

On Tour



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by Nicholas Richards

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On Tour

Dramatis Personae

Adults of the Tour Party

Mr Gideon Groat (Leader of the tour party)

Julian (conductor)

Misty

English parents

Mr Hammersmith

Mrs Hammersmith

The Choir

Cornelius

Walter

George

Jerome

Xavier

Patrick

Milo

Pip

Lina

Henkai

Mayor of Blaristak

Mangtin

Officials, Aides

Lontai (Hotel Manager)

Guide, Lina passers-by, Waiter

Sangki Mah

The Gong

Taslik

Blatko

Shapri

Ranel

Tajmur

Beggar

Almes

Sambatham

Goh

The News Team

Newsreader

Professor Rupert Foot

The play is set in the Republic of Linan (pronounced Linan) in the town of Blaristak. (Blaristak is the main town in a region which was once an independent Kingdom of Pindu, belonging to the Taslik people, and is now a province of Linan.)

The people of Linan are called Lina (*Leena*), their tongue Linanese.

Scene 1 The Town Hall of Blaristak

The stage is set for a concert by *Clara Cantorum Schola*, a visiting choir from England. On stage a music stand. A banner at the back proclaims '*Blaristak welcome CCS*' with '*Blaristak tuyan CCS*' beneath – not necessarily in the Latin alphabet. In the audience are two adults who are accompanying the Choir: Mr Groat, who is in charge of the trip, and Misty, a young quasi-matron. Also in the audience are other members of the cast as locals, including three Taslik: Blatko, Shapri and Ranel. Watching Left is Henkai, the tour's Lina escort or minder. Planted about the audience these actors will encourage applause at various moments.

(Enter Upstage with some formality and perhaps holding music the Choir - in the order *Patrick, Pip, Walter, George, Jerome, Milo, Xavier, Cornelius* - to applause. They form an arc and smile at the audience. Enter Right Julian, the conductor, to more applause. He looks round at the audience, takes up a position in front of Choir, raises his hands – and the Choir begins to sing a setting of Psalm 137.)

Choir: *Super flumina Babylonis ...*

(After several bars of music enter Right obtrusively the Mayor of Blaristak, accompanied by Mangtin, a serious-looking flunky, and one or two other officials. They stand at the side of the stage looking at the Choir and talking in loud Linanese, the Mayor being too important to keep quiet even for a concert.)

Mayor: Duwei kinte turon! [Look at that fine display!]

Mangtin: (Nodding) Guti chal, Sheina Putong! [Absolutely, Mayor Putong!]

Mayor: Kyan-wan temin kubyan. [What are they singing about?]

Official 1: Manpote rua barsir, Sheina. [Better not be anything religious.]

Mayor: Yamen mina afang do tahung. [If so, there is plenty of room in [our] prisons.]

(The entourage laugh loudly at this quip. The Choir sing on, with puzzled glances towards the laughter. Henkai strides across to the Mayor with a forced smile.)

Choir: ... *illic sedimus... et flevimus ...*

Mayor: Nilu deishin satjiu? [Have you heard the news?]

Mangtin: Bai, Sheina? [What, Mayor?]

Mayor: (Confidentially but audibly) Gong tamel rua ku Blaristak! [Gong is coming to Blaristak.]

Mangtin: (Surprised) Gong? Dima? [Really?]

Official 1: Gong?!

Official 2: Meyu, Sheina? Meyu? [When...?]

Mayor: Demat. [Today.]

Mangtin: Demat?!

(The music reaches a midway cadence - interpreted as a conclusion by the Mayor, who breaks into sudden and vigorous applause, copied by Mangtin and the officials. Julian gives an irritated look over his shoulder, and the Choir breaks off raggedly. As Julian raises his hand to resume, the Mayor claps again – to Julian's irritation. The Mayor speaks an unusual form of English in a remarkable accent.)

Mayor: Yeljing, Yeljing! Wonderful! Wonderful! Well very done!

(Henkai gets up on stage.)

Julian: (Put out by the interruption) Actually we are not *well very finished*.

(Julian raises his hand to resume the music. Henkai comes over and brings Julian's hand down.)

Henkai: (To Julian) Actually you are, yes. (Urgently whispering, indicating the Mayor) This man Mayor of Blaristak! He has actually finished you off, yes: for he has clapped.

Mayor: (With another little clap) Yeljing, Yeljing! Wonderful, wondermostful!

Henkai: (To the Mayor, bowing) Patal, Sheina! [Thank you, Mayor] (Inviting the Mayor onto the stage) Kim tinewen kubyar? [Would you like to question the Choir?]

(The Mayor nods, gets up on the stage and beams from Choir to audience and back again, his hand fluttering with claps the while.)

Mayor: (To the audience, encouraging more applause) Gushen-koi wai (peering at welcome notice behind) Say-Say-Ess! [A big hand again for...CCS!]

(Applause)

Henkai: The Mayor will now interrogate the choir.

Julian: (Doubtfully) Interrogate?

Henkai: Pleasant questions. (Polite bow) With your permission...

Julian: (Unsure) Erm...

Henkai: (Shrugs) Or without.

Mayor: Do Englisi!

Henkai: In his very own English.

Mayor: (Beaming amiably) There is to be no worries, no. I learn well English at school. Now in first of place we so much grateful for singing visit from very long way England!

(Mayor and Henkai initiate further applause.)

Mayor: Patal! Patal! Thank you so very! And what wonderful sound you make! Most fortunate we are, having you in Blaristak town! You so good we keep you here, never let you leave Blaristak!

(Henkai reflects the Mayor's beam; the Choir smiles uncertainly.)

Mayor: You enjoy rest of your life in this good country, no?

(The Choir is clearly not sure whether this is a joke or a threat.)

Mayor: You have been in our great capital...

(Choir nods.)

Mayor: With high buildings and shouting people and so many bicycles...

(Choir nods with feeling.)

Mayor: And now to Blaristak you come with wild mountains (gesturing grandly) and fishy rivers and fresh airs. You are liking fresh airs? And happy Blaristak town?

(The Choir nods and murmurs politely.)

Mayor: And tonight you stay (pointing Off Left) in...

Choir: (Variously, with excitement) The Castle!

Mayor: Tonight you stay in Retang Ubal - Castle Ubal, yes. And you see vips tonight!

(Puzzled looks; boys murmur aside...)

Pip: Vips?

George: What's a vip?

Patrick: V-I-P, I think.

Pip: That's the spelling; what's the meaning?

