aah-ah Ah-ah-aah-ah

CHILDREN and MISS HONEY

Ah!

MISS HONEY jumps up and down with joy.

MISS HONEY Go on, Brucey! Yeah! Yes! [*She pauses and realizes what she has done, and slowly lowers her hands.*] Sorry, Miss Trunchbull. I

got carried away.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

That's all right, Jenny. We all get carried away sometimes. Even me. [*Looking irritated, she makes her way to BRUCE's side.*] Well done, Bogtrotter. Good show. [*She exits down the steps and stops behind the first portion of the audience.*] Well? Come along,

Bogtrotter.

BRUCE

What? Where?

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Oh, did I not mention? That was only the first part of your punishment. There's more – the second part. And the second part is Chokey!

BRUCE What?!

MISS HONEY

No. No, Miss Trunchbull. Please. You can't.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Yes, Miss Trunchbull, please, you can! Do you think I would allow myself to be defeated by these maggots, do you? Who do you think I am, Miss Honey? A weakling? An idiot? A fool? You?

MISS HONEY

He's eaten it all. He did what you asked.

MISS TRUNCHBULL takes BRUCE by the wrist and leads him off the front of the stage.

BRUCE

I did! I ate the lot! Please! No! No, not there! Don't take me to Chokey! Please! No! No!

MATILDA

That's not right!

Lights down.

MATILDA THE MUSICAL

ACT 2

About 5 minutes before the end of intermission, the curtain rises to reveal a microphone in the middle of the stage. MR WORMWOOD walks over to it. He taps it and it screeches.

MR WORMWOOD

Ladies and gentlemen! Hey. Before we, er, continue with proceedings, I would like to offer an apology for some of the things that have been going on here tonight. They are not nice things, and they are not

right things. And I would like to state, guarantorically, that we would not like any children who might be here tonight watching this to go home and try these things out for themselves.

I am, of course, talking about reading books. Now, it is not normal for kids to behave in this fashion. It stunts the brain, it wears out the eyes; it makes kids ugly, stinky, fatty, sweaty Betty, boring, gaseous . . . and crucially, it gives them head lice of the soul. Under no circumstances do we condone such activities, and we do so utterly without reservoirs.

Now, can I just ask, by a way of a show of hands, how many grown-up people here has actually ever read a book? Come on, put em up.

MR WORMWOOD elicits the name of someone from the audience.

MR WORMWOOD

Don't take this the wrong way, but . . . Bookworm! Bookworm! Reading all the books like a stinky little worm. You read books, like a worm. Worms read books. You read books. Worms are stupid. You're a s-wurm. There, now [*audience member's name*] will learn from that. It won't stop [*him/her*] reading, but . . . [*he'll/she'll*] never put [*his/her*] hand up in a theatre again!

Ladies and gentlemen! May I present to you today the pinnacle of our achievements as a species. The very reason that we bothered evolving out of unicorns in the first place.

A television is brought out by MICHAEL, who has a ukulele strung around his back.

MR WORMWOOD

Somewhere, on a show, I heard That a picture tells a thousand words. So, telly, if you bothered to take a look, Is the equivalent of, like . . . lots of books!

Every time the word "telly" is mentioned in the following verses, MICHAEL yells the word along with his father.

MR WORMWOOD

All I know, I learnt from telly. This big beautiful box of facts.

If you know a thing already,

Baby, you can switch the channel over just like that.
Endless joy and endless laughter. Folks living happily ever after. All you need to make you wise Is twenty-three minutes plus advertisements.

Why would we waste our energy Turning the pages, one, two, three? When we can sit comfortably, On our lovely bumferlies, Watching people singing, and talking, and

doing stuff?

All I know, I learnt from telly. The bigger the telly, the smarter the man. You can tell from my big telly Just how clever of a fellow I am!

Take it away, son.

MICHAEL steps forward, and after some consideration, plucks a note on his ukulele. After a pause, he looks down and plucks another doleful note.

MR WORMWOOD You can't learn that from a stupid book, [*audience member's name*]!

All I know, I learnt from telly. What to think and what to buy. I was pretty smart already, But now I'm really, really smart, very very smart.

Endless content, endless channels, Endless chat on endless panels. All you need to fill your muffin, Without having to really fink or nuffin.

Why would we waste our energy

Trying to work out "ooh"-lysses? When we can sit happily on our lovely bapperlies Watching slightly famous people talking to really famous people?

All I know I learnt from telly. The bigger the telly, the smarter the man. You can tell from my big telly Just how clever of a fellow I am.

MICHAEL runs out and grabs a giant trash can. MR WORMWOOD walks over to a small book cart and starts throwing books over his shoulder, and MICHAEL catches them in the trash can.

MR WORMWOOD

Who the Dickens is Charles Dickens? Mary Shelley? Cor, she sounds smelly. Charlotte Bronte? Do not want-y! Jane Austin? In the compostin'. James Joyce? He doesn't sound noice. Ewen McEwan? Ugh, I feel like spewin'. William Shakespeare? Schwilliam Schmakespeare. Moby Dick? [*He titters.*] Easy, grandma!

All together, now! All I know, I learnt from telly!

The bigger the telly, the smarter the man. You can tell from my big telly What a very clever fellow I am.

Thank you very much.

Some of the CHILDREN come on stage to take away the props. LAVENDER walks up to the microphone as though to take it away, but after making sure no one is looking, she pulls it down to her level and starts

speaking into it.

LAVENDER Hello. I'm Lavender, by the way. Matilda's best friend! There's a bit coming up that's all about - me! Well, not exactly about me. But I play a big part in it. But I'm not going to say what happens, because I don't want to spoil it for you. [*She starts walking off the stage with the microphone, then stops.*] All right. Look. What I do is I volunteer to give the Trunchbull a jug of water. And on the way back . . . No! I don't want to tell you anymore because I don't want to ruin it! [*She walks off stage. After a moment, she runs back on.*] Well . . . On the way back, I find a newt. A newt is like a really ugly lizard that lives in water. And so I pick it up and . . . No! I'm not saying any more! [*She raises her fists and growls, then huffs off. Before she can make it off stage, she turns around.*] I'm going to put the newt in the Trunchbull's jug! It's going to be brilliant!

LAVENDER runs out and the stage darkens as the Entr'acte plays. When lights go up again, there are four swings hanging from the rafters. BRUCE and TOMMY sit on two of them. BRUCE is wearin a sign that says "I have been to CHOKEY." As the following song progresses, various CHILDREN and then BIG KIDS come down a slide at the back of the stage and take turns on the swings.

BRUCE

When I grow up, I will be tall enough to reach the branches
That I need to reach to climb
The trees you get to climb
When you're grown up.

BRUCE and TOMMY

And when I grow up, I will be smart enough to answer all
The questions that you need to know
The answers to
Before you're grown up.

AMANDA and ERIC

And when I grow up, I will eat sweets every day,
On the way to work, And I will go to bed late
every night.

And I will wake up
When the sun comes up, And I will watch cartoons until my eyes go square -

CHILDREN

- And I won't care 'Cause I'll be all grown up. When I grow up . . .

