

The Genius Machine: script (edit April 2023)

SCENE 1	School Hall. Morning assembly.
Deputy	Good Morning year 6. Thank you for coming in so sensibly to assembly. As your deputy head I'm afraid I have bad news. A letter is going to be going out to your parents later today but I wanted to tell you this in person.... <i>(notices a hand up)</i> ... Yes...what's the matter?
Pupil 1	<i>(sat amongst the audience, standing up. Very melodramatically)</i> Oh no sir! Is someone ill? Where's the headteacher...are they ok?
Deputy	Don't be so dramatic! They're fine. The Headteacher just has an important meeting to prepare for so they can try their best to save the school.
Pupil 2	<i>(Also in audience, standing up)</i> The school! What's wrong with the school?
Deputy	That's the bad news I'm afraid. We've been running out of money for a long time. We can't afford the repairs and now someone has come forward and offered a lot of money to buy the land.
Pupil 3	<i>(also in audience standing up)</i> But they can't have the land! The school is built on it.
Deputy	They want to knock it down and build new houses.
Pupil 1	But we need it! I know we're leaving soon but we've got little brothers and sisters here! What will happen to them?
Deputy	They'll have to go to other schools. Some of the local ones have places free.
Pupil 2	They'll be really upset...and what about the teachers?
Deputy	We'll have to find new jobs.
Pupil 3	But who's going to want to employ you? I've heard it's really hard for old people to get jobs nowadays!
Deputy	Thanks for that comment...I'm afraid the bad news isn't over yet. They want the land as soon as possible so school will be closing at the end of this half term.
Pupil 1	Why can't they wait until the end of term? We haven't even started practising for our leavers show yet.
Deputy	I'm afraid it will have to be cancelled. There's just no time.
Pupil 2	That's not fair! I know the school is crumbling and falling apart but surely it doesn't deserve to be knocked down and forgotten.
Deputy	I agree. The headteacher is meeting with Mr Johnson the builder this morning to try to delay the closure until the end of term but it's not looking very good. Everyone just keeps saying the school's not safe! We desperately need money for repairs.
Pupil 3	I suppose they've got a point. Just look at the state of our school!
	<i>Pupils 1, 2 and 3 come onto stage with Deputy and sing Song 1 "Look at the state of our school" Song ends and they leave the stage. Scene ends</i>

SCENE 2	Head's Office. <i>Head enters with Deputy.</i>
Head	So how did they take the news?
Deputy	As well as could be expected. They're a good bunch of kids. Year 6 were most upset about the leavers show being cancelled.
Head	I just wish there was something more we could do. Our only hope is appealing to Mr Johnson's better nature and hope he'll delay the demolition until the end of the school year.
Deputy	This is Mr Johnson the multi millionaire builder you're talking about. He has a reputation for being the most ruthless man in the county! I don't fancy our chances.
Head	Nor me...but we've got to try. It's the least we can do for the kids.
	<i>There is a knock at the door and secretary enters.</i>
Secretary	Mr Johnson and his "assistants" are here to see you.
Head	Thankyou. Can you please show them in.
Deputy	Sorry to have to leave you but I'm due in class to cover Year 3...wish me luck.
Head	Good luck...you'll need it with that lot... <i>(Takes a deep breath and steels himself)</i> Come on in Mr Johnson
	<i>Mr Johnson enters. He looks like an Elvis impersonator and is accompanied by his two minders who are dressed like the Blues Brothers in black suits, white shirts, black hats and shades. They try to look threatening as Mr Johnson comes over to the Head to shake hands.</i>
Mr Johnson	Headteacher...we meet again.
Head	Indeed we do, and this time I see you've brought your friends.
Mr J	Ah yes...how rude of me. Let me introduce...
Head	<i>(Interrupting)</i> Jake and Elwood by any chance?
Nigel	No...I'm Nigel
Hubert	And I'm Hubert. Pleased to meet you
	<i>They both move as if to come and shake hands. Mr Johnson stops them</i>
Mr J	Stay there! I don't pay you to be sociable.
Nigel	No...you pay us to look menacing.
Hubert	Just stand there and loom ominously you said...
Mr J	<i>(Hushing them)</i> Shh...I think you must have misheard me...anyway, shall we get to business.
Head	Ah yes...I wanted to ask you a favour. Would you be able to delay the demolition until the end of term please? The children and teachers are very upset and it seems only fair...
Mr J	<i>(Shaking his head)</i> I'm sorry, I can't do that. In fact, the contractors have had a cancellation and they can move in next week. That's actually why I agreed to meet with you today.
Head	<i>(Shocked)</i> Next week?? But you said we could have until half term...that's not enough time...what will I tell the children??

