

THE MIGHTY MULLYGRUBBER MALONE

By Will Swanton

“It’s a kids’ book for adults and an adults’ book for kids. If you love your cricket, you will love this book.”

— Michael Slater, Recent Australian Test Great and Current Cricket Commentator

The ‘mullygrubber’ is part of cricketing folklore: a ball only delivered by accident, shooting along the ground after hitting a crack in the pitch. But one bowler, Mullygrubber Malone, has learned to do it on purpose — and being the only one who can, is now the most dangerous bowler in the world.

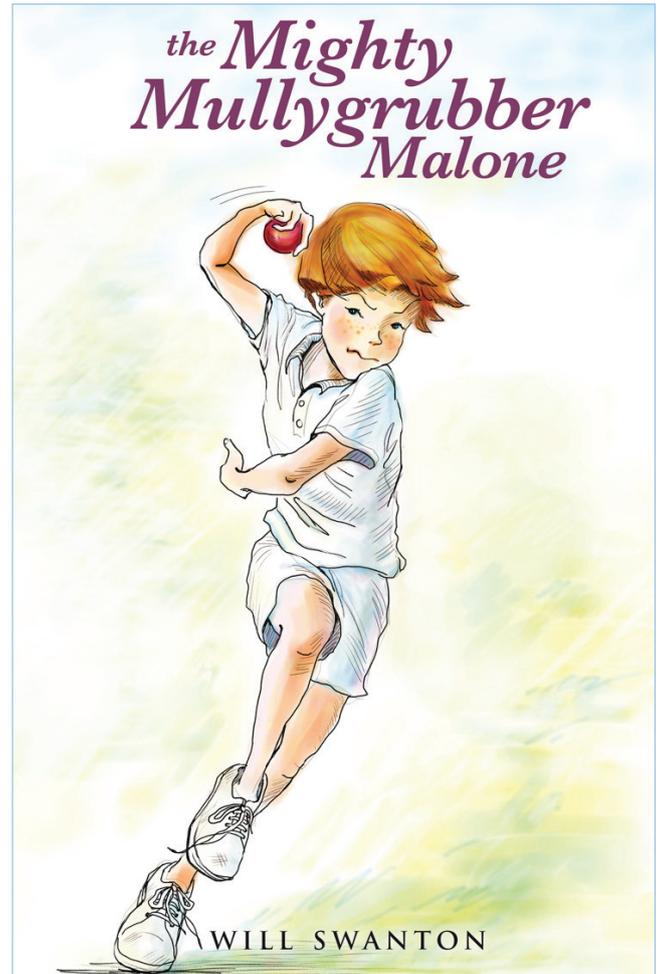
The Mighty Mullygrubber Malone is the story of a twelve-year-old leg spinner who goes all the way from being part of the school team to the Australian Test XI in one summer. Precious creatures, leggies. With them, Grubber beats schoolyard bully Bumper Barnes to a place in the NSW Under-12s side. Ditto for the Australian Under-14s. Grubber then rockets through the age groups for the local club, the Barrenjoey Bugles. Being too good for the Under-15s, Grubber is thrown into the Under-17s, then the Under-19s — still too good. Then comes grade cricket against the men, with Grubber becoming the ‘man of the match’ in fourth grade, third grade, second grade ... and first grade.

When NSW’s first-choice spinner is injured, there’s an uproar when Mullygrubber is called into the Sheffield Shield. Come January, when Australia need a spinner to play the final Test of the Ashes series against England at the SCG, the selectors decide they can’t pick a twelve-year-old. There’s no way they’ll pick a twelve-year-old. But they pick the twelve-year-old.

Mullygrubber ends up bowling the final over of the match when Australia need one wicket, and England need only five runs, to decide the series. The atmosphere is everything Grubber imagined — 50,000 people screaming, ‘MULLYGRUBBER (clap, clap, clap)! MULLYGRUBBER (clap, clap, clap)!’ The Ashes are in this young bowler’s hands.

Up Mullygrubber’s sleeve is the scribbled-all-over list of six perfected deliveries: *MULLYGRUBBER MALONE’S SECRET BAG OF BOWLING TRICKS*. Every ball comes with a rhyme. When Grubber doesn’t say the rhymes, the bowls don’t come at all. But with the rhymes, look out: Mullygrubber’s like no other bowler the world has ever seen, or ever will again.

Populated by such characters as schoolyard nemesis Bumper Barnes (a galoot who gives nipple cripples and Chinese burns), Technique Thompson, Seamer Smith and Outswinger O’Reilly, author Will Swanton beautifully evokes the days of schoolboy cricket. Readers will all recognise the Test idols that Grubber gets to play with: Wise Old Waugh, Metronome McGrath, Hercules Hayden et al, playing against Insane Hussein’s Poms.



Mullygrubber Malone is destined to become an Australian ‘classic’ sporting novel for young readers and indeed anyone who ever dreamed of donning the ‘baggy green’.

The author, Will Swanton, is a cricket writer for News Ltd. He has been working as a journalist for over ten years, most recently for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He has covered Test matches worldwide, as well as the Olympics and other major sporting events.

Books by Will Swanton include:

- *Some Day: Inside the Dream Tour* (Allen & Unwin, 2008)
- *Murderball* (Allen & Unwin, 2009)

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