When I grow up, (When I grow up, when I grow up) I will be strong enough to carry all
The heavy things you have to haul
Around with you
When you're a grown up

And when I grow up, (When I grow up, when I grow up) I will be brave enough to fight the
creatures
That you have to fight
Beneath the bed each night
To be a grown up.

BIG KIDS

And when I grow up, I will have treats every day, And I'll play with things that mum pretends
That mums don't think are fun.

And I will wake up When the sun comes up, And I will spend all day just lying in the sun, And I
won't burn 'Cause I'll be all grown up . . . When I grow up . . .

*The CHILDREN and BIG KIDS recline in various parts of the stage. MISS
HONEY comes up the stairs by the side of the stage and sits down on a
swing. MATILDA enters shortly after from the other side of the stage.*

MISS HONEY

When I grow up, I will be brave enough to fight the creatures That you have to fight Beneath the
bed each night To be a grown up. When I grow up . . .

The CHILDREN and BIG KIDS start to dissipate.

MATILDA

Just because you find that life's not fair, it Doesn't mean that you just have to grin and bear it. If
you always take it on the chin and wear it, Nothing will change.

*The swings rise into the air and the scene behind them slowly changes
to the library.*

MISS HONEY

When I grow up . . .

[She starts walking off stage.]

MATILDA

Just because I find myself in this story, It doesn't mean that everything is written for me. If I
think the ending is fixed already, I might as well be saying I think that it's okay, And that's not
right!

MRS PHELPS

Matilda, how lovely to see you. Are you enjoying school?

MATILDA

Oh, yes. Bits of it, anyway. . . . Mrs Phelps! Where's the REVENGE
section?

MRS PHELPS

What?! Well, we don't have a "revenge" section. Why? Is there a child
at school who is behaving like a bully?

MATILDA Oh, no. Not a *child*, exactly.

MRS PHELPS

Matilda, are you sure something -

MATILDA

You want to hear the next part of my story?

MRS PHELPS

Story? Did you say "story"? Did you say . . . Matilda! What are we waiting for?

Behind MATILDA and MRS PHELPS, the library stacks split apart. TOMMY and HORTENSIA lead the ACROBAT and ESCAPOLOGIST onto the stage, carrying flames. The ACROBAT's hair has dynamite in it. As MATILDA narrates, the ESCAPOLOGIST and ACROBAT act out the scene.

MATILDA

Slowly, very slowly, the Acrobat wrapped her shiny white scarf around her husband's neck.

MATILDA AND ACROBAT

"For luck, my love - "

MATILDA

- she said, kissing him with the gentlest of kisses.

MATILDA and ACROBAT

"Smile. We have done this a thousand times."

MATILDA

But suddenly, she hugged him with the biggest hug in the world, so hard that he thought she would hug all the air out of him. And so, they prepared themselves for the most dangerous feat that had ever been performed.

The ESCAPOLOGIST and the ACROBAT take each others hands and walk back out of the stage.

MATILDA

The great escapologist had to escape from the cage, lean out, catch his wife with one hand, grab a fire extinguisher with the other, and put out the flames on her specially-designed dress within twelve seconds before they reached the dynamite and blew his wife's head off!

MRS PHELPS screams in terror. MATILDA stares at her questioningly.

MRS PHELPS

Sorry, go on.

MATILDA beckons MRS PHELPS to sit on the floor with her. A white sheet covers the back of the stage and silhouettes act out MATILDA's story upon it.

MATILDA

The trick started well. The moment the specially-designed dress was set alight, the acrobat swung into the air. The crowd held their breath as she hurled over the sharks and spiky objects. One second. Two seconds. They watched as the flames crept up the dress. Three

seconds. Four seconds. She began to reach out her arms towards the cage. Five seconds. Six seconds! Suddenly, the padlocks pinged open, and the huge chains fell away. Seven seconds. Eight seconds. The door flung open, and the escapologist reached out one huge, muscled arm to catch his wife and their child. Nine seconds! Ten seconds!

MRS PHELPS

Oh, I can't look!

MATILDA

Eleven seconds! And he grabs her hand, and . . . and . . . and suddenly, the flames are covered in foam before they can both be blown to pieces.

MRS PHELPS

Hooray! So the story does have a happy ending after all.

MATILDA No.

MRS PHELPS

No?

MATILDA

No. Maybe it was the thought of the child. Maybe it was nerves. But the escapologist used just a touch too much foam. And suddenly, their hands became slippery, and she fell.

MRS PHELPS

No. Was . . . Was she okay? Did . . . Did she survive?

The sheet parts and the ESCAPOLOGIST walks slowly forward, carrying the ACROBAT in his arms.

MATILDA

She broke every bone in her body. Except for the ones at the ends of her little fingers. She did manage to live long enough to have their child, but the effort was too great. "Love our little girl," she said. "Love our daughter with all your heart. She was all we ever wanted."

The ESCAPOLOGIST carries the ACROBAT off the front of the stage.

ACROBAT'S VOICE

Love our girl with everything. She is everything.

MATILDA

And then, she died.

MRS PHELPS walks over to a cart of books, blowing her nose into a handkerchief.

MATILDA

And then, things got worse.

MRS PHELPS collapses against the cart.

MRS PHELPS

What? "Worse"? Oh, no, Matilda. Not worse. They can't get worse.

MATILDA

I'm afraid they did. Because the escapologist was so kind that he never for one second blamed the evil sister for what happened. In fact, he asked her to move in and help look after his daughter. She was nothing but rude to the little girl, making her wash, iron, cook, and clean, and beating her if she did a thing wrong. But always in secret, so that the escapologist never suspected a thing. And so the poor little girl grew up with the meanest, cruelest, horrible-est aunt you can possible imagine!

MRS PHELPS

Let's call the police!!

MATILDA

Mrs Phelps! It's . . . It's just a story.

MRS PHELPS

What? Oh. Oh, yes. Of course. Matilda, you are so smart. Your parents must think they have won the lottery having a child like you.

MATILDA

Oh, yeah. Yeah, they do. They're always saying that, in fact. They say, "Matilda, we're so proud of you. You're like winning the lottery." . . . Yeah, I'd better go.

MRS PHELPS exits and the book shelves part. The scene changes to the Wormwood's living room. MR WORMWOOD enters, dancing.

MR WORMWOOD [*to the tune of "Telly"*] I'm so clever, I'm so clever. I'm so very, very, very, very clever. I'm so very, flaming clever. What a very clever fellow I am! [*to MRS WORMWOOD*] Come, here you! [*He dances with her, twirling her around.*]

MRS WORMWOOD No, stop, stop. There's only one man I do *that* with!

MR WORMWOOD

Everyone, gather around. I want my family to share in my triumph. Not you, boy.

MATILDA

I'm a girl!

MR WORMWOOD

One hundred and fifty-five old bangers on my hands. All polished up, but the mileage on the car telling the truth: that each one was knackered. How could I possibly make the mileage go back? I couldn't very well drive each one backwards, could I?

MICHAEL

Backwards.

