

# Stand and deliver!

A Family Pantomime

By Mick Gaunt

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## Stand and Deliver. A Family Pantomime

### Cast

John Carter	Principal Boy
Polly Fisher	Principal Girl
Kitty Fisher	Dame
Bob 1	Custom & Excise Man
Bob 2	Custom & Excise Man
Dick Turpin	Highwayman
Squire Hawkins	Lord of the Manor and Local MP
Grime	Squire's Henchman
Harry Carter	Villager
Will Carter	Younger Villager
Charlie	Younger Villager
Jenny	Younger Villager
Tom	Younger Villager
Sue	Younger Villager
Sally	Younger Villager

### Act 1 Scene 1 Village and Dock

*(Smugglers and Villagers seen carrying the contraband across stage. They are happy and carefree.)*

**Song** *(Suggestion. Dividing the Plunder. Stormfrun. Tweak and Chop the words to suit.)*

John. Look lively lads, we've got to get these goods away, and the food stuff to the villagers quickly.

Harry Aye John, and just you make sure one of them Kegs of Rum is stashed in my cottage.

John Polly, are you keeping a sharp eye for the Custom and Excise men?

Polly No sign of them, John. I reckon if they are looking for us they will be at Prussia Cove.

John Off-loading here directly to the Dock seems to have given them the slip again tonight.

Harry Well that's the last of it off the Ship, John.

John Yes get it taken to the cave as quickly as you can.

*(Whistle blows off stage, shouts heard)*

Bob 1 There they be.

Bob 2 We've got them this time.

Bob 1 After them.

Bob 2 Hold it right there, we've seen you.

John Quickly everyone, as quick as you can, I'll try to put them off the track. *(All exit to wings.)* Get out of here.

*(Two Bobbies dressed like 'Peelers' with tall Top Hats, rush on from the back of hall. Harassing the audience etc. with ad-libs as they do.)*

Bob 1 Where did they go? Oh! They are not here. I really wanted to **arrest** someone!

Bob 2 You lot seen any smugglers? *(To audience)*

Bob 1 Woe betide you if you don't tell us. *(John ambles across stage carrying a fishing rod)*  
Here be one of 'em. *(Grabs him)* I've got him, Bob.

John Hold on what you doing?

Bob 2 Ah, John Carter from Prussia Cove. We've caught you smuggling this time!

John Hold on a second lads, I'm just off to do a spot of fishing.

Bob 1 A likely story!

Bob 2 Where's the contraband?

John Contraband?

Bob 1 Contraband!

John Contraband?

Bob 2 Contra,,,, just a minute we've done that already!

Bob 1 Search him.

Bob 2 What's that?

John A fishing rod.

Bob 1 We've got you 'Bang to Rights' this time. **Our first ever arrest!**

Bob 2 *(Looks to wings)* Hold on. He's right, no contraband, and nothing in the dock either.

John I'm going on a fishing trip.

*(A Highway man enters, complete with mask, pistols, dagger, Tricorn hat and all the usual trappings. Dick always wears his mask and hat when he is a Highwayman. When he is being John Palmer he should not, and be wearing a different coat, so as to look different)*

Dick **Stand and Deliver!**

Bob 1 What the?

Bob 2 Oweer!

Bob 1 Who are you? What do you want?

Dick I'm Dick Turpin.

Bob 2 Dick Tiepin?

Dick Turpin, Turpin!

Bob 2 Sorry! Sorry!

Dick Oh good gracious me, it's every time! You three stand over there whilst I get something sorted out, but remember I've got my eye you. *(To audience)* Did you hear that, they got my name wrong! It happens all the time! Perhaps you could help me and shout it out loud if anyone gets my name wrong. Shout **Turpin! Turpin!** Okay, have a little practice, what are you going to shout?

Aud Turpin! Turpin!

Dick Great, that should do it! Yes I'm Dick Turpin the deadly Highwayman. Your money or your life.

Bob 2 Take my life, I'm saving up for Christmas.

Bob 1 Look here, my good fellow. You can't rob us, we are licensed Custom and Excise men.

Dick Is this the Kings Highway?

Bob's Yes.

Dick Well I'm a Highwayman, so I can rob whosoever I please! So there!

Bob 2 But I thought Highwaymen only attacked at night!

Dick **Oh no, I don't do the night shift!** I only work in the afternoons, that's why it's called Daylight Robbery. Your money or your life.

Bob1 You'll regret messing about with us.

Dick Probably, *(looks at watch)* 'cause the Pub's just opened! Hand over your cash.

John Excuse me, Sir. Does that include me, I'm just a fisherman hoping to catch his dinner! I've no money.

Dick You're not with these two then?

