

Scene One – Tom wants to leave!

The School Hall

Props: Cleaners' mops & buckets, brooms, dusters

Lights: Spots on Narrators

(Enter the Narrators)

Narrator 1: Tom had been the caretaker at Tower School for more years than he cared to remember.

(Enter Tom and his team of cleaners.)

He knew the place like the back of his hand. He had overseen the cleaning and ensured that the floors gleamed and the place was spotless. You could eat your dinner off Toms' floors. He looked after his team of cleaning staff and made sure they did their work properly.

Narrator 2: If a job needed to be carried out at Tower, you just had to ask Tom and, hey presto, with a puff and bang it would be done. He repaired and maintained anything and everything. He erected notice boards and display boards and took them down when they weren't needed any more.

Narrator 3: He was, in his own way, an environmentalist, making sure that energy wasn't wasted on his premises – flicking off unneeded lights

(The lights go out)

Tom?

....and turning taps off properly. He knew the cost of things.

He was also a caring man – painting areas that had begun to look tatty, putting in ramps, hearing fields and rails for children that had physical difficulties.

Narrator 4: He made the site a safe place to be – checking the electrical wiring, removing dangerous objects, shutting the windows at night and locking the premises up with his numerous keys. There wasn't a spot on the Tower site that Tom hadn't cared for or had some hand in. He was, as they say, "part of the fixtures and fittings".

(Exit Narrators)

Tom : I love this school but really I just want to be able to retire and move to my lovely little home in Cornwall that I share with the love of my life – Rosie. There's just one big problem though – I am not old enough yet.

(Enter Rosie)

Rosie: I could retire now if I wanted to but I can't really go until Tom can leave, can I? I've been here so long I'm part of the furniture now, aren't I Tom, just like you?

Tom: Yes, Rosie.

Rosie: I've always liked being with the kids. Haven't I Tom? I used to run a youth club, and I worked at Tower's After School Club when it started up.

LIGHTS: DIM
Spot on Narrators

(In the background Rosie is busy doing her work.)

Narrator 1:	Rosie had been a helper in the school for a very long time. She was very good at her job. She's worked inside and outside the classroom helping children with their work, and out in the playground looking after them at lunch and playtime.
Narrator 2:	She always cared for the children in her class as if they were her own. She prepared their work for display, listened to them read and to their problems, helped them with their English and Maths, sorted out their books, sharpened their pencils.
Narrator 3:	Rosie kept the classroom spick and span. Nothing was out-of-place when Rosie was the helper in the class. She was, as they say, "a safe pair of hands".

Lights: FULL

(Enter Tom)

- Tom: Oh, Rosie! Here we are at Tower again and I just wish we could be finishing the lake at that cottage of ours.
- Rosie : I know, Tom. We've already done so much work haven't we? That dry-stone wall looks great. It's really good to think that we did it all by ourselves.
- Tom : Yes, and those fences we've been weaving look fantastic too. We're a great team, Rosie!
- Rosie: We are, and now the ducklings are about to hatch. I hope we don't miss them.
- Tom: So do I. Soon we'll have loads of them floating about on the lake – if I ever get the chance to get it finished.
- Rosie: You will, Tom. Why don't you go and have a word with Herself about early retirement. You never know, she might let you go with a handsome pension.

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Remove anything on stage

Bring on Secretary's desk with computer and lamp, telephone + chair.

Head's table, chair, telephone

Children's project. Box on Head's table with sweets in it.

Scene Two – Please can I leave?

THE HEAD'S OFFICE

Lights: Spot on Narrators

Narrator 4: So Tom did. He knew Herself was likely to be busy, she always was, but he thought he'd try to have a quiet little word with her. He chatted to the Secretary on the way in.

Secretary: Hello, Tom! You look nice and suntanned. Had a good weekend in Cornwall?

Tom: Yes thanks, Sharon. How're those babies coming along?

Secretary: Well, there's a lot of wriggling going on. I can't believe I'm having three. I've only got one more month to go and then I can put my feet up and twiddle my thumbs.

Tom: You won't be twiddling your thumbs when they arrive. That's for sure.

Secretary: You're right. I won't know which end up I am then. I hope they're not identical I might end up feeding the same one over and over again.

Tom: Is Herself in?

Secretary: Yes she's in her office.

Sound Effect : Knock on door

(Tom knocks on the door.)

Tom : Can I have a quiet word with you please?

Herself: Yes, Tom, of course you can – sit down.

Tom: I was in Cornwall at the weekend working on my lake with Rosie.

Herself: How lovely. How's it coming along?

Tom: Well, that's the problem really, I have such a lot to do on that site that I was....

Sound effect: Knock on door

(Enter the secretary)

Secretary: Sorry to interrupt, Tom.
Could you sign these cheques please, I need to get them off straight away?

