

WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE



VOYAGES SCRIPT

Kingston Lacy House 1991

Scene 1	On the Grass Circle by the Stables	page 2
Scene 2	In Front of the House	page 8
Scene 3	Under the Horse Chestnut Tree	page 11
Scene 4	Half Way up the Cedar Avenue: The Veneti and the Durotriges Version 1: Colehill First School	page 17
	Version 2: Pamphill First School	page 30
Scene 5	By the Evergreen Oak Tree: 1236 AD	page 41
Scene 6	At the Medieval Manor Court: Nursery Wood	page 43
Scene 7	In the Lime Walk	page 50
Scene 8	On the South Lawn at the Rear of the House	page 51
Scene 9	In the Marquee	page 52



VOYAGES

Scene 1

On the Grass Circle by the Stables

The Chorus is at the round flower bed and beckons the audience in from the stable yard.

Chorus: Come into the circle
 This zodiac
 Round as the stable clock
 And listen to the rhythms here
 Across the lawns and through the woods
 Of a park laid down over centuries
 Like one great green cloak
 Hiding a timeworn trail of paths
 And trinkets of stone and bone.

Beneath the surface a pulse still beats
Echoes trapped in stone and leaf
Louder now the ancient song
You must go on and on and on –
Spiralling, turning, spiralling, turning,
Leaves, trees, stones and sticks.

A journey begins from this courtyard
A path through re-remembered lives
Follow as we sing up the past
Carolling stories of people
Who walked this way.
Our task to guide you
In the shadow of this stone-grey house
In the shadow of this stone-grey house.

Beneath the surface a pulse still beats
Echoes trapped in stone and leaf
Louder now the ancient song
You must go on and on and on –
Spiralling, turning, spiralling, turning,
Leaves, trees, stones and sticks.

Step through the circle –
Let's have no unwilling groans –
We hope you'll return to nineteen ninety one
Enriched by the stories we'll tell and show.
Enough! The circle's starting to turn back
To Kingston Lacy in nineteen hundred and five
The servants are about to start work.

Chorus moves audience to the laundry courtyard

The Servants in the Courtyard

(Work mime, servants circling around, responding to bells. At the end all automatically walk in lines – girls to one end, boys to other end of courtyard). Cooper, the butler, steps forward.

Cooper: Good morning, everybody.

All: Good morning, Mr Cooper.

Cooper: Mrs Bankes has a few words to say to you so make sure you're looking smart and *(looking at Mary)* ...try and look happy. This is a great day for us, remember. *(still to Mary who's looking very sad)* May I remind you, Mary, and everyone else, that there is to be no further mention of the recent sad event concerning a certain member of staff. Especially not to the children. Remember, our place is not to question. *(He walks over to indicate to Mrs Bankes that they are ready)*

All: No, Mr Cooper.

Mrs Bankes and the children enter with Nurse Stanley.

Mrs Bankes: Good morning, staff.

All: Good morning, Ma'am. *(All bow or curtsey)*

Mrs Bankes: I am sure I have no need to inform you of the special significance of this illustrious day in the history of Kingston Lacy. *(slight pause)* The streets of Wimborne, I am told, are lined with townsfolk and villagers alike – all eagerly awaiting to see His Majesty as he travels from Crichel to our ancient estate. *(very imperious)* Now is our golden opportunity to shine. His Majesty will honour us all by viewing the many treasures of Kingston Lacy – the paintings, the furnishings, the trophies and the greatest treasure of all, Master Ralph. I know we are all delighted that he is restored to better health, thanks to the efforts of Nurse Stanley. It will be a great day for him, having tea with His Majesty and later, helping to plant the Cedar of Lebanon tree on

the South Lawn. It is such a shame that my dear husband cannot be with us to share the joy.

Viola (*interrupting*): Mother, why hasn't father come home to see the King? (*Pause. Servants react*) Is he still in India?

Embarrassed silence. Nurse Stanley steps forward.

Nurse Stanley: Really, Miss Viola!

Mrs Bankes: How often have I told you not to ask stupid questions, Viola! I do hope you are not going to shame us all today in front of His Majesty!

Nurse Stanley: I'll take her in hand, madam.

Mrs Bankes: Why can't you be a good girl, Viola? Like your sister, Daphne. She never asks silly questions. (*Viola is clearly upset*) (*to servants*) Now, Mr Cooper, I will leave you to supervise the final preparations. Nurse Stanley, perhaps you would ensure the children practise their bowing and curtseying with Miss Tidmarsh. I must go to the front of the house to see the estate steward.

Mr Cooper rings the bell. All curtsey or bow. Mrs Bankes exits.

Cooper: Come along now, everybody. To your work!. Hurry now!. Don't forget His Majesty will be here soon.. The honour of Kingston Lacy depends on you all.

All servants move off to different positions, ready to reappear for their small group scenes.

Outline of sequence and servants' improvised dialogue in the courtyard

1. *Cooper organises footmen putting up bunting at house end of yard.*

Cooper: That bunting should have been put up hours ago.

2. *Carpet layers enter from garden end with long roll of carpet accompanied by Estate Manager, instructing them to hurry and to carry it carefully. Mr Cooper stops them as he notices mess in centre of yard. They inspect the mess. Bunting boys look from where they are. Someone says it may have been the pony when she was brought through. Mr Crook, the groom, denies this.*

Peter: Excuse me, Mr Cooper, I think it was Silver Tail the pony came through.

3. *Andrew, the blacksmith (Mr Budden), appears waving silver spade. He has just finished and is very proud. All forget the mess and applaud, including bunting boys from where they are working at the end.
Someone suggests using the spade to clear up the mess. Blacksmith is furious and won't let them have it. Cooper suggests brooms and Estate Manager sends grooms to fetch them.
Andrew leaves down steps by house to take spade to safety at front of house.*

Cooper: I'll go to get Mrs Smith. I'll leave you in charge, Estate Manager.

Cooper leaves through laundry room door to find Mrs Smith, the housekeeper, to organise sweeping of the carpet. Grooms return and sweep with brooms.
4. *When the ground is swept, Mr Hayter organises the laying of the carpet. When finished they exit by side of house, smartening themselves up.*
5. *Cooper returns with Mrs Smith and carpet sweepers (Natalie & Gemma) armed with utensils and Helen under duress. He then summons footmen who have finished bunting and takes them off round front to practise opening doors.*
6. *Mrs Smith sets maids to work then exits to exhibition room, saying she'll be back to check progress soon.*
7. *Helen goes to finish silver. Natalie and Gemma go on working their way down the carpet.*
8. *Winnie, the Nursery maid, enters from laundry looking sad. Holds brush, stands centrally. Natalie and Gemma ask what's wrong. Winnie mentions Alice.
Miss Tidmarsh appears and comforts her, warning that Nurse Stanley is about to arrive.*
9. *Nurse Stanley brings on Viola with Elizabeth, the new maid, dawdling behind looking up at house. Viola is in disgrace but rebellious and starts to wander off up the yard, looking for Alice.
The new maid starts to walk on the carpet. Nurse Stanley tells her off and organises brushing of Viola's hair. Nurse Stanley exits at house end.
The maids brush Viola's hair. She complains and demands Alice. Winnie is upset but won't tell her where she is.*
10. *Nurse Stanley decides to deal with Viola herself. She sends Winnie and Elizabeth to help Miss Tidmarsh. Nurse Stanley and Viola exit to Exhibition Room.*

Viola: Where is Alice? No one tells me anything.

Nurse Stanley: Miss Viola, there is still work to be done with you.

11. *Miss Tidmarsh enters with Ralph and Daphne. They line up at house and practise bowing and curtseying. Ralph is in a world of his own, playing with a toy and perhaps telling a story about a knight on horseback. Daphne is worried about Viola. Will she practise her curtsey? Maids clean shoes and tidy them.*

Miss Tidmarsh takes them off to front of the house to see their mother.

12. *Laundry maids enter just before children are taken off. They start shaking out large white tablecloth – in silence at first. They check no one is listening and then talk about Alice.*

Maid 1: I wonder where Alice is.

Maid 2: I do miss her.

13. *Mrs Smith arrives from exhibition room to check the tablecloth.*

Mrs Smith: Is the tablecloth ready? I told you to get it ready ten minutes ago.
I'd better inspect it.

She has to wait a moment while they shake some more. She inspects it carefully. They stand in silence.

14. *Cooks appear from end door, walking carefully. Mrs Jinks, the head cook, praises the cake that Nina has iced and tells her to take it round to the front of the house. Nina starts to run.*

Nina: The King will be here soon.

