

THE HALF CROWN BOY

A Play

by

Angela Lanyon

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

THE HALF CROWN BOY

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CAST

David Bates	<i>Nearly 14</i>
Mr. Bates	<i>His father</i>
Mrs. Bates	<i>His mother</i>
Mr. Binns	<i>Manager of the Royal Worcester Porcelain Works</i>
Mr. Sherriff	<i>The foreman</i>
Taffy Gwilliam	<i>An apprentice</i>
Lizzie	<i>His sister</i>
Mrs. Gwilliam	<i>Their mother</i>

Music Hall singer

Queen Marie Amelia of France

Other apprentices:

Rowberry
Barker
Churchman
Sandy
Darling
Locke

Girls

Boys

Soldiers

Landlord

Revellers

Royal party

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The Set is very simple. An open stage with small scenes taking place in lighted areas and no set changes apart from bringing on beds, stools, benches etc. A high counter for the scene in the Inn.

The action should flow in a straightforward manner but is divided into Sections for ease in rehearsing.

ACT I

(Opening in front of Tabs).

1.

(DAVID BATES and BARKER come pelting down the aisle pursued by a gang of STREET URCHINS. Various cries of "Mother's boy", "Sissy" etc. BOYS leap on to the stage and are set on. BARKER breaks free. "Let him alone; it's this one we want" [meaning BATES]).

Barker: *(Running off).* Mrs. Bates, Mrs. Bates, they're killing him. They're killing David.

(DAVID BATES is swung around amid the gang and ends up on the ground).

David: Let me go. I don't want to fight. I've got a job. I'm grown up.

(The boot is about to be put in when MRS. BATES arrives with a sweeping brush in her hand and followed by BARKER).

Mrs. Bates: What's happening? What are you doing to him?

(Simultaneously the mothers of two other boys come and pull their sons away. MR. BATES arrives).

Mr. Bates: Now then *(Confused whispers of 'It's MR. BATES' etc. Silence as they watch his approach).*

Mr. Bates: *(Pulling DAVID to his feet).* Come on, you. You ought to be ashamed

of yourself. Fighting in the street at your age. *(He pushes him off)*. Get on home, you know you're starting work at the Porcelain works tomorrow. *(Turning back)*. Go on, be off with you. Get along home.

Mrs. Bates: And don't let me see you around here again.

2.

(Curtains open to reveal DAVID BATES asleep in a low bed under a blanket. There is a plain wooden table and two chairs and three mugs on the table and a handkerchief containing food).

Mrs. Bates: David, David. Come along, lad, it's time for you to be up. You don't want to be late your first day.

David: Do I have to?

Mrs. Bates: Do you have to go, well, of course you do. Besides I thought you're the one whose so set on it. You're the one who wants to be a painter.

David: Just another five minutes.

Mrs. Bates: Just nothing of the sort, your Pa's up already.

David: What's he up for?

Mrs. Bates: To take you to sign your articles. It's a big day for you, boy, come along. Proper sleepy head, aren't you?

David: Oh, all right. *(He pulls the blankets round him and sits on the edge of the bed)*. It's dark.

Mrs. Bates: What do you expect at this hour? You'd best go and stick your head under the pump and see if you can't open your eyes a bit wider. *(She pours tea into the mugs then calls)*. Pa, Pa, hurry up now. Oh, there you are.

(MR. BATES enters).

Mrs. Bates: What's up with David? I thought he'd be all excited at starting work.

Mr. Bates: Nervous most like. I can remember my first day - right strange I felt. Funny him taking up painting like this. Real keen on it, he is. Still, if he sticks at it there's no reason he shouldn't make a living of it, same as any other trade.

(CHIMES off stage).

Mr. Bates: There's the clock - the boy'll be late if he doesn't look sharp.

David: *(Entering hurriedly).* I'm ready, I'm ready, I don't want to be late. Are you ready Pa?

Mrs. Bates: You've had nothing to eat.

David: They have time for breakfast, don't they. You said they had a break.

Mr. Bates: Ay, that's right.

Mrs. Bates: Here's your pack, lad. *(She hands him the handkerchief).* And good luck.

David: *(Turning back at the door, a bit awkward at being adult and feeling very unsure of himself).* Thanks, Ma.

3.

(The Works. Central playing area. The APPRENTICES are grouped round a long table. The FOREMAN wearing a top hat stands slightly down-stage. DAVID and MR. BATES enter. DAVID being pushed slightly in front of his father).

Foreman: Good day to you, Mr. Bates. Now this is young David - good morning, David.

David: Good morning - sir.

Foreman: You want to be a painter, is that right?

David: Yes, that's right, sir.

Foreman: And have you discussed this with your father? You know that signing these articles means you've got to stay here for seven years and prove yourself a good craftsman? Do you understand that?

David: Oh yes, I want to be a painter, I do.

Foreman: And what sort of things do you want to paint?

David: Everything, really. Trees and hills and landscapes - and the patterns of clouds.

Foreman: Well, I think you'll have to start with something a lot simpler. You'll have to learn how to grind and mix colours and the correct way to hold the brushes. And how to make the right strokes.

Mr. Bates: Oh I'm sure he's willing to learn, Mr. Sherriff.

Foreman: Are you, David? Lots of boys of your age would prefer a job out of doors. If you come here you'd learn to be quiet and not chatter or play. Boys like romping around and making a noise, we can't have that here. Do you understand the rules? Punctuality is most important.

(The following rules may be said by individual APPRENTICES).

1st A: All persons employed in this factory to assemble at half past six throughout the year.

2nd A: Breakfast time, half past eight to nine.

3rd A: Dinner hour one to two p.m.

4th A: Every work day reckoned to terminate at 6 p.m.

5th A: All work not ready to be passed through the warehouse by six o'clock p.m. on Friday, not reckoned for until the week following.

6th A: Half an hour allowed for assembling in the morning after which the entrance door will be locked, and a quarter of an hour at breakfast and dinner. Except day men.

7th A: On Saturdays, manufacturing labour to cease at 4 p.m. from which time an hour for paying wages. Hands to employ themselves in cleaning rooms and benches, putting tools etc. in order throughout the works.

