

WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE



A TALE OF HOURS SCRIPT Wimborne Minster 1993

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A TALE OF HOURS

Scene 1

On Minster Green

Jack, Dad, the Quarterjack and Gran are in position on the Green. The audience is led from the Cornmarket to Minster Green and positioned along the path facing the Green with their backs to the line of yew trees. The war memorial is on the left and there is a structure in the centre of the Green. The cast enters from the far corner of the Minster carrying banners and singing. The craftspeople leave the procession at their corner and take up their positions.

SONG: We are the future
 We are memory
 Sumus futura
 Sumus memoria
 Resonating tale of hours

 We are the future
 We are memory
 Sumus futura
 Sumus memoria
 Resonating tale of hours

 We come and go
 As the bell chimes
 In a temporal dream
 As shadows drift
 See them coming
 Over the Minster Green

 We are the makers
 We are the makers
 The tellers and the shapers
 The tellers and the shapers
 Wood, word, stone and glass
 Watch us gather
 On the Minster grass

 We are the future
 We are memory

Sumus futura
Sumus memoria
Resonating tale of hours
Now is the time to tell
Now is the time to tell
This new tale of hours
This new tale of hours
Stories of ages
Changing ages
Chimes from the Minster tower

We are the future
We are memory
Sumus futura
Sumus memoria
Resonating tale of hours

Quarterjack (*as storyteller*): Good evening, friends. Gather round, for I've a story to tell, A Tale of Hours to share with you this evening. A Jack story. Another story of hero Jack. This is a new story and an old story. A story of all those who stood here before us in Wimborne and of those who move here now.

(hits bell)

Once there was boy called Jack – in your time, in our time, in his time – whose father was a craftsman, (Dad enters) one of the many roofers, tillers, carpenters, masons, hod carriers, craftspeople who strengthen and renew the Minster as the years wear on.

(Dad: 4 beats. Craftspeople: CHIP 1234)

And Jack had a grandmother (*brings on the telescope*) who was a wise and strong woman. For many years she taught science in the old Wimborne Grammar School, over there in the shadow of the Minster.

(Gran rings hand bell)

For fifty years she taught about the bending of light and the movement of planets in space.

Gran and Jack look through the telescope.

Gran: One hundred thousand million stars in the Galaxy, Jack. A heaven that people have always looked up to, that gave meaning to lives as well as shed light on their world...

Jack: How far do you think we could go, in the future? Could we travel though time and space into somewhere beyond?

Gran: If the sun were to stop shining at this very moment, it would take eight minutes for us to know about it. It takes the sun's light that time to reach us.

Quarterjack: That's why Jack loved his Gran. She always had something new and different to tell him.

Gran: I brought him here, time and time again. It was one of my favourite places. And round and round the Minster's dark recesses we'd wander.

Jack: She'd smooth her hand along the cold Purbeck stone or curve it around warm mahogany.

Gran: And tell stories from the past, showing Jack how life stretches back, how in the future lives are retold; remembering, remembering...

Cast form circles, silent or murmuring Time-Chant.

Time Time Time Time
Time is deathless
Time is deathless
Time is endless
Time is endless
Time is essence
Time is essence
Deathless endless essence
Deathless endless essence
Time time time time

Quarterjack: She knew all the facts and dates, there was nothing Gran couldn't remember.

Gran: But it was the clock that fascinated me most, the ancient astrological clock. "Look", I'd say, "see how the world is the centre of the Universe, Jack. Once people believed that."

Quarterjack: ...and together they looked up at the planets wheeling in cycles and the golden angels trumpeting and marching at the booming of every hour

Gran: ...and I'd say "Now we know better than that." Yet even with all the telescopes in the world our view of time and space is still a puzzle...

Quarterjack & Jack: But gradually things began to change.

Gran (*seeming worried*): Oh dear, everything's begun to change.

Sequence starts slowly. In the background characters swirl, drawing Gran back.

Gran: My mind doesn't seem to work any more. (*Sequence continues*) I've got a head that won't work.

Quarterjack: As Gran got older, she kept losing her way and forgetting things.

Sequence becomes stronger.

Quarterjack: Her memory went round and round and the past came into the present and the present went into the past. And no one could stop the muddle. One day she became a young girl again and went off to see her parents.

Jack: Jack didn't like it. One day, Gran asked me,

Gran: "Did I have any children?"

Jack: And I said "I'm your grandson – Jack" and she looked right back at me and said,

Gran: "You mean no more to me than a photograph in a book. I am sorry. Did I have any children? I am sorry. (*continues murmuring "I am sorry" over next speeches*)"

Quarterjack: Oh, Jack is angry. Jack is sad. He looks up to his father – his Granny's son – and needs him to solve these mysteries.

Dad: I'm a man whose mother has left me; how can I explain to my son what I don't understand myself? I hide my sadness in the rhythm of work; I look for answers in the sound of hammer on stone, in the sawing of wood.

Quarterjack: As Jack sees his father deep in his own thoughts, he sees his grandmother going away from him further and further and a voice wells up inside him which has the strength of two voices.

Jack & Dad: She's gone back to the past.
Back into the past.
Become her old self again
Her young self
An old woman turned
Into a young woman

Old into young
Old into young
Into old.

Jack climbs to the top of the memorial and shouts towards the bell tower.

Jack: Where has she gone?
 Where is the past?
 Where is she now?
 Who am I? Who am I?

ALL: Who am I?

Notables, corbels and guides exit. The Minster clock strikes seven o'clock. Quarterjack enters. Quarterjack introduces himself to Jack with a flourish.

Quarterjack (*aside to the audience*): And who am I? Now this is my time.
 (*to Jack*): Good evening, Jack, says one Jack to another. Let me introduce myself: Quarterjack, sentinel of time at Wimborne Minster for over 400 years.

Jack: Quarterjack!

Quarterjack (*aside to the audience with a twinkle in his eye*): ...shouts Jack in amazement!

Jack: What on earth! The legend says you come at midnight, on the stroke of midnight. People have seen you climbing down and walking the streets of Wimborne.

Quarterjack: That's what they say, is it? Let me see, what time is it? (*takes out watch*) Nearly seven. Well, to be honest, my dear boy, I rather relish the idea of doing things at the wrong time – I don't get much chance – ding dong ding dong 96 times a day, that's 672 times each year I draw the people of Wimborne's attention to Time. I say, stop what you're doing and listen here – time is passing, another sliver slinks into the shadows.

Jack (*getting increasingly heated and angry*): I want to know where it goes, all the years, all the memories of the years – where have they gone? I want to catch them and bring them back for Gran. (*Points to her*) I want to know where she goes when she goes back into the past...Someone must have found the answers.

Quarterjack: Most people do eventually. (*Enter the Scientist*) Here is an old friend of Granny's, a man of intuition and insight: May I present Anthony, Professor of Mathematics. Anthony, this is Jack, a boy full of questions.

Scientist and Jack shake hands.

