

# WIMBORNE COMMUNITY THEATRE

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Allendale House 2001 and 2002



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**Scene 1: Prologue**  
**On the Stairs**

*Audience enter the hall. Projected images of new house.*

*Recorded Voice of House speaks strongly, knowingly:*

Even when a house is left for the last time  
it's never empty. You can never know  
what makes it live in people's minds  
long after they've left it.  
You can never know all there is to know  
about a house. You pass through one door  
and out another and leave behind  
a trace in every room –  
all the days and nights  
all the men and women  
in their sitting rooms, study, hall,  
all their deals and promises,  
lies and prayers, their secrets  
in the office, bedroom, stairs,  
music and books, recipes and menus,  
in the kitchen, dining room, larder,  
strong room, office, cubby hole, attic,  
lavatory, landing.  
Stored within my walls.

You can never know all there is to know  
about a house.

Under the floor boards, dust,  
behind the skirting boards, dust,  
in the fireplace, ash,  
under the floorboards, toothbrushes,  
behind the wall – a charcoal pencil,  
under the step – seed, key, hinge, fragment ...  
Words waiting for your enquiring minds.  
Waiting to come to life.  
(pause – new tone, urgent)  
Someone is coming down the stairs,  
Someone is lost and out of her time.

She has been left behind.  
Someone has been left behind.  
Someone is lost or out of her time.  
She has been left behind.  
She is following in the footsteps of ...  
In the footsteps of ...

*Suzie Funnell comes down the stairs with her handbag, confused. The rest of the cast stands in formation at the top of the stairs.*

Suzie: Oh! Did someone call my name? Strange, it's all changed. Excuse me, is this where I obtain .. a new .. Ration Book? This is the Council Offices, isn't it? I was told, I could collect my Ration Book here ... but it's so strange coming back – the last time I was here – such sad difficult days, everyone leaving, the end of an era. I remember ... the orderly tramp of feet on these stairs ... yes, and the hasty, darting leaps of a few.  
*(Elly runs down the stairs and into the hall)*  
Don't run down the stairs, dear, you're not a boy climbing trees ... *(pause)* ... well. It was a school for young ladies ... I had to do what the parents wanted ... wished for ...didn't I?

*Images projected: Allendale House. The school. Slide of diphtheria virus as wallpaper.*

Suzie: Oh, forgive me, how rude. I didn't introduce myself. Miss Funnell, teacher ... certified teacher ... I owned the lease of Allendale House for thirty years – Miss Suzie Funnell's School for Young Ladies.

*Images projected. SFX. Sound comes from drawing room of children singing carol: The Holly and the Ivy*

Suzie: Christmas, just before the holidays, when this house was at its happiest.  
*(Looking round)* It's almost as though the girls are still here somewhere ... a reunion? Perhaps, one of you? Sometimes they'd imagine people from the past – a woman on the stairs.  
*(Ann Castleman moves down the stairs and into the hall)*  
Ann Castleman, they'd say it was, Edward's wife, grieving for her lost child; or they'd see a young girl at the window, a Workhouse girl wanting to look in, wanting to learn too ...  
*(Image is shown at the window)*  
Of course, I rebuked them. It was improper behaviour for young ladies to see what did not exist. *(pause – softer)* And yet ... and yet. I too have seen glimpses .. memories .. imaginings...

*Music. All slowly walk down stairs, muttering words about glimpses, memories, imaginings. They pass through the audience into the drawing room. Suzie moves to one side, to look around, as other characters enter and take up positions.*



## Scene 2 Christmas 1830

*Image projected: Enquire Within.*

*The door to the drawing room opens and the Servants, Molly and Martha, invite the audience into the drawing room as the carol singers continue to sing The Holly and the Ivy.*

*Images projected: musical box, child playing with dolls' house, drawing room figures.*

*After the audience has settled, the cast form a tableau in front of the fireplace as they introduce themselves, facing the audience. Ann, heavily pregnant with son-to-be William, sits to one side with her daughter Emily, then aged 6, next to her friend Florence.*

*The carol singers finish the carol. The family applaud politely.*

Mary: Charming! Charming!

Ann: How clever your Gerald is, Florence dear! To make the poor little Workhouse children sing so beautifully! Well done, Gerald! Wasn't that lovely, Emily dear?

Emily: Thank you for the singing. It was lovely.

Mary (*clutching hanky*): Not too close, Emily! Yes, yes. Thank you.

*Emily goes and gives the carol singers some coins. Everyone "oohs". The carol singers exit. Emily returns and sits with Florence and they turn pages of a book, pointing at the pictures. As each member of the family introduces themselves, projected images of them are shown: William, Edward, Mary, Charles, Ann, interspersed with whole family images.*

William (*then aged 64*): Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls.  
I am William Castleman, formerly steward of two great Wimborne families – the Hanhams of Dean's Court and the Bankes of Kingston Lacy. Father to Edward, Charles and Henry. (*he indicates Henry's absence*) Tonight with his own parishioners in Christchurch. As I bid you welcome to Allendale House, the Castleman family residence, at this time of festivity and goodwill, I hope you'll agree that this humble abode, built for my family some four years ago to the designs of the eminent architect, Sir Jeremy Wyatville ...

Edward (*interrupting*): Who, let it be known, Father, designed St George's Chapel in Windsor. Edward, eldest son, schooled in jurisprudence and finance, now steward to the landed gentry, following in my father's fine footsteps.

Mary (*holding hanky to her face, interrupting*): And we shall hear more of that in a minute. Let your father, finish, Edward. Mary Castleman, devoted wife to William and mother to Edward, Henry and Charles.

William: Indeed ... (*resuming where he left off*) ...agree that this fine family house is a monument to progress, designed for optimum health and hygiene, a beacon of light in the town.

Charles: Yes, Father, with Bonaparte vanquished for good, (*all applaud*) this nation reigns supreme. I am Charles, the youngest son, a lawyer and campaigner to bring the railway system to Wimborne. With the coming of the great engines thundering to and from London, our lives will never be the same again.

