

Mildred Hubble – aged 11

THE WORST WITCH

Adapted by Paul Todd from Jill Murphy's books

The Worst Witch series of books, the first of which was published in 1975, toured nationally as a musical with book, music and lyrics by Paul Todd with Jill Murphy in 1991/2, and was made into a children's series for Carlton TV.

MILDRED HUBBLE is 'The Worst Witch' at Miss Cackle's Academy for Witches – she always gets things wrong. But she manages to get by until Ethel, the teacher's pet, becomes her deadly enemy. In this scene **MILDRED** has been summoned to Miss Cackle's office to explain a recent incident. She is very nervous and hoping desperately that she won't be expelled.

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Mildred

Mildred Headle, Hubmistress. I mean Hubble, Headmistress. Mildred Hubble . . . Like 'trouble', Miss, yes. Unfortunately . . . Except there's no 'o' in it . . . But there are two 'b's . . . And an 'h' instead of 't', 'r'. Obviously. *(Pause)* You can borrow my pen, Miss, if yours has run out . . . Why am I here? Now, that's a very good question. I've not done anything wrong . . . much. At all, really. It's a lot of fuss about nothing, if you ask me . . . Didn't you? Oh, I'm sorry. *(She giggles nervously)* I am taking it seriously, Miss Cackle. Very, very seriously *(She giggles again)*. Sorry. It was Miss Hardbroom. And a Spelling mistake, that's all. A silly, little Spelling mistake in Miss Hardbroom's class . . . I turned Ethel into a pig. That was the mistake. It was meant to be a frog. I've got to have extra lessons. They're really, really complicated, all the animal spells, aren't they? . . . Right. Well, it all started when I was given a tabby instead of a black cat – I mean, everyone else got a black cat and H.B. – I mean, Miss Hardbroom – probably did it on purpose, but Tabby's lovely and really intelligent and things, but Ethel made fun of him and I didn't like it 'cos he can't answer back, and Ethel said that we were both as bad as each other (but she didn't say what at!) so I said: 'You'd better be quiet' and she said 'Won't!' and I said 'If you don't, I'll –' and she said 'What?' and I said I'd turn her into a frog and she said I couldn't 'cos I didn't know the spell. So I did. Well, I didn't. I nearly did. But I've changed her back. She's a bit disgruntled but she's alright. Apart from the occasional oink . . . Witches' Code, Rule Number Seven Paragraph Two . . . ? *(Pause)* No, I'm afraid that escapes me at present . . . 'It is not customary . . . ' ? Oh, yes! 'It is not customary to practise tricks on your fellows' . . . No, Miss, I won't forget in future . . . Can I? Really? I can go? I thought I was going to be – *(Pause)* You're right. The extra lessons with H.B. – Hardbroom'll be punishment enough. Thank you, Miss Cackle. *(She starts to exit, then turns)* When you were little? Extra Chanting lessons? Really? *(Pause)* For two whole terms? *(Pause)* I won't tell a soul. Honestly. Not a word. Goodbye, Miss Cackle. And thank you. I'll see you soon. *(Re-considering)* I didn't mean that. At least, I hope I didn't. *(Moving off, to herself)* Well, well, well . . . who would've thought Miss Cackle was ever a little girl . . . ?