

# **WILLY WONKA**

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **ACT ONE**

The play opens somewhere in the bowels of Willy Wonka's fabulous chocolate factory. Wonka, a famous, eccentric, mercurial, whimsical and occasionally sinister candy wizard, welcomes us into his world ("Pure Imagination"). Wonka summons his Oompa-Loompa servants for an important announcement: he is planning to retire, and the time has come to choose his successor ("Golden Age of Chocolate").

Wonka, acting as narrator, introduces us to the impoverished Bucket family: Mr. And Mrs. Bucket, their young son Charlie, and Charlie's four bedridden grandparents. Charlie's Grandpa Joe assures Charlie that Charlie is destined to work for Mr. Wonka making candy, just as Joe himself did as a young man. Unfortunately, Wonka fired all his workers years ago (after one of his candy recipes had been stolen and sold to his competitor Slugworth) and locked the gates of his factory forever. Mysteriously, however, Wonka's factory has continued to produce candy. But nobody ever goes in...and nobody ever comes out.

A group of children gather outside Charlie's house, each clutching a nickel to buy a Wonka bar from the local Candy Man ("Candy Man"). Charlie is the only child too poor to buy any candy, but the Candy Man treats him to a lollipop and a copy of yesterday's newspaper.

Charlie takes the paper home, and the Buckets learn from it that Wonka has announced a contest: five lucky children will receive a tour of his world-famous factory, and receive a lifetime supply of Wonka chocolate. Five Golden Tickets have been hidden among fifty million ordinary candy bars, and the finders of these tickets will win the tour and the chocolate.

The first Ticket is found by Augustus Gloop, an obese, gluttonous child from Frankfurt, Germany ("I Eat More!"). The second Ticket is found in Sao Paulo, Brazil, by an extremely spoiled girl named Veruca Salt. Her wealthy father, a macadamia nut magnate, had purchased hundreds of thousands of the candy bars and put his entire factory workforce to work searching for the ticket.

As the mania for Wonka Bars continues all over the world, Mr. Bucket loses his job at a toothpaste factory. Charlie encourages him not to give up hope ("Think Positive").

On Charlie's birthday, his family presents him with a Wonka Bar. Everyone manages to suppress his or her disappointment when Charlie unwraps the bar but does not find a Golden Ticket.

The third Ticket is found in Snellville, Georgia by Violet Beauregard, an abrasive girl who is constantly chewing gum. The fourth Ticket is found in Television City, California by Mike Teavee, a boy who seems more interested in television, video games and cell phones than touring Wonka's factory ("I See It All On TV").

That night, before Charlie goes to bed, Grandpa Joe reveals that he has secretly purchased another Wonka Bar for Charlie. They open the bar together, but it contains only chocolate. The Buckets tell Charlie not to be discouraged ("Cheer Up, Charlie").

As winter approaches, the Bucket's situation is becoming increasingly desperate. Charlie is helping the Candy Man pack his wares when he finds a silver dollar on the ground. He assumes that it must belong to the Candy Man and tries to return it, but the Candy Man assures Charlie that it isn't his, and tells Charlie to bring it home to his family. He also gives Charlie a Wonka Bar as a reward for his honesty. Charlie buys another Wonka Bar to share with his family. Charlie unwraps the candy and discovers that he has found the last of Wonka's prizes. Charlie chooses Grandpa Joe to accompany him on the factory tour, prompting Joe to leave his bed for the first time in years. ("I've Got a Golden Ticket").

## ACT TWO

The five winners and their chaperons are gathered at the gates of Wonka's factory, where he makes a spectacular entrance ("Pure Imagination", reprise). Wonka greets each child (apart from Charlie, each one is insufferable in his or her own way). Wonka forces everyone to sign an elaborate and cryptic contract before beginning the tour.

The tour finally begins, and Wonka describes a dizzying array of fabulous chambers and exotic rooms, each devoted to the creation of various sweets and treats ("In This Room Here").