Mayor: (Smiles as if at some joke) And watch out for...! How in English...? (To Henkai) Puishai-ka?

Henkai: (Trying to find the English word) That is...er...

Walter: Ghost?

Henkai: (Nodding – with surprise that Walter knows the word) Ghost.

(Choir react with interest.)

Patrick: Ghost?

Henkai: (With a smile) In Castle Ubal is ghost of old king.

(Mayor chuckles.)

Cornelius: A ghost of a king? Does he have a name?

Mayor: Not you worry about names of goats. (To Cornelius) Have *you* a name, my boy?

Cornelius: I do.

Henkai: (Prompting discreetly) What is it?

Cornelius: Cornelius.

Mayor: (To the audience) His name Conny Less! (Gives a little clap for no obvious reason.) And how many years?

Cornelius: I've been called Cornelius all my life. It's the cross I bear.

Henkai: (Prompting) How old you are?

Cornelius: Oh. Twelve.

Mayor: (Nodding in sympathy) I was twelve once.

Cornelius: (Politely) Really?

(Mayor moves on to Xavier.)

Mayor: And what to us you were singing? (Indicating the music held by Xavier) What mean strange words? I am thinking they not English.

Xavier: (Looking doubtfully at music) No, it's not English: so I don't know what it means.

Mayor: You are singing us what you not understand? Strangest.

Julian: It's about a people far from their homeland – weeping.

Mayor: Well you are far from homeland - but you, I see, not weeping – (with a grand and happy sweep of his arm) for you are in People's Democratic Republic of Linan! (Indicating Milo, next in the line) This boy, for example, he is looking most happy. (To Milo) Enjoy you existing in People's Republic of Linan?

(Henkai interprets the Mayor's questions.)

Henkai: You like being here?

Milo: (Enigmatically) Who wouldn't?

Mayor: Of course you like! Everyone so happy in Linan! And in what of our foods rejoice most your taste buddies?

Henkai: What have you enjoyed eating in Linan?

Milo: I shall never forget the stew called *Plumpty Porpoise*

Mayor: (After a moment digesting Milo's syllables) Plumti...?

Henkal Plumista poipasan.

Mayor: Ah: Plumista poipasan!

(Mayor claps; Henkai claps; 'audience' claps.)

Mayor: (Beaming with satisfaction) Our National Dish!

Mangtin: (Nodding) Gongu kyulu.

Mayor: And favourite of our Great Leader, Sunum Gong! Best of choice!

Xavier: We call it the *Stew of Surprises*.

Henkai: (Translating for the Mayor) Poipasan ansyajin.

Mayor: (Chuckling with pleasure) Ansyajin! Ansyajin! Why?

Xavier: In it are many unexpected things. I found part of a...

(Julian stops Xavier's story with a discouraging shake of the hand.)

Mayor: (Moving on to Jerome) And you who?

Jerome: (Quietly and solemnly) Jerome.

Mayor: Jay-rum. And to see what thing here look you forward?

Henkai: What are you hoping to see here?

Jerome: Birds.

Mayor: What?

Xavier: He said, 'birds'.

Mayor: Birds?

Xavier: Birds. (Makes explanatory bird movements with his hand.) Jerome's a twitcher.

(Mayor is baffled. Jerome twitches in embarrassment.)

Xavier: Or is it *tweeter*? Anyway, he watches birds.

Mayor: *Watches birds*? Why?

Xavier: Good question.

Jerome: (With growing animation) I want to go up into the mountains to see the red-tailed mountain eagle... And the Hutchins warbler... (Gathering speed and volume) And the yellow-backed wood-thrush... And the griffon vulture... And the long-legged bleating buzzard... And the... (birds real and imagined ad lib.)

Henkai: (Cutting through) In the mountains you see many interesting creatures.

Jerome: (With one last wish) And Kuzenov's white-throated bush chat.

Patrick: Can we go up into the mountains?

Henkai: It is dangerous. As well as birds ... (looking for the words) *bandits* and... *beasts*.

George: Excellent!

(Mayor approaches George.)

Mayor: And what they call *you*?

George: 'The Rat'.

Mayor: Rat? (The Mayor looks at Henkai, puzzled.)

Henkai: (Confirming what the Mayor thought he heard) Yaitan.

George: That's what they call me, 'the Rat'; but my name is George.

Mayor: Why they call you 'Rat'?

George: I like to think it is a term of deep affection.

Mayor: (Puzzled) In this country we not have affection for rats.

George: (With facetious concern) Oh dear!

(Mayor, baffled, moves on to Walter.)

Mayor: You be no, I hope, rat.

Walter: No. I am Walter.

Mayor: *Walter*?! Very English name! (He claps.) Most English!

Patrick: Actually a quarter of Walter's from here.

Mayor: (Puzzled) A quarter from... Linan?

Walter: Twenty-five percent. My mother was born here.

Julian: It was her idea for the Choir to visit Linan.

Mayor: She is here?

Julian: Sadly not. Visa problems.

Mayor: Most pitiful! Here in Linan we have not so many problems: we have *police*.

(Smiles meaningfully at Mangtin)

Mangtin: (With an acknowledging smile) *Many* police.

Mayor: (Surveying the Choir expansively) Now who of you is best singing?

Julian: (Diplomatically) They are all very good.

Xavier: (Indicating Pip) Pip can sing supersonic. Go on, Pip: let the Mayor hear your highest!

(Pip opens mouth wide. The Mayor waits expectantly. The rest of the boys look pained and hold their ears. After a few moments Pip closes mouth and looks at Mayor.)

Jerome: That was Pip's most painful note.

Mayor: I hear nothing.

Patrick: You have to be young to hear it.

(The Mayor and Henkai frown; Mangtin grins.)

Henkai: (Looking uncomfortably at the Mayor) The Mayor is young, you know.

Patrick: (Surveying the Mayor doubtfully) No, I didn't know: I'm sorry.

Julian: (Giving Patrick a discouraging look) It is their little joke. I do apologise.

Henkai: English humour. (To Mayor) Haha-pe englis.

(The Mayor frowns; then tries to recover the initiative with a general and jolly question.)

Mayor: (To Choir) Now you tell me: You still have time here before return to Britain. What day of tour most... quivers you with excitement?

Henkai: (Paraphrasing) To what day most you are looking forward?

Patrick: (Slowly, deliberately) March the twenty-fifth. (Drops music.)