Mrs Jinks: I'll get the lobster.

Nina bumps into Mrs Smith with the tablecloth. ALL shocked.

15. *Laundry maids say there is another cloth ready. Run to fetch it urged on by Mrs Smith. All exit back into laundry.*

16. *Mrs Jinks is furious with Nina for breaking the rules. Nina suggests taking the cake back to the kitchen to re-ice. Mrs Jinks says they will have to make do. She'll repair it round the front as there is no time now. They exit round to front of house.*

Mrs Jinks: Stop blubbering! The King will be here soon.

17. *Laundry girls and Mrs Smith follow them, carrying the cloth.*

18. *At the same time, Helen appears with the silver. Kerry crosses the laundry girls' path, looking for a lace hankie. It's in the laundry. They gossip about Alice. Enter Viola and Nurse Stanley.*

Viola: Have you seen Alice?

Nurse Stanley: Miss Viola, I haven't finished with you yet!

19 *Cooper appears at the end of the house and says the King is on his way. Helen and Kerry run after him to the front of the house.*

20. *Mr Boast and his assistant appear from garden end, adjusting clothes.*

Mr Boast: Come on. boy, clean yourself up!

21. *The gardeners arrive with the tree and shears. They start to prune. Natalie is concerned about the carpet.*

22. *Tom runs on to warn them about the moles. He bumps into the gardeners who almost wreck the tree.*

23. *Cooper reappears and summons them to the front as the King is about to arrive.*

24. *Trumpet flourish. Cooper invites the audience to come to the front of the house to witness the arrival of the King.*

Cooper: Ladies and Gentlemen! You are requested to make your way to the front of the House to view the arrival of His majesty King Edward.

The Chorus leads the audience down the steps at the side of the house.



Scene 2

In Front of the House

The Chorus leads the audience over to the edge of the grass to stand facing the house. Music is playing all the time. The Bankes family is standing in a line on the plinth of stone framed in the archway. All the servants are lined up on either side, carrying food. A tree as necessary. Finally Nurse Stanley comes walking across with Viola, who has been clearly 'disciplined'. The music stops.

Nurse Stanley: There, Ma'am. Let's hope Miss Viola behaves herself properly now.
(*Viola takes her place. SILENCE*)

The Chorus steps forward to get the audience's attention. They position themselves facing the audience, but not masking the Bankes family if possible.

Chorus: The crowds waited expectantly
When King Edward VII came to tea
The servants lined up nervously
When King Edward VII came to tea.

Servants: Hooray! Hooray! Hip! Hip! Hooray!
Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

Chorus: (*referring to the food*)
There was ptarmigan, widgeon, sturgeon and teal,
Cold cuts of turkey, ham and veal
A luscious lobster from Studland Bay
Freshly caught for the Royal Day
When King Edward VII came to tea.

Servants: Hooray! Hooray! Hip! Hip! Hooray!
Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

Chorus: The stable clock was chiming three
When King Edward VII came to tea
All was pomp and ceremony
When King Edward VII came to tea.

Servants: Hooray! Hooray! Hip! Hip! Hooray!

Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

Five members of the Chorus carry on the coatstand with the masks and hats of the Royal Party. Trumpets play as they walk ceremoniously over tarmac. Other Chorus members move aside. The five Chorus members introduce the character and put on appropriate hat etc. They form tableaux.

Chorus 1 & 2: Baron Rothschild appeared (pause) and the Countess of Crewe.

Chorus 3 & 4 (together): Lord and Lady Allington too.

Chorus 5: But the one they really wanted to see
Was King Edward VII come to tea.

The five come to life as the Royal Party and process around waving to the audience, servants, etc. Trumpeters play again. The five move over to greet the Bankes family. As they arrive at the plinth, the music stops.

Mrs Bankes: Welcome to Kingston Lacy, sire.
May I present our dear young squire?
My young son, Ralph, my pride and joy.
You must admit he's a strapping boy! (*Ralph bows*)

Servants: Hooray! Hooray! Hip! Hip! Hooray!
Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

Mrs Bankes: And these are my daughters, Daphne and Viola –
Try and manage a little smile, dears
Don't forget your curtseys - down!
(*Daphne gets it right; Viola fluffs it*)
Oh dear, Viola, you're such a clown!

Servants: Dear, oh dear, she's such a clown
Miss Viola's curtsey's let us down.
Dear, oh dear, she's such a clown
Miss Viola's curtsey's let us down.
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Clown!
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Down!
(*Freeze*)

Mrs Bankes (*back into more realistic style*): Would Your Majesty care to take a turn about the gardens before partaking of tea?

King: Delighted, delighted, charming, charming.

Music plays again as Royal Party processes around again to cheering servants. After Royal Party has left up steps back to the courtyard, servants form lines and march after. Only Viola is left standing alone. The remaining Chorus members reappear mysteriously.

Some gentle movement, moving up to Viola. They bring her to centre, whispering

Chorus: Viola...Vi-o-la...Vi-o-la...

Chorus: Listen
Listen
Listen
Listen to the voices
Listen
Listen
The voices in the trees

(Repeat whispering Vi-o-la)

Listen
To the murmur
Of the rustling leaves
Listen
Listen
To the breath
Of the gentle breeze

(Repeat whispering Vi-o-la)

Listen
Listen
Listen
Listen to the voices
The voices in the trees

Viola: I can hear...Alice... Alice singing... *(moves away)*

Chorus *(to audience)*: Follow the child,
Follow the child
As she moves
As she moves
Towards the trees
Towards the trees.

The Chorus leads the audience off to the trees.



Scene 3

Under the Horse Chestnut Tree

Alice sings her song. As she sings, she works on a monument, pegging things to the structures made by the environmental sculptors. These are her personal possessions, e.g. a diary, a photograph, a sewing box, some dried flowers and finally her bonnet and apron. She also has a tin box. The song starts sadly but grows stronger and stronger towards its end.

Alice (*singing*):

I know I'm only a servant girl
And I'm not ashamed to say
I belong to the ranks of those that toil
For a living day by day.
With willing feet I press along
In the path that I must tread
Proud that I have the strength and skill
To earn my daily bread.

I belong to the lower class.
That's the phrase we often meet
And there's some who sneer at a servant girl
As they pass her in the street.
They star at her in proud disdain
And their lips in scorn will curl,
And sometimes we can hear them say
"She's only a servant girl."

Only a servant girl, thank God,
With willing hands and heart,
I am able to earn my daily bread
And in life's battle take part.
You could offer me no title
I would be more proud to own
And I stand as high in the sight of God
As the Queen upon her throne.

Ye gentle folk who pride yourselves
Upon your wealth and birth
And look with scorn on those who have
Nought else but honest worth,

Your gentle birth we laugh to scorn,
For we hold it as our creed
That none are gentle save the one
That does a gentle deed.

Viola approaches Alice.

Viola (quite angrily): Alice Maud Baker! So there you are! Hiding under the trees, indeed. Whatever would Nanny say? I have been looking for you everywhere!

(Alice carries on singing)

I am talking to you, Alice. I needed you to brush my hair. Nanny always pulls it with her hard hands. As hard as claws. As eagle's claws. Tugging and tearing, tugging and tearing. And nobody would tell me where you were. Just like nobody tells me when father is coming home from India. They all keep secrets from me. Where were you, Alice Maud Baker?

(Alice hums)

I'm jolly cross. Everyone's being beastly to me. No one takes any notice of me. It is so unfair. All I hear is Master Ralph, Master Ralph! When Ralph was born all the bells in Wimborne Minster were rung and the whole world cried with joy. Ralph's the youngest of the three of us but he is the most important. Why? Mother says he is the Bishop of Wimborne, the Admiral of the Fleet and the heir to all the Kingston Lacy estate. He is just like a King!

Alice finishes her song.

Alice: There, that's it. All gone, all gone... *(She looks at Viola)* Has the King come to Kingston Lacy today, Miss Viola?

Viola: Why, of course! How silly you are, Alice! Everyone has come to see him. *(Pause. Viola moves closer.)* I'm going to tell you a secret; promise not to tell a soul.

Alice: I promise.

Viola: The King's an old meanie! Do you know what he did? He laughed at me. I had to do my horrid stupid clumsy curtsey and the King laughed. Then the others laughed too. *(Pause)* I hate being a girl. I hate it, I hate it, I hate it! I wish I was a boy so I could be like Ralph. I could be Bishop of Wimborne, Admiral of the Fleet and heir to Kingston Lacy...I could even be the King and make people bow and curtsey to me.

