
The ACTING UP! Collection



By Alison Kemp

A collection of ten drama pieces, ideal for larger classes in Key Stages One and Two. Unusual and inspiring, they cost next to nothing to stage. The entire collection is priced at £22.45 to download, thus each piece costs around £2.00 and includes a free performance licence for up to 3 non-commercial shows to any sized audience. For commercial use please email first.

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- Fun and entertaining drama for children
- Improvised sections accommodate for individual interpretation and group exploration
- Easily edited for the teacher to allow for variations in resources and time
- Resource requirements made easy with costume and props lists
- Economical and uncomplicated staging
- Cohesion with subjects of the National Curriculum Key Stages One and Two
- Selections covering subjects such as PHSE, History, Geography and English
- Geared to larger classes
- Ideal for Drama Clubs and assembly presentations

Synopses

Monsters Beware:

Tom is frightened of going to the bathroom in the middle of the night. He thinks there are monsters in the corridor but his sister, Dayna, helps him to conquer his fear. Together, they frighten the big scary monsters away and Tom learns that there is really nothing to be scared of. This is suitable for very young children – aged 4-6 years. Approximate running time: 10 minutes.

Hot Air:

'Hot Air' is a choral speaking piece about a child that brags, but gets found out to be a bit of fibber! Child A – the bragger - can be played by different children or groups. This piece is suitable for 8-11 year olds. Approximate running time: 5 minutes.

Friend or Foe:

The villagers struggle to do their jobs but the Toymaker has a solution: make the Robots help the villagers. Unfortunately, using Robots doesn't go quite as planned and in the end, they cause chaos. The villagers finally learn that only by helping each other can they make life easier. This play is suitable for 6-9 year olds. Approximate running time 15 minutes.

The Broken Promise:

This is an adaptation of 'The Pied Piper' by Robert Browning and dramatises the outbreak of rats in the city of Hamelin. The Mayor refuses to pay the Pied Piper and, in revenge, the Piper leads the children of Hamelin to a secret place. The play features an X-factor type competition, a press conference and a stand off between the Police and the Piper, resulting in a happy ending. The play is suitable for 7-11 year olds. Approximate running time: 25 minutes.

The Timid Hare and the Flight of the Beasts:

Hare rests under a tree, hears a coconut dropping and is scared to death that the sound means the end of the world. Before long, she has started a rumour that spreads among all the island's animals. Buddha stems the flight of the beasts by tracing the rumour back to its source with his calm pragmatism and thereby comforts the animals. This play is adapted from an Indian folk tale and suitable for young children, aged 4-6 years. Approximate running time: 10 minutes

Forest Cuts:

The trees, parrots, monkeys and bees of the forest try to drive out the business people – The Corporate Crew – who seek to use up all the forest timber. Eventually they manage to reach an agreement which pleases everyone. Children will learn that there are many everyday items they use that originate in the forest and how these valuable resources can be replenished. This play also raises the awareness of environmental issues for 5-7 years olds. Approximate running time: 10 minutes.

The Odyssey:

A retelling of the Greek myth, The Odyssey, for 4-6 year olds. In this version sailors become motionless, crazy or swallowed up by the Sirens and their various ways to tempt them. The play can stem from discussions about what children like watching, eating and playing and when can you have too much of a good thing! Approximate running time: 10 minutes.

The Nile Capers:

Aziru, a Canaanite merchant goes for a wander in Ancient Egypt. Firstly, the Medjay terrorise her and then a Guide steals from her. Just when she thinks the locals are becoming friendlier, schoolchildren play a practical joke on her. Soon, Aziru finds herself at the pyramids. There's a flurry of activity and song and an Overseer who plans to play a prank on the visitor. However, she turns the tables on her hosts in the tomb of Tutankhamun and, in the end, they all get their own back on the interfering Director at the Overseer's party. The play provides a colourful opportunity for 9-11 year olds to use their own research and improvisations to explore Ancient Egypt. Approximate running time: 25 minutes.

Like Wildfire:

It's September 1666, and after a long hot summer, the Thames is low and water in London is short. The King's baker, Thomas Farynore, goes to bed but while he sleeps one of his five ovens is aglow and soon the whole of Pudding Lane is on fire. The play follows the panic of the people as well as the procrastinations of King Charles II and the Mayor of London. Samuel Pepys makes an appearance and all eventually help put the fire out. Children can add to 'Like Wildfire' with their own research to help bring to life Stuart London. The play is suitable for 9 to 11 year olds. Approximate running time: 15 minutes.

