Positive Stories For Negative Times

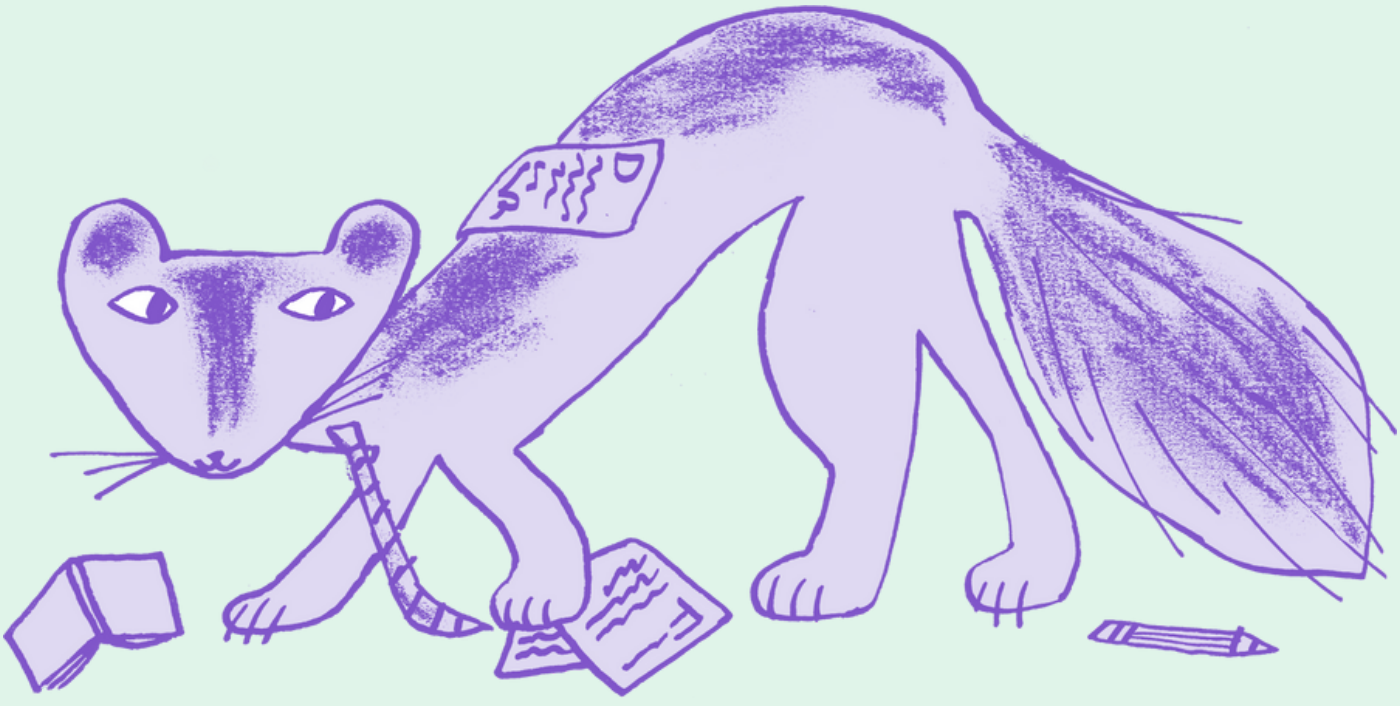
Season 3
2022/23

Presented by
WONDER FOOLS

In association with
TRAVERSE THEATRE

Ms Campbell's Class Fifth Period

by Leyla Josephine



Ms Campbell's Class Fifth Period Notes

Characters

The characters are designed so anyone can play them, you're more than welcome to make adjustments and change pronouns.

Mack is the class clown, the troublemaker. They love showing off and making people laugh, even if it means ruffling a few feathers.

Clover likes everything done a certain way. Their way. They are always keen to please - well, they like to please those who matter; everyone else can get lost.

Bell likes to stay out of things. Keep their head down. They don't say much. In fact, they've not said anything for years.

Ms Campbell loves poetry and the sound of her own voice. You can choose someone to act as her or she could be a voice recording, or a lighting trick, or maybe she's a puppet that you create her out of papermache! Let your imagination run wild. You can also change her to a male character if that suits better.

The Janny works long hours in the school and can't be bothered with anything, except cats, The Janny loves cats.

The Chorus is made up of the rest of Ms Campbell's class and should be made up of actors that aren't playing Bell, Mack or Clover. They'll be asked to invent their characters with the included character exercises. They'll also be asked to come up with their own lines - these sections are clearly marked. You can decide whether the written dialogue for chorus is distributed or said in unison or a mixture of both, or if you have another idea go for that! The text is just a starting point.

