

**Positive
Stories
For
Negative
Times**

Season 5
2026/27

Presented by

**WONDER
FOOLS**

Archeology

by Maryam Hamidi



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Our story plays out in an archaeological base camp which is unearthing a modern-day classroom. The audience gather in the base camp surrounding a mini classroom and the performers move freely amongst them. Some of the audience can participate in archaeological activities and some can sit around the space.

All parts are played by young people (apart from two surprise grownups at the end). There are lots of roles that can be interchanged so everyone gets a shot at performing. And everyone has a job to do throughout.

There are four areas:

Area 1 - One with sand trays and clean paint brushes for dusting.

Area 2 - One with a couple of tables with lamps, magnifying glasses and brushes where broken objects are pieced together.

Area 3 - One with a couple of tables covered in unearthed specimens ready to be described, recorded and tagged.

Area 4 - And a classroom scene - 4 two-seater desks lined up as if facing a teacher - except the table legs look half buried in sand or worn down and the chairs are upturned and mixed up.

Everyone, dressed as ARCHAEOLOGISTS, welcomes the audience to either sit around the space or within the archaeological base camp itself. There are ARCHAEOLOGISTS in all four areas - and their lines should be shared out.

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS step out of the dig to narrate the story. There are four of these archaeologist speakers and these roles can be shared out.

OONIE - An archaeological storyteller, determined to keep things on track.

TULI - A gung-ho archaeologist, and a joker, who sees the value in everything they unearth.

THREA - A more considered archaeologist interested in ancient civilisations.

FORD - A palaeontologist who would rather be living with dinosaurs than people.

- These roles can be of any gender or background. They could speak on microphones, on platforms or you might find a different way to stage them. The ARCHAEOLOGISTS also play the other characters in the story. Sometimes these characters step out of the story to speak directly to the archaeologists, the audience or each other.

ARRI - A little shy and quiet. Sometimes keeps their fun personality under wraps.

TE - confident, outspoken. Keeps all their worries tied in a knot.

- These roles should be shared among three or four performers. The play talks about Arri using cruel words towards Te but we never hear what these words are. We don't want the audience to presume what's been said based on the protected characteristics of the young performers - so the performers interchanging as ARRI or TE can vary between gender and background.

MR/MISS GOZO - their class teacher

THE HEAD - the head teacher

Arri's GRAN

Te's DAD.

BEE - a classmate

CAM - a classmate

NAZ - a classmate

HAL - a classmate

BIG TE BIG ARRI

- BIG TE and BIG ARRI should be played by 2 ADULTS. This can be pre-arranged with class teachers or you can pull up two audience volunteers to read the script from clipboards.

Important Props

- A telescope breakable and fixable into three parts - maybe one made of kitchen roll tubes
- A mug that says 'best teacher', pens, pencils, glue sticks and a sandwich wrapped in cling film
- A soft ball, a child's lunchbox and a crumpled note
- An old pair of glasses
- An old scarf, torn and restitched
- A small desk calendar
- Two notebooks/diaries belonging to Arri and Te
- A picture of two friends as if drawn by a five-year-old
- A beanie hat for ARRI and a small crossbody bag for TE.
- And lots of random (safe to handle) small broken objects to unearth that might belong to a child - for example: small toys, stationery or keyrings.
- Sand and sand trays.
- Magnifying glasses, small lamps, dry paintbrushes, small trays, stickers or tags and a camera.
- Some classroom desks and chairs
- A small discovery bell
- A tea towel
- Paper towels
- Two clipboards with scripts for the Big Arri and Big Te scene

A glossary of punctuation and formatting

- - when a speaker is interrupted by the next speaker.
- ... when a sentence trails off OR trails into the next speaker.
- *Italics in dialogue* when a speaker is emphasising that word.
 - Indented dialogue and stage directions mark the dramatised scenes, where the characters act out the story
- *Narration and commentary appear in the main margin*

A note on staging

I hope with this script you can play around with the staging.

For example -

How will you set up the performance space?

Where will the audience sit?

Can you look up examples of plays that are staged in the round, in traverse or site-specific?

What music could you use at the beginning, end and between scenes?

You can play and discover lots of original moments in between the scripted dialogue and action.

For example -

How will you introduce the audience to the space?

How will you teach the audience the activities in the archaeological areas?

How will you present your expertise?

Do the Archaeologists do anything particular when they ring their discovery bell or when performers are swapped round?

What character qualities do you want to add to your role?

Introduction

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS welcome the audience into their archaeological dig in their own words. There are jobs to be done in amongst their various dusting, piecing and sorting stations!