Scientist: The whole world, Jack – in your time, in my time – craves answers to the unanswerable. Why we're here and where we came from, when time began and when it might end...

Quarterjack: Indeed, Professor, I do agree. Why we're here and where we came from, when time began and when it might end, those are the things I hear people talk about sometimes, going in and out of church – well, not very often actually ...

Jack: And what have you discovered? Does Granny really go back to times before I was born?

Scientist: Very much, Jack, very much. And so can we all – if we put our minds to it.

Quarterjack: And just what I am after doing right now. Jack, when I saw you and your Dad, I knew this was the time for us to meet. For adventure. For discovery. It may not be midnight but seven is as good a time as any. Come Jack. Let's see who can shed some light on these matters. We must begin to look at things from a different point of view (*mysteriously*) ...As the Professor says, "We must put our minds to it".

Craftspeople and musicians play Chorus. All exit, leading the audience.

Corbels and Notables into position.

The audience is led round the side of the Minster to the rear. They pass tableaux of the Notables on the way.



Scene 2

At the Secret Meeting Place

Jack and the Quarterjack arrive and stand watching while the audience assemble. Mrs Bestland is busy working on Isaac Gulliver's headstone. Next to her is her daughter, Jessica, and other children. All are singing as she carves with her friend Mary.

Song: Oh, Isaac Gulliver he was a giant of a man
 A friend to the poor
 On sea and on land.
 Oh, Isaac Gulliver on his trust white mare
 Yes, he lifted our spirits
 From the depths of despair!

 Like a gurt clap of thunder his fine voice rang out
 All over the county
 He ruled hereabouts
 Oh, Isaac Gulliver on his trusty white mare
 Yes, he lifted our spirits
 From the depths of despair!

 Though they say Isaac Gulliver is dead as the stone
 As cold as the night
 And lain quite alone
 My chisel will sing out and carve out his name
 And our Isaac Gulliver
 Will live on again!

They carry on working. Gargoyles move audience about. Meanwhile The Quarterjack begins to leave.

Jack: Quarterjack ... where are you going?

Quarterjack: Time, Jack! Got to keep in time, Jack! I'll be back, Jack! Ask the stone woman, Jack – the keeper of memories, she's got time in her hands – she may help you. *(He leaves)*

Jack: But....

Jack gives up and approaches the woman

Jack: Excuse me....

Mrs Bestland: Who are you?

Jack: I'm Jack.

Mary or Girl: Jack be nimble, Jack be quick
Jack jump over the candlestick.

Jack: I'm...I'm trying to find a lost memory....My Granny's gone back in time...and...I think I have too. (*thinks hard about how to express the next bit*) To find it. When a memory gets lost, stolen away....where might it be hidden?

Mrs Bestland: Huh! Lost memory, eh? Like Henry, isn't it, Mary?

Mary: Sounds like.

Mrs Bestland: Know what happened to my husband?

Mary: My brother.

Mrs Bestland: Gobloos! Excise man gave him a blow on the head – over Christchurch way. Never the same again!

Mary: Brain addled he is, curdled as last week's cream. Thinks he's a boy again – most of the time.

Jack: Really? Granny's the same...she...

Mrs Bestland (*interrupting*): Can't even remember how to hold a hammer and chisel no more...god job I've watched and watched all these years, eh, Mary?

Mary: True enough. Her father were a mason too, you know.

Mrs Bestland: And his father before him. I am Annie Bestland, the mason's wife. I have seven children to keep. I carve the stone as good as any man.

Mary: Better...

Pause. They work and sing again.

Jack: Is that...gravestone...you're carving...Isaac Gulliver's?

Mary (*laughing*): He can read then.

Jack: Granny told me about Isaac Gulliver...he was a famous smuggler, wasn't he?

Mrs Bestland (*indignant*): He was an upright gentleman.

Mary: A good man. Churchwarden here at the Minster...for the twilight of his years.

Mrs Bestland: A fine gentleman. He always seen me and my children right. Since Henry's addling.

Jack: But I remember Granny telling me he was known as the King of the Smugglers.

Mrs Bestland (*suspicious*): You sure you're not a gobloo?

Jack: A what?

Mary: Excise man?

Jessica: (*going up to tease Jack*) A land shark?

Jack: NO...honestly, ... It's just...I'm trying to remember...for Granny to remember...

Jessica: Mr Gulliver's gang sometimes met over there. (*points to the trees*)

Mrs Bestland: Hush, child!

Jack: Oh, please tell about him. Granny said there are wonderful stories.

Mary: The boy is mad for memories.

Jack: I promise I won't tell...

Mary & Girl: I promise I won't tell!

Mrs Bestland (*laughs*): Ha! That's the words...ha-ha! That's the words! We had to speak on those nights...remember, Mary? Long ago.

Mary: When we two were girls! We remember, Jack.

Mrs Bestland: Listen! The stones know, boy, the stones know!

Mrs Bestland, Mary & Jessica: Ask them, Jack, ask them! Ask the stones!

They retreat, laughing, with Gulliver's headstone as the gargoyles lead Jack over to the site.

The smugglers' scene begins with secret words spoken by Mrs Gulliver and the Pathway students. Mrs Gulliver asks after Amos, the strong man, to help. Beth goes to bring him there.

The Smugglers – Scenario for Pathway Group/Wimborne First School

1. *Dramatic entrance: Mrs Gulliver leads a line of new smugglers on carrying a lantern. All copy her movements which go up and down and around. At times she "shushes" them and they pass this back down the line. Sound effects throughout.*
2. *Making a circle quietly. Mrs Gulliver stands on a barrel in the centre.*
3. *The Promise: Standing, one hand raised, the other on heart.*

All repeat: I promise not to tell a living soul about this meeting.

4. *Sending off the look-outs (Tracy, Beth & Florrie) to check if others are coming, while others are seated. Mrs Gulliver mentions occasional need to scare off unwelcome visitors – hence usefulness of churchyards for the meeting place. She gets them to practise making scary noises.*
5. *Look-outs return without having seen anything.*
6. *Speech of welcome by Mrs Gulliver, after checking clock.*

Mrs Gulliver: The others should be here by now with Mr Gulliver. I hope everything went according to plan down on Branksome Chine Beach. Well, we'd better start without them, anyway. Now, you all sure that you want to help us with our special work tonight?

7. *All agree.*
8. *Explaining in turn why they have decided to become a smuggler (prompted by Mrs Gulliver).*
9. *Offering information about their skills (again prompted by Mrs Gulliver).*

Mrs Gulliver: Now my husband always likes to get the best of those honoured to join his little group...so let's be hearing what you lot are good at.

Sam: Writing.

Eric: Drawing

Chris: Reading.
Florrie: Gardening.

Each suggestion is shaped to smuggling frame.

10. *The Practical Test (prompted by Mrs Gulliver).*

Mrs Gulliver: Well, let's just see some of these useful skills in action, shall we?
Let's start by making a tunnel.