Alice (smiling): Poor Miss Viola.

Viola: Don't laugh at me, Alice Maud Baker. Or...I'll call Nurse Stanley and order her to dismiss you.

Alice: Oh, it's too late for that now, Miss Viola.

Viola: And just what is that supposed to mean?

Alice: It means what it means, Miss Viola.

Viola: You're talking in silly riddles, Alice!

(Pause. Alice finishes monument, sings again. Viola notices the ancient axe head, hanging.)

Viola: What is that thing hanging there?

Alice: Something my grandmother found. Something very old. Something she gave me. For good luck.

Viola: Where did she find it?

Alice: That is a secret, Miss Viola.

Viola: Tell me! *(Pause, then softer)* Please! I shan't tell. I am very good at keeping secrets.

Alice *(unwilling)*: Miss Viola, I...

Viola: Now you're being unfair to me too, Alice. I told you my secret...about the King...why can't you share yours with me?

Alice *(Pause)*: Very well, Miss Viola. *(They move closer together and sit on the raised area.)* Do you remember me telling you once that my grandmother used to work at Kingston Lacy when she was young...before she was married.

Viola: Yes. She worked in the kitchen.

Alice: One day she was sent on an errand to fetch some fruit from the glass houses near Home Farm. But because she hadn't been working long at Kingston Lacy, she took the wrong path and found herself in the middle of the avenue of tall cedar trees. Just as she was about to turn back, she tripped over something in the ground.

Viola: What was it?

Alice: This stone. Buried in a huge mole hill. My grandmother scraped away the earth and found it had a hole in the middle. *(Points to stone.)* See.

Viola: The stone was in the pile of earth?

Alice: Yes. My grandmother cleaned it up and later on she showed it to some of the other servants in the kitchen. Now the cook, who knew about these things, said the stone was very, very old - a Celtic stone belonging to one of the tribes who lived around Badbury Rings.

Viola: Perhaps it belonged to a warrior.

Alice: Wise men and women have often used stones for healing, Miss. My grandmother used to lay the stone on my forehead if I had a fever. I remember how cool it felt, how soothing. And I remember how she told me stories.

Viola: Like you do for me, Alice, when I feel ill?

Alice: Yes, Miss, to ease the pain.

Viola: Why haven't you shown me the stone before, Alice?

Alice: I used to wear it round my neck when I was younger. But I had to take it off when I started work at Kingston Lacy. Nanny's rules. The funny thing is, my stomach pains began soon after that time.

The Chorus approaches. They move Alice towards the exit from the trees. Neither she nor Viola notices them.

Alice: I must leave now, Miss Viola.

Viola: Where are you going?

Alice: On a long journey.

Viola: Have you been given permission? *(Alice doesn't reply)*
(cross) Alice!
(softer) Please, Alice Maud Baker. Tell me where you are going.

Alice: I can't tell you that, Miss. But it's a journey we must all make one day.

Viola: Can I come with you?

(The Chorus shakes their heads.)

Alice: No, but you can set me on the path.

Viola: And please tell me more stories...about the stone...you know more, don't you, Alice? I can tell. You do.

Alice: I'll make a bargain with you, Miss. We'll walk together up the hill and I'll tell you two stories of the stone. But then we must part. Do you agree?

Viola: Yes.

Alice stands. The Chorus plays some music.

Alice: In the year 56 BC a tribe of Celtic people lived in these parts, close to their hillfort at Badbury. They called themselves the Durotriges, which means The Dwellers by the Sea. One evening they met together on a hill close by to celebrate their summer festival. The Festival of Lughnasa.

They move away towards the hill. The Chorus speaks, beckoning the audience to follow.

Chorus: Listen, travellers,
What happens to people long gone
If we cannot find a moment
One quiet evening
In which to remember?
Let's follow Alice's voyage
Away from the cold Carrara marble
Through this cool canopy of chestnut
And up over the cedar hill.

Vi-o-la
Vi-o-la
O
Listen
Listen
Listen to the stories
Listen
Listen
To the stories in the stone.

Look for the thumb print
Of a Celtic King
Look
Look
Look for the wisdom
Of the hollow ring.
Look
Look

Look for the stories
The stories in the stone.

Follow the child
Follow the child
As she moves
As she moves
Towards the cedar trees
Shaking their long green hair
In the breeze, in the breeze.



Scene 4

Half Way up the Cedar Avenue: The Veneti Group A (Colehill First School)

The Durotriges arrive first on the hill, playing their sticks as drums and singing their anthem.

We are the Durotriges
We are the Durotriges
We are Celts
Strong and tough
When we want to fight
We are very rough
We live in straw huts
And gather fruit and nuts
From the forest
We wear checks and we wear stripes
We treat our hair to make it light
The sun shone bright
And all was right
Until the Romans came to attack.

Maeve assumes priest-like role to officially bless the festival. She picks up the talking-sticks and drums with them above her head, walking round the assembled children in an arc. Then she goes into the centre of the circle and stands still. Puts sticks down carefully and stands with arms outstretched.

Maeve: I, Maeve, daughter of Rionn,
Chief of the Chalk Hill Durotriges,
Call upon the gods to bless this festival.
May the goddess of the sun
Nourish our crops,
May the goddess of the rain
Quench their thirst,
And bring them to fruition.

In the shadow of all these ancient trees
I ask for the wisdom of the magic stone
To protect and guide our tribe.
Stone of the fiery mountain

Heal our sick and wounded.

All: Stone of the fiery mountain
Heal our sick and wounded.

Maeve: Guide us on our journey to the Other World
Where there is no sadness, no jealousy, no fear.

Cormac: Maeve, daughter of Rionn, you have spoken well. But I am worried. *(Pause)*
I see three empty spaces here today. Your husband, Manus, where is he?
Your daughter, Efa, where is she? Your son Finn, where is he?

Maeve: Manus has taken the children to the market where he hopes to exchange my
best woven blanket.

Cormac: In the traditions of our tribe, all should be present at the start of the festival.

Child: They're coming. I see Manus, Efa and Finn approach.

Everyone waves and calls their names.

Manus, Efa and Finn on Manus' shoulders run down the hill and enter the enclosure.

Maeve: You are late. The festival cannot begin until all are present. You have
shamed our traditions in front of the whole tribe.

All: *(Shouting)* Late, Late, Late!

Manus, Finn & Efa: *(Shouting)* News, news! We bring news. News!

Maeve: *(Takes children and hugs them)* I've been worried. Are you all right?

Finn & Efa: Yes, we're all right. You must listen...

Manus: Maeve.....

Maeve: Why are you so late? You have shamed me in front of everyone. The
Festival of Lughasa has already begun.

Manus: We are sorry to arrive late. But listen to our news and you'll understand.

Maeve: what news? How was the market? What did you get for my blanket?

Others: What about my sword? My spear? My bread? etc.

- Manus: Please, Durotriges. Please listen. *(All quiet)* The market was good. We were on our way back and we decided to go to the headland.
- Finn & Efa: To see the sea.
- Manus: It was a beautiful sunny evening, as though the sky was on fire. We were gazing at the golden water when we noticed this enormous creature coming towards us.
- Efa: We thought it was a monster.
- Finn: Yes, a monster with a great, long neck.
- Manus: But as it grew closer we realised it was no monster but the biggest boat we had ever seen. Not long like any of ours.
- Cormac: A boat? From over the sea? It might be these evil Romans we've heard about – they're coming to attack.
- All: Yes. Romans! They have strange boats. Yes.
- Manus, Finn & Efa: No, no. They can't be Romans. They are Celts like us.
- Maeve: How do you know, children?
- Manus: Because next morning we saw the boat anchored in the harbour. It wasn't so frightening close up. Big, yes, but in a sorry condition. The vast leather sails were badly torn.
- Efa: And some of the boat was burnt.
- Finn: Like there'd been a bad fire.
- Cormac: It still could have been a Roman boat.
- Manus: But we saw the people sitting by their boat. Women, men and children.
- Finn: They were dressed in rags.
- Efa: They were so cold and shivering. That's why father gave them your blanket, mother.
- Maeve: What? You gave them my best blanket?
- Finn: I told you she'd be angry.

Manus: You would have done the same, Maeve. Anyway, poor as they were, they insisted on giving us something in return.

Maeve: What did they give you? *(Manus looks in bag)* I hope it's something very special.

Manus: Look, a pot.

Maeve: Is that it?

