

The Keymaster

by **Nick Perrin**
(with Ruth Kenward)

Pupil Script

Scene 1 In A Modern Day Classroom

[ALL are seated looking very bored. Enter SUPPLY TEACHER (KEYMASTER) to stand Downstage Right.]

SUPPLY TEACHER *(to class)* Good morning, class!

ALL *(mumbling)* Morning, sir.

[ALL exchange glum expressions, etc.]

SUPPLY TEACHER I'm your supply teacher for today.
(rubs hands) Right! Battle of Hastings!

Song - HISTORY IS BORING / THE KEYMASTER

[Dialogue within the song:]

Ben *(spoken)* Oh no! Not another supply teacher!

Supply Teacher 1066 is a very important date. What happened in 1066?
Ben, C-J, Max, Sam. *(bored)* Battle of Hastings, Sir.

Supply Teacher And who was King of England in 1066?
C-J, Max, Sam. *(dull tone)* Don't know, Sir.

Ben *(bored, out to audience)* Don't care, Sir.

Supply Teacher *(surprised, cross)* You don't care? How can you not care about history?
[CHORUS sing.]

Supply Teacher *(spoken, to audience)* But I've got a way to open up their minds!
[Exit TEACHER, CHORUS sing. Enter KEYMASTER.]

Keymaster *(spoken)* I have the keys, the keys to history!
[KEYMASTER & CHORUS sing.]

Max Either he's lost it completely or he's for real.
Ben, C-J, Sam. *(disbelieving)* What, a keymaster?

Max *(defending himself)* Well, he's not like our usual supply teachers.
Samantha But he can't take us back in time.
Max Why don't we see what he does next.
Ben, C-J Yeah!
Ben Let's play along with it!

KEYMASTER If you're coming, let's go! But I'm warning you – history is far from boring. It can be horrible.

BEN, C-J, MAX, SAM. Yeah, horribly boring!

KEYMASTER *(shrugs)* Well... you'll see.

[KEYMASTER takes a key from his bunch and gives it to MAX, who inspects it. KEYMASTER slips offstage to collect his Timelock, while BEN, C-J & SAMANTHA look over MAX's shoulder at it with puzzled expressions.]

MAX *(holding up the key, reads)* One, nought, six, six.

ALL Ten sixty-six!

C-J *(to MAX)* Is that where we're going then? 1066?

MAX *(shrugging)* I dunno.

[KEYMASTER returns with Timelock, which he holds up.]

KEYMASTER This is the Timelock! *(displays to audience, then CHORUS)*
Max - put the key in the Timelock.

BEN, C-J, MAX *(wrinkling noses)* Timelock?

SAMANTHA *(folding arms)* Don't be ridiculous! It must be a joke.

KEYMASTER No it's not a joke. But here's a good one:
Why did the girl throw her clock out of the window?

[SAMANTHA shakes head, rolls eyes, walks away as if thinking this is stupid, but turns back round to listen.]

BEN, C-J, MAX *(dubious, but wanting to know the answer)* Dunno!
Why did the girl throw her clock out of the window?

KEYMASTER So she could see time fly!

[ALL groan, KEYMASTER shrugs with a grin.]

SAMANTHA *(to CHORUS, rolls eyes)* Tut! How old does he think we are?

KEYMASTER *(calmly)* I know how old you are, Samantha.

[SAMANTHA huffs, folds arms and turns her back. KEYMASTER offers the Timelock to MAX again.]

And you're about to see time fly for real. Ready, Max?

MAX (to CHORUS) What shall I do?
ALL (ad lib) Go for it! Put the key in! Get on with it! (etc.)

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[During the music, BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside with KEYMASTER while 1066 cast enter and take positions. KEYMASTER puts the Timelock down but in view. HAROLD should be Upstage standing on a raised block. COMMENTATORS should stand Downstage to one side. NORMANS & ENGLISH grouped on separate sides, as opposing teams limbering up.]



DID YOU KNOW? Halley's Comet was seen during the Norman Conquest of England and appears in the Bayeux Tapestry.

Scene 2 1066 - The Battle Of Hastings

COMMENTATOR 1 (football commentator style) Good afternoon, and welcome to the big match, with England playing a home fixture here in Hastings.

COMMENTATOR 2 Yes, and Senlac Hill is looking glorious in the sunshine. Match preparations are well under way.

COMMENTATOR 1 Indeed, and the Normans are recovering from that stormy channel crossing, aren't they?

COMMENTATOR 2 (nodding) They are looking quite fresh in spite of the quick march up from the coast. But the England squad also had a challenging journey.

COMMENTATOR 1 That's right. They've done well to get here at all after that... er... skirmish at Stamford Bridge. So how do you see the battle going down?

COMMENTATOR 2 Well the English must start as firm favourites. They're playing at home and have a good track record. Their position at the top of the hill gives them an early advantage.

COMMENTATOR 1 Yes, and the Normans are stuck in the waterlogged bit at the bottom. Quite a swamp down there after all the rain we've been having.

[CHORUS begin to point and applaud and cheer.]

COMMENTATOR 2 (shouting) And first on to the pitch are the Normans!

[NORMANS move to Centre, acting aggressively.]

Song - THE BIG MATCH

MAX *(impressed tone)* Wow! That was some battle!

