



# Lord of the Lorenz Butterflies

## Scene 1 Ellies Office

**Characters ( Narrator, Ellie, PhD1, PhD2, Giles, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Ray)**

*Narrator and Ellie enter from stage right, Ellie is sitting at her desk*

**Narrator:**

Twas the day before panto, and all  
throughout Met  
The staff were excited, their appetites whet  
For this year's edition of seasonal fun,  
Of daft songs, cross dressing, and bad  
weather puns.  
But in the department there was one member  
Of staff with no love for the month of  
December.  
Scrooge was her name, Ellienezer her first,  
And this time of year she considered the  
worst.  
For she hated the panto, and refused to  
attend,  
The excitement for it, she could not  
comprehend.  
We join her now, in her office in Lyle,  
Working hard as ever, at least for a while...

*Ellie is sat at her desk working on her laptop.  
There is a knock at the door, Ellie gets up  
and walks in front of her desk and leans with  
her back to it reading some paperwork*

**Ellie** Come in.

*Two PhD students enter from stage left  
looking excited. Ellie continues to work  
without looking up at them.*

**PhD1** Hello, we're selling panto tickets...

**PhD2** (*Overly excited*) Yes, it's going to be  
the best one ever this year.

**PhD1** How many shall we put you down for?

**PhD2** (*eagerly*) One? Two? 9.81? 287?  
1013.75?  $3 \times 10^8$ ?

**PhD1** (*to PhD2*) There are only 200 seats.

**PhD2** Oh yeah...so 200 then?

**Ellie** (*still not looking up*) None.

**PhD2** (*shocked*) None?

**PhD1** Oh, I know...you're going away  
somewhere so can't come. Right?

**Ellie** No

**PhD2** So you are coming then?

**Ellie** No

**PhD2** (*confused*) I don't get it...she's here,  
but she's not coming to the panto?

**PhD1** Maybe she doesn't want to come to the  
panto...

*Phd2 drops the ticket box looking horrified*

**PhD2** Saaaaay whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat?!

**PhD1** (*to Ellie*) Are you sure we can't  
convince you?

*Ellie finally looks up from her work, clearly  
annoyed.*

**Ellie** Let me make this perfectly clear. I don't  
want to come to this panto. Or next year's  
panto. Or any panto EVER!

*PhD2 bursts into tears and runs offstage left.  
Phd1 picks up the ticket box and walks  
offstage left looking flustered.*

**Ellie** Humbug

*Ellie goes back to her work. After a brief  
pause there is another knock at the door.*

**Ellie** (*frustrated*) Yes?

*Giles skips in from stage left. Ellie again  
doesn't look up from her work.*

**Giles** Hello Ellienezer!

**Ellie** What can I do for you Giles?

**Giles** Do you know, I've just seen a PhD  
student crying in the corridor...must've come  
from a fluid dynamics lecture I suppose...

*Short pause*

**Giles** Anyway, I'm here to find out whether  
you wish to partake in this year's  
"festivities"...

**Ellie** (*still not looking up*) What festivities?

**Giles** Why the panto interval act of course!  
Ah just thinking about it makes my heart soar  
like a radiosonde!

*Giles looks wistfully skyward.*

**Giles** Now, I know you don't normally get involved in these things, but I really think this year will be different. My field mill is showing high potential! Steve Woolnough is performing a ThermohaMIME, ACP will be showing off his wave-break-dancing and I've invented a new instrument which I'm going to be demonstrating...

*Giles pulls out a guitar-like instrument with a cup anemometer on the head.*

**Giles** Behold, the anemomitar! Here, let me play you something...

*Giles plays a chord but the anemomitar is clearly out of tune.*

**Giles** Blast. Hang on a tick, let me just tune it up...

*He tunes the anemomitar by blowing on the cups so that they turn. We hear the sound of a guitar string tuning up.*

**Giles** That's the ticket.

*He goes to start singing a very un-giles-like song (hip-hop maybe?) but Ellie cuts him off (ideally just before some inappropriate/rude lyric).*

**Ellie** Giles, I'm not taking part.

**Giles** But Ellie, I haven't even shown you my digereedooDAR yet.

*Giles whips out a pipe and begins playing (sound effect)*

**Ellie** Goodbye Giles

*Giles dances offstage left still playing his flutometer. Ellie goes back to work. After a short pause there is another knock at the door.*

**Ellie** (annoyed) What is it now?!

*Bob Cratchit enters nervously from stage left*

**Bob** It's just me, Bob Crachit, your PhD student...

**Ellie** Well, what do you want?

**Bob** Well, Professor Scrooge...I was just wondering...err...if it's not too much to ask...umm...if me and your other students...err...