(A moment of surprised silence. Disquiet registers on faces of Mayor, Mangtin, Officials and Henkai. Uneasy stirrings and murmurs in the audience)

Patrick: (Nodding and repeating – in case there was any doubt) March the twenty-fifth.

(Awkward silence)

Pip: (Piping up) March the twenty-fifth? That's the day we go home?

Patrick: March the twenty-fifth. (With a meaningful look) It is a most important date.

(More uneasy stirrings. Mayor glowers. Cornelius tries to move things on.)

Cornelius: Not very tactful, Patrick. No wonder the Mayor is offended.

Henkai: (Hands turned up in anguish) Why...? (To Julian) Why he say this?

Mayor: (Brusquely to Henkai, leaving the stage) Feima rui tin! Rui tin! [I've had enough]

(Exit Right fuming Mayor, followed by Officials – but not Mangtin. The Lina in the audience are uncertain at first what to do, then severally follow the Mayor Off Right. On stage everyone looks thoroughly confused. Mangtin gets up on the stage and addresses Henkai.)

Mangtin: (Peremptorily) Shulzen hyanshi! (With a sweeping gesture) Kangle taram!

Henkai: (Nodding) Kaozi, kaozi. [Understood] (To the remaining audience) Shulzen hyanshi!

(To Groat and Julian) Concert over.

(Exit Mangtin Right. Groat gets up onto the stage.)

Groat: What's up, Henkai?

Henkai: It is not good. Mayor Putong, he is angry; and when Mayor angry you in biggest trouble.

Cornelius: Patrick's date seemed to hit a nerve.

Jerome: What happened on the twenty-fifth of March?

Henkai: (Crossly) *Nothing* happened.

Jerome: Then why...?

Henkai: (Exhales impatiently. To Groat and Julian.) Take boys out. I speak to Mayor. (Exit sharply and crossly Right.)

Groat: (Getting the Choir's attention) Boys...!

(Mr Groat gestures to the Choir to follow him. He goes Upstage and exits, followed by the Choir. Patrick and Walter are last; Walter holds Patrick back. The two boys remain on stage while the rest leave. Meanwhile Misty approaches the stage from the audience. Suddenly Walter thumps Patrick.)

Patrick: What...? Leave it out!

Walter: What did you say that for?

Patrick: You hit me.

Walter: You know what I mean. (In angry, mocking tone) *Your favourite day.*

Misty: (Mounting the stage) Walter...! What's going on? I saw you hit Patrick.

Walter: And you've come to thank me? (Offering Patrick) Your turn now. (To Patrick) You know in Linan you can be put in prison for saying that date?

Patrick: Don't be silly.

Walter: Oh I'm silly? Something I said destroyed our concert!

(Patrick throws a punch at Walter. Misty comes between them just as he throws another punch, accidentally hitting Misty's arm.)

Misty: Hey! (Rubbing arm) Ow!

Patrick: Sorry, Misty. Sorry... (Exit Upstage briskly and unhappily.)

Misty: What's this all about? Patrick didn't mean to... upset anyone.

Walter: Patrick was being Patrick. And Patrick's not a good thing to be in Linan.

Groat: (Off) Walter?

Walter: We'd better go. (Exit Upstage.)

(Misty, puzzled, begins to follow. She sees the music dropped by Patrick and picks it up. Suddenly from the auditorium Blatko, a Taslik, calls to her.)

Blatko: Miss...! Please!

(Misty waits as Blatko approaches the stage. Two other Taslik, Shapri and Ranel, follow Blatko, and they all mount the stage. The Taslik have thick accents with dark vowels and heavy consonants, contrasting with breathy and sing-song Linanese.)

Blatko: A word, please.

Misty: Yes?

Blatko: Yes. It is important. I am Blatko. Here... (introducing the other two) Here you see Shapri... This being is Ranel.

(Shapri and Ranel smile shyly as they are introduced.)

Misty: How do you all do? I'm Misty. I know: funny name. You see I'm Miss Twistleton-Thompson, and so the boys called me Miss T at first; then Miss T became Misty... You know how it is... And I don't mind, I think it's quite sweet, as nicknames go... I mean I used to have a chemistry teacher called Garsington – but you'll never guess what we used to call him...

Blatko: (Urgently interrupting) Miss Misty... We must talk.

Misty: We *must*? What about?

Blatko: We are students of music at University of Blaristak. We come to hear your concert.

Misty: Oh – I'm sorry.

Ranel: We know what your boys sing.

Misty: You know more than they do.

Shapri: (Looking around warily) It is brave. Religious music not allowed in Linan.

Ranel: And what they sing means to us much. Lament of unhappy people, captive - in land not their own.

Misty: I must tell them.

Blatko: We are such people.

Misty: You are?

Shapri: We are Taslik...

Misty: **(Nodding, politely pretending to know what the word means)** Taslik.

Shapri: But when your boy said... what he said...

Misty: You mean Patrick saying the twenty-fifth of...?

Blatko: **(Making hushing gesture)** Have you heard?

(The Taslik wait for mystified Misty to reply.)

Shapri: Do you *know*... anything?

Misty: Erm... Well I'm the first to admit that there's a lot I don't know. Not like you university chaps. Of course I read books and things, and watch docu-...

Blatko: **(Breaking through the wittering)** Something is about to happen here... **(Looking around warily)** Something... very big.

(Enter Mangtin and Policeman Right.)

Ranel: This is vital moment to tell you what is...

(Seeing Mangtin Blatko stops Ranel. Shapri, with a knowing look at Blatko, takes from Misty the music and quickly writes on it.)

Misty: What is what?

(Mangtin looks at Taslik suspiciously.)

Ranel: **(Suddenly artificial)** What is the joy with which we hear your radiant music!

Misty: They didn't even get through one piece though.

Ranel: **(Carrying on regardless)** Very much!

(Shapri passes to Blatko the music. Blatko glances at it and hands it to Misty.)

Blatko: You will pass this on.

Misty: Er... I shall.

(Blatko taps the music in Misty's hand meaningfully.)

Blatko: **(Artificially)** Thank you for asking our opinion.

Misty: But I didn't...

Blatko: Bye bye.

(Exeunt Right Taslik. Misty looks after them baffled. Mangtin and Policeman approach Misty.)

Mangtin: They bother you?

Misty: Erm. No, not really.

Policeman: What they say?

Misty: Oh just... talking about the concert. Nothing particular.

Mangtin: These men, they are not good.

Policeman: They are Taslik. Not to be trusted.

Misty: Could you tell me what are Taslik?