Mr J	I'm sure you'll think of something. They're only kids after all. They don't really have feelings.
	<i>There is another knock at the door and the secretary enters</i>
Secretary	Sorry to disturb you headteacher, but here are some year six children to see you. They say it's really urgent and can't wait. Is this a bad time?
Head	It's a terrible time! But send them in anyway. Nothing much matters now!
	<i>Secretary leaves and pupil 4, pupil 5 and pupil 6 enter</i>
Pupil 4	Thank you for seeing us. We've had an idea.
Pupil 5	I know we can't have a leaver's performance at the end of term anymore. Thanks to him. <i>(Gestures at Mr Johnson)</i>
Mr J	I'm only doing my job. People need houses
Pupil 6	And we need a school. But anyway, our idea is to put on a show next week.
Head	Next week?
Pupil 4	Yes. We'll organise it all...outside lesson time of course. It'll be a final celebration of our time here.
Head	Ok. I don't see why not. As long as it doesn't affect your school work.
Pupil 5	It won't. We'll audition people across school to take part in our break times. Staff are welcome too.
Mr J	It just so happens I'm an excellent singer...maybe I could take part.
Pupil 6	No thank you. No offence but you're the whole reason we're having to do this in the first place
Nigel	That's a good point
Hubert	And I've heard you sing. You're terrible...you couldn't carry a tune if it was packed up neatly and placed in a rucksack.
Mr J	That's not true... <i>(he starts to sing part of an Elvis song REALLY badly)</i> Now since my baby left me...I found a new place to dwell... <i>(he trails off)</i>
	<i>Everyone on stage stares at him in deadpan silence. Then blank it out and continue. Nigel and Hubert shake their heads sadly</i>
Head	<i>(To the pupils)</i> but won't this show cost money? Props...costumes etc? I'm really sorry but we don't have any left.
Pupil 4	We thought of that. We'd like to hold a jumble sale after school tomorrow. Just a small one but enough to raise bit of money to cover the show.
Pupil 5	Year 6 have already donated some stuff but we wondered if we could have a look in the school cupboards for anything we could sell?
Pupil 6	It's going to be all cleared out soon anyway so it might as well go to a good cause...
Head	<i>(Looking thoughtful)</i> I don't see why not. You can start in the hall cupboards. I'll come and unlock the door for you because it sticks something rotten. <i>(To Mr Johnson)</i> You don't mind if I pop out for a minute do you?
Mr J	Not at all. Take your time.
	<i>Head and pupils 4, 5 and 6 leave the stage.</i>

Mr Johnson	Right! The coast is clear. I don't trust this headteacher and these kids at all. I think they're plotting something.
Nigel	They seem nice to me
Hubert	Yeah. Lovely polite kids.
Mr J	No they're not! They insulted me. They said I couldn't be in their show
Nigel	I don't blame them...you're rubbish.
Hubert	Yeah...you'd really spoil it. You can't sing at all.
Mr Johnson	I'll have you know I have a voice which only comes along once in a generation.
Nigel	Thank goodness for that.
Mr Johnson	Remind me to sack you as soon as we're finished here. Anyway...pass me the bug. I want to know what they're planning behind my back
Hubert	I've got it here...but I want ti known that I'm not happy about it. Seems like an invasion of privacy
Mr Johnson	That's the whole idea...idiot! Give it here.
	<i>Hubert reluctantly passes the bug over. Mr Johnson sidles over and sticks it under the desk. Nigel and Hubert watch but look disapproving, shaking their heads.</i>
Mr Johnson	That should do it. Right...(he calls loudly offstage to secretary) Excuse me...secretary.
	<i>Secretary enters frostily</i>
Secretary	Yes? Can I help you?
Mr Johnson	I'm afraid we have to leave now. Please could you tell the headteacher something urgent has come up...and please remind him that the deadline to leave the school is now the end of next week.
Secretary	<i>(Sarcastically)</i> I'm sure the headteacher will be most upset you're leaving sir.
Nigel	I don't think he will.
Hubert	I have the feeling we're not very popular here.
Mr Johnson	You don't say, Einstein!
Secretary	Goodbye. I'm sure you can show yourselves out.
	<i>They start to leave</i>
Mr Johnson	<i>(As he leaves)</i> ...and should they change their mind about me singing in their show...here's my card...(hands it to secretary who looks at it, watches them leave and throws it away before leaving stage themselves)
	<i>They leave the stage and the scene ends.</i>

