

13. LATIN PLAY

for
PEPPARD PRIMARY

MINIMUS THE MOUSE

A SKETCH IN 4 SCENES (15 MINUTES)

By kind permission of Barbara Bell who invented Minimus

by

OLIVERUS assisted by VALERIA and CATERINA

A Latin Play for the end of the Summer Term

Synopsis

Five modern-day children are on an archaeological trip. They are tired after a day's work. A mouse, Minimus, appears and speaks to them in Latin. They translate, involving the audience. Minimus takes them home and introduces them to his family and they take part in his birthday party.

13. LATIN PLAY

CAST

Moderns

Emma, 14	An English schoolgirl. Learns Latin, a swot	(Rebecca)
Jacqui, 13	An English schoolgirl. Also learns Latin, rather given to the giggles	(Harrieta)
Beatrice, 12	A French schoolgirl. On a 2 week exchange. Friend of Jacqui	(Carlotta ma)
Tom, 12	An English schoolboy. Clever but sometimes speaks before he thinks	(Christopherus)

Romans etc

Minimus	A mouse	(Emilius)
Vibrissa	A cat	(Pheobea_)
Flavius Cerialis	Commanding Officer of the fort at Vindolanda, on the site of Hadian's wall	(Denisius)
Lepidina	His wife	(Carolotta mi)
Claudia	Sister of Lepidina	(Tia)
Flavia, 16	Daughter of Flavius and Lepidina	(Florella)
Julius, 13	Son of Flavius and Lepidina	(Jacobus mi)
Rufina, 3	Younger daughter of Flavius and Lepidina	(Briarea)
Corinthus	Slave, Greek. Tutor to the children	(Jacobus ma)
Pandora	Slave, Saxon, pretty. Hairdresser and ladies' maid to Lepidina	(Helena)

Off Stage

Producers	Oliver Makower (Oliverus) Valerie Phelps (Gubernatix Valeria) Kate Brealey (Caterina)	
Dea ex machina	Anne Jarvis (Magistera Anna)	
Costumes	Rosie Klingard	
Stage Manger	Sarah Burke	
Assistant Stage Manager	(Seamus)	
Assistant Stage Hand	Candidus a Celtic Slave	(Vilbius)

We also wish to thank John and Nick Butler and Peter Haydon of Butlers the Builders who generously constructed our curtain track, all the parents who kindly provided the costumes, and all the staff and assistants of Peppard Primary who have tolerated our noisy shenanigans with such good humour.

13. LATIN PLAY

Scene 1

(PROPS: MOUND, 2 STOOLS + CUSHION COVERED BY GREY COTTON)

(First Emma & Tom, then Jacqui and Beatrice, all very tired and fed up, wander onto front of stage. Andrew flops down in front of a mound, just big enough for Minimus to be hidden behind it).

Tom: Let's sit down here. I'm bored with archaeology

(Minimus appears, blinking)

Emma: What's that?

Minimus: Minimus sum.

Jacqui: That sounds like Latin. You learn Latin, Emma. What is he saying?

Emma: You learn Latin too. At least you're supposed to

Minimus: Minimus sum. ad villam meam venite.

Tom: He says he's Minny Mouse

(Jacqui, (giggles)) He is very big for a Minny Mouse

Emma: No, I think he's saying his name is Minimus and he's inviting us to his house. Let's go.

CURTAIN

13. LATIN PLAY

Scene 2. AD 100

(PROPS. NONE)

(Inside a Roman house at the fort at Vindolanda on the line of Hadrian's wall, a few years before the wall was built. As the curtain rises, the Romans are ranged stage left. They stand, from the centre, Flavius, Lepidina, Claudia with Rufina holding Lepidina's hand and standing in front of her. Flavia and Julius are sitting on the floor, front, stage right, quietly playing knife-paper-stone. Flavius, Lepidina and Claudia are talking inaudibly.)

The moderns enter stage right. Minimus leads in Emma, followed by Jacqui, Beatrice and Tom who remain stage right).

Emma, (amazed): Look at all the people!

(Romans look towards them, equally amazed.)

Jacqui: Ask them who they are

Emma: qui estis?

Flavius, (very straight and soldier-like): Flavius Cerialis sum. miles sum (*salutes*).

Emma: He's a soldier. We can all ask their names.

Jacqui to Lepidina: quis es?

Lepidina, (politely): Lepidina sum. mater sum (*curtsies*)

Jacqui: I think she's the mother

Jacqui to Claudia: quis es?

Claudia: Claudia sum. soror sum

Jacqui: She's Claudia but what does soror mean?

Beatrice, (French accent): Eet sound lik soeur in fwrench. Soeur, she min seester

Tom to Flavia: quis es?