**Sometimes if it's just one voice saying the line, rather than in unison, it might be appropriate to change the line so it suits that choice, e.g. 'we heard' might make more sense as 'I heard'.*

Set

Everyone in the cast should have a chair. Think of the chairs as your scaffolding to create images, moments of movement and different shapes. They could also be a tool to show who has more power in the room at what time. There's opportunity to create some fun dynamics with them.

Ms Campbell’s Class Fifth Period

By Leyla Josephine
DRAFT 3
January 2023

Empty chairs face the audience.

There is a sound of a bell ringing.

One by one, or in small groups, students buzz into the classroom and take a seat. There is a whir of activity and it should feel like lots of things are happening at the same time. The actors should think about what their character would be doing while they wait for the teacher to arrive.

CHORUS: The story starts the same as each fifth period does.

The end of lunch hits with a kick, a buzz.
We're hyper from the sugar, manic from the fizz.
We're all screaming, running, laughing, slamming each other into walls.
Paper airplanes fly down the corridor, someone's blocked the loo with paper towels.

Monster Munch is stuck in-between braces, illegal chewing gum is being chewed.
The dinner ladies scrape plates, binning mushed-up left-over food.
There's a group recording a Tik Tok dance, one guy is doing the splits.
Someone's getting a uniform mark, groaning 'Again? Sir, you can't be serious?!'.

We're on a high, it doesn't get much better than this.
Laughing until our sides hurt, taking the mick.
There's nothing better: getting to spend everyday with your mates.
If it was lunch all day, we'd never leave this place.

But the fun doesn't last forever and next period is the worst.
Book us on the next rocket ship out of this universe.
It's only for dummies, the kids who come last.
It's time for Ms Campbell's 5th Period English Class.

It's not that we're not smart, it's not that we're not able.
It's just so boring, we're worried it could be fatal.
We just can't be bothered, we just can't be assed.
Welcome to hell: Ms Campbell's 5th Period English Class.

She's a rubbish teacher.
She doesn't explain anything right.
She's always pissed about something.
Always talking to herself or looking for a fight.
She purposely uses big words that we don't understand.
If you get stuck with her, you don't stand a chance.

We heard she murdered her ex and then made him into stew.
We heard she was caught smoking in the staff loos.
We heard she got fired from her last teaching post.
One stern look from her can turn bread into toast.

We heard she smacked a pupil.
We heard she's just got divorced.
We heard she's on Tinder. Bleugh.
She's never given a decent report.

We heard she force fed a pupil Wine Gums until they were sick.
We heard she once shouted so hard she grogged in someone's face.
We heard she's got devil horns under her hair.

She's something straight from a primary 1s nightmare.

Mack enters the room with a swagger.

CHORUS: Here comes Mack.
Maybe they'll cause trouble today and we can just sit back.

MACK: Alright troops, what's happening!?

CHORUS: Mack, do you think you'll do something bad today?
Come on, do us a solid.
We can't be arsed, we can't be bothered.
It's probably Charles Dickens or god forbid, Hamlet again.
Who cares about these ancient-old, dead-boring men?!

MACK: What more do you want from me? I'm knackered, it's been a long day of trouble already. I've been late to all my classes, I glued Mr Norris's lunch to his desk, I let the P5 hamster, Graham, loose at break AND I've just put wee Paddy the first year in the bin for the third time this week.

CHORUS: Oi come on, just a wee thing, enough to send her on a rant.
Go on, go on, go on, do it for us Mack.

MACK: Well, I suppose I could think of something.

CHORUS: Yes, Mack! You're the best.

MACK: Well, she certainly wasn't impressed when I said she had a face like a tuna baguette.

CHORUS: Some of your finest work yet.
If that isn't poetry, we don't know what is.
We didn't even lift a pencil that period, the telling off went on for so long.
Go on Mack, we're all behind you, do something wrong.

MACK: Well, if it's what my fans want….

Clover enters pushing people out the way to get to their seat.

CLOVER: Emmmm hello?! If you were walking any slower, you'd be going backwards - MOVE.

CHORUS: And here's Clover, a snob, always sticking to the rules.
Determined to get out of this town, they think they're too good for this school.
Their prefect badge twinkling in the florescent light.
Never happy unless they are proved right.

CLOVER: Did you do the homework last night? What did you get?

CHORUS: We heard they've got a skyrocket IQ.
We heard they don't do anything but study after school.
We heard they're going to Oxford or Cambridge.
Ha, no chance, not if they keep failing English.

CLOVER: I just didn't know what the questions wanted from me! It made no sense!

CHORUS: Always blaming the teacher, or the school, or the 'choice of text'.