BEN 1066 and all that makes a bit more sense now.

C-J *(vaguely)* But I don't get the bit about the conkers.

BEN, MAX, SAM. *(laboured)* Con-que-rors, not conkers!

SAMANTHA Pity they couldn't settle it with a game of conkers.

BEN Yeah, cleaner than all that blood and guts!

C-J *(pulling a face)* Ugh – it was disgusting.

KEYMASTER Well I did warn you history can be gruesome.
(getting keys out with a sigh) Poor Harold – he was hoping for an arrow escape! *(gestures that he's expecting a laugh, e.g. hands open)* An arrow escape?

[ALL groan, apart from C-J, who laughs.]

SAMANTHA *(snootily to audience)* About as funny as a trip to the dentist.

[KEYMASTER shrugs.]

C-J I thought that one was funny, actually!

MAX Can we stay a bit longer and see what happens next?

KEYMASTER *(shaking his head)* Gotta keep moving. The Timelock only allows a short visit, otherwise you might get locked in.

C-J *(strongly)* Oh no! I don't wanna get stuck here! Let's go!

KEYMASTER *(holding keys out to C-J)* OK. Where next?

[C-J chooses a key, and reads the date.]

C-J *(holding up the key, reads keenly)* One, five, five, eight.

ALL Fifteen fifty-eight!

SAMANTHA *(makes a thoughtful expression)* Oh... that's Tudor times.
(know-all tone) I know all about that. Henry the Eighth and all those wives – Shakespeare – all that stuff.

[BEN, C-J & MAX yawn exaggeratedly.]

BEN, C-J, MAX Bor-ing!

KEYMASTER But did you know they emptied their potties in the middle of the road?

ALL Eurgghhh!

KEYMASTER And did you know all that filthy toilet stuff ended up in the rivers?

ALL Eurgghhh!

KEYMASTER And do you know where they got their drinking water?

ALL No. Where did they get their drinking water?

KEYMASTER Can't you guess?

ALL Eurgghhh! Not the rivers?

KEYMASTER Yep. And that made people very poorly.

C-J Did they have doctors in those days?

KEYMASTER *(wrinkling his nose)* Kind of... let's go and see. Put the key in the Timelock, C-J!

[C-J puts the key in the Timelock.]

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside along with the KEYMASTER, who puts the Timelock down but in view. Physician's surgery is created, with a table full of jars of horrible remedies. TUDOR CAST take their positions, three PATIENTS sitting on chairs Stage Left, waiting to be called by DOCTOR, who sits behind table, Stage Right. UNDERTAKERS stand Stage Left.]



DID YOU KNOW?

A trip to the doctor in Tudor times was a gruesome event! They believed that too much blood in the body caused illness, so they applied leeches to the skin to suck blood out! Lovely...

Scene 3 1558 - Tudor Physicians

Song - NEVER DRINK THE TUDOR WATER

BEN *(holding nose)* Pwah! Did you notice the smell?

C-J *(flapping her hand in front of her nose)* Yeah! What a stink!

KEYMASTER (to C-J) The Tudors were very smelly. They thought baths were unhealthy! They only had a bath once or twice a year.

MAX (laughing) Like you, Ben! (holds his nose)

[BEN & MAX scuffle, then listen to SAMANTHA.]

SAMANTHA (know-all tone) I don't blame them, if the water was that dirty. If you think about it, we only know about hygiene because we've learned from the past.

[BEN & MAX express boredom, yawn, roll eyes etc., SAMANTHA is oblivious.]

It's fairly obvious that we have benefited by learning from other people's mistakes. (suddenly spots them mocking her) Oi! Stop it!

C-J (backing SAMANTHA up) I think Samantha's right.

BEN Yeah, she is.

MAX We were just messing about.

KEYMASTER (to SAMANTHA) Don't tell me you're beginning to enjoy history?

SAMANTHA (hesitating) Well... it does make more sense like this.

KEYMASTER (handing keys to SAMANTHA) Where next?

[Excited, SAMANTHA picks a key and reads the date.]

SAMANTHA (holding up key, reads) One, six, zero, five.

ALL Sixteen-o-five!

KEYMASTER (indicating the Timelock) Go on then, Samantha.

[SAMANTHA puts the key in the Timelock.]

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside along with the KEYMASTER, who puts Timelock down but in view. Guy Fawkes scene is created. CAST take positions. SERGEANT leads on SOLDIERS, marching.]



DID YOU KNOW? Until 1959 it was illegal in England not to celebrate the date of Guy Fawkes' arrest!

Scene 4 **1605 - Guy Fawkes**

SERGEANT Hup, two, three, four! Hup, two, three, four! HALT!
[Last SOLDIER halts clumsily, after the rest.]
Right, men. Listen carefully! I shall say this only once.
How many times will I say it?

SOLDIERS Once, sir!

SERGEANT *(nodding)* I shall say this only once.

SOLDIER 1 But you said it twice, sir.

SERGEANT *(cuffing him)* Be quiet, you 'orrible little man.
Now where was I?

SOLDIER 1 You were saying it only once, sir.

SERGEANT *(gives an irritated 'tut')* Stupid boy. Anyway...
We've had a tip-off. There are going to be fireworks tonight.

SOLDIER 2 Fireworks, sir?

SERGEANT Fireworks.