Mangtin: Taslik are not to be trusted.

Policeman: They trouble you again, you tell us please.

Misty: Right-ho. Will do.

Policeman: **(Sternly and pointedly)** You will.

Misty: They seemed perfectly pleasant gentlemen though.

Mangtin: No. They are Taslik. **(To Policeman)** Nene hua-du Shapri? [You saw Shapri?]
(Policeman nods. Exeunt Right - with suspicious glances around - Mangtin and Policeman. Nonplussed, Misty stands still for a moment. She looks at the music. Enter Julian Upstage.)

Julian: Misty...?
Misty: Oh...I'm here.
Julian: True – **(pointing Upstage)** but you're needed *there*.
Misty: Just met some...Taslik.
Julian: Uh-huh.
Misty: What *are* Taslik?
Julian: The local people. They used to be independent before the Lina took over.
Misty: Ah – that explains... **(Gives Julian the music.)** Here.
Julian: **(Taking the music)** Thanks. Bet *George* dropped it.
Misty: Look what they've written... **(pointing to Shapri's scribbles)** here. See?
(Julian peers curiously at the music.)
Julian: Odd...
Misty: Perhaps it's a Taslik tune.
Julian: Three notes... with a time signature of twenty-one over three! I don't think so. It's code.
Misty: They said they had something important to tell us. Something we need to know.
Julian: Really? If it's that vital then we'd better get decoding. **(Gestures Upstage)** First things first: tour conference.
Misty: What's the plan?
Julian: Make peace with the Mayor – or we may not be long for this country.
(Exeunt Upstage.)

Scene 2 The home of the Hammersmiths, Oxfordshire, going-to-work time

(Enter Left Mrs Hammersmith, holding a phone and mid-conversation. Empty brackets indicate inaudible speech on the other end of the phone.)

Mrs Hammersmith: CCS. C-C-S. Stands for *Clara Cantorum Schola*. Means 'clear-voiced Choir'. Yes, they're pretty good. I *would* say that: my sons sing with them – but they get good reviews... (...) Why Linan? (...) Well in fact I was born there; and I thought it would be ... (...) Yes: I arranged for the Choir to visit. (...) Oh I left when I was thirteen... (...) A long time ago, true... But I know the area ... still speak some Linanese, in fact... (...)

(Enter Right Mr Hammersmith, putting on a tie and generally getting ready to go to work. He is wearing glasses pushed up over his head and looking urgently around for something.)

Mrs Hammersmith: Yes – Linan is very... It's a closed society (...) Mm. But I think this is good publicity for the Lina. You know, a choir from Britain... Happy faces at concerts, uniting power of music and all that... (...) They've been singing in Pinau and... And yes, now they're in Blaristak. (...) B...L...A... That's it. By the mountains. Of course... No, no, not at all. Glad to be of... (...) Okay then, look forward to reading about it... Mm. Bye then... Goodbye. **(Hangs up.)**

Mr Hammersmith: **(Still looking around, preoccupied)** That was...?

Mrs Hammersmith: The press.

Mr Hammersmith: Oh? Telegraph? The Times?

Mrs Hammersmith: Well, The *Oxford Times*. **(Looking at phone)** They want to run a feature about the Choir. Oh... a message! Well... they've arrived safely in Blaristak...

Mr Hammersmith: Have you seen my glasses?

Mrs Hammersmith: **(In reply)** Yes. **(Reading excitedly)** And they're staying at the castle tonight.

Mr Hammersmith: Where?

Mrs Hammersmith: Outskirts of Blaristak.

Mr Hammersmith: No – where did you see my glasses?

Mrs Hammersmith: On your head. **(Looking at her husband's head)** They're still there.
(Mr Hammersmith finds his glasses and moves Right.)

Mrs Hammersmith: Just think...

Mr Hammersmith: Haven't the time to think, I'm afraid. Dangerously late as it is.

Mrs Hammersmith: Walter's the same age as I was...

Mr Hammersmith: Well of course... To reach our age you have to be twelve at some point.

Mrs Hammersmith: He's arrived in Blaristak at the same age I was when I left. Blaristak! The mountains! The ancient Kingdom of Pindu!

Mr Hammersmith: Do you miss it?

Mrs Hammersmith: Yes, yes... of course - but it's part of Linan now. Things will have changed. **(Dreamily)** It's the fair land of my youth that I miss.

Mr Hammersmith: And it's the crammed train of my middle age that I'm going to miss if I don't get going. **(Moves Right, adjusting his cuff links.)**

Mrs Hammersmith: No breakfast?

Mr Hammersmith: Keep it for my retirement. Bye then. See you this evening!
(Exit Mr Hammersmith briskly Right. Mrs Hammersmith looks back at her phone.)

Mrs Hammersmith: Castle Ubal! Tonight they stay in Retang Ubal! Memories, memories!
(Exit Upstage in a reverie Mrs Hammersmith.)

Scene 3 The Hall of Castle Ubal, now a hotel, in Blaristak Evening

(Enter Left with a duster Tajmur, an elderly and lowly member of the hotel staff. He proceeds to dust and sigh, and then sits down wearily. Enter briskly Left Lontai, the manager of the hotel, holding and keeping an eye on his phone. He observes Tajmur disapprovingly.)

Lontai: Tajmur!

(Tajmur, being rather deaf and absent-minded, does not hear.)

Lontai: **(More loudly)** Tajmur!

(Tajmur hears. Lontai tells him to get moving – and fast.)

Lontai: Sinau ika! **[Bestir yourself!]** **(With a sneer)** Ungha Puishai-ka! **[Silly ghost!]**

(Tajmur picks himself up slowly. Lontai looks on with an expression of contempt, but then snaps into life as he sees Right someone coming.)

Lontai: Sangki Mah! **(To Tajmur, crossly)** Hulé! **[Away!]**

(Exit Tajmur Left. Lontai straightens his tie, smooths his hair and so forth. Enter Right Sangki Mah, young son of the Great Leader, the Gong. Lontai bows as Sangki Mah walks past him across the stage.)

Lontai: (From a bowing position) Saiwen, Sangki Mah. [Greetings...]

Sangki Mah: (With a quick nod of acknowledgement...) Saiwen. (...he passes on. Exit Left.)
 (Lontai wipes his brow, and then follows Sangki Mah Off Left. Noises Off Right as the Tour Party arrives. Enter Right Groat, Julian and Cornelius.)

Groat: Welcome to Castle Ubal!