SCENE 3	The Hall Cupboard. <i>Pupil 7, Pupil 8, Pupil 9 and Pupil 10 enter and look around. There are various random sports and music items dotted around the stage including an old guitar.</i>
Pupil 7	This place is a mess. Do you really think we'll find anything worth selling here?
Pupil 8	The whole school is a mess to be honest! I can't believe it's really the end. All that history.
Pupil 9	Yeah...I mean, it's disappointing for us and all that, but we're leaving to go to High school anyway. It's my little brother I feel sorry for...he's got to go to a totally new school.
Pupil 10	I know! My sister is the same...and there aren't enough places for them to stay with their friends. They're all getting split up.
Pupil 7	That's really sad. Are they ok?
Pupil 8	Not really. He's been crying himself to sleep most nights. I just wish we could do something more to help.
Pupil 9	What can we do? To fix the school would cost a fortune and that Johnson bloke would still knock it down anyway. All the contracts are signed I think.
Pupil 10	The school is doomed! <i>(Sighs)</i> Let's see what we can find to sell for his show...
Pupil 7	At least we can go out with a bang! <i>(Looks around)</i> Can't see much here though...
Pupil 8	<i>(Picks up guitar)</i> This might be worth something <i>(strums it...it is very out of tune)</i> Sounds really bad though...
Pupil 9	A bad workman blames their tools and all that!...although I blame that music teacher we had teaching us in Year 5...he was rubbish!
Pupil 10	<i>(Picking up genius machine)</i> Hey guys...what's this? <i>(Blows off the dust)</i> I think it's got something engraved on the side...
Pupil 7	Let's have a look. <i>(They gather round the machine in Pupil 10's hands...reads)</i> "THE GENIUS MACHINE." Huh...just another piece of worthless junk! I'll stick to this guitar. <i>(Picks up guitar and messes around with it making tuneless noises)</i>
Pupil 8	Dunno but look...it's got an ON switch. Let's try it...
Pupil 9	Are you sure that's a good idea? We don't know what it does...too late!
	<i>Pupil 8 reaches over and flicks the switch. SONG 2: The Genius Machine starts with electric guitar riff. They look shocked but then gradually get into the song and sing/play along. At the end of the song Pupil 9 switches the machine off. The guitar goes back to making tuneless sounds.</i>
Pupil 10	WOW! What just happened?
Pupil 7	I don't know. But we were AMAZING!
Pupil 8	Yeah...and I can't sing or play normally. Do you think the machine made us awesome?
	<i>They look at the machine nervously</i>
Pupil 9	Do you think it's magic?
Pupil 10	Could be something Scientific I guess.
Pupil 7	Whatever it is, we need to test it again. On someone else this time...
Pupil 8	If it does that to everyone imagine the show we could put on!

Pupil 9	I think the football team are having a meeting in one of the classrooms...we could try it on them. They've got ZERO musical talent!
Pupil 10	Perfect! We can sneak the machine in and turn it on...if it makes that bunch sound good then we know it truly is a genius machine. Let's go!
	<i>They leave the stage with the machine and scene ends</i>

SCENE 4	The football team meeting. <i>PE teacher, Player 1, 2, 3, 4 and goal keeper enter stage. There is a flip chart on the stage. PE teacher goes over to it and the others gather around.</i>
PE teacher	Right...let's get this sorted. We can't have that happening again!
Player 1	Yeah it was embarrassing
Player 2	And we were doing so well up until that point.
Player 3	Nil-nil against our local rivals with only five minutes to go and then...
Player 4	I said I'm sorry. I went for the ball...honest!
Goalkeeper	You nearly took their head off!
PE teacher	It's not the tackle that concerns me...these things happen. It was how we defended the free kick afterwards.
Player 1	But I don't think we've ever practised that
Player 2	I hadn't got a clue what to do!
Player 3	<i>(Under their breath)</i> That's not unusual!
Player 4	Aren't we meant to make a wall or something?
Goalkeeper	YES!..all you lot did was mill around in the penalty area and block my view. I couldn't see a thing..
PE teacher	We really need to get this sorted. <i>(moves over to adjust board with difficulty)</i> Can you help me with this please?
	<i>The team gather around the board to help. Their backs are to the audience. As they work Pupil 11 sneaks in with the machine. Signals to audience to keep quiet and then places the machine, turning it on. They leave the stage and the team turn around, sitting on the floor facing the PE teacher. SONG 3: "How to defend a free kick" starts and PE teacher sings solo. The team look confused but gradually join in in the style of 90s boy/girl band. Song ends and they look at each other, wondering what just happened.</i>
Player 1	Er...what just happened?
Player 2	<i>I don't know...</i>
Player 3	Nor me...I just had the urge to sing!
Player 4	...And dance!
Goalkeeper	Is it just me...or did we sound incredible? And what was that song?
PE teacher	I think I need a lie down!
	<i>Pupil 11, 12 and 13 enter and turns off the machine.</i>
Pupil 11	I'm really sorry about that. We just needed to test the machine.
Pupil 12	It's a Genius Machine! And it really works!
Pupil 13	You guys sounded amazing!
Pupil 11	How would you like to be in our show?