Herself : Yes of course I can, Sharon – you know I like to get things over and done with quickly. *(Sharon exits)*
Sorry, Tom , what were you saying?

Tom: Er I was just telling you about the lake and the lack of time.....

Sound effect: Phone rings

Herself: Excuse me, Tom; I'm expecting the Chair of Governors.
(*She picks up the phone.*) Yes of course, Will you? Oh good. I'll see you at the meeting then. Goodbye.
(*She puts the phone down.*)
Sorry about that! What is it about the lake, Tom?

Tom: Er, I would like to get it finished but I don't really have the time at present. We spend all our weekends there, as you know.

Herself: Yes, I do and I have heard all the good things you are doing there as well.

Sound Effect: Knock on the door

(*Enter 2 KS1 pupils with a note in their hands.*)

Child 1: Miss Simons sent us, Miss.

Child 2: We've come to get a silver certificate.

Herself: Well done both of you!

Child 1: We've been doing a project on the environment and we did this for our homework during the holiday.

(*She gives the project folder to the Head.*)

Herself: Mmm. Very good.

Child 2: She came to my house and we did it on my computer.

Herself: Did you? Well that's very good to have worked so hard during the holiday.

Child 1: I've made my mum recycle everything. We hardly put anything in our bin now.

Child 2: We've put a big notice over our bins at home that says DON'T FORGET TO RECYCLE, haven't we?

Child 1: Yeah, but my big brother takes no notice and still puts his drink cans in there.

Child 2: Her brother's a pain and so's mine.

Herself: Oh dear! Can you leave this with me and I will make sure you both get your certificates in assembly on Friday? Now what would you like, a lucky dip or a chocolate bar? You come and choose!

(*The children take a sweet from the box.*)

Aren't they clever, Tom?

Tom: Yes, well done girls!

Herself: Now, go straight back to class now won't you?

Children: Yes Miss. (*The children exit*)

Herself: So what's the problem, Tom?

Tom: Er, I was hoping that you would help me to get an early retirement package so that I could move down to Cornwall permanently with Rosie.

(Herself scratches her head and looked troubled.)

Herself: Early retirement? You're part of the fabric of the school, Tom. What would we do without you?

Tom: I know I've got a couple of years to go but I was hoping

Herself: Tom, much as I would love to help, I doubt very much if the local authority would let you have early retirement. The only way they'd let you go is if you were incompetent and didn't do your job properly then they might be pleased to package you off early. Well that's not going to happen because you do everything so well.

Tom: Oh dear! I was hoping there would be a way out.

Herself: Tom, I am sorry. I will ask but I doubt it very much. Anyway, what would we do at Tower without you? Don't you realise, Tom - you are indispensable.

Tom: Indispensable?

Herself: Yes, Tom, indispensable.

(Tom leaves Herself and moves to the front of the stage. Herself exits. Rosie enters)

Rosie: How did you get on?

Tom: She says I'm too indispensable to retire.

Rosie: Oh dear! But it's nice to know that you're so highly regarded.

Tom: I suppose so but I just want to be with you Rosie in Cornwall. Just us, sitting by our lake, fishing together. That's all I want.

SONG: SWEET LITTLE HOME IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Clear stage

Tin bath with ramp for ducks

Lit incubator with chicks in

Tray with coffee mugs on.

Scene Three – Sweet little home in the Countryside

IN THE COUNTRY

Lights: Spots on Narrators

Narrator 1:	When the weekend came Tom and Rosie were back in Cornwall in their beloved cottage. There was much to do. The ducklings and chicks were about to hatch.
Narrator 2:	The lake area had to be out-of-bounds for the ducks because it was so muddy. Tom and Rosie had agreed to make a little enclosure for their feathered friends to live in until the lake was ready.
Narrator 3:	On the way from London they had purchased three tin baths that they now filled with water and put ramps up against. Soon the ducks were waddling up the ramps and splashing around in the water, happily quacking away.
Narrator 4:	Tom went off to dig the lake and Rosie made some tea and went to look at the incubator in the barn where the eggs were to see whether any of them were about to hatch. She realised as soon as she entered the small barn that some had because of the cheeping noise that greeted her. She rushed back out to call Tom

LIGHTS: FULL

- Rosie : *(Whispering to Tom)* Look it's a little Muscovy chick. Oh! Isn't it sweet?
- Tom: My mother had a pair of Muscovy ducks on her farm when I was a little boy. I always thought they were so unattractive compared to the rest of the ducks.
- Rosie: They're all lovely, as far as I'm concerned,
(Rosie opens the incubator and touches the little chick.)
You're so soft and fluffy and gorgeous aren't you?
- Tom: *(Mimicking Rosie)* Yes!
- Rosie: Stop it you silly goose.
(Rosie tickles Tom in the ribs.)
- Tom: I'm not a goose I'm a little Muscovy duck, Rosie, all fluffy and gorgeous.
- (The pair of them laugh.)*
- Rosie: I'll never eat crispy duck again when we go to the Chinese Restaurant.
- Tom: But it's your favourite, Rosie.
- Rosie: I know, but I would feel too guilty if I did it now.
- Tom: Soon the place will be full of little ducklings going quackers.