MR WORMWOOD

When suddenly, I had the most genius idea in the world. I run into the workshop. I grab a drill. And using my incredible mind, I attach the

drill to the speedometer of the first car. I turned it on. I whacked it into reverse.

MICHAEL

Backwards!

MR WORMWOOD gives MICHAEL a high five.

MR WORMWOOD

Yes, boy! Backwards! Backwards. Exactly. Now, a drill's motor: It rolls backwards thousands of times a second. And within a few minutes, I had reduced the mileage on that old rust-bucket to practically nothing. I did it to every single car!

MICHAEL

Backwards!

MRS WORMWOOD

Stop talking now, darling. There's a good boy.

MR WORMWOOD

Ten minutes later, the Russians show up. Great, big, nasty-faced apes. Expensive suits, dark glasses; dunno who they thought they were.

MRS WORMWOOD

Oh! Russians are nocturnal. I saw it on a programme last night.

MATILDA

That was badgers. It was a programme about badgers.

MRS WORMWOOD

Same thing! . . . And did it work?

MR WORMWOOD shows her a suitcase full of money. MRS WORMWOOD screams.

MRS WORMWOOD

Fantastico! Now I can afford Rudolpho all day long!

MATILDA

But you cheated them! That's not fair at all. They've trusted you, and you've cheated them.

MRS WORMWOOD What is the *matter* with you? What've we done to deserve a child like you?

MR WORMWOOD throws down the suitcase. Behind him, the scene changes to MATILDA's bedroom.

MR WORMWOOD

You know what I'm going to do tomorrow? I'm going to go down to that library and tell that old bag that you're never to be let in again.

MATILDA

What? No! Please don't!

MR WORMWOOD And if she does, I will have her fired! And you will never read another stinking book as long as you live. I will put an end to your stories, young man. [*He drags MATILDA by the wrist and throws her through the door to her room onto her bed.*] Now, get in there and stay in there, you nasty

little creep!

MR WORMWOOD slams the door and leaves. MATILDA lies face-down on her bed. She brings her fist down three times to great thundering sounds.

Slowly, she looks up.

MATILDA

At night, the escapologist's daughter cried herself to sleep, alone in her room. She never said a single word about the evil aunt's bullying, because she didn't want to cause a fuss, and so she suffered in silence. This only encouraged the woman to greater cruelties, until one day, she exploded!

MATILDA and ACROBAT'S SISTER [*off stage*] "You are a useless! Filthy! Nasty little creep!"

MATILDA

And she beat her, threw her into a dank, dark, dusty cellar, locked the door, and went out.

MATILDA has thrown herself onto the ground. She holds her head. The sound of a car pulling up to a house is heard.

MATILDA But that day, the escapologist happened to come home early. And when he heard the sound of his daughter's tears - [*She knocks on the door three times.*] - he smashed the door open!

The ESCAPOLOGIST, wearing the white scarf, smashes the door open to lightning and thunder, and takes MATILDA into his arms.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Don't cry. I am here, little girl. Please don't cry.

Dry your eyes. Wipe away your tears, little girl.

Forgive me. I didn't mean to desert you. Don't cry, little girl. Nothing can hurt you. You've nothing to fear. I'm here.

MATILDA and ESCAPOLOGIST

"Have I been so wrapped up in my grief for my wife that I have forgotten the one thing that matters to us most? I love you so much, my daughter. I shall spend the rest of my life making it up to you."

The ESCAPOLOGIST wraps the scarf around MATILDA's shoulders.

MATILDA and ESCAPOLOGIST

"We shall be together, forever."

MATILDA

Don't cry, daddy. I'm all right, daddy. Please don't cry. Here, let me wipe away your tears.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Forgive me.

MATILDA

Daddy, forgive me.

ESCAPOLOGIST

I didn't mean to desert you.

MATILDA

I didn't want to upset you. Please, daddy, don't cry.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Don't cry, little girl.

MATILDA

I'll be all right.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Nothing can hurt you.

MATILDA

With you by my side, I have –

MATILDA and ESCAPOLOGIST

– nothing to fear. MATILDA [*simultaneously*]: You're here. ESCAPOLOGIST [*simultaneously*]:
I'm here.

The ESCAPOLOGIST carries MATILDA to her bed and brings up the sheet.

*MATILDA rolls out the other side of the bed as the shape of a little
girl rises from beneath the covers.*

MATILDA

But when the little girl fell asleep, the escapologist's thoughts
turned to the acrobat's sister, and an almighty rage grew inside his
great heart.

MATILDA and ESCAPOLOGIST

"This demon! This villain! This monster! She has sullied the memory of
my wife. She has betrayed the trust of her own sister. She has shown
cruelty to the most precious reality of my marriage. Bullying children
is her game, is it? Well, let us see what this creature thinks she can
do when the wrath of a grown man stands before her!"

*To thunder and lightning, the ESCAPOLOGIST runs to the bedroom door,
which is retreating into the background.*

MATILDA

But that was the last the little girl ever saw of her father. Because
he never came home ever again.

MISS HONEY enters holding a stack of books tied together.

MISS HONEY

Matilda? I've got those books we spoke about, so you can just sit and
read -

*MISS TRUNCHBULL starts blowing her whistle from off stage, then runs
toward MISS HONEY and MATILDA. She is wearing a short skirt and a
jumper. BRUCE scurries behind her, carrying a chair and wearing his "I
have been to CHOKEY" sign. MISS TRUNCHBULL blows the whistle in MISS
HONEY's face.*

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What are you doing with those books, woman?

MISS HONEY [*tearfully*] They're . . . They're for Matilda!

MISS TRUNCHBULL No, they are not. [*She grabs the books from MISS HONEY's hands.*]
Not on my watch! [*She walks to stage left and shotputs the books into the wings, to the sound of
breaking glass.*] There is an age for reading and an age for being a filthy
little toad! These are toads. Aren't you, Bogtrotter?

BRUCE

Yes, Miss Trunchbull.

MISS TRUNCHBULL Yes, Miss Trunchbull! [*She takes the chair from BRUCE and brings it
to the front corner of the stage.*] Only, Bogtrotter, here, is now a good toad. [*She
slams the chair down.*] Sit!

*MISS HONEY sits in the chair. Quietly, MATILDA approaches BRUCE to see
if he is all right.*

MISS TRUNCHBULL It has become clear to me, Miss Honey, that you have no
idea what you are doing. You believe in kindness, and fluffiness, and
books, and stories . . . This is not teaching! To teach the child, you
must first break the child. [*She blows her whistle and the CHILDREN, in gym uniforms,
trot onto the stage and form a line with their hands on their heads.*] Quiet, you maggots!

MISS HONEY

No one was speaking, Miss Trunchbull.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Miss Honey, please understand that when I say "Quiet, you maggots,"
you are entirely included in that statement. Where is my jug of water?

LAVENDER starts jumping up and down.