Foreman: *(Speaking directly to DAVID).* Wages commence paying at 5 o'clock p.m. on Saturdays throughout the year. Now, David, did you understand all that? You've to be here for half past six every morning.

David: Oh yes, sir.

(Enter ROWBERRY precipitously).

Foreman: Apprentices who turn up late like Rowberry here, get fined. Don't they, Rowberry?

Rowberry: Yes, sir, please sir, I'm out of I'm all out of breath, sir. There was this horse, you see sir, it was bolting, sir, along by St. Nicholas church and I

Foreman: Rowberry.

Rowberry: Yes, Mr. Sherriff?

Foreman: What was it ran away yesterday, Rowberry? A pig, if I remember correctly.

Rowberry: Well, sir, there was this old faggot in the road

Foreman: What Rowberry?

Rowberry: This old lady well she was an old faggot, she called me

Foreman: Rowberry!

Rowberry: Yes sir?

Foreman: Rowberry, you're late.

Rowberry: Yes, sir.

Foreman: And you know the rules?

Rowberry: Yes, sir

Foreman: That's your second fine this week - and your third.

Rowberry: My third! Bloody unfair.

Foreman: Sit down, Rowberry.

(The following rules spoken to ROWBERRY and DAVID).

1st A: Swearing and bad language strictly forbidden at all times.

2nd A: During work hours silence and order are required, and at all times steadiness and propriety of conduct recommended.

3rd A: Sobriety, civility and punctuality are indispensable for length of service.

4th A: Useful reading at proper times approved. All immoral publications and prints found in the works destroyed and their owners discharged.

5th A: On no pretence whatever is intoxicating drink of any description allowed in the works and smoking is strictly prohibited.

6th A: Such of the hands as take meals on the premises are required to do so in their respective workshops or, in the case of the girls, in the room appropriated for their exclusive use.

7th A: Any person found loitering in another workroom will be fined unless he can give a satisfactory reason.

Foreman: *(Directly to DAVID).* Boys are not allowed to play on the premises. We're very strict about that, valuable ware could get broken with boys larking around, throwing balls and running about the place. You'll be appointed to a place at the work bench, David and expected to stay at it unless sent elsewhere on the company's business.

Mr. Bates: These articles, sir, do we sign them now?

Foreman: Not quite fourteen, is he? Mr. Binns is most particular that the articles are signed on his fourteenth birthday then by the time he's twenty one, he's qualified. That'll be a great day - won't it. *(To DAVID).* Now, I believe you're already acquainted with Barker. Barker, come along and welcome young Bates and help him settle in.

(FOREMAN goes off with MR. BATES).

Barker: Bet you feel a bit funny, don't you? You'll be all right.

Rowberry: Hey, is it true you got into a fight last night? Barker told us. I'm a great one for a bit of fisticuffs myself.

(ROWBERRY leaps round in a mock fighting attitude).

Churchman: Give up, Rowberry, sit down. Aren't you in enough trouble already?

Barker: Better tell you who everyone is. That's Rowberry, I suppose you've guessed that, then the proper one's Churchman, Churchman by name and churchman by nature. He never gets into trouble.

Darling: Then there's me. I'm Darling. *(He gets up to make a mock bow and knocks something down)*. Me all over. That's Locke and there's Gwilliam - Taffy.

Rowberry: Taffy was a Welsh man, Taffy was a thief

Sandy: Oh, come on, Barker, get on with it, he'll be back in a minute. I'm Sandy and that's Clarke who's got his nose down. Welcome to the workshop. *(In manner of public speaker)*. What I say, gentlemen is, a very warm welcome to our new work mate.

4.

(Cheers, handshakes and friendly thumps. Cross fade to ROWBERRY and BATES).

Rowberry: *(offering an apple)*. Do you want a bite?

David: No, s'all right.

Rowberry: Go on, go on have a bite. We'll share it.

David: I was just looking at it. The colours, see.

Rowberry: Never mind the looking, get on with the tasting.

David: Like some of my bread?

Rowberry: Yeh, go on. What are you staring at?

David: The tops of those trees over there. Look, I'd like to be able to paint them.

Rowberry: Keen, aren't you? Wait till you've been here as long as I have. Five years, I've been apprenticed, another two and I'll be finished. Go where I like then.

David: I know what I want to do, I want to go and be a landscape painter. You know - paint the hills and mountains and scenery and all.

Rowberry: You mean the Malvern Hills - the Beacon?

David: No - well - yes. Not really. Something further off than that. Know what I mean?

Rowberry: No.

David: This is all right, I mean I'm learning, aren't I? Can't learn to be a painter any other way. The foreman, he's teaching me to draw, that's what I mean.

Rowberry: Oh, you're all right there. I heard him say. I was over at the office and I overheard him saying - said you were coming on all right.

(Bell rings).

Rowberry: The lad shows promise, that's what he said. Here, that's the bell, come on, race you to the door.

5. SONG *APPRENTICES' SONG.* [Tune: *EARLY ONE MORNING*]

Apprentices: *Early each morning, just as the day is dawning
We struggle to the factory to earn our daily bread,
Oh, we're so weary,
Oh, life is dreary,
How can they treat a poor apprentice so?*

*We must obey each rule, and we cannot play the fool,
Broken dishes must be paid for from our weekly wage.
Oh, life is such a grind,
I wish I didn't mind,
But half a crown is all that we can take home for our pay.*

*We're not allowed to drink, or to go and see a play,
Books and cards are banned as well, there's nothing we can say.
Oh what a dreadful bore,
Life should be something more,
Why do they treat a poor apprentice so?*

*Seven years we have to learn and very little do we earn,
Our lives are governed by the rules, it's only work and bed,
I'd like to run away -
Smash all the pots one day -
Seven years is far too long to treat a lad so hard.*

(Song ends with *DARLING* lurching into the work table and knocking something down and breaking it).

6.

Foreman: Lads, now then, what are you at? You know the rules.

Darling: It was an accident.