Pupil 12	Teachers are welcome too!
Pupil 13	Come with us and we'll tell you all about it.
	<i>Pupil 13 ushers them offstage. They are still confused. Pupil 11 and 12 stay behind</i>
Pupil 11	I can't believe that really worked! Did you hear them?
Pupil 12	Yes...but I think we need to go and talk to the headteacher. Hopefully they'll know what to do...
	<i>They leave the stage and the scene ends.</i>

SCENE 5	Split stage: part headteacher's office/desk at back with Nigel and Hubert sat with headphones on listening in. Headteacher working at desk. There is a knock at the door...
Head	Come in
	<i>Pupil 14, 15 and 16 enter. They are carrying the machine, a guitar and a recorder. They seem excited.</i>
Head	How can I help you children?
Pupil 14	We've got something to show you
Pupil 15	Something AMAZING!
Pupil 16	We found it in the cupboard
Head	<i>(Peering at the machine)</i> OK...and what is it exactly?
Pupil 14	It's a genius machine!
Pupil 15	THE genius machine!
Pupil 16	It's probably the only one in existence...and we found it at OUR school!
Head	And what does it do exactly?
Pupil 14	It makes even the worst singer sound like an angel!
Pupil 15	The ropiest guitarist play like Hendrix...
Pupil 16	And the clumsiest dancer as graceful as a ballerina
Head	Is this some sort of joke? To be honest I've had a really bad day...well bad year actually, and I'm really not in the mood.
Pupil 14	No joke...honest! Let us prove it to you
Pupil 15	Can you play the guitar?
Head	Well...I had a couple of lessons when I was a child but I was pretty awful...so no!
Pupil 16	Show us what you can do...
	<i>Pupil 16 hands the guitar to Head. The Head tries to play it and it sounds terrible.</i>
Pupil 14	Yep, you were right...you're terrible!
Pupil 15	Now watch this
	<i>Pupil 15 fiddles with the machine to turn it on. Pupil 14, 15, 16 and Head all watch and are pretty much frozen.</i>
Hubert	Nigel...I think you need to get the boss. Something interesting's happening!
Nigel	<i>(Shouting to offstage)</i> MR JOHNSON...
Hubert	<i>(Looks at Nigel and shakes head)</i> I could have done that.
	<i>Mr Johnson enters</i>

Mr J	What's the matter boys? I hope it's more interesting than last time when you wanted to tell me the Head drank a cup of tea...
Hubert	It is sir...they've found something.
Nigel	They say it's some kind of machine that makes untalented people sing, play and dance brilliantly
Mr J	Hmm...interesting. Move over lets have a listen.
	<i>He puts on some headphones and sits down to listen</i>
Pupil 16	Ok...the machine is on. Try playing the guitar now...
Head	If you insist...but it really isn't going to make any difference...
	<i>The Head plays guitar and it sounds incredible. (Song 4: Genius Machine Guitar Jam) They are stunned</i>
Head	Wow! Did you hear that? I was incredible!
Pupil 14	You certainly were. I'll just turn it off again (<i>they turn off machine</i>)
Pupil 15	Now try this...
	<i>Pupli 15 hands the Head a recorder</i>
Head	Oh no! The one instrument I was even worse on than the guitar...
	<i>Head plays the recorder really badly. The three pupils grimace and cover their ears</i>
Pupil 16	Oof...that really was painful! Now let's try with the machine on...
	<i>Pupil 16 switches machine on. Head plays (Song 5: Genius Machine Recorder Jam)</i>
Head	Ok...I believe you now. That's incredible!
Pupil 14	Just imagine how good our show will be now!
Pupil 15	We've got the football team signed up. We just need to find some more willing volunteers
Pupil 16	Is it ok if we go round school to audition people...and would you like to perform?
Head	<i>(Picking up guitar and strumming it gently with a happy look)</i> That's fine...and yes, why not? Sign me up! I must go and tell the deputy about this!
	<i>They all leave the stage. Mr Johnson, Nigel and Hubert take off headphones and come centre stage.</i>
Mr J	Well boys, you were right, that WAS very interesting! A machine that can make you a star. Of course I don't really need it with my natural talent but it wouldn't hurt to have a little boost!
Nigel	What are you saying boss?
Hubert	Yeah...I'm confused.
Mr Johnson	I'm saying...I WANT that machine, and I can't imagine they'll just give it to us. As you said before, we're not exactly popular there at the moment...we'll need to go and get it.
Nigel	You mean..
Hubert	Steal it?