LAVENDER Ooh, ooh! Me, me, me, me, me! I'll get it, Miss Trunchbull!
[*She runs to the front of the stage, gives two thumbs up to the entire theatre, then runs off. MATILDA, in gym uniform, joins the others in line.*]

MISS TRUNCHBULL Stupid girl. And you. [*She goes down the line of CHILDREN.*]
Flabby, disgusting, revolting! Revolting, I say! It's high time you
were toughened up with a little . . . phys-ed. [*She blows her whistle and the
children rush to arrange gym mats on the floor. ERIC has a little trouble pulling his out.*]

MISS TRUNCHBULL
This school, of late, has started reeking –

AMANDA [*quietly*] Eric . . .

MISS TRUNCHBULL [*to AMANDA*] Quiet, maggots, when I'm speaking!

ERIC throws himself flat on his mat.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
– reeking, with a most disturbing scent. Only the finest nostrils smell it, But I know it oh-too-well.

It is the odour of rebellion. It's the bouquet of dissent!

And you may bet your britches this Headmistress Finds this foul odiferousness Wholly
olfactorally insulting. And so, to stop this stench's spread, I find a session of phys-ed Sorts the
merely "rank" from the "revoting". [*She takes off her jumper to reveal a top with the Olympic logo
emblazoned on it. She starts exercising and the children follow suit.*]

The smell of rebellion comes out in the sweat, And phys-ed will get you sweating. And it won't be
long before I smell the pong Of aiding and abetting. A bit of phys-ed will tell us Who has a head
full of rebellious thoughts. [*She stands on one leg and the children follow.*] Hold, hold!

*Most of the children fall to the ground, but MISS TRUNCHBULL sees that
MATILDA is still standing.*

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Just like a rotten egg floats to the top Of a bucket of water.

*Realising what she has done, MATILDA slowly lowers herself onto her
mat.*

MISS TRUNCHBULL
The smell of rebellion. The stench of revolt.

CHILDREN
One, two, three, four.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
The reek of insubordination.

CHILDREN

I can't take it anymore. One, two, three, four.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
The whiff of resistance. The pong of dissent. The funk of mutiny in action.

MATILDA

That's not right.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Before the weed becomes too big and greedy, You really need to nip it in the bud. Position
two! [*She takes an inhaler from HORTENSIA and throws it into the wings.*] Before the worm starts
to turn, You must scrape off the dirt And rip it from the mud!

The whiff of insurgence.

CHILDREN

One, two three, four.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
The stench of intent.

CHILDREN

One, two, three, four.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
The reek of pre-pubescent protest. The pong of defiance.

CHILDREN

One, two, three, four.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
The odour of coup.

CHILDREN

One, two, three, four.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

The waft of anarchy in progress.

ERIC

Please, miss, please!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Once we've "exercised" these demons, They shall be too pooped for scheming.

MISS TRUNCHBULL drags off a mat to which ERIC still clings. The OLDER KIDS bring in a tall ladder, a trampoline, a gymnastic platform, and a mattress.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Some double-time discipline Should stop the rot from setting in! [*She climbs onto the ladder.*] All right, let's step it up. Double time.

As MISS TRUNCHBULL sings, each of the CHILDREN jump onto the trampoline, land on the platform, and fall onto the mattress. Some miss their landing. Some are pushed, sometimes unintentionally, by their classmates.

MISS TRUNCHBULL One, two, three, four. Discipline. Discipline. For children who aren't listening; For midgets who are fidgeting Or whispering in history. Their chattering and chittering, Their nattering and twittering Is tempered with a smattering Of discipline.

We must begin insisting On rigidity, and discipline, Persistently resisting This anarchistic mischieving. These minutes you are frittering On pandering and pitying

While little 'uns like this: They just want discipline.

The simpering and whimpering, The dribbling and the spittling, The "miss, I need a tissue" – It's an issue we can fix. There is no mystery to mastering The art of classroom discipline. It's discipline, discipline –

CHILDREN

Discipline!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

The smell of rebellion, The stench of revolt, The reek of pre-pubescent plotting. The whiff of resistance, The pong of dissent, The funk of moral fibre rotting . . .

MISS TRUNCHBULL climbs down the ladder and into the wings with a flourish. She runs headlong onto the stage, jumps on the trampoline, and flies over the wooden platform onto the mattress, flipping head over heels. She then takes up a position sitting on the mattress.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Imagine a world with no children. Close your eyes and just dream. Imagine – come on, try it – The peace and the quiet. A burbling stream. [*She stands and jumps into a sitting position on the*

wooden platform.]

Now imagine a woods with a cottage, And inside that cottage we find A dwarf called Zeek, A
carnival freak Who can fold paper hats with his mind. And he says,

"Don't let them steal your horses. No! Don't let them throw them away. No, no, no! If you find
your way through, They'll be waiting for you, singing, "Neigh! Neigh!" [*She whickers like a
horse.*]

ERIC

She's mad!

MISS TRUNCBULL Aha! And there, just like I said: The stinking maggot
rears his head! Even the squitiest, pitiest mess Can harbour seeds of stinkiness.

Have you ever seen anything more repellent? Have you ever smelled anything worse than That
smell of rebellion?

MISS TRUNCBULL takes up a lounging position on the wooden platform.

*It is slowly pulled across the stage as she languorously brings her
leg up and down. The CHILDREN stand in front of it and make rowing
motions with their arms as it makes its way across the stage. The next
two verses overlap.*

[MISS TRUNCBULL

The stench of revolt. The reek of insubordination. The whiff of resistance. The pong of dissent.

CHILDREN*

Discipline. Discipline. No more whispering. Children need discipline. Cut out that whispering. If
you're mischieving, She'll sniff you out. Without a doubt, She's a snout in a million. Discipline.
Discipline. No more whispering. Children need discipline. Cut out that whispering.]

MISS TRUNCBULL

And I will not stop till you are squashed; Till this rebellion is quashed; Till glorious, sweaty
discipline has washed This sickening stench – away! [*She grabs the end of a net that is pulled back
across the stage with the wooden block as she stands on top of it. Upon the net is the word
"DISCIPLINE".*]

*LAVENDER runs on the stage with a jug of water, a cup, and a wriggling
newt.*

LAVENDER

Look! The newt! Can you see? It's the newt! I've got the newt! I'm
going to –

MISS TRUNCBULL

Quiet!

LAVENDER drops the newt into the water.

MISS HONEY

I don't think this is "teaching" at all. I think it's just cruelty.

MISS TRUNCHBULL takes the jug and cup from LAVENDER.

MISS TRUNCHBULL That is because you, Miss Honey, are pathetic. [*She takes a drink of*

water.] You are wet. You are weak. [*She takes another drink.*] You are, in fact, a snivelling little -

There is the sound of something dropping into her glass.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

- newt. Newt!

MISS TRUNCHBULL puts the cup and jug down on the platform and scurries away from it. The children, except for ERIC, gather around, chatting excitedly.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Newt! There's a newt inside my -

MISS HONEY

Quiet, children, please! Quiet!

MISS TRUNCHBULL [*to ERIC*] You!

ERIC

No, not me! What? No! I didn't!

MISS TRUNCHBULL You did this, you vile, repulsive, malicious little sinner! [*She takes ERIC by one ear and drags him to one side.*]

ERIC

Stop! Stop!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

"Stop"? "Stop"? We were just getting started!

