

Scene 1

(As the **intro music** plays (CD track 10) the cast enters. All stand to sing.)

Song **Drumnadrochit** (CD track 1 & 11, lyrics p18)

(Whole cast)

(As the **intro music** plays again (CD track 12) positions are taken for the first scene. The backdrop to the main stage should depict the iconic image of the shores of Loch Ness, with the famous ruins of Urquhart Castle, as shown on the front cover. A town sign reading 'Drumnadrochit' should also feature in the scenery. In front of the main stage, or on a smaller stage to one side, the office of a rural English newspaper is set up – see staging suggestions/scenery. As four reporters sit at desks typing, Editor Mr (or Mrs) Farthington enters.)

Mr Farthington Right! What earth-shattering stories have we got to catapult the Diddlesbury Gazette into the major league? Give me some top scoops that will put us up there with the Daily Mail!

Reporter 1 Well Mr Farthington, the carpet factory's moving premises.

Reporter 2 There are new traffic lights on the high street.

Reporter 3 The council have decided to do weekly bin collections.

Reporter 4 And the Year 2 class at St Paul's school have a new hamster.

Mr Farthington That is not what I want! Can't one of you uncover a spy network or something?

All reporters What? Here in Diddlesbury?

(The telephone rings (CD track 13). Mr Farthington answers it.)

Mr Farthington Diddlesbury Gazette, the editor, speaking.....Katy Allbright? Yes, she's a reporter here.....What? Oh no! My deepest apologies, Mrs Hatford! I'll deal with her personally. Goodbye! (putting the phone down) Honestly! You couldn't make it up!

Reporter 1 We're reporters, Mr Farthington. We usually do make it up!

(Katie Allbright enters the office and she bumps into a table!)

Mr Farthington Ah Katie, I sent you out on a simple job yesterday, to cover the wedding of Lord and Lady Batford, did I not?

Katie (sheepishly) Erm....yes?

Mr Farthington So why did you end up at the funeral of Mr Hatford, gather everyone together for a photograph and say, "Why the long faces? Let's have a few smiles!"

Katie Whoops!

Mr Farthington You lot call yourselves serious journalists? I think you *all* need a large dose of ambition!

Song This Media Merry-Go-Round *(CD track 2 & 14, lyrics p19)*

(Reporters, supported by the whole cast)

Mr Farthington Right Katie, you've always said you wanted to be an investigative journalist, so I'm sending you north! You're off to Drumnadrochit, on the banks of Loch Ness.

Katie Drumna...what? Loch Ness? Why?

Mr Farthington Apparently there's been a recent sighting of the Loch Ness monster. See what you can dig up.

Katie But there's no such thing as the Loch Ness monster!

Mr Farthington In which case you'll be back before you know it! Now, I've heard it can get a bit chilly up there, so remember your scarf and gloves! Bye bye Katie!

(Katie exits, looking sorry for herself.)

Reporter 1 Why are you sending her up there, Mr Farthington? Has there really been a sighting?

Mr Farthington Of course not! She's right, there's no such thing as the Loch Ness monster! But with her out the way at least she can't cause any more chaos in Diddlesbury! Ok, thinking caps on; where might we find a secret spy network.....?

*(As the **intro music** plays again (CD track 15) the lights come down. The desks are cleared from in front of the main stage, or from the small stage to one side if this is an arrangement you have used. Fade the music when ready.)*

Scene 2

*(To **Scotland The Brave** (CD track 16) the lights come up. A tent – see staging suggestions/scenery – now occupies the smaller side stage if you have one set up, or sits at the side of the main stage. Katie sits by it, wearing waterproofs!)*

Katie It's a shame the Gazette's budget couldn't stretch to a B&B! Oh well, this is cosy I suppose. Ok, a quick forty winks, then I'll get on with finding out what's been going on round here.

*(As Katie removes her glasses and lies back in the tent, the three old guardians of the loch enter, followed by a group of school children and a teacher, Miss Taggart– see staging suggestions/costumes. The children sit listening to the guardians who stand centrally on the main stage. As they start to speak, Katie peeps out of her tent, puts her glasses on and starts writing notes on a pad. **NB – Katie's note pad, which she has throughout, could have her lines written on as there are quite a few for her to learn.**)*

- Mo McDonald** Now children, my name is Mo McDonald. This is Malcolm McPhee and Maggie McDougal. We are your guides for today, and would like to welcome you and your teacher to Drumnadrochit on the shores of Loch Ness.
- Maggie McDougal** This beautiful loch, so deep and so mysterious, stretches from Fort Augustus to the narrows of Bona Ferry.
- Malcolm McPhee** And we three are its guardians. Look, these are our medals of office (*showing off the medal round his neck*). It's our responsibility to preserve the beauty and majesty of the loch.
- McDougal** We also make sure that its 'legend' is passed down through the generations. You know what I'm talking about, don't you?
- Children** The Loch Ness monster!
- McDonald** Aye, dear old Nessie. Throughout the years people claim to have seen her, but only we guardians know her secrets.
- Child 1** Who saw Nessie first?
- McDonald** St Columba, in the year 565 AD. He was on the banks of the loch with his friends, when suddenly out of the water came Nessie! Without a flicker of an eyebrow Columba said....
- McDougal** "Think not to go further great Beastie, nor touch thou that man! Quick! Go ye back!" And with that Nessie fled!
- Child 2** Did he really say that Miss McDougal?
- McDougal** Between you and me Laddie, he probably said, "AAAGGHHH!"
- Miss Taggart** Perhaps you could explain to the children how you became a guardian of the loch and of Nessie's legend.
- McPhee** Well, Miss Taggart, many of our ancestors were guardians, so we learned the secrets of the loch as children. However, you can only become a guardian by special invitation.
- Child 3** And who gives you this special invitation?
- McDonald** Why, Nessie herself will invite you to become a guardian! That's what happened to us. I know some would say we're a wee bit potty, but we know what we've seen and heard.....

Song The Guardians' Song *(CD track 3 & 17, lyrics p20)*
(The Guardians, supported by the whole cast)

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