John No. They have just stopped me and accused me of being a 'Free Trader'.

Bob 1 He means a smuggler.

Dick *(Aside to audience)* This is where I do my 'goody, goody' bit and say, *(Big flourish)* "Be off with you then, I only rob from the rich and give to the poor!"

John Thank you chum. Right I'll see you again lads. Good luck! *(Exits)*

Dick Right you pair. What's yer names?

Both Bob.

Dick And you?

Both Bob.

Dick What? Like a 'Two Bob Piece' or a 'Florin'? *(To audience)* Sorry kids you won't know about them?

Bob 1 I'm Bob 1 and he's Bob 2.

Bob 2 We are 'Peelers' or 'Bobbies', you see.

Dick Oh right. Now hold up your sticks this is a hand out.

Bob 2 No I think you've got that wrong.

Dick Have I?

Bob 2 Yes. It's hold up your hands this is a stick up.

Bob 1 I don't suppose you've had much success as a Highwayman, with that sort of approach?

Dick Not a lot no. I've been very unfortunate. *(Very sad)*

Bob 2 I'm not surprised!

Dick A robbery in Epping Forest went wrong and I had to gallop away on my speedy steed Black Bess. A posse of 'Peelers and Bobbies' were chasing me.

Bob 1 What happened?

Dick Black Bess was too fast for them all and we left them far behind.

Bob 2 They've probably not had the training we've had! You see we are **licensed to arrest** people!

Bob 1 But we are still waiting for our first **arrest!**

Dick But there's more bad news, I'm afraid. *(Very sad)* Bess collapsed after all her efforts. It's very, very, sad! *(Milk audience)* Oh it's worse than that! *(Much worse.)* Yes, I'm afraid Black Bess is dead!

Bob 1 Oh dear, the poor little lamb.

Dick No, no, she was a horse! Anyway, that's enough of me. Your money or your life.

Bob 1 We don't have any money either, we work for the Government.

Bob 2 That's right, and we're not even on the minimum wage.

Bob 1 My Mum can't even get a Council Flat!

Dick Why are you doing this job then?

Bob 2 Well our Boss, Squire Hawkins, Lord of the Manor and local MP says he'll make things far worse for us if we don't stop the smugglers.

Dick Don't you mean 'Free Traders'?

Bob 1 That's what they call themselves, but he says they are depriving him of his rightful Duty Tax, and he already taxes them to the hilt from what they earn in his Mines!

Dick Sounds a nasty sort to me.

Both Oh he is, he is!

Dick Right here's what I'll do; you can go, providing you can tell me where I can find a horse.

Bob 2 Well the only person around here with a horse is Widow Fisher.

Bob 1 I understand it's going cheap

Bob 2 No, no! Horses go 'neigh', chickens go 'cheap'!

Dick and Bob 1. Shut up!

Dick Where will I find this Widow?

Bob 1 Through the village till you come to the Fish and Chip Shop.

Dick Cheers. Okay you're free to go, make sure you have some money next time I see you. *(Exit)*

Bob 2 Come on, I wonder what he'll make of Widow Fisher? *(Exit opposite side to Dick)*

*(Passage of time. Lights down and then back.)*

## **Act 1 Scene 2 *(same setting)***

*(Dames music, 'There is nothing like a Dame' as she enters)*

Kitty Well hello everybody, oh it's so nice to see me! *(Poses)*  
Now I expect you are wondering who I am, well I'm Kitty Fisher, I run the local Fish and Chip Shop. Yes that's what I'm down to these days, but in my younger years I used to be quite famous in High Society. *(To lady in audience.)* That's the London High Society not the Musical dear! I'm sorry to say I'm not as young as I once was. I'm approaching 40!

Stage Crew *(Shouts)* From which direction?

Kitty Watch it you! *(To audience)* Now can we all be good friends? When I come on stage I'll shout 'Hello everyone' and you can wave and shout like this, 'Hiya Kitty'. *(Waves both arms in the air)* Right little practice, remember wave both hands like this. 'Hello everyone'.

Aud. *(Waves)* Hiya Kitty.

Kitty Yes, that's so good. So that's me, **Catherine Maria Fisher**, *(Poses)* but they now call me Widow Fisher. That's right dear, Widow, I'm all alone now! *(Aud. Ahh!)* Oh it's worse than

that! But I've had quite a few husbands. My last one drowned in a vat of coffee. An unusual death but at least it was instant!

Then after he'd *'gone'* (*points to heaven*) someone told me to get a dog! It's not the same though is it, let's face it. I mean after twelve months dogs are usually still pleased to see you!

