

Suddenly SHE knocks.

TRUNCHBULL

Enter!

For a second SHE considers running away, but then SHE goes in...

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.

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 that Matilda Wormwood is an exception to the rules.

TRUNCHBULL

An exception?

MISS HONEY

W, w, w, well, I must tell you headmistress that it is my intention to help this little girl. W, w, w, whether you like it or not!

SHE goes.