

STORYKEEPERS PRESS

READ-ALoud PERFORMER'S GUIDE

Bring the Wilderland to life in your own voice

THE MINGLES IN WILDERLAND • BOOK ONE: TIMBIT'S EMPIRE

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A Note on This Book as a Performed Story

The Mingles in Wilderland was written to be read aloud. Its sentences are short. Its dialogue is distinct. Its chapters are brief enough to end on a high note and leave the listener wanting more. Reading this book well is a performance — not a theatrical one, but an honest one: your own voice, carrying someone else's characters, into the ears of someone you love.

This guide will help you do that.

The Cast of Characters

The Mingles

Timbit Sciurid (TIM-bit SY-yoo-rid)

A squirrel. Inventor. The protagonist.

Voice: Quick, earnest, enthusiastic — then quietly devastated when things go wrong. Timbit thinks in forward motion; his sentences tend to accelerate. When he's afraid, he gets more precise, not less. When he's broken, he goes very quiet.

Watch for: The moment in Part IV when his voice changes entirely — when he has nothing left to hide behind.

Pippin Lapidore (PIP-in LAP-ih-dor)

A rabbit. Fierce. A survivor.

Voice: Controlled, clipped, watchful. Pippin does not waste words. When she is angry, she is cold — not loud. When she finally says something soft, it lands harder because of how rarely it comes.

Watch for: Chapter 83. "You. You are a coward." This is the most important line Pippin speaks in the book. Let it land. Do not rush past it.

Quilliam (Quill) Thornridge (KWIL-ee-um THORN-rij)

A porcupine. No memory. Wants adventure.

Voice: Open, curious, a little bewildered — but steady underneath. Quill is the one who notices things the other two don't. He asks the questions that need asking. His voice should feel like someone looking at the world for the first time, every time.

Watch for: Chapter 37, when Quill cannot shoot. The voice that says "That's a he" should sound like discovery, not philosophy.

Snicker (SNIK-er)

A weasel. Small. Surprising.

Voice: Fast, a little sideways, occasionally alarming. Snicker says things others are thinking and shouldn't say. There's a warmth under the sharpness — you have to let that come through, or Snicker's death doesn't land.

Major Characters

Captain Horatio Proudfoot (hoh-RAY-shee-oh PROWD-foot)

A landlocked sea captain. The mentor.

Voice: Deep, deliberate, unhurried. Horatio has earned his words. He does not rush, does not raise his voice, does not need to. When he speaks, the room — and the reader — quiets. Think: the weight of someone who has seen everything and is no longer afraid of anything except wasting time.

Watch for: Chapter 59 — "My role in this struggle must decrease, but yours must increase." This is a farewell. Read it as one.

Marlowe (MAR-loh)

Horatio's companion. Steady.

Voice: Dry, observant, reliable. Marlowe says less than Horatio but notices more. The warmth in Marlowe's voice is quiet — it shows in small moments. Chapter 82 is Marlowe's chapter; give it all the gentleness it deserves.

Selca Emberwind (SEL-kah EM-ber-wind)

An Aridite dervish. Complicated.

Voice: Formal, melodic, slightly ceremonial — someone who speaks in the cadences of devotion, even when the devotion has gone wrong. Selca is not straightforwardly evil. There is a person in there who knows something has been lost.

Gaia Varron (GY-ah VAR-on)

The Archon. The villain.

Voice: Cold, precise, total. The Archon does not rage — she commands. Her danger is her certainty. She is never sarcastic, never petty. She believes completely in her right to do what she is doing. That belief is the most frightening thing about her.

Watch for: Chapter 84 — the roar. Let it come from somewhere real.

Dune Shadowrend (DOON SHAD-oh-rend)

An Aridite who changes.

Voice: Careful, conflicted, then suddenly clear. Most of Dune's scenes are internal struggle. The moment in Chapter 84 when he steps forward should feel inevitable and shocking at the same time.

Performing the Book

Natural Stopping Points

The book's 85 short chapters make bedtime stopping easy. Suggested natural breaks:

- **After Chapter 7** — the three have found each other; a good early stopping point
- **After Chapter 16** — the village has made its choice; end of Part I setup
- **After Chapter 21** — the Unfortunates are truly on their own
- **After Chapter 34** — Firnax; a satisfying, self-contained chapter to end on
- **After Chapter 45** — the table grace; an intentional resting point
- **After Chapter 59** — after Horatio's commissioning; pause before the final movement
- **After Chapter 67** — before the last act; a natural dramatic breath

The Stinkfish Game

When the Mingles play Stinkfish (a rhyming, call-and-response sharing game), lean into the rhythm. The chant has a particular sound — let your voice drop into it. Young listeners will want to join in.

The Table Grace

"For that which we are about to receive, make us truly grateful."

"Amen."

This is said twice — Chapter 45 and Chapter 85. Let the second one land differently. You and your listener both know what has changed since the first.

The Archon's Camp

The scenes in the Aridite camp have a different texture — tighter, more watchful. Drop your volume slightly. Tighten your pacing. The feeling of surveillance is in the silence between words.

A Note on the Death

A character dies near the end of the book. The death is real — it is not reversed, not softened. When you reach it, do not rush past it. Give the listener time. Give yourself time. The book trusts the reader to hold grief. Trust yourself to hold it too, while reading.

Pronunciation Quick Reference

Name / Word	Pronunciation
Timbit Sciid	TIM-bit SY-yoo-rid
Pippin Lapidore	PIP-in LAP-ih-dor
Quilliam	KWIL-ee-um
Horatio Proudfoot	hoh-RAY-shee-oh PROWD-foot
Selca Emberwind	SEL-kah EM-ber-wind
Gaia Varron	GY-ah VAR-on
Dune Shadowrend	DOON SHAD-oh-rend
Firnax	FUR-naks
Aridite	AIR-ih-dite
Geoglyph	JEE-oh-glif
Gigant	JY-gant
Forecastle	FOHK-sul
Gunwale	GUN-ul
Sema	SEH-mah
Slough	SLOO

For a full pronunciation guide to all vocabulary in the book, see the Vocabulary Development Guide in this kit.