MISS HONEY

No, Miss Trunchbull, don't, please. You'll pull his ear off!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

I have discovered, Miss Honey, through many years of experimentation, that the ears of small boys do not come off. They stretch. In fact, I think I can feel these ones stretching even now.

MISS TRUNCHBULL grabs both of ERIC's ears and stretch them out several inches to the side.

ERIC Ow! Ow!

MISS HONEY

No, Miss Trunchbull, no!

MATILDA

Leave him alone! You big, fat, bully!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

How dare you. You are not fit to be at this school. You ought to be in prison! In the deepest, dankest, darkest prison! I shall have you wheeled out, strapped to a trolley with a muzzle over your mouth!

MISS TRUNCHBULL starts to rant and scream at the children, lumbering all over the stage. MATILDA stands near the front of the stage, looking anguished.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

I shall crush you. I shall pound you. I shall dissect you, madam! I shall strap you to a table and perform experiments on you! All of these disgusting little slugs shall suffer the most appalling indignities because of you. Yes, you! I shall feed you to the termites. And then I shall smash the termites into tiny fragments . . .

MISS TRUNCHBULL's words fade into the background, though she continues to rail in silence at the CHILDREN and MISS HONEY, who cower at the back of the stage. MATILDA stands on one block of the stage, which slowly rises.

MATILDA

Have you ever wondered (well, I have) About how when I say, say, "red" (for example) There's no way of knowing If red means the same thing in your head As red means in my head When someone says "red".

And how, if we are travelling at Almost the speed of light, And we're holding a light, That light would still travel away from us At the full speed of light.

Which seems right, In a way, But I'm trying to say –

I'm not sure, But I wonder if inside my head, I'm not just a bit different from Some of my friends. These answers that come into my mind, unbidden; These stories delivered to me fully-written.

And when everyone shouts (like they seem to like shouting) The noise in my head is incredibly loud. And I just wish they'd stop, My dad and my mum, And the telly, And stories would stop for just once.

And I'm sorry, But I'm not quite explaining it right. But this noise becomes anger, And the anger is light. And this burning inside me would usually fade,

But it isn't today. And the heat and the shouting – And my heart is pounding – And my eyes are burning – And suddenly, everything, everything is –

Quiet. Like silence, but not really silent. Just that still sort of Quiet. Like the sound of a page being turned in a book. Or a pause in a walk in the woods.

Quiet. Like silence, but not really silent. Just that nice kind of Quiet. Like the sound when you lie upside-down in your bed. Just the sound of your heart in your head.

And though the people around me – Their mouths are still moving – The words they are forming Cannot reach me anymore.

And it is quiet. And I am warm. Like I've sailed – Into the eye of the storm.

From across the stage, MATILDA focuses her attention on the cup of water that MISS TRUNCHBULL is standing near.

MATILDA

Tip! Go on, tip! Tip over! Tip over! Tip over!

The cup tips over toward MISS TRUNCHBULL. As she turns around, you can see that there is a newt on the back of her leg.

MISS TRUNCHBULL – miserable collection of excuses for children, and you, madam, standing there like the squirt of squirts, are its beating heart! But I am a match for you. And I tell you, there is nothing I shall not do, no length to which I shall not go, no punishment I shall not inflict, no ear I shall not . . . stretch . . . [*She trails off.*] What is it? What is it? There's something on me. Get it off me! Get it off me! It's heading north! [*She pauses in horror.*] I've got a newt in my knickers! I've got a newt in my knickers! [*She runs off stage.*]

There is a pause.

MISS HONEY

Well. That was interesting. I think we all better go home while we still can.

The CHILDREN cheer and run off.

MISS HONEY

Matilda?

MATILDA

Watch.

MISS HONEY

Matilda, I really think it would be wise –

MATILDA

Watch. Please.

MATILDA sets up the cup again and focuses her attention on it. It sways from side to side and then tips over.

MATILDA

I moved it with my eyes. Am I strange?

MISS HONEY

I think . . . I think . . . How do you fancy a nice cup of tea?

MISS HONEY puts MATILDA's school blazer back on her and buttons it.

Very slowly, the platform of MISS HONEY's house starts to roll in from the back of the stage.

MATILDA

What do you think it is? This thing with my eyes.

MISS HONEY

Well, I'm not going to pretend I know what it is, Matilda. But I don't believe it's something you should be frightened of. I think it's something to do with that incredible mind of yours.

MATILDA

You mean, there's no room in my head for all of my brains, so they have to squish out through my eyes.

MISS HONEY

Well, not exactly, but, er . . . Something like that. You certainly are a special girl, Matilda. I . . . I met your mother. She's . . . unusual. What about your father? Is he . . . Is he proud to have a daughter as clever as you?

MATILDA Oh, yeah. He's very proud. He's very, very, very proud. He's always saying, "Matilda, I'm so proud to have a daughter as - " [*She pauses and looks at MISS HONEY.*] That's not true, Miss Honey. That's not what he says. He's not proud at all. He calls me a liar, and a cheat, and a nasty little creep.

MISS HONEY I see. [*She leads MATILDA up onto the platform of her house.*] Here we are. Home sweet home.

MATILDA looks around.

MATILDA

Are you poor?

MISS HONEY

Er, yes. Yes, I am. Very!

MATILDA

Don't they pay teachers very well?

MISS HONEY

No, they don't, actually, but, er, I'm even poorer than most, because of, er, other reasons. You see, I . . . I used to live with my aunt.

But one day I was out walking, and I . . . I came across this old shed. I fell completely in love with it. I ran to the farmer and begged him to let me move in. He thought I was mad. But he agreed, and I've lived here ever since.

MATILDA

But Miss Honey, you can't live in a shed!

MISS HONEY

I'm not strong like you, Matilda. You see, my father died when I was young. Magnus was his name. He was very kind. But, er, when he was gone, my aunt became my legal guardian. She was mean and cruel and horrible like you can hardly imagine. And when I got my job as a teacher, she suddenly presented me with a bill for looking after me all those years. She had written everything down: Every tea bag, every electricity bill, every tin of beans. And she made me sign a contract to pay her back every penny. She . . . She even produced a document to say that my father had given her his entire house.

MATILDA

Did he really do that? Magnus. Did he really just give her his house?

MISS HONEY

I don't know. But I find it hard to believe. Just like I cannot believe that he would have . . . that he would have killed himself. Which is what she said happened.

MATILDA gasps.

MATILDA You think . . . You think she *did him in!* Don't you, Miss Honey?

MISS HONEY

I cannot say. All I know is that years of being bullied by that woman made me . . . pathetic! I was trapped.

MATILDA

And that's why you live here.

MISS HONEY

This roof keeps me dry when the rain falls. This door helps to keep the cold at bay. On this floor
I can stand on my own two feet.

On this chair I can write my lessons. On this pillow I can dream my nights away. And this table,
as you can see, Well, it's perfect for tea.