*Ellie stops working and turns to Bob.*

**Ellie** Spit it out!

**Bob** Could we have tomorrow night off?

**Ellie** Whatever for?

**Bob** Well...it's the Christmas Pantomime...

**Ellie** What is it with everyone and the pantomime? What has it ever done for this department?

**Bob** Well...It brings everyone together...It creates a sense of community in the department...It's a chance for the new PhD's to get to know their colleagues...And for everyone to let their hair down after a busy term...And the good-natured teasing of the more senior members of staff helps make them more accessible, giving students the courage to more readily engage with their lecturers and supervisors, leading to advancement of their knowledge and skills which makes them better scientists ultimately leading to a better future for the entire field of meteorology.

*Pause.*

**Ellie** Yes, but aside from that.

**Bob** Please let me go. I promise it won't affect my work.

**Ellie** (looks knowingly at the audience) That's what they all say.

*Ellie ponders the decision.*

**Ellie** It's a poor excuse for wasting valuable research hours...

*Bob looks dejected.*

**Ellie** ...But since I seem to be the only one knows it...take the night off.

**Bob** (excited) Oh, thank you, thank you, thank, you!

**Ellie** BUT...I want a draft of your thesis on my desk by 9am Friday morning.

**Bob** But Professor Scrooge...I'm only in my first year...

**Ellie** What was I thinking ...midday then.

**Bob** Umm...of course...Thank you Professor Scrooge.

*Bob walks of stage right. Ellie shakes her head and gets back to work.*

*Lights down –Ellie leaves stage right*

*Scene opens in a PhD office in Lyle two phd's enter stage left followed by a coughing tiny ray.*

**Tiny Ray** Wait for me guys cough

**Phd1** Slow down, or we will be back down royal berks again.

**Phd2** You know you shouldn't be pushing yourself.

*Bob runs onstage from stage right.*

**Bob** Everyone, I have wonderful news! Professor Scrooge is letting us take part in the Panto!

*Everyone cheers*

**Tiny Ray** Even me?

**Bob** Yes, even you, Tiny Ray.

**Ray** Yay! (*coughs*) I love the Panto! (*coughs*)

*Bob puts his arm around Ray*

**Bob** We all do Tiny Ray, we all do...

SONG – WE LOVE THE PANTO

*Ellie storms in stage right.*

**Ellie** What is all this racket?! It's hard enough trying to work out how to use the new Office 365 without listening to this tomfoolery! Get out the lot of you!

*All the Phd students apologise and exit stage left*

**Ellie** (*to the audience*) And you lot can keep it down and all!

**Audience** Boooooooo!

**Ellie** Humbug!

*Ellie exits stage right*

*Lights down.*

## Scene 2 Illingworth's seminar

### Characters (Narrator, Ellie, Anthony)

**Narrator** We rejoin Professor Scrooge in her office later on Panto Eve. According to her automatic out-of-office email, she always works late to maintain a healthy work/work balance. Plus there are no distractions...

*Ellie is sat at her desk again working. After a short while there is the hoot of an owl from outside. Ellie tries to ignore it. The owl hoots again and Ellie pauses clearly irritated by the sound. The owl hoots a third time. Ellie gets up, picking up a slingshot/bow/crossbow from behind her desk. She walks over to her window and fires. There is a squawk followed by a thud – owl down! Ellie sits down again looking pleased with herself.*

*After a short pause there is the sound of the department seminar bell ringing. Ellie looks up surprised but then shrugs it off. The bell sounds again. This time Ellie stands up and walks to the door to see if anyone is there. She walks back to the other side of her office to look out the window. Anthony Illingworth strides onstage from (stage left) mouthing to the sound of the bell – apparently, the noises are coming from him! Ellie jumps but then recognises Anthony. Illingworth wearing morris dancing bells.*

**Ellie** Anthony Illingworth? How can you be here, you're retired!

**Anthony** I'm not retired, I'm a Professor Emeritus! Did you like my Bell Impression?

**Ellie** That was you?

**Anthony** Oh yes, I have many you see...

*Anthony works through his impressive repertoire of bell impressions, he starts with a small bell*

**Anthony** That was my tiny ray bell...

*Anthony then makes a ringing noise like a phone*

**Anthony** That was Alexander Graham Bell

*Anthony impersonates big ben*

**Anthony** ...that was Big Ben and now for the grand fromage...

*Anthony makes the sound of a gong causing his whole face to shake. Ellie covers her ears.*

**Anthony** Did that resonate with you?

**Ellie** My Ears are ringing!

**Anthony** Hey, that's my job!

**Ellie** What are you here for? There are no seminars at this time.

**Anthony** *Au contraire mon petit poisson!* You see, I'm here to teach you the statistically significant errors of your ways. Sit down, sit down! No time to lose.

*Ellie takes a seat. The backdrop changes to show a hilariously edited photo of Chilbolton (courtesy of Will K)*

**Anthony** This is the world's largest fully steerable meteorological rrrrradar at Chilbolton. Now usually one would use this marvellous piece of equipment to measure prrrrrecipitation. But recently we've been using it for something quite different, you see? John Nicol and I have developed a sophisticated tracking algorithm...