SOLDIER 1 *(aside, muttering)* And he said 'fireworks' twice.

SERGEANT Pay attention, numbskull! There's a traitor hiding in 'ere.
[SOLDIERS murmur reaction.]
He's waiting to blow up the Houses of Parliament.
[SOLDIERS murmur louder reaction.]
And in a few hours' time King James will be sitting
(pointing upwards) right... up... there.
[SOLDIERS follow SERGEANT's gaze silently.]

SOLDIER 2 Oo, er! The whole place will go crackers!

SERGEANT *(shouted)* So get moving! Search everywhere!
Don't let him escape!
[SOLDIERS spring into action and move about, searching.
SERGEANT stands still with his arms folded.]
You'd better find this traitor soon, or you'll get a rocket
from me!
[During the song, GUY FAWKES creeps in, carrying a torch
or giant sized match stick. He hides behind a barrel.]

Song - GUY FAWKES HIDING

BEN Eurghh! They were really disgusting in those days!

MAX Yeah, even more blood and guts! (*mimes vomiting*)

C-J (*to KEYMASTER*) Why did they torture Guy Fawkes like that?

KEYMASTER That's what they did to traitors in those days. And they wanted to get the names of his accomplices.

SAMANTHA But it was a horrible thing to do to someone.

MAX (*to SAMANTHA*) But he was planning to blow up the Houses of Parliament, with the King inside. What would you expect them to do?

BEN (*to SAMANTHA, sarcastically*) Sit him down with a nice cup of tea and a fairy cake?

MAX Don't you mean a fiery cake? (*laughs*)

[*ALL groan.*]

C-J Can't you two ever be serious?

BEN (*scratching head*) Er... no!

SAMANTHA (*overly serious*) Tell me, Keymaster, is it ever possible to justify torture?

KEYMASTER (*hands on hips*) What do you think? Can you justify torture?
[*Pause while they look at each other, then all shake heads.*]
Didn't think so. Here! Pick a key.

[*KEYMASTER holds keys out to BEN, who chooses a key as he speaks.*]

BEN (*thoughtfully*) You know what, history does makes you think.
(*holding up the key, reads*) One, seven, one, four.

ALL Seventeen fourteen!

KEYMASTER Put the key in the Timelock!

[*BEN puts the key in the Timelock.*]

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside along with KEYMASTER, who puts the Timelock down but in view. CAST take their positions. VILLAGERS are seated round tables, or grouped standing. A SERVING MAID is filling tankards from a jug, LANDLORD is polishing a tankard.]



DID YOU KNOW? In the 1820s women were used to smuggle whisky past the excise men. A 'belly flask' containing about two gallons of whisky would be strapped on to the woman and padded out to make her look pregnant.

Scene 5 1714 - A Smuggler's Tale

VILLAGER 1 *(pointing to Right)* Ooh, watch out – here comes the master!

VILLAGER 2 *(ironically)* Perhaps he'll pay us, now the haymaking's done!

VILLAGER 1 Huh! He'll take his time, that's for sure.

[LORD GUTSWORTHY enters, Right. VILLAGERS doff caps in his direction, then turn away indicating their displeasure, miming drinking, throwing negative glances in his direction.]

LANDLORD *(bowing and scraping)* Good evening, Lord Gutsworthy, your lordship!

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(dismissive)* Yes, yes, yes... Bring me the usual. Be quick about it!

LANDLORD *(shouting across to serving maid)* Fetch a crate of wine for his lordship!

SERVING MAID *(to VILLAGERS)* A whole crate? He's a drunkard!

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(cupping his ear)* What was that, wench? Speak up!

SERVING MAID *(very loudly and slowly)* I said that's great! Here's your tankard.

[SERVING MAID plonks down his tankard.]

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(pompous)* What's the use of an empty tankard? Fetch the wine, girl!

[SERVING MAID goes off to get crate of bottles.]

LANDLORD Would you care for a morsel to eat, Lord Gutsworthy?

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(irritable)* What? What did you say?

LANDLORD *(loudly, slowly)* Would you care for a morsel to eat?

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(bossily)* Of course. Bring me a pie. Nothing but the best.

LANDLORD Naturally. *(turns away)*
(aside, to VILLAGERS) Nothing but the best for the old glutton.

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(as if he might have heard)* Pardon? What was that?

LANDLORD *(very clearly)* Nothing but the best mutton, sir!

[SERVING MAID noisily dumps crate by LORD GUTSWORTHY.]

SERVING MAID *(slams down bottle on the table)* Your wine...
(aside, for VILLAGERS benefit) ...your booziness!

[VILLAGERS snigger. LORD GUTSWORTHY pours himself wine, makes a big show of sniffing and sampling it. SERVING MAID quickly fetches the pie and returns.]

SERVING MAID *(slams down pie on table)* Your pie...
(aside, over her shoulder as she turns away) ...your pigginess!

[VILLAGERS snigger, mimic LORD GUTSWORTHY silently.]

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(grunts, then raises tankard to LANDLORD)* By George, that's a fine wine! I'd pay good money to find out where you got this excellent vintage!

[VILLAGERS stop motionless and look at LANDLORD, awaiting his response. There's a short pause as the LANDLORD is holding up the tankard he's been cleaning to inspect it.]

LANDLORD What do you mean by 'good money'?