Wonka leads the tour group through a chamber in which the walls and ceiling appear to be closing in around them, and they emerge in the chocolate smelting room, featuring a chocolate river and a network of pipes. Wonka introduces his workers, the Oompa-Loompas. Augustus falls into the chocolate river and is sucked into a large pipe. Wonka, with little apparent concern, directs the Oompa-Loompas to take Mrs. Gloop and retrieve Augustus. The Oompa-Loompas share a moral message about the dangers of gluttony ("Oompa-Loompa One").

Wonka and the remaining guests board a pink candy boat. Veruca Salt demands that her father buy her both the boat and one of the Oompa-Loompas. Salt attempts to buy them from Wonka, but Wonka is unimpressed. The boat ride then turns into a psychedelic nightmare as Wonka navigates them through what appears to be a tour of the darker aspects of human imagination, complete with frightening projected images ("There's No Knowing"). Wonka laughs maniacally and the others scream with horror until the boat abruptly vanishes and the party finds themselves in Wonka's Inventing Room.

In the Inventing Room, Wonka reveals one of his creations - the Everlasting Gummy Gourmet Gobstopper, an entire gourmet meal contained in a piece of gum. Heedless of Wonka's half-hearted warnings that the gum is not yet perfected, Violet is unable to resist it ("Chew It") and is transformed into a blueberry and apparently explodes. The Oompa-Loompas share a warning about the evils of excessive gum chewing ("Oompa-Loompa Two").

Wonka and the remaining guests proceed to the Fizzy Lifting Drink Room, which is filled with bubbles. Wonka informs everyone that the drink will cause the imbiber to float on air, but forbids anyone to partake. Charlie and Grandpa Joe linger behind after the others leave, and the Oompa-Loompas tempt them to sample the drink. They do so, and immediately rise into the air ("Flying"). Unfortunately, they soon find that they're in danger of being sucked into a giant fan on the roof of the room. However, they discover that burping reverses the effects of the drink, and, via a series of belches, they are able to descend back to the ground ("Burping Song").

Charlie and Grandpa Joe rejoin the others in the Nut Room, where a team of squirrels is busy sorting good nuts from bad nuts. Veruca immediately demands a squirrel, and launches into an extended spoiled tantrum ("I Want it Now!"). She is deemed a "Bad Nut" and falls down one of the sorting shoots, pursued immediately by her father. Wonka has lost another candidate. The Oompa-Loompas share a moral about the ills of spoiling children ("Oompa-Loompa Three").

Wonka and the dwindling group proceed to the Choco-Vision Room. Wonka explains that he is currently developing an experimental process for transmitting chocolate via television. He explains how to activate the experimental machinery but warns everyone not to do so. Naturally, Mike immediately activates the equipment and transports himself via television signal. This results in his being shrunk to tiny size. Wonka directs that he be taken to the taffy-pulling machine and stretched out. The Oompa-Loompas warn of the perils of excessive television viewing ("Oompa-Loompa Four").

With only Charlie and Grandpa Joe remaining, Wonka abruptly announces that the tour is over. He pronounces that the day has been "a total waste of time and chocolate." Before going, Charlie confesses that he and Grandpa Joe tasted the fizzy lifting drink, and states that he therefore doesn't deserve the lifetime supply of chocolate he was promised. He apologizes to Wonka and thanks him for the tour. Wonka stops Charlie from leaving and announces that the entire competition was devised with the goal of finding his successor, and that Charlie's behavior and performance prove that he should take over the factory. Wonka then launches them into the air in a flying glass elevator ("Flying", reprise).

Augustus, Violet, Veruca and Mike appear, restored to their former selves, and join the Oompa-Loompas in praising the virtue of honesty ("Oompa-Loompa Five").

Wonka informs Charlie that his entire family is welcome to come and live at the factory. Charlie is delighted to take on his new role as Wonka's handpicked successor ("Finale").