11. *All stand and make a tunnel in pairs. As the first pair go down, the tunnel appears to stretch away. Words as they enter:*

Through the tunnel
The dark tunnel.
The smugglers' tunnel.
Dark and dingy.
Cold and wet.
Slimy and scary.

12. *Trying out others' tasks: passing barrels, lace, perfume, tea.*

13. *Mrs Gulliver congratulates them on passing the tests. Noisy interruption. All look scared. Mrs Gulliver organises them to the side to hide as Wimborne First smugglers arrive.*

14. *Wimborne First children come on from the back, hurriedly and in some disarray.*

*** Two alternative scripts for continuing scenario.**

***Script 1: Mrs Pettifer's class, Wimborne First School.**

When the smugglers return.

Mrs Gulliver: Aye, Aye... before you go any further, where's Neil?

Neil organises contraband (lace, tea, barrels etc.)

Mrs Pettifer: Please, can we have a drink?

All: We're so thirsty, please can we have a drink? *(All moan)*

Mrs Gulliver *(consults other smugglers)*: Shall we let them?

Smugglers all say YES. Smugglers drink. Mrs Gulliver then realises her husband is missing. The gang pause. Then some try to explain. Everyone speaks over each other.

All (*together*): Everything was fine when we got there.
 It was all going well.
 Mr G was on the boat.
 I saw him with the barrels.
 I saw him earlier.
 I was scared.
 I was seasick.
 My horse fell over a stone.
 I was on foot. *etc.*

Mrs Gulliver: I can't hear a word. Tell me what really happened! (*Everyone begins to speak at once again*). No, don't tell me – show me!

Children make a huddle, then shout out who they want to play in the story and get into positions. Drum Beat.

Robin: We arrived at the beach in the middle of the night.

All (*repeat*): We arrived at the beach in the middle of the night.

Kate: I'm excited.

Neil: Not sure about this...

Ben: I've got my gun loaded.

Alex: I'm happy because I'm getting a shilling.

Simon: I'm frightened.

Abbie: I'm cold.

Sarah Jane: I'm scared.

Alison: I'm worried because there might be a spy about.

Alexa: I need the toilet. (*Drum Beat*)

Kate M: We noticed lots of strange seaweed on the beach.

All (*repeat*): We noticed lots of strange seaweed on the beach.

*Smugglers look at the mounds of seaweed. Riding Officers make strange noises.
(Drum Beat)*

Kate R: We hauled in the contraband with our grappling hooks.

All (*repeat*): We hauled in the contraband with our grappling hooks.

Smugglers get into lines and haul – “Heave! Ho!” Gulliver gives orders in the middle. Drum Beat.

Paul: We each took some contraband.

They pass the barrels etc. along the lines. Drum Beat.

Steven P: Suddenly!

Smugglers sink down and Riding Officers jump up, looking aggressive.

Riding Officers: The seaweed grew into Riding Officers. (*Drum Beat*)

All Smugglers: A chase began.

All get on piggy backs. Riding Officers are in one line and Smugglers in the front line. All run on the spot. Drum Beat.

Smugglers shout:

Kate: Quick!

Neil & Robin: Look out!

Paul: Help!

Sarah Jane: They're coming!

Alex & Ben: Giddy up, horsey!

Amy: Oh No! We've got to get away!

Riding Officers shout:

Nathaniel: Let's catch 'em!

Philip: Run faster!

Tom: Let's hang them!

Peter B: They're getting away!

Chris: It's Gulliver's gang!

Peter A: You wait till we get them! (*Drum Beat*)

All Smugglers: Mr Gulliver told us...

Gulliver: Right split up!

*Everyone gets down from piggybacks (except Gulliver & the hobby horse).
Smugglers gather round Gulliver. Riding Officers make a line.*

Riding Officers: CATCH HIM!

Smugglers run through the line of Riding Officers, shouting. Riding Officers circle Mr Gulliver and then kneel down and shout. Drum Beat.

Riding Officers: A shot rang out!

Mr Gulliver runs out of the circle of Riding Officers.

Smugglers: We lost sight of Mr Gulliver.

All of the group move down to Mrs Gulliver.

Philip: That's how it happened.

Sarah Jane: It was awful.

Katie: I saw his horse run off, with Gulliver not on it.

Robin: I think he might be dead.

Katie: He gave me his lace hankie for Mrs Gulliver and said "I'll be back".

Nathaniel: Poor Mrs Gulliver!

Tom: Someone must have tipped them off!

They all start accusing each other. Gulliver appears and silence gradually falls. The smugglers back away from Gulliver in amazement.

Inspection by Gulliver.

***Script 2: Mrs Thackeray's class, Wimborne First School.**

When the smugglers return.

Mrs Gulliver: Aye, Aye... before you go any further, where's Neil?

Neil organises contraband (lace, tea, barrels etc.)

Mrs Thackeray: Please, can we have a drink?

All: We're so thirsty, please can we have a drink? *(All moan)*

Mrs Gulliver *(consults other smugglers)*: Shall we let them?

Smugglers all say YES. Smugglers drink. Mrs Gulliver then realises her husband is missing. The gang pause. Then some try to explain. Everyone speaks over each other.

All (together): Everything was fine when we got there.
 It was all going well.
 Mr G was on the boat.
 I saw him with the barrels.
 I saw him earlier.
 I was scared.
 I was seasick.
 My horse fell over a stone.
 I was on foot. etc.

Mrs Gulliver: I can't hear a word. Tell me what really happened! (*Everyone begins to speak at once again*). No, don't tell me – show me!

Children make a huddle, then shout out who they want to play in the story and get into positions. Drum Beat.

Laura: We arrived at the beach in the middle of the night.

All (repeat): We arrived at the beach in the middle of the night.

William: I'm scared in case I get caught.

Karly: At least I'm getting some money out of this.

Andrew: I feel cold.

Zoe: I hope I'm doing the right thing.

Matt: I'm getting nervous.

Anthony: I need the toilet. (*Drum Beat*)

James: We saw lots of strange seaweed lying on the beach.

All (repeat): We saw lots of strange seaweed lying on the beach.

Smugglers inspect the mysterious seaweed. Riding Officers make strange noises. Drum Beat.

Jenny: We hauled in the contraband from the sea with grappling hooks.

All (*repeat*): We hauled in the contraband from the sea with grappling hooks.

Smugglers get into lines and haul – “Heave! Ho!” Gulliver gives orders in the middle. Drum Beat.

Natalie: We each picked up a barrel.

They pass the barrels etc. along the lines. Drum Beat.

Bethan: Suddenly!

Smugglers go down And Riding Officers stand up.

Riding Officers: Suddenly the seaweed grew into Riding Officers. (*Drum Beat*)

All Smugglers: A big chase began.

Riding Officers are in one line and Smugglers in the front line. All run on the spot. Drum Beat.

Smugglers shout:

Leann: Quick, they're coming!

Martin: They're gaining on us!

Jenny: Giddy up, horsey!

Alistair: They're getting closer and closer!

James: I hope I survive!

Gavin: I hope my family's alright!