Foreman: Nonsense, that's what it was. I heard. All that singing and silliness. Come on now, which ones of you were doing it?

Darling: I I

Foreman: I know you were, Darling. If I hear anything smash, you're the first person I think of. What is it this time?

(THEY all stand silent).

Foreman: Well, lads, come on, I'll not bite.

(DARLING picks up some pieces of pottery and holds them out).

Darling: It was this Mr. it was this amphora thing I was doing. The boy

Foreman: That! I don't know what to say about that, Darling. I'll have to see Mr. Binns about that. You'll have to pay for it, I reckon. *(HE goes).*

Sandy: You've done it now, Darling. They'll sack you.

Barker: He'll be all right. He goes to Sunday School, doesn't he? He goes with you, Churchman.

Churchman: What's that got to do with it?

Barker: You know what they're like here. Good little boys get pats on the head. They get given sixpences when we have a day's outing, don't they, Churchman?

Churchman: Oh, give over.

Darling: Don't suppose it'll make any difference now. *(Looking round).* But it was an accident. Well - it was.

(FOREMAN enters).

Darling: It was an accident. Honest.

Foreman: Maybe, but there was nonsense going on, I heard you as I was coming along. Were you involved, Rowberry? Barker?

(He goes round the group and they all nod).

Foreman: Very well, you're all fined twopence and you, Darling, you're fined five shillings.

Darling: Five bob!

Gwilliam: Oh, fair play.

Barker: But that's two weeks' wages.

David: That's not fair.

Foreman: Not fair, Bates? You want to think who that amphora belongs to before you say it's unfair. It's not Darling's is it?

David: No

Foreman: Right.

David: I still say it's unfair.

Foreman: And I say you can pay another penny for being impertinent and answering back. It's not for you to say what is or isn't fair. Sandy - get that mess swept up and quickly. Darling, Mr. Binns wants to see you.

(Exit DARLING and FOREMAN).

David: Well I still don't think it's fair.

Sandy: We were all singing.

Churchman: I wasn't.

Barker: Yes you were. It's all right standing there and looking pious, Churchman, you were singing too. I heard you.

Churchman: I didn't break anything. And I didn't start the singing either.

David: Oh, get yourself a halo, Churchman. *(Sings).* There's a friend for little children above the bright blue sky *(He moves to threaten CHURCHMAN).*

Churchman: Give over, Bates. Leave me alone.

Sandy: Shut up, he'll hear you.

David: All right. *(To CHURCHMAN).* Masters's pet, master's pet.

Sandy: He's coming.

(THEY all dash to their places as FOREMAN enters. Some of the GROUP go off to prepare for the following sequence).

Foreman: That's better. Sandy, I thought I told you to sweep.

Sandy: Did you? Arr, so you did.

Foreman: Well then

Sandy: I'll do it later.

Foreman: You'll do it now. And that's another penny you're fined, Sandy. Refusing to sweep the floor when told. It'll go in the fines book. I don't know what's got into you boys this afternoon.

(SANDY starts sweeping the floor).

Clarke: It's that hot, Mr. Sheriff, sir.

Foreman: And if you sat down quietly and got on with your work you'd be cooler than dancing about making fools of yourselves.

Barker: *(After a pause)*. Mr. Sheriff, Mr. Sheriff, did you know the cavalry are coming to Kempsey at the weekend? There's going to be a review. Are you going?

Foreman: It's a working day, Barker, I'd have thought you'd know that.

Locke: My brother's a soldier.

David: I saw the soldiers once, marching through the city. Red coats and guns and all the officers with swords. It was all exciting. I felt oh, I felt I'd like to go off and march with them. Tum, tum, tum,tum on the big drum and a little boy, no bigger than me was keeping the time on a little drum as he marched at the side.

Foreman: Bates, you get on with your work. Let me have a look at what you're doing, lad. Yes, those cups are coming on well. You've got a fair hand for flowers. Keep on practising and you might get as good as Churchman. Quite a flair he has.

7. *(The FOREMAN goes off right and the BOYS move forward on the tune "THE BRITISH GRENADIERS". The rest of the GROUP, plus MR. and MRS. BATES come downstage looking into the auditorium at the cavalry. THE BATES enter from the opposite side to DAVID so they don't actually see him until the cavalry have passed. There should be a great feeling of excitement, pointing and cheering the soldiers. Flags can be waved. When the sound of the marchers has faded away and the crowd finished singing, MR. and MRS. BATES meet DAVID and ROWBERRY unexpectedly).*

Crowd: *Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules;
Of Hector and Lysander, and such great names as these;
But of all the world's brave heroes, there's none that can compare
With a tow, row, row, row, row,row, row, for the British Grenadier.*

*Those heroes of antiquity ne'er saw a cannon ball,
Or knew the force of powder to slay their foes withal
But our brave boys do know it, and banish all their fears,
Sing tow, row, row, row, row, row, row, for the British Grenadiers.*

(Downstage in one corner is the bar of the public house. Plenty of people pushing and calling for drinks, cheering the soldiers. LANDLORD calling for order so he can serve people).

Landlord: Wait on, gentlemen, and you'll all be served.

(The scene freezes while the following takes place).

Mrs. Bates: It is a surprise seeing you, David.

Mr. Bates: Oughtn't you to be at work, lad?

Rowberry: Oh, we got the day off, didn't we, David?

David: Well sort off. Short of work for us to do. That's it.

Rowberry: A good sort, Mr. Binns, he never keeps you hanging on. Very patriotic he is. Anything to do with the English Nation and he's for it. "Keep the flag flying, boys", he said.

Mr. Bates: I understood him to be a Quaker, I thought they were against the use of force.

David: The soldiers aren't actually fighting. Not now.

Mrs. Bates: Oh let's go and sit down Pa, my feet are nearly falling off with all this standing.

Mr. Bates: I told you, you shouldn't 've put on a pair of new shoes.

Mrs. Bates: I got stepped on, that's what did it. I'm sure I shall've a bruised toe when I get home. And I'm that thirsty I could drink a well dry.