William: For is it not our duty, each of us, to learn how to better ourselves, as I have done, ladies and gentlemen. Son of a humble farmer from Hinton St Mary. And now look at me! In my fine house! And I have reared my sons to do the same – to ride in the vanguard of progress.

Edward: And we also own ten public houses in the town.

Mary: Edward, dear, I am not sure how much of interest the inns of the town are to the good ladies and gentlemen.

Edward: Mother, Wimborne's prosperity is built as much upon its populace's love of fine ales as any other product!

Ann: Ann Castleman, nee Fryer, wife to Edward. And for that we should thank my grandfather, Isaac Gulliver.

Edward: The famous gentleman smuggler.

Ann: Entrepreneur, dearest, please.

Mary: Remember, Edward, Ann's grandfather ended his days as Churchwarden of the Minster and a fine upstanding gentleman. But enough talk of ale-houses – what will our guests think of us? My husband has a fine record as an upstanding pillar of the community. In fact, he has always done his duty as a Christian to ensure that the good people of Wimborne are not lured into the ways of drunkenness and debauchery! Tell them about the Deanery Court, William ... the scandal on the Sabbath.

- William: Indeed, as steward to the Deanery Court, I reprimanded a certain young gentleman of high rank who was discovered in the Minster graveyard in a state of intoxication ...
- Mary: When he should have been in church, setting a fine example to his tenants.
- Edward: And it was (*mouths*) Sir Michael Hanham himself! (*All tut tut!*) And you really went gunning for him, didn't you, Father?
- William: Because he contravened one of the Dean's Court laws made by his family. I had him up for it – and he received a severe reprimand! And learnt his lesson, oh yes! That's the kind of man I am!
- Edward: Not that we have anything against a little tippie now and again, do we, Father? God sent us the grape and the apple, as well as the hops.
- Mary: But we mustn't forget the Good Book and its Laws ...and, indeed, why we let our other son, Henry, take the cloth – and now with his own parish in Christchurch, and still in his twenties.

*Projected image of Henry, preaching in the pulpit.*

- William: Very devout, is our Henry.
- Edward: Just a deuced shame about his backward-looking ideas!
- Mary: Edward! Please do not criticise your dear brother Henry in public.
- Edward: But, Mother, the man's a fool!
- William: Edward, have you been at the sack?
- Charles: Edward's right, Father! He has no understanding of progress!
- Mary: Charles, I will not have a repeat of this nonsense! Do you wish to send me to an early grave?
- William: Do as you mother says, boys. (*changing the subject*) Besides, Henry has a wonderful voice on him! Finest tenor for miles around!
- Mary: Like an angel, the Rector at the Minster used to say!

*Mocking reactions from Edward and Charles.*

- Mary: Let us change the subject, dear. Pray, tell our guests about your important work at Kingston Lacy!

William: Oh, I could tell you a few tales about the squire up at the other big house – Mr William John Bankes. Even though he has been absent from these shores for some time.

Charles: Aiding the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War.

William: He keeps sending all those ancient bits of stone over from Egypt! The catarycts and that!

Edward: Caryatids, Father.

William: That's what I said.

Edward: Mr William John Bankes is a very learned gentleman and adventurer with ugly rumours following him about.

William: Don't believe a word of them myself! Lies spread by jealous troublemakers! Just like the rabble-rousers stirring up discontent in the countryside as we speak! "Times are hard" they whine. Well, not if you're prepared to work hard, I say! We Castlemans is known for our strength of steadfast character and honesty, isn't that right, boys?

*Rural image projected of men at haystack.*

Edward: That's right, Father. It's not for us to question the wealth of the landowners. That's why we Castlemans have always stood by the Bankes and the Hanhams.

Mary: And why we have instilled in you boys the importance of a good education. Without which one is bereft. Edward is extremely highly regarded in Wimborne like his father before him.

Ann: And his son will follow on also.

Mary: And Charles, forging ahead with such dreams.

Charles: More than that, Mother dear. I hear the hiss of steam! The rhythm of steel on steel ... I feel the heat of the furnace as the engine plunges through forests and fields ... to Wimborne.

Florence: And yet his ecclesiastical brother Henry talks of monsters. Florence Rowe, wife of Gerald Rowe, a senior governor of the Workhouse and close friend of the Castlemans of Allendale House.

Ann: Just as he does about the new farm machines. Now the servants talk of them in fearful tones.

*Projected image of threshing machine.*

William: When, in fact, ladies and gentlemen, these new threshing machines will change the condition of the labouring poor forever. Just look at this wondrous invention. No more back-breaking labour, no more winnowing, no more gleanings. My dear late father would have given an eye for one of these on his farm at Hinton St Mary!

Edward: And they will increase the production of corn sevenfold. Bringing vastly increased profits to the landowners, the small farmers, the suppliers, the distributors.

William: Yes, yes, this is indeed a good time for all upstanding residents of Wimborne Minster! *(Raises his glass)* Your very good health! TO THE FUTURE!

*The family raise their glasses and stand in freeze.*





### Scene 3 The Swing Riots

*Images and sounds.*

*Song: 'We Poor Labouring Men' drifts over from the Workhouse.*

*Image: a ramshackle Dorset cottage projected on the window.*

*SFX: Thomas Hardy description of Tess working on machine.*

*Words and images are projected through next speech.*

*"1830. After the Enclosure Act, removing the grazing and pannage rights of the poor, the coming of machines."*

*Contrasted with image of Allendale House.*

*"The Workhouses were filling up faster and faster as trade grew scarcer. "*

*Back to image of threshing machine.*

*SFX: Shouting.*

*Molly, the servant, appears and stands near the window, holding a candle.*

Molly: A good time for the poor? Listen to them singing in the Workhouse. Just across the garden. Sniff. Go on. And you'll maybe smell the boiled cabbage and maybe the drains. Look how Ma'am always keeps her handkerchief in her fist. I am Molly, servant here since the start, and before that in The Dormers, and before that up at the big house, Dean's Court. I come from Witchampton, a village to the north. A good time for the poor? Long ago, my parents couldn't afford to keep me so they sent me into service. *(Pointing to Alice, standing by the window)* Now my little niece Alice is come here to join me. Same reason. Our story doesn't change so fast as the Castlemans'. Their profits go up but the labourers' wages go down – seven shillings a week now round here. *(Sotto voce)* But there's a stirring in the air tonight as the poor step out of their hovels. Listen! *(She moves to the window and looks out.)*

*Projected images on the shutters. Men running with flaming torches, muddied faces, running wild and free.*

*SFX – running feet, whispering voices.*

Like a herd of stallions ...sparks flying from their hooves ...At last! The men from the north. From Handley. And Amos, my nephew. He carries an important letter. They've stopped at the Workhouse to visit Emma and Cousin Frances *(turns, back, mysterious)* before coming here. This is not the first grand house they have visited tonight. Nor will it be the last ...