Riding Officers shout:

Ben: Come on, Let's catch them!

Bethan: Come on, we're gaining some ground!

Craig: Hurry up, everyone!

Amy: We're catching them up, don't stop now!

Tom: I'd like to get my hands on Gulliver! (*Drum Beat*)

All Smugglers: Mr Gulliver said ...

Laura: Right split up!

Smugglers scatter, shouting “Aaahhh!” Riding Officers circle Mr Gulliver, shouting

Riding Officers: CATCH HIM!

Drum Beat.

Riding Officers: A shot rang out!

All of the group move down to Mrs Gulliver.

Dominic: Poor Mrs Gulliver's worried.
Amy: I feel so sorry for her.
Rachel: I hope Mr Gulliver's alright.
Bethan: I wonder what did happen to him/
Tom: He shouldn't have risked his life for us.
Sharon: Are we still going to get paid?

They all start accusing each other. Gulliver appears and silence gradually falls. The smugglers back away from Gulliver in amazement.

Inspection by Gulliver.

15. Gulliver appears from nowhere. All are amazed and fall back as he approaches each group in turn. Mrs Gulliver runs to hide behind a tree with two friends. Gulliver reassures them he is all right and tells how he evaded capture (mention of officer seeking warrant).

16. Mrs Gulliver is cross with him. Gulliver explains why he had to decoy the Officers and lead them away.

17. Gulliver asks to inspect the booty. Praises the gang and promises a bonus. He asks about the new recruits. Wimborne First children point them out.

18. Mr Gulliver welcomes the new recruits and checks the tests have been done.

*19. **The Chariot Song** (to celebrate another success and to the next).*

Hiding from the Gobloos,
Carrying some barrels,
Sneaking through the woods,
Won't do us any harm.
Having a secret meeting,
Being quiet,
Being smugglers,
A long spell in jail,
Going through tunnels.

So we'll roll the old chariot along
And we'll all go on behind.

20. Voices of riding officers heard offstage, looking for Gulliver:

Did you hear that singing?
It must be Gulliver and his gang!
I know they're round here somewhere.
We'll get him this time.
Come on, let's go and look inside the Minster first.

21. Discussion among the smugglers about what to do. Some suggest RUNNING. Some FIGHTING.

Gulliver: First hide the contraband. In the false grave, of course.

22. All help with Pathway students to hide the contraband.

23. A plot is hatched to make Gulliver appear dead.

Anthony: You're dead.
Gulliver: No, I'm not.
Others: Pretend to be dead.
Gulliver: What about my face?
Jenny: Wig powder! (*she fetches the box*)

24. Gulliver is prepared and lain on the bench at the front. The children stand behind in a horseshoe shape.

25. All position themselves behind Gulliver and weep.

Pray! Sing a hymn! Act sad! Cry, Mrs Gulliver.

26. The riding officers arrive and stand extreme downstage right (closest to public car park).

Officer: Stay right where you are! I am Abraham Pike, Riding Officer to His Majesty the King. This is the Parish Constable of Wimborne.

Pause. Praying. Officers hold back mentioning Gulliver's name to begin with.

Officers: What are you all doing here in the middle of the night?

No response other than weeping and mumbling of prayers.

Officers (*repeat the question*): What's going on? We know you're smugglers!
We heard you singing.

No response immediately, then....

ALL: We're singing hymns and praying.
Officers: What are you praying for?

No response – just more weeping.

Officers (*recognising Mrs Gulliver and very pleased*): Ah-ah! Look, Abraham, it's her – Mrs Gulliver no less! Where's your husband, Madam?

More weeping

Mrs Gulliver: You're too late. (*ALL repeat: Too late*)

Mrs Gulliver: He's gone. (*ALL repeat*)

Officers: Where's he gone? (*ALL point up to heaven, then down to corpse*)

Mrs Gulliver: Can't you see, he's gone. (*ALL repeat*)

Officers: Where's he gone? (*ALL point up to heaven, then down to corpse*)

Mrs Gulliver: Can't you see, he's dead. (*ALL weep*)

Officers whisper together. Silent dramatic pause. Gulliver nearly sneezes.

Officer: Who was that then? (*One of gang pretends it was him/her – or all sneeze at once.*)

Officers (*approaching corpse*): Let's have a good look at this so-called corpse.

Officers (*advise against it*): Might have the plague.

Officers (*freeze and move back*): That's catching, isn't it? (*Slowly withdraw*)

Officer: We'll let you off with a warning tonight. (*Hurry off*)

27. Smugglers breathe a sigh of relief. Gulliver gets up and celebratory congratulations all round on the playing of another good trick. Mrs Gulliver ticks Gulliver off for making too much noise.

Mrs Gulliver: Don't want them to come back.

28. Gulliver sends them all off quietly with contraband to distribute.

Gulliver: I'll to France to hole up until the scent is off.

ALL exit.

29. Gulliver's speech to Jack at the end of the Smugglers' Scene:

Gulliver: Those were fine times Jack. Days of adventure and escapades. My gang and I played some tricks, I can tell you. I cheated death for many years. Until the beggar finally tripped me up. But tell me, lad, I've always wondered – how am I remembered in history? What do people say about me?

Jack: Well, Granny always called you the Gentle Smuggler".

Gulliver (*laughs*): Excellent! I never could abhor violence! Always came down hard on any of my gang...er...employees...who wilfully hurt anybody...The Gentle Smuggler, eh? Fine woman your Granny.

Jack: Do you know her?

Gulliver: But of course!

Gulliver: She's often run her fingers over my memorial stone in the Minster of a cool summer afternoon. Always reminds me of how Mrs G used to ruffle my hair. Ah, Memories, Jack! Where would we be without them? Gentle Smuggler, eh? I became Church Warden of the Minster, you know? Until Age caught up with me. Lost the use of my legs. Blasted nuisance in my line of work! Forced to sit in a bath chair and be wheeled about Wimborne by my daughter Elizabeth – lovely girl, but I did hate the way she talked to me as if I was a helpless baby. But such a time, Jack – the hands creep round and round. You can't trick time like you can a riding officer! But there again, Jack, I'm still as alive as the stone...yes, lad, the stone is full of life...and it's not cold like people say...oh no! Let's go inside the Minster now.. and feel how warm it is to the touch! I'll show you where they put me and you may meet some of my friends! Oh, there's life in death, Jack, believe me! Come into the heart of the stone!

The audience is led round the Minster to the Green where the gargoyles are gathered.



Scene 3 Into the Heart of Stone

Sound of chipping made with hands.

All: Faces breathe in the stone
 Faces breathe in the stone
 Faces breathe in the stone

All move. In pairs - Rabbit & Fox, Monkey and Frog, Rat & Cat.

All (*looking*): Watching
 Listening
 Watching
 Listening

All (*singing*): Corbels, Corbels
 Gorbels, Gorbels.

Rabbit: We see
Cat: We hear
Frog & Rat: We are
Flat Nose: Hundreds of years old.

All into position. Fox chases Rabbit round group.