So here I am all alone, apart from my daughter Polly. You've already met her, isn't she beautiful? Takes after me, you can tell where she gets her looks, can't you? (*Poses*) Anyway, she helps me with the Fish and Chips, and I give her a hand at the local school. Oh, I love those kids you know, never been able to eat a whole one though!

So here I am all alone, all alone, wasting away. Mind you everything's still working! Piston and Valves are fine and my Big End has never looked better! (*Points to bum*) When I was starting on my (*coughs*) career, **yes dear career**, Mother gave me some good advice. She said, you always have to keep them guessing, so whatever you do when its bedtime, leave some item of clothing on. **So, I always wore my hat!** Yes, I'm sure there's a few more miles on the clock. Do **you** fancy a spin round the block young fellow? (*To man in audience.*)

Oh, isn't he handsome? He looks a bit Italian like Giacomo Casanova. Now he was a friend of mine too. Oh, I've always loved Italian men, (*pause*) French, Spanish, German, Greeks and all those Czechs. (*Pause*) **Some paid cash of course!**

What's your name dear, come on tell Kitty don't be shy. (*Get his name, let's say its Fred*).

Now I'm going to sing you a little song entitled "She was only the Vicar's daughter but a man never got Pastor!

**Song.** (*Suggestion. Holding Out for a Hero .Bonnie Tyler.*)

Dick (*Enters at end of song.*) **'Stand and Deliver'**.

Kitty That's what I was doing, dear!

Dick What?

Kitty Standing and delivering. A song!

Dick No, no! I want your money.

Kitty Haven't got any.

Dick What's with this village? Is everyone poor?

Kitty Yes dear, that's us.

Dick I shall have to search you. Hands in the air. (*He feels all over her body and she loves it.*) No, I have to agree, you've no money.

Kitty Are you sure? Would you like to have another look? (*Holds arms up again*).

Dick No you've not got any money.

Kitty But if you wanted to do it all again I could use my 'Chip and Pin Card'. What's your name, Sweetie?

Dick Dick Turpin.

Kitty Tick Durpin?

Aud. Turpin!.Turpin!

Kitty Sorry. Sorry! Anyway, **I like the name!**

Dick I'm the deadly Highwayman. (*Poses*)

Kitty You don't look deadly to me dear, quite nice actually! Oh dear me. Take your mask off so I can see your face. (*Takes his mask and hat off.*) That's better!

Dick You're quite right, I'm too kind to be a Highwayman, really. I can get quite emotional sometimes.

Kitty A sensitive highwayman, and you look even better with your mask off. I like an emotional and sensitive man. (*To audience*) You know, someone who doesn't feel sick when I kiss them! So you're a Highwayman?

Dick Yes. I'm afraid I'm bit of a Kleptomaniac.

Kitty Oh well don't worry, you can always take something for it. Kleptomaniac? (*To audience.*) Take something for it? Oh, please yourself! But I can assure you the jokes won't get any better!

Dick But, I only rob from the rich and give to the poor.

Kitty Oh a sort of Robin Hood. It'll never catch on! I'm poor, what do you think you could give me? (*Suggestively*)

Dick What had you in mind?

Kitty Have you got anything I might be interested in? (*Stroking his arm*) Mind you be careful what you say because (**Fred**) already has his eye on me and I don't want any falling out! Oh you're a real sweaty?

Dick Sweaty!? I think you'll find it's written as sweetie in the script.

Kitty Oh is it? Mine must be a **musprunt!**

Dick Enough of this banter. We'll be here all day if we don't get on, and the Director won't be very pleased. I'm looking for Widow Fisher.

Kitty Then look no further, **for I am she!** (*Large sweeping bow.*)

Dick Good. Now I understand that you have a horse.

Kitty Yes, she's called '**Beauty**'.

Dick I understand it is going cheap. (*Stop her.*) No, don't! We did the chicken joke earlier!

Kitty Well what do you have to trade? I know what you can do. Polly is spending more time teaching at the School, so I need some extra help in the Fish and Chip Shop. You look just the man for the job! *(To audience.)* **I need a man who can batter my fish!** But first I want you to come to my party.

Dick A party? Oh, I like parties.

Kitty There will be lots of beer to drink.

Dick Oh good, I like beer.

Kitty There will lots of loud music and lots of dancing.

Dick Yes, I like dancing.

Kitty Then there will be lots of **adult** fun games.

Dick **Adult** fun games, oh good!

Kitty So plenty of kissing and hugging.

Dick Kissing and hugging, sounds okay.

Kitty And, of course, we'll then have to play Jockey Knock?

Dick Oh I like ..... What's Jockey Knock?

Kitty It's a bit like Postman's Knock *(suggestively)* but with a lot more horseplay! Then next, it will be time to casserole me.

Dick Don't you mean caress?

Kitty No, casserole! *(pause)* Slowly over four hours!