**Ellie** Still trying to find the fog, are you?

**Anthony** No, no, no, *mon saucissonn!* We're tracking you! And then we're using information about your past activity to forecast your future. Let's have a look at the results, shall we?

*The background changes to show a time-height cross-section of a descending volcanic ash plume. The axes are labelled as 'time' and 'success'. A picture of Ellie's face is in the top right at the starting point of the descending plume.*

*Anthony pulls out a pointer and starts gesturing to the figure as he explains it.*

**Anthony** So, this is you right now (*pointing to the picture of Ellie*), high up in the troposphere following the success of your recent paper.

*The picture of Ellie starts to descend along the ash plume.*

**Anthony** But, as we move forward in time we see you descending down, down, down like a

sting jet, eventually crashing into the boundary layer.

*As the picture of Ellie reaches the bottom it falls on its side.*

**Ellie** This is a poorly conducted piece of research! My work clearly shows that I'm going to remain in the stratosphere indefinitely, just like a CFC.

**Anthony** Ah, but you have severely underestimated the magnitude of  $p$ .

**Ellie** (*confused*) Pressure?

**Anthony** No, you *pomme de terre!*  $p$  is the Panto factor!

**Ellie** What's the panto factor?

*The equation  $p=\rho RT$  appears on-screen.*

**Anthony** The panto factor, introduced by Illingworth *et al.* 2013, is proportional to the time spent at the panto,  $T$ , and the relative panto contribution,  $R$ .

*He points at each symbol in turn.*

**Ellie** Hmm! I presume  $\rho$  is the drop in productivity, then?

**Anthony** No... $\rho$  is density.

*Ellie looks confused and annoyed.*

**Anthony** Now, if we take a look at the next chart (*the screen changes to show a scatter graph showing a positive correlation*), we see that there is a strong correlation between  $p$  and one's  $H$ -index. So, if you carry on with your "anti-panto" ways you will end up down here (*he gestures to the bottom left of the plot*) with the JCMM.

**Ellie** Humbug!

**Anthony** Ooh, yes please, I'd love one!

**Ellie** What? No, I don't believe this nonsense.

**Anthony** Well, I think that by the end of this night you will believe it.

**Ellie** What do you mean?

**Anthony** You're going to be visited...by three spirits! The ghost of panto past, the ghost of panto present and ghost of panto's yet to come. They were the co-authors of my panto

factor paper and they're going to set you straight.

*Anthony makes the sound of an alarm clock.*

**Ellie** Saved by the bell!

**Anthony** Oh my, look at the time. I said I'd go pick up that speed boat tonight. Au revoir *mon champion*. Expect the first ghost when the bell tolls one...like this:

*Anthony makes the sound of a bell chiming, then leaves stage left. Ellie stands up and walks to the door to look out after Anthony.*

**Ellie** (to herself) What was that all about? Panto factor. Must've been that viva wine I was drinking.

*She walks back to her desk and sits down again.*

**Ellie** Finally, I can get some work done.

*She goes to start typing but immediately falls asleep, face planting the keyboard, and starts snoring loudly.*

*Lights down.*

## Scene 3 – The Ghost of Pantomimes Past

**Characters** (Narrator, Ellie, Ross R, Roman, Emperor, Keith S, Y Ellie, Young Ross R, The Queen, Mike Stroud, Young sue grey, Fairy, Young Robin Hogan, Young Len shaffery, Young Richard Allan, Young Janet, Offstage voice)

**Narrator** As Ellineezer sleeps at her desk the night hours fly by. Who is the ghost of panto past, as we hear the 1 o'clock bell toll.

*Bell rings (courtesy of Illingworth)*

**Narrator** Thank you Anthony, and on that note lets return to her office to find out.

*Ellieneezer stirs into life.*

**Ellie** That was the one o'clock bell and there is no ghost, I have nothing to worry about

*Ross sneaks up behind from stage right (He's behind you)*

**Ross** Boo!

*Ellie knocks some papers on to the floor*

**Ellie** Are you going to clean that mess up?

**Ross** Err, no. I don't clean things up. I'm a top-notch ghost; I can walk through walls.

*Ellie looks unconvinced.*

**Ellie** Right...

**Ross** Look! (*walks into a wall, recoils in pain*). Oh, normally that works.

*Ellie looks sceptical*

**Ellie** Right. So, (*dramatically*) are you the Spirit whose coming is foretold?

**Ross** (**Dramatic voice**) Yes I'm Ross Reynolds and I am the ghost of pantos past. I have witnessed forty years of pantomimes

*Ross paces to the left of the stage as he speaks*

**Ellie** I see.

**Ross** (*Dramatic voice again*) I have seen forty years of pantos. I've seen Gone with the Wind, Snow White, James Sonde and Cinderella; Aladdin, Cinderella, The Exorcist and Cinderella; Cinderella, Cinderella, Cinderella, Saving Professor Bryan, Cinderella; (optional) Cinderella, Cinderella, Cinderella and Cinderella .

