

Wandering in Walthamstow**Burley version****February 2002****Part One****Scene One****Narrator**

Welcome, everybody, to the Burley Junior Drama Club's presentation of "Wandering in Walthamstow" – Part One.

We find ourselves many long years ago in a place that never was in a time that never happened. Our setting is Scone College, a boarding-school full of bullies and weeds – and that's just the teachers. One class in particular, 3B, deserves our attention. Let me introduce you to three of the pupils: Hardman, the school rebel; Middleditch, her sidekick; and Wettle, the school goody-goody, who is utterly and completely....wet. Our show begins as they await Mrs Evelyn, their English teacher and...uh-oh...Hardman is obviously up to one of her tricks again.

Wettle

I don't think we should, Hardman. Don't you think you've caused Mrs Evelyn enough problems as it is? She won't be able to take much more.

Hardman

That's the idea.

Middleditch

Trust you to be on the teacher's side, Wettle. What's wrong with getting your own back once in a while?

Wettle

You wouldn't feel that way if you weren't always getting into trouble. Besides, you ought to exact revenge on the teachers who punish you, not nice teachers like Mrs Evelyn.

Smith

Exactly!

Jones

They wouldn't dare, that's why.

Middleditch

Can you imagine taking it out on Miss Rule?

Smith

The Baroness!

Middleditch

She'd have US taken out – and shot!

Wettle

So in the meantime, poor old Mrs Evelyn gets it in the neck again.

Hardman

Don't worry – for as long as I've known her, she's been dead from the neck up anyway – she won't feel a thing. *(To the class)* Are you all with me?

Girls

Aye!

(There are a few dissenting voices. The bell rings)

Class War – a chant or rap**Hardman**

The classroom bell rings - so begins – yet another day
 Only eight hours more – to ignore – what the teachers say
 Stuck in this gloomy old room – left to wither away
 Now, no sitting back – let's attack – till we get our own way

- 1 We'll put our teachers on the rack
- 2 So they don't dare to turn their back
- 3 They'll not know what is white or black
- 4 Once we've launched our all-out attack
- 5 These teachers have so much to learn
- 6 They fiddle, leaving Rome to burn
- 7 Dear friends, once more unto the breach
- 8 We'll show these teachers how to teach

Middleditch

The bell rings once more – at the door – someone watches out
 If it's warfare they choose – they will lose – let there be no doubt
 They're so underprepared – unaware – doing nothing about
 Their certain defeat – they will bleat – meanwhile we can cry out that

- 1 We'll be the winners, they'll be the losers
 - 2 They'll be the baffled, we the confusers
 - 3 They'll be berated, humbled, frustrated
 - 4 They'll be the fozzlers, we the bamboozlers
 - 5 They'll be forced to admit that they have been bested
 - 6 Bitten off, chewed up, swallowed, digested
 - 7 They'll be the askers, we the refusers
 - 8 They'll be the beggars, we'll be the choosers
- 1 Yes, we'll be the winners, they'll be the losers

Hardman

The teacher is coming - no slumming – it's time to finish this rap
 When she enters the room, I want schtoom! – so she won't guess our trap
 Try to make her feel sure – she's secure – but before very long
 We'll show this beak – who is weak- and who are the strong!

Mrs Evelyn enters, very cautiously. She checks above the door for a bucket of water before moving to the desk.

Mrs Evelyn

What's this? No pin on the chair, no attempt to saw through the leg of the desk? No obscenities or outrageous caricatures on the blackboard? Something is very up. Oh, I know. *(She checks the drawers of the desk)* No dead hedgehogs either. Things are very quiet in here. Perhaps too quiet. Isn't anyone going to say anything? Anything at all?

Wettle

Good morning, Miss.

Mrs Evelyn

Good Morning, Miss Wettle. Mmm, well, while you all at least appear to be attentive and compliant, for once in your lives, perhaps we can attempt to get on with some work. *(She pauses)* Mmm. *(Suddenly)* Books out!

The girls produce their books with military efficiency and precision timing – just as Wettle would as a matter of course.

Mrs Evelyn

I don't believe this! *(She blinks her eyes and rubs them)* Well, at long last – this is much more like it.

*She turns her back and begins to chalk on the board. **Hardman** coughs and all the girls in unison ride their chairs a little nearer to the board. **Mrs Evelyn** turns round but can't quite tell what has happened.*

Mrs Evelyn

I know you girls are up to something and when I find out what it is I'll take the matter as far as I can.

Hardman

How far, Miss?

Mrs Evelyn

To within an inch of your life if you tempt me any further, Miss Hardman.

The class ooooooh at the possibility

Hardman

Does that mean you intend flogging me with a six-inch ruler?

Mrs Evelyn

Don't worry girl – I'll have the measure of you yet! *(Sigh)* I knew this couldn't last. Now, please, everybody, let's get on with this work.

*She turns to the board again. **Hardman** coughs and the class advances forward. Pause. The process is repeated. At this point, **Brown** crawls out on hands and knees and attempts to tie Mrs Evelyn's shoelaces together. **Mrs Evelyn** spots her. **Brown** looks up with a daft expression.*

Mrs Evelyn

And what do you think you're up to, Miss Brown?

Hardman

At a guess, Miss, your knees.

The class laughs

Mrs Evelyn

Quiet! And as for you, Miss Brown, return to your chair immediately.

She does

Hardman

(to Brown) Fool! Haven't I always told you never to crawl to teachers.

Mrs Evelyn

That's quite enough! I'm getting just a little fed up with your cute remarks this morning, Miss Hardman.

Hardman

Only a little – then I'll have to try harder.

There is a general laugh

Mrs Evelyn

Right! That's it. At any moment I could lose my temper.

Hardman

Careless.

Another general laugh

Mrs Evelyn

Silence! Nobody moves – nobody says another word for the rest of the lesson. Now, on with your work

*She turns to the board. **Hardman** coughs louder than before. The class approaches Mrs Evelyn slowly but relentlessly in their chairs till she is hemmed in. Mrs Evelyn turns round, sees what has happened and slowly raises her arms in surrender.*

The following is recited like a poem or sung to the tune of "I feel pretty"

Mrs Evelyn

I surrender, I surrender
I surrender but hope for reprieve
And I tender my craven heart upon my sleeve

Class

Diddle diddle dum dum dum di dum

Mrs Evelyn

I never wanted to teach in school
Diagnosed a masochistic fool
I only hoped to be popular.
Instead I'm told, "What a flop you are!"

I surrender, I surrender
I surrender but pray I'll be free
Although slender are my hopes that that can ever be

Class

Diddle diddle dum dum dum dum di dum

Mrs Evelyn

I'm resigning, I'm resigning
I'm resigning before I'm destroyed
I'm inclining towards the lot of the unemployed

Class

Diddle diddle dum dum dum dum di dum

Hardman

Now that's what I call "dumb"!

Blackout