Manus: They have painted their story on it. Look. *(Pot is passed around)*

Maeve: My best blanket for this little pot.

All laugh and tease Manus. Finn and Efa argue with everyone that it was the right thing to do. They are cross that people are laughing at their father.

Cormac: This pot seems to us to show Romans.

Manus: But they are not Romans. We asked them their name and they said they were called the Veneti tribe.

Efa & Finn: Yes, the Veneti.

All discuss. One or two have heard of them but most haven't.

Cormac: Where are they now, these Veneti?

Manus: Up on the top of the hill. Waiting to speak to you.

General uproar.

Manus: Yes, they want to meet you all. Please! Hear their story from their own mouths. Something terrible has happened to them.

Maeve: Very well. As Chief of the Durotriges tribe, I, Maeve, daughter of Rionn, have decided that we will receive these Veneti into our circle. But I hope you are right, Manus.

Cormac: So do I.

Manus: *(Getting up)* Trust me. *(He goes and beckons to the Veneti)* Please don't frighten them. Be silent.

All stand and watch the Veneti move down the hill.

Manus: Fellow Durotriges, we have gathered here on this hill today to meet another tribe, the Veneti. I believe these people come in peace. I believe they wish to be our friends. On my return from the market at Maidun three days ago, I met the Veneti and have invited them to come and give their news to us.

The Veneti come slowly down the hill, carrying their blue banner, walking slowly and painfully. As they walk, they sing, sigh and moan. One collapses as they draw near. They stop in front of the Durotriges, wrapping the banner horizontally around their shoulders. They look at the Durotriges in fear and concern and then at each other. Eventually they all reach their hands out to the one in the middle and gently push her forward with a woven blanket. She takes it slowly forwards and lays it down before the Durotriges. She then backs away and is greeted by the others in her group with a hand laid on her shoulder.

Manus: Look, Maeve, they have returned the blanket I lent them when I last saw them.

Maeve: My best blanket. Perhaps they are to be trusted...

Manus: Tell us your story, Veneti.

Veneti: We are the Veneti. We have come a long way from across the sea. We are cold, tired and hungry. We have suffered much at the hands of our enemy, the Romans. We would like to tell you our story. Please listen. Please listen. Please listen.

They repeat these words as they put the banner down and form themselves in profile into the shape of a boat with Almelza on Ivan's shoulders at the stern, as the back. Clare stands in the middle as the mast / Goddess of the Wind, carrying the blanket. They begin to sway rhythmically, making the noise both of the wind and the sea.

Almelza: Once we were a proud and powerful tribe.
We ruled the seas of Armorica
We ruled the west of Gaul.

Others: The Goddess of the Seas favoured us.
The Goddess of the Wind blessed us.

The Goddess runs out and does wind dance, all around.

The Goddess: Favoured them. Blessed them. Favoured them. Blessed them.

All repeat these words happily until one shouts.

Veneti 1: Romans! The Romans are attacking!

Almelza: And the Romans came but we were not afraid.

Others: Romans! (*scornfully*) We are not afraid. The Goddess of the Seas will favour us. The Goddess of the Wind will bless us. We are not afraid of Romans.

Almelza: So we stood strong but the gods left us and we stood alone. And the Romans killed our people and took our houses.

The boat moves on with wind and sea sounds. The Goddess of the Wind rushes out to meet the Romans. Then she stops in her tracks. Pause. She slowly dies, covered by her blanket. Silence.

Veneti: The Goddess of the Seas is dying. The Goddess of the Wind is dying. The Goddess of the Wind has died. She is dead.
(*Scared*) Romans! The Romans have oars in their boats. They do not need the Goddess of the Wind. The Romans have killed the Goddess of the Wind. Romans are attacking us! Romans!

They are killed. Slowly after a pause the survivors help the friends up and reform into a new tableau: poor cold refugees, arms outstretched to the Durotriges.

We are the Veneti. We fought a terrible battle at sea with the Romans. Many of us died. Few of us escaped. We have come a long way. Across the sea. We need your help. We are cold, we are tired, we are hungry.

Veneti 1: We're not Romans. We don't look like Romans.
Our boats don't look like Romans.

Veneti 2: We don't dress like Romans.
We fight differently.

Veneti 3: We feel ill
We are hungry.

Veneti 4: We need shelter
We need clothes.

All: We keep crying
We keep crying.

All (*sing*): We are the Veneti
Caesar was our enemy

The Romans burnt our boats
We are cold and hungry
We've come a long long way
We want to be your friends. *(repeat song)*

Manus: We have heard the story of the Veneti. We have heard how they have suffered. Fellow Durotriges, I advise we take them to our homes. Join with them in friendship.

Maeve: No. We have heard their story and they seem to speak the truth. But first we must question them further. Who wishes to take the sacred stone of my warrior ancestors and let its strength give them wisdom to see the truth?

*In turn the Durotriges stand and ask a series of questions passing the stone along the line
The Veneti send a spokesperson in turn to hold the stone and answer.*

Durotrige 1: How did you get here?

Veneti 1: From across the sea.

Veneti 2: We walked from the harbour to here.

Durotrige 2: How many boats did you come in?

Veneti 3: In our last remaining boat. The others were burnt.

Durotrige 3: How many travelled in this boat?

Veneti 4: All you see before you.

Durotrige 4: Why have you travelled to our country?

Veneti 5: To warn you of the threat from the Romans. They may attack you next.

Durotrige 5: What does your name mean?

Veneti 6: Veneti means Great Sea Travellers.

Durotrige 6: How did you know we were here?

Veneti 7: We are all Celts. Like you. We have traded with you in the past.

Durotrige 7: Why was there a woman on the pot?

Veneti 8: To warn you about the threat of attack.

Durotriges: We feel sorry for you but we are still not sure.

Veneti 1: One of your people found us cold and hungry. He trusted us and gave us food and a beautiful woven blanket. We return your blanket. Please believe us. If you will not listen to me – hear the voices of our children.

Veneti 2: We've travelled so far and there's nothing left for us. All we want is comfort and friendship. We come with skills and we can help you.

All (*sing*): We are the Veneti
Caesar was our enemy
The Romans burnt our boats
We are cold and hungry
We've come a long long way
We want to be your friends. (*repeat song*)

Maeve: Durotriges, it is time to decide. Shall we let these Veneti be our friends or not? I place the pot of the Veneti here. Stand around it in the correct way. Close if you trust them, far back if you do not, in the middle if you are not sure.

The children go and stand as appropriate: most close with a few at a distance.

Who wishes to speak to say why they have made this decision?

In turn the Durotriges stand and make their statements.

Manus: You see, Veneti, my tribe welcomes you. Come and be our friends.

Veneti: We wish to thank you. Thank you.

The Durotriges sit around the Veneti, shake their hands and give them blankets, coats and food.

Veneti 1: We thank you for believing us and giving us food and drink. We are now happy.

Veneti 2: We are very tired, full from all the food. I am warm but I am very tired and can now sleep under shelter. I feel safe.

Veneti 3: Thank you, friends. We didn't know what to expect when we arrived here but now we are pleased we came.

Veneti 4: We now feel safe and we have made lots of friends and I hope we can live here.

Veneti 5: At last we have some friends. We needed them. Thank you.

Veneti 6: I was hungry, cold and tired and now I am full and warm but still tired.

Veneti 7: Thank you. I hope we can repay you in some way.

Veneti 8: Now we have a future. Thank you.

Cormac: Veneti! To show our trust we will share with you our ancient legend about our magic stone. May it ease your sorrows and bring you comfort.

All: May it ease your sorrows and bring you comfort.

Cormac: Durotriges! Move to your positions ready to start.

Durotriges form three groups. One as the volcano with the second group surrounding it as the spiralling path. The third group comprises musicians, narrators, stone, two trees, holder of the sun banner and Athopothix.

Burst of loud, crashing music ending with cymbal. Silence.

Narrator 1 & 2: Once there was a fiery mountain
With red hot lava
Streaming and flowing. (*Volcano shakes and hisses*)

Narrator 3 & 4: With a spirally path
Winding around it. (*Spiralling path kneeling, sways and hums*)

Narrator 5 & 6: This is the story of Athopothix
A wise man
Who tamed the Fiery Mountain
With magic words. (*Athopothix appears and bows*)

Cormac: And discovered there
A magic healing stone. (*Stone comes on and does a cartwheel*)

Drum beat. Volcano erupts noisily. Spirally path shakes in reaction. Music cacophony. Athopothix rushes out and dances about, stretching out arms towards the volcano. Cymbal crash. All noises stop.