Ruby Bridges:

The scenes in 'Ruby Bridges' give children a chance to put their own interpretations on the story of Ruby Bridges, one of the first children to go to a desegregated school in New Orleans in 1960. Teachers can pick from scenes to improvise and there are a variety of suggested ways to present them. These scenes will give children an opportunity to explore the motivations and conflicts between and within races, allowing them to put their own interpretations on the events that happened to the 6 year old. As Ruby can be played by an older child, the improvisations can be enacted by 6-11 year olds. Approximate running time 5 -25 minutes.

SCRIPT SAMPLE from *The ACTING UP! Collection:*

THE BROKEN PROMISE by Alison Kemp



Synopsis:

This is an adaptation of 'The Pied Piper' by Robert Browning and dramatises the outbreak of rats in the city of Hamelin. The Mayor refuses to pay the Pied Piper and, in revenge, the Piper leads the children of Hamelin to a secret place. The play features an X-factor type competition, a press conference and a stand off between the Police and the Piper, resulting in a happy ending. The play is suitable for 7-11 year olds. Approximate running time: 25 minutes

Costumes

Rats - Children in headbands with big grey ears. They wear large grey pointed noses. The noses are made from rolled card and painted black on the end. They are strapped around their heads with elastic. If possible, claws can also be made with black gloves on which long pointed plastic claws are attached.

Dogs – Children in headbands with floppy felt ears, tails – possibly made from boas or dusters – and pom- poms for noses.

Cats – Children in headbands with triangular ears. These could be made from felt glued to cardboard. Tails as the dogs but longer. Noses as for the dogs.

The Mayor and his advisors – The mayor should wear a grand hat: a pirate's hat could be

adapted to look like an old English Tricorn. Add some ribbon to make it look grander. He should look very well-fed so some sponge under a gown with 'gold' chains around the neck should give the right look of money and authority. He should have either another gold chain, which he buys with the Pied Piper's money, or a new gown. When the parents accuse him of spending the money on himself, in Page Five, just change the word accordingly: so 'Because you bought a new chain' might become 'Because you bought a new gown'.

The Advisors will look similar to the Mayor but shouldn't wear the hat or chains.

The Townspeople should look quite poor, dressed in rags, and torn clothing with cloth hats. Colours are drab – browns. Nothing too modern – a medieval England feel without being too literal.

General Smithson – khaki trousers or combat pants and khaki tea shirt and boots.

The Police: All in Blue with possible sirens on their heads: these can be empty plastic bottles, painted blue with holes through which elastic is attached to keep them on the childrens' heads. They hold foil covered cards as riot shields.

The Pied Piper – is dressed very colourfully. If played by a girl, maybe wearing trousers or tights with different colour legs, a long colourful shirt with no collar or a bright fitted jacket over the tights. Shoes should be more like socks – bedsocks would be fine. Props and Set –

Dolls and buggies for 'Mothers'

Microphones and note pads for Reporters.

3 chairs and a table that can be carried on and offstage

The River in which the Rats drown is represented by a blue tab [curtain] in front of the stage, to Stage Left. Alternatively, cut out a circle of some blue paper or plastic, and when the Rats are in it, they will Freeze Frame in positions of drowning in a spotlight. When the spotlight goes off they can all exit.

The Piper disappears with the children, into a building which could be represented by the Upstage tabs. He does appear at the end with some rats on a 'roof' so two rostra that slide apart could be the doors and the upper edge, the roof of the building. The Pied Piper carries a pipe.

A pile of cloaks – as the Advisors are just carrying them on, you could have random swathes of fabric like velvet to suggest cloaks.

SFX – two types of pipe/flute music; one for when the Piper leads the Rats and another for when the Piper leads the children.

The Broken Promise

(Townspeople run across stage screaming, behind them are the Rats. They exit Stage Right.)

(Reporters enter Stage Right, scribbling and observing. These are in the guise of modern-day reporters, with microphones.)

Townsperson: RATS!

(Enter Rats from Stage Right, eating clothing.)

Reporter: Tall rats
Thin rats
Brown and grey
Chewing chewing all the day

Reporter: The outbreak of rats is causing chaos amongst the city of Hamelin.

(Enter dogs Stage Left, 'barking' amongst themselves.)

Reporter: *(over the noise)* They fought the dogs, pinching ears, flicking ear wax, fleas and bits of old food at them.

(Rats dive for dogs who growl and reach out as if to scratch the rats. The action stops as they freeze.)

(Cats enter Stage Right and Rats creep up behind them and are about to drag them off as the Cats screech in terror. The action stops as Cats and Rats freeze.)

Reporter: *(holding hand to mock ear-piece)* They have killed the cats. My gosh. This is no less than a slaughter. And it seems to be out of control. .