*SFX – loud thud as if from outside which awakens the tableau. Family unfreeze.  
Molly goes to answer door.*

Mary:           What is that dreadful noise, dear?

William:       Perhaps the mummers, coming to wassail, perform St George and the Dragon for Christmas-tide.

Edward:       Of course, every year we let them in to play. We give them charity.

Ann:           Christmas cheer.

Charles:       Quaint old country customs!

*The group of Mummers enter and perform for the Castleman family  
Family freezes*

Lead Mummer:       Make room! Make room, my gallants all,  
                              And give us space to rhyme.  
                              We've come to show St George's play  
                              Upon this Christmas time.  
                              For here am I, old Father Christmas,  
                              And welcome in or welcome not,  
                              I hope old Father Christmas,  
                              He'll never be forgot.  
                              For though I've only a short time here to stay,  
                              I will show you mirth, and merriment  
                              Before I go away.  
                              For in this room  
                              There shall be shown  
                              The most dreadfullest battle  
                              That ever was known.

Turkish Knight Mummer:   In comes I, the Turkish Knight,  
                                  Just come from Turkeyland to fight.  
                                  The valiant soldier I do not fear,  
                                  No matter what sharp sword he bear.  
                                  If his head be made of brass,  
                                  Or his belly lined with steel,  
                                  From my shoulder to my knuckle-bone  
                                  That's the place to feel.  
                                  I'll cook his wings,  
                                  He shall not fly,  
                                  I'll cut him down,  
                                  Or else I'll die.

So, I comey here to finds Saint George.  
Huh! That noble man of courage bold!  
If his blood run hot,  
I'll quickly make it cold.

Saint George Mummer: In comes I, Saint George! *(cheer from crowd and family)*  
A valiant man with naked sword and shield in hand  
It was I that fought the fiery dragon  
And brought him to the slaughter  
And by these means did win  
The King of Egypt's daughter.  
Now hold on, hold on, my gentlemen,  
Thy talk is very bold  
Thou talkest like those other gentlemen  
Of whom I have told.  
I'll bring thee to thy bended knee  
And bleeding I will leave thee.  
So if thy be a Turkish Knight,  
Draw thy sword,  
Let's fight!

*An impressive battle sequence follows, including various unrecognisable groans and insults.  
It ends with the Turkish Knight slain.*

Turkish Knight Mummer: Groan!

Lead Mummer: Saint George, Saint George,  
What hast thou gone and done?  
Thou's cut this knight down  
Just like the setting sun.

Saint George Mummer: He gave me first challenge,  
Why should I give the eye?  
Draw thy sword and fight, said I.  
Or, pull out they purse and PAY!

*He points his sword at Edward Castleman*

If you do not meet our demands, we'll burn your ricks, destroy your  
farms!

Lead Mummer: And here's a letter for you, Mr Castleman!

*He hands a letter to Edward. The Mummers leave. Edward Castleman takes the letter and  
reads it. Charles joins him.*

Charles: Who's it from, Edward?

*Edward Castleman reads the letter aloud. The rest of the Castleman family gather round anxiously.*

*Projected image: The Mummer's Letter*

Edward: "Edward Castleman,  
This is to acquaint you that if Bankes' threshing machines at Kingston Lacy are not destroyed directly, we shall commence our labours. For you are an inhuman monster and we will dash out your brains. Bankes and your sett aught to be sent to Hell. Revenge for thee is on the wing.  
From the determined Captain Swing."

*Music starts: chords of Captain Swing song.*

Edward (*after a long pause*): Captain Swing?

William: Who on earth is Captain Swing?

*Buzzing of voices from the family, talking about the incident.*

William: Edward, summon the magistrates!

Edward: Yes, Father. Damnable blackguards!

Charles: Ignorance is what holds man in servitude.

*Edward and Charles exit. William stays to protect the women. Family freezes.*  
*SFX: Voice giving factual information about the riots.*

Molly: There was no fire that night. Not here. But the dragoons from Dorchester gave chase and soon the ringleaders were caught and sent to Van Dieman's Land. Other side of the world. But the Grim Reaper did cast his shadow over this house that night. (*to Ann*) Ann Castleman was so shook up she gave birth early to her son and heir, named William, after his grandfather. (*She presents Ann with a baby – folded shawl/puppet*) At the age of four, he caught a fever and was taken away.

*Ann passes the baby to William and Mary who walk slowly through the audience and exit through the door at the end of the room during the remainder of the speech.*

Broke his grandparents' hearts, they say. Shortly after that the old master and mistress, William and Mary, both went to join him, all within eight years of those Handley torches' visit to Allendale that December night. All harvested, if not by a threshing machine, then by a scythe.

Ever since then, Ann Castleman was different. She rarely smiled and was often peevish. In the summer she would fret over the smell from the Workhouse. (*Molly hands Ann a book*)

*Image projected: Book – Enquire Within Upon Everything: Hints on taking a house*

Ann (*reads*): “Avoid the neighbourhood of graveyards and of factories giving forth unhealthy vapours. Endeavour to obtain a position where the direct sunlight falls upon the house, for this is absolutely essential to health.” (*She snaps the book shut*) Didn’t I tell you to close the windows, Molly!

Molly: But it’s ever so hot, Ma’am!