Narrators: Spirally path
Come forth

Stop the fiery mountain
Stop it growing angry
Stop it
Stop it
NOW!

Spiralling path stands, holding hands and humming as it dances round the volcano, swaying. Volcano gradually dies down. Tree stands in front of volcano with stone attached. Sun banner is held up. Spiralling path kneels again.

Narrators: SUDDENLY!

Cormac: A stone swaying
In an olive tree caught his eye. *(Stone starts swinging on tree)*
At first he thought
The stone no use *(Athopothix shakes head)*
Though a small voice in Athopothix's hat
Said:

Narrators: Keep it, Keep it, Keep it, Keep it.

Cormac: It was too late!
He hurtled it away
Into the mountain's boiling fire.

Stone spins away, leaping acrobatically into the centre of the volcano. Volcano erupts and spiralling path shakes again. Percussion sounds.

Narrators: *(repeating words rhythmically backwards and forwards)*
Bubbling, boiling
Hissing, spitting
Bubbling, boiling
Hissing, spitting

Cormac: And shot out like a hawk
In an arc
Across the sunset *(Stone begins to move in manner of words)*
Round and round the spirally path
Into Athopothix's shaking palm. *(Stone jumps into Athopothix's arms)*

Narrators: The stone was red hot
Yet it didn't burn.
So Athopothix knew it was
A healing stone.

All cheer as Athopothix puts stone on shoulders and parades around with it. Fanfare. Drum beat becoming slower.

Cormac: Time passed
Athopothix felt worn out.
It was time to travel
To the Other World.

Narrators: *(softly and repeatedly)* The Other World. The Other World. The Other World.

Athopothix moves around the path which stands, humming and swaying gently. When Athopothix reaches the centre he kneels.

Cormac: Kneeling in the centre he called Rionn
A Celtic warrior to him

Narrators: *(whispering, passing words on repeatedly and gradually growing louder and louder)*
Rionn, Rionn, Rionn, Rionn...

Rionn walks slowly around the path and into the volcano as name is called. He reaches the centre.

Cormac: Athopothix gave him the stone
For the welfare of the tribe.
Rionn said,

Rionn: Can you not heal yourself from death?

Cormac: Athopothix said,

Athopothix: My time has come.

Cormac: So Rionn took the stone
And left sadly
Returning to the Durotriges.

Rionn helps Stone to climb onto Cormac's shoulders. All cheer loudly. Percussion burst. Maeve comes to the front.

Maeve: We still tell this legend
At all our festivals
Winter, autumn, spring, summer.

Durotriges, as a token of our new friendship with the Veneti, I wish to lend them our healing stone. May it help them heal their sad hearts and deep hurts.

She takes stone off her neck and presents it to one of the Veneti. They hug. All cheer.

Manus: Come, everybody. Let's lead the Veneti in a procession with us back to the hillfort where we will feast and drink until dawn.

All cheer again. Procession forms with banners, music etc. All leave the arena.

Alice stands and goes to the centre of the arena.

Alice: So the Durotriges, who lived in these parts at that time, made friends with the poor Veneti who had been cruelly beaten by the Roman army in France in 56 BC.

Viola: Did they stay friends for ever?

Alice: I hope so.

Viola: But the Romans invaded Britain, didn't they? They built a road just down there. *(She points)* Miss Tidmarsh told us.

Alice: That was nearly a hundred years later though, when they reached Dorset.

Viola: I wonder if there was a big battle at Badbury Rings? The Durotriges fighting side by side with the Veneti.

Alice: No one knows.

Viola: The stone would have protected them, wouldn't it, Alice?

Alice: Perhaps, perhaps so.

Viola: What happened to the stone after that? I suppose it lay buried in the ground for *thousands* of years.

Alice: *(Looking at the stone)* Ah! Now that's another story.

The Chorus approaches and stands waiting, mouthing "Time to move on".

Viola: The second story! You promised me two, Alice.

Alice: *(Reaching her hand out for Viola's)* I did promise. *(She moves Viola upstage, pointing to the oak tree behind)* Then there was a Wise Woman.

Viola: Who?

Alice: A Wise Woman called Alicia Payntere. She lived in the woods near here with her seven children.

Viola: When?

Alice: In Twelve Hundred and Thirty Two. By an old oak tree. *(She comes for Viola)* Come, Viola. Quickly now. I'll show you where. *(She leads her up the hill.)*

The Chorus moves the audience on, repeatedly singing:

Chorus: Viola, Veneti, Alice, Alicia
Over and over, sound echoing louder
Yesterday, today, tomorrow and tomorrow
A lineage of names from these descend
Alice, Alicia, Viola, Veneti.



Scene 4 (*alternative script*)

Half Way up the Cedar Avenue: The Veneti Group B (Pamphill First School)

The Durotriges arrive first on the hill, playing their sticks as drums and singing their anthem.

We are the Durotriges,
We are the Durotriges.
We are the Durotriges,
We are the Durotriges.
We can fight you any time.
ALL DAY LONG!

Maeve assumes priest-like role to officially bless the festival. She picks up the talking-sticks and drums with them above her head, walking round the assembled children in an arc. Then she goes into the centre of the circle and stands still. Puts sticks down carefully and stands with arms outstretched.

Maeve: I, Maeve, daughter of Rionn,
Chief of the Chalk Hill Durotriges,
Call upon the gods to bless this festival.
May the goddess of the sun
Nourish our crops,
May the goddess of the rain
Quench their thirst,
And bring them to fruition.

In the shadow of all these ancient trees
I ask for the wisdom of the magic stone
To protect and guide our tribe.
Stone of the golden eagle
Give us your strength and comfort.

All: Stone of the golden eagle
Give us your strength and comfort.

Maeve: Guide us on our journey to the Other World
Where there is no sadness, no jealousy, no fear.

Cormac: Maeve, daughter of Rionn, you have spoken well. But I am worried. *(Pause)*
I see three empty spaces here today. Your husband, Manus, where is he?
Your daughter, Efa, where is she? Your son Finn, where is he?

Maeve: Manus has taken the children to the market where he hopes to exchange my
best woven blanket.

Cormac: In the traditions of our tribe, all should be present at the start of the festival.

Child: They're coming. I see Manus, Efa and Finn approach.

Everyone waves and calls their names.

Manus, Efa and Finn on Manus' shoulders run down the hill and enter the enclosure.

Maeve: You are late. The festival cannot begin until all are present. You have
shamed our traditions in front of the whole tribe.

All: *(Shouting)* Late, Late, Late!

Manus, Finn & Efa: *(Shouting)* News, news! We bring news. News!

Maeve: *(Takes children and hugs them)* I've been worried. Are you all right?

Finn & Efa: Yes, we're all right. You must listen...

Manus: Maeve.....

Maeve: Why are you so late? You have shamed me in front of everyone. The
Festival of Lughasa has already begun.

Manus: We are sorry to arrive late. But listen to our news and you'll understand.

Maeve: what news? How was the market? What did you get for my blanket?

Others: What about my sword? My spear? My bread? etc.

Manus: Please, Durotriges. Please listen. *(All quiet)* The market was good. We
were on our way back and we decided to go to the headland.

Finn & Efa: To see the sea.

Manus: It was a beautiful sunny evening, as though the sky was on fire. We were
gazing at the golden water when we noticed this enormous creature coming
towards us.

- Efa: We thought it was a monster.
- Finn: Yes, a monster with a great, long neck.
- Manus: But as it grew closer we realised it was no monster but the biggest boat we had ever seen. Not long like any of ours.
- Cormac: A boat? From over the sea? It might be these evil Romans we've heard about – they're coming to attack.
- All: Yes. Romans! They have strange boats. Yes.
- Manus, Finn & Efa: No, no. They can't be Romans. They are Celts like us.
- Maeve: How do you know, children?
- Manus: Because next morning we saw the boat anchored in the harbour. It wasn't so frightening close up. Big, yes, but in a sorry condition. The vast leather sails were badly torn.
- Efa: And some of the boat was burnt.
- Finn: Like there'd been a bad fire.
- Cormac: It still could have been a Roman boat.
- Manus: But we saw the people sitting by their boat. Women, men and children.
- Finn: They were dressed in rags.
- Efa: They were so cold and shivering. That's why father gave them your blanket, mother.
- Maeve: What? You *gave* them my best blanket?
- Finn: I told you she'd be angry.
- Manus: You would have done the same, Maeve. Anyway, poor as they were, they insisted on giving us something in return.
- Maeve: What did they give you? (*Manus looks in bag*) I hope it's something very special.
- Manus: Look, a pot.

