Scene 1

NARRATOR This is the story of a naughty little boy whom everybody loves. His name is Rufus.

He lives with his family in Vindolanda, near Hadrian's Wall in the North of England. Britain is ruled by the Romans, and Rufus's father is the Commander of a cohort in the Roman army. In the first scene, Minimus, a mouse who lives in their house, is finding out about Rufus's family – his father, his mother, his sister, his brother.

MINIMUS (to Flavius) quis es?

FLAVIUS Flavius sum, pater sum.

MINIMUS (to Lepidina) quis es?

LEPIDINA Lepidina sum. mater sum.

MINIMUS (to Flavia) quis es?

FLAVIA Flavia sum. soror sum.

MINIMUS (to Iulius) quis es?

IULIUS Iulius sum, frater sum.

NARRATOR Here are the two slaves – Corinthus, a Greek, and Candidus, a Celt. Corinthus is

Flavius's secretary and the older children's teacher. Candidus is the cook and

handyman. Minimus asks them what they are doing.

MINIMUS quid facis, Corinthe?

CORINTHUS (holding a book and a stilus) lego et scribo.

MINIMUS quid facis, Candide?

CANDIDUS (with a saucepan and a duster) coquo et purgo.

NARRATOR And here is Vibrissa, the family cat, who hopes one day to catch Minimus.

(Vibrissa jumps towards Minimus)

MINIMUS noli surgere, Vibrissa!

EVERYONE (shouts) curri Minime!

(Vibrissa chases Minimus off. Everyone else follows)

Scene 2

Lepidina, Corinthus, Candidus

(The table is being laid, then Corinthus exits)

NARRATOR Today, the Governor, Marcellus, is coming to dinner. Lepidina is worried because

nothing seems to be ready. She thinks the house is a mess and the food won't be

cooked in time. She has ordered roast peacock.

LEPIDINA (to Candidus) villa sordida est!

CANDIDUS purgo diligenter. (Dusts the table)

LEPIDINA quid coquis?

CANDIDUS ecce! (Goes off and brings on the peacock) Pavo perfectus est!

(Candidus puts the peacock on the table and goes off to fetch a bowl of fruit and some cheese. He continues to clean up and arrange everything on the table, then

exits. Enter Minimus)

NARRATOR Here comes Minimus again. He has smelt the cheese.

MINIMUS caseus optimus est. (He reaches up for it)

LEPIDINA mus improbus est, Vibrissa, surge! (Vibrissa chases Minimus)

(Enter Flavia with her dress rather creased)

LEPIDINA eheu! Flavia, tunica non pulchra est. ubi Pandora est?

NARRATOR Pandora is a slave girl who helps Lepidina look after Rufus. She is also a very

good hairdresser. (Enter Pandora)

LEPIDINA Pandora, mei capilli non pulchri sunt. et ubi meae pillulae?

(Lepidina, Flavia and Pandora go to side of stage)

NARRATOR Pandora sees to Lepidina's hair and puts her necklace round her neck. Lepidina

puts a precious gold ring on Flavia's finger.

PANDORA anulus splendidus est! Pretiosus est!

FLAVIA cur pretiosus est?

LEPIDINA quod aurus est.

(Flavius enters to centre stage, calling for Corinthus)

FLAVIUS Corinthe, ubi vinum? (Corinthus enters with wine)

CORINTHUS hic est (shows the wine). Vinum optimum.

FLAVIUS euge! Candide, cibus optimus! (looks at the food).

(There is a knock at the door; Corinthus goes to open it. The Governor enters.

Exit Corinthus).

FLAVIUS salve, vir optime! exspectatissimus es. sede!

(Marcellus sits down)

EVERYONE salve!

MARCELLUS salvete! beatus sum. (Points to Rufus who has just come in) quid facit?

(Rufus is running towards the peacock on the table)

RUFUS euge! pavo pulcher est!

EVERYONE Rufe, noli tangere!

FLAVIUS Rufe, improbus es!

LEPIDINA (pointing to the door) redi ad cubiculum.

(Rufus starts to cry)

MARCELLUS noli lacrimare, Rufe! (to Lepidina) Rufus non improbus est. Rufus curiosus est.

(Rufus is happy and runs to Marcellus)

RUFUS gratias tibi ago, vir optime!

(They all sit down for supper)

Scene 3

NARRATOR We are in the schoolroom. Corinthus is teaching Flavia and Iulius. Iulius is writing

but Flavia is sitting looking bored. Corinthus is angry.