*Ellie is trying to work.*

**Ellie** Bah, HUMBUG.

**Ross** A humbug. Oh yes please

**Ellie** Not humbugs. Bah humbugs. Well I wouldn't even bother seeing one panto. But anyway, what are you doing here? I have quite a lot to do; I'm compiling a compendium of all the women who've made a great contribution to science. So far, I have myself ... Anyone else?

**Ross** Loads: Ada Lovelace, Laura Bassi, Rosalind Franklin, Marie Curie, Dorothy, Hodgkin, Lisa Meitner, Rosalind Yalow...

**Ellie** (*interrupting*) Yes, yes, but are there any as important as me?

**Ross** Don't be so naïve... (*Holds out hand*)  
Pull my finger.

**Ellie** I beg your pardon!

**Ross** No really, pull my finger (*holds out a giant foam finger to Ellie*)

**Ellie** Why would I do that?

**Ross** I am here to show you your pantomimes past. We must travel together.

**Ellie** Well if it's the only way to get rid of you, it would better be quick. A haunting isn't a good enough reason to not get this compendium done and my paper written by 4am.

*Ellie gets up and walks over to him and Pulls his finger*

*Lights come up on image of inside Buckingham palace/photo of ross and the queen.*

**Ellie** Where are we? This isn't my past...

**Ross** Shhhhhh. Here I come.

*Ellie+ross to stage left side*

*The queen and young Ross - super hairy with afro - appear on stage from stage right*

**Young Ross:** So, as I've been saying for the last four hours, we have some very bright students. Look, here are their weather charts. (*pause, while they look at weather charts*) But after all, meteorology, well, (*sings*) it's a kind of magic!

**Queen:** Very well, but one's afraid one must be going.

**Young Ross:** Oh no, no. (*sings?*) Today, I'm gonna show you round, we'll have a real good time. You'll feel ali-i-i-ive

**Queen:** (*sings; don't stop me now 2<sup>nd</sup> line*) I'm afraid one really has to go, one has to go, see how one's corgis are

**Young Ross:** But don't stop me now! (*Pause*) They call me Mr Fahrenheit, I'm talking at the speed of light, I wanna make a meteorologist out of you. So don't stop me

now, I'm having such a good time, like at the met ball. Don't stop me now, if you want some more explaining, just give me a call. Don't stop me

**Queen:** One's not having a good time.

**Young Ross:** Don't stop me

**Queen:** One's not having a good time

**Young Ross:** I don't wanna stop at all. I'll show you BARCELONA and the seven seas of rhye. (*excited. Points offstage*). I see a little silhouetto of a sonde!

**Queen; Ross** (rey-NOLDS) Ross (rey-NOLDS), what on earth is the Fandango?

**Young Ross;** Thunderbolt and lightning

**Queen;** Oh, how delighting

**Ross;** FLASH! (*Picture of Ruari from calendar*)

**Queen;** Aaa-aaaah (*posh- not at all frightened. Not like the flash a-aaah*). One's just a poor queen, doesn't understand thee

**Young Ross;** You're just a poor queen (*to the audience*) get her a cup of tea

**Queen:** spare one one's ears from this meteorology. Easy come, easy go, will thou let one go

**Queen** Ross Reynolds

**Young Ross** No! I will not let you go.

**Queen:** let one go

**Young Ross:** I will not let you go

**Queen:** let one go!

**Young Ross;** I will not let you go.

**Queen:** won't let one go-o-o-o-o- . Oh, (*sings*) one wants to break free. (*spoken*) One wants to break FREE. One wants to ride one's bicycle.

**Young Ross:** *(sings)* Weather really matters, anyone can see. Weather really matters to me.

*(Mike Stroud runs on from stage left)*

**Young Ross** Mike Stroud, what are you doing here?

**Mike** Your majesty, let me tell you all about the Atmospheric Observatory!

*Queen hangs head in boredom/disbelief and stands stage right*

WEATHER STATION SONG

*YR and Mike bow madly to the queen...as does ghost Ross. The queen, Mike and Young Ross leave stage right*

*Ross and Ellie move back to centre stage*

**Ellie** What on earth was that for?

**Ross** I just wanted everyone to see this

**Ellie** I have no time for this.

*Ross holds out finger, Ellie pulls it*

*Haunting noise, lights out. The lights come on. The desk is still present, but the backdrop shows an image of Pompeii*

**Ross** Oops, that's not right. I haven't been around THAT long. What a pa-LAVA.

*pulls finger- backdrop of dinosaurs*

**Ross** Oops, wrong way again.

**Ellie** What's that (pointing at backdrop)

**Ross** I don't know, do-you-think-he-saurus?

*Ellie pulls Ross' finger or whatever leads into this. A Roman(Emperor) comes on stage right.*