It isn't much, but it is enough for me. It isn't much, but it is enough –

MATILDA But Miss Honey, she's got your father's house! She's got everything that's yours. [*She moves to sit on the same stool as MISS HONEY.*]

MISS HONEY

On these walls, I hang wonderful pictures. Through this window, I can watch the seasons
change. By this lamp, I can read! And I . . . I am set free.

For the first time, MATILDA gives a small smile.

MISS HONEY

And when it's cold outside, I feel no fear. Even in the winter storms, I am warmed
By a small but stubborn fire. And there is nowhere I would rather be.

It isn't much, but it is enough for me.

For this is my house. This is my house. It isn't much, but it is enough for me.

*MISS HONEY opens a drawer and takes out a shiny, white scarf. Slowly,
from the back of the stage, the ESCAPOLOGIST walks toward MISS HONEY.*

MISS HONEY

This is my house.

This is my house. It isn't much, but it is enough –

MISS HONEY wraps the scarf around MATILDA's shoulders.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Don't cry –

MISS HONEY

And when it's cold and bleak, I feel no fear.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Please don't cry. I'm here.

MISS HONEY

Even in the fiercest storms, I am warmed –

ESCAPOLOGIST

Please don't cry.

MISS HONEY

By a small but stubborn fire.

ESCAPOLOGIST

Let me wipe away your tears. Forgive me –

MISS HONEY

Even when outside, it's freezing –

ESCAPOLOGIST

I didn't mean to desert you.

MISS HONEY

I don't pay much heed.

ESCAPOLOGIST

I know that I hurt you.

MISS HONEY

I know that everything I need Is in here.

The ESCAPOLOGIST approaches MISS HONEY from behind and places a hand on her shoulder.

MISS HONEY

It isn't much, but it is enough for me. It isn't much, but it is enough for me.

The ESCAPOLOGIST slowly exits the stage. MATILDA looks down at the scarf she is wearing.

MATILDA

Miss Honey, is this your father's scarf?

MISS HONEY

Yes. Yes, it is. My mother gave it to him before she died. You see, she was -

MATILDA

An acrobat.

MISS HONEY

Yes. Yes, she was. And my father was -

MATILDA

An escapologist.

MISS HONEY

Matilda, how did you know that?

MATILDA

So . . . So they were your parents!

MISS HONEY

What? Who?

MATILDA

The people in my story!

MISS HONEY

What story?

MATILDA

A story! I've been telling a story, and I thought I was making it up, but it's real! It's your life! I've seen your life.

MISS HONEY

You've seen my life?
MATILDA She did him in! Let's go to the police! [*She grabs MISS HONEY's hands and tries to drag her away.*]

MISS HONEY
No! No, we can't! We've no evidence!
MATILDA
We can just tell them! Tell them she did it!
MISS HONEY It won't work, Matilda! It would me my word against hers! They'd never believe she was capable of murder! [*She wrenches her hands free from MATILDA's.*]

MATILDA But *why*? She was so cruel to you! She beat you!

MISS HONEY covers her ears with her hands.

MATILDA
She shouted at you! She locked you up in tiny cupboards and threw you into cellars!

MISS HONEY
Stop, Matilda. Please.

MATILDA
Miss Honey, your aunt's a murderer. She killed Magnus. WHO IS SHE?

MISS TRUNCHBULL'S VOICE
A contract is a contract is a contract!

MATILDA
Miss . . . Miss Trunchbull.

MISS TRUNCHBULL walks heavily onto the stage via the steps at the front. MATILDA scurries off and MISS HONEY lies down on the floor of her house as it recedes to the back of the stage. MISS TRUNCHBULL stands on a desk, which rises into the air. The commentator from her videos starts speaking, and MISS TRUNCHBULL flails as though recreating one of her games. The CHILDREN enter and stand by the desks. MISS TRUNCHBULL realises where she is and starts lecturing the CHILDREN.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
In this world, children, there are two types of human being. The winners and the losers. I am a winner. I play by the rules, and I win. If I play by the rules and . . . I do not win, then something is wrong. Something is not working. If something is wrong, you have to put it right. Even if it screams.

MISS TRUNCHBULL walks over to the side of the stage and makes as though to pull at a big chain pull that has descended, then stops short and looks at MISS HONEY.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
What are you looking at?
MISS HONEY [*without fear*] You.

MISS TRUNCHBULL This class is going to have a very special spelling test. Any child who gets one single answer wrong shall go to Chokey.
[*to ERIC*] You! Spell . . . Oh, now, let me see. Spell "newt".

ERIC stands on his chair and turns around.

ERIC
Newt. N - E - W - T. Newt.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
What?
ERIC

Miss Honey taught us. She's very good at teaching.
MISS TRUNCHBULL Nonsense. Miss Honey is far too soft and peachy to be good at anything. Any moron can see that. [*to HORTENSIA*] You, turn around, and spell the one thing that you all are. "Revolting."

HORTENSIA stands and turns toward the audience.

HORTENSIA
Revolting. R - E - V - O - L - T - I - N - G. Revolting.

MISS TRUNCHBULL
You're cheating!

MISS HONEY
Of course she's not cheating! She's simply spelling a word!

MISS TRUNCHBULL
These little specks of dust can't be this clever. They are worms!

MISS HONEY
I taught them! That's all. With kindness, and patience, and respect!
MISS TRUNCHBULL How dare you bring those words into my classroom, madam! You know nothing of teaching, and I shall prove it. [*to LAVENDER*] You, filth-bog, snot nose. Spell . . . "amchella-kamaneal-septicanis-timosis"!

MISS HONEY
What? That's not a word! You just made it up!

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Spell or go to Chokey! And I should warn you: It has silent letters.
LAVENDER A . . . M . . . C - H . . . E . . . L . . . L . . . A . . .
[*She hesitantly starts counting on her fingers.*]

MISS TRUNCHBULL
Oh dear. Oh, dearie, dearie -

LAVENDER K!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

No, I'm so sorry; it was a silent Z! You're going to Chokey!

MISS TRUNCHBULL takes LAVENDER by the wrist and drags her down the stairs off the stage. Before they get too far, NIGEL stands up on his desk.

NIGEL

Cat! C - A - F! Cat! I got it wrong, miss. You have to put me in Chokey, too.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What?

ERIC stands on his desk.

ERIC

Dog. D - Y - P. Dog. And me!

AMANDA stands on her desk.

AMANDA

Table. X - A - B - L - Y. And me.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What are you doing? What's going on? Stop this. Sit down.

HORTENSIA stands on her desk.

HORTENSIA

You can't put us all in the Chokey!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Sit down. Sit down!

HORTENSIA

Bananas! B - X - Y - G - A -

All CHILDREN, except BRUCE, stand on their desk and start shouting.

MISS TRUNCHBULL staggers over to the chain pull and pulls it. There is a sound of a heavy door closing, and the gates of the school cast a shadow on the CHILDREN. They go silent and sit in their seats.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

"You have to put me in Chokey, too. You can't put us all in the Chokey, miss." Come now, maggots. You think I haven't thought of that?

MISS TRUNCHBULL takes a large radio transmitter from her belt.