David: Here, you sit, and I'll get you something. *(Moves to tavern).*

Mr. Bates: Wait, you're not allowed in taverns, boy, your articles forbid it.

David: Who's to see me? You don't think anyone from the works'll be here.

Mr. Bates: Not if it's a day off?

Rowberry: He means people like the bosses. They'll not be here, they'll be drinking champagne in some grand house I guess.

Mrs. Bates: Oh let him go, Pa, I don't fancy sitting here on my own with all these rough fellows about. His friend can go with him.

David: What'll I fetch you?

Mrs. Bates: A nip of gin'd be nice.

Mr. Bates: And I'll have some ale. Good reputation this place had for its beer. Better than some where you'd think they drew it straight from the Severn. Go along, Lad, if you're going.

(PUB-CROWD un-freeze and DAVID and ROWBERRY jostle their way to the bar. "Make room for the little 'un" etc.).

Landlord: Can I help you, lad?

David: A nip of gin, Landlord and some ale for my Pa. What about you, Rowberry, we'll have the same, shall we?

Landlord: And who's doing the paying?

David: I am. I've been saving. *(He pulls out some silver, a half crown and a couple of shillings).*

Landlord: One of the wealthy ones, are you?

(DAVID is jostled. Someone kicks his ankle. ROWBERRY turns round to see what has happened).

David: Hey, you kicked me!

Man: You watch what you're saying, shrimp.

David: I'm not a shrimp.

Landlord: Come on, no arguing in here. Where's your money?

Rowberry: He put it on the bar.

Landlord: And then back in his pocket again.

David: No I didn't. *(Rounding on MAN).* You've pinched my money.

Man: *(Laughing).* And kicked your ankle! Come off it, sonny.

David: *(Loudly).* This man is a thief.

Man: You watch what you're saying.

David: I had nearly five shillings.

Landlord: Maybe you did.

Rowberry: You saw it.

Landlord: Did I?

David: He's a thief.

Man: I've told you to watch yourself.

David: You shouldn't allow thieves into your inn.

Man: Nor whining brats either. Bet he never had any money.

David: You want to look to your purses, there's a pickpocket in here.

Landlord: You get out of here, you dirty little mongrel. Stirring up trouble in my bar.

David: I want my drinks.

Landlord: If you can't pay for your drinks, get out.

Rowberry: I'll pay for them, David. I've got some coppers.

(DAVID is bundled out of the group and ROWBERRY follows with the drinks which they take across to THE BATES. OTHERS go off).

Mrs. Bates: Ta, son, set me up nicely this will. Is something up, lad, you're

looking glum?

David: No, it's

Rowberry: Someone stood on his foot. Ever so crowded in there. Real glad I was to get out and into the air.

Mr. Bates: Good beer this. Grand to have a lad that's earning, isn't it, Ma? You've done well, David to save some of your pay. When you've done two years it goes up, doesn't it?

Rowberry: He's not like me, you know. I always seem to be getting into hot water. Not a week goes by without me getting fined, a half penny here and a half penny there. Never seem to get in, in the mornings - can't get out of bed.

Mrs. Bates: And he's the same. I'd like to see the late book when it comes to David.

Rowberry: He can draw all right. You should see him, he'll draw anything.

David: I'm looking at the hills, all those flecks of red behind the Malverns and the shadows, dark as blackberries at the bottom of the slope.

Mr. Bates: Ay, it's getting late, we'll have to be going back.

Mrs. Bates: I can hear a band, Pa, do you think the soldiers have come back to play? There'll be some dancing. We used to dance, remember? You must.

Mr. Bates: What about your foot?

Mrs. Bates: I think I'd forgotten about that.

(The COMPANY can join in general country dancing or a polka).

9.

(Lights up on central acting area. GROUP collects slowly the bell for the gates to be shut is heard ringing. DAVID and ROWBERRY sneak in at the last moment).

Foreman: So you're here, are you?

David: Yes, on time too.

Foreman: So I see. Pity you weren't on time on Saturday. Weren't here at all, were you?

Rowberry: Well, you see

Foreman: None of your excuses, Rowberry, you're as full of them as a dog is as fleas. What have you got to say for yourself, Bates? Where were you on Saturday? Well - where were you?

Rowberry: Please, Mr. Sherriff we went to

David: To see the cavalry turn out at Kempsey. Oh, you should have seen it, Mr. Sherriff.

Rowberry: Smart. A fine body of men, Mr. Sherriff. Very English, very patriotic, it was. British Grenadiers, you know.

Foreman: Grenadiers are foot soldiers, Rowberry. The tallest and finest in the British Army.

Rowberry: Oh they were, sir. The very tallest some of them

Foreman: Rowberry, go inside. And you too, Bates. You'll be fined for this, boys. Have your pay docked.

David: They were very fine soldiers, sir

(DAVID and ROWBERRY move into the area with the rest of the BOYS).

Locke: Go on then, what was it like?

Rowberry: You should have been there.

Darling: I wish I'd gone. Didn't have any money saved.

Churchman: You're too clumsy, that's why. How many coffee cups last week?

Darling: You don't have to keep going on at me.

Gwilliam: And what about you, Davie, did you enjoy yourself as well?

Rowberry: Don't talk to him.

Gwilliam: What happened?

David: Had my money pinched.

Clarke: What happened?

Rowberry: He was getting a drink for his Ma.

Churchman: Serve you right for going into a tavern. I'll tell.

(The BOY next to him puts a dab of colour on CHURCHMAN'S face).

Darling: You've got the pox - look at yourself.

Locke: Thump him, thump him. *(He flicks paint).*

Rowberry: Give up, he's not worth it..

Gwilliam: You had your fun Saturday, seeing all those soldiers. Grand were they? Marching up and down with their guns, I should like to have seen them all.

Rowberry: Bates and I sang British Grenadiers as loud as anyone, didn't we, Bates? And marched up and down beside them. *(ROWBERRY picks up a broom and puts it over his shoulder and marches across the stage and back).*

Rowberry: Then after that there was dancing on the common and the band playing away

David: All in the evening light with bonfires all around. And there was a new

dance

Rowberry: You can't explain, come on, we'll show you

10.