Mr Johnson	I wouldn't say that exactly...shall we say "procure it for a long term loan?"
Nigel	<i>(Nodding)</i> So steal it then!
Hubert	When shall we go and get it?
Mr Johnson	There's no time like the present. Shall we say tonight? We can listen in to find out when they've all gone home...boys...
Nigel and Hubert	Yes boss?
Mr Johnson	I'm gonna be a star!
Nigel and Hubert	If you say so boss!
	<i>Scene ends and they leave the stage.</i>

SCENE 6	History Lesson in classroom. <i>History teacher is teaching pupil 17, 18, 19 and 20 who are sitting at desks looking bored</i>
History teacher	<i>(In a droning voice)</i> ...and that's why the great Anglo Saxon King Offa built his dyke where he did. You know, he really was the most tremendously interesting man...
Pupil 17	<i>(To his classmates)</i> I wish he was teaching us instead then...
History teacher	What's that you say?
Pupil 18	He said "You really bring history to life!
Pupil 19	I feel like we're really there!
	<i>There is a knock at the door</i>
Pupil 20	There's someone at the door. Finally some excitement!
History teacher	Come in!
	<i>Pupil 16 enters carrying the machine and a clipboard with a piece of paper on it.</i>
Pupil 16	I have a message from the headteacher. We're looking for people to perform in our big show and we wondered if the History club would like to take part?
History teacher	Oh...I don't know about that. It's a little frivolous for us.
Pupil 17	Oh go on! Let's do it.
Pupil 18	Anything to relieve the boredom!
Pupil 19	We could really show them the History club know how to <i>(stands up and dances)</i> "part-ay!"
Pupil 20	It's what King Offa would have wanted!
History teacher	No...no...no! It's just not becoming of a professor of the historical arts. I'm afraid we will have to respectfully decline.
Pupil 16	That's a shame. I'll leave the sign up sheet here just in case you change your mind. Oh... and the head asked if we could store this in here please?
	<i>Pupil 16 places the genius machine down at the edge of the stage and discretely switches it on.</i>
History teacher	I suppose so. Now if you don't mind we must continue our study of the Anglo Saxons...
Pupil 16	Ok...bye guys.
	<i>Pupil 16 leaves the stage. History teacher turns back to class who look bored again</i>
History teacher	Well class, as we know...Anglo Saxons lived long ago... <i>(he stops suddenly and coughs)</i>
Pupil 17	Are you ok?
History teacher	Er yes...just a frog in my throat. Where was I?

	Song 6: Anglo Saxon rap starts. They talk over the intro as the teacher starts to move with beat seemingly not in control of his body...
Pupil 18	You were just saying “Anglo Saxons lived long ago...”
Pupil 19	You sure you’re ok?
Pupil 20	You’re jigging around in a funny way...
	<i>Teacher begins to rap. The class gradually join in until it’s a full on performance. At the end of the song they pose then look a bit confused</i>
Pupil 17	What happened then?
Pupil 18	I think we were rapping and dancing! ...and I think we were pretty good!
Pupil 19	It must be something to do with this strange machine
Pupil 20	But what does this mean?
History teacher	<i>(Who has been looking thoughtful)</i> It means we’re entering that show! Hand me that sign up sheet!
Pupil 17	I’d better take this back to the Headteacher...I think it’s important.
	<i>They laugh, gather up the sign up sheet and machine and leave the stage. The scene ends.</i>

