

Meet Mr Wormwood

"Mr Wormwood was a small ratty-looking man whose front teeth stuck out underneath a thin ratty moustache. He liked to wear jackets with brightly coloured checks and he sported ties that were usually yellow or pale green."

Mr Wormwood - husband to Mrs Wormwood and father of Michael and Matilda - is a second-hand car salesman who likes to swindle his customers. "Sawdust," he tells his family, "is one of the great secrets of my success."

He's also a boastful, arrogant man who is utterly disinterested in his daughter, despite the fact that, by the age of four, she is reading Dickens and doing sums in her head that baffle him. He doesn't understand her love of reading. "What d'you want a flaming book for?" he demands, when Matilda asks him.

Matilda gets her own back, though. The tricks she plays on her parents are ingenious - and teach Mr Wormwood to be a lot more careful about where he leaves his hat...

Matilda was adapted for the screen in 1996, with Danny DeVito playing the role of Harry Wormwood. The RSC's 2010 Matilda The Musical, featuring words and music by Tim Minchin and book by Dennis Kelly, includes a solo piece by Mr Wormwood all about his main love: telly.