(ROWBERRY flings down the broom and he and DAVID start to polka round the workshop. FOREMAN enters).

Foreman: Bates. Rowberry!

Rowberry: *(Grabbing broom).* I was showing Bates how to sweep, Mr. Sherriff.

Foreman: I should have thought, by now, he knew how to sweep. He seems to know how to march too. Get back to your work places.

(They return to their seats).

Foreman: And lets have a bit of sense from you all. Disgraceful the lot of you. *(HE opens the fines book).* Last week - Bates, Bates, Rowberry, Locke

Locke: I didn't think there was any work for me to do.

Foreman: And you didn't look either. Darling, late after dinner. And Gwilliam too. Not often late, Gwilliam. No excuse?

Gwilliam: It's my sister, see. She's not well. I had to go for the doctor. My Mam sent me. Coughing, she is.

Foreman: Well let's hope the doctor cures her. What we need in here is a new attitude to work, lads. Fines don't seem any deterrent to some of you. Locke - a penny for being out of your place and hitting Rowberry.

Locke: He hit me first, sir.

Foreman: Clarke - reading at the wrong time.

Clarke: Couldn't put it down, Mr. Sherriff.

Foreman: Mouse hunting, Darling, and pulling the poke of Locke's cap and immoral writing. One shilling. And as for you, Bates, putting asafoetida on the fire - one shilling and three pence and another three pence for setting off fireworks. Nonsense during work time. I don't know what comes over you, boy.

David: I don't know either, Mr. Sherriff.. I get excited, that's all.

Foreman: Pity you can't get excited early in the morning and manage to arrive here on time. "All persons employed in this factory to assemble at half past six throughout the year". Half past six, not twenty to seven or ten past.

Boys: *[To the tune of EARLY ONE MORNING]*

*Late every morning, I hear the foreman's warning -
Shake yourself and try for once to get to work on time,
I am a sleepy head,
I'd rather stay in bed,
Everything I earn is taken back again in fines!*

(As the song ends the FOREMAN hands out wages to the BOYS who have formed a line. THEY collect their money and sing the 4th verse of the song in slower as if tired. DAVID separates himself and GWILLIAM comes after him).

Gwilliam: Something the matter, Davie?

David: *(Shakes out empty pay packet).* See.

Gwilliam: Nothing there.

David: Didn't earn anything. Had it all taken off me in fines.

Gwilliam: Haven't you anything? Nothing saved up?

David: I had some saved. Saved a whole five bob, I did. Someone pinched it last week when I was watching the soldiers. Well, when I was in the tavern afterwards.

Gwilliam: Look, I've all my money, can I lend you some? A shilling? You can pay me back when you get it next week.

David: Supposing I don't?

Gwilliam: Oh you will. You're not daft, Davie, you just get carried away. You want to come home and meet my mam, she'll give you some supper. Tell you all about her home, she will.

David: Yes, but your sister - I thought she was ill.

Gwilliam: Do her good it will to see another face. She gets low lying in bed all day. Misses the hills, I suppose. Still, you have to go where the work is and proper hard it is back there. You either go in the mines or scratch at the hill sides. No way of living if you can help it.

David: I'll not be in the way?

Gwilliam: *(Giving DAVID a friendly thump).* Aw, come on. It'll look better in the morning.

(As THEY walk off slowly the other APPRENTICES run past singing snatches of the song).

END OF ACT I

ACT II

11.

(When the house lights start dimming DAVID and ROWBERRY come in through the auditorium and seat themselves noisily in the front row. DAVID pulls off ROWBERRY'S cap and tells him to be quiet).

(Anyone in the audience who is in the know may loudly 'shush' them both. Failing that the HOUSE MANAGER should).

(Spot up on stage and the Music Hall SINGER appears. Begin the Act with a medley of Music Hall songs and encourage the audience to join in. SINGER leads audience in 'NELLIE DEAN', 'DAISY BELL' and ends with getting DAVID and ROWBERRY on the stage for 'THE COCK LINNET SONG'.

12.

(Black out then tabs open and lights up in central area where BOYS are painting. DAVID and ROWBERRY come up the steps from the auditorium).

Foreman: Bates, Rowberry, you're late again.

David: Are we?

Foreman: Look at the clock, lad, look at the clock. I suppose you can tell the time?

David: I er I I didn't know there was any work. I finished all I had to do last night. I thought I'd be waiting.

Foreman: Did you indeed! And I suppose you're the same, Rowberry?

Rowberry: Oh no. No, I had to go on an errand for my mother. She's she's hurt her leg. Fell down. In the rain.

Foreman: *(Reading from log book).* It hasn't rained for five days.

Rowberry: Hasn't it? I thought there was a shower yesterday.

Foreman: Temperature 56 degrees. Fine and sunny.

Rowberry: Perhaps it was the day before.

Foreman: And perhaps you over-slept. Jump to it now, boys, there's a pile of cups need decorating. Lilies and roses for you, Bates, and heather for you, Rowberry.

David: I get sick of doing flowers, Mr. Sherriff.

Foreman: Less of that, my lad, you're not here to enjoy what you do but to get on and do it properly. And see you keep your brush on your work and off Locke's face today.

(DAVID pulls a face behind the FOREMAN'S back. HE walks off).

Locke: Here, Bates, did you go?

Clarke: You never, did you?

David: Yes of course I did. Rowberry came too.

Locke: You went to the Theatre Royal? You never!

David: We did, didn't we, Rowberry

Rowberry: We did indeed. No use you looking all shocked, Churchman, we went to the theatre and we saw singing and dancing. But we never saw the devil.

David: We saw something much better - oh yes, we did. You should have been there.

Churchman: Playhouses are places of sin.

Rowberry: Fiddlesticks.

Churchman: It's against your articles too.

Gwilliam: Exciting, was it?

David: I got excited. I don't know about Rowberry. Did you get excited, Rowberry?

Rowberry: You should have seen her.

Churchman: You mean there were women there?

David: And showing their legs.

Churchman: Imperilling your soul seeing that sort of thing.