Rosie: Do you remember when we used to take the children to feed the ducks in the park. They loved it didn't they?

Tom: Yeah, especially the little ducklings.

(Tom and Rosie exit.)

Little children sing SONG: FLUFFY LITTLE DUCKLINGS

Lights: Spot on Narrators

Narrator 1: And so the weeks went by with Tom and Rosie visiting their beautiful home in Cornwall at the weekends and working at Tower School during the week.

Narrator 2: Then came the fateful weekend when Tom was putting the final touches to the lining of his lake. Rosie had just brewed up some tea and was walking past the duck enclosure when she noticed something she didn't like the look of.

Narrator 3: She put down the tea tray and went over to the tin bath that the Muscovy always chose to splash around in. She could see something white at the bottom of the bath. She knew even before she got there what had happened.

LIGHTS: FULL

Rosie: Tom, come quick! There's something wrong with the Muscovy!

(Tom comes running in.)

Tom: What is it, Rosie? What's the matter?

Rosie: It's the Muscovy. It's at the bottom of the bath.

(They both look in the tin bath.)

(Crying) It's dead, Tom, I'm sure it is.

Tom: How can a duck drown? It doesn't make any sense.

(He pulls it out of the tin bath and starts to shake it.)

Rosie: Maybe it's had a heart attack or something.

Tom: I'll rub its heart, Rosie, you give it the kiss of life.

Narrator 4: And that is what they did. Tom gently caressed the little duck's heart and Rosie blew into its beak, slowly and steadily. They did this for some time until finally the little duck started to move around.

Rosie: It's alive, Tom! It's alive.

Tom: Oh my goodness. Isn't that amazing?

(The pair of them look at the little duck as it waddles about.)

Rosie: Look, Tom, it can't keep its eyes off us. It keeps looking from you to me.

Tom: You're right, Rosie. It's uncanny isn't it? It's just as if it knows we've saved its life.

(The duck waddles backwards and forwards looking at them.)

Rosie: Oh! You sweet little thing. I'm so glad you're alive again.

(She hugs the duck.)

We should give it a name, Tom, shouldn't we?

Tom: *(Laughing)* Yes, I'm going to call it Dead Duck.

Rosie: You can't call it that, Tom.

Tom: Why not? It was dead. Sounds reasonable enough to me.

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Clear Stage

Side view of car with Duck and luggage in the boot.

Scene Four – D.D. Goes travelling

IN THE CAR

LIGHTS: SPOT ON NARRATORS

Narrator 1:	And so that is what Tom called the Muscovy. Although Rosie didn't like the name it did make her smile when she heard him say it. She preferred to call it DD – short for Delightful Duck. .
Narrator 2:	From that point on the little duck would follow Tom and Rosie about the place wherever they went. He was like a little shadow. Somehow the pair of them began to feel that the duck had become kind of human – one of the family.
Narrator 3:	What Rosie and Tom didn't know as they made their way back to London that Sunday evening was that Dead Duck was in the back of their car.
Narrator 4:	He had sneaked in the boot when they were packing their things away and hidden underneath the blanket they threw over everything. Dead Duck had no idea where he was going but he certainly was not going to be parted from Rosie and Tom. That was for sure.

(Rose and Tom are driving to London in their car chatting. DD is in the boot listening)

- Tom: I've had enough of looking after the school. I know everyone there is really kind but my heart's not there anymore, Rosie.
- Rosie: I know sweetheart but what can we do? Herself thinks your indispensable and the only way they could get rid of you early would be if you stopped doing your job properly.
- Tom: I've been thinking about that. What do you think would happen if I stopped doing everything well and started being incompetent?
- Rosie: Oh! I don't know about that. You'd lose your reputation, Tom, and that's worth a lot in life.
- Tom: Is it? I'm not so sure. No-one would miss us if we were in Cornwall would they? Nobody's indispensable – that's what my mother used to say.
- Rosie: She's probably right dear.
- Tom: Supposing I left the windows open and the doors unlocked and let the place get dirty and not bother about it. They'd soon get fed up with me then.
- Rosie: I don't like the sound of it, Tom. It's not like you at all.
- Tom: It was that duck drowning business that did it. It made me wonder what else could go wrong when we're not there.
- Rosie: The neighbours are good, Tom, they'd telephone if anything was up.
- Tom: It's a long way to go to sort out a problem isn't it?

