

Scene One – Out with the old!

The Museum

Props: Automata (circus models) with covers over them and information cards. 2 tatty lions. Tray of drinks . Big present.

Lights: FULL

(Enter the museum manager and his new ladyfriend)

Max: Well, babe, what do you think of my museum? Great ain't it?

Tracey: Oh Max, it's lovely, so many gorgeous things, you are clever.

Max: Sure, I can see you've got good taste babe. I've pumped a lot of money into this place.

Tracey: What's that stand over there, Max? I don't think you've shown me that one.

Max: Oh that, it's old hat babe, you don't want to see that. It's had it.

Tracey: But isn't it a circus stand? Oh let's have a look, Maxie! I love the circus.

Max: Do you babe? Well soon it's going to be a Space Age Stand. I've got big plans for that.

(Tracey goes over to the stand anyway)

Tracey: *(She reads the sign)* TROGG'S CIRCUS. Hey, why has everything got covers on it?

(She gets up on the stand and starts to remove the cover off one of the exhibits).

Oh, look at these two clowns, aren't they sweet? But their costumes are all faded.

Max: Sure babe, but I ain't wasting money on that lot.

SONG: MONEY

Max: Come on, we've got to meet the new curator who's taking over the museum on Monday. It's saved me a lot of money getting a youngster in. I hope he's got some energy.

(Peter, the new curator, comes in)

Peter: Hello sir, I'm your new man, pleased to meet you.

Max: Well, we'll see about that. I hope you'll be an improvement on old Tom. He's been here for so long he could be one of the exhibits himself. My father took him on 30 years ago. Personally, I'm glad to see the back of him; doddering old fool.

Tracey: Oh! Er! Hi Peter! I hope you're going to do something to change Max's mind about that old circus stand. It would be such a pity to see it go.

Max: Ain't quite as easy as that my darling. These things need money and I've already spent a fortune. I wanna Space stand in its place a.s.a.p. The science Museum has a number of space exhibits they wanna get rid of and I could be signing a contract with them at the end of the month, so all that junk will have to go.

Tracey: Oh, Maxie, but what about those lovely clowns?

Max: You'll soon forget about them honey when I show you the little rock I just bought you from the jewellery shop.

Tracey: Oh, Maxie, what kinda rock?

Max: Well it ain't Gibraltar. I'll show you over dinner. Come on babe! Let's go!

(To Peter) Hey, get rid of those mangy lions over there. Shove them in the cellar for the time being, they're really tatty and they show the place up. And you make sure you look after the museum, I've got a lot of dough sewn up in this business. It has to be a success.

(Max and Tracey exit)

(Old Tom comes in)

Tom: Hello, I'm Tom, you must be Peter the new curator.

Peter: Yes, I am, pleased to meet you.

Tom: I see the boss has just left, too busy to say "goodbye" to me on my last day.

Peter: Oh, I'm really sorry. You must be feeling pretty upset about leaving.

Tom: No, I can't say I am now. When his father ran the business it was a great place to work in. He was so thoughtful, such a nice guy. Hard to believe he produced such a money-grabbing son like that.

(Enter the secretary and the lady from the box office with a tray of drinks and a big present)

Una: Have they gone, him and his new floosy?

Tom: Yep.

Una: Well, thank goodness for that. The man is a pig. Couldn't even be bothered to buy you a retirement present, after all you've done for this place, Tom.

Sylvie: His father would turn in his grave if he knew what was going on.

Una: Yes, Ted was a proper gentleman. *(Turns to Peter)*
Oh, sorry we've ignored you love. It's not your fault poor Tom is out of a job. My name's Una and this is Sylvie.

(They all shake hands)

Peter: Pleased to meet you.

Sylvie: We'll miss you, Tom, so we've bought you a little going away gift.

Tom: Thanks girls! If it hadn't have been for you two I'd have been off years ago. *(He opens the present, thanks them and gives them a kiss)*

SONG: LET THE SUNSHINE THROUGH

Peter: His girlfriend was very worried about losing the circus stand.

Tom: What! He's getting rid of it?