Cornelius: Who was that getting out of the swish car?

Groat: One of those vips we were told about, I imagine. (Calling out) Hello?! Anyone here?

Julian: Maybe all the staff are busy with the *important* guests.

Cornelius: We're important, aren't we?

Julian: The only British choir to tour Linan for the last thirty years – I'd say we are.

Groat: (Calling) Hallo?
 (Enter Left Tajmur with no obvious haste.)

Groat: (To Tajmur) Hello there. (As introduction) CCS.
 (Tajmur nods sadly.)

Groat: If this is the right entrance we'll bring in our bags. (Looking at Tajmur doubtfully)
 Do you speak English?

(Tajmur opens his mouth but before he can reply, enter Left Lontai, who quickly takes over the reception duties, gesturing to Tajmur to busy himself elsewhere. Tajmur moves Upstage.)

Lontai: I can help you?

Groat: Hope so. We're CCS and we're tired.

Lontai: (Coolly) Ah... yes. From England. Singers are where?

Groat: Tell them to come in, Cornelius.
 (Cornelius goes Right and signals to the others. Lontai shakes head, not wanting the rest inside.)

Cornelius: In!

Groat: Quietly.
 (Enter Choir in a blast of excited noise.)

Cornelius: (Quietly) Quietly.
 (Boys spread around, one tripping over another, and investigate with excitement. General hubbub)

George: Wow! That's what I call a hall!

Xavier: I thought Linan didn't do splendid chambers.

Jerome: Grandest place we've ever stayed in!

Patrick: Majestic!

Xavier: Thank you, Walter!

Walter: Me?

Xavier: For having a mother who booked this place.

Milo: She's mine too.

Xavier: Thank you, Milo.

Milo: (Bows) A pleasure.

George: Misty: come and see!
 (Enter Misty. Lontai folds his arms sternly.)

Jerome: Used to be a castle.

George: Still is.

Jerome: I mean, it used to be a castle where princes and knights and things lived.

Cornelius: Let's hope there's a dungeon for the Rat.

(George thumps Cornelius.)

Misty: (Looking around in awe) Fantastic!

Walter: (Knowledgeably) This is where the King lived.

Patrick: When this was the Kingdom of Pindu.

Walter: (In poetic tones) When this was the Kingdom of Pindu.

Pip: Where's the ghost?

George: (Pointing over Pip's shoulder) Is that him, Pip?

Pip: (Turning round) Where?

(George makes a sudden and disturbing ghost laugh behind Pip, making him jump satisfyingly.)

Groat: All right: best behaviour! – or we'll be out before we're in.

Misty: Shall we get the bags?

(Lontai comes forward with a shaking head.)

Lontai: No! No bags!

Misty: We'll need them.

Lontai: You will not. Listen, please, if you will...! Listen!

(Hubbub dies down. All look at Lontai.)

Lontai: I am sorry for what I must tell you. I, you see, I am manager of hotel.

Cornelius: We'll cope.

Misty: Anything else you must tell us?

Lontai: Rooms – they are (shakes head sadly) they are taken.

Groat: What?

Lontai: Your rooms, they are taken.

Groat: No, no. We booked months ago. (Looking round) Where's Henkai when you need him?

Lontai: Yes – five months past you made booking. But for busy hotel things change in one day, you know. I am so sorry. (Shrugs) But what can be done, you see?

(Exchange of aghast looks)

Groat: *What can be done?!* You can be moved from your job – that's what can be done – if you don't find us rooms.

Lontai: This is not possible, of course. We today hear of important guests.

Cornelius: Ah: the Coming of the Vips!

Lontai: Therefore no rooms for you, we most regret. You must go to other hotel.

Misty: Other hotel?

Groat: (Looking at his watch) Now?!

(Lontai nods sympathetically but with obvious intransigence.)

Julian: What other hotel?

Misty: It's late: we won't find anywhere else.

Lontai: There is hotel in Mautee...

Groat: And where is that?

Lontai: Distant only thirty kilometre.

Groat: We are not travelling thirty kilometres tonight!

Lontai: You not need to walk. You have outside bus...taxi...

Groat: And *you* have *inside* something like fifty rooms! So find us a few of them! Otherwise...

Lontai: Otherwise?

Groat: We sleep here – (**pointing at the floor**) here on the floor. Boys: make yourselves comfortable. No more kilometres *or* miles tonight
(Boys variously sit and lie down on the floor. Lontai is nonplussed.)

Lontai: You cannot lie here.

Misty: They can lie anywhere, these chaps.
(Boys begin to sing.)

Boys: *Illic sedimus et flevimus...*

Groat: Mr Hotel Manager: today these boys have travelled two hundred miles and tried to sing a concert in your Town Hall. They are tired and hungry and they are not going anywhere.

Lontai: Then I call police. (**Moves Left.**)
(The singing dies down at the word 'police'. Enter Henkai. Lontai stops when he sees Henkai.)

Henkai: Mr Groat...

Groat: Henkai! Where've you been? You're meant to be our shadow! We need you.

Henkai: I talk to Mayor. I explain things. Now no more misunderstanding. And he is come to pay respects to the vips.

Groat: The Mayor?

Lontai: (**With some alarm**) *Sheina Putong?*

Patrick: Those vips!

Henkai: (**Indicating Right**) He come.

Groat: Wonder who these VIPs are.

Julian: Let's hope he's forgotten about the date.
(Enter Mayor.)

Lontai: (**Unctuously**) Sheina!

Mayor: Saiwen, Lontai. (**To the Party**) Hello, you Say-Say-Ess. (**To Groat**) Mister Grate...

Groat: Good evening, Mister Mayor. To what do we owe the... pleasure...?

Misty: We're very sorry about the date.

Mayor: (**Indicating Henkai with satisfaction**) This man Henkai, your good minder, he explain everything. All forgiven! Now I come to hotel to see vips!

Jerome: The vips *again*!

Mayor: You know now who stay with you?
(Groat opens mouth to say no, but the Mayor does not wait for an answer.)

Mayor: They come for quiet, mountainful holiday: great father and son. No many security. And for you, I am strongly hoping your stay is as comfortable as may be.

Xavier: They won't let us stay here.

Pip: (**Piping up excitedly, pointing at Lontai**) He's going to call the police.

Mayor: What is this?

Groat: It seems that the hotel is double-booked.

Mayor: (**Sternly**) Lontai? Zhen shi aun? [What's this all about?]

