

ACT IT OUT: Mr Coombes

Excerpt from Chapter 5 in Boy: Tales of Childhood by Roald Dahl

CHARACTERS:	PLAYED BY:
Dahl	
Mr. Coombes	
Mrs. Pratchett	
Thwaites	

DIRECTIONS | Reread this scene to identify what your character says and does.

Highlight your dialogue. Underline your actions. Act out the scene with your group.

55. Every boy in our form was watching Mr Coombes and Mrs Pratchett as they came walking down the line towards us.
56. 'Nasty cheeky lot, these little 'uns!' I heard Mrs Pratchett muttering. 'They comes into my shop and they thinks they can do what they darn well likes!'
57. Mr Coombes made no reply to this.
58. 'They nick things when I ain't looking,' she went on. 'They put their grubby 'ands all over everything and they've got no manners. I don't mind girls. I never 'ave no trouble with girls, but boys is 'ideous and 'orrible! I don't 'ave to tell you that, 'Eadmaster, do I?'
59. 'These are the smaller ones,' Mr Coombes said.
60. I could see Mrs Pratchett's piggy little eyes staring hard at the face of each boy she passed.
61. Suddenly she let out a high-pitched yell and pointed a dirty finger straight at Thwaites. 'That's 'im!' she yelled. 'That's one of 'em! I'd know 'im a mile away, the scummy little bounder!'

62. The entire school turned to look at Thwaites. 'W-what have I done?' he stuttered, appealing to Mr Coombes.
63. 'Shut up,' Mr Coombes said.
64. Mrs Pratchett's eyes flicked over and settled on my own face. I looked down and studied the black asphalt surface of the playground.
65. "Ere's another of 'em!" I heard her yelling. 'That one there!' She was pointing at me now.
66. 'You're quite sure?' Mr Coombes said.
67. 'Of course I'm sure!' she cried. 'I never forgets a face, least of all when it's as sly as that! 'Ee's one of 'em all right! There was five altogether! Now where's them other three?'
68. The other three, as I knew very well, were coming up next.
69. Mrs Pratchett's face was glimmering with venom as her eyes travelled beyond me down the line.
70. 'There they are!' she cried out, stabbing the air with her finger. "Im . . . and 'im . . . and 'im! That's the five of 'em all right! We don't need to look no farther than this, 'Eadmaster! They're all 'ere, the nasty dirty little pigs! You've got their names, 'ave you?'
71. 'I've got their names, Mrs Pratchett,' Mr Coombes told her. 'I'm much obliged to you.'
72. 'And I'm much obliged to you, 'Eadmaster,' she answered.
73. As Mr Coombes led her away across the playground, we heard her saying, 'Right in the jar of Gobstoppers it was! A stinkin' dead mouse which I will never forget as long as I live!'
74. 'You have my deepest sympathy,' Mr Coombes was muttering.
75. 'Talk about shocks!' she went on. 'When my fingers caught 'old of that nasty soggy stinkin' dead mouse . . .' Her voice trailed away as Mr Coombes led her quickly through the door into the school building.