Rosie: You're a very good school caretaker my love; and we only have one more year to go before you can officially retire. Promise me you won't do anything stupid, Tom, it could make you ill, maybe even kill you with all the worry.

Tom: I'll think about it, Rosie. That's all I'm saying.

Lights: Spots on Narrators

Narrator 1: The duck was quietly listening to all this in the back. When he heard that Tom could be made ill and killed, his head shot up and his heart pounded and he was terrified. How could this be and what could he do about it? He thought about Tom losing his reputation, whatever that was, but he was far more worried about him being killed now. That certainly was not on.

Narrator 2: The duck wasn't sure what a school caretaker was either but he thought that it meant taking care and Tom certainly took care of him. He promised then and there that if Tom stopped taking care of this school thing he would look after it himself. After all, Tom had saved his life. The least he could do was help to save his.

Lights: Spot on Narrators

Narrator 3: When Rosie and Tom arrived in London late that night, they were amazed to discover the duck asleep in the boot of the car.

Lights: FULL

(Tom and Rosie empty the car.)

Tom: Well I'll be blowed! Look at this, Rosie! You won't believe what I've discovered in the boot of the car.

(Rosie goes over to have a look.)

Rosie: What is it love? Oh my goodness!

Tom: It's Dead Duck. It's come back with us.

Rosie: Poor little thing. Look at it, Tom! You'll have to carry it in. It's fast asleep.

Tom: You're right; I certainly won't be driving back to Cornwall tonight. That's for sure. He'll have to stay with us until next weekend.

Rosie: We can't put it in the garden all night. It'll be terrified. I'll put some water in the bath and we'll leave it asleep in the bathroom in the old dog basket. I'll put in a feathered cushion to make it feel cosy.

Tom: We'd better leave our bedroom door open and listen out for it.

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Clear stage

Scene Five - D.D. Goes to School

IN THE PLAYGROUND

Lights: Spot on Narrators

Narrator 4: In the morning it seemed sensible to take the duck to school with them. There was a pond in the grounds they knew it would enjoy splashing around in. So they rang and checked with Herself first to make sure it was ok. She was amazed to hear the story of the duck's revival, and delighted to have it in school. She was waiting for them at the gate when they arrived, and was thrilled to see the little duck.

LIGHTS: FULL

(Tom and Rosie walk in with the duck waddling behind them.)

Herself: Oh what a sweet creature!

Tom: It follows us around everywhere we go.

Rosie: We didn't think it would get in the boot of the car though, did we, Tom?

Tom: Certainly not.

Herself: I'm not surprised it follows you around. You saved its life. It's very grateful, aren't you little duck?

(Herself stokes the duck's back gently.)

Tom: I suppose so.

Herself: The children will adore having it in school. We'll have to make sure they don't overwhelm the poor thing, though. I'll have an early assembly to let them know all about it and then get the School Council members to look after it and make sure no one upsets the poor little thing.

Tom: Thank you. We thought we'd take it to the pond for now and let it have a bit of a splash.

Herself: Bring it into assembly at 9.15 and we'll get the *(Slowly)* intro-duck-tions over quickly!

(They all laugh and the duck quacks.)

Lights: Spots on Narrators

Narrator 1: The Head tells the children about the duck in assembly and introduces it to them.

IN THE SCHOOL HALL

Lights: FULL

Herself: ...and so boys and girls that is the story of how this lovely little duck came to visit us at Tower School. Until it is able to go back to its home in Cornwall we are going to have to look after it. So Emily, chair of the school council, where are you?

(Emily comes onto the stage and strokes the little duck.)

I want you and your team of councillors to make sure that our little friend is properly looked after during its stay at Tower.

Emily: Yes Miss, we can do that?

Herself: I'd like you to call an emergency meeting and draw up a plan right now.

Emily: Of course. Has the duck got a name, Miss?

Herself: Tom, has it got a name?

Tom: Dead Duck – that's what I call it.

(All the children laugh.)

Emily: It's not a very kind name, is it?

(The duck waddles us to her side and nestles against her leg.)

Duck: Thank you, Emily.

(Emily looks at the duck. She's surprised it can speak, but quickly realises no-one else heard it.)

Emily: That's ok.

Herself: What's ok?

Emily: Er.. er.. nothing Miss.

Herself: Do you know you're right, Emily. Perhaps the School Council could come up with a friendlier name for our little friend.

Emily: We will be pleased to help.

(The duck rubs his neck against Emily.)

Duck: You're very nice, Emily. Thank you.

Emily: You're welcome.

Herself: Right then, it's back to schoolwork now everyone. You can see the duck at playtime but remember – don't crowd it. It's only little and it'll be afraid.

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Library bookcase

Seats for the School Council to sit on

White board with pens