Lontai: (**Confidentially, with pained expression and whining tone**) Yamen matu duishi Gong te hunki rua... [We have been told that the Gong will be arriving...]

Groat: What is he saying, Henkai?

Lontai: Lesh chume afang olozhe baina.

Henkai: Most rooms in castle being... **(mimes hammering to indicate refurbishment)**

George: Hammered?

Xavier: Destroyed?

Groat: Refurbished?

Henkai: **(Nods)** And only rooms enough for big unexpected guests.

Misty: Who are these big unexpected guests?

Mayor: **(Crossly)** Milun tuwen, Lontai! **(To Groat)** No no, that is mistake. Easily repaired. **(Sternly to Lontai, with aggressive machine-gun delivery)** Kuiti afang! Fiwen dun teshe shi tao! **(Smiling, to Groat)** Misunderstanding now gone. **(To Lontai)** Hoshil! [Ridiculous!]

(Lontai nods meekly.)

Mayor: Forgive wretched manager. Big guests give him much confusion. He now find for you rooms.

Groat: That's better.

Lontai: In Tower...

Groat: OK. Is there anything wrong with the Tower?

Lontai: Nothing. Except...

Misty: Except...?

Lontai: It is high. Many metres high. Even more of your English feet. And boys not climb on roof or... **(making a falling-from-a-great-height gesture.)**

Misty: We'll tell them. **(To the boys)** Boys, you're not to climb on the dangerous roof.

(Boys nod and exchange looks which suggest that they have other ideas.)

Patrick: We heard, Misty.

Xavier: You can rely on us.

Mayor: **(Chuckling)** And of course beware of... **(checking with Henkai)** Puishai-ka.

Henkai: Goats.

Walter: Ghost.

Groat: Right, boys: Who's happy to sleep in a high haunted tower?

(All boys' hands shoot into the air.)

Mayor: Yeljing! As you say: all good that end good.

(Mayor walks Right. He sees Patrick, whose head he gives a friendly pat – to Patrick's alarm.)

Mayor: And may you have Wednesday happiest birthday!

Patrick: But it's...

(Henkai puts his hand firmly over Patrick's mouth in feigned friendliness.)

Henkai: Yes, Patrick, we shall make for you special birthday!

Walter: **(Aside)** Clever Henkai!

(Henkai releases Patrick's mouth. Patrick wipes his mouth crossly.)

Groat: Well thank you, Mr Mayor. All say thank you to the Mayor, boys.

Boys: **(Variously)** Thank you, Mr Mayor!

Groat: We're much obliged. Er... who *are* these VIPs staying here?

Mayor: The Vyai-pees?

Henkai: **(Interpreting)** Vips, Sheina.

Mayor: Ah yes: big honour for Blaristak. They here now in castle, yes. I go see them; I return in soon-ness. **(Exit Left.)**

Henkai: I tell Mayor this boy looking forward to birthday. He believe this.

Groat: Good thinking, Henkai. **(To the boys)** Okay: Get your bags... And Cornelius... Make sure no one goes onto the roof.

Cornelius: **(Saluting facetiously)** Aye, aye, Mr Groat!

Henkai: And, boys: be careful what you say in Linan.

Boys: **(Variously, as they move Right)** Yes, Henkai.

Misty: Don't mention March the you know... **(Shrugs)** For some reason.

Henkai: And especially what you say in Castle. Here is staying Gong.
(All stop in astonishment.)

Henkai: You know who is Gong?
(All nod. Excited murmurs and looks)

Henkai: **(Portentously)** Great honour to Blaristak! Great honour to Castle Ubal! Great honour to you stay same place as... **(almost religiously)** Sunum Gong, Great Leader of Linan!

Cornelius: We'll take *great* care with our words, Henkai.
(Henkai nods solemnly and exits Left.)

Lontai: **(Clicking his fingers at Tajmur, and pointing after the boys)** Tajmur!
(Exeunt Right Boys excitedly, followed by Tajmur and Groat. Julian keeps back Misty.)

Julian: I've cracked the code.
(Misty looks puzzled. Julian takes out the music Misty had given him.)

Julian: Looked at it in the taxi here; and I spotted the word *Ozgorod*: the name of a street we came down. Asked the taxi driver, and he said it means 'freedom'.

Misty: *Our* taxi driver drove too fast to read street names.

Julian: It's a way of telling you where to meet them. You see it says *stac* after it? That's not 'staccato'. They know you'll be clever enough to take that to mean street.

Misty: I'm flattered. But how long is this street? Do they expect me to walk up and down it, hoping to see them one day?

Julian: Look: three notes - E, F, B. That's the number you meet them at.

Misty: E, F, B is not a number, Julian.

Julian: **(Patiently)** The key of this piece is E. Note E is therefore one; F is two, B five. *Ergo* you meet them at number one hundred and twenty-five Ozgorod Street. And the time signature: twenty-one over three... That means the twenty-first of March.

Misty: Twenty-first... Tomorrow!

Julian: Tomorrow. At eleven.

Misty: That's when we have our guided tour of the town. How do you know the time?

Julian: You see the double bar line... It's actually the number eleven.

Misty: Oh yes!

Julian: And below there's a tiny *am*.

Misty: Ingenious!

Julian: Well, Misty, you'd better find out what this urgent news is.

Misty: But I can't leave the boys on the tour.
Julian: Henkai'll be with them. And the Guide. Just say you want to buy me a present.
Misty: Why should I do that?
Julian: I don't know. Say anything: a souvenir to take back home. Something for the boys. Then re-join the tour.
Misty: Can't *you* do it?
Julian: I *must* prepare the music for our final concert tomorrow. Anyway: you're the one they want to see, Misty.
(Exeunt Right.)

Scene 4 The Roof of the North Tower

(Very low light. Sound of wind. Enter Upstage Milo and Pip. They look around curiously and explore. Milo pats himself against the cold and coughs.)

Pip: We're on the roof!

Milo: And it's cold.

(Enter variously Cornelius, Xavier, Patrick, Jerome, George, Walter. They spread about in wonder, looking over the edges of the stage as if over parapet of a tower platform. George and Xavier go Right; Walter and Jerome Left; Milo centre, Cornelius Upstage Right. Pip approaches the edge Left and backs away as he sees the drop below.)

Pip: Whoa! The manager wasn't wrong: We are high!

Jerome: Not as high as those moonlit mountains!

Walter: Look at sleepy Blaristak below!

Patrick: Dark and quiet. Waiting to awake and explode.

Milo: Why'd you say that?