Ann: I don’t care! Can’t you smell those vile fumes? Do you want to poison us *all*? CLOSE THEM!

*She turns away. Molly and the young servant, Alice, obey.*

Molly: A little girl was born a year after that, Edith Mary. (*Ann produces another baby*) But it wasn’t the same. And me? I grew too old for service. Aching joints. Touch of gout. Still I didn’t have far to go. (*Goes to the window and looks out at the Workhouse*) There was plenty more to take my place.

*Projected image: list of names of Workhouse inmates with occupations, ages*

*Mrs Frampton enters and opens the door to Molly to go through.*  
*SFX. Music. Molly gathers her belongings and exits.*

Mrs Frampton (*dusting shutters as she speaks. Brisk and efficient*): Mrs Betty Frampton. New housekeeper. A breath of fresh air. That’s what the house needed. And that’s how I see my role. To help poor Mrs Edward - that’s Ann, my mistress - come through her vale of tears and shine again. So I took over recruiting and training the new nursery maid. Not that Ma’am always concurred with my opinions, it must be said. But now – do come and see how nice we’ve made it upstairs – and continue your tour of Allendale House.

*Mrs Frampton leads the audience upstairs to the Drawing Room.*



**Scene 4**  
**In the Upstairs Drawing Room, 1839**

*Projected image: letter in The Times.*

Mrs Frampton: Well, in 1839, I think it was, a letter about the Workhouse next door caused another problem for the Castleman family. Yes. Mr Edward was at the very centre of it. In spite of the fact that Mr Gerald Rowe, the Governor of the workhouse, was his good friend. Tut! Tut! Such a to-do! Yes. A letter in The Times newspaper, no less. Anonymous. I remember, the mistress was sitting at her desk. Clutching little William's lock of hair as usual.

*Ann takes up position as described. She sits down, forlorn, stroking picture of boy.*

*Projected images: change between garden/tennis court/Workhouse.*

*SFX: piano music being practised.*

Next door, Miss Emily was practising her scales. It was such a beautiful day. Outside, the nursery maid was pushing little baby Edith in a perambulator round the tennis courts. And, of course, in the distance, the very same Workhouse where my predecessor, Molly, had just passed away, suffering from the smallpox. God rest her soul! And, oh, how the news of it sent a shiver down all of our spines in those difficult days.

Ann: Mrs Frampton! Why is that new nursery maid ...

Mrs F: Maisy, Ma'am?

Ann: Whatever ... why is she pushing baby Edith around the grounds?

Mrs F: Er ... just taking the air, Ma'am, I suppose ...

Ann: Did you instruct her to do so?

Mrs F: Er ... no, Ma'am ... I think it was a whim on her part ... (*Doorbell rings.*)

Ann: Go and reprimand her most severely. Doesn't she know there's been another case of smallpox in the Workhouse? She should do – she came from there after all! And I still don't understand why you had to take on another of their hopeless creatures! Supposing she's infected herself!

Mrs F: Oh, she's a good clean girl, Ma'am. We had Mr Place, the Workhouse surgeon ...

Ann: Yes, I know Mr Place.

Mrs F: Oh yes, of course. He was here only last night, wasn't he, Ma'am? Anyway, that nice Mr Place gave young Maisy a thorough checking over. Inside and out, Ma'am.

Martha (*entering*): Excuse me, Ma'am. Mrs Rowe is here to see you. Shall I show her in?

Ann: No, I cannot see her now.

Martha: With respect, Ma'am. She seems very agitated, Ma'am.

Ann: Oh, very well, show her in. But Martha ...

Martha: Yes, Ma'am?

Ann: Come back in five minutes and tell me that Cook needs to discuss the luncheon menu with me.

Martha: But with respect, Ma'am, you've already discussed the luncheon menu with Cook.

Ann: I know that, you fool, but Mrs Rowe does not.

Martha: Oh ... I see, Ma'am, I think.

Ann: Go and bring her in. And what are you standing about for, Mrs Frampton? By now the nursery maid will be gossiping with the Workhouse inmates, probably encouraging them to breathe their noxious germs over baby Edith.

Mrs F: Oh, rest assured, Ma'am, she wouldn't do that, not after all my instruction. But I'm on my way to sort the matter out, Ma'am. Oh, and afterwards, shall I see if Miss Emily has finished her piano lesson, Ma'am?

Ann: Very well.

*Martha reappears with Mrs Florence Rowe as Mrs Frampton exits.*

Martha: Mrs Rowe, Ma'am. (*She withdraws*)

Florence: (*Weepy and clutching a copy of The Times newsletter*) Oh Ann! It's so terrible! I don't know what to do!

Ann: Please try and remain calm, Florence. Do sit down.

Florence (*as she sits*): Have you seen this? (*shows her the newspaper*) As my oldest friend, I just had to speak with you about it. Such a cruel and spiteful letter! After all the hard work Gerald has put into improving the Workhouse. Who could have written such a wicked letter, Ann?

Ann: Florence, you must not become so overwrought over matters about which we women have little control. I am sure Gerald and Edward will sort the matter out.

Florence: Edward? How is he involved? Gerald has only just found out about the dreadful letter!

Ann: It is merely a letter expressing concerns about the conditions in the Workhouse. It was only a matter of time before the rest of society learnt of them.

Florence: You sound as if you agree with the foul sentiments expressed, Ann! You know how hard Gerald and the other guardians have worked to accommodate the ever increasing poor since the war ended ... of course, there have been problems – but this (*indicates letter*) accuses Gerald of mismanagement. It could ruin his reputation. And you still have not told me how Edward is involved in this matter?

Ann (*beginning to lose patience*): I am sorry, Florence, but surely you realise how worried we have all been since the outbreaks of smallpox! After all, it is we who have to live next door to the Workhouse, not you! Your house is a safe distance away.

Florence (*trying to interrupt*): But ...

Ann: Edward says it is the dirty habits of the poor there, allowing heaps of dirt and filth to accumulate, that is behind the disease!

Florence: Exactly! So it is not Gerald's fault!