Maeve: Is that it?

Manus: They have painted their story on it. Look. *(Pot is passed around)*

Maeve: My best blanket for this little pot.

All laugh and tease Manus. Finn and Efa argue with everyone that it was the right thing to do. They are cross that people are laughing at their father.

Cormac: This pot seems to us to show Romans.

Manus: But they are not Romans. We asked them their name and they said they were called the Veneti tribe.

Efa & Finn: Yes, the Veneti.

All discuss. One or two have heard of them but most haven't.

Cormac: Where are they now, these Veneti?

Manus: Up on the top of the hill. Waiting to speak to you.

General uproar.

Manus: Yes, they want to meet you all. Please! Hear their story from their own mouths. Something terrible has happened to them.

Maeve: Very well. As Chief of the Durotriges tribe, I, Maeve, daughter of Rionn, have decided that we will receive these Veneti into our circle. But I hope you are right, Manus.

Cormac: So do I.

Manus: *(Getting up)* Trust me. *(He goes and beckons to the Veneti)*
Please don't frighten them. Be silent.

All stand and watch the Veneti move down the hill.

The Veneti come over the hill, carrying a canopy of red cloth. They seem sad and depressed and are making moaning sounds. They arrive in front of the Durotriges and lay their canopy down.

Veneti 1: We are the Veneti. We have travelled many miles. We are cold and tired and are now going to tell you our story.

Veneti 2: The story of how we lost everything.

Veneti 1: I will play our enemy Caesar.

*Some of the Veneti become slaves, making moaning sounds.
Sound of sticks being hit to a slow beat.*

Caesar: Conquered nations!

Slaves: Mighty Rome.

Slaves: Desperate Veneti!

Caesar: Build new boats!

The slaves mime building a boat. The sticks are hit at a faster rhythm.

Slaves: We must obey mighty Rome.

Slaves start humming and build up to a climax. During this the Veneti run up to Caesar.

Caesar: Victorious Rome.

Veneti: 1: Despair
2: Hope
3. Peace
4: Destruction
5: Tired
6: Hungry
7. Scared
8: Death

Caesar: Victorious Rome.

Veneti look at Caesar slowly and then to the audience. They stretch out their arms with cupped hands and then speak.

Veneti: NEW BEGINNINGS!

Manus: We have heard the story of the Veneti. We have heard how they have suffered. Fellow Durotriges, I advise we take them to our homes. Join with them in friendship.

Maeve: No. We have heard their story and they seem to speak the truth. But first we must question them further. Who wishes to take the sacred stone of my warrior ancestors and let its strength give them wisdom to see the truth?

*In turn the Durotriges stand and ask a series of questions passing the stone along the line
The Veneti send a spokesperson in turn to hold the stone and answer.*

Durotrige 1: Were you a rich country?

Veneti 1: Rich in history.

Veneti 2: And in love for each other.

Durotrige 2: Why did the Romans attack?

Veneti 3: Our fleet of ships was strong. The Romans wanted to destroy them.

Durotrige 3: Why didn't you Veneti defend yourselves?

Veneti 4: The Romans had ships with oars. We had only sails. When our wind Goddess died we were helpless.

Durotrige 4: How did you manage to escape to our country when your boats were all torn and ripped?

Veneti 5: We had only one boat left and barely made it to these shores.

Durotrige 5: What did the Romans take from you?

Veneti 6: They took everything.

Maeve: It is now time for you to make your decision, Durotriges. If you trust the Veneti and believe we should make friends with them, stand close to them. If you are still not sure that you trust them, keep your distance.

The children go and stand as appropriate: most close with a few at a distance.

Maeve: Now let us hear what you have to say, Durotriges. Speak boldly and wisely.

Durotrige 1: I trust the Veneti. They look cold and poor and their clothes are torn.

Durotrige 2: I trust them too. They look like they need a nice warm home. We should invite them to our village and take care of them.

Durotrige 3: I trust them. Their story sounded true.

Maeve: *(to Durotrige who is keeping his distance)* Why do you not trust them, friend?

Durotrige 4: There were Romans painted on the pot Manus brought. I think they may be Romans tricking us.

Maeve: (to Veneti) Do you have an answer?

Veneti 1: We painted Romans on the pot we gave you to warn other Celts. The Romans may be coming to this land.

Manus: I am glad we have nearly all agreed to welcome them. Let us sing our welcoming song to them and share our food and drink.

All (*sing*): We will not fight you
We will not hurt you
We welcome you to our village
Anytime.

Manus: Friends, let us return to our family groups.

Four baskets of bread are given out by family groups.

Manus: Veneti! When you have finished your food, to show you our trust we will share with you our ancient legend about our magic stone. May it ease your sorrows!

All: May it ease your sorrows.

Everyone walks to starting positions (in two semi-circles around the eagle, facing the audience. Veneti in outer semi-circle and Durotriges in inner semi-circle). Drum beat from Maeve and Manus. Meanwhile Manus collects Thomas, puts on wings and mask and puts Thomas on shoulders. He kneels in the centre waiting. When ready, all clap ten times, double beat. Maeve stops them with one loud beat on the drum. She walks to Manus and places stone about his neck. Then she moves away with the drum.

Manus: There once stood in these woods
The statue of a great eagle
It was made of smooth, shiny gold.

Everyone reaches out hands to statue.

All: Smooth! Shiny! Gold! (*Repeat several times*)

Manus: One day the Goddess of the Stars came to look at the statue.

Jordan raises star banner behind the fence.

She made a special spell to make mischief.

All: *(remain standing, twirling fingers as they speak)*
Abracadabra, Fizzy-fi, Durotrigana!
Abracadabra, Fizzy-fi, Durotrigana!

Manus: And the first full moon rose in the sky.

Mark raises moon banner in the sky and gently waves it back and forward towards the statue.

It shone warm moonbeams
Long strands of light
Onto the statue below
Until it came to life.

All make whooshing noises and push out with hands and fingers, gradually sinking down to knees as the eagle rises up and stands with outstretched wings. Eagle makes screeching noises.

Manus: The eagle opened wide its yellow beak
The eagle stretched its cruel claws
The eagle flapped its wide wings
And soared into the sky.
Searching for enemy houses,
Searching for enemy houses!

Everyone stands and forms groups as houses.

The eagle ripped open the houses with its claws
The eagle gobbled up people with its beak!

Fast drum beats as eagle flies around houses, making aggressive motions at each. The houses collapse in turn. Everyone lies still, humming loudly and continuously.

Manus: *(over humming)*
For a whole year
Another Goddess watched this:
The Goddess of the Sun.
She wanted to stop the killing.
She felt sorry.
So she waited until the star Goddess was resting.

Star and Moon banners come down behind the fence.

Then one day at noon
She made the sun become
Red hot then white hot
Hotter and hotter
Hotter and hotter.

Everyone wakes up and kneels, repeating:

All: Hotter and hotter, HOTTER AND HOTTER!

Manus: Until the eagle crashed to the rocks below.

Sound of rocks being crashed together over and over again. Manus, as eagle, dies in an extended stumbling swoop, down to centre of the circle. He eases off the stone and holds it up high. All make chorus of sea sounds as two children fetch the sea blanker and flutter it over the other children as stones, rocking gently to and fro.

Manus: The sea washed over the stones
Back and forth
Back and forth
Until the eagle became
Fossilised in rock.

All continue rocking and making sea noises. Loud drum beat from Maeve.

Manus: One day many years later
Maeve's ancestor
A brave warrior
Went for a walk.

Marching drum beat from Maeve as Warrior strides all around searching the area. He reaches the eagle and stops.

Manus: In the rock he saw
A sharp claw
So being a warrior
He broke it off
To use as an axe head (*Warrior freezes*)
And carved a hole
For a handle. (*Warrior raises stone above head*)
But when she killed the eagle
The sun Goddess had put magic
In the claws
To make it heal not kill.

It has become our healing stone.

All clap as at beginning.

Manus: This story has been passed down
From our ancestors.
If we, the Durotriges,
Or anyone else
Were to break the stone claw
The spell of the Sun Goddess
Would be broken too.

Maeve: Durotriges, as a token of our new friendship with the Veneti, I wish to lend them our healing stone. May it help them heal their sad hearts and deep hurts.

All cheer loudly.