CORINTHUS non laetus sum. cur non scribis, Flavia?

FLAVIA fatigata sum.

CORINTHUS (pointing to the door) Iuli, procede ludere. (Iulius goes out) Flavia, scribe!

(Corinthus goes out. Vibrissa enters, followed by Rufus)

FLAVIA Rufe, noli tangere!

(Rufus pulls Vibrissa's tail. Vibrissa hisses)

FLAVIA Vibrissa noli surgere! (Vibrissa jumps on to the table and knocks over the ink-pot)

FLAVIA eheu! atramentum volat

(Corinthus and Iulius enter. Vibrissa runs out)

CORINTHUS quid scribes, Flavia?

FLAVIA nihil! Vibrissa improba est et Rufus improbus est.

CORINTHUS Rufe! ubi Vibrissa?

RUFUS ilgnoro. desidero ludere.

NARRATOR Corinthus realises that everyone needs playtime.

CORINTHUS venite, omnes. "Simo dicit" ludimus.

NARRATOR They start to play "Simon Says". If Corinthus says "Simo dicit", they must do what

he says. If he doesn't start by saying "Simo dicit" they mustn't do anything.

CORINTHUS Simo dicit, procedite.

(They all move forward)

CORINTHUS redite!

(Nobody moves)

CORINTHUS Simo dicit, surgite.

(They all jump up)

CORINTHUS discumbite!

(Only Rufus lies down. Flavia and Iulius laugh at him. Rufus starts to cry)

CORINTHUS noli lacrimare, Rufe! non improbus es.

RUFUS (jumping up happily) gratias tibi ago, Corinthe!

(They hug. Exeunt)

Scene 4

NARRATOR Iulius and Rufus are in the guardroom with Flavius. Iulius wants to join the Roman

army as soon as he is 18. He and Rufus are asking Flavius about the weapons.

IULIUS (pointing to a helmet) quid est?

FLAVIUS galea est. Rufe, noli tangere! (Rufus is trying to put the helmet on)

IULIUS (pointing to the sword) quid est?

FLAVIUS gladius est. (Rufus goes to pick up the sword)

Rufe, noli tangetre!

IULIUS (pointing to the dagger) quid est?

FLAVIUS pugio est. (Rufus is touching the point)

Rufe, relinque! periculosus est. improbus es, Rufe!

(Rufus has pricked his finger. He sucks it and sobs. Enter Candidus)

CANDIDUS ecce, Rufe! (He has a wooden sword in his hand)

IULIUS nunc Rufus ridet!

RUFUS gratias tibi ago, Candide!

(They hug, Exeunt)

Scene 5 Pandora and Rufus

NARRATOR Rufus is ill. He has a high temperature, and is complaining of stomach pains. He

is lying down. Pandora is trying to feed him. He won't eat.

(Enter Lepidina)

PANDORA (to Lepidina) Rufus nihil consumit.

LEPIDINA anxia sum. medicum arcesso. Corinthe!

NARRATOR Here comes Corinthus with a doctor.

CORINTHUS medicus est. (Exit Corinthus)

LEPIDINA salve!

MEDICUS salve, domina!. salve, Rufe! ubi tibi dolet? (He bends over Rufus, rubbing his

tummy)

RUFUS venter mihi dolet. (Rufus starts to cry)

MEDICUS (pouring out some medicine) Hoc bibe, Rufe!

(Rufus drinks it and lies down quietly)

LEPIDINA (to the doctor) gratias tibi ago! vale!

(The doctor leaves) venite. omnes!

(They all come in, looking very worried)

LEPIDINA Rufus calidus est.

IULIUS & FLAVIA pavidi sumus. Rufum amamus.

FLAVIUS anxius sum. Rufum amo.

CORINTHUS sollicitus sum. Rufus optimus est.

CANDIDUS tristis sum. Rufus proprius est.

(Pandora is mopping Rufus's brow. She stays with him)

NARRATOR Flavius takes wine from the table and tells everyone to kneel down and pray to

Jupiter. Candidus goes to one side to pray to the British goddesses.

FLAVIUS luppiter! preces nostras audi! vinum accipe!

CANDIDUS deae matres! precem meam audite!

NARRATOR They all pray quietly. After a little while, Pandora jumps up smiling. Rufus is

better.

PANDORA nunc Rufus <u>non</u> calidus est.

RUFUS (sitting up and pointing to his tummy) venter mihi non dolet!

OMNES euge! bene tibi, Rufe! optimus es!

RUFUS gratias omnibus ago! euge!

OMNES euge!