**Ellie** Where am I now?

**Ross** This is Rome in the year AD 113. That is the Emperor

**Emperor** *(to audience)* Salve

**Ross** And he is about to receive the world's first ever weather forecast

*Another Roman comes on stage left*

**Roman** *(with raised right palm)* Hail Caesar

**Emperor** Right, I'll stay indoors then

**Ross** OK on we go

*Ellie pulls Ross' finger again. Emperor and Roman leave*

*Backdrop shows image from last scene (taken in dress rehearsal)*

**Ross** Ah! Spoilers! Spoilers!

*Slide flashes to various big (super obvious) events from last 100 years. To the sound of the TARDIS noise*

*Ghostbusters Scene*

**Ross** Aaaah help! Quick, pull my finger!

*Flashes to Ross calendar*

**Ross** *(shouts towards offstage)* I told you not to show that this year!

*Ellie grabs his finger, haunting noise, lights down.*

*Haunting noise again, lights out again. Same desk is there, Keith 'fuzziface' Shine is sitting at it (Comes on stage right) He has a ginormous colourful beard. He looks festive-wearing a Christmas jumper?- and the picture of his office shows a big fake-pantomime poster of 'gone with the westerly winds'*

**Ross** *(looks hopeful)* Ah, here we are. Do you recognise this one?

**Ellie** *happily* Of course

**Ross** Go me, go me. *(does a proud dance)*

**Ellie** *(looks askew at Ross)* Of course I remember this. It was when I was doing my PhD. It was the golden age of my time here back in the 90's.

**Ross** *(wistfully)* Ah I remember the 90's. The Moulin Rouge, typhoid fever, those new fangled auto mobiles that were going to take the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by storm. 1892 was of course the year I finally left school. After a long and successful teaching career.

**Ellie** Right. As I was saying. This is where I used to have meetings with my supervisor Dr. Fuzziface.

To 'dr fuzziface' (Keith)

**Ellie** Hi Dr Fuzziface!

*He doesn't react at all*

**Ellie** Hello?

*Still no reaction*

**Ross** He can't hear you. (*Dramatically*)  
These are but shadows of the things that  
have been. They have no consciousness of  
us.

**Ellie** That's a shame... I learnt so much back  
then. Here I come now, I used to be so  
beautiful back then...

*Ellie looks pensive. Ellie & Ross walk to stage  
left side; out of spotlights.*

*Keith is humming a Christmas song as he  
reads. There is the sound of a doorbell- it is a  
Christmas song.*

*Keith looks up and to opposite side.*

**Keith** Hi Ellie, come in, come in. I was just  
reading this brilliant paper, "Will reindeer  
flights get bumpier with climate change?"; S  
Klaus et al. It doesn't bode well for santa's  
elves, I tell you. Someone should do this one  
day for aeroplane flights. Anyway, it's good to  
see you. What do you need?

*Young Ellie enters from stage left*

**Young Ellie (Y.E)** Hi Keith Shine. I've just  
finished reading the IPCC second  
assessment report. Good job it's so short,  
hopefully they never feel the need to make it  
thousands of pages long.

**Keith** Ah, work can wait! It's pantomime  
season, the best time of year! You shouldn't  
be working so hard on your PhD. I do hope  
you're enjoying the festivities. Are you acting  
in the panto this year?

**Y.E (excitedly)** Of course, but you know I  
can't say anything about it.

**Keith** Oh go on, you can tell me something. I  
saw a 1:500 scale model of a the death star  
so I'm guessing 'Met Wars: the ESSC strike  
back'? Am I right?

**Y.E.** Maybe.

**Keith** Or is it 'Gone with the Westerly-winds'  
(*points at fake poster*)

**Y.E.** Noooo, that's the fake!

**Keith** Ahhh, but you could be double  
bluffing... You're not nervous are you?

**Y.E.** A bit; but I'm really excited! It's not every  
day you get to mock your supervisors!

**Keith** Oh, so I'm in it am I?

**Y.E.** I didn't say that...

**Keith** Well make sure you enjoy it while you  
can, in a couple of years you might be on the  
other side of the jokes.

**Y.E.** I'll worry about that when I'm a  
professor- probably about twenty five years'  
time!

**Keith** Well I won't be here to see- I won't stay  
around for THAT long. (*Laughs.*)

*Young Ellie and Keith freeze frame. Ellie and  
Ross return to centre stage.*

**Ellie** That was such a great time. Keith made  
sure I had such a good time with the panto.  
(*Dramatically*) Supervisors have the power to  
render students happy or unhappy; to make  
their work light or burdensome; a pleasure or  
a toil. ... (*huge pause and back in her normal  
voice*) but then, everything was so much  
easier back then. The panto was so much  
smaller.