Dick That all sounds great, what time does the party start?

Kitty Whenever you wish dear, **there's only the two of us!** *(Very suggestively)*

Dick Now, what about this horse? Is it a fast horse?

Kitty Fast? Oh yes, you should see how fast it runs when it's time for its oats! *(Pause)* Oh yes, he loves his Nosebag! Come along, I need to get back to the Chippy.

Dick What sort of things will I be doing to help?

Kitty Well you can batter the fish and with your dagger, *(indicates it)* you can peel the potatoes. But the first job will be to update the price of our Pie and Chips.

Dick Update the pies prices?

Kitty Yes. I only charge a £1 for Pie and Chips but I have it on good authority that in the Chip Shops in Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados, Steak pies are £2, Beef pies are £2.20 and Chicken pies are £2.40.

Dick Really?

Kitty Yes! Those are the 'Pie Rates' of the Caribbean.

Dick I told you they don't get any better! *(To Audience)* Just one thing Kitty, if I'm staying with you I think we'd better tell everyone my name is John Palmer. *(Taps his nose)* Got it?

Kitty Got it! *(Taps Dick's nose)* Come along I'll introduce you to my 'Beauty'. *(If audience laugh here.)* Hey, they are making up their own jokes now! *(Both Exit.)*  
*(Tabs close, start the scene and open Tabs when ready as dialogue continues.)*

## Act 1 Scene 3 A Forest path.

*(Harry, Polly and John enter)*

Harry Yes it was a bit too close for comfort, John, we only just got our stuff away in time. It was a good job you distracted them long enough for us to get the stuff here to the cave. How did you manage it?

John Well I had a bit of help from a Highwayman. He turned up just as they were going to arrest me.

Polly A Highwayman? Masked, and waving guns? Oh dear, I bet it was frightening?

John No, not really. He seemed a bit 'flakey', and not sure what he was doing. A bit too kind to be a Highwayman. I think he sees himself like Robin Hood, robbing the rich and giving to the poor. When he realised I was just a local villager he let me go. He's gone to your Mother's Chip shop to try and buy the horse from her.

Polly Oh dear. Will she be safe?

John I don't think there is reason to worry, Polly. He seems quite a decent man really.

Harry What about the two Bobs?

John I don't think he will hurt them either, they are as skint as the rest of us!

Polly They are not bad lads either, just a bit slow on the uptake. But I feel for them, Squire Hawkins bullies them and has got them doing whatever he wants.

John He's got his finger in every fraudulent scheme around. We just can't prove it. And being an MP in a 'Rotten Borough' where he owns all the households means he can get away with anything.

Harry He'll throw them out of their cottages if they don't do his dirty work.

Polly If he didn't pay such a pittance and push the taxes up to such a high level we wouldn't have to resort to smuggling to keep us fed.

John It's not smuggling, I've told you before Polly, we are 'Free Traders'.

Harry Ha, ha! It's a pity Lord Hawkins and Hanging Judge Jeffreys don't see it that way.

John Well at least the Westminster Parliament are trying to help the poor and needy. They have stopped kids working down the mines more than 9 hours a day.

Polly And introduced school education for them.

John You and your Mother are doing a fine job teaching them to read and write.

Polly Helping me has given her another interest since Father died.

Harry We'd better give the others a hand distributing our stuff to the villagers.

Polly I'll come and help till it's time for School. *(Both exit.)*

***(Blackout.)***

## **Act 1 Scene 4. Squire Hawkins Manor House.**

*(Squire Hawkins and Grime enter.)*

Grime Begging your pardon Sir, the two Customs & Excise men are without.

Sq Without what?

Grime Just without Sir

Sq Well I can't help that, what do you expect me to do about it?

Grime Expect you to do? Nothing, Sir.

Sq Good, I'm glad to hear it! Anyway they are late, have they arrived yet?

Grime That's what I'm saying Sir, they are outside waiting to give their report.

Sq Well why didn't you say so? Bring them in man, bring them in. *(Grime exits and fetches Bob 1 & Bob 2)* You can leave us Grime, isn't there something important you need to do? *(Grime nods, and exits)* Well, have you caught the smugglers yet?

Bob 1 Well Sir, we've got some good news, we found them unloading contraband...

Sq You've captured them?

Bob 2 And some bad news.

Sq You haven't captured them?

Bob 2 Correct, that's the bad news.

Sq So, they have outwitted you again have they? Doesn't take much doing, does it?

Both No, Boss!

Sq I wonder why I bother paying you!

Both You don't!

Sq Perhaps not, but I do own your cottages, and if you don't put a stop to all this smuggling you'll be out 'Lock Stock and Barrel!'

Bob 2 'Aint got any!

