

Refund Act Summary

"Refund" is a one-act play written by Frigyes Karinthy in 1938, adapted and translated by Percival Wilde. The play satirizes the education system and follows Wasserkopf, a former student who returns to his old school to demand a refund of his tuition fees paid eighteen years ago. Wasserkopf claims that he has not learned anything useful and is now useless in society. He threatens to complain to the education minister if his request is denied, demanding a re-examination and a refund if he fails.

The principal convenes an urgent meeting with the masters to decide on Wasserkopf's request. They decide to give him a test and outwit him by agreeing to prove his answers correct, whether correct or not. Wasserkopf uses derogatory language towards each master, but they demonstrate his superiority in manners, physical culture, alertness, perseverance, logic, and ambition. The masters justify his incorrect answers as correct and give him high marks to expel him.

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The play highlights the theme of wit and unity. The masters work together to manage the situation and deal with Wasserkopf without jeopardizing the school's reputation. The play also comments on the backwardness of the education system in preparing good students for the future. Wasserkopf's inability to obtain employment and his lack of understanding of foreign exchange investments and Hungarian currency suggest that he has not learned anything useful in school.

In conclusion, "Refund" is an absurd and satirical play that uses humor to comment on the education system and society's perception of education. The play suggests that education is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about developing one's personality and character. The masters in the play demonstrate that by outwitting Wasserkopf and showing him that he has learned valuable skills in school that he can use in society.