

*listens. No reply.) Great. Thanks for your support, everyone.
(Tearful.) They might at least . . . They could have at least
. . . Oh, Zara . . . I know you're always here, but sometimes
I get so . . . lonely . . .*

She sits on her bed, sad, angry and frustrated.

The Burston Drum

Ellen Dryden (with lyrics by Don Taylor)

This musical play is based on the true story of what came to be known as the 'Longest Strike in History'. On 1 April 1914 in the village of Burston, near Diss, Norfolk, a group of children went on strike to protest at the unfair dismissal of their teachers, Kitty and Tom Higdon. These two dedicated teachers believed that village children from poor working families deserved a better education and chance in life. As they had previously experienced, the School Managers and Councillors were against their ideals, but the village children and their parents fought on their behalf. The Burston Rebellion continued until 1939, the strike school meeting at first in temporary buildings and from 1917 in a more permanent one. In this scene Violet Potter, leader of the children, 13 years old, lively, staunch and intelligent talks to the pupils. She holds a paper in her hand. The scene is in a darkened schoolroom, lit by the children's torches and lanterns.

VIOLET. Ssh. We don't want them to know we're in here. We'll all have to go home in a minute or they'll come looking for us. Keep away from the windows with those torches. . . . Now you heard what Mr Durbridge said at the meeting out on the Green. They've sacked our teachers. The School Board man is coming to tell them to get out of this school by the first of April. That's tomorrow!! They won't even let them stay till the summer holidays! That means they've got to get all their things out of here by tomorrow. The Mistress has asked us if we'll help her carry her own things back to the schoolhouse and load up the cart. . . . Quiet! Listen to me. . . . We can do more than help them load up and leave. Now. Do you want the Governess and