All (*chant*): A FOX IS CATCHING A RABBIT.

After the mimed death of the Rabbit, SILENCE to count of 3.

All (*singing*): Each day I sit
 Each day I sit

Foreman: I whispered as the water hit my caul
 Dripping my life back to the stone
 Welcomed in cold embrace by the
 Grinning columns
 Into hard deep care.

Worker 2 leads off from the circle.

All (*looking*): Watching
 Listening
 Watching
 Listening (repeat 3 times)

Fox, Monkey & Worker 2: Grotesque, Grotesque, Grotesque.

Worker 1, Rat & Flat Nose: Ugly, Ugly, Ugly.

Rabbit, Frog & Cat: Angels, Angels, Angels.

All: FROZEN IN STONE, FROZEN IN STONE.

All: FROZEN IN TIME, FROZEN IN TIME.

Voices fade out.

The audience enters the Minster through the Main Door.



Scene 4
A Call to Ghosts

Thomas Hardy meets Jack in the pulpit. He introduces himself and recites the poem he wrote in the Minster.

COPYING ARCHITECTURE IN AN OLD MINSTER
by Thomas Hardy

How smartly the quarters of the hour march by
That the jack-o'-clock never forgets;
Ding-dong; and before I have traced a cusp's eye,
Or got the true twist of the ogee over,
A double ding-dong ricochetts.

Just so did he clang here before I came,
And so will he clang when I'm gone
Through the Minster's cavernous hollows--the same
Tale of hours never more to be will he deliver
To the speechless midnight and dawn!

I grow to conceive it a call to ghosts,
Whose mould lies below and around.
Yes; the next "Come, come," draws them out from their posts,
And they gather, and one shade appears, and another,
As the eve-damps creep from the ground.

The Notables, white-faced and ghostly, appear slowly from behind the altar during the last verse and process into the choir stalls, chanting.

Notables: We are the old people, we are the new people.
 We are the same people, different than before.

The Notables take up position at the front of the choir stalls. Thomas Hardy completes his poem.

Hardy: See - a Courtenay stands by his quatre-foiled tomb,
 And a Duke and his Duchess near;
 And one Sir Edmund in columned gloom,

And a Saxon king by the presbytery chamber;
And shapes unknown in the rear.

Maybe they have met for a parle on some plan
To better ail-stricken mankind;
I catch their cheepings, though thinner than
The overhead creak of a passager's pinion
When leaving land behind.

Or perhaps they speak to the yet unborn,
And caution them not to come
To a world so ancient and trouble-torn,
Of foiled intents, vain loving kindness,
And ardours chilled and numb.

They waste to fog as I stir and stand,
And move from the arched recess,
And pick up the drawing that slipped from my hand,
And feel for the pencil I dropped in the cranny
In a moment's forgetfulness.

Each character from the Minster tombs and memorials introduces themselves to Jack and the Quarterjack and relates their story and their significance in history.

Character Notes:

Elizabeth Snodgrass

Her name was spotted by novelist Charles Dickens on a visit to the Minster. He decided to use it in his book *The Pickwick Papers*.

Joseph Collett

Died in 1621 leaving 20 pounds sterling per annum for the relief of ten poor people, five men and five women of the Parish who “should attend divine service in the Parish church. If they are absent they should lose four pence out of their pay which shall be given to those not offending.”

Sir Edmund Uvedale

St. George's Chapel, North Wall. Died 1606. His widow “in doleful duty erected” a monument to him. It was carved by an Italian sculptor in renaissance style. Uvedale's eyes are open as if the figure were walking to his own resurrection. After an accident it was repaired and given two left feet.

Henrietta and Harriet Defoe

Daughters of the famous novelist Daniel Defoe who wrote *Robinson Crusoe*. Henrietta married a Wimborne man, Mr Boston. Harriet is buried with her in St George's Chapel but their tombstone is now lost.

Sir Anthony Ettricke

Buried under the South West Window in Holy Trinity Chapel. Eminent barrister and distinguished antiquary. A former pupil of Wimborne Grammar School. Later of Trinity College, Oxford, where he filled almost every important post with distinction. He was called to the Bar in 1652.

From 1662 until 1682 Ettricke was Recorder and Magistrate of the town of Poole. During this period the rebellious Duke of Monmouth was sent to him for trial after his capture near Horton beneath an ash tree. Ettricke convicted him and sent him for execution at the Tower of London.

As he grew old he was said to become "humorous, phlegmatic and credulous". He was offended by the inhabitants of Wimborne and made a solemn vow that he would "never be buried within the church or without it; neither below the ground or above it".

Later when his anger had subsided he had a longing to be buried with his ancestors. Being a skilled lawyer he managed to avoid breaking his oath by obtaining permission to make a recess in the wall where his coffin was laid. He was also convinced he would die in 1693 and had the coffin inscribed with this date. In fact he died in 1703 and the coffin shows the date altered accordingly.

John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset

Grandson of John of Gaunt.

Margaret, Duchess of Somerset

Daughter of Sir John Beauchamp.

They lie together in an alabaster tomb at the top of the steps in the Presbytery. They were also parents of Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby, and thus the grandparents of Henry VII. They were both Lancastrians and wear the double collar 'SS' of Lancaster.

Gertrude, Marchioness of Exeter (Gertrude de Courtenay)

Also in the Presbytery opposite the Beauforts lies the daughter of William Blount and wife of Henry Courtenay, Earl of Devon and Marquis of Exeter, KG, who through his mother was a grandson of Edward IV. He was Commissioner at the trial of Anne Boleyn. He was later attainted and executed for aspiring to the crown.

Lord and Lady Exeter's son was Edward Courtenay, 1st Earl of Devon, to which title he was restored in a new creation and from whom the present Earl of Devon descends.

Ethelred, King of the Saxons

Elder brother of Alfred. Died of wounds received in fighting the Danes at Martin, some fifteen miles north of Wimborne. Brought to the Minster for burial in 871. Later a brass effigy was set in a Purbeck marble slab in the North Wall just beyond the sanctuary step. The half figure in royal robes is the only memorial brass effigy of an English king and was engraved in 1440. The Purbeck slab was originally much larger but was ruthlessly cut to its present size in 1857.

Charles Waldo Lionel Churchill

Memorial in the North Transept. The only son of Charles Marent Churchill, 2nd Lieut., 3rd Battery, The Hampshire Regiment. Attached 28th Mounted Infantry. Died at Klerksdorp South Africa on April 2nd 1902 of wounds received in action at Boshblutt on March 31st 1902 in his 19th year.

“Be thou faithful unto death
And I will give thee a crown of life”

William George Hawtrey Bankes

Memorial in the Holy Trinity Chapel. Cornet 7th Hussars; fifth son of Hon. George Bankes of Kingston Lacy. Fell mortally wounded on 19th March 1858 while charging a body of rebels near Lucknow, India during the Indian Mutiny. Died on 6th April 1858 aged 21 years. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry.