[LORD GUTSWORTHY opens his purse, then he passes money to LANDLORD as he speaks. The VILLAGERS watch intently as LANDLORD counts the coins.]

(turning to VILLAGERS) Talk about tight! Tut! Still, it'll do.

LORD GUTSWORTHY *(loudly)* Eh? What?

LANDLORD *(loudly)* Er... nothing! Listen! We'll tell you where the wine comes from.

[LORD GUTSWORTHY mimes eating his food, drinking his wine. VILLAGERS relax and move into position. Some will become sailors in the boat, some will be 'on shore' pointing at the boat, some become the Excise Men.]

Song - THE MOONRAKERS

[Dialogue within the song:]

Villager 1 Look out! Here come the King's Excise men!

Villagers *(ad lib)* What are we gonna do? We'll be hung if they catch us!

Landlord *(shouting)* Quick, hide the stuff in the caves!

[VILLAGERS bustle about hiding kegs hurriedly.]

Excise Man 1 *(shouting pompously)* Stop what you're doing! His Majesty's Excise!

[VILLAGERS stand still and face the EXCISE MEN.]

Excise Man 2 *(bossily, to VILLAGER 2)* You, sir! What are you doing?

Villager 2 *(pointing and nodding persuasively)* Can't ye see the giant cheese in the water?

[Catching VILLAGER 2's drift, VILLAGERS begin to point, nod and mumble as if they were very simple!]

Villagers *(ad lib)* Ooh aarrhh, yonder cheese! *(etc.)*

Villager 2 We're fetching it out!

Villager 1 We'll be rich as kings with a cheese that size!

Excise Man 1 *(incredulous)* Do they really think the moon's reflection is a cheese?

Excise Man 2 They're mad!

Villagers *(ad lib)* Ooh aarrhh, yonder cheese! *(etc.)*

Excise Man 1 *(dismissively)* We're wasting our time here.

Excise Man 2 *(pompous)* Indeed. It's a village full of idiots.

Villagers *(ad lib)* Idiots? Where be the idiots? Can 'ee see 'em?

[EXCISE MEN exit.]

Villager 1 They've gone!

Villagers *(shout)* Hooray!

Lord Gutsworthy An interesting tale, my good man.
I'll give you five crowns for a dozen kegs.

Landlord Five crowns? For a dozen kegs?

Lord Gutsworthy Take it or leave it.

Landlord *(to audience)* 'Cor, what a miser!

Lord Gutsworthy *(with bossy wave)* Have these peasants fetch them up to the manor.

LORD GUTSWORTHY swigs from tankard, belches, leaves.]

LANDLORD *(shouting after him)* Good night, your rudeness.

VILLAGERS And good riddance!

[Exit all VILLAGERS, LANDLORD & SERVING MAID.]

C-J Keymaster, what was the problem? Why were the excise men trying to stop them?

KEYMASTER They were smugglers. They were bringing wine into the country secretly, to avoid paying tax.

BEN It's like going through customs looking all innocent, when you know you've got stuff to declare in your luggage.

C-J People never want to pay tax, do they?

MAX *(nodding)* My dad's always moaning about VAT, Council Tax, Income Tax, tax on fuel, tax on beer...

SAMANTHA Yes, but he wants *(counting off on her fingers)* hospitals, doctors, schools, roads, police, fire service, recycling...

BEN I reckon people don't want to pay tax 'cos they're tight – like old Gutsworthy!

MAX *(offended)* Dad's not tight...
(having second thoughts) ...except when it comes to my pocket money!

SAMANTHA Maybe it's just that he thinks politicians waste his money.

ALL *(turning to audience, stroking chins)* Hmm!

KEYMASTER You know those excise men?

BEN, C-J, MAX, SAM. Yeah?

KEYMASTER They must have been really healthy.

C-J Why's that?

KEYMASTER 'Cos of all the exercise they got!

[ALL groan]

SAMANTHA The jokes only get worse!

KEYMASTER I've been told my humour can be quite taxing... *(pause)*
Oh well, where are we going next, Max?

[KEYMASTER holds up the bunch of keys in front of MAX, who looks at the keys, picks one, and reads the date.]

MAX *(holding up key, reads:)* One, seven, three, three.

ALL Seventeen thirty-three!

C-J Go on Max - put the key in the Timelock!

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside along with the KEYMASTER, who puts down the Timelock but in view. Factory scene is created, MANAGER positioned Upstage. WORKERS queue up at a table to one side, each holding an employment card. RECRUITMENT OFFICERS are seated at the table.]



DID YOU KNOW? James Hargreaves invented the Spinning Jenny after his young daughter knocked over the family spinning wheel. The spindle continued revolving and gave Hargreaves the idea that a whole line of spindles could work off one wheel.

SCENE 6 1733 - The Industrial Revolution

[Enter JIM.]

JIM (to WORKER 1) Excuse me, is this the queue for work?

WORKER 2 (sarcastically) Well we're not queuing to see the King!

WORKER 1 (nudging WORKER 2) No need to be like that about it!
(to JIM) What work are you looking for?

JIM Anything. I need a new job 'cos my master found a machine that works quicker than me.

WORKER 1 (sympathetically) That's the same as most of us, then.
Here, stand behind me.