David: We only looked.

Gwilliam: Did she sing? I like a bit of singing myself. A lot of singing back home. My sister can sing.

David: Not like this, Taffy. She was all *(Makes a gesture indicating the singer was buxom in the Victorian sense)*. You should have heard her.

13.

(ROWBERRY sings the chorus of one of the music hall songs. FOREMAN enters).

Foreman: *(Shouting)*. Rowberry!

Rowberry: Sorry, Mr. Sheriff, just airing my lungs.

Foreman: And I'll just air mine and tell you that by the time you've done your articles we might be glad to dispense with your services.

Rowberry: Six years I've been here. Only another to go and then I'm free. Free!

Foreman: Free to starve at this rate, boy. Get on with your work now.

(FOREMAN goes round inspecting the work, nodding and giving advice).

Foreman: How's your sister, Gwilliam?

Gwilliam: She doesn't alter much, thank you, Mr. Sherriff, sir. The coughing's got her now. If only she could go back home and be in the clean air of the hills. I reckon that would do her more good than what the doctor gives her.

Foreman: We must keep hoping for the best.

Churchman: God's will be done.

Gwilliam: Shut up, she's not your sister.

David: Why don't you keep quiet, Churchman?

Churchman: I was only saying the minister says

David: Maybe he does but you don't have to repeat it.

14.

(The lights fade and GWILLIAM and DAVID walk downstage to where there is a bed and chair in a small spot. GWILLIAM'S MOTHER is there and his SISTER, LIZZIE, in the bed).

David: Hello, Lizzie, how are you feeling? *(GWILLIAM sits on the floor by his MOTHER'S chair).*

Lizzie: Now there's a thing to ask with me lying here.

David: Hoped you were a bit better.

Lizzie: Better for seeing you, David.

David: Brought you something. *(He hands her a small posy of honeysuckle and leaves).* Don't seem to be many flowers about, but I found this bit of honeysuckle and these leaves - all bright and glowing. I picked them yesterday. Been in a jar all day at the works, they have. Told the foreman I was going to try my hand painting them.

Lizzie: I can see no trees from my window. I think I miss that most of all.

David: The trees?

Lizzie: And the hill-sides behind them. I wish I could show you the hills. Like soft fire they are with colour. Beech trees and chestnuts glowing and the

lakes lying so still in between the slopes. You must go to Wales one day, Davie.

David: And you'll come with me and show me all the places you love.

Lizzie: No, I'll not come with you. But you'll think of me when you sit in the sun with a rock at your back and hear the wind singing in the grass. I do wish I could go back there. Just once.

Mother: Lizzie, you shouldn't be talking so much, you'll tire yourself.

David: Perhaps I'd better go.

Lizzie: No.

David: I'll sit then, shall I?

Mother: Yes, you sit. Maybe you could read to her. One of the psalms to ease her mind.

Gwilliam: Couldn't you read something cheerful? Something to make her laugh.

Mother: And set her coughing again! (*To LIZZIE*). You'll take a little soup, cariad, something to strengthen you. Here, David, you give it to her.

Lizzie: Davie, don't go. Not yet. Stay a while. Only for a little while,

15.

(*Cross fade to ROWBERRY. HE is calling and DAVID joins him*).

Rowberry: Oh come on, Bates, come on. Don't go soft on me. Well, I'm going anyway.

David: You've got permission to go.

Locke: So where's it to this time?

Rowberry: To Birmingham, on the railway. My Pa's going to show me the sights. I'm fed up with living here, nothing goes on. Anyway, won't be long before I've finished my time and then

Locke: Oh yes, we've heard all that before.

Rowberry: Come on, Bates, you can take the day off.

David: No.

Rowberry: Well ask for it then.

David: No, I don't want to go.

Rowberry: You're going soft.

David: I've got something else to do.

Rowberry: Oh like that is it? Sure it's not against your articles.

David: No. It's not. Nothing like that.

Rowberry: Bet there's a girl in it somewhere.

Locke: Lizzie Gwilliam. She's sick.

Rowberry: She's been sick for ages.

David: She's worse now.

Locke: Gwilliam says she's dying.

David: I said I'd go in. So that's why I'm not coming, Rowberry. Thanks all the same.

Rowberry: Oh well, comes to us all. *(He swaggers off)*.

Locke: He's changed.

David: Always was a bit like that.

Locke: Not nasty - except to me.

David: I expect he feels rather grand now he's nearly finished his apprenticeship. Seven years is a long time.

Locke: And what'll you do? When you've finished, I mean?

David: Me? I don't know. I don't really have any plans. One day perhaps

Locke: You going now? Tell Gwilliam - say I'm sorry.

16.

(Fade to spot. MRS. GWILLIAM in black, sitting. DAVID comes into the spot and picks up the bunch of flowers that he gave LIZZIE. HE touches GWILLIAM and MRS. GWILLIAM on the arms and walks off).

Gwilliam: I can't believe I'll never see her again. That I'll never hear her voice.

17.

(Quick change to central area where APPRENTICES are busy working. FOREMAN going round supervising).

Foreman: There's good work there, Darling, if you can manage not to break it. Come along now, Locke, what are you staring at?

Locke: I'm waiting for work, Mr. Sherriff.

Foreman: There's plenty here if you look for it. There's a gross of teas in that basket all needing a thin blue line.

Locke: I'm no good at banding.

Foreman: Well, it's time you were. Now, let's see what you're doing, Bates. (*Inspects ware*). Yes, you've got something there. Tidy it up a bit and watch where you put your fingers. You all right, Rowberry? Staring into space again.

Rowberry: No, I've plenty of work, it's all piled round me.

Foreman: I can see that. It's work completed that's paid for, not what you sit and look at. Same rules apply if you're being paid at a third as a beginner or two thirds when you're on improvers' rates.

18.

Mr. Binns: (*Downstage in spot*). My privilege to announce that on Thursday the 29th of this month, the works will be honoured by a visit of Her Majesty Queen Marie Amelia of France, the Duc de Nemours and members of their family. Owing to the sad death of the Duchess de Nemours at the end of last year, the party will be in mourning and wish their visit to be a quiet one. Proper preparations will, of course, be made to receive them and I shall expect all workers to be especially industrious and restrained in their behaviour on that day. Your individual workshop managers will give you further details as necessary.