**Ross** Is it really so different now? It only  
takes a little effort to make sure the student  
enjoys the pantomime.

**Ellie (a bit annoyed)** This is silly, can I just go  
back to work now?

*Ross holds out his finger and she pulls it  
lights down keith shine exits stage right YE  
leaves stage left*

*Backdrop shows onstage of Panto. Ross and  
Ellie are still centre stage. Richard Allen is  
onstage behind Ellie and Ross, ready to sing.*

**Ross** Do you recognise this place?

*Ellie looks at the scene behind her and faces  
back to front.*

**Ellie** (*worried*) Yes, this is a panto that I acted in many years ago. Look, there's Richard Allen! He's about to sing about TAMSAT...

*Ross and Ellie move to stage right, away from Richard Allen*

### AFRICA SONG

*Lights down, Richard Allen off stage left.*

*Backdrop shows backstage of pantomime. They are clearly backstage during a past pantomime. Young Robin-Hogan is there, dressed up as a Princess. Young Ellie is also there. (Ross and Ellie are stood stage right)*

*(Young Sue, Young Robin, Fairy and Young Janet are on stage)*

*Lights up*

*Young Richard Allen comes 'off stage (stage left)' with a script in his hand*

**YJ** Hi Richard Allen, how did it go? Did they love it?

**YRA** It's a tough audience, I'm not sure they got it. If that wasn't funny, I don't know what is! Here Janet Barlow, you can have the stupid script! (*tries to hand script to Janet; drops it. He storms off stage right*)

**YJ** Wow! (*to YS*) Did you see that? (*to YE*) Did you see that? It got caught in an eddy, or something! There must be some serious physics behind that! I always thought I loved the ocean most, but the small scale features of the boundary layer are ACTUALLY my vocation!

**Young Sue (YS)** Shhh everybody, Robin Hogan is trying to say something.

**Young Robin (YR)** Thanks Sue Gray. OK people, we are ready to go! Hope you all know your lines. You there (*points to a fairy who is swigging from a paper bag*) stop drinking! You still have your line to say!

**Fairy** (*drunk*) It'll be fine. (*hiccups, and staggers off stage right*)

**Young Robin** (*shakes head and sighs*) As I was saying, I hope you're all ready because there were a few issues in rehearsals. I still can't believe Tim forgot his sword on stage,

but it's OK, I got Sue to glue it to his hand so he can't forget.

**Young Sue (YS)** Tim Woollings? I thought you said Len Shaffrey?

**Young Len (YL)** (*runs across stage from stage left*). He is a pumpkin, with a sword. But I'm Len the pumpkin! Why have I got a sword?!

**YR** Sue! I give you one job! I hope no-one ever puts you in charge of anything important- like, I don't know, PhD tutoring. So, as I was saying, you'd better all get this right. I'm expecting perfection. I do NOT want to be made a fool of.

*As he finished speaking he puts on a wig and proudly walks off stage left. A loud fake laugh is heard.*

*YS turns to YE.*

**YS** She'll be going on about that for years. Ellie you look nervous, are you OK? Don't worry about Robin and Richard!

**YE** I'm just really worried I'll mess my lines up and it won't be funny anymore!

**YS** It's probably funnier if you get it a bit wrong anyway.

*Len is still trying to remove the sword, in comedy fashion.*

**YL** (*waving his sword around*) It's not Broadway!

**YS** Stop waving your sword around. Here, let me help you with that. Ellie, you're on, after the next song get ready!

*Everyone tries to help Len. YE takes a big inhale, readies herself, on the left of the stage everyone freezes except Ellie and Ross*

*Focus back on Ellie and Ross- walk to centre stage.*

**Ellie** I don't want to see anymore, can't we just go?

*Holds out his finger, Ellie takes it. Lights go down all Young actors on stage leave stage*

*right When lights come back up: Young Richard Allan is on stage singing Africa by toto*

*Richard Allan leaves stage right Robin walks on from stage left to centre stage, proudly sitting on a chair in pink. It is the shoe scene in Cinderella. Ellie and Ross are still in sight.*

**YR** *very high pitched voice* Bring me the shoe! My dainty feet will fit it like a least squares fit to a linear trend.

**Ellie** Why did you bring me here? I already said I don't want to see this!

*Young Ellie walks on from stage right with a tiny shoe in one hand, and an umbrella in the other, spinning around in circles. She trips over, and throws her shoe which lands near Robin. She looks horrified and starts hunting the shoe, obviously looking everywhere except where it is. Robin looks annoyed and there is an awkward silence.*

*He stands up, picks up the shoe, laughing towards the audience, and aggressively pushes it at YE. He sits down and smooths himself down.*

**YR** *(high pitched voice)* Ah, handsome prince. You look as if you've been subjected to some serious vorticity and a thorough dousing in hydrometeors. Is there a tropical storm outside?