In AREA 1 The ARCHAEOLOGISTS teach some audience members to dig and dust off objects they find buried in sand trays.

When the audience successfully discover something the ARCHAEOLOGISTS ring a little bell. They gather around the object curiously and consider it as if it's an unfamiliar thing.

The Archaeologists from this area take fragments, pieces and artefacts to AREA 2.

Here the Archaeologists encourage the audience to puzzle together things that have broken apart.

When the audience successfully piece something together the ARCHAEOLOGISTS once again ring a little bell. They gather around the object before these objects are taken to AREA 3.

In AREA 3 the ARCHAEOLOGISTS encourage the audience to describe and note down on pads what they think these objects are and give them tags or stickers.

In AREA 4 ARCHAEOLOGISTS are excavating something much bigger: a whole classroom. They encourage some audience members to place markers around it and take photos of it.

Here the Archaeologists dust down and carefully lift out bits of classroom furniture - setting up the stage.

And then the first four Archaeologists step up and begin to tell the story.

ONE.

Four archaeologist speakers take a microphone each - and so our story begins.

Ford

(tapping on the mic) Is this on? Ah - good.

Oonie

Welcome.

Tuli

Thanks for joining us today.

Ford

You can take a seat if you haven't already

Threa

We hope this dig gives you an insight...

Ford

...into whatever we're unearthing here.

Tuli

We are your Archaeologists

Threa

Anthro... pologists

Ford

Palaeontologists.

Oonie

Storyteller... ists?

Ford

The facts we dig up, speak for themselves

Tuli

Speak for yourself.

Oonie

Because sometimes we have to imagine what they mean.

Okay, team. What've we got?

Archaeologists gathered around the different areas begin to answer, referring to the discoveries laid out before them and the audience.

Archaeologist Ensemble

Pens, pencils

Reading a glue stick

and 'pritt...sticks'

Lifting up a novelty 'Best Teacher' mug that's been glued back together.

A novelty drinking vessel...

Lifting up a smelly old sandwich wrapped in cling film.

Two slices of bread with a jam filling

which we can assume someone lied and said they'd eaten.

One Archaeologist digs out a Beanie Hat.

Archaeologist

An item of... headwear?

There's writing inside it.

'ARRI'

A name?

And another Archaeologist reports a small crossbody bag.

Archaeologist

A kind of bag?

It contains items - a book of notations.

This could be a name too

TE?

And then attention turns to the classroom scene in Area 4 - desks and chairs still empty.

Archaeologist Ensemble

And a big window,
walls covered in displays
and a shining board of white plastic.

Threa

You'll have to imagine those.

Tuli

But something's emerging here

Oonie

People. A story.

Ford

Pfft... a story?

Tuli

Who could they have belonged to?

Threa

We need to excavate

Tuli

Recover

Ford

Analyse

Oonie

Gather

Threa

Interpret

Ford

To uncover facts.

Tuli

Truths. Someone's truth

Oonie

Plus the other truth

Threa

And the ones besides that

Tuli

But when you're digging for it.

Oonie

The truth that is.

Tuli

It's easy to miss a fragment.

So please keep digging.

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS keep encouraging the audience to participate in tasks in the various areas.
Archaeologist Ensemble

Digging

Dusting

Piecing together.

The material remains of the past tell us so much about

Then

Now

And whatever comes next

A brief interlude of DIGGING as OONIE, TULI, THREA and FORD continue blethering.

Threa

Objects, Artefacts and Fossils

Ford

Ahhhh, fossils. More interesting than whatever *this* is.

Tuli

Your brain's a fossil.

Ford

What's the ancient Sumerian for - "you smell"?

Threa

Sometimes I wonder if we're in civilisational decline.

Oonie

No name calling in front of the visitors...

SNAP - the Archaeologists stop what they're doing and politely consider the audience.

And then - SNAP - they get back to work.

Ford

Fossils teach us facts, not fiction.

Threa

Not all stories are fiction.

Ford

I still think we should have dug deeper.

Tuli

Palaeontologists... Always wanting to dig deeper.

Am I right?

Threa

I don't get it?

Ford

I don't get what we really expect to learn from *this*?

Archaeologist

We've found something else!

They lift up the telescope - and look at it in awe

Archaeologist Ensemble

What a thing to look at
To look through?
See what it sees
To better understand
Distant stars and the infinite universe...

universe

universe

Oonie

This could be the key to this story.
These people.

An Archaeologist holds up the beanie hat from the unearthed objects...