Peter: 'Fraid so. He's putting up a Space Stand in its place at the end of the month if he can get a deal.

Tom: What a shame! I remember when we first put that up. The kids were queuing up to get in here for that.

Peter: Who was Trogg?

Tom: Mr Alfred Trogg travelled all over the world looking for unusual acts for his circus back in the 1930's. He was very famous indeed. When he died, Max's father, Ted, felt he should be honoured by having models made of his famous circus acts. Each of the characters under these cloths are automata.

Peter: What are those when they're at home?

Tom: Electronic models. Let's give him a demonstration girls.

(Tom and the women go over to the two clowns and start them up. The clowns go through their act.)

Sylvie: Aren't they lovely! It's ages since I've seen those working.

Peter: They are unusual. I've never seen anything like that before, but they do look very tatty, they need a complete overhaul.

Tom: Some of the models aren't working properly. They'd cost a fortune to get repaired. It's been under wraps now for a couple of years. I suppose it was inevitable it would have to go.

Peter: Unless I can come up with a rescue plan before the end of the month.

Una: Some hope of that, love. Getting money out of Max Carter would be like getting blood out of a stone.

Peter: He's told me to put these lions in the cellar because they're tatty. I suppose I'd better do as I'm told.

(Peter removes the lions and the others put the covers back on the automata.)

Tom: Well, good luck in your new job.

Sylvie: My goodness he'll need it.

Tom: I'm off! We might as well all be off, don't you think? *(He goes off with his present.)*

Peter: Leave me with the keys, Tom. I'd like to have a look around before I go if you all don't mind.

Una: Suit yourself, love. Have a nice weekend.

(They leave, and Peter remains with the lions in a darkened circus.)

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

PROPS: *Remove tray & present wrapping. Circus models remain on the stage with covers. Sketch book for child 6.*

Scene Two – Sheltering from the rain!

The Museum

Lights: Dim

Peter: Well, I've had a good look around, and I have to say, the most interesting stand of all of them is this old circus one. Seems such a terrible pity that it's all going to be scrapped.

(Walks off to his office)

Lights: FULL

(In the background the old circus founder and ringmaster comes to life.)

Trogg: Ted Carter, your son's getting rid of us. Can you hear me? It's Alfred Trogg, your old friend. Some chance of waking the dead! Let me see if I can wake up these automata.

(He goes around pressing their buttons)

Danger! Red Alert! Danger! Danger!!

(All the automata begin to come to life and throw off their covers, they each begin to go through their acts)

Trogg: Your days are numbered. You're off to the scrap heap, the lot of you. Hang about! What's that noise?

(A group of youngsters make their way into the museum – their voices can be heard in the distance.)

Trogg: Freeze everyone! We've got visitors.

Child 1: Cor! It's chucking it down out there. Quick! Climb through this open window, we can shelter in the museum!

Child 7: Yes, hurry up! My hair's getting messed up.

Child 5: But we may get done for breaking and entering.

Child 1: But we haven't broken anything, stupid, because the window was already open wasn't it!

Child 3: I don't think it's a good idea.

Child 1: All right then, you stay out there in the wet and we'll see you later.

Child 3: Oh all right. I'm coming.

Child 4: Flippin' eck! Look at this place! Looks like a scene from Dracula's castle.

Child 5: I've never been in here before, have you?

Child 4: Too flipping expensive ain't it? Costs about a fiver to get in here. I could get load of chocolate for that money.

Child 6: *(Sketches in her sketch book.)* Yeah, only the posh kids come 'ere don't they?

Child 3: My mum came here when she was little.

Child 6: Yeah but that was ages ago weren't it?

Child 3: You calling my mum old?

Child 1: Well she ain't young is she?

Child 3: She's lovely, my mum is. You leave her alone!

Everyone: Mummy's little didums. Mummy's little didums.

Child 3: Shut up!

Child 5: Let's get out of here! I don't like it. It gives me the creeps.

Child 1: 'Ere! Look at this lot! It's a circus!

(They all go over to look at the characters)

Child 6: I bet these costumes were lovely when they were new.