REC. OFFICER 1 Next!
 [WORKER 1 hands card to REC. OFFICER 1.]
What's your trade?

WORKER 1 I'm a master weaver, sir.

REC. OFFICER 2 We have machines to weave these days. You can mind a
machine on the factory floor – take it or leave it.

WORKER 1 (sadly) I'll take it. I have no other choice.

REC. OFFICER 1 (stamps WORKER 1's card, places on pile) Next!
 [WORKER 1 moves aside to join MANAGER.
 JIM hands card to RECRUITMENT OFFICER 1]
What's your trade?

JIM I've been working on the land, but my boss bought a threshing machine and he doesn't need me any more. I'll take anything.

REC. OFFICER 2 You can mind a machine on the factory floor – take it or leave it.

JIM Thank you.

REC. OFFICER 1 *(stamps JIM's card, places on pile)* Next!
[WORKER 2 hands card to REC. OFFICER 1.]
 What's your trade?

WORKER 2 *(sarcastically)* I'm an experienced poet, sir. Very good at verse.

REC. OFFICER 2 *(failing to see the sarcasm)* A poet? No poets needed 'ere. You can mind a machine on the factory floor – take it or leave it.

WORKER 2 *(sarcastic)* Ooh! That's really made my day.

REC. OFFICER 2 *(stamping last card and placing on pile)* Right – the rest of you can go home. We don't need anyone else.

[Dismissed WORKERS shuffle sadly back to positions where they can join in the song. The RECRUITMENT OFFICERS also move aside. At the hooter sound, hired WORKERS go Upstage.]

Song - REVOLUTION

[WORKERS stand still. MANAGER moves to Centre.]

MANAGER Back here first thing in the morning or you'll get no pay.
[WORKERS exit, mumbling with discontent as they go. Exit MANAGER and RECRUITMENT OFFICERS.]

C-J At least they had a job... But how boring it was.

BEN Yeah, it was like the people were turned into machines!

MAX Machines always seem to take away people's jobs.

KEYMASTER Yes, but what would your life be like without machines?
[Brief pause for thought.]

BEN No cars.

MAX No trains.

C-J No electricity.

SAMANTHA No washing machines.

BEN *(aghast)* No TV.

MAX *(incredulous)* No mobile phones.

C-J *(horrified)* No computers!

ALL *(horrified)* No computers?

SAMANTHA *(thoughtfully)* Computers do so much for us...

KEYMASTER I say, I say, I say. What do computers eat for dinner?

ALL *(bored tone)* I don't know. What do computers eat for dinner?

KEYMASTER Microchips!

[ALL groan.]

SAMANTHA Quick! Get the next key before he tells another awful joke!

[C-J grabs keys, picks one, and reads the date.]

C-J One, eight, three, nine.

ALL Eighteen thirty-nine!

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside along with the KEYMASTER, who puts the Timelock down but in view. Enter FATHER & PUB EXTRAS, to mime in pub area. MOTHER enters with baby, to mime in home area.]



DID YOU KNOW?

In Victorian times water quality was so poor that it was considered safer for everyone, including children, to drink beer! But half of all children died before their fifth birthday.

SCENE 7 1839 - Victorian Children At Work

BOSS 1 Here come the brats!

[MINERS, SERVANT GIRLS & CHIMNEY SWEEPS begin to enter and form three groups, miming their work.]

BOSS 2 *(shouting at children)* Get a move on!

BOSS 3 *(pointing to children)* Skinny runts – they're half asleep!

BOSS 1 Won't get much work out of them.

BOSS 2 Yes, but they're cheap.

[BOSSSES move on to raised block Upstage.]

Song - WORK HARD

[Exit MINERS, CHIM. SWEEPS, BOSSES, SERVANT GIRLS.]

Optional extension for Victorian Scene

[This scene is Victorian Melodrama, and should not be performed seriously! MARY stays on stage, going Downstage Right to join MOTHER. All lines should be over-acted - large gestures, dramatic voices.]

- MAX Keymaster, can you tell me.
- KEYMASTER *(interrupting)* Ssh! Look! That servant girl is going home from work.
- MOTHER *(outstretched arms in relieved welcome)* Oh Mary!
(clasping hands together in prayer fashion) Thank goodness you're back! *(goes to pick up the baby)*
- MARY *(gasps, hands to cheeks)* Mother! What's the matter?
Is it little Benny?
- MOTHER *(nodding vigorously)* He can barely breathe with the smog!
He may not last out the night!
(dramatically pointing to pub) Go! Fetch your father at once!
(puts baby back down, fans herself)
- MARY *(striking a determined pose)* I shall do my very best! Farewell!
[Runs around in slo-mo fashion, 'seeking' her father, hand shielding her brow, etc.]
(pulling out a large hankie) Will I ever find my father before it's too late? *(sobs loudly)* Ah, there he is – in the pub!

[MARY stands centrally, directing her song partly at her father, who is busily drinking, and partly at the audience.]

Song - FATHER, COME HOME!

- FATHER *(draining drink)* All right, if I must!

[FATHER sheepishly follows MARY home.]
- MOTHER *(dabbing eyes)* Oh husband, where have you been?
- FATHER *(shuffling nervously)* Er... I was just having a little drink at the Queen Vic...
- MOTHER *(outstretched arms, eyes to ceiling)* But poor Benny is gone!
-

FATHER Gone?