Ann: But it is surely up to the guardians to deal with the problem? To be candid, Florence, I hope this letter will bring about the necessary and overdue reforms that may allow me once again to open my windows in summer and allow my children to take the air without fear of contagion. Not to mention without breathing the stench of poverty!

*She takes a pinch of smelling salts. Knock at the door. Martha appears, as ordered.*

Martha: Er ... Ma'am ... Cook wishes to speak to you about dinner ... I mean about luncheon ...



Ann: Thank you, Martha. *(She stands as if to show Florence out)*

Florence *(pause)*: Ann Castleman, I am not leaving this house until you tell me how you and Edward are involved in this matter.

Ann: Very well. Last evening during dinner we had an unexpected visitor, the surgeon from the Workhouse.

Florence: George Place! But why did he? ... *(Pause. She is incredulous)* You are not saying that it was he who wrote this wicked letter to The Times?

Ann: I am.

Florence: But what did he want with your Edward?

Ann: Edward has agreed to be Mr Place's legal advisor in case of any action against him in response to the letter. Place is afraid the guardians will cry libel in order to protect themselves.

Florence: And so I should think! Why, the wily treacherous upstart! And as for Edward, how could he think of betraying our friendship by agreeing to help this troublemaker?

Ann: Remember, Florence my dear, we have already lost our son and heir through sickness. We do not wish to lose our daughters too.

Florence: And you dare to blame Gerald for a tragic act of God? No, Ann. You insult my intelligence and our friendship. I shall not stay any longer in this house.  
*(Goes to the door, which Mrs Frampton opens. Turns back to face Ann)*  
I pity you! *(Florence leaves)*

*Projected image: Workhouse,*

*SFX: Sad song coming from workhouse*

*Mrs Frampton enters and places a shawl on Ann's shoulders.*

Mrs Frampton *(working again as she speaks)*: The poor mistress. Her little boy gone and now her best friend. Still, that's progress for you! *(Physically helps Ann off stage)* Of course, I did my very best to console her in her hour of need. I made myself indispensable. And then, of course, there was Master Charles. My favourite. Always trying to outdo his brother. Rushing around. Nobody thought he could possibly surpass Master Edward, apart from myself. I always had faith in him. And, of course, I was eventually proved right. Such a commotion! Or rather locomotion! My little joke! Such celebrations! Of course the Mistress was still a little frail. I am sure that explains why she was less happy than most ... but for Master Charles ... well! His dreams came true!



**Scene 5**  
**Railway Day, 1847**

*Projected images: 1844, Wimborne. Railways arriving.*

*SFX: Steam, whistling, noise, cheering.*

*The day the railway reaches Wimborne. A drinks reception laid on by Charles Castleman. Ann stands at one end with grown up daughter, Emily, and Edith, her twelve year old daughter. Ann is angry.*

Emily: Emily Castleman. Now aged 20. Impressionable. Excited. I can still see smoke in the sky, mother! Look Edith!

Edith: Edith Castleman. Aged 12. A little shy. *(to Emily)* Yes, I see it too!

Emily: Such an exciting day! I loved it all! The whoosh, whooshing of the steam! All the crowds in their finest attire! Cheering and shouting! And Uncle Charles so proud in his new coat! I even loved the smell of the fumes!

Ann: Where on earth can they be? They were supposed to be here two hours ago!

Mrs F: I'm sure they'll be here very soon, Ma'am.

Ann: But the champagne will be warm!

Emily: Don't fret, Mama. It will only bring on your headache.

Mrs F: I'll see if there's any more ice, shall I, Ma'am?

*Martha, the servant, enters.*

Ann: Well?

Martha: They're on their way, Ma'am.

Emily and Edith: Hurray!

Ann: Edward promised back at the new station they'd come straight here! Where can they have been?

Mrs F: Oh, you know what gentlemen are, Ma'am. *(to Martha)* Fetch some more ice, Martha! For the champagne.

Ann: Too late!

*The doors burst open and Charles Castleman is carried in triumphantly by a band of male supporters. They are drunk and celebrating. As they enter, they pretend to be a steam train, chuffing around the room.*

Edward: Well done, Charles, old man!

Gentleman 2: You've done it!

Gentleman 3: Progress!

Gentleman 4: At last Wimborne's on the map!

Captain Moorson: And steaming ahead!

All (*laughing*): Good one, Moorson! Yes, yes! Steaming!

Charles: How about some bubbly! Champagne!

Edward: Yes, come on, Mrs Frampton! We're thirsty!

Gentleman 2: Yes, it's a jolly long way from The Dormers, y'know! I'm parched!

Edward: Let's have a smile, my dear! This is a happy day for the Castleman family!

Gentleman 2: And for Wimborne!

*General laughter and cheering as champagne is distributed under Ann's supervision.*

Edward (*raising glass*): To the Castleman Corkscrew! To my brother, Charles Castleman, without whose vision ... (*All Oooh!*) ... and perspicacity (*All Oooh!*) ... and sheer bloody-minded obstinacy ... (*All laugh*)

Charles: Steady on, Edward!

Edward: It would never have happened! 'Cos you know, he always was an awkward...

Gentleman 3: Get on with it, Eddie!

Edward: Yes, yes ... To Charles!

All: To Charlie! (*All drink toast*)

Emily: Well done, Uncle Charles!

*All freeze.*

Gentleman 4 (*under breath*): Champagne's a bit warm ...

Gentleman 3: Just look at Mrs Castleman – miserable as sin! Would have thought she could manage to serve chilled champagne!

Gentleman 5 (*under breath*): Don't bother with the canapés, old chap ...Yuk! Think they must have stolen them from the Workhouse!

*Freeze. Servants speak.*

Mrs F: Just look at Master Charles! What a gent!

Martha: Fancy all them high and mighty folk in their cups! Ma'am don't look none too happy!

Mrs F: As per usual!

*All unfreeze.*

Gentleman 2: Do us your speech again, Charles!

Edward: Yes, do it for Ann!

Emily: Yes please, Uncle Charles!

Ann: I was present, dear, if you recall ... before I had to return to prepare the Reception ...

