

ROALD DAHL

ILLUSTRATED BY QUENTIN BLAKE

Matilda





The Reader of Books

It's a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful.

Some parents go further. They become so blinded by adoration they manage to convince themselves their child has qualities of genius.

Well, there is nothing very wrong with all this. It's the way of the world. It is only when the parents begin telling *us* about the brilliance of their own revolting offspring, that we start shouting, "Bring us a basin! We're going to be sick!"



School teachers suffer a good deal from having to listen to this sort of twaddle from proud parents, but they usually get their own back when the time comes to write the end-of-term reports. If I were a teacher I would cook up some real scorchers for the children of doting parents. "Your son Maximilian", I would write, "is a total wash-out. I hope you have a family business you can push him into when he leaves school because he sure as heck won't get a job anywhere else." Or if I were feeling lyrical that day, I might write, "It is a curious truth that grasshoppers have their hearing-organs in the sides of the abdomen. Your daughter Vanessa, judging by what she's learnt this term, has no hearing-organs at all."



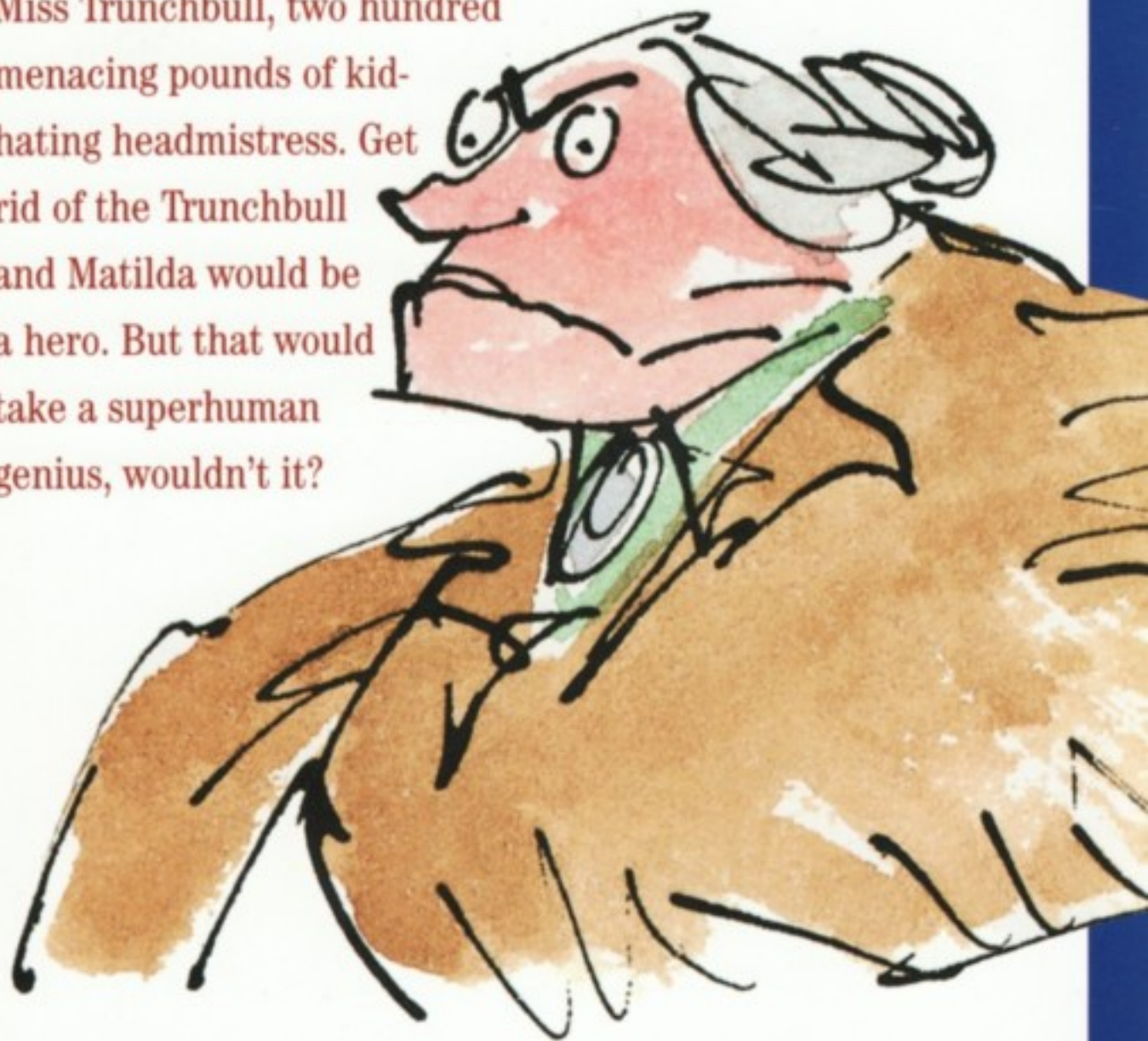
I might even delve deeper into natural history and say, "The periodical cicada spends six years as a grub underground, and no more than six *days* as a free creature of sunlight and air. Your son Wilfred has spent six years as a grub in this school and we are still waiting for him to emerge from the chrysalis." A particularly poisonous little girl might sting me into saying, "Fiona has the same glacial beauty as an iceberg, but unlike the iceberg she has absolutely nothing below the surface." I



think I might enjoy writing end-of-term reports for the stinkers in my class. But enough of that. We have to get on.

“The Trunchbull” is no match for Matilda!

Who put superglue in Dad’s hat? Was it really a ghost that made Mom tear out of the house? Matilda is a genius with idiot parents—and she’s having a great time driving them crazy. But at school things are different. At school there’s Miss Trunchbull, two hundred menacing pounds of kid-hating headmistress. Get rid of the Trunchbull and Matilda would be a hero. But that would take a superhuman genius, wouldn’t it?



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