

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Wilberforce Wilson and the Magic Fountain

by Bruce Shearer

EXTRACT

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- Wilberforce Wilson: Wilberforce Wilson is a happy, polite, friendly boy of seven.
- Ratrap McClaptrap: Ratrap McClaptrap is a ferocious, fearful, unhappy principal in his fifties.
- Nefertitti Niggledypinch: Nefertitti Niggledypinch is an unpleasant, unfriendly teacher in her forties.
- Basher Mangleman: Basher Mangleman is a thick, stumpy aggressive boy of seven.
- Bertha Balderdash: Bertha Balderdash is a whining, moaning blabbermouth of seven, who tells lots of lies.
- Sneaky Snodgrass: Sneaky Snodgrass is a teasing, sneering, ratty boy of six.
- Woolly dogs: The woolly dogs are the perennially hungry, easy going, friendly, companionable sorts of dogs that often inhabit schoolgrounds. Their spokesdog is the narrator.

SYNOPSIS

This play for children is about Wilberforce Wilson entering a new and unfriendly environment, being a new school. It is about his making a difference to that new school, the terrifying Mumblebumblegrumbleton Primary and not letting it influence his own behaviour. It is about a transformation. A magical transformation to Mumblebumblegrumbleton Primary, brought about by Wilberforce Wilson and the Magic Fountain.

SCENE 1

(FRONT GATE OF MUMBLEBUMBLEGRUMBLETON PRIMARY. A GROUP OF WOOLLY, FRIENDLY LOOKING DOGS ARE HANGING AROUND THE GATE IN FRONT OF A LARGE SIGN WHICH READS MUMBLEBUMBLEGRUMBLETON PRIMARY. ONE OF THOSE DOGS STEPS TO THE FRONT AND SPEAKS WHILE THE OTHERS GATHER ROUND AND LISTEN.)

DOG: This is a story about a short scruffy boy of seven called Wilberforce Wilson. It's not a tall story, because as I said, Wilberforce Wilson wasn't very tall. Its not a short story, because it takes a while, and although in some respects its a long story, its not that long. Not as long as the name Wilberforce Wilson, which you might have already gathered was a rather tall and distinguished name for a short scruffy boy. In fact Wilberforce Wilson preferred to be called Willy. This nickname served just as well for both his names. Now Wilberforce, oh sorry, Willy, was seven. A good age you might say, a very good age indeed, especially for a bone.

(ALL THE OTHE WOOLLY DOGS NOD AND LICK THEIR LIPS IN AGREEMENT AT THIS.)

But not just for a bone, seven was a good age for Willy. He felt that being seven was just right.

There was only one problem in Willy's happy life. He was going to a new school, Mumblebumblegrumbleton Primary School.

(THE DOG GESTURES WITH HIS HEAD TO THE SIGN BEHIND THEM AND ALL THE OTHER DOGS LOOK BACK ALSO AND HOWL AND MOAN SOFTLY AND SADLY. THE DOG THEN LOOKS IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.)

He'd heard it wasn't a very friendly school and he was absolutely right. In fact, Willy had heard that it was the most unfriendly, awful, nasty, bossy and rude school in the whole city, if not the whole world. Willy had heard that the children were rough and rude, the teachers were loud and bossy and that the principal, Mr Ratrap McClaptrap was absolutely, positively, awful. Anyway, let me tell you the story.

(THE OTHER DOGS CROWD IN EVEN CLOSER TO LISTEN.)

It was a day just like this, we were all hanging around the gate, we were afraid to go in in those days, and Willy came walking up for his first day at the new school.

(WILBERFORCE WILSON SLOWLY DRAGS HIS FEET TOWARDS THE GATE OF MUMBLEBUMBLEGRUMBLETON PRIMARY, DRAGGING A SCHOOLBAG WITH A SKULL AND CROSSBONES INSIGNIA, WITH MUMBLEBUMBLEGRUMBLETON PRIMARY WRITTEN UPON IT.

HE STOPS JUST BEFORE HE REACHES THE ASSEMBLED DOGS, LOOKS AT THE BAG AND THEN LOOKS WORRIED. WILBERFORCE WILSON PICKS UP HIS BAG, PUTS IT OVER HIS SHOULDER AND STARTS SLOWLY TRUDGING HIS WAY TOWARD THE GATE, KICKING AN ALUMINIUM CAN ALONG AS HE GOES. HE STOPS AND READS THE SIGN ALOUD.)

WILBERFORCE Mumblebumblegrumbleton Primary, Fowlscowl St.
WILSON: Bodgyhollow. This must be it!

(HE NOTICES THAT THE DOGS WERE ALL CLUSTERED AROUND THE OPEN GATE. HE WALKS UP TO THEM AND STARTS PATTING THEM AND THEY ALL START LICKING HIM AT ONCE.)