MOTHER Yes, gone! And you down at the pub while he took his final breath!

FATHER *(tragically)* His final breath?

MOTHER *(angrily approaching FATHER)* Why weren't you here? You heartless brute! *(picks up rolling pin, waves it at him)*

FATHER I'm entitled to a little drink at the end of a hard day's work! You do nothing but nag, woman! *(clenching fist)*

MARY *(rushing to restrain FATHER)* No! Father!

MOTHER You wicked, no-good drunkard! Call yourself a father? *(raising rolling pin)*

[FATHER tries to grab rolling pin. During the struggle, MARY tries to keep them apart, gets hit on the head and falls to the floor. Brief silence.]

FATHER / MOTHER *(dramatically over-acted)* Oh no! What have we done?

[FATHER & MOTHER bend down and check MARY for a pulse, then stand looking distraught, open mouthed.]

FATHER / MOTHER *(wailing)* Poor Mary! We've killed her!

FATHER *(remorseful)* If only I had come home earlier... I swear I'll never touch another drop so long as I live.

[Exit VICTORIAN CAST.]

C-J Cor, that was just like East Enders!

BEN Yeah, things haven't changed much!

KEYMASTER *(aside to the audience)* Not even the acting!

SAMANTHA *(pompously)* Well I disagree. Things have changed. Even poor people can take their sick babies to hospitals. And children don't have to go to work any more.

[Go to MAX's line below, leaving out SAMANTHA's line.]

If not including the above, proceed as follows:

SAMANTHA I'm glad children don't have to go to work any more.

MAX *(politely)* Actually, Samantha, children do have to work in lots of countries. We're just very lucky we don't have to.

SAMANTHA *(defensively)* I suppose so. But other things have changed for the better. We don't have smog any more – our air is clean!

MAX Well it may be cleaner than it was, but we still have pollution.

BEN *(suddenly twiggling)* Ah! So... I see! It must have started back then!

ALL What started back then?

BEN Climate change.

KEYMASTER *(wisely)* Yes, it's a pity they couldn't see what lay ahead. But we can – so choose a key! *(hands keys to SAMANTHA)*

BEN *(disappointed)* Aw... I thought it was my turn.
(sighs) Oh well...

SAMANTHA *(chooses a key then reads)* One, nine, one, eight.

ALL Nineteen eighteen!

SAMANTHA Here we go!

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[During the music, BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside with KEYMASTER, who puts the Timelock down but in view. Enter SUFFRAGETTES waving placards, chanting. REPORTER & PHOTOGRAPHER also enter and photograph / make notes as SUFFRAGETTES chain themselves to railing Upstage. MEN enter, grumbling ad lib about uppity women. MAN 1, 2 & 3 go Downstage.]



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1913, Emily Wilding Davison threw herself under the King's horse at Epsom racecourse to protest about women's right to vote. She was killed, and thousands of women attended her funeral wearing suffragette colours: black, purple, green and white.

Scene 8 1918 - Votes For Women

SUFFRAGETTES *(noisily ad lib)* Votes for women! Votes for women! Give us our rights! Equal rights for women! We want to vote!
(continue ad lib until POLICEMAN & SERGEANT enter)

MAN 1 *(shouting over the noise)* What a disgrace.

MAN 2 *(nodding)* They should lock all these trouble-makers away.

[Enter POLICEMAN & SERGEANT blowing whistles. MEN stop talking, as do SUFFRAGETTES except WOMAN 1, 2, 3.]

SERGEANT *(shouting)* Now then, now then. Quieten down. You're causing a public nuisance!

[WOMAN 2 & 3 quieten down, WOMAN 1 keeps going.]

POLICEMAN *(waving truncheon at WOMAN 1)* You, madam, are causing a disturbance of the peace! Be quiet!

[WOMAN 1 quietens down.]

MAN 3 *(tutting and shaking head)* It's shameful. A woman's place is in the home.

WOMAN 1 *(moving to stand right in front of MAN 3)* Only when it suits you. Since the war started, we've been doing all kinds of work!

WOMAN 2 *(goes next to WOMAN 1)* I've been doing my husband's job at the factory since he went away...

WOMAN 3 And I've been driving a tractor!

WOMAN 1, 2 & 3 We deserve equal rights!

[REPORTER moves Downstage to stand by WOMAN 1.]

REPORTER *(to WOMAN 1, pen poised over notebook)* Excuse me, madam, would you be kind enough to give me a comment for the Evening Post?

WOMAN 1 Certainly. We'll all tell you. *(beckons SUFFRAGETTES)*
[SUFFRAGETTES move into position for the song.]
(turning back to REPORTER) Make sure you get this down.

REPORTER *(calling PHOTOGRAPHER)* Oi Bert, get a picture of this.

Song - VOTES FOR WOMEN

WOMAN 1 *(holding placard high)* Ladies! Follow me!
We're heading for Parliament!

[WOMAN 1 leads SUFFRAGETTES off, all chanting as they did when they came on.]

REPORTER Come on, Bert! What a scoop!

PHOTOGRAPHER This'll make the front page!

MEN *(shouting ad lib at the disappearing women)* You're a disgrace! Shameful! Know your place! Nothing but troublemakers! *(etc.)*

SERGEANT *(trying to quieten and disperse the men)* Now then, now then. Move along please, gentlemen.