SCENE 7	The Hall <i>Caretaker and cleaner 1 and 2 are standing around not doing much and looking a bit like shifty teenagers hanging around up to no good. Pupil 17 enters carrying machine and trips over a mop bucket. The Caretaker and cleaners surround pupil 17</i>
Caretaker	Oi you! What you doing in the hall after school time?
Cleaner 1	You shouldn't be here now...this is our domain once the bell rings and all those hoity-toity teachers have gone home
Cleaner 2	Yeah! We rule the school now...and we don't like kids
Pupil 17	<i>(Laughing nervously)</i> Are you serious?? Er...I'm just taking this to the Head's office and then I'll be off.
Cleaner 1	Something funny is there?
Cleaner 2	You laughing at us?
Pupil 17	<i>(Backing away a little)</i> I wasn't laughing at you...I thought you were joking
Caretaker	You can't fool me...I know you lot talk about me behind my back. Figure of fun I am...
Pupil 17	Honestly...we don't
Cleaner 1	I don't believe you, think you're so much better than us don't you?
Cleaner 2	You wouldn't be laughing at him if you'd seen him back in the day...
Pupil 17	Pardon?
Cleaner 1	Back in his heyday...in the 1980s
Cleaner 2	He was a legend then...every bloke wanted to be him and every girl wanted to be with him!
Caretaker	Those were the days indeed...still got it though you know
Pupil 17	Got what?
Caretaker	You know...IT! The old animal magnetism...
Pupil 17	Er...ok
Cleaner 1	Anyway...what's that you've got there
Pupil 17	<i>(Trying to hide machine)</i> What this? Oh nothing...it's just something for the Headteacher.
Cleaner 2	Looks like some kind of machine to me...let's have a look
Caretaker	Yeah...pass it here
	<i>They grab the machine from pupil 17 and look at it closely. Pupil 17 backs away</i>
Cleaner 1	What is it?
Cleaner 2	Dunno. There's some kind of on switch though. Perhaps it a new type of vacuum cleaner?
Pupil 17	I wouldn't turn it on if I were you
Caretaker	Really? We don't take orders from snotty kids...let's flick the switch and see what it does.

	<i>They switch it on and it glows. Song 7: Take me back to the 80s starts and they shudder as if electrocuted before throwing themselves into the performance. They throw off their cleaners/caretakers overcoats to reveal 80s outfits along the lines of Spandau ballet/Human League. Song ends and they look bit stunned.</i>
Pupil 17	I told you not to switch it on!
Cleaner 1	Wow! I haven't felt that alive for years!
Cleaner 2	I feel electric!
Caretaker	Told you I'd still got it! Hey kid...I'm sorry about before. I think I was being a bit paranoid
Cleaner 1	Yeah...sorry
Cleaner 2	I think we were a bit mean
Pupil 17	That's ok...Hey, you guys were really good... How would you like to be part of a little show we're putting on?
Caretaker	Sounds great...Just let me lock up the school for the night and we'll sign up.
	<i>They lead offstage together with the machine and the scene ends.</i>

SCENE 8	The school at night. <i>It is dark and the stage is empty apart from a table with the machine on it at the back. There is the sound of a window opening and then breaking and Mr Johnson, Nigel and Hubert stumble onto the stage. They are wearing all black with balaclavas over their face. Hubert has his on backwards.</i>
Hubert	I think there's something wrong with this balaclava. I can't see anything
Mr J	It's on backwards you idiot. The eye holes usually go at the front...you know...where your eyes are!
Nigel	<i>(Proudly)</i> I put mine on correctly! All by myself!
Mr J	I'm so proud. Now come on...let's find this machine and get out of here
Hubert	Ok boss. What does it look like?
Mr J	I don't know. Just look for something you wouldn't normally expect to see in a school
Nigel	Like a well stocked stationery cupboard?
Hubert	Haha! Good one mate. Very satirical!
Mr J	Can you two comedians stop trying be funny and keep looking
Nigel	No need boss. I think I've found it
	<i>He picks up the machine from the back of the stage and brings it to the centre. They gather around it.</i>
Hubert	Is that it? It's not very impressive
Mr J	It doesn't need to be impressive as long as it works <i>(he takes it from Nigel and holds it up)</i> the genius machine... <i>(dramatically holding it up in the air)</i> ...and now you've found your genius!
	<i>There is a dramatic pause as he freezes, holding the machine.</i>
Nigel	Who's that then boss?
Mr J	Me you fool!...this machine is going to make me a superstar! Everyone will know my name!
Hubert	I know your name already boss...it's Mr Johnson!
Mr J	Soon the whole world will know too! I can't wait to walk into a fully booked restaurant and say 'Don't you know who I am?' To get the best table in the house! Nigel...turn it on!
Nigel	Yes boss
	<i>He turns on the machine and Song 8: "Don't you know who I am" starts. Mr J sings it in the style of Elvis while Nigel and Hubert sing and dance in the style of the blues brothers. Song ends and they look a little surprised.</i>
Mr J	It works! Now quickly. Let's get out of here. Bring the machine too
Nigel	I'll get it. <i>(He picks up the machine and leaves the stage with Mr Johnson)</i>
Hubert	Coming boss <i>(he stands and turns his balaclava a few times looking puzzled before shrugging and pulling it off his head. He hurries off stage)</i>