Child 7: They're all dusty. I'm going to get my new jeans filthy if I'm not careful.

Child 3: Funny looking circus. Look at that lot over there in kilts.

Child 4: Aye Jimmy! Looks like a load of tartan jugglers.

(Attempts the Highland fling, pretending to juggle at the same time)

Trogg: That, young lady, for your information, is one of the best juggling acts ever to appear in a circus.

(Everyone jumps back in alarm. Peter comes in but he watches from the back in amazement)

Child 5: It's a ghost, I'm off.

Child 1: Hang about everyone! He seems pretty harmless. Don't go! Let's see what happens.

Trogg: The McLaren Clan of Montrose Jugglers were first seen at the Fort William Highland games in 1931. They caused an enormous stir. They started their act juggling bagpipes and then went on to big logs, and finally ended up with Haggis. So popular were they that they were invited to open each of the Highland Games every year, and thousands came to see them.

Child 1: How come you know all about this?

Trogg: I, young lad, am Alfred Trogg, world traveller, circus founder and ringmaster of the famous Trogg's Circus.

Child 4: Flippin' eck! You've been about a bit.

(Trogg starts up the Highland jugglers)

Everyone: Wow!

SONG: JUGGLING IN THE HIGHLANDS

(The jugglers revert to the freeze position and all the children clap)

Trogg: This circus stand, I am sad to say, is in grave danger.

Child 4: Why, is it going to collapse? *(Everyone laughs)*

Trogg: No, it is going to be removed forever and all these automata are going to be destroyed.

Child 4: Auto what mate?

Peter: Automata. *(He comes forward)*

Child 5: Flippin' eck! Let's get out of here! I told you we'd get caught.

Peter: Wait! How did you get in?

Child 1: Through that open window over there.

Child 3: It's raining cats and dogs out there. We just came in to shelter from the rain, didn't we guys?

Everyone: Yeah.

Peter: *(Aside)* Tom should have locked that window before he left. It's all right, don't look so worried.

Child 1: Thanks mate! The last thing we need right now is to be in trouble with the police.

Peter: Look! I'm new here and I'm not too impressed with the owner of this place. The last thing I'm likely to do is give him a ring.

Child 5: What's he done to you?

Peter: Nothing yet. But he has sacked the nice old boy who worked here, so that he could employ me because I don't cost him as much. Now he's getting rid of this lovely circus stand, which as far as I can see, is the best exhibit the museum has got.

Trogg: Well said, young man! Well said! But what are you going to do about it?

Peter: I don't have a clue. But whatever it is, I have to do it before the end of the month because he is going to put a Space Age stand there.

Child 4: Yeah. *(Sings "Rocket man")*

Child 1: But you can go to the Science Museum to see space stuff.

Child 5: If you've got the money you can.

Child 7: I'd rather buy myself some new clothes. Boring old museums! Yuk!

Child 1: But this, well it's different.

Trogg: That is a bright child!

Child 1: My teacher don't think so.

Child 3: Our teachers think we're all thick as two planks.

Peter: I suppose you lot have been bunking off.

Child 4: Yeah! How'd you know that?

Peter: I was very much like you when I was a kid. That is until I went to live with the Taylor family. They're my adopted family. They showed me how valuable education is, and I'm very grateful to them for it.

Child 5: It's boring if you're useless at everything.

Peter: Everyone's good at something, you just have to find out what that something is.

SONG: EVERYONE'S GOOD AT SOMETHING

Child 5: You're good at singing, that's for sure.

Peter: Thanks! Look! I'm going to have to lock up for the night.

Child 1: Can we come back tomorrow? We might think up a plan to save your circus stand.

Child 6: I'd like to come back and look at these old posters. They're beautiful.

Child 7: Nearly as lovely as me, eh Van Gogh?

Child 3: Yeah! Maybe we ain't as thick as people think we are.

Peter: Okay! As long as you promise to go to school tomorrow, otherwise the deal is off.

Child 1: Okay! You've got a deal.

Kids: *(Thumbs up)* Yeah!