*YE looks at shoe. She can clearly not remember her line. Robin glares.*

**Voice offstage** GET ON WITH IT

**YE** Um... err... I found the shoe?

**Ellie** Go on! You know this line! It's "In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, Hurricanes Hardly Happen".

*YE is still hesitating. YR coughs.*

**YR** I said, is there a TROPICAL STORM, in Hertfordshire perhaps?

**YE** Ah! *(Clears throat)*. Of course not. In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, Hurricanes Hastle Hamsters *(audience laugh)*

*Robin walks to her. While still smiling at the audience, he manhandles her away from the audience.*

**Robin** No, its supposed to be... *whispers in her ear, and turns her back again. He smooths himself down and walks back to his seat.*

**YE** In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, Hurricanes Hamper Hairdressers *(audience laugh)* oh what is it meant to be

*Ellie collapses on her knees in despair. Robin leans his head in his hand. Len walks on from stage right looking sheepish, still attached to the sword.*

**YL** Fear not, the brave pumpkin will save the day!

**YL** *stage whisper* Its OK Ellie.

*He pulls her to her feet with his spare hand and whispers in her ear.*

**YE** *smiles nervously* In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, Haemorrhoids Hardly Help.

*Offstage laughter continues. Young Ellie runs offstage (stage left), crying. Young Len goes to move after her. Robin smiling at audience, trying to smooth over with audience. Freeze the scene.*

**Ellie** *(angry)* Why did you show me these confounded things? I don't want to see this. Take me back to my office, NOW!!!

*Ross holds out his finger, Ellie grabs it. Fade to black.*

*Lights on narrator*

**Narrator** So, with Ellienezer in despair at nightmares past, and ghosts abounding, it seems that this year's PhD cohort are determined to quell the festive spirit. Hopefully the second half will lift things a bit, and we won't send you away weeping into

your Christmas puddings. Come back and find out: will Elienezer ever change her ways? Which other honoured staff members have taken a turn for the ghastly this year? Has Janet really discovered her ACTUAL project, backstage at a pantomime? Will Tiny Ray's cough ever go away? Are there any other comedy vegetables in this year's pantomime? And do PhD students REALLY get drunk backstage? Surely not. But we'll see you after the interval to find out.

## ACT 2

### Scene 4 - The Ghost of Panto Present

**Characters (Narrator, Ellie, John Methven, Ted Shepherd, Helen Dacre, Giles, Helary Weller, Chris Scott, PhD1, PhD2, Tiny Ray, Dan Peak, Nicolas Bellouin, Andy Turner, Paul Williams**

**Narrator:** Hello and welcome back to the 2013 Met panto. I hope you're all suitably refreshed and ready to get riding the emotional roller coaster once again. Previously...Ellieneza Scrooge the grumpiest person in all Met land has been taken back into the past and witnessed the moment when she came to hate the panto. What will happen next? Who will the other ghosts be. Will Tiny Ray save the day? Let's go back to the action and find out.

*Ellie wakes up at her desk with a start*

**Ellie** HURRICANES HARDLY HAPPEN

*Looks around trying to figure out what where she is*

**Ellie** What? Where am I back in my office by the looks of it. I guess last night must have been a dream. And I have been working too hard lately. And I did have rather a lot of that wine. Hey where's the wine gone?

*Ellie gets up to look for wine at the front of the stage.*

*John Methven enters from stage right, looks confused, takes swig of Ellie's wine he is holding, sits down at Ellie's desk and starts typing*

**Ellie** I know it should be here somewhere. *(Sees John)* Hey, who are you?

**John M** What? Wait, this isn't my office!? I wondered why I was writing a biography of Ada Lovelace. I'm John Methven, the Ghost of Panto, ermm... Oh look, this nice Nigerian gentleman wants to send me money!

**Ellie** Get off my computer!

**John M** Oh yes, I was here for something else wasn't I. I'm John Methven the Ghost of Panto ermm...

**Ellie** Go on *(prompting him)* The Ghost of Panto...

**John** PAST!

**Ellie** Well I already met the Ghost of Panto Past, so you must be the Ghost of Panto Present

**John M** Yes. Probably

*John goes back to typing*

**John M** Where's that send button gone? How will he ever know where to send that money without my bank password?

**Ellie** Hello. I'm still here. Aren't you going to do your job?

**John M** What's that then?

**Ellie** Aren't you supposed to show me pantos present, and then get out of my life?

*Pause, John looks under the desk*

**John M** Hmm, no biscuits here. I must have left them in the lab, shall we go?

*Both leave stage right*

### Scene 4b – The Lab

*Ted S, Helen Dacre and Giles enter from stage left. Lights up*

**Giles** Right let's get this vocal warm up going . Starting in the boundary layer.. radiosonde..

**ALL** *(in a low voice)* Radiosonde, radiosonde, radiosonde

**Giles** and moving up into the free troposphere.

**ALL** *(higher)* Radiosonde, radiosonde, radiosonde

**Giles** and moving up towards the tropopause.

**ALL** *(higher still)* radiosonde, radiosonde, radiosonde

**Giles** STRATOSPHERE!!!

**ALL** *(higher still)* radiosonde, radiosonde, radiosooooooooonde

*Ellie and John come on stage right*

**Ellie** *(tetchily)* Right let's get this over with.

You've brought me to the laboratory and you're going to try and change my mind about the panto. So what am I meant to be seeing here?