Thomas Hardy

He lived in Wimborne with his first wife Emma from 1881 to 1883 and wrote *Two on a Tower* here. The young hero of the novel, Swinburn St Cleve, was educated at Wimborne (*Warborne*) Grammar School. When Lady Constantine enquires about his schooling, her informant, Amos Fry, pays the school a startling tribute: “A place where they draw up young gam’sters’ brains like rhubarb under a ninepenny pan, my lady, excusing my common way. They hit so much learning into en that ‘a could talk like the day of Pentecost”.

Living in the little house in The Avenue called ‘Llanherne’, Hardy enjoyed its well-kept garden with all sorts of old-fashioned flowers and fruit in profusion. When the weather permitted he liked to do his literary work sitting under the vine on the stable-wall “which for want of training hangs in long arms over my head nearly to the ground. The sun tries to shine through the great leaves, making a green light on the paper”.

The Minster was much to his taste. He saw it as a massive, dark, brooding presence with a touch of gaiety in the Quarterjack. As he copied the architectural detail, he formulated the poem *How Smartly the Hours*.

In a lighter vein he wrote *The Levelled Churchyard*, which made a satirical comment on the way the Minster’s burial-ground had been tidied up with scant regard for the identities of the dead. Headstones were removed and mounds levelled in such a wholesale fashion that the orderly patterns of internment were jumbled up in inextricable confusion. A ghostly voice complains in the poem that “Teetotal Tommy’s headstone’ has been transferred to the grave of a roaring drunkard, and that

“Here’s not a modest maiden elf
But dreads the final Trumpet,
Lest half of her should rise herself,
And half some sturdy strumpet.”

At the end of the scene, the Notables retreat behind the Choir Stalls. The audience is led by the Quarterjack to St George’s Chapel. He positions them facing the Saxon Chest.



Scene 5

Secrets of the Saxon Chest

The audience is positioned in front of the Saxon chest in St George's Chapel. The Quarterjack points out its significance to Jack as the oldest thing in the Minster. He encourages him to explore its secrets – what can it tell him about time and memory? Jack examines it closely. The Quarterjack withdraws.

Adrian, the Carpenter, appears. He holds a chisel and a hammer throughout the speech and uses them to gesticulate and act out cutting into the wood. He tells Jack a story about how he found the chest.

Adrian: I made that. It was the last thing I ever made. Let me tell you – I was working for the Abbess at the time, building a new church on the site of the double Saxon monastery that Cuthburga built which the Danes destroyed. They were very short of money, the nuns. They thought that the new pilgrimage trade might help them increase their coffers and so sent a monk to Spain to buy relics of the True Cross which had recently been discovered. They said "Make a substantial box to house *the old sticks*. They chose me because I was too old to be up on the scaffold with the younger carpenters.

I wasn't allowed to use new wood; that was all being used for the building. So I looked around for old timber and in the crypt of the church I found this solid baulk, part of the foundations, and it was well preserved, being so damp. With the help of some of the bigger lads, we hauled it out of the earth and left it to dry out. And after a week or so, cracks began to appear along the grain – I thought *Peculiar* - as they usually appear across the grain. But useful for me because it would be easier to sink a square hollow in it.

Then word came that the monk had returned with the relics. I started to work the box – I knew it was going to be hard because of the irregular grain. In went my third chisel, into the cross grain marks and then one hit and a whole square block of wood moved. *Oh, so strange*, I thought as I began to prise it away. Ten minutes it took to work it off; it was a lid, a tight fitting lid. And inside was a cut-out hollow and on the floor of the hollow – wood dust and a small gold bell, three huge nails..

Pause.

Adrian (*enigmatically*): I was a carpenter all my life. You can be sure wood holds its secrets. Let me show you how the past lies ingrained in this chest. (*He slowly opens the lid with great care.*) Those were days of miracles. Breathe in. Listen. What shall you see?

He takes out the bell, rings it and turns towards the Saxon scene.

Arrival of the Nuns and Monks. The audience is moved around to stand with their backs to the chest facing the huge arch. Brother Edwin enters from stage right with incense. Tetta enters with Ethelburga (the cruel mistress) from stage left. Ethelburga adopts a formidable stance. Lioba enters and stands at the back with the Bible on the lectern.

Procession of Novice Monks and Nuns down steps from back, singing Time Prayer.

Nuns & Monks (*singing*):
Ora Ora
Seven times a day have I rendered praise to you.
Matins and Laudes
Ora Ora
Tierce
Ora Ora
Sexte
Ora Ora
None
Ora Ora
Vespers
Ora Ora
Complies
Seven times a day have I rendered praise to you.
Seven times a day have I rendered praise to you.

They divide at the bottom of the steps and reform on either side, kneeling.

Bell rings. Monks and Nuns form religious statues on either side.

Tetta: Sister Lioba. (*Lioba reads aloud.*)

Bell rings. Tetta thanks Lioba and makes a gesture to indicate the Nuns and Monks should kneel.

Tetta: I am Abbess Tetta. I welcome you to our house here at Wimborne which was founded by our late Mother Cuthburga. You are joining a community of some five hundred nuns.

- Guardian: Welcome, brothers, you have joined our double house of learning here in Wimborne.
- Tetta: A wall divides us from the monks. We are strictly segregated here and I shall protect you from the slightest contact with the brothers.
- Guardian: We live apart, yet are co-workers in the Service of Christ.
- Tetta: We follow the strict rules of St Benedict – Work and Prayer.
- Guardian: Ora et Labora.
- Tetta: You have all renounced the world to follow Christ. It is not an easy path.
Let us hear your testimonies of why you have answered the call of God.
- Guardian: Why you have answered the call.
- Monks and Nuns stand in turn and speak nervously.*
- Emma: To honour the memory of my dear dead mother who always wished me to become a nun. I hope to make her proud.
- Mark: Once as a boy, working on a farm I heard a voice ...calling me ...I saw no one but I heard it clearly ... I believe it was St Cuthburga calling me to the monastery at Wimborne.
- Hannah: I don't know why I'm here but I hope to find a new family in God.
- Woody: I saw a wonderful light in the sky over Wimborne ...I followed it as the shepherds followed the star to Bethlehem.
- Helen: I was brought up in a large family ...my parents did not love me and blamed me for everything that went wrong. Once our hay barn caught fire and they whipped me ...I ran away and ...here I am.
- Tom: Things were wrong at home so I've come to the monastery to see if things will be right for me here.
- Tetta: Thank you. One day you may become like Sister Lioba. She came to us as a very young girl and she has been fired by the love of Christ. You will all be under the care of the Guardian and of the Mistress Novice, Sister Ethelburga. She will teach you obedience and humility.

Sister Ethelburga comes and stands menacingly behind the Nuns. Catherine recognises her and whispers to her friend. Ethelburga wags her finger at her.

The Guardian introduces Brother Edwin to the Monks.

Section finishes with lead into work scenes.

Paired/small group work scenes: cutting from boys to girls and back. Ethelburga links them, establishing nasty nature.

