

*(Note: MRS WORMWOOD has a Cockney accent)*

**MRS WORMWOOD**

Look, is this going to 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. And this time I have a secret weapon: Rudolpho. He's part Italian, you know. Very supple. And he has incredible upper body strength.

**DOCTOR**

I... think we should have a talk.

**MRS WORMWOOD**

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

*(Beat)*

**DOCTOR**

Mrs. Wormwood, do you really have no idea?

**MRS WORMWOOD**

*(Beat)*

Wind?

**DOCTOR**

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

**MRS WORMWOOD**

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

**DOCTOR**

Mrs Wormwood, you're pregnant.

*(SHE stares at him)*

**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 Championship?

**DOCTOR**

A baby, Mrs. Wormwood! A child, the most precious gift that 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!

(Note: MRS WORMWOOD has a Cockney accent, MISS HONEY has a Standard British Accent, RUDOLPHO tries to be Italian)

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**MRS WORMWOOD**

Who is it?

**MISS HONEY**

Oh, yes, er, hello, my name is Miss Honey. Matilda's teacher?

**MRS WORMWOOD**

Bit busy right now.

**MISS HONEY**

It will only take a moment...

**MRS WORMWOOD**

Oh, well, come in if you must.

*(SHE shows Miss Honey in. RUDOLPHO is inside. Every so often a little dance moves bursts out of him like a nervous reaction. He looks slightly miffed at the interruption)*

...This is Rudolpho. It's nothing like that, he's my dance partner. We're rehearsing.

**Rudolpho**

Ciao.

**MISS HONEY**

Ah, parle Italiano? Bene. Ciao, Rudolpho, piacere. Come stai?

**RUDOLPHO**

*(Beat)*

What?

*(To Mrs Wormwood)*

Who is this, babe? You know what interruptions do to my energy flow.

**MRS WORMWOOD**

What do you want, Miss Chutney?

**MISS HONEY**

It's Miss honey. Well, as you know, Matilda is in the bottom class and children in the bottom class aren't really expected to read-

**MRS WORMWOOD**

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

**RUDOLPHO**

I'm in the zone, doll. I can feel it in my hips. Don't waste this.

**MRS WORMWOOD**

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

**MISS HONEY**

I... beg your pardon?

**RUDOLPHO**

Babes, I'm on fire here, please!

**MISS HONEY**

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

**RUDOLPHO**

Calculate this!

*(HE does a particularly extravagant move)*

**MRS WORMWOOD**

*(applauding)*

Oh, fantastico!

**MISS HONEY**

Her mind is incredible, with a little help from us she could-

**MRS WORMWOOD**

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

*(Note, both MR & MRS WORMWOOD speak with a Cockney accent; MATILDA speaks Standard British)*

**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**

Oh, 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 said that these cars were knackered. I told them, I said 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?

**MRS WORMWOOD**

Of course they didn't believe me, I've got green hair! ...And what's this? Another flaming book? What's wrong with the telly?

**MRS WORMWOOD**

She's got no respect, that one. It's all books and stories.

**MATILDA**

No, no. It's a lovely book, honest you should read it, I'm sure you'd-

**MRS WORMWOOD**

Lovely? Here's what I think of your lovely!

*(grabs book and throws it)*

*(Note, MR WORMWOOD speaks with a Cockney accent)*

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**MR WORMWOOD**

*(Addressing the audience)*

I would like to offer an apology for some of the things that have been going on here today. They are not nice things and they are not right things and I would like to say garrantorically that we do not want any children that might be here today watching this to go home and try these things oput for themselves. I am of course talking about... reading books.

It is normal for kids to behave in this fashion, it stunts the brain, wears out the eyes, makes kids ugly, stinky, fatty, sweaty, betty, boring, gaseous and crucially, it gives them varrucas ... of the mind.

*(Note: MRS PHELPS & MATILDA speak in a Standard British accent)*

*(MATILDA turns up at the library. SHE see miss Honey leaving)*

**MRS PHELPS**

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

**MATILDA**

Yes. I mean, my mum wanted me to stay home with her. She hates it when I go out. She misses me so much. Dad, too. He loves having me around.

*(beat)*

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? Oh, I love your stories, Matilda.

*(beat)*

And that's not a hint, by the way. But if you did happen to have a story you wanted to tell me, I could-

**MATILDA**

Who was that lady?

**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**

*(still far away in her thoughts)*

Once upon a time...

*(MRS PHELPS gives a squeak of delight...)*

(Note: MISS HONEY speaks in a Standard British Accent. TRUNCHBULL speaks in a received British accent -think Downton Abbey snooty, a bit over pronounced/haughty)

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**TRUNCHBULL**

Well don't just stand there like a wet tissue, get on with it.

**MISS HONEY**

Well, yes. Miss Trunchbull there's, in, in, in, in my class that is, there is, Mat, a little girl called Matilda Wormwood, and-

**TRUNCHBULL**

Daughter of Mr. Harry Wormwood who owns Wormwood Motors. 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 think Matilda is that kind of child at all.