MACK: Clover, are you sure you're not just bad at English?!

CLOVER: *(Clover rolls their eyes but doesn't rise)* I swear if this effects my UCAS, I'll march right up to the heads office and tell all about what I really think of this stupid, stupid subject. Why would Hamlet wait so long to kill Claudius?! Surely he would have saved us all some time if he'd just got on with it and killed the guy. And Ms Campbell hasn't explained any of it. I don't understand how she got this job.

CHORUS: We can't argue with that. She is total crap.

Bell enters and makes their way to their seat.

MACK: Alrrright Bell, what's happening?

Bell, wearing noise cancelling headphones, ignores Mack and sits down.

CHORUS: Why does Mack even bother with Bell?
They always keep themselves to themselves.
Their headphones glued on.
Apparently they're easily 'overwhelmed'.
They never want to talk. They never say hi.
None of the adults have ever explained,
they've never told us why.

CLOVER: You shouldn't make fun of people Mack.

MACK: I'm not! I'm just talking to my pal.

CHORUS: We heard Bell's not talked for 5 years now.
We heard it's been their whole life.

MACK: Bell spoke in Primary.

CHORUS: Nah, Mack don't tell lies.
We heard it was a violent incident.
We heard it was a car accident.
We heard it was all for attention.
We heard it was an allergic reaction.

MACK: Yeah, to Clover's bad chat.

CHORUS: OOOOOOOHHHHHH Clover are you gonna take that?!

CLOVER: Ha ha, good one. You been googling bad comebacks?

MACK: Shut it Clover, ya lump of butter. You don't know anything.

CLOVER: I can see the joke you were trying to make. But Clover - the brand of spreadable vegetable fat - is technically, margarine. And that is a perfect example of how I know more than you and that micro-shrew brain of yours.

MACK: Are you calling me a shoe?

Mack heads towards Clover but some class members hold them back

CLOVER: My point exactly.

CHORUS: Quick everyone, sit down, Ms Campbell is on her way.
We wonder what kind of mood she'll be in today.

The class all sit on their chairs… except for Mack. Ms Campbell enters the class room.

MS C: Mack, why are you wandering the classroom, are you lost? Do you need a map? I take it you still haven't managed to get that brain transplant?

Mack sits in their chair. Clover sits up, straightens their tie and clears their throat.

CLOVER: Happy Monday Ms Campbell, did you have a nice weekend?

Mack mimics Clover behind their back. Ms Campbell looks at Clover suspiciously.

MS C: I don't do weekends. Weekends are for the weak. My brain does not take breaks.

CLOVER: And that is why it is in such great shape.

The class groan at Clover's see-through charm.

MS C: Okay, now Clover has got their vestibule olfactory out of my gluteus maximus, I am pleased to announce that today is the day you take the test to decide what English set you will be in next year.

The class groan. Clover's hand shoots up.

CHORUS: Miss! Miss! Miss!
You can't be serious?!
This is a surprise, we've had no time to prepare.
You mean to tell us, if we fail this test we have you for another year?
You never warned us. This isn't fair!

MS C: I don't know if you're aware, but it is not my responsibility to keep you up to date with every little resolution I make. You are not children anymore. You should be taking more responsibility for your studies and knowledge, rather than just preparing for exams. You should be reading and thinking for the exuberance of it. This is what is wrong with the youth of today - no drive, no morals, no role models, fixed to their mobile devices. I read there was more applicants for Love Island, than university last intake. Disgusting. No wonder you're all going bald so early, there's no heat in the head!

CHORUS: Look at Clover, they're sweating in panic.
Being the best is all they care about.

MACK: It's tragic.

MS C: Now, if you can all locate your copy of Robert Burn's Tam O'Shanter and put away your textbooks and mobile devices, which should not be out in the first place.

Clover stretches their hand even further in desperation to be noticed.

CHORUS: *(whispering)* If Clover stretches their hand any further.
They're going to surely dislocate their shoulder.

MS C: In fact, you can put them in the box on my bureau, and you can get them at the end of the day, as there is no need for you to have them at all.

The class groan. Clover is practically jumping now. Ms Campbell clears her throat and starts reciting Tam O'Shanter with much gusto.

MS C: When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,

The class are rolling their eyes, making faces. This is not the first time they've heard this poem.

MS C: As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate;

Clover manically swings their arms.

MACK: Miss, I think Clover has a questi-

MS C: Don't interrupt me while I am performing!

While we sit bousin, at the nappy,
And gettin fou and unco happy
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters -

Clover is making strange noises in desperation. She can't ignore him anymore.

To find out how to get involved and for more information visit:
www.positivestories.scot

www.wonderfools.org

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