**John M** Why don't you have a watch and see?

**Ellie** Well so far all I see is Giles Harrison, Helen Dacre and Ted Shepherd. I don't know what they're doing down here. They should be at work raising the profile of the department rather than wasting time on the panto

**Giles** Helen, Ted, so glad you agreed to take part in our interval act

**Ted** (*with copious jazz hands*) Thanks Giles! I have to say I am looking forward to singing in this interval act. It really will be.....my time to shine

**Ellie** He could put those incredible jazz hands to much better use if he spent more time working and less on the panto. Bah.. humbug I say!

**John** Humbugs? Where? I Love humbugs. Can I have one?

**Ellie** Not humbugs, I said bah humbug

**John** Oh, ok...

**Helen** So, whom else are we waiting for?

**Giles** Just Hillary Weller and Chris Davies

**Helen** Don't forget he's Chris Scott now

**Giles** Oh yes. I must try and remember that.

**Helen** So did you manage to persuade Ellie to join us?

**Giles** Well...yes I did actually

**Ted** (*in surprise and overdramatically*) REALLY

**Giles** Of course not. You know how she feels about the panto.

**Helen** Probably for the best. She makes everyone more depressed than the centre of Hurricane Sandy.

*Chris Scott and Hillary Weller enter from stage left*

**Giles** Ah here they are. Hi Hillary. Hi there Dr Scott. See I did remember.

**Chris** Actually I've decided to change my name again. No point just changing from Chris Davies to Chris Scott. If I'm going to do this, I might as well do it properly. From now on I want to be called "Newton Raphson", I could explain why if you have time

**Hilary** I can guess. Don't you think that's ridiculous?

**Chris** Really, you don't like it? How about...Zodiac Olympus

**Hilary** Right. You think you could pull that off?

**Chris** (*enthusiastically*) Yes.....(*less enthusiastically*) No. How about Richter Scale? Barwick Butterbean? Cyrus Steelgroins?

*Each name is delivered with heroic confidence but each one is scoffed at*

**Chris** How about....Dirk Cannon?

**Helen** Damned stupidest name I've ever heard

**Giles** Right anyway let's get on with this singing practice.

**Helen** I have to say Giles I'm glad you've gone for something a bit different this year

**Hilary** Yeah, normally at this time we'd be singing something really lame like (*names actual song they performed in the interval*)

**Giles** Lets have a run through then, are the instruments tuned?

*Instrumental tuning.*

**Giles** a-1, a-2, a-1-2-3..

SONG (hopefully a cheesy boyband number so they can refer to themselves as Wind Direction)

**Hilary** You know what. I love the panto

**Helen** Me too I love the panto

**Ted** I haven't been here long but...I..love...the..panto. (*Each word accompanied by a hand gesture*)

**All** It's the most wonderful time of the year

*Staff leave all linking arms and singing of to stage left*

*Ellie and John move to centre stage*

**Ellie** (*still sceptical*) Right so the panto makes a few weirdos slightly happier. And slightly weirder. That's supposed to make me change my mind about it is it.

**John M** Maybe

**Ellie** Are you going to take me to see anyone else

**John M** Yes. Probably

**Ellie** You don't know do you

*Pause*

**John M** No (*pause*) Now you were saying something about humbugs?

**Ellie** Not again? Come on let's just move on. Somewhere. Anywhere.

*Both leave stage right lights down*

## **Scene 4c – The PhD Office**

*Phd 1,2 and tiny ray come on stage left. Lights up*

*The PhDs are at a table with a load of props. Tiny Ray is there with 2 others.*

*Ellie and John enter from stage right Tiny. Ray is covered in paint paper and sellotape etc.*

**Ellie** OK so here we are in the PhD office. What am I meant to be observing here

**John M** Just watch..

**PhD1** Panto day today. Can't wait. I love it. I love it I do.

**PhD2** Oh it's great isn't it. I could even do a little dance

**Tiny Ray** Oh yes shall we? I'd love to dance

**PhD1** Now come on there Tiny Ray. You know you're too weak and puny to be doing things like dancing.

**Tiny Ray** Oh yes. I forget

**PhD2** But I thought I saw you breakdancing the other week?

**PhD1** That wasn't breakdancing was it Ray. Come on, tell us what happened

**Tiny Ray** (*pathetically*) I