Sq What?

Bob 2 Locks, stock or barrels.

Sq Shut up! Now are you quite clear on your position? You are poor stupid peasants, but I'm willing to let you be my right hand man!

Bob 1 But we can't **both** be a right hand man!

Bob 2 One of us will need to be a left hand man!

Sq Oh this is hard work! Look you will be my key allies, sidekicks. But woe betide you if you let me down, I'll have you drummed out of the Service and thrown out of your cottages onto the street. Just so we all know the situation, and if there's any other breach of discipline I'll throw you in gaol too! Do you understand?

Both No, your Lordship.

Sq **I said do you understand?**

Both Yes, your Lordship.

Sq Oh that is so good, because you see, *(Arms around their shoulders and said gently to start with.)* I just want us to be one big happy family, so if your morale does not improve **you will be flogged!** Now I must find out when their next consignment is due and where they intend bringing it ashore. This smuggling is affecting my profits so I've had to put up the rents, and taxes. Now how are we going to do that?

Bob 1 Er, perhaps we should ask them.

Sq Don't be stupid, they won't tell us that; but wait a minute, their kids might.

Bob 2 Do you want us to get hold of some of the kids and torture them? *(To Bob 1)* They could be our first **arrest!**

Sq No. That won't work.

Bob 1 We could make them sit and watch the GOLD Channel with repeat showings of Dad's Army!

Sq Shut up! The best way is to send in spies. Infiltrate their gang.

Bob 1 Spies! You mean someone like 007 James Bond? Make sure they are shaken not stirred!

Sq The Westminster Government has stopped all the brats in the village from working over nine hours a day in my Mines. It is affecting all my profits! They are also sending them to school for two hours a day as well. Whoever heard of filthy little snotty nosed brats being educated? They'll be wanting cakes and cream tea next!

Bob 2 So how's that going to help us then?

Sq Shut up and listen! This is the plan.

Both The plan!

Sq The little brats finish work in the Mines and then go off to Polly Fisher's school.

Both Yes, yes.

Sq And, so will you.

Bob 1 What?

Sq Go to school.

Bob 2 What for?

Sq So you can listen to what they are talking about.

Bob 1 Oh that won't be interesting, they'll be going on about who fancies who, and what's in the latest pop charts.

Bob 2 Are Derby County ever going to get into the Premiership!

Bob 1 Who's going to win 'I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here' and all the latest gossip from Strictly Come Dancing.

Sq No, no. They are bound to have heard their Fathers talking, and will know when the next shipment is due.

Bob 1 You sure?

Sq Yes!

Bob 1 But they will recognise us.

Sq Not if you disguise yourselves. Dress up as kids yourselves.

Bob 2 What, go to lessons?

Bob 1 Why not? It will do you good. You could do '**wiv' sum head-u-cation'**! You're '**ill-it-er-rate'**, **and not been ar-tic-u-lat-ed like that what I has done!**

Bob 1 Hey, watch it you. *(To Aud.)* I'd hit him for that if I knew what he meant.

Sq Shut up! What a brilliant plan, and it was all my idea. Don't you think it's a brilliant plan?

Aud. No.

Sq Oh, yes it is! *(etc. etc.)* Shut up! You need to catch the smugglers red handed with the goods.

Bob 1 They call themselves Free Traders!

Sq They are just **smugglers!** Shut up! Get on with it. (*They start to exit*)

Bob 2 Here Bob, I don't want to be a psychic!

Bob 1 Psychic?

Bob 2 Yeah, he said we were his psychics!

Bob 1 Sidekicks! Fool! (*Exit*)

Sq (*To audience*) Oh dear, oh, dear. Me, a man of such standing, high ambitions and of course intelligence, having to depend on a couple of idiots like that. One wonders how stupid people can be? .... Hmm! ..... Now what to do?

Of course, I shall need a backup plan. Those two idiots are likely to mess up, so .... my Head of Estate and loyal henchman Grime, has already infiltrated the gang. That's where I just sent him, to keep in touch with the smugglers and find out where they are hiding the contraband. When I know where it is I shall steal it from them so I'll have the best of both worlds, won't I? Ha. Ha, a wonderful idea. Don't you agree?

Aud No.

Sq Oh, yes it is.

Aud Oh, no it isn't.

Sq Go boil your heads! Ha, Ha, ha. (*Exits*)  
*(End of Scene.)*

## **Act 1 Scene 5. Village and Docks. (A few days later.)**

*(Kitty and Polly enter.)*

Kitty Hello everyone. (*Waves*)

Aud (*Waves*) Hiya Kitty.

Polly Well that was a nice response, Mother. Oh, that's a nice locket.

Kitty My new fellow gave it to me.