Manus: And now let's lead them gently to our homes by the hillfort where they may rest and eat with us.

All cheer again and form a procession, Maeve beating the drum.

All (*chant*): We are the Durotriges, We are the Durotriges.

All leave through arch, then left and off down the hill.

Alice stands and goes to the centre of the arena.

Alice: So the Durotriges, who lived in these parts at that time, made friends with the poor Veneti who had been cruelly beaten by the Roman army in France in 56 BC.

Viola: Did they stay friends for ever?

Alice: I hope so.

Viola: But the Romans invaded Britain, didn't they? They built a road just down there. (*She points*) Miss Tidmarsh told us.

Alice: That was nearly a hundred years later though, when they reached Dorset.

Viola: I wonder if there was a big battle at Badbury Rings? The Durotriges fighting side by side with the Veneti.

Alice: No one knows.

Viola: The stone would have protected them, wouldn't it, Alice?

Alice: Perhaps, perhaps so.

Viola: What happened to the stone after that? I suppose it lay buried in the ground for *thousands* of years.

Alice: (*Looking at the stone*) Ah! Now that's another story.

The Chorus approaches and stands waiting, mouthing "Time to move on".

Viola: The second story! You promised me two, Alice.

Alice: (*Reaching her hand out for Viola's*) I did promise. (*She moves Viola upstage, pointing to the oak tree behind*) The there was a Wise Woman.

Viola: Who?

Alice: A Wise Woman called Alicia Payntere. She lived in the woods near here with her seven children.

Viola: When?

Alice: In Twelve Hundred and Thirty Two. By an old oak tree. (*She comes for Viola*) Come, Viola. Quickly now. I'll show you where. (*She leads her up the hill.*)

The Chorus moves the audience on, repeatedly singing:

Chorus: Viola, Veneti, Alice, Alicia
Over and over, sound echoing louder
Yesterday, today, tomorrow and tomorrow
A lineage of names from these descend
Alice, Alicia, Viola, Veneti.



Scene 5

By the Evergreen Oak Tree: The Wise Woman of Cowgrove 1236 AD

Outline of scene and improvised dialogue

1. *Narration to introduce scene:*

Narrator: A couple from the village of Holt made their weary way one evening to a certain place near a strange and knotted oak tree. They were carrying a sick child in their arms..."

2. *The couple move towards the audience, forming a strong tableau. They are talking in low voices. The child is moaning.*

Woman: Is this the place?

Man: I think so.

Woman: Where is she then?

Man: Look at that tree!

3. *Several gossips appear and question them.*

Gossip1: You've come to look at her goings-on too, have you?

Gossip 2: She usually comes here at this hour.

Gossip 3: That's the tree – look at the shape of it. All twisted and gnarled – they say there's evil spirits trapped inside.

Gossip1: Don't you trust her with your child. I've just seen a magpie – that's a very bad sign.

Gossip 2: And I heard a cuckoo sing and it's way past Midsummer.

Gossip 3: They say she's put a spell on Agnesse Abbott's husband, the Tithing Man of Cowgrove.

The couple decide to try Alicia as a last resort.

The gossips take up positions on raised tree trunks at the rear of the audience.

- 4. The Wise Woman appears from behind the tree with her children. They have been gathering herbs. They sing and dance. The woman asks them to sprinkle herbs into the cauldron and mixes them a drink as there is no milk from the cow. The cauldron is stirred with a wand as a kind of performance to the audience.*

Alicia: Friends, watch how I can prepare a drink to save my family...

- 5. The couple approach the Wise Woman tentatively. They repeat the gossip and ask for help. The Wise Woman calls her children to fetch certain herbs, her wand and her stone which are hidden in the tree.*
 - 6. The Wise Woman lays the stone on the child's forehead and holds it still. Silence. A tableau is formed.*
 - 7. The gossips whisper in clumps during silence.*
- Gossip 1: What's she doing?
- Gossip 2: Maybe she's sucking the life out of that sick one to give to her own.
- Gossip 3: That's why the harvest's bad – because of her!
- Gossip 1: How come her children are all alive?
- 8. Ricardo Abbott, Agnesse's husband and the Tithing Man, arrives with the Constable and other officials. There is an awkward conversation between Alicia and Ricardo, hinting at earlier intimacy and his helping her last year with her repairs. He won't tell her exactly who has accused her of witchcraft but the charge is levelled and she is led away.*
 - 9. The gossips have a field day, especially over the supposed relationship with Ricardo and may wonder at possible incidents involving the two women. They encourage the audience to follow them to the Moot.*
 - 10. The Chorus makes the audience follow to the Nursery Wood for the Moot.*
 - 11. Alice and Viola follow. Viola gets caught up and made into the Lord of the Manor. A cloak is put on her shoulders.*



Scene 6

At the Medieval Manor Court: in the Nursery Wood

There is a small fair in progress when the audience arrives at the Moot. Music playing, dancing and juggling. People milling around, selling and shouting out:

Voices: Ten eggs for one shilling!
 Apples!
 Relics from the Crusade! (etc.)

As everyone moves around the fair they talk of the moot that is to take place that day.

Enter Agnesse and Ricardo Abbott. They are having a passionate argument about Alicia Payntere. Everyone in the fair slows down their actions and voices become quieter as they listen to the couple.

Ricardo: You will regret this day, Agnesse.

Agnesse: Not as much as you will regret the day you went to *her* for help.

Ricardo: We have been through this so many...

Agnesse: Going to a younger woman to have your sick head cured when you've a wife well able to tend you. But that's no good. I'm too old. I haven't got those special cures of hers, those strange...

Ricardo: You've a suspicious and spiteful nature. It's jealousy that's caused all this upset. Your spite will make our private business the laughing stock of this place and will make a poor innocent woman stand before the whole court. Have you no pride?

Agnesse: Don't speak to me of pride when you have made a mockery of me with that Alicia Payntere.

Drum beat.

Gossips: Look, they're coming.

Enter the Steward, Reeve, Constable, Scribe with Alicia and the children. As soon as Alicia is seen a silence falls over the whole scene.

Reeve: Hear ye, hear ye! I, Robert Shawe, Reeve of this Manor, do call you all draw together for the Moot. The villages of Abbottstreet, Cowgrove and Stone, you are called to bear witness to John Browning, Steward of Kingston Lacy, in the reign of King Henry III. I now call upon the Tithing Man to present himself to the Steward.

Ricardo: I, Ricardo Abbott, comes with Tithing and present this day certain rents to the Steward of three shillings. Furthermore... furthermore, I..., I..., It is my duty as Tithing Man to present that Alicia Payntere has been accused by some in this court of... (Pause)

Reeve: Come on, come on!

Ricardo: ...by some in this court of witchery.

Steward: I see! A case of witchery.

Scribe: Witchery.

Steward: These were my words. Witchery! Very well, let us hear evidence against this woman.

Ricardo: Step forward, Agnesse Abbott, wife of Ricardo Abbott.

Agnesse: I, Agnesse Abbott, wife of Ricardo Abbott, do bring evidence against Alicia Payntere. She came to me asking for milk, saying her own beast wouldn't give any. She said she needed the milk to feed her hungry children. I know she's a widow woman and I've nothing against those poor children of hers who have to see and hear some terrible things. I'm a good God-fearing woman but I denied Alicia the milk she wanted. Why? She's done me a great deal of harm and I couldn't feel any charity to her. Alicia has turned the head and heart of my husband with her strange ways. When I didn't give her the milk she didn't go away, oh no, an anger rose in her, a wicked, wicked rage and she cursed me, my children and beasts, in words that did cause great fright and fear. All was cursed that was dear to me, except for Ricardo. She didn't want to hurt him. Within seven days my beasts, my livelihood, became ill and died of fever. All my animals dead. That's evil work and I say to all here today that Alicia Payntere is a witch. (*Short pause*) She's not one of us. She's got the evil eye! No one knows exactly where she comes from. All she said when she settled here a few years back was that she travelled from place to place where she was guided. I'll tell all present that her guide is The Devil himself.

All react. Steward silences them all.

Steward: Call the next witness!

Ricardo: Stand forth, Jon Smedmore's family, Mary Fry, Richard Hille, Kate Browning and Helena Heath.

In turn, each says their name and states they have known Agnesse Abbott for many years and what she says is the truth.

Jon: When the blacksmith's son died, he was shot in the liver and they took him to Alicia Payntere.

Mary: It was then that a magpie was seen and a cuckoo was heard in the churchyard.