Caroline: Sister Valburgh, Sister Valburgh, help me. Valburgh, how long will it be until her fever breaks?

Charlotte: I think Elizabeth's fever will continue for another week. But we must remember the words of St Benedict. Care must be taken of the sick. For He Himself said...

Caroline: When I was sick, you looked after me. God has given you the gift of healing, Valburgh.

Brother Edwin rings Bell.

Tom: Milking the cows is the only job I could get before I came here.

Owen: Brother Edwin is helpful too although he is a bit strict.

Enter Brother Edwin.

Brother Edwin: You are doing well. That's it, brothers, now bring the cow back to the field.

Ethelburga rings the Bell.

Catherine: Sister Hannah, please do some work.

Hannah: It is so lovely and sunny here by the pond.

Catherine: We are working very hard to catch these fish. All you are doing is soaking up the sun.

Dannie: The Lord finds work for idle hands.

Hannah: I wonder how the boys from the village are.

Dannie: We left all that behind us when we joined the monastery.

Enter Ethelburga.

Ethelburga: What are you doing? I will see you after prayers, Sister. Sister, your work is well appreciated.

Brother Edwin rings Bell. Mark and Woody are planting a tree.

Brother Edwin: It is good to see you planting a tree for God's creation so that it will blossom.

Nuns are writing – practising calligraphy.

Lioba: Now what letter shall we practise?
Helen: "L" for Lioba.
Lioba: Very well, take the quill, with gentle strokes.
Amy: You are very wise, Sister Lioba, I wish I was like you.
Emma: Oh, I cannot do this.
Lioba: Have patience, Sister.
Emma: Sister Lioba, is it true that your mother had a dream about you before your birth – you were holding a golden bell?
Lioba: Yes, it is true, but we should concentrate on our work.
Emma: You were holding a golden bell. And, they say, it meant that one day your fame would resound like a bell in the world?
Lioba: That is enough, Sister Tecla.
Helen: But I want to know more.
Lioba: Oh, very well, I also had a dream about purple ribbon flowing from my mouth. But I am not sure what it symbolised. God came to me and said I should visit foreign lands.
Helen & Emma: Where?

Enter Ethelburga.

Ethelburga: What do you think you are doing? It looks like playing to me.
Lioba: But, Sister, I am teaching them to write for God, to write the Scriptures.
Ethelburga: You are from a noble family, Sister Lioba, but remember I am in charge of the novices. Now you have finished playing, I want you to scrub the courtyard with the others. Come!

All exit except Lioba. Brother Edwin rings the Bell.

Ben: Have you seen her?
Ralph: Yes, I have. *(slowly)* A vision of loveliness!
Ben: Skin as white as milk. There is a window on the other side of the kitchen, you can see right down on the nuns!
Ralph: Ben, we should not be here.

Ben: Yes, I know, it's frustrating ...it's my father's fault. We must flee this place.

Ralph: We don't belong here. Someone is coming.

Brother Edwin: Are you sure you are working, brothers?

Ralph: It is our first time at making bread.

Brother Edwin: You need to try a little harder. Come with me.

Girls' work scene. The Nuns get into lines and follow routine. They sing as they work.

Caroline: Oh, my knee hurts. Oh, my back!

Charlotte: Why won't it shine yet?

Suzy: Ah, my fingers!

Emma: I'm so cold!

Hannah: Oh, when will this job end?

Dannie: This is so boring!

Helen: This isn't fair!

Leanne: I'm so tired!

Amy: I've got a pain.

Jo: When will this ever finish?

Enter Ethelburga, the cruel mistress.

Ethelburga: Work harder! Clean your Pagan ideas away. You are nothing, nothing. Your destiny will be in the other place.

Catherine: My back hurts.

Helen: We've been working all day.

Ethelburga starts to hit Catherine. Enter Lioba.

Lioba (*breaking the action*): In the name of God, STOP!

Ethelburga: I am the Guardian here. Go back to your study. How dare you interfere!

Exit Lioba.

Ethelburga: You may all go to supper, except for Ruth, Catherine and Hannah. You three shall stay behind.

Exit all, except three named above.

Hannah: My back!

Helen: I'm hungry.

Catherine: I must be very wicked. Forgive me, Father.

Ralph & Ben appear at the window. They talk to the girls and try to persuade them to elope.

Catherine: Oh Lord, forgive me. Save me from evil men.

Ruth and Hannah agree to meet with the boys.

Ethelburga re-enters and hits the Nuns. The boys hide.

Ralph & Ben: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Brother Edwin rings the Bell. The Monks enter singing. Ben and Ralph arrive late. Brother Edwin stares at them as if to reprimand them.

Boys' work scene with the Guardian

Woody: I hope God leads me in the right path.

Owen: He will shine on this day.

Tom: I pray God I don't get this wrong again.

James (*wiping brow*): It is God's will.

Joel: We are blessed to perform the Lord's work.

Mark: Idleness is the enemy of the soul.

Guardian: You have worked very hard, performing God's work.

Ralph & Ben (*referring to the fate of Ethelburga*): An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

A loud Bell tolls. Ethelburga is dead. The group whispers. Voices rise to a crescendo. Dancing on Grave sequence.

Monks (*chanting*): An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Nuns carry the body in covered with a cloth and lay it down. Monks and Nuns form two separate circles. Drumbeat. All jump in the air six times. Ethelburga leaves but the cloth stays. The Bell rings and Monks and Nuns form two lines.

Tetta and the Guardian re-establish order.

Tetta: Penance is due.

Guardian: Penance is due.

Tetta: Penance is due. In all the time that I have been Abbess here, nothing as terrible as this has ever happened before.

Guardian: In our house at Wimborne. I have struggled in my mind, searching for any reason for this event.

Tetta: I have prayed for you all constantly. Why did you do such a thing? To jump on the grave ...

Guardian: ... of our Novice Guardian, Sister Ethelburga. Her ways may have been harsh but she was a loyal servant of our lord.

Tetta: We must now pray for God's mercy and for the repose of Sister Ethelburga's soul.

Guardian (*echoing*): The repose of Sister Ethelburga's soul.

Tetta & Guardian: For three days we will all fast, pray and sing litanies for the dead, for the dead, for the dead.

All pray.

Lioba appears.

Lioba: For three days, Jack, and three nights
We pressed our sorrow into stone
Our bodies emptying with fasting
Our hearts filling with forgiveness
Until a miracle occurred.

The earth above Ethelburga
That dancing feet had crushed
Rose up again like a loaf of bread
Lightened by the yeast of faith
And her soul was set free!

All form tableaux.

Lioba: Then Abbess Tetta came to me
And said, "Be mistress of the novices

In the monastery”.

With the guidance of the Lord
I guided the young
With the Light of the World
We studied and we sang.

All form tableaux.

Brother Edwin: For many years Wimborne
 Was alive with learning
 The flame of wisdom
 Set young hearts burning.