(Everyone leaves the stage)

Lights: BLACKOUT

Props: Cups of tea and biscuits

Notepad & business card for Science person

LINK-UP MUSIC

Scene Three – The Science Museum visitors.

The Museum

Lights: Full

(Peter enters and walks towards the circus stand. Sylvie comes out to meet him.)

Sylvie: Oh you're here! Good! Did you enjoy your weekend?

Peter: Yes thanks, Sylvie. Is Una in?

Sylvie: She is, and we're just about to make you a nice cup of tea. Do you take sugar?

Peter: No thanks! I'm sweet enough.

(Sylvie goes off and they both come back with the teas.)

Una: Hello there! You still fascinated by the circus stand?

Peter: Yes I am. Has anyone ever said that this place is haunted?

Sylvie: Gawd, I hope not. It does give you the creeps at night but I don't think that anyone has seen a ghost yet. Why do you ask?

Peter: Oh, nothing.

(Peter goes up to the Tightrope Walker automaton)

Peter: What do you know about her?

Una: There's a card over there next to her START button. See what it says.

Peter: "Tina the tightrope walker from Toronto".
Tina always wanted to be a ballerina when she was little. She practised for hours and hours when she was a child and starred in lots of school productions. One day her cat got stuck on the roof and Tina went up and rescued him. Everyone held their breath in horror as she walked along the apex of the roof. So good was her balance that when she picked up the cat she did a little pirouette on the roof before bringing it back down to safety. Everyone watching applauded this amazing feat.

Then on a holiday to the Lake District at the age of 14, she rescued a woman from Sharp Edge, one of the most dangerous ridges on the mountain Blencathra. Again an audience gathered to watch this amazing girl and as she descended the ridge, she pirouetted and bowed to them and they applauded her enthusiastically.

It wasn't until she was 19 years old that Alfred Trogg discovered her. He was visiting Niagara Falls at the time and Tina was about to attempt to cross the falls on a tightrope. Wearing her best ballet tutu, she daintily danced away across the thundering waters. On both sides of the Falls the audience screamed and cheered as they watched her finally complete the crossing.

Alfred was waiting to sign her up as the most famous tightrope walker of all time. She appeared in his circus shows during the 30s, and people came from all over the world, especially Canada, to see this wonderful act.

Una: Sounds like quite a girl, eh?

Sylvie: Switch her on! Let's have a look at her!

SONG: LIFE IS LIKE A WALK ON A TIGHTROPE

Peter: Isn't that something?

Sound Effect: Phone Ringing

Sylvie: Oh gawd, the phone's ringing.

Una: I'll get it

(She runs off to answer it as Peter and Sylvie put the card back and chat.)

Una: Quick! It's the boss. He's coming over with someone from the Science Museum. Put those cloths back on the circus stand or he'll think we've been playing with it.

(They just get the cloths back on as the door opens and the Manager, his floosy and a woman from the Science Museum come in.)

Max: *(To Una)* A nice cup of tea for my guests please, and the best biscuits, Una! Don't be long we've got to get to Harrods before lunch, haven't we sweetie? *(Hugs Tracey)*

Una: *(Aside)* Oh gawd! Another trip to ASDA.

Tracey: Yes, Maxie is going to buy me a beautiful fur coat, aren't you honey?

Science Lady: (*Posh voice*) Shall we get on with that business, Mr Carter?

Max: Sure. Now look over here! This is the area I want to put the Space Age exhibits in. We're chucking out all this rubbish to make way for them.

Science Lady: I say, isn't that the famous Trogg Circus stand? My father brought me to see that when I was a little girl. How amazing! My favourite was the strong woman; she was pulling a lorry along with her teeth. Is she still here?

Max: Er! I don't know, probably. Peter show this lady the strong woman!

Science lady: Yes that's the one, the Indian lady. What's her name?

(*Una brings the tea over.*)

Peter: There's a card beside her, shall I get it for you?

(*The Science lady starts to read out the card.*)

Science Lady: The Invincible Indira from India.