Polly Another new fellow!

Kiitty He's polite and kind and so lovely. He's not from around here.

Polly Sounds nice. What's his name?

Kitty Dick, er, er, John Palmer. (*To audience*) Shh!! He's helping in the Chip Shop, he's always bringing me little trinkets he's picked up.

Polly Ah! A chap new to the area, bringing trinkets! It's making sense now!

Kitty Lovely chap with a heart of gold.

Polly Mother have you heard some villagers have found gold coins on their doorstep?

Kitty Oh that happened to me this morning, I found a bag of gold coins.

Polly Who from?

Kitty There was a note, it said "For Kitty. Really enjoying myself, I know you like Czech but I only have cash!". *(To audience)* That's a reference to an earlier joke, dear!

Polly Who sent it?

Kitty No idea! *(Winks)*

Polly You've no idea? Well, I think this person just needs to be very careful.

Kitty Why is that, dear?

Polly Squire Hawkins is leaving no stone unturned to find the Highwayman who has been robbing his coaches. It might be a good idea if it was to stop for a while!

Kitty Right dear. I'll tell Dick ... er, er, the person, whoever it is, that is, should I ever get to find out! .... But I now I need some help from you? *(Aside, stage whisper.)* Excuse me, but what happens next?

Polly Haven't you got a script?

Kitty Well yes, but I dropped a cup of coffee all over this page! Tell you what, I'll borrow one from the Stage Manager. *(Exits)*

*(John, Harry, Grime enter)*

Grime I'm glad you have let me become part of your group, John, hope I can help you and the 'Free Traders'.

John I'm sure you can.

Harry Your help with unloading the other day was much appreciated.

Grime I've heard there's another delivery on the way, when are you expecting it?

John Well that's something we don't talk about until the day it's due. That way there is less chance of the Custom & Excise men finding out.

Grime Yes that would make it a bit difficult, but we could always... *(Runs finger across throat)*

John **No!** That is definitely not the way we work at all.

Harry Forget about that idea altogether, or we will be parting company.

Grime Fine, fine. I was only kidding! I'll see you later. *(Exit)* Give me a shout when the next delivery is due.

Polly I'm worried about him.

Harry It's just the thought of adventure and excitement I think, Polly.

Sq *(Enters. He is ogling Polly all the time.)* Ah, the Carter Brothers and oh I say '**Ding Dong**' the lovely Polly Fisher. Well "**Hello**" Miss Fisher.

Polly Squire. *(Very short.)* I think we should be moving on, John.

Sq Oh you're not leaving, are you my dear? I thought we'd have a little tête-à-tête. Perhaps you'd care to join me for tiffin in the local Pub.

Polly Out of the question! *(Exits with Harry. John starts to follow)*

Sq Don't go, Carter, I need your help. You are top dog around here, so perhaps you know where the Highway man stealing taxes is hiding?

John Someone is stealing all the taxes?

Sq I've just told you that!

John But I don't know. They say he's called Dick Turpin, but he's certainly not one of the locals.

Sq So you don't know? Keep your eyes and ears open, we aristocrats have to keep together and our place in society, we can't let the peasants get the upper hand. Another thing, no offence old chap, but are you sure a man of your breeding should continually been seen with the likes of Polly Fisher?

John *(To audience)* And he's asking for my help!

Sq Tell me, why do they call you King of Prussia?

John It's my nickname. I'm from Prussia Cove in Cornwall.

Sq Oh! *(It dawns on him.)* **Nickname!** So, you are not aristocratic then?

John Oh no, I'm just from a small fishing community.

Sq Oh! *(Aside)* **That changes everything!**

John I wish you luck finding your highwayman. *(Exits)*

Kitty **It's school time!** *(Enters ringing the school bell and walks across the stage and back off, seeing Grime and Hawkins together.)* Time for school, children. Hurry along now, school time.  
*(Grime enters, passing Kitty on the way.)*

Grime Psst! Psst!

Sq Me? No, I've only had a coffee! *(Aside)* I said not to contact me.

Grime I waited till it was safe. Has he gone? *(Head gag)*

Sq Well now you are here, what news have you?

Grime As well as the smuggling problem, someone is stopping your coaches in the forest, taking the taxes, and here's the best bit, giving the lot back to the poor.

Sq Look, I know all this!

Grime Yes, but I thought we'd bring this lot (*Audience*) down here up to speed.

Sq Get on with it! What news have you?

Grime Another coach has been stopped and robbed, your Lordship. That makes six in the last two days!

Sq Well, what are you doing about it, man? Well?

Grime Your soldiers are scouring the countryside but without a lot of luck. I'm afraid these robberies are having an effect on your finances, your Lordship. Your accounts do not look as good as they once were.