SCENE 9	Head's office next morning. <i>Head and Secretary enter carrying coffee cups</i>
Head	You know, it's been a difficult year but this show that the kids are organising has really cheered me up.
Secretary	I know what you mean. Their enthusiasm is certainly infectious.
Head	I really feel like we've turned a corner.
Secretary	I'll drink to that!
Head	Absolutely! Here's to everything turning out ok...
	<i>They clink their coffee mugs together and slurp the coffee. The phone on the desk rings and the Secretary goes to answer it.</i>
Secretary	Hello...the Headteacher's office...
Head	<i>(Loudly whispering)</i> Who is it?
Secretary	<i>(Covering mouthpiece and loudly whispering back)</i> It's Mr Johnson
Head	What does he want?
Secretary	I don't know yet...he wants to speak to you
	<i>Mr Johnson enters other side of stage holding his phone and speaking as the headteacher takes the phone</i>
Mr J	Hello Headteacher...I have good news...my team are ready to move in earlier than expected and can now start to demolish the school on Friday
Head	WHAT? How is that good news??
Mr J	Well it's good news for me...on reflection I guess it's not so great for you guys
Head	But you promised we could have until the end of the term...year six have their show planned for next week
Mr J	Well they'll just have to cancel it then...it would have been rubbish anyway...they refused to let me perform!
Head	Is that what this is all about? Your bruised ego?
Mr J	<i>(Indignantly)</i> No! Anyway, they couldn't afford me now...I'm going to be a star!
Head	<i>(Pleading)</i> Please reconsider...just give us a little longer
Mr J	I'm sorry but my mind is made up...tomorrow is your last day. You'd better finish your coffee and start thinking about how to break the news to your precious children...Goodbye.
	<i>Mr Johnson hangs up and leaves the stage.</i>
Head	Hello?...hello?... <i>(puts down the receiver sadly)</i> It's no good...he's gone!
	<i>Deputy enters stage</i>
Deputy	Is everything ok headteacher?
Head	I'm afraid not...we've tried everything but I'm afraid this time it looks like it's the end of the road for our dear old school...

Deputy	Perhaps we could try to sell that machine...it must be worth something...hang on...(looking around) Where IS the machine??
Head	What are you talking about, it's on my desk where I left it last night...right over there...(turns to point and machine is absent)...Oh!
Secretary	It's gone...and we're the first people in school...(turns to look offstage and points) and look over here...broken glass and the window is open
Head	We've been burgled and all they've taken is the machine... but no one knew about it!
Deputy	Wait a moment...how did Mr Johnson know we were drinking coffee? He's been listening to us talk! (Goes over to desk and feels around and finds bug) Look here...a listening device. They must have planted it when they were in your office the other day
Secretary	THAT'S how he knew about the machine...and he said he was going to be a star...he must have stolen it!
Deputy	But there's no way to prove it...we've run out of time
Head	(Sadly) You're right...it's all over...he's won. I guess all good things come to end...
	<i>They move centre stage with their coffee mugs and perform Song 9: All Good Things Come to an End</i>
Head	(sadly) We'd better go and break the news to the staff and kids...
Secretary	One last assembly...
	<i>They start to walk slowly and sadly offstage with their arms around each others shoulders. Just before leaving the Deputy stops suddenly as if he's thought of something</i>
Deputy	You carry on...I just need to make a phone call...I'll catch you up.
	<i>Deputy leads offstage the other way. Scene ends</i>