Max: Er! We don't have a lot of time, Miss. Do you think we could discuss the space exhibits and get going?

Tracey: Maxie! Let's have a look at the model! Pleeease honey?

Science Lady: I'm sure it won't take very long, and, well it's such a discovery.

Max: Oh, all right then.

(*Max goes off with his head in his hand and sits away from them.*)

Science Lady: "Indira was born to a poor family in Madras. She was the only girl in a family of 10. She helped at home, all day long as a child, whilst her brothers sat idly by. By the time she was 10 years old she was able to bring the elephants back by herself. They were carrying huge logs, which the villagers used to build houses. Sometimes Indira would pick up the logs that the elephants dropped and put them back in their curled trunks. No one realised just how strong she had become until the day that Alfred Trogg was visiting Madras. A big lorry had broken down at the foot of a hill and

needed to be moved. Indira used a rope which she attached to the lorry and then, with her teeth, she dragged it up the hill. Alfred signed her immediately. Indira was very happy to leave her lazy brothers and went off to train with Alfred. She could lift enormous weights, lie on beds of nails, and bend iron bars, as well as tear up telephone directories with her bare hands. People came from miles around to see this Indian wonder and she stayed with the TROGG'S throughout the 30s until the war began"

How absolutely fascinating. Does the model work?

(Peter went over and pressed the button and the automaton began to sing and drag a lorry up a hill with her teeth)

SONG: I'M INVINCIBLE

Science Lady: This must be worth a fortune. Have you ever thought of having it valued, Mr Carter?

(Max returns. He has barely been listening, so he doesn't understand what she is talking about.)

Max: No, Miss, but I have to get on my way soon. Can we discuss the space stand now?

Science Lady: *(Annoyed)* If we must!

(Everyone leaves the stand and goes back to their work)

Max: So you think we could strike up a deal, Miss?

Science Lady: I am sure the Science Museum would be pleased to do business with you, Mr Carter. My boss is away for a week's holiday. I'll make sure he contacts you as soon as he returns about the contract.

Max: Thanks a lot. Now let's be on our way!

Tracey: Maxie, are you sure you want to get rid of the circus stand? I think it's really charming.

Max: Nah! This is just a pile of junk, babe. You come with me. I'll buy you something worth looking at.

Tracey: Ooooooh!

(Max and Tracey leave)

Science Lady: *(To Peter)* Is he mad? These are lovely. Someone needs to do something about this before he destroys these wonderful automata.

Peter: I'm trying hard to come up with a plan. But you've seen him, he just won't listen.

Science Lady: Here's my card. Give me a call, my husband's in antiques. He may be able to help.

Peter: Thanks.

(They all go off – automata remain on stage)

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Lion Tamer's pipe

Scene Four- Coming up with a plan!

The Museum

Lights: FULL

(The place is empty and Alfred Trogg comes to life. He wanders around all the figures and switches all the buttons on. They all begin to come to life)

Trogg: Hello there my friends. I need to speak to you.

Tina: Things are serious aren't they Alfred? It looks like the end for us.

Indira: The manager is a fool, so selfish and greedy. He doesn't seem to think of anything but money and that silly girl he hangs around with.

(Addeaddapipe picks up her pipe and plays it)

Tina: *(To Addeaddapipe)* Where are your lions?

Addeaddapipe: The manager has put them in the cellar. I must play my pipe to soothe them in case they wake up. We've been together for years, they won't know where they are if they wake up and I'm not around.

McLaren

Kid 1: Maybe they'll escape from the cellar and eat the manager.

Trogg: They may eat Peter instead, and then who'll help us? Thank goodness we have some friends. I detected that the Science lady is one and the children are working hard to help us.

Mr McLaren: Aye, they're an interesting bunch of kids. Got a lot of heart. But it's hard to think what they'll come up with.

Trogg: Shhh! They're coming now. Let's hear what they have to say and then I think we should let them meet us properly, don't you?

Mrs McLaren: Yes, I'm dying to speak to them. It's been so long since we had company.

(The characters all freeze and the curator enters with the children)

Peter: So you all went to school today then, that's good.

