

## To Grow or Not to Grow: That Is The Question

by RCSI

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Scott McSnuffins had a plan.

It wasn't the kind of plan adults would call "sensible" or "mature." But Scott didn't do mature. Maturity was for broccoli lovers, cheddar cheese fans and people who enjoyed ironing socks and underwear. Scott was 12 years old, the proud owner of a slightly wobbly tooth, and absolutely, completely, 100% NOT going to Big School next year.

"I refuse!" he announced one sunny Tuesday, standing on the 6th Class lunch bench like a superhero. "I will not go to Big School! I will stay here forever, and if anyone tries to stop me. I'll do something heroic. Or mildly dramatic!"

"Like what?" asked his best friend, Daisy, through a mouthful of spaghetti hoops.

Scott paused for effect and whispered, "I'm going to chain myself to the school flagpole."

### **Day 1**

His operation "never-grow-up" has begun

That night, while the rest of the world slept peacefully (Scott's mum fell asleep, mouth open and halfway through a documentary called "Ten Ways to Grill a Pineapple"), Scott McSnuffins was on a mission.

Wearing his fluffy dinosaur pyjamas, he tiptoed through the house like a ninja with squeaky slippers. He grabbed his pre-packed "Rebellion Bag," slung it over his shoulder with more drama than a soap opera cliffhanger, and crept out into the night.

Inside his overstuffed school bag were:

- Three bike locks because one wasn't dramatic enough.
- A packet of marshmallows is badly needed for survival, snacking, and possibly bribery.
- A sleeping bag shaped like a giant hot dog, complete with fake mustard stitching.
- A handwritten protest sign that read: "NOT LEAVING. I HAVE RIGHTS. AND SNACKS."
- A pair of sunglasses (for coolness and anonymity).
- A mini fan (in case things got too intense or sweaty).
- A bag of glitter (just in case he needed to make a sparkly statement).
- And a plastic walkie-talkie that only connected to a second walkie-talkie he left with his dog, Mr President, who was not helpful but did enjoy pressing buttons with his nose.

Scott arrived at the school, climbed over the fence (by accidentally falling through a bush), and marched up to the flagpole with the confidence of someone who had definitely not just ripped their pyjamas on a sticking-up twig.

He wrapped the chains dramatically around the pole, twice, then thrice, then once more for dramatic tension, and clipped them shut with a satisfying clunk. Then he unrolled his hot dog sleeping bag, wriggled inside, and

popped his head on a deflated whoopee cushion, which let out one final farty squeak.

He lay there under the stars, his marshmallow stash tucked safely in his hood, and whispered to himself:

"Scott McSnuffins... the boy who would not grow up. The first of his name. Ruler of the Playground. Defender of the Juice Boxes. Long may he snooze."

Then he dozed off with a trail of mini marshmallows stuck to his cheek and dreams of staying in 6th Class forever.

Little did he know, by sunrise, he'd be a local legend... and possibly trending on TikTok.

## **Day 2**

By Day Two, Scott's protest had become a full-on school legend.

Parents driving past honked their horns in support (or confusion). The 4th Class started calling him "Sir Scott of Stubbornness." The teachers gave up trying to move him and instead started to bring him toast in the morning.

Scott's camp had grown. Someone donated a mini umbrella for "shade and drama." A 5th Class student gave him a beanbag shaped like a llama. His hot dog sleeping bag was now parked beside a stack of juice boxes labelled "Use for emergency only."

He was a king among primary pupils.

A rebel.

A boy with no bedtime.

By midday on Day Two, teachers tried reasoning.

Miss Quibble (Head of 6th Class): "Scott, darling, you're making a scene."

Scott: "Exactly! All great heroes make scenes. I'm practically historical."

Then came the psychologist.

Mr. Smile: "Tell me how you're feeling inside, Scott."

Scott: "Hungry. For justice. Also, waffles."

Then came the PE teacher.

Miss Zaleska: "Big School has a rock climbing wall!"

Scott: "I'm already climbing emotional walls. That's harder."