All: Speech! Speech! Let's hear it again!

Emily (*jumping in excitement*): Do it for me, Uncle Charles!

Charles: Oh, very well. If you insist!

Ann (*to Emily*): Steady yourself, Emily. Remember you are supposed to be a young lady.

All: HURRAY!

Charles (*climbs onto chair and raises glass*): On behalf of the Board of the South Western Shareholders it gives me great pleasure to officially open the westward line. The railway has arrived in Wimborne at last!

All: Hurray! Choo-choo! (*laughter*)

Charles: The future is steam! We have overcome all the obstacles, convinced those who poured scorn, those who cast doubt ...

Edward: Like dear brother Henry!

Gentleman 4: That miserable old priest! Bet he's hiding in the pulpit! (*mimicking vicar*) Oh Lord, protect us from this unnatural monster, this embodiment of Satan!  
(*All laugh*)

Charles (*continuing*): those who resisted change ... now will see we were right! And the Great Western Company, the losers (*All respond*) must concede that the best team won in the end! (*All: Hear! Hear!*) Let us express our gratitude for the genius of our industrious and able friend, Captain Moorson, the finest engineer in the land. (*All cheer*)

Martha: Is that the one who can't keep his hands to himself?

Mrs F: Sssh! Yes, the soldier boy!

Charles: This day will go down in the annals of Wimborne's history ... no longer a sleepy country town, but an artery beating fast with the blood of progress, heading westwards!

Gentleman 2: Well said!

Gentleman 4: The man's a poet!

Charles: Look around you ... all are here ... the landed gentry, the business men, all united in this endeavour ... I thank you for your confidence and support through the many years it has taken to bring our scheme to fruition. We are all here to gain ... by the train!

All: Gain by the train! Yes, yes!

Charles: New manures for the farmers and new products for our shops. Profits and Progress! Speed and Success!

*All drink again and give glasses to the servants.*

Charles: Remember, my friends – only four hours to London!

*All cheer and start forming a train-type conga, moving about the room.*

Charles: London to Winchester!

All: Choo-choo!

Charles: Winchester to Southampton!

All: Chuff-chuff!

Charles: Southampton to West Moors!

All: Choo-choo!

Charles: West Moors to Wimborne!

All: Wimborne! Hurray!

*All chuff off as train, in state of intoxication.*

Ann: Edward – a word! If you please!

Edward: But we're off to the Dolphin, my dear! Can't keep old Harold waiting!

Ann: It will only take a moment, Edward. *(to servants)* Clear away! *(they start to clear away)* Edward, you promised me the guests would return here for drinks immediately the ceremony at the station was concluded!

Edward: Did I? I really don't remember!

Ann: I arranged with the servants for the champagne to be chilled, the canapés served, to the agreed time, Edward. And yet you, your brother and your companions remain carousing in The Dormers for two whole hours! You made me a laughing stock!

Edward: No, dear.

Ann: I heard them mocking me!

Edward: No, no ... I assure you ...

Ann: It's Charles, isn't it? He has no respect for me! He persuaded you!

*Door opens. Charles returns.*

Charles: Did someone call? Come, Edward! We are all waiting for you in the cold! Hurry up, man!

Edward: Really, Ann, this is not the time or place ...

Ann: I have to speak out, Edward!

Edward: Not in front of the servants, dear!

Charles: Ann, let Edward be free! Don't be such an old hen! Hurry up, Edward!

*He makes clucking sound to tease Edward. Charles exits.*

Edward: Coming, Charles! *(to Ann)* You are spoiling Charles' great day, Ann!

Ann: Why must he live here in our house, Edward? I married you not your brother.

Edward: The house belongs to the Castleman *family*, Ann. You know that.

*Edward exits; sounds off.*

*Servants start to clear way. Mrs Frampton pours herself a glass of champagne.*

Mrs F: Well, did you hear such a to-do? *(tastes drink)* Mmm! 'Tis a bit warm. But what a way to speak to Master Charles – and on his special day!

Alice: I keep thinking about those eerie, whistling noises we heard! Like a monster, the Reverend said. And the sky all black with smoke.

Martha: What is there to be excited about? It's hardly for the likes of us, is it?

Alice: Reverend says it's not healthy to be travelling at such speed. T'aint natural!

Martha: Nor is slaving away for the likes of the Castlemans all day – but we do it just the same!

Mrs F: You want to watch your mouth, Martha Stone, you do! You're lucky to have a position here at all!

Martha: And I'm ever so grateful!

Alice: And the smell. Like all that dirty soot that fell on me last week as I was cleaning the chimney!

Mrs F: Nonsense! It's progress, isn't it? Nought to be afeard of. Myself, I can't wait to travel up to London! To the theatre, maybe. Just imagine! *(offering champagne)* Now, who's to joining me in celebrating?

*They each take a glass.*

Mrs F: Just think, Alice, you'll be able to visit your sister in Dorchester soon in no time – no more long cart rides. An hour and you'll be there!

Alice: I don't like the sound of it!

Mrs F:           Well, I reckon Master Charles is right. Times are going to change hereabouts in Wimborne. For the good.

Martha:        I'm not so sure. There'll always be rich and there'll always be poor – just like there'll always be a Workhouse!

Mrs F:           And now, there'll always be a railway!

*Freeze, then exit.*

*Projected image: Railways*

*SFX: Steam, train*





**Scene 6**  
**The Twentieth Century**  
**The Schoolroom, the 1940s**

*Projected images as Link: Railways. Closure of station in 1960s. Workhouse closing.*  
*Suzie enters in teaching mode.*  
*Girls all stand and sing as Suzie enters.*

Suzie: Well done, girls. However, I must ask you for your full undivided attention now. *(girls all sit upright)* I have to inform you, reluctantly, that it is no longer possible for the school's Christmas Concert to be performed ...

Girls: Oh Miss!

Suzie: Please do not interrupt me!

Schoolgirl 1: But we were so looking forward to it, Miss Funnell. *(others concur)*

Suzie I understand your disappointment ... as you know this school prides itself on its instruction in the Arts ... music, dance ...