Sq So you have failed me! Again! How can a highwayman evade you and all my soldiers?

Grime Well he just disappears into the forest. It is very thick and dense, my lord.

Sq It's not the only thing round here that's thick and dense! You'd better do something about it, **and quickly**. When you do catch him, I'll hang him from the Gallows and leave him for the crows! (*Evil laugh*). Who can this insolent highwayman be?

Grime No one knows, Sir, it's a stranger, and he wears a mask!

Sq What other news? Any news of the smugglers? It had better be good!

Grime Well, I **have** managed to join their gang but they are not telling me much at the moment.

Sq Not a lot of use are you? I'll just have to hope the two idiot excise men have some luck at the school, but I'm not holding my breath! You just keep at it and don't contact me again until you have some good news. You go that way and I'll go this. (*They Exit but opposite to what he said.*)

**(End of Scene.)**

## **Act 1 Scene 6. Schoolroom.**

**Song** (Suggestion Another Brick in the Wall. Pink Floyd. Chop to suit)

(*Kitty rings the bell and children start to appear on stage. Children involved, fighting, pea shooters, paper aeroplanes general mayhem.*)

Kitty Hello, everybody.

Aud. (Waves) Hiya Kitty.

Kitty Settle down please, settle down please. .... Please be quiet boys and girls. .... Can we have some silence, please? (No response to any of this) Time for a little tact and diplomacy, that's all that is needed. **SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP!** (Immediate silence.)

(Charlie enters and tries to creep in without being seen.)

Kitty Charlie! I've seen you. You're late, you should have been here at 4 o'clock.

Char Why, what happened?

Kitty Nothing happened! Why are you late?

Char Because there was a large Road Sign.

Kitty Road Sign?

Char Yes it said 'School Ahead'. **'Slow Down'!**

Kitty Sit down! Now call 'The Register'

Char (Stands up shouts) The Register.

Tom (Rushes in.) Quick, quick, hide me. I've just had a Ploughman's lunch! Hide me!

Kitty Why do you want to hide?

Tom Well I think he wanted it himself!

Kitty Sit down! I can't be bothered with this anymore. Anyone who isn't here shout 'I'm not here Miss'. No? Right, so we are all here apart from Johnny Brown?

Jenny He's absent.

Kitty **I was aware of that**, but he's not here today either.

Tom I've got a letter from his mum.

Kitty Well you'd better read it out then.

Tom Jonny hasn't come, because he hasn't **been**. I've given him something to make him go, and when he's **been** he'll come.

Kitty Well that seems straightforward. Now you two children were late, why was that?

Sally I missed the school bus.

Kitty But we don't have a school bus.

Sally That will be why I missed it then!

Kitty Sit down! And where were **you** yesterday?

Will I forgot to come because I'm losing my memory.

Kitty When did that start?

Will When did what start?

Kitty Sit down! (*To audience*) Oh, I do wish Polly would hurry up. This is such a worry. I shall have to improvise with the lessons till she arrives. (*Sees Jenny with an Art Book*) Ah, I see you have your Art Book. What have you been drawing?

Jen I've drawn a picture of God.

Kitty That's very good, but you do realise that no-one knows what God looks like.

Jen (*Shows drawing*) Well, they do now!

Kitty Now who likes poetry?

Sue Yeah, I do, I writ me own.

Kitty (*Winces*) Writ me own? Writ me own? Where's your grammar?

Sue She's at home with Grandad.

Kitty Look. It's we **write**, she **writes**, I **write**, they **write**

Char OK you all write, but she writ this one.

Kitty Oh dear. Who can make up a sentence starting with the letter I?

Tom Me, Miss, me. (*Hand in the air*)

Kitty Go on then.

Tom I is...

Kitty (*Quickly interrupts.*) No, no, no, no! You don't say **I is**, you should say **I am**.

Tom Okay. **I am** the ninth letter of the alphabet!

Will Anyway, we think we should not be at school today.

Kitty Not at school? Why not?

Will (*Said very dramatically. Standing up.*) Because it's a rainy day and that means we can't go out at play time and socialise properly. Young minds, eager to learn, with great hopes of the future, should have social discourse and be allowed to mix and exercise.

Char (*Stands and joins Will*) That's right, to socialise is essential for our physical and emotional development, because our energy needs to be channelled in a constructive manner.

Sally (*Join the other two*) And with all this extra energy, we start thinking about naughty and useless things. So, it is essential for us to have social discourse to ensure the improvement of our inner self.

Will, Char, Sally. (*Together.*) So, you see Miss Kitty, this is not a day to come to school.

Kitty Say that again.

Tom I don't think they could!

Kitty OK. All of you sit down! (*They sit in unison.*) I should punish you for your cheek.