Richard: And Alicia would not attend to the blacksmith's boy. She said she was helping someone with a hurt leg.

Kate: "These things cannot be rushed...fate cannot be tampered with" - that's what she said.

Steward: Very well, let us hear what else has to be said on the matter of Alicia Payntere.

Ricardo: Stand forth, Mary Tray, Beth Brown, Margaret Edwards and Anne Moore.

In turn, each says their name.

Mary: There's been a lot of rumours spread around. Some people...some *person* in this place has too much power! Fear has been put into folk's heads... but I'll hear none of it. Alicia Payntere is no witch. I've seen her cure people.

Steward: How were they cured?

Beth: We've seen Alicia curing warts. She used venison – the King's meat on Margaret. She drained the blood from it, chanted some words in Latin and then placed the meat on the warts.

Steward: Let me see your hands.

Margaret shows her hands.

Agnesse: It was her vanity that got her hands clear. I'd rather have warts than the Devil curing me!

Reeve: Quiet! You've had your say!

Steward: Next testimony.

Ricardo: Stand forth, Anne Brown, Adam Stone and Sarah Mills.

In turn, each says their name.

Anne: I was passing one day and I saw Alicia curing Adam's leg. It was all swollen....

Sarah: I saw it too... I saw how she prepared the herbs...

Adam: And after that the swelling went right down. Look! *(He shows his leg)*

Steward: Call the next people, Ricardo Abbott.

Ricardo: Stand forth, Joseph Root and his son, John Root.

In turn, each says their name.

Joseph: One night I thought I saw a poacher late at night on the King's land. There was a full moon that night and when I got closer I saw it was, in fact, Alicia Payntere! She was hanging strange shapes onto the trees. Chanting, she was, and waving a wand about in the moonlight. My leg has been bad ever since that night.

John: Alicia should pay for the money that has been lost on the far because my father, Joe, has been unable to work since that day.

Steward: I see that the Tithing Man wants to speak.

Reeve: Stand forth, Ricardo Abbott.

Ricardo: Ricardo Abbott, husband of Agnesse Abbott and Tithing Man. Before I start to say what is in my heart, I must say that old Joseph's a lazy and bad farmer and he's no right to blame Alicia for his own shortcomings *(Pause)* What are we doing, trying to destroy a person who has helped us? We all know Alicia is a wise woman. If there is anything wrong with one of us, we go to Alicia. Most of us here at some time have seen her with ailments. I saw her when I had a crippling hand pain and she, Alicia, put a bit of snake skin in my hat and she cured me. That's wisdom, that's understanding Nature's powers –

not witchcraft. She is a young widow with seven children to feed. She's innocent. The trouble is some people have to destroy what is good. Some are jealous of those who are a bit different. It has broken my heart having to lead an innocent woman to this Moot Court. I brought Alicia here today because it was my duty – and no other reason.

Steward: Now you have given your evidence you must again take up your duties as Tithing Man.

Reeve (*Pause*): I now call Alicia Payntere. Stand forth.

Alicia takes off the stone around her neck.

Alicia: This stone, this healing stone has been passed down from generation to generation. (*Alicia starts showing everyone the stone*)

Gossip: Don't touch it!

Alicia: My family has always respected Nature and its powers. I use my skills to help make people well. I am innocent, please believe me.

Steward: Is that the last witness?

Ricardo: Yes.

There is much noise as the crowd cries out either Guilty or Innocent.

Reeve: Silence!

Crowd: Burn the witch! (*soft whisper*) Witch, witch, witch...

Steward stands.

Steward: There is no clear evidence. We cannot be sure if Alicia Payntere is guilty or innocent. I, as steward, will give her a fair trial – Ordeal by Fire. She will have to carry a piece of red hot iron for three paces. Her hand will be bound up. If, when it is undone three days later, there are no blisters - she is innocent. But if she has blisters she will be punished further. Take her to the courtyard where the ordeal will be ministered.

Crowd: Who will care for the sick? Who will care for the children?

Scribe: The Tithing Man, Ricardo Abbott.

Agnesse: And me! So I will...

Drum is beaten 3 times. Exit Steward and Scribe.

Silence. Alicia is handed the stone. Silent picture as she places it round her neck. A slow drum beat as Alicia and her children are led away by the Constable.

After a while, the family with the sick child, who is now well, enter desperately trying to tell how she saved their child's life.

Villagers and all leave, talking excitedly about the events. Only Alice and Viola remain. They stand and move to the centre of the space.

Viola: Alice. Did the stone protect the Wise Woman from the fire?

Alice: Perhaps. She was a strong woman

Viola (*thinks*): I hoped the story would have a happy ending, like the Durotriges making friends with the Veneti.

Alice: Sometimes it's the telling that's all

Viola: I don't understand.

Alice: One day you may, Viola. One day. (*Pause*)
Beneath the surface a pulse still beats
Echoes trapped in stone and leaf
Louder now the ancient song
You must go on and on and on –
Spiralling, turning, spiralling, turning,
Leaves, trees, stones and sticks.

The Chorus harmonize as they approach.

Viola: Oh, Alice! (*she hugs Alice warmly*) Thank you for the stories.

The Chorus begins to move Alice away.

Viola: Are you going now?

Alice: Yes. It's time for me to go on. And it's time for you to go back.

Viola: Why? No one's missed me.

Alice: Yes, they have. They're looking for you. Winnie and the others.

Viola: How do you know?

Alice: They're worried. They want you to come home.

Viola: Really?

Alice: Yes, Viola. Really! Now I have a present for you. *(she puts the stone around Viola's neck)* May it give you comfort, strength and wisdom.

Viola: Thank you, Alice. Are you sure you...

Alice: I don't need it any more. *(Pause)* Remember me sometimes.

Alice moves away with half the Chorus, waving.

The other half of the Chorus leads the audience to the Lime Walk with Viola, singing.

Chorus: Viola, Veneti, Alice, Alicia
Over and over, sound echoing louder
Yesterday, today, tomorrow and tomorrow
A lineage of names from these descend
Alice, Alicia, Viola, Veneti.



Scene 7

In the Lime Walk

Enter the Lime Walk. All stop. The Chorus points the audience and Viola to the left where Alice is forming a tableau. The audience then follows Viola up the Lime Walk with half the Chorus at the front leading and half the Chorus at the rear. The cast lines the Lime Walk and turns and sings as the audience passes.

All (singing): Precious stone
 Precious stone
 Helping, healing
 Helping, healing
 Soothing stone.

Crush the roots,
Mix the herbs,
Make her well
Tonight. *(Repeat verse)*

Precious stone
Precious stone
Helping, healing
Helping, healing
Soothing stone.

Rock of old
Use your powers
Make her well
Tonight. *(Repeat verse)*

Precious stone
Precious stone
Helping, healing
Helping, healing
Soothing stone.



Scene 8

On the South Lawn at the Rear of the House

The audience follows the Chorus through the gate at the end of the Lime Walk and stops around the sun dial.

Chorus (*whispering*): Viola, Veneti, Alice, Alicia
Viola, Veneti, Alice, Alicia...

Voices of the servants are heard and they are seen running across the lawn.

Servant 1: Miss Viola, Miss Viola!

Servant 2: There you are, Miss, we've been looking for you everywhere.

Servant 3: Are you all right. Miss Viola? We were worried.

Viola: Yes, I'm all right.

Servant 1: Where've you been, Miss Viola?

Viola: The strangest thing – it was like a journey....a voyage...

Servant 2 (*interrupting*): And who gave you that stone?

Viola: Well, (*pause*) I found it under the horse chestnut tree.

Servant 3: Oh Miss, what you'll get up to next! Now come on – or you'll miss all that lovely tea!

They all run off, holding Viola's hand, over the lawn and turn into the marquee. The other servants stand outside the marquee, waving them forward. The Chorus leads the audience to the marquee.

Chorus: Follow the child,
Follow the child
As she moves
As she moves, towards the trees, towards the trees.



Scene 9

Inside the Marquee

All the players are assembled inside the marquee in a large circle. All chant as the audience enters. This is repeated until the audience is assembled and the chant rises to a crescendo at the end.

All (*chanting*): Come into the circle –
 This zodiac
 Round as the stable clock
 And listen to the rhythms here
 Across the lawns and through the woods
 Of a park laid down over centuries
 Like one great green cloak
 Hiding a timeworn trail of paths
 And trinkets of stone and bone.

Beneath the surface a pulse still beats
Echoes trapped in stone and leaf
Louder now the ancient song
You must go on and on and on.

All bow.

END