Schoolgirl 2: We've learnt all the words, Miss Funnell. We've been practising during break-times.

Schoolgirl 3: Yes, Miss, and we've even got the costumes!

Suzie: Do not proceed with these untimely remonstrations, girls.

Schoolgirl 1: But why, Miss Funnell?

Suzie: Sometimes there is no simple answer to a question, my dear.

Schoolgirl 1: But you always tell us that knowledge is the answer to everything, Miss Funnell.

Schoolgirl 2: Yes, like Socrates, Miss.

Suzie: Socrates?

Schoolgirl 2: "Learning makes the soul ready for life's journey." Remember, Miss? You made us copy it down only yesterday, Miss.

Suzie: And Socrates was indeed correct in his observation. But in certain cases ... in this particular case ... life does not proceed as we anticipate ... it is beyond our control ... you see ... *(tearful)*

Schoolgirl 3 *(whispering)*: What's wrong with her?

Schoolgirl 1: Dunno. Never seen her like this before.

Schoolgirl 2 *(aloud)*: Are you feeling ill, Miss Funnell?

Suzie *(gathering herself together)*: I am afraid, girls, that as from tomorrow, the school will have to close. I have taken this decision most reluctantly ...

*Door opens. Parent enters angrily. Girls freeze.*

Mr Yates: WHERE IS SHE? Where's my Lily? I won't have her in this cesspit a moment longer!

Suzie: Mr Yates?

Mr Yates: It's a disgrace! You take our money hand over fist and can't even keep the place clean! Your prospectus boasts about excellent sanitation – that a joke! Huh! Only I'm not laughing! And nor are the other parents queuing to see you outside.

Suzie *(to audience)*: I didn't know what to say. I was unused to this tone. My school was for young ladies.

Mr Yates: And make no mistake – I want all my money back – every penny. And I shall tell all the other parents to do the same. Now tell me where you've hidden my Lily and I'll be off. I don't want to catch any diseases.

*Mr Yates leaves.*

Suzie: Diphtheria. The sanitarium was full. Upstairs overlooking the Minster. I had no choice. The inspectors arrived and I had to close. I was ruined.

*Schoolgirls exit. Suzie packs a case. She picks up book Enquire Within.*

Suzie: *Enquire Within Upon Everything. (she packs book away)* This was left. I loved learning and I wanted others to love it too. Here in Allendale House, I tried ... my best.

*She stands, lost in thought, as the next scene begins.*



**Scene 7 (as performed for the first production in December 2001)**  
**East Dorset Heritage Trust, 2001**

*Alan Wilson enters.*

Suzie: Excuse me? Mr Yates?

Alan: No, I'm Alan Wilson, Director of the Heritage Centre and Community Learning Centre.

Suzie: Learning?

Alan: I hope so.

Suzie: Are you from the Council?

Alan: Yes.

Suzie: Would you be so kind as to show me the way to collect my Ration Book?

Alan: I'm afraid it's too late for that. But I can show you how to enrol in learndirect.

Suzie: Can you? That sounds wonderful. Learndirect! I approve of that. And the Castleman family would have too, I'm sure. But you can't give me my Ration Book?

Alan: No, sorry – you seem to know a lot about the history of Allendale House. I don't suppose you'd be interested in becoming a volunteer guide?

Suzie: I used to be a Girl Guide, you know. I remember our troupe leader ... Miss Cunningham ... she was a character. Wouldn't stand for any nonsense! I learnt a lot from her! *(she suddenly changes tack)* Oh dear! But I thought the Council Offices were based here now?

Alan: No. They were after the War, for thirty years – people coming to collect Ration Books, pay their rates and so forth. But they moved back up to Furzehill in the 70s, though they still owned the building. *(gets out notebook, as if to read names)* Since then it's been leased to an Antiques Centre, Antiquated, who sub-let the top floors to three different restaurants – including a Chinese one ...

*Images projected of recent historical residents and events: (e.g. TV; Coronation; key events nationally and in Wimborne; Folk festival; Silver Jubilee; Antiquat pictures; Echo extracts; Chinese restaurant; Andrew & Fergie coming to buy furniture; opening of Allendale as a Community Learning Centre:*

*During this speech, Suzie moves away, back in time to join the cast who enter and stand behind Alan in groups: School in centre; Servants, Stage Right; Castleman Family, Stage Left.*

Alan:            So, you see, Miss ... Oh, she's gone! Oh dear! Was I as boring as that?  
                      *(looks about him)* Hello! Hello! Blimey. All those long nights watching the  
                      builders at work, wondering if we'd be ready in time, must have taken its toll.  
                      Or perhaps I'm just becoming at home with all those former residents of  
                      Allendale.

Voice of House:    When a house is left, it's never for the last time.  
                              When Miss Suzie Funnell went out one door,  
                              Wimborne Urban District Council came in another,  
                              following in her footsteps.  
                              You can never know all there is to know  
                              about a house.

                              Up the stairs and down the hall, went the Castlemans,  
                              went Molly and Martha, Alice and Lily, Mrs Frampton and  
                              Florence, one Derek Schwier. All gone.

                              And now you, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,  
                              take your place in the history of Allendale.  
                              For my future belongs to you  
                              with Alan, Liz, Ian and Mark to lead the way.  
                              Enquire Within Upon Everything.

### *Song – Enquire Within*

Chorus:            If you feel yourself yearning  
                              For community learning  
                              Enquire Within  
                              Upon everything  
                              Whatever you want to know.

Servants:        From dealing with mangle  
                              To removal of stains  
                              From history to mystery  
                              To unblocking drains.

Chorus:            If you feel yourself yearning  
                              For community learning

Enquire Within  
Upon everything  
Whatever you want to know.

Castlemans:        From Englishmen's homes  
                         To Castleman celebs  
                         From banks and railways  
                         To the World Wide Web.

Chorus:            If you feel yourself yearning  
                         For community learning  
                         Enquire Within  
                         Upon everything  
                         Whatever you want to know.