### **Day 3**

By Day Three, Daisy came back with reinforcements: Max, who once ate 12 crackers in a minute, and Lena, who owned a clipboard and was therefore very official.

Daisy: "Scott. You can't just live out here like a big monkey on display."

Scott: "Yes, I can. I'm one with the pigeons now. Gerald the pigeon is my advisor."

(He pointed to a confused pigeon sitting on a nearby wall.)

Lena (checking clipboard): "Technically, he hasn't broken any rules... except 'Don't chain yourself to school property.' And possibly 'Don't build a pillow fort near the bin area.'"

Max: "You smell like sour milk and marshmallow dreams, pal. Maybe it's time."

But Scott wouldn't budge. He was deep in his mission.

He gave daily speeches to the Senior Infants saying:

"Beware, children. If you go to the big school, they'll try to make you do algebra. And wear shirts that tuck in."

He handed out copies of "The Rebel Schooler Times" (printed on the back of old worksheets), featuring:

### **"How to Pretend You Understand Fractions"**

Step 1: Nod. Step 2: Say "Interesting." Step 3: Eat a biscuit.

### **"Interview with Gerald the Playground Pigeon"**

Scott: "Do you support the protest?"

Pigeon: "Coo."

### **A Spot-the-Difference Puzzle**

Featuring two identical drawings of the headteacher, except one has a pirate hat.

### **"Snack of the Week" Review**

- This week's feature: "Crushed banana in a bread crust I found in my bag.

2/5 stars. Slightly tragic."

- Future career ideas for kids who refuse to grow up
- Juice box critic
- Professional hide-and-seeker
- PJ fashion model
- School tour guide (but only for the playground)

### **Day 4**

On the morning of Day Four, after a wild dream, in which his hot dog sleeping bag came alive and performed an emotional musical number called "Let It Go (To Secondary School)," Miss Murphy handed Scott a worksheet.

"Activity: Imagine Your Best Possible Self at Big School."

He rolled his eyes. "What, like a superhero in a tie who knows chemistry?"

But... something about the quiet moment, the squashed marshmallow in his pocket, and Gerald the pigeon watching him thoughtfully made him pause.

He picked up a marker. And began to imagine.

He drew:

- Himself on stage, spotlight right on top of him, wearing a wizard cape made from cafeteria napkins
- A crown of sharpened pencils for dramatic effect and emergency note-taking

- His drama club, called "Theatre of the Slightly Unhinged", where capes were mandatory
- Giving acting tips to nervous students: "Cry on command by thinking about soggy chips."
- And hosting the school talent show, with a fog machine entrance and at least three costume changes

He finished the last line and stared at it. Then blinked.

"...Whoa," he whispered. I will become a theatre star."

He looked up at Daisy, eyes wide. "I AM dramatic enough for Big School."

She nodded. "You always were."

Scott slowly stood, head high, and struck a Shakespearean pose with one hand on his heart and the other holding his juice box.

"O world of secondary, prepare thy stage... for Scottus the Spectacular approacheth."

He entered his hot dog sleeping bag, unlocked the chains with a dramatic click, and took his first brave step toward Big School.

A little nervous.

A little sticky.

But filled with serious "main character" charisma.

As he packed his things, his mum arrived.

"Scott. Honey," she said gently, "did you know that Big School has a drama club."

Scott gasped. "With stage lights?"

"And costumes."

He narrowed his eyes. "...What kind of costumes?"

"Capes. Tiaras. At least one fake beard. And possibly a fog machine."

Scott stared into the distance as if receiving a message from the gods of Theatre. Then he rose like a nobleman, slowly and dramatically, as though music should have been playing and velvet curtains parting behind him.

"Fine," he said. "But only if I get to audition for everything and eat vending machine snacks during rehearsals."

Mr. Crumbly, standing nearby with his third coffee, smiled. "Deal. Now go home and shower. You smell like damp crayons and ambition."

Scott gave a deep bow, stepped out of his hot dog sleeping bag, and marched proudly toward his future. He was ready for drama, destiny, and whatever Big School awaited backstage.