**TRUNCHBULL**

What is the school motto, Miss Honey?

*(beat)*

**MISS HONEY**

Bambinatum est maggitum.

**TRUNCHBULL**

Bambinatum est maggitum. 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.

**MISS HONEY**

But I didn't...

Miss Trunchbull; Matilda Wormwood is a genius.

**TRUNCHBULL**

*-(beat)*

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

**MISS HONEY**

She knows her times tables.

**TRUNCHBULL**

So she's learnt a few tricks...

**MISS HONEY**

But she can read!



**TRUNCHBULL**

So can I.

**MISS HONEY**

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

**TRUNCHBULL**

What? But she is a squib, a shrimp, an un-hatched tadpole. We cannot just 'place her in with the eleven year olds'- what kind of society would that be? What about rules, Honey, rules?

**MISS HONEY**

I believe Matilda Wormwood is an exception to the rules.

**TRUNCHBULL**

An exception?

To the rules?

In my school?

*(Note: TRUNCHBULL speaks in a received British accent - think Downton Abbey snooty, a bit over pronounced/haughty)*

*(addressing Matilda)*

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

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.

*(addressing/chasing kids)*

All those little slugs shall suffer the most appalling indignities because of you – yes, you!

**2.** I shall feed you to the termites, and then I shall small the termites into tiny fragments, and then I shall grind the fragments into dust, and then I shall take that dust, and feed it to the bloodworms, and the bloodworms I shall feed to the birds, and the birds I shall release into the air and then shoot down with my twelve-bore shotgun, and so on and so on, ad infinitum, madam!

**3.** I shall rip the rebellion out of this class and devour it whole! I shall hang each and every one of you upside-down by your ankles until all of your bodily liquids drain out through your nose and into jars! Yes, jars! Which I shall send to your parent with your school reports upon which I shall write, “could do better.” Miss Honey has allowed her weakness and filth to permeate through this miserable collection of excuses for children!

**4.** And you, Madam ... You are the axis of evil! You are the nexus of necrosis! You are a rotting lump of pure wrong! You are the dark heart of all that is unholy in this land, a black hole of wrong headedness from which no light, no strength, no discipline can escape.

But I am a match for you, madam. In me you have met the avenger, the spirit of all that is right!

*(Note: MATILDA speaks in a standard British accent)*

## **MATILDA**

**1.** Have you ever wondered, well I have, about how when I 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...

**2.** 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 once.

**3.** 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 once.

And I’m sorry 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 is...  
Quiet.

*(Playground. KIDS young and old. LAVENDER comes up to Matilda)*

**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, look, I'd better hand around just in case. If they start to squeeze out of your ears you're going to need help. I'm Lavender. And I think it's probably for the best if we're friends.

*(SHE holds her hand out. THEY shake. Suddenly NIGEL runs on, panicked, terrified. He runs one way, then the other. But nowhere seems to offer the protection he needs)*

**NIGEL**

Hide me! Someone poured a whole can of treacle 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 1**

You're done kid. You're finished.

**BIG KID 2**

Once Agatha Trunchbull decides you're guilty you are squished.

**BIG KID 3**

Yesterday, she caught Julius Rottwinkle eating a licorice all-sort during science. She just picked him up, swung him around, and threw him out the window.

**MATILDA**

Don't listen to them! That didn't happen, they're trying to scare us.

**NIGEL**

Oh, Matilda... they're saying she's going to put me in Chokey.

*(the BIG KIDS suddenly gasp with fright)*

*(Note: MISS HONEY speaks in a Standard British Accent.)*

**MISS HONEY:**

I'm not strong like you, Matilda. You see, my father dies when I was young. Magnus was his name. He was very kind. But when he was gone, my aunt became my legal guardian. She was mean and cruel like you can hardly imagine. And then, when I got my job as a teacher, she presented me with a bill for looking after me all those years. ... She even produced a document that said my father had given her his entire house.

**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 gonna say what happens because I don't want to spoil it for you.

*(pause)*

Alright, look, what I do is I volunteer to get Trunchbull a jug of water. And then...

No! I don't want to tell you any more because I don't want to ruin it!

**BRUCE:**

Okay, look, alright, 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...

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, as a huge cloud of chocolatey gas wafted from my mouth and then drifted... across the class...

**MISS HONEY:**

...She even produced a document that said my father had given her his entire house.

**MATILDA:**

But did he really do that? Magnus, I mean. 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... killed himself, which is what she said happened.

*(MATILDA gasps, a realization)*

**MATILDA:**

You think, you think she...did him in, don't you, Miss Honey?

**MISS HONEY:**

I... cannot say, Matilda. All I know is that years of being bullied by that woman made me... well, pathetic; I was trapped.

**MATILDA:**

And that's why you live here.