

Read the extract carefully, then answer the questions in the answer booklet provided.

*In the story 'The Magic Pudding' written by Norman Lindsay, the characters Bill Barnacle, Sam Sawnoff and Bunyip Bluegum are trying to track down their Magic Pudding (magic because it can go on being eaten forever) which has been stolen by some professional pudding snatchers. This extract starts when Bill is asking a very talkative Rooster they have just met if he has seen a possum and a wombat, the pudding snatchers. The Rooster thinks he has seen the possum ...*

"Which way did he go?" inquired Bill excitedly.

"Now, let me see," said the Rooster. "He went down the road, turned to the right, gave a jump and a howl, and set off in the direction of Watkin Wombat's Summer Residence."

"The very man we're after," shouted Bill, and bolted off down the road, followed by the others, without taking any notice of the Rooster's request to wait a minute and be introduced to the wife.

"His wife may be all right," said Bill as they ran, "but what I say is, blow meetin' a bloomin' old Rooster's wife when you haven't got a year to waste listenin' to a bloomin' old Rooster."

They followed the Rooster's directions with the utmost rapidity, and came to a large hollow tree with a door in the side and a notice-board nailed up which said, "Watkin Wombat, Esq., Summer Residence."

The door was locked, but it was clear that the puddin'-thieves were inside, because they heard the Possum say peevishly, "You're eating too much, and here's me, most severely singed, not getting sufficient", and the Wombat was heard to say, "What you want is soap", but the Possum said angrily, "What I need is immense quantities of puddin'."

15 The avengers drew aside to hold a consultation.

"What's to be done?" said Bill. "It's no use knockin', because they'd look through the keyhole and refuse to come out, and, not bein' burglars, we can't bust the door in. It seems to me that there's nothin' for it but to give way to despair."

"Never give way to despair while whiskers can be made from dry grass," said Bunyip Bluegum, and suiting the action to the word, he swiftly made a pair of fine moustaches out of dried grass and stuck them on with wattle gum. "Now, lend me your hat," he said to Bill, and taking the hat he turned up the brim, dented in the top, and put it on. "The bag is also required," he said to Sam, and taking that in his hand and turning his coat inside out, he stood before them completely disguised.

"You two," he said, "must remain in hiding behind the tree. You will hear me knock, accost the ruffians and hold them in conversation. The moment you hear me exclaim loudly, 'Hey, Presto Pots and Pans', you will dart out and engage the villains at fisticuffs. The rest leave to me."

Waiting till the others were hidden behind the tree, Bunyip rapped smartly on the door which opened presently, and the Wombat put his head out cautiously.

"Have I the extreme pleasure of addressing Watkin Wombat, Esq.?" inquired Bunyip Bluegum, with a bow.

Of course, seeing a perfect stranger at the door, the Wombat had no suspicions, and said at once, "Such is the name of him you see before you."

"I have called to see you," said Bunyip, "on a matter of business. The commodity which I vend is Pootles' Patent Pudding Enlarger, samples of which I have in the bag. As a guarantee of good faith we are giving samples of our famous Enlarger away to all well-known puddin'-owners. The Enlarger, one of the wonders of modern science, has but to be poured over the puddin', with certain necessary incantations, and the puddin' will be instantly enlarged to double its normal size." He took some sugar from the bag and held it up. "I am now about to hand you some of this wonderful discovery. But," he added impressively, "the operation of enlarging the puddin' is a delicate one, and must be performed in the open air. Produce your puddin', and I will at once apply Pootles' Patent with marvellous effect."

"Of course it's understood that no charge is to be made," said the Possum, hurrying out.

"No charge whatsoever," said Bunyip Bluegum.

So on the principle of always getting something for nothing, as the Wombat said, Puddin' was brought out and placed on the ground.

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