Patrick: Maybe you'll see

George: (To Xavier) What would you give me if I walked along the parapet?

Xavier: A contribution to your medical bills... Some grapes for your hospital stay...

Walter: Think of all the birds you'll see from here, Jerome.

Jerome: Hill pigeon, little cuckoo-dove, nuthatch, Hodgson's frogmouth, vampire owls...

Walter: (Patting his shoulder to stop the flow) Just *think* of them, Jerome.

Cornelius: We'd better go down. We're not supposed to be here...

Patrick: Don't be a spoilsport, Corny! There's no health and safety police here.

Cornelius: There's *every* kind of police in Linan.

Patrick: (Looking below) Quite a few of them coming into the hotel, it seems.

Xavier: I bet that old geyser downstairs is a secret policeman.

(Enter gloomily Tajmur. Milo nudges Cornelius and points to Tajmur.)

Milo: He's the old geyser *upstairs* now.

(Tajmur looks around. Patrick nudges Cornelius.)

Patrick: Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Cornelius: Erm... Hello.

Patrick: (Aside, commenting on Cornelius' eloquent address) Magnificent!

(Tajmur speaks fluent but slow English with little accent.)

Tajmur: You were instructed not to come up here.

Cornelius: Sorry. We'll go down. Did you hear us from downstairs?

Tajmur: No. My room is in this tower.

Patrick: You live here?

Tajmur: I have lived in this castle since the days when a king ruled a free Pindu.

Patrick: You have lived here over thirty years?

(Tajmur nods solemnly. The boys consider Tajmur in puzzlement and wonder.)

Xavier: Do you ever see...?

Tajmur: What?

George: Anything strange... up here. Is it true the Tower is haunted?

(A distant howl. The boys exchange frightened looks.)

Pip: *What... was that?!*

(The howl again.)

Tajmur: (After a pause) Have you heard about the *Kandagul*?

(Boys shrug heads.)

Tajmur: The people here tell the tale of a huge creature that comes from the mountains... It takes unwary children.

George: Where? Where does it take them, this creature?

Milo: Somewhere...*good*?

Tajmur: (Shrugs) They never come back: so I would not know. That is the tale.

George: And can this creature fly?

Milo: And land here on the roof?

Xavier: And snatch us away?

Pip: To its mountain lair?

Tajmur: (Gesturing Upstage) Not if you come below.

(The boys obey his gesture, exchanging uneasy looks, and move Upstage.)

Milo: What does it look like, this... Can-do...?

Tajmur: Kandagul. No one has seen it – and lived.

Xavier: Have you ever seen it?

Tajmur: (With a mysterious chuckle) Am I alive?

(Boys look at Tajmur and at each other uncertainly.)

Pip: (Blurting out) Are you a ghost?

(Tajmur turns and looks penetratingly at the boys. A suspenseful pause.)

Tajmur: That is what they call me. (Wry smile) And now time, I think, for you to sleep.

(Exit Upstage Tajmur. Boys look around uneasily.)

George: (With a hollow laugh) And now we *sleep*?

Jerome: Never to wake...?

(Boys move Upstage.)

Cornelius: Don't complain: you all wanted to come up here. To this 'haunted tower'.

Xavier: I prefer my ghosts in books: you can shut them inside.

(Exeunt Upstage. Darkness.)

Scene 5 The Hammersmiths Arriving-home time

(Enter Right Mr Hammersmith wearing coat.)

Mr Hammersmith: Hullo. I'm home. Mona?

Mrs Hammersmith: (Off Upstage) Is that you?

Mr Hammersmith: Think so. Any news?
Mrs Hammersmith: (Off) What's that?
Mr Hammersmith: I said, Any news?
Mrs Hammersmith: Can't hear you. I'll be down in a mo.
 (Exit Mr Hammersmith Right.)
Mrs Hammersmith: (Off) Just had some news. Are you still there?
Mr Hammersmith: (Off) No.
 (Enter Upstage Mrs Hammersmith with phone.)
Mrs Hammersmith: Herbert?
 (Enter Right Mr Hammersmith, sans coat, undoing his tie.)
Mrs Hammersmith: There you are.
Mr Hammersmith: Here I am
Mrs Hammersmith: Well they're safely in Castle Ubal. Apparently they're staying in the Tower. Beautiful views – and there's a secret passage to find if they look around.
Mr Hammersmith: *Walter* will find it. (Double take – looks at his wife curiously) How do you know?
Mrs Hammersmith: What? Oh, just got a message.
Mr Hammersmith: No - how do you know about the secret passage? Have you been to this castle?
Mrs Hammersmith: (Awkwardly) Well we used to visit Castle Ubal often.
Mr Hammersmith: But when *you* lived in Blaristak... it was the royal palace, surely.
Mrs Hammersmith: (Evasively) Oh there were guided tours... You know... Anyhowever... dinner's ready. Hungry?
Mr Hammersmith: Famished.
 (They move Upstage.)
Mrs Hammersmith: And speaking of guided tours... They're being taken round Blaristak tomorrow.
 (Exeunt Upstage.)

Scene 6 Blaristak, Tinstik Square Morning

(Enter Right Guide. He looks sternly behind him and beckons on his group.)

Guide: This way, please! This way! Here!

(Enter tour group: Henkai, Choir and Misty.)

Guide: We are now in Tinstik Square. (Flatly) It is very interesting.

(All look around unenthusiastically.)

Guide: You will admire tall building to your right.

(Group looks to the Right.)

Guide: It is built in 1990 – Year of Pindu Liberation. Very historic. And beautiful.
Now you turn left...

(Group looks obediently Left.)

Guide: There is Hall of Meeting. It is very interesting.

Patrick: Good to know.

(Meanwhile enter Mangtin Right. He goes urgently to Henkai; they whisper together.)

Guide: (Pointing over the heads of the audience) And there marvel you now Congress Building. Built in 1997 for meeting of Provincial Deputies it is made of glass and concrete and sweat of working class. (Flatly) It is also beautiful.

(Exeunt Right Henkai and Mangtin on some urgent mission.)

Patrick: Henkai's off somewhere again.

Cornelius: Something's going on. It's his job to be a *limpet*.

Patrick: (Nodding in agreement) Our gloomy shadow.

Pip: And where's Misty?

Cornelius: Got the Guide's permish to pop off for some shopping.

Pip: Lucky Misty!

(Guide makes a hushing gesture and points sternly Left; the group steps a little Left with heavy hearts.)