[MEN begin to move off, muttering ad lib, but quietening down. Enter NEWSPAPER BOY, wearing sandwich board that reads 'Government softens towards suffragettes'.]

NEWSPAPER BOY *(calling ad lib as he enters)* Read all about it! *(walks to Centre)*

POLICEMAN *(to MAN 1)* Come on sir, the show's over.

MAN 1 *(to POLICEMAN)* Yes, officer, we'll be on our way as soon as I've bought a newspaper.

[MAN 1, 2 & 3 walk towards NEWSPAPER boy.]

NEWSPAPER BOY Read all about it! Votes for women over 30 if they're rate payers!

[MAN 1 buys newspaper from NEWSPAPER BOY.]

Thank you sir! *(walks to exit, calling)* Read all about it! Read all about it!

MAN 1 *(reading newspaper, tutting)* What's the world coming to?

MAN 2 *(as they begin to leave)* Mark my words, it'll end in tears!

MAN 3 *(jokingly)* We could even end up with a woman prime minister!

ALL MEN *(laughing)* What a ridiculous idea!

MAN 2 *(laughing)* That could never happen!

CHORUS Oh yes it could!

[Exit MAN 1, 2 & 3.]

BEN Well, there's Theresa May and Margaret Thatcher... I can't think of any others.

KEYMASTER What about the rest of the world?

SAMANTHA I saw a programme about a woman prime minister in New Zealand. *(trying to remember)* She was called... er... it's coming... Jacinda Arden.

BEN I saw that programme. I'm sure they talked about a woman being in charge of Germany.

C-J *(matter of fact tone)* Angela Merkel.

[BEN, MAX & SAMANTHA all gape at C-J in astonishment at this surprising, uncharacteristic display of knowledge!]

BEN, MAX & SAM. *(astonished)* That's amazing, C-J!

BEN *(amazed)* How on earth do you know that?

C-J *(offended)* I watch the news too!

KEYMASTER *(slowly, nodding wisely)* Today's news is history in the making.

C-J *(repeating thoughtfully)* Today's news is history in the making...

BEN *(enjoying that idea)* That's a really interesting thought!

KEYMASTER *(picking up Timelock)* Well I'm glad you're interested, but time is running out! *(jangling keys)* We must get a move on. Whose turn is it?

SAMANTHA It must be Ben's.

BEN Oh good. Let's have a look.
 [KEYMASTER holds up the keys for BEN to choose.]
 (reading) One, nine, four, one.

ALL Nineteen forty-one!
 [BEN puts the key in the Timelock.]

KEYMASTER Here we go!

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA move aside along with KEYMASTER, who puts the Timelock down but in view. Wartime scene is created.]



DID YOU KNOW? About 3.5 million children were evacuated from their homes during World War II. Most didn't know where they were going or who was to look after them. They had labels tied on to them as if they were parcels.

Scene 9 1941 - Evacuation

Sound Effect - Steam Train

[Enter EVACUEE, carrying case, to stand Centre looking sad and uncertain. After a moment, puts case on floor.]

Sound Effect - School Bell

[Enter SCHOOL CHILDREN, some carrying satchels, all laughing and talking ad lib. CHILD 1 & 2 stop Downstage Right. CHILD 1 points at EVACUEE and sniggers with CHILD 2 before going to stand next to EVACUEE, who reacts with distaste.]

CHILD 1 *(sneering)* What are you doing here?

CHILD 2 You don't live round here...

EVACUEE *(very correct and precise)* I'm an evacuee.

CHILD 2 *(sarcastic)* Well, we can see that.

CHILD 1 So have they bombed your house then?

EVACUEE *(posh accent)* Good gracious, I certainly hope not!

CHILD 3 *(imitating the posh accent, mocking)* Oooo! I certainly hope not!

CHILD 1 Think you're better than us, do you, city boy? *(or girl)*

EVACUEE Of course not!

CHILD 2 Bet you do! With your posh clothes an' all!

EVACUEE No – of course I don't!

CHILD 3 I hate evacuees.

CHILD 1 Yeah, they think they know everything.

CHILD 2 Just 'cos they've seen a few bombs dropping in the city.

EVACUEE I've seen more than a few bombs dropping!

CHILD 1, 2 & 3 *(mocking)* Ooooooh!

CHILD 3 Think that makes you tough?

CHILD 1 *(shoving EVACUEE)* Think that makes you special?

EVACUEE *(protesting)* No, it's simply a fact.

[CHILD 1, 2 & 3 prod EVACUEE as a short brawl develops.]

 Why don't you leave me alone?

CHILD 2 Posh boy! *(or girl)*

CHILD 3 Not so tough now!

EVACUEE *(pushing them away)* I say! Get off!
(angry) I've seen things you'd never want to see.

CHILD 2 *(challenging tone)* Like what?

Sound Effect - War Sounds

[EVACUEE moves Downstage Centre, speaking over the sound effects.]

EVACUEE *(dramatically, but in his own time)* My neighbour's house bombed to pieces, just a pile of rubble. I saw them carrying out the bodies. These were people I knew!

I've seen buildings on fire, people jumping out of high windows covered with flames... Night after night, German planes flying over.

People rushing into air raid shelters, screaming with fear because bombs are falling all around them.