Flavia (stands up): Flavia sum. pulchra sum (*tries to look beautiful*)

Emma: She says she's beautiful

Tom: Not bad (*Smartens himself up*)

Beatrice to Julius: quis es?

Julius (stands up): Julius sum. filius sum (*bows*). (*Proudly*) Flavia mea soror est

13. LATIN PLAY

Tom (*eagerly putting his hand up*): I think filius means brother

Emma (*in an elder sister tone*): No it doesn't, it means son

Jacqui to Rufina: quis es?

Rufina: Rufina sum. improba sum (*sticks her tongue out*)

Emma: improba means wrong, wicked

Jacqui: She's naughty, she's naughty

(Jacqui and Tom dance round Rufina singing "naughty, naughty" and Rufina starts to cry. Emma shoos them away.)

CURTAIN

13. LATIN PLAY

Scene 3

(PROPS: TABLE, STOOL, SLATE, CHALK)

(As the curtain opens, Lepidina and Pandora are polishing a table in the centre of the room. Emma and Tom are standing stage right, Jacqui and Beatrice stage left. Flavia is sitting writing on a stool in front of them, using a slate and chalk)

Lepidina: eheu. villa sordida est,

Pandora: eheu. eheu. sordidissima est.

Jacqui: eheu must be a word for being sad. It's a sad sort of sound. What's sordida?

Emma: Sordid of course. The house is sordid, very sordi.

Jacqui *(wipes a finger on the table)*: It's only dirty. Sordida means dirty.

Emma: and sordidissima means very dirty!

Jacqui: That's why they said eheu. *(Stepping forward)* Let's all say eheu. Come eheu everybody.

Audience: eheu

Jacqui: That's not loud enough. Try again

Audience: EHEU. EHEU.

(Enter Flavius, cross and concerned, with Corinthus, a slave, behind him)

Flavius to Lepidina: quid facis? quid est tumultus?

Jacqui: He's asking what she's doing.

Emma: And what all the noise is. Keep quiet Jacqui, or we'll get caught.

Jacqui *(stepping forward again to the audience)*: Shhh

Lepidina to Flavius: villa sordida est. villam purgamus

Beatrice: Wot is villam purgham?

Emma: Purgamus is we purge. We purge the house, or more likely we are cleaning the house.

Tom to Corinthus: quis es?

Corinthus: Corinthus sum. servus sum

Jacqui: He is a slave

13. LATIN PLAY

Tom: That's a servant without pay

Flavius: serve, purga

Beatrice: I like zat. "Slave! Git cleaning." Vait till I say zat to Maman.

Corinthus (*grumbling*): doceo, non purgo. multum labor habeo. Flavia segnus est.

Flavia (*pouting to the audience*): non sum. est homo importunes

Jacqui: Flavia thinks Corinthus is horrid

Emma: Corinthus is a teacher. They never like cleaning or putting the chairs on the tables.

Pandora (*looks appealing*): me subvenite!

(*Corinthus sets to work*)

Beatrice (*laughing*): She make heem 'elp her

Jacqui: He is her slave now!

Lepidina: Minime, hodie dies natalis est.

Emma, Jacqui, Beatrice and Tom (*all together, slowly*) Today is Minimus's birthday.

CURTAIN

13. LATIN PLAY

Scene 4

(PROPS: TABLE, CAKE, CANDLES, BOWL, MILK)

(Jacqui & Beatrice are stage left, Emma & Tom stage right. Table with cake on just right of centre. Vibrissa's bowl in front and underneath).

Minimus *(enters, dancing)*: euge! Dies natalis mihi est.

Jacqui: He's all right. What's happened to mus?

Emma: It's his birthday.

Minimus: euge! euge! felix dies. euge!

Tom *(stepping forward to the audience)*: Come on everyone

Everyone: euge! euge! felix dies. euge!
euge! euge! felix dies. euge!

(Minimus does a little dance, steps on the rim of Vibrissa's milk on the floor and it goes everywhere).

(Enter Vibrissa, very angry): irata sum. lac spoliatum est. *(Hisses)*

Emma: Vibrissa is angry. Her milk is spoilt

(Minimus hides behind table)

Jacqui: eheu. Her milk's gone. Minimus is for it

Vibrissa: *(sees Minimus)* Arrhhhhh. *(Chases him)*

(They weave in and out of Emma, Jacqui, Beatrice and Tom)

(Enter Rufina, chases Vibrissa. Enter Pandora, chases Rufina. Enter Flavius with Lepida)

Flavis *(sternly and in a loud voice)*: tacete omnes

Emma: Be quiet, everyone *(Everyone stands still)*

Lepidina: cantate, omnes, felix dies Minime sit.
(Everyone, cast and audience, to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You")
felix dies tibi sit
felix dies tibi sit
felix dies, care Minime
felix dies tibi sit

euge, euge, EUGE!

CURTAIN - FINIS