(*Fade spot*).

Darling: I saw Queen Victoria once. In Birmingham.

Locke: And I did.

Rowberry: Who's this one?

Foreman: Rowberry, it seems you don't take notice of anything. Her Majesty Queen Marie Amelia is the ex-Empress of France and the duke is her second son.

David: I thought the French Queen had her head cut off ages ago. Is this another one?

Rowberry: No, she's just carrying it around with her.

Foreman: That's enough, Rowberry, get on with your work. Mr. Binns says this queen is a very religious sort of person, always going round giving money to the poor and seeing people get looked after. Called La Santa as a child - that means 'The Saint' if you don't know French.

Churchman: She'll be a Roman Catholic if she's French. They're all damned our

minister says. They believe that babies go to hell.

Foreman: And you believe that Roman Catholics do, so now you're even. Come on now, lads, let's get a bit of clearing up done. The girls from the burnishing department are decorating the rooms that the royal party'll use and we won't want this workshop so untidy they'll go out thinking we don't care. Come along, Bates, get your end of the work table straightened. Put that pea spitter away, Locke, we're not having games. And cover the gold before you start sweeping, Sandy.

Gwilliam: Will she be very grand, do you think, her being a Queen?

Foreman: Knocking on a bit, she is. The Duke's in his forties they say and she must be a deal older if he's her son.

Locke: How many's coming?

Foreman: A party, that's all it says. They'll be here soon after three. Get those trays out of the way, you lads, so we can straighten up.

19. (*A centre space is cleared; some of the APPRENTICES may leave the stage, DARLING, LOCKE, BATES, GWILLIAM, CHURCHMAN and FOREMAN remain*).

Churchman: She's only like every other person.

Foreman: She's a queen and don't you forget it, Churchman, if she speaks to you, see you're respectful.

Sandy: Yes, what is a queen?

Locke: She's a Queen - that's what she is.

Darling: Once a queen, always a queen. They get anointed with oil in church.

Foreman: Once a queen you're a Queen forever.

David: A Queen is a Queen and that's it.

SONG - I AM A QUEEN O! [Tune: GREEN GROW THE RUSHES, O]

All: *Blow, blow the trumpets O!
What is a Queen O!
A Queen is a Queen, is a Queen, is a Queen.
And ever more shall be O!*

2nd: *I'll give you two O!*
All: *What is your two O? Blow, blow the trumpets O!*

2nd: *Two, two the Duc Nemours
Dressed in sombre mourning O!
A Queen etc.*

3rd: *I'll give you three O!*
All: *Blow, blow the trumpets blow.
What is your three O?*

3rd: *Three, three the lady's maid etc.*

4th: *I'll give you four O!*
All: *Blow, blow the trumpets, blow.
What is your four O?*

4th: *Four for the lords in waiting etc.*

5th: *I'll give you five O!*
All: *Blow, blow the trumpets, blow.
What is your five O?*

5th: *Five for the coachman at your door etc.*

6th: *I'll give you six O!*
All: *Blow, blow the trumpets, blow.
What is your six O?*

6th: *Six for the boys who sweep the floor etc.*

(At the last line of 'A Queen is a Queen' the group part. The ROYAL PARTY enter and a girl comes forward and presents the QUEEN with a posy of flowers. The QUEEN walks round inspecting the ware. Some of the APPRENTICES may be presented to her).

Foreman: Three cheers for the Queen hip, hip,
All: Hooray *(Three times).*

20.

(The QUEEN smiles graciously and departs. The BOYS make a move to scatter but the FOREMAN collects them together again).

Foreman: Wait a minute, wait a minute. I've something to say to you. *(Loud*

groans). You haven't heard it yet. At the special request of her Majesty Queen Marie Amelia, the works are to have a day off.

Locke: Three cheers for the Queen! (*HURRAHS*).

Foreman: Further more, she has donated twenty pounds to be shared among you in the way of providing a feast. (*CHEERS*). Mr. Binns and Mr. Kerr and other visitors have made additions and a treat will be provided in Malvern on August 9th. We shall go there in wagonettes and the whole day will be spent in the town. Those of you lads who feel like climbing the Beacon'll be very welcome to try, but don't ask me to go with you. (*ALL CHEER*).

21. (*The BOYS collect jackets and the GIRLS bonnets and they turn the table lengthwise downstage to represent a wagon and climb aboard. The song can be repeated. Some may have parasols or umbrellas*).

SONG: *OUTING SONG* [to the tune of *BLAYDON RACES*]

All: *Hey folk, look out for we are going
Riding on a wagonette with all the bunting blowing,
There's Rowberry and David Bates, and Churchman - Oh I say!
We're driving on the Malvern Road to have a holiday.*

Girls: *Hey lads,*
One Voice: *Just look at my best bonnet!*
Girls: *From top to toe we're dressed to please*
One Voice: *There's ribbons all upon it.*
Girls: *So don't be shy and don't hold back, just join in all the dances,
While there's time that's free from work - just grab at all the
chances.*

Boys: *Hey girls*
One Voice: *You ought to see my muscles!
Big and bold and tough they are, all set for friendly tussles,*
Boys: *So just forget how prim you are, sit down upon the heather,
We've all the day to please ourselves by having fun together.*

Mr. Sherriff: *Now then, I want no misbehaving
Pull yourselves together, lads, and stop this silly raving.*

*Now David Bates and Rowberry just mind what you're a-doing,
Or mark my words without a doubt, you'll find there's trouble
brewing.*

All: *Hey there, we're all in this together,
Going up the Malvern Hills in the summer weather,
The works are shut, the time's our own to do just as we will,
By climbing up through Malvern town to picnic on the hill.*

(When the song is over they all jump off and GWILLIAM and DAVID separate out).

Gwilliam: Not meeting your Ma, Davie?

David: Might do - expect my Pa'll be off working. What about going up the Beacon?