School Children:    From Harry Potter fan clubs  
                         To Steps on line  
                         From making web sites  
                         To Kid Pix design.

Chorus:            If you feel yourself yearning  
                         For community learning  
                         Enquire Within  
                         Upon everything  
                         Whatever you want to know.

*The End*  
*(All bow, then Alan steps forward)*

Alan:              Ladies and gentlemen, thank you. We now invite you to join us in exploring the rest of the building. And to try out the computers upstairs, on which you can learn more about any aspect of the history of Allendale and its relationship with Wimborne.



**Alternative Scene 7 (as performed for the second production in June 2002)**  
**The Council Offices, June 1953**

*Music. Projected image: June 1953 with photo related to the Council*

*Joyce Holder, Council employee, calls from offstage.*

Joyce: Miss Funnell, Miss Funnell? Are you there?

*Door opens. Joyce enters with Suzie's ration book.*

Joyce: Excuse me. *(Pause)* Miss Funnell? *(Pause. Suzie lost in reverie, tearful)*  
Miss Funnell? Are you feeling alright? Here, have a chair. Sit down a moment.

Suzie *(confused, thinks she is addressing a pupil)*: You will have to leave, dear. The school has been closed down.

Joyce: I've brought your Ration Book, Miss Funnell. You left it in the downstairs office. We've been looking for you all over the building. Here. *(Gives her book)* All ship shape and Bristol fashion, as we used to say in the WRENS. *(Pause. Suzie confused)* In the War, Miss Funnell. I was a WREN, you see, in Weymouth ... the Navy?

Suzie: Who are you? Which class are you in? I don't recall your face, girl.

Joyce: I'm Joyce Holder. I didn't come to your school, Miss Funnell. I went to the Minster School and then St John's. But I work here in the Ratings Office downstairs - where you were earlier today – by the big bookshelf?

Suzie: But you just said you were in the Navy.

Joyce: That was during the War years. *(Pause)* It's 1953, Miss Funnell.

Suzie: Oh dear. Do forgive me. How rude!

Joyce: Don't worry.

Suzie *(gathering herself together)*: I mistook you for one of my pupils. I used to work here, you see. Long ago.

Joyce: Yes. The other girls were saying downstairs. It must be strange, coming back, now it's the Council Offices.

Suzie: Yes. So many changes. Yes. *(Pause)*

Joyce: Would you like me to show you downstairs, Miss Funnell? When you're ready.

Suzie: Thank you. *(Looks around once more)*

Joyce: It's just that we're closing early – what with the Coronation. Are you going to listen on the wireless.

Suzie: I ... don't ... know ... Princess Elizabeth?

Joyce: Yes, only now she'll be Queen Elizabeth. A new age!

Suzie: Yes.

Joyce: I'm travelling up tomorrow to stay with my friend from the WRENS, Audrey. She lives up in London now. And we'll watch it all on her new television set. Her family have bought one especially! We'll see the great procession from Buckingham Palace, all the crowds down the Mall ... everything! Even the crowning inside the Abbey!

Suzie: Really?

Joyce: Just imagine! I can't wait! And Audrey says afterwards they're showing all these other exciting programmes, you know. Cowboys and Indians, Mantovani, American serials ... all in the corner of your own room!

Suzie: Enquire Within, upon Everything!

Joyce: Beg pardon, Miss Funnell?

Suzie: A new Elizabethan age. And new ways of learning.

*Door opens. Mrs Marshall, another Council employee, enters, a bit severe.*

Mrs Marshall: Ah! Here you are, Miss Holder. Driving poor Miss Funnell to distraction, I shouldn't wonder, with your idle chatter!

Suzie: Oh no. Miss Holder is teaching me all about Mr Baird's wonderful invention.

Joyce: The television, Mrs Marshall!

Mrs Marshall: Yes, I am aware of that fact, Miss Holder, fuddy-duddy as I am. I am, however, of the opinion that we have all managed perfectly satisfactorily with the wireless until now.

Joyce: They say we'll even have them in Wimborne Minster soon.

Mrs Marshall: Heaven help us! How will I ever get you to do your work then, Miss Holder?

Suzie: Ah, but all things must change. The universe itself is constantly altering its state.

Mrs Marshall (*changing subject to get her out of house*): Well, I'm sure you know best, Miss Funnell, being as you were a teacher and so on. But I'm afraid we're about to close the offices, so Miss Holder will escort you to the door. Have you got your Ration Book safely?

Suzie: The Elizabethan Age. Television sets. What else lies in store for the old house? The Castlemans would have approved, you know. Progress.

*They leave.*

*Song. All cast enters and goes into groups: School in centre; Servants, Stage Right, Castleman Family; Stage Left.*

*Voice of House comes in over a succession of projected images briefly depicting Elizabethan reign (e.g. TV; Coronation; key events nationally and in Wimborne; Folk festival; Silver Jubilee; Antiquat pictures; Echo extracts; Chinese restaurant; Andrew & Fergie coming to buy furniture; opening of Allendale as a Community Learning Centre).*

Voice of House: When a house is left, it's never for the last time.  
When Miss Suzie Funnell went out one door,  
Wimborne Urban District Council came in another,  
following in her footsteps.  
You can never know all there is to know  
about a house.

Up the stairs and down the hall, went the Castlemans,  
went Molly and Martha, Alice and Lily, Mrs Frampton and  
Florence, one Derek Schwier.  
Master and servants, teachers and pupils. Gone.  
Then the Council too - Joyce Holder, Mrs Marshall.  
Before the commercial years - antiques, restaurants. All gone.

And now you, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,  
take your place in the history of Allendale.  
For my future belongs to you.  
A community learning centre



From television to the internet  
Here you may enquire within upon everything.

*Song – Enquire Within*

Chorus:                If you feel yourself yearning  
                             For community learning  
                             Enquire Within  
                             Upon everything  
                             Whatever you want to know.

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                             To Kid Pix design.

Chorus:                If you feel yourself yearning  
                             For community learning  
                             Enquire Within  
                             Upon everything  
                             Whatever you want to know.

*The End*  
*(All bow)*