Child 1: You're not going to believe this, Pete, but we had a really brilliant day.

Child 4: This bloke came from the local circus with some of his mates and they are going to teach all the kids at our school circus skills.

Child 7: Yeah! He was really good-looking. I'm sure he fancied me.

Child 3: Miss said that if you are interested you have to put your name down, and so we all did.

Child 6: Amazing ain't it? This thing happening here and then the circus arriving at school.

Peter: Yes, it's uncanny.
(*To child 2*) What do you think about it all? You haven't had much to say for yourself.

Child 3: You won't get a word out of her, she can't speak.

Child 4: Well she can, but she won't, if you know what I mean.

Child 5: So we've come up with this amazing plan, ain't we?

(Peter still looks at Child 2)

Child 4: Well it'll be amazing if it works.

Child 1: Yeah, this is what we want to do. We're all going to practice our circus skills - juggling, acrobatics and stuff and then we want you to open the museum so that we can put a show on.

Child 6: We invite kids from the local schools for nothing and after we've told them all about these amazing automata thingies and how they need repairing. They go off and do a load of sponsored walks and stuff to raise the money.

Child 4: Van Gogh here is very good at graffiti and s/he'll do all the posters for us, won't yer Van?

Child 6: Er, yeah.

(One of the automata winks at the children and a couple of them see it)

Child 4: Here, that one moved over there. I saw it.

Child 3: Yeah, so did I.

Child 7: I think he was smiling at me.

Peter: No, it can't have, they're just electronic models. Listen, I can't open the museum in the daytime for free. Max Carter would have my guts for garters if I did. He expects me to make a lot of money, and we do have a steady turnover during the week. It's very busy at the weekends. Now the evening, that might be a possibility.

Child 3: But how will we get the kids to come at night?

Child 1: There must be some way of getting them down here. We'll have to put leaflets through everyone's door and give them out at school.

Child 5: Loads of kids round here haven't been in this place, I'm sure they'd flock here.

Child 7: I've got loads of friends. I'm sure I could persuade them all to come.

*(The automata move again and this time all the children see it.)
(Child 2 signs the word "look")*

Everyone: Look!

(All the automata come to life)

Trogg: We are very pleased to see you all again, aren't we my friends?

Autos: Yes

Children: Wow!

Child 4: You're all ghosts! This is unreal!

Indira: Don't be afraid. We know you are friends and so we want to help you solve this terrible problem.

Trogg: The night is a good time to hold your show. We can help you in the meantime practise your circus skills.

Peter: But I have to get Max Carter to come to the show. If he doesn't agree with the idea and goes ahead with his space plan, we'll get nowhere.

Tina: I can't see him agreeing. The man's a complete fool.

Trogg: But the Science Lady is no fool. Surely she could put her boss off this plan if she tried.

Peter: I'm not sure, but it's worth a try.

Child 3: We'd better practise our circus skills.

Child 4: I fancy being a clown.

Child 1: You already are!

Child 4: *(To the clowns)* Tell us how to go about it will you?

Child 3: It's the first time I've ever heard her being serious.

Clown 1: We met Alfred when he was on a slow boat to China.

Clown 2: He thought our swabbing the decks act was wonderful and we always performed it in his circus.

Child 4: Crispy noodle. Number 44.

Child 3: Don't be rude.

Child 7: Her mother never taught her any manners.

Child 4: *(To child 2)* Come on, Sprint, we can have a go at this.
(The clowns give a demonstration)

Clown 3: These two clowns are happy now, but they used to be arguing all the time. Didn't you?

Clown 1: Yes but that's because I thought he'd found another girlfriend.

SONG: THE CLOWNS' SONG

Peter: Let's get the date in the diary so that we can all start working towards the big day. We'll meet here every night up until then, at the same time.

Everyone: You're on!

Peter: I'm looking forward to seeing Max Carter's face.

Lights: BLACKOUT

LINK-UP MUSIC

Props: Rubbish sack and rubbish bin & broom. Big tape measure.

Lion tamer's pipe. Van Gogh's posters.