Delicately, she extends the antenna and flips open the lid, then presses a button. Green laser beams start to shoot from every which way across the theatre, shrouding everything in green light.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

I've been busy! A whole array of Chokeys! One for each and every one of you! Now that our little spelling test is over, I can tell you that each and every one of you has failed!

MATILDA peeks out from under her desk and extends her hands to the

chalkboard. A piece of chalk starts moving upon the board.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

You see, maggots, in this world, there are two types of human being.

The winners and the losers. And I -

NIGEL

The chalk! Look, the chalk!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What?

CHILD

It's moving.

ERIC

It's moving! It's . . . It's writing something.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

What the devil? Who? Who?

CHILD

No one. No one's doing anything.

MISS TRUNCHBULL switches off the lasers. The chalk starts writing as the CHILDREN read the words from the board.

CHILD

Ag - a - tha. Agatha.

CHILD

This - is - Magnus.

MISS HONEY reaches up as though to touch the letters, then looks at MATILDA.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

He can't. He can't!

CHILD

Give - my - Jen - ny - back - her - house.

CHILD

Then - LEAVE!

MISS TRUNCHBULL

No. No, no, no, no, no.

CHILD and MISS TRUNCHBULL

Or - I - will - get - you -

CHILD and MISS TRUNCHBULL

- like - YOU - GOT - ME!

CHILDREN and MISS HONEY Run! Run! RUN! [etc.]

MISS TRUNCHBULL makes as though to erase the letters, but is bullied off the steps on the stage and disappears. The CHILDREN scream in triumph. BRUCE, who has until this point been silent, stands on his desk and takes out a microphone.

BRUCE

Whooo-a! Never again will she get the best of me. Never again will she take away my freedom.
And we don't forget the day we fought –

CHILDREN

For the right to be a little bit naughty! Never again –

BRUCE

– will the Chokey door slam!

CHILDREN

Never again –

BRUCE

– will I be bullied, and –

CHILDREN

Never again –

BRUCE

– will I doubt it when –

CHILDREN

My mummy says I'm a miracle.

Never again!

*MATILDA walks over to MISS HONEY. They take each other by the hand and
run off.*

CHILDREN

Never again will we live behind bars.

Never again now that we know we are Revolting children, Living in revolting times.

We sing revolting songs,

Using revolting rhymes. We'll be revolting children Till our revolting's done, And we'll have the
Trunchbull bolting – We're revolting. Aarrh!

We are revolting children, Living in revolting times. We sing revolting songs, Using revolting

rhymes. We'll be revolting children Till our revolting's done, And we'll have the Trunchbull
bolting – We're revolting.

TOMMY

We will become a screaming hoard!

LAVENDER

Take out your hockey stick and use it as a sword!

BRUCE

Never again will we be ignored!

HORTENSIA

We'll find out where the chalk is stored!

NIGEL

And draw rude pictures on the board!

ALICE

It's not insulting!

CHILDREN

We're revolting!

We can S - P - L how we like. If enough of us are wrong, Wrong is right. Every one N - O - R - T -
why? 'Cause we're a little bit naughty!

So we got to stay inside the line. If we disobey at the same time, There is nothing that the
Trunchbull can do.

BRUCE

She can take her hammer and S - H - U -

CHILDREN

You didn't think you could push us too far, But there's no going back now. We R-E-V-O-L-T-I-
N-

BRUCE

Revolting times!

CHILDREN

We'll S - I - N - G -

BRUCE Songs!

CHILDREN

U-S-I-N-G-

BRUCE

Rhymes!

CHILDREN

We'll be R - E - V - O - L - T - I - N - G. It is 2L84U. We R - E - volting.

OLDER KIDS start jumping in from off the stage and join the CHILDREN.

CHILDREN and OLDER KIDS

We are revolting children, Living in revolting times. We sing revolting songs, Using revolting rhymes. We'll be revolting children Till our revolting's done. It is 2L84U.

The next three verses overlap.

[CHILDREN

We are revolting children, Living in revolting times. We sing revolting songs, Using revolting rhymes. We'll be revolting children Till our revolting's done.

OLDER KIDS

We R - E - V - O - L - T - I - N. We'll S - I - N - G, U - S - I - N - G. We'll be R - E - V - O - L - T - I - N - G.

BRUCE

Never again will she get the best of me. Whooo-a! Down, down, down, down.]

CHILDREN and OLDER KIDS

It is 2L84U. We are revolting!

With a bang, the theatre is showered in confetti. The CHILDREN and OLDER KIDS run off stage and the scene changes to the library. MATILDA is standing facing the books, with a collection of books in her hand.

MISS HONEY walks in reading from a piece of paper, and MRS PHELPS stands on a small block.

MRS PHELPS

A few days later, the Acrobat and the Escapologist's daughter received a letter from a solicitor. It said that her parents' will had mysteriously turned up, and she was now the owner of a beautiful old

house, which had, up until that moment, been owned by the evil aunt, one Agatha Trunchbull. She moved in immediately. And she was very happy. Happier than she had ever been in her entire life.

MISS HONEY

And as for Miss Trunchbull, she was never seen again. The Chokeys were immediately destroyed, and a new headmistress took over.

MRS PHELPS And her name was . . . [*She points happily.*] Miss Honey. And it is often said that it was the best school in all the land.

MISS HONEY

And do you know something else? Matilda was never again able to move things with her eyes. I thought it was because her mind was being challenged, but she said it was because she no longer had a need for superpowers. Sometimes I would look at her . . . The little girl who had done so much to help others, but was stuck with parents who were mean, and cruel, and called her names, and I would feel my blood boil, and I would wish that I could just . . . do something.

MRS PHELPS

So, this is the end. And I wish so much that I could tell you that the story has a happy ending. I wish so much that I could tell you that Matilda got the love she deserved. But perhaps the truth is . . . not all stories have happy endings.

There is a pause. The sound of a car pulling up is heard. MR WORMWOOD, MRS WORMWOOD, MICHAEL, and RUDOLPHO enter from the stairs to the left of the stage. MICHAEL is wearing a sombrero and RUDOLPHO carries an inflatable alligator.

MR WORMWOOD

Don't just stand there gawping! We're going to Spain!

MATILDA

Spain? But why?

MRS WORMWOOD

Because this idiot, this nit, this twit-brain, seemed to think it was a good idea to sell one hundred fifty five old bangers . . . to the Russian mafia!

MR WORMWOOD I didn't know they were the flaming Russian mafia, did I? [*He takes MATILDA by the wrist.*] Come on, boy. We're leaving forever and we're never coming back.

MR WORMWOOD starts to drag MATILDA off stage. MISS HONEY runs to stand in his way.

MISS HONEY

Let Matilda stay here! With me.

MR WORMWOOD

I beg your pardon!

MISS HONEY

Mr Wormwood, I would love to take Matilda. If she'd like to stay with me, that is. I would look after her with love and care, and I'd pay for everything. Would . . . Would you like that, Matilda?

MR WORMWOOD

You mean . . . You mean, leave our daughter here with you?

MATILDA [*shocked*] What did you say? Did you . . . ?