Reporter: Indeed it is. The rats have started to bite babies as they sit in their buggies.
(Reporters exit Stage Left)

(Mothers enter with babies (dolls, of course!) in pushchairs. Some Rats run up and bite the babies; others snatch them out of the pushchairs with the dolls in their mouths. Some of the mums are about to run after the rats, others comfort their babies. The action stops as they all freeze.)

Reporter: *(Running from Stage Left with notepad and pen)* The city of Hamelin is full of rats!

(All children come out of the freeze frame...)

Dogs: They were here.

Cats: They were there.

Dogs, Cats and Mothers: They were EVERYWHERE!

(Dogs, Cats and Mothers all run off Stage Right and Rats run after them.)

(Mayor enters Stage Left, followed by his three Advisors):

Advisor One: But Mr Mayor we have to do something about the rats.

Mayor: Those people are blaming me for the rats. I know they hate me. They do. I know it. I go out into the street and they gossip, gossip. *(Seems to be going into a paranoid trance)* I have to control them.

Advisor Two: M'Lord, you will. You will control them. Through your calm, through your clear thinking.

Mayor: *(still pacing)* Yes, yes. My calm. Yes. I'll make them love me. Then I'll kill them. Love yes. Extermination. Oooh.....

Advisor Three: M'Lord, The Rats will spread plague. We must act immediately.

(Mob of Rats come scurrying on Stage Right but don't notice the Mayor and his advisors. The Advisors huddle together during the following interchange and mime having a battle plan. They use lego and snooker cues to mime a wartime battle board. The Mayor is the only one who notices the following scene)

Rat One: So I'll chew through the loaves of bread. That'll be well wicked.

Rat Two: And then what?

Rat One: I'll spit it out into their soup!

(Rats start giggling)

Rat Three: Hey, there's a human!

Rats: Good! I'm just dying for the toilet!

(Rats start laughing again, making noises with their teeth and lips as archetypal rats and scurry off Stage Left)

Mayor: *(Crying)* Dying for the Mayor's Head. That's what they said. They said...Oh my. They're all out for me, for ME. It's a plot...I'll track them down.

Advisor Two: M'Lord. Remember, your calm. Remember your clear-headedness.

Advisor Three: This is a war and we have to claim victory. Victory, I say, over the pesky rodents.

Advisor One: Awfully sorry to interrupt, but we need to discuss how we will clean up Hamelin.

Advisor Three: I suggest we go with the tanks, explosives and snipers on roof tops around the city.

Mayor: ...and where are we going to get the money from for all THAT? Eh?

Advisor Two: *(Sheepishly)* We can sell some of your cloaks?

MAYOR: WHAT? DO YOU KNOW ME AT ALL? I NEED my cloaks.

Advisor One: All 365 of them?

MAYOR: You FOOLS! I'll have your heads...

Advisor Three: No matter. We have further alternatives. Plan B *(signals to Advisor Two)*

Advisor Two: Traps.

Mayor: No, they don't work. We need too many.

Advisor One: *(desperate and thinking on his feet)* poison cheese.

Mayor: No, that doesn't work. The dogs will eat it. Oof! You lot are hopeless.

(Storms out towards Stage Right, followed by Advisors but they stop short of the exit as they are passed by the Pied Piper, entering from Stage Right. They stare at him in confusion and amazement. Reporter enters Stage Left with microphone)

Reporter: BREAKING NEWS: Renowned European Rat Fighter, Pied Piper is on his way to Hamelin (*hand to ear piece*). No, he's *here*. He's in Hamelin now.
(Reporter exits Stage Right.)

Advisor One: Look at his hair!

Advisor Two: Look at his trousers!

Advisor Three: Look at his jacket!

Mayor: What is THAT?

Pied Piper: *(Standing centre stage)* I'm just the Pied Piper, man. I play my pipe and the rats follow, toute suite. I'm the dude who'll lift your mood.

Mayor: What? What's he saying? Will someone translate?

(During the following conversation, the Townspeople enter Stage Left, miming excited gossip as they look at the Pied Piper. Four Townspeople carry chairs for the Mayor and his Advisors and place them Downstage Right. The Advisors and Mayor take their places. The following scene should replicate the mood of a television games show: a cross between Dragon's Den and The X Factor.)

Advisor Three: Talk straight. We've no idea what you're on about.

Mayor: He's holding a toy!

(Townspeople laugh.)

Pied Piper: This isn't a toy! This pipe plays music...

Advisor One: All pipes play music, you fool!

Townspeople: Freak! Idiot! Weirdo!

(Mayor stands up to face audience with arms held high to encourage their cat calls)

Pied Piper: The music from my pipe can kill your rats.

END OF SCRIPT SAMPLE

(NB These are not musical plays. There is no music or CD supplied with these scripts.)