SCENE 10	The Hall. Final assembly. <i>All adult staff except Deputy are sat at the back off stage. Head enters to front of stage to speak to the audience as if they are the pupils.</i>
Head	Good morning everyone. Thank you for all coming into assembly so sensibly and quietly for what I'm afraid will be the last time ever...
	<i>Gasps of shock and general murmuring amongst staff on stage</i>
Head	Yes. I know we were all looking forward to the performance that year six were arranging, but unfortunately, it will not be able to happen...sadly, this is now our last day.
History teacher	WHAT!...but I thought we had until the end of term
Head	Yes, and so did I...but Mr Johnson has now brought forward the date of demolition to this Friday
PE teacher	He can't do that!
Head	He can...and he has. As soon as this assembly ends we need to begin packing everything up ready to leave.
	<i>The Headteacher goes to the back of the stage and sits down. Everyone on stage is frozen as Deputy enters the stage with a phone by their ear.</i>
Deputy	Hello...is that Mr Johnson
	<i>Mr Johnson enters the other side of stage, also with a phone by his ear</i>
Mr J	Speaking...who is this?
Deputy	It doesn't matter who this is but I'd like to know why you burgled the school last night and took our Genius machine?
Mr J	<i>(Outraged)</i> How dare you! This is slander! I did nothing of the sort
Deputy	I think you need to tell the truth...
Mr J	Why would I want this...this "Genius Machine"... whatever that is?
Deputy	Because you are a sad, lonely talentless hasbeen who thinks he's a rock n roll star...who needs to steal a talent machine from children to validate himself as a person!
Mr J	YOU need to watch your tone!...I shall be getting in touch with my solicitor after this...I'll sue you for every penny you have!
Deputy	Fair enough...meanwhile, I will be phoning the police. I'm sure they'll be very interested in what I have to show them...
Mr J	Show them? What?...You have no proof...you're bluffing!
Deputy	Am I?...What I think you have failed to realise is that the device you used to bug the school office also contained a very small, but very effective memory card.
Mr J	<i>(Slightly worried)</i> Go on...
Deputy	...And when I inserted that memory card into my computer I heard a very interesting conversation between you and your two accomplices whilst in the process of stealing our machine.
Mr J	<i>(Pausing and changing tone)</i> Ah...I see...er...perhaps we can come to some sort of arrangement to clear up this unfortunate "misunderstanding?" I'm sure we don't need to bother the police with such a trifling matter?

Deputy	Perhaps we can...Maybe you should come down to the school and tell us what you have in mind...
	<i>They both leave the stage. The others unfreeze. Head gets back up and moves to the front to speak to all...</i>
Head	<i>(Sadly)</i> So all that remains for me to say is thank you for being such wonderful staff and children and I wish you the best of luck as we all get split up and sent on our separate ways
	<i>Secretary enters</i>
Secretary	Sorry to disturb you headteacher but you have a visitor.
Head	Oh ok. I'll come and see them now.
	<i>Deputy enters stage</i>
Deputy	Oh I think everyone will want to hear what they have to say!
	<i>Mr J, Nigel and Hubert enter looking sheepish. Nigel is carrying the genius machine.</i>
Head	Mr Johnson! What are you doing here? And you have our machine!
Mr J	I'm afraid there has been an unfortunate misunderstanding. This machine accidentally ended up in my possession.
Nigel	We found it...
Hubert	It was just lying around...
Deputy	In a locked office in the middle of the night?
Mr J	Anyway...we would just like to return it to it's rightful owners...Nigel...
	<i>Nigel comes forward and gives the machine to the Head</i>
Head	Thank you very much
Deputy	And I think he has something else to say.
Mr J	I do?...oh yes...I do. Er...I'm sorry
Nigel and Hubert	We're sorry too
Deputy	<i>(Prompting)</i> Go on...
Mr J	And because you've all been SO understanding I've decided to cancel the planned demolition of the school. I'll build the houses somewhere else so you can stay open after all.
All	HOORAY!
Head	<i>(Shaking his hand)</i> Thank you Mr Johnson, thank you...I don't know what to say. But we still have no money to pay for our bills and repairs.
All	BOO!
Nigel	<i>(shaking head)</i> That is a problem
Hubert	The cost of living at the moment is terrible!

Mr J	Ok, I get the hint...How about I cover the costs of your repairs and bills AND make a generous donation to the school? Perhaps in return you might consider loaning me your amazing machine every now and again?...purely for research of course. I don't REALLY need it!
Nigel	No boss...not at all
Hubert	You have the voice of an angel!
Deputy	That seems very fair to me. What do you think Headteacher?
Headteacher	Sounds like everything has worked out brilliantly...(turning to audience) OK year six...now we have our machine back don't we have a show to put on?
All	HOORAY!
	<i>All leave stage but re-enter during final medley of songs leading into Song 10: The State of our School. Everyone comes onto stage to take bow during the finale.</i>