(turning to shout at the children) Is that enough for you?

[CHILDREN stand still and quiet. EVACUEE hangs his head. CHILD 1 picks up the suitcase, takes it to EVACUEE.]

CHILD 1 *(tapping EVACUEE on shoulder)* Here. Sorry.

CHILD 2 We didn't think.

[EVACUEE shrugs, wiping arm across his eyes as if crying.]

CHILD 3 *(hands EVACUEE hankie)* At least you'll be safe here in the countryside.

Song - FAR FROM HOME

EVACUEE Thank you, it'll be easier knowing I have friends.

CHILD 1 Come on, I'll show you the way.

[Exit EVACUEE, CHILD 1,2,3 and other CHILDREN.]

BEN I can't help thinking...

KEYMASTER *(comically)* Ooh, mind you don't wear your brain out!

BEN *(laughs)* Yeah, well... Seriously, we haven't said goodbye to war, have we? So people haven't learned from history. Why is that?

SAMANTHA Everyone knows how terrible war is, so why does it keep happening?

MAX Has there ever been a time when there wasn't any war in the world?

[ALL shrug.]

C-J *(drawing a deep breath)* Well I think it's hardly surprising we have wars. Isn't war just a bigger version of what goes on every day?

[SAMANTHA tries to answer; C-J continues in full flow.]

Is there ever a day when there isn't an argument in the playground?
And bullying? And gangs?

[MAX tries to answer; C-J continues in full flow.]

And people nicking things, and other people getting their own back?

[BEN tries to answer; C-J continues in full flow.]

It seems to be human nature. Maybe we're stuck with it, but I like to think that people could be better...

[KEYMASTER gets final keys and Timelock ready.]

BEN, MAX, SAM. Wow! C-J!

BEN You could be the next prime minister!

C-J All in good time! *(wink)*

KEYMASTER Right. We have two keys left to use before our time runs out, but only one place to go.

BEN, C-J, MAX, SAM. Aww...

KEYMASTER *(holds up the keys)* Here are the keys, but I can't go with you.

C-J You can't come with us?

SAMANTHA Why?

KEYMASTER Because this key *(indicates)* takes you into the future.

ALL *(very excited)* The future?

[Ad lib comments between themselves, 'awesome' 'amazing' etc.]

KEYMASTER Are you ready?

BEN, C-J, MAX *(enthusiastically)* Yeah! Let's go!

SAMANTHA But there are two keys. What's the last one for?

KEYMASTER You'll need that to get back again. You must take the Timelock and the last key with you.

[KEYMASTER hands Timelock to SAMANTHA, keys to MAX.]

C-J But... will you still be here when we get back?

KEYMASTER *(urgently)* No time for questions. You must hurry.
Where are you heading, Max?

MAX *(reading key)* Two, zero, six, nine. *(or fifty years ahead of
current date)*

ALL Two thousand and sixty-nine. *(or fifty years ahead of current date)*

[MAX puts key in Timelock, puts last key in his pocket.]

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

*[BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA stand centrally, looking
around. SAMANTHA puts the Timelock on the ground.]*



DID YOU KNOW? Turning off lights, TV and computer, not leaving phone chargers on unless you are using them, putting on more clothes when it is cold instead of turning up the heating, keeping doors closed, recycling things, treating everyone as you would like to be treated... All these things can help save the planet, and we're sure you can think of more.

Scene 10 Into The Future

[SAMANTHA moves Downstage Right, looking at ground.]

Song - TOO LATE?

[Dialogue within the song:]

Max There's nothing here!

Samantha It's just rocks and dust!

Ben Looks more like Mars than Earth...

C-J What's happened?

C-J I can't believe this is our future. **Chorus** *(TOO LATE, TOO LATE)*

Max Just fifty years from now... *(TOO LATE, TOO LATE)*

Ben They said this would happen. *(TOO LATE, TOO LATE)*

Max Why didn't anyone listen? *(TOO LATE, TOO LATE)*

Samantha But wait! *(moving to MAX)* You've forgotten! We have the key!

[MAX digs in pocket for the key.]

C-J So what?

Samantha Don't you see? We can go back and change things!

Ben, C-J, Max *(as MAX produces the key)* Yeah! Of course!

SAMANTHA *(purposefully)* OK, we know where we're going!

[SAMANTHA picks up the Timelock.]

MAX Two, zero, one, nine. *(or current year)*
ALL Two thousand and nineteen! *(or current year)*
[MAX puts the last key in the Timelock.]

Scene 11 Back To The Present

Sound Effect - TIME TRAVEL

[Exit BEN, C-J, MAX & SAMANTHA. The opening scene is re-created. KEYMASTER stands Downstage Right.]

KEYMASTER Welcome back!

MAX Keymaster! Thank you for everything.

C-J You've taught us so much!

SAMANTHA We've learned what we needed to learn.

KEYMASTER And what's that?

SAMANTHA That today is the history of tomorrow.

KEYMASTER *(nodding appreciatively)* Very good.

BEN *(earnestly)* And we've got a job to do. We can change things.

MAX We've got to change things!

SAMANTHA We have to make people realise that they're making history, every day!

C-J And we've got to tell them that every single person can make a difference.

BEN Even supply teachers!

Song - WE HAVE THE KEYS



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