Will You wouldn't punish someone for something they'd not done, would you?

Kitty Of course not.

Will Good 'cause I've not done my homework!

Kitty Why haven't you done the homework problems I set?

Will Because I've got enough of **my own** problems.

Kitty Sit down! Oh, that reminds me, Sally have you been copying Jenny's answers?

Sally No, why?

Kitty Only she's written for one question, "Sorry I don't know the answer" and you have put "Nor me"!

Sally Well I don't!

Kitty Sit down! Jenny, I have noticed that your homework is in your Mother's handwriting.

Jen Ah well... er... that's because I borrowed her pen.

Kitty **Sit down!** Now I shall be doing Maths later, so get some revision done. Practice makes perfect.

Sally But you've told us many times that **no-one is ever perfect!**

Kitty That is correct.

Sally So what's the point of practice?

Kitty **Get on with it!** What's the book you are reading, Sue?

Sue Horrible Histories!

Kitty What's it about?

Sue It's about 200 pages!

Kitty I give up! Now we have two new children starting today. (*Ushers in Bob 1 dressed as boy and Bob 2 as a girl*) Here they are, but they are a little shy and you can no doubt see why! Who are you?

Bob 1 I'm a new boy.

Kitty New boy? Dressed in those clothes you look distinctly second hand to me! What is your name?

Bob 1 My Mother called me George because I was born on St George's Day and my brother is Andrew, because he was born on St Andrew's day.

Kitty I see, that's a very novel idea. And, this is your sister I believe, what is her name?

Bob 1 April Fool!

Kitty I haven't seen a report from your previous school so I'll just test your general knowledge. Do you know the Prime Minister?

Bob 1 No I've never met him!

Bob 2 And I certainly haven't!

Kitty Hang up your cap and sit over there. *(He can't find anywhere to hang cap so chalks a hook on the wall and hangs it there. A hidden nail.)*

Bob 1 Budge up! *(Will sides to edge of bench, it tips and he falls on the floor. As they sit on the other end it becomes stable again, each time they stand he slides off again!)*

Kitty Well April Fool, do you prefer April or F.... *(Shakes her head)* silly question, forget it. Well you're a big girl, for someone who is as tall as you are. Are you from a big family?

Bob 2 Yeah, I am, because, you see, my mother's deaf.

Kitty Your mother's deaf? What does that have to do with having a big family?

Bob 2 Well Dad used to get into bed at night and say to Mum, "do you want to go to sleep or what"? Mum would always say *(Cups hand to ear)* What? *(All the Class join in! **What?**)*

Kitty Just say hello to the boys and girls.

Both Hello, boys and girls.

Bob 2 You lot still working down the Mines then?

Jen. Yes.

Bob 1 What do you talk about when you are working?

Will Sport, usually. Why do you ask?

Bob 1 No reason. Just wondering. Do you ever go out on the boats with your Fathers?

Bob 2 Fishing and stuff, they must keep you informed what is going on.

Will *(Aside to Jenny.)* Something's wrong here!

Jen I think I've seen them before?

Bob 1 (*Charlie is playing with his phone.*) What have you got on your phone?

Char It's a new Social Media site!

Bob1 What's it called?

Char YouTube, Twitter and FaceTime have joined together, and it's called 'YouTwitFace'!

Kitt Oh, TikTok! Pay attention over there. Who can tell me anything about Damascus?

Sue It kills 99% all known germs.

Kitty Correct! Right, we shall do some Maths. Who knows who invented fractions?

Jen Henry the Eighth, Miss.

Kitty Correct! Who can tell me what are six eights?

Will Please Miss the answer is 984

Kitty Correct! No, it isn't, don't be silly, six eights are forty-eight!

Will It's 984 and I can prove it.

Kitty OK prove it.

Will 888

88

$\frac{8}{984}$  *Writes on a Flip Chart or Slate. Then sums them. Use the audience.)*  
984 There you are six 8's are 984!

Kitty Oh yes, so they are! (*To audience*) Well, isn't it amazing how much things have changed since schools have been using computers! So, Sally, if 5 people each gave you £50 tell me what would you get?

Sally. Probably a X Box, Miss.

Kitty. Oh dear, why can't you children ever answer my questions correctly?

Sally Well if we knew all the answers there'd be no point in any of us coming!

Kitty I'm getting no sense here, I'll switch subjects. Now this is a beautiful flower; who can tell me what it is? (*Shows it*)

Tom It's a rose.

Kitty No, it's an antirrhinum magus.

Sally Aunty who?

Kitty No not Aunty, Antirrhinum magus

Tom It looks like a rose to me. If it is an antirrhinum magus how is that spelt?