Guide: Over there (pointing in a seemingly random direction) is District of Workers. Many old buildings there - built before People's Revolution.

Xavier: Are we going there?

Guide: (Tersely) No. You know date of People's Revolution?

Boys: (In weary unison) 1948.

Guide: A happy year. (Nods and points Off) You see tower over there?

(Boys raise tired eyes and nod glumly.)

Guide: Twenty-seven metre high. Even higher in your English feet. (Seeing no reaction he feels obliged to explain.) That is a joke. Now you come this way.

(Boys troop wearily after Guide. George pulls Walter back.)

Walter: What's up, George?

(George puts finger to mouth and points Off. As the Party moves Left, George takes Walter Right.)

Patrick: (Looking around and Off) There are more policeman here than in Britain.

Guide: And so Linan is safe and Britain is crime-full. Come.

Walter: The plan is...?

George: We make our own tour.

Walter: Doubt it's allowed.

George: 'In the Land of No Fun it is your duty to break the Law.' Thomas Jefferson. Come on!

Guide: (Pointing Upstage) Behind is Chamber of Judges. Also very interesting.

George: I'll be the Guide.

Walter: What are *you* going to show me?

George: First: a good place to get lost (pointing off stage) ... down there

(George pulls Walter Left. They get off the stage and crouch down.)

Pip: Can we go down that street. It looks ... as if it could be... (forlornly) even more interesting.

Guide: No. Now we proceed along Avenue of Fallen Heroes.

Xavier: (Dully) Goodee!

George: Wait till they're gone.

(They jump off the stage and hide.)

Walter: Dug in 2019 this ditch has become a refuge for boys fleeing sight-seeing tours...

George: Sshh!

(The Party – minus George and Walter – follow the Guide with heavy footsteps. George and Walter wait until the Guide's voice is safely distant, and then emerge back onto the stage.)

George: Now...! Blaristak's our oyster!

Walter: Oyster?

George: We can go where we like, look at what we like, talk to whomever we like...

Walter: You don't speak Linanese.

George: You're part Lina. You know a few words, don't you?

Walter: I know a song and the word for 'ghost'. I'm also a quarter Scottish, as it happens – but I can't speak Scots.

(Enter Right an old beggar with a stick.)

George: Well I'm glad to say I'm one-hundred-per-cent... (Seeing Beggar) Hello?

(The Beggar taps his way across the stage, indicating that he is blind. He then sits down and puts a cap on the ground for alms. The boys go up to him. The man then bursts out into a discordant wail...)

Beggar: *Taiiiii... wuuuuuu...*

(... making the boys jump back in alarm.)

Beggar: *Tikka Tikka kuuuu...luuuuu.*

Walter: What's...?

George: I think it's singing.

Beggar: *Kadjaaa... hurrr...* I am singing. If I not sing, I not eat.

(Boys exchange looks. The Beggar resumes...)

Beggar: *Kadjaaa... Pa...lumaaaa...*

Walter: My word!

(George puts a coin in the cap. Beggar stops singing – to the boys' relief.)

Beggar: You are English?

George: We are. Well... Walter's a bit Lina.

Walter: Twenty-five per cent.

George: And a quarter Scottish, as we've just learned.

Beggar: I am one hundred-per-cent old and blind. But I can sing.

(Boys again exchange looks.)

Beggar: (Sings) *Tukuuuu...!* That is how I earn little *lentis* to buy my bread. What else can I? I am old, I cannot see, I hardly walk...

(Enter Left a passer-by, who walks loftily across the stage.)

Walter: You speak English.

Beggar: What use? English not come since Lina take over.

(The passer-by walks past the beggar.)

Beggar: *Liuu-eee...!*

(The passer-by scowls and walks on disdainfully. Exit Right.)

Beggar: Nothing. Today I stay hungry.

George: I've put a coin in.

Beggar: I hear. Five-lenti coin. You know how much that buy?

(George shrugs.)

Beggar: Twenty-five per cent of bread loaf. Of stale loaf.

George: It's all I had.

Beggar: You must be very poor. Why you here? In Blaristak?

George: We are here to sing?

Beggar: You sing? Like me?

George: Not... *exactly* like you.

Beggar: You sing me now a song.

(The boys exchange looks.)

Beggar: A song from England. You have come from England to Blaristak to sing?
Then *sing!*

(The boys look enquiringly at each other. Walter starts up a ditty.)

Walter: *Alms for the poor, alms for the poor
Just a little offering, we shan't ask more.*

(Walter is joined in the singing by George.)

George: } **(Together)**

Walter: } *Please, passer-by, pause a moment if you would,
And give a little something that could do us some good.*

(Two walk past and drop coins in the cap. The boys smile and keep singing.)

*The baker came by and he gave us a cake:
A fine, dainty cake, quite the best he could bake.
The butcher's young boy, well he slipped us a chop:
Spare (so he said) and unwanted in the shop.
Alms for the poor, alms for the poor... (etc.)*

(One of the boys could take the hat round the audience.)

*The doctor paid a visit and he tended our sores;
Took no fee for this worthy cause.
The bobby stood by, and he asked how we fared.
Couldn't give us money but he showed that he cared.
Alms for the poor, alms for the poor... (etc.)*

(More passers-by; more money; more happy smiles. The boys' singing and movement grows more boisterous until they are swinging each other round, clapping and generally making a scene.

Meanwhile the Beggar takes the cap and steals away, with the nimbleness of a hare and sighted youngster. Walter notices his disappearance first.)

*The vicar hove in view, and he said for us a prayer -
A heartfelt prayer was the best he could share.
The bishop drove by and he stopped for a while
With words of warm comfort, then left with a smile.*

George: *Alms for the poor, alms for the poor...*

(George tails off as he realises Walter has stopped singing. Both boys look around.)

Walter: He's gone. With a smile, I'll guess.

George: Where...?

(Walter spots the Beggar Off Right.)

Walter: There! Quite speedy for a blind man.

George: I'm not convinced he's really one-hundred-per-cent blind, you know.

Walter: **(Shaking head disapprovingly)** Have we been robbed, would you say?

George: That's one for our lawyers. At least we know if we get stranded in Linan we can busk ourselves a few lentis. Come on.

(Exeunt Right. Enter Left Guide.)

Guide: **(Looking behind)** Come! You come.

(Enter Left weary Tour Party.)

Guide: Stop! You stop!

(Group shambles to a stop.)

Patrick: **(Looking around at the familiar sights)** We're retracing our happy steps.