*Tableaux change to enable all to leave acting area except Lioba and Jack. Nuns to the Crypt,
Monks to the Boat.*

Jack (to Lioba): Granny taught in Wimborne, Lioba, like you
 And she loved sharing knowledge
 With young people too!
 But did you stay forever in the Monastery?

Lioba: No, Jack, I have another story
 A bell rang to call me to far-off lands
 Boniface beckoned with his saintly hands
 It was time to travel across the sea
 To take God’s light to Germany!

 So I left the Wimborne Monastery
 With thirty nuns and never returned
 But I remembered, I remembered.
 So come now, Jack come and see
 The sorrow and joy of memory!

*The audience is led by the Quarterjack down into the Crypt to see slow singing and dance by
Nuns around candles.*



Scene 6

Ship of Memory

The audience returns from the Crypt to the Nave of the Minster. The Quarterjack and Jack climb into the Pulpit to watch the procession of the Boat down the nave with Nuns to the fore and the Monks carrying it.

Craftspeople: Lioba, the wise mistress
 Is carried away to new lands
 The sea's rhythm comforts her sadness
 At leaving brothers and sisters;
 In the ship's hold are books and grapes
 Wisdom and wine taken to the Frankish kingdom;
 These are changing ages:
 Lioba's rite of passage
 Turns her into a saint
 Monuments are carved in her honour
 And her worthiness is carried
 Like a seed in the wind
 Into this moment.

Jack: Wasn't she scared, leaving her friends and her home, sailing to a strange new land?

Quarterjack: Perhaps so, but the spirit of teaching and of God strengthened that part of her that may have been weak.

Jack: What a long way to go! I should like to be that strong!

Quarterjack: You have it in you to be. Let's go forward into the open, be carried along by Lioba's miracle.

Jack points to where Lioba and Gran are seen hugging each other near the main door.

Jack (*pointing*): Look, there she is, Granny with Lioba – have we found where she goes? (*calls loudly*) Granny, wait for me, let me catch up with you.

Jack runs down the aisle and follows Gran and Lioba through the main door of the Minster. The Quarterjack follows and ushers the audience out onto the Green.

Quarterjack (*at the door of the Minster as the audience spills out*): Come, come, come, into the open, let us leave the Minster's cavernous hollows as Mr Hardy had it, and pause one moment longer to finish this story of Jack, this tale of hours...

OUTSIDE ON THE MINSTER GREEN.

The whole cast is assembled.

The following characters are positioned in a static group on the memorial:

Lioba, Mrs Bestland and her sister, Thomas Hardy, the Scientist, Gran, Dad, Jack, Gulliver. They form an image as of a boat with Gran being carried like Lioba in her Boat. Rocking.

Jack (*to Quarterjack*): Is this where Granny goes? (*to assembled group*) Are you her memories?

All (*freeze*): A ship of strength we are; a vessel of wisdom sailing into the future; join us, Jack.

They make room for him.

Quarterjack: And so he climbed aboard and felt very comfortable being in such company.

They chatter together in a buzz of conversation. Then these statements are made which all listen to carefully.

Lioba (*very strongly*): For thirty years I worked with my ten sisters teaching the Scriptures. We looked only forward to the glorious tomorrow. Just before I died, I laid my head on Queen Hildegard's shoulder and she said to me, "May Christ our Creator and Redeemer, grant that in the day of judgement we may see without confusion of face. (*turns to him, lays a hand on his hand and speaks very ordinarily*) That means, Jack, look beyond the face and the body.

Thomas Hardy: Fascinating! For my part, if there's any way of getting a melancholy satisfaction out of life, it lies in dying, by which I mean putting on the manner of ghosts, wandering in their haunts and taking their view of surrounding things. (*to Jack*) To think of life, Jack, (*said with great deliberation*) as passing away is a sadness, to think of it as *past* is tolerable.

Scientist (*using laptop*): We are made out of the past. Our bodies are formed from an explosion of old stars.

- Gran & Dad: We are made out of the past.
Our bodies are formed from an explosion of old stars.
- Scientist: Life regenerates.
Where there is disease there is also life.
- Gran, Dad and ALL: Life regenerates.
Where there is disease there is also life.
- Scientist: Our souls, Granny, have never felt better.
- ALL (*except Gran*): (*sounding happy*) Our souls, Granny, have never felt better.
- Quarterjack: That reminds me, the other day someone was gawping up at me, mouth open, urging time forward just so that they could hear me ring my bell, and someone said “Time is the life of the soul”.
- Thomas Hardy: (*showing off*) That was Longfellow, he said it first.
- Quarterjack (*ignoring him*): Time is the life of the soul. What d’you think of that, Jack? Doesn’t that make you think of Granny’s soul? And how it’s having the time of her life – well, what I mean is, it has its own life ...
- Jack: It’s really hard for me to understand. I’m not used to thinking such deep thoughts. But it does make me think that Granny is not unhappy in her own world.
- Mrs Bestland: That’s right, lad – all is not what it seems. Eyes deceive, use your head.
- Gulliver: Some say ...
- Dad: Here, Jack, look what we found (*he hands timber to Jack who inspects it*) – rotting timbers up in the rafters over 500 years old and riddled to the core with deathwatch beetle. And d’you know, all the while I was working I thought about Mum. The poisoned nerve cells, the tangles in her brain, the damage – yet within, inside her mind – inside the cavernous hollows, are still the monuments, the artistry, light shining through stained glass, her spirit – all that’s still there, Jack, it’s just that we can’t easily see it.
- Gran (*to Jack*): (*indicating Dad*). How many times in the circumference of a year have I met this young boy? (*to scientist*) Did you know the Milky Way is a cluster of stars that come out together looking for milk? (*Gran and the Scientist laugh*).

Thomas Hardy: What imagery!

Gran: *(now normal briefly)* I struggle to remember and my memory forgets. This is my disability. *(she changes and becomes happy)* But I go into other worlds, see people, talk to them, there is so much to do all day, so much marking to do ... marking time. *(she turns to Gulliver)* My dear friend, tell me ...

All stand and make two circles – inner and outer. Everyone chatters together in twos and threes.

Jack: This feels like a ship coming home. Here we all are: Gran's memories, safe and sound, sailing away ...all heading in the same direction ...

Quarterjack *(to audience)*: And so Jack journeyed a while longer before he woke once again to his own time.

The group get up and move away leaving Jack sitting on the War Memorial step as at the beginning.

Quarterjack: Just before he opened his eyes, he saw all his new friends moving away, receding into the past, strung out like time itself, spiralling, spiralling over the waves and the Minster Greens, the green surface of Gaia.

All characters, led by Gran move again in one long serpent's tail, spiralling away from Jack. Only Dad collects up his tools and wood and slowly walks towards Jack.

Quarterjack *(climbing up high)*: And when Jack woke up everything was back in its place. From the steps of the Memorial he turned and saw his father coming towards him, carrying a baulk of wood – and looking up he saw that time was back on his pedestal.

Peal of bells from the bell tower of the Minster – all characters raise one arm to the tower.

THE END