Gwilliam: Can see Snowdon from up there, boy, if it's a clear day. And the Brecon Beacons too. I'll show you.

David: Always seems such a long way to the top.

Gwilliam: Always a long way whatever you're climbing.

Foreman: Come on, lads, there's a picnic waiting to be eaten.

Locke: You'll need to get your steam up if you're going to climb that. Take hours.

Darling: No it won't, you're just too fat, that's your trouble. You eat too much.

Locke: Lead me to it, Darling, lead me to it.

(GWILLIAM and DAVID out of breath are left admiring the view).

David: See for miles, can't you?

Gwilliam: I'll have to sit, I'm puffed out.

David: Have an apple? *(Hands over apple)*. It's like a map. They say you can see one sixth of all England from up here.

Gwilliam: Don't forget Wales.

David: You're always on about Wales.

Gwilliam: Fine place, Wales. Lovely hills and little valleys filled with sheep. You'll have to go there.

David: One day. I told Lizzie I'd go there one day.

Gwilliam: Look, it's raining.

David: But not over there, the sun shining on the cottages.

Gwilliam: And if you look you can see Gloucester Cathedral sticking up. And all the patterns of the fields laid out along the river till they vanish in smoky magic.

David: Seems as if it was painted on silk. You can't do that on china, it streaks and

fires up matt.

Gwilliam: Can't do it with water colours either.

David: (*Excited*). You could do it in oils. A wide brush, not too thick with the paint and stroke it over the surface. It'd look like watered silk, like the gown the Queen wore but the colour of blackberries and flowers.

22.

(*The rest of the APPRENTICES and the FOREMAN erupt onto the stage. The BOYS are giving the FOREMAN a helping hand*).

Rowberry: Well we got you here. We said we would.

Foreman: And by the way I feel you'll be carrying me down. Feet first.

Rowberry: Oh, no, we'll just drop you over the edge and you'll roll.

Foreman: (*Indicating DAVID and GWILLIAM*). These two lads got here first, I think they ought to have the prize.

Darling: They didn't set off with us - they've been here half the afternoon.

Sandy: Guzzling by the looks of it. What have you got in that bag, Gwilliam?

Gwilliam: Part of what I couldn't eat at luncheon. Wanting to spread it out, I was.

Foreman: Hand round the lemonade, boys, we'd all do with a sup of something wet.

Darling: Pity we haven't got no beer, that's what I say.

Foreman: Well you can go on saying. Not so bad after all, is it, Bates, being an apprentice? Mr. Kerr and Mr. Binns, fair employers as the times go. I know you have to work hard - and you're expected to keep the rules and be punctual - but there you are, you do that everywhere. But you don't have days like this!

Darling: We don't get royal visits every day.

Locke: No, but we do get days off now and again. I had one to go to the workman's institute.

Gwilliam: And I had one to go and visit my grannie. And Darling, you had a day off to go on a picnic. And we get money for our holidays.

Clarke: They're our fines so it's our money, isn't it?

Foreman: One way of seeing you save, isn't it, lad?

Gwilliam: Almost pay you to break things, eh, Darling?

Foreman: He doesn't need any encouragement, not him. If it hadn't been that he attended Sunday School regular, I'm not sure they'd have kept him on. Can't even keep his bottle upright.

Darling: (*Tipping it*). It's empty. All gone.

Locke: And so's the sun.

Gwilliam: That's Wales over there.

Locke: You and your Wales. If you had a magic carpet you'd be off like a shot.
Land of our fathers and all that guff.

David: Oh shut up, Locke.

Rowberry: And you shut up yourself.

Foreman: That's enough of that. Don't spoil the day. (*He stands*). Best be going along now, it's getting chilly up here. We don't want everyone coming in on Monday with coughs and colds. Cleared up your litter, have you lads? Still dreaming, are you, Bates?

David: I'm coming.

(*Chorus of song as the BOYS go off*).

Mr. Sherriff: *Now then, it's time we should be going
In the houses down below the evening lamps are showing
It's work again tomorrow, boys,*

Boys: *But we could stay for ever.*

All: *Playing on the Malvern Hills in lovely summer weather.*

Gwilliam: (*Off stage and calling from a distance*). Davie, Davie Bates, come on.

Bates: (*Looking across the landscape*). One day

Gwilliam: David!

David: Coming. (*After a last look round he runs off*).

(*Lights slowly come up on family group of FATHER and MOTHER in typical Victorian photographic style. FATHER and MOTHER look older and smarter*).

Mrs. Bates: Well now, I expect you'd like to know what happened to our David. A wonder it was to his father and me and we're that proud of him. Finished his apprenticeship like a good lad

Mr. Bates: I saw to that

Mrs. Bates: Then off he goes as a clerk to Africa, of all places. Reckon he was tired of being indoors all that time. Wondered if we'd ever see him again but after three years - back he came. Been in all sorts of places, Egypt, Switzerland, all over Europe. Took up his painting - not at the porcelain works but great big pictures on canvas. Went to Birmingham and then up to

London. Had pictures hung in the Royal Academy. Got to know all the nobs and people.

Mr. Bates: Never forgot us though

Mrs. Bates: And I don't think he forgot Lizzie either. Always painting what they called 'rural scenes', farms and cattle and such. And lots of little pictures of hedges and flowers like you find in the country.

Mr. Bates: I've a grandson, too.

Mrs. Bates: Noel. He paints as well. He always had dreams did our David, but he worked hard, made them come true. (*Breaking the pose, and turning to FATHER*). Well, Pa, we've a lot to be thankful for, and who'd have thought when he set off for work that first morning that it'd all end up like this?

(DAVID enters and joins his PARENTS. He is well dressed and wears a velvet jacket. Poses with them).

(PHOTOGRAPHER brings on camera with black cloth. Lights up and the MALE APPRENTICES and MR. SHERRIFF etc. are grouped on one side of the stage and LIZZIE, THE GIRLS and THE QUEEN on the other. As the PHOTOGRAPHER comes from under the cloth DAVID steps forward and brings the CAST forward).

CURTAIN