Archaeologist Ensemble

Arri

... and another Archaeologist, the small crossbody bag.

and Te

Two kids

In one classroom

Busily, SEVEN ARCHAEOLOGISTS are given items of costume or props. They begin to stretch and warm up and then step in to BECOME LIVING ARTEFACTS:

ARRI wears the beanie hat and TE the crossbody bag. Four of their CLASSMATES put on an item of school uniform, oh, and MR/MISS GOZO picks up their 'Best Teacher' mug.

As the Characters take their places in the Classroom, the Archaeologists dust and make adjustments around them. An Archaeologist wraps the Telescope in a tea towel and hands it to ARRI.

Archaeologist Ensemble

Arri.

Sat cradling something precious.

Wrapped in a tea towel.

Something precious -

Arri

that I shouldn't have brought from home.

Archaeologist Ensemble

Some...*thing* that might change things

Help them make friends again.

And Te.

Always on the lookout.

Te

With all the friends in the world.

Archaeologist Ensemble

But somehow still all alone.

TWO.

Ford

Kids can be cruel

Oonie

They're just trying to figure themselves out

Mr/Miss Gozo

Figure out how they fit in the world

Arri

And this might make them like me again

Mr/Miss Gozo

It's hard at this age.

Tuli

It's hard fitting into the world

Threa

Fitting into your school

Ford

Fitting into your own skin

Mr/Miss Gozo

Into your class

Arri

It's a telescope, Miss Gozo

Mr/Miss Gozo

Wow, an old one. Looks precious.

Arri

An antique

Te

What is it?

Bee

A telescope? No way.

Arri

An *antique* telescope.

Mr/Miss Gozo

Arri - are you sure it was okay to bring this in?

Cam

Wow... that's awesome

Naz

Can I see?

Hal

Where'd you say you got it?

Te

It's just an old telescope.

Arri

You can take a look if you like?

Te

No thanks

Hal

It's pretty cool.

Mr/Miss Gozo

Arri?

Arri

I thought I'd show it before the trip to the Science Centre, Miss. My Gran said it was fine.

Hal

You don't live with your parents?

Arri

No

Mr/Miss Gozo

Me neither, as it happens.

Cam

I've got two mums

Naz

I've got one mum but two dogs

Tuli

Funny, isn't it? Arri was right.

Threa

Suddenly people are interested

Te

They're interested in the telescope. That's all.

Arri

Pals, suddenly pals.

The characters in the classroom all freeze ...

THREE.

Ford

I don't get it... what are the facts here?

The Archaeologists step forward and begin dusting the classroom furniture and the characters with their brushes...(the characters try not to giggle...but it's tickly).

Tuli

Not facts. Feelings.

Ford

Can you be a bit more specific?

Oonie

For weeks now

Tuli

Since Arri started this term

Threa

Things had been tough

Arri

In the classroom... Te acts nice to me.

Te

What do you mean? Of course I'm nice

Oonie

This is good. Tell us more.

ARRI takes on OONIE's encouragement.

Arri

You never do it in front of the teachers - but when their backs are turned.

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS begin to use the telescope - looking through it to awaken moments.

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS unearth a child's lunch box...

Ford

In the lunch hall

Arri

I sit with them... but on the outside looking in

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS unearth a soft ball and throw a ball in a circle...

Oonie

In the playground

Threa

Everyone's running

Arri

I'm running with them - but then they're running away.

The ARCHAEOLOGISTS unearth a crumpled note...

Area 2 Archaeologist

(Reading) "Do you think Arri's acting weird today?"

Tuli

In groups... huddles of bodies

Arri

Whispering, giggling, eyes on me

BEE, CAM, NAZ & HAL throw the ball between them.

Bee

We weren't trying to be mean

Cam

Thing is, it's not easy on *any* of us

Naz

We're still trying to figure out how...

Hal

How we all fit together.

Te

And you've been acting weird since... since...

But TE can't say it. Instead...

TE and ARRI hand their props to two new Archaeologists who replace them.

The new TE puts on their bag, and ARRI their hat:

Te

If we fit you in... what happens to the rest of us?

FOUR.

They return to their positions gathered around the telescope, Mr/Miss Gozo hovering around them.

Oonie

After the dust has settled

Tuli

On this microscopic moment

Threa

Which version of the truth will we remember?

Te

Guys, calm down - it's just a telescope

Mr/Miss Gozo

Can you tell us a bit more about it, Arri?

Arri

It's over 70 years old. It's small but really powerful.

Cam

It's the lens

Naz

Like in a pair of glasses