MRS WORMWOOD

They'll be here any minute!

MATILDA

Dad? You called me your daughter.

There is the sound of a car pulling up. The Wormwoods and RUDOLPHO scatter.

MRS PHELPS

Quick! Hide in the books!

RUDOLPHO

What if they damage my legs? My beautiful legs?
Several HENCHMEN in dark suits walk onto stage from the steps on both sides. They are carrying weapons, including a baseball bat and a crowbar. SERGEI, their head, steps onto stage in a fur-lined cloak. He pulls a pink lollipop from his mouth.

SERGEI [*to MATILDA*] You are the Wormwoods' daughter?

MATILDA Yes.

SERGEI

Where is your father?

MATILDA

He's . . . I don't know.

SERGEI

Wormwood is a stupid man. And, being stupid, he assumed I was stupid too. And that is a very, very stupid, and rude, thing to do.

MATILDA

Yes, I am afraid my daughter is quite rude. And very, very stupid.

SERGEI

You know this? At least there is one clever one in the family.

The HENCHMEN laugh. SERGEI cuts them off with a gesture.

SERGEI

What is your name, little girl?

MATILDA

Matilda.

SERGEI

I like you, Matilda. You seem smart. Certainly, in my line of work, you don't often get to meet smart people like you. Most of the people I deal with, their thinking is all backwards.

MICHAEL

Backwards!

The HENCHMEN scatter, looking for the Wormwoods.

SERGEI Приятно познакомиться с такой умной девочкой. [*Prijatno poznamočit'sja s takoj umnoj devočkoj.*]

MATILDA Спасибо. Мне тоже приятно познакомиться с вами. [*Spasibo. Mne tože prijatno poznamočit'sja s vami.*]

SERGEI Ты говоришь по-русски? [*Ty govoriš' po-russki?*]

MATILDA

He tak horošo, kak mne hotelos' by. No ja budu starat'sja i izučat' dal'se. [Ne tak horošo, kak mne hotelos' by. No ja budu starat'sja i izučat' dal'se.]

SERGEI

Matilda! Who taught you how to speak Russian?

MATILDA

Well, I taught myself, I suppose. I was reading Dostoyevsky, and I just thought it would be better to read it in the language it was written in.

SERGEI leans down and kisses her three times on the cheeks.

SERGEI

I am Sergei! It is truly an honour to meet you, Matilda Wormwood. Matilda, your father has been stupid and rude to both of us, yes? I could very easily have one of my friends teach him manners. And one day, when he leaves hospital, he will still be stupid, but not so rude, I think. I give this as a gift to you. What do you say?

MATILDA takes SERGEI by the hand and pulls him to the side.

MATILDA

Mr Sergei, this is a very tempting offer. But he is my father, and I am his daughter. I think I've had enough of revenge.

SERGEI takes his dark glasses off and bends on one knee.

SERGEI

This little girl . . . This miracle . . . Matil-da . . .

HENCHMAN 1

Da?

HENCHMAN 2

Da?

HENCHMEN Da!

All the henchmen raise their weapons at MR WORMWOOD, who is cowering on the floor.

SERGEI

Что вы делаете?!

[Čto vy delaete?!]

HENCHMAN 1

Вы сказали "Да"!

[Vy skazali "Da"!]

HENCHMAN 2

Я не сказал "Да"!

[Ja ne skazal "Da"!]

SERGEI

МатильДА! я сказал "МатильДА"!

[Matil'DA! ja skazal "Matil'DA"!]

The HENCHMEN walk away, placated.

SERGEI

Что с вами сегодня!

[Čto s vami segodnja!]

[to MATILDA] Your father is very, very stupid. But he is also very, very, very . . . very lucky to have you as his daughter. Although, if I happen to be doing business here again and I see him, he will not be so lucky.

SERGEI and the HENCHMEN leave.

MRS WORMWOOD

Quick! Let's get out of here before they change their minds!

MR WORMWOOD

Wait, what about the girl?

MRS WORMWOOD makes a sound of disgust as she hurries away.

MR WORMWOOD [to MATILDA] Do you - want to - stay here, with Miss Honey?

MATILDA

Yes. Yes, I do!

MR WORMWOOD [to MISS HONEY] And do you want to, er, look after her?

MISS HONEY

I do.

MR WORMWOOD

Well. We are a bit short of room, so, yes.

MATILDA

Thank you.

MATILDA holds out her hand to her father. He takes it gingerly in two fingers, and shakes it. After a thought, he tips his hat to her, and it comes away easily in his hand. He pauses, and exits down the stairs. MATILDA runs to MISS HONEY.

MISS HONEY

And Matilda leapt into Miss Honey's arms -

MATILDA

- and hugged her.

MISS HONEY

Oh, Miss Honey hugged her back.

MRS PHELPS

And they hardly noticed as the Wormwoods -

RUDOLPHO [*off stage*] And Rudolpho!

MRS PHELPS

As the Wormwoods and Rudolpho sped away into the distance.

MRS PHELPS exits, pushing a cart of books. MATILDA and MISS HONEY have eyes only for each other.

MISS HONEY

Because they had found each other.

MATILDA

Yes. They'd found each other.

MATILDA and MISS HONEY hold hands and walk together to the back of the stage. After a few steps, they drop hands and do cartwheels next to each other.

Lights go down. They come up again to ERIC gliding across the stage on a scooter. For the curtain call, the whole cast, in turns, comes out on their own scooter, wheel around the stage, and take their bows.

COMPANY

When I grow up, (When I grow up, when I grow up) I will be tall enough to reach the branches

That I need to reach to climb The trees you get to climb When you're grown up.

And when I grow up, (When I grow up, when I grow up) I will be smart enough to answer all The questions that you need to know The answers to Before you're grown up.

And when I grow up, I will eat sweets every day, On the way to work, And I will go to bed late every night.

And I will wake up When the sun comes up, And I will watch cartoons until my eyes go square,

And I won't care 'Cause I'll be all grown up. When I grow up . . .

MISS TRUNCHBULL scooters down stage as the back of the stage parts.

COMPANY

Even if you're little you can do a lot. You Mustn't let a little thing like "little" stop you. If you sit around and let them get on top, you Won't change a thing.

The company lines up on both sides of the middle of the stage. MATILDA walks out to the front of the stage, and each member of the company bows down as she passes them.

COMPANY

Just because you find that life's not fair, it Doesn't mean that you just have to grin and bear it. If you always take it on the chin and wear it, You might as well be saying You think that it's okay And that's not right!

And if it's not right, You have to put it right . . .

The cast starts to make their exits, leaving MATILDA at the front of the stage.

COMPANY

But nobody else is gonna put it right for me Nobody but me is gonna change my story
Sometimes you have to be a little bit –

MISS TRUNCHBULL glides across the back of the stage, angrily.

MISS TRUNCHBULL

Maggots!

COMPANY

– naughty!

The stage goes dark aside from a spotlight on MATILDA. She jumps into her characteristic pose, fists poised on her hips, head tilted high and to the right.

Lights go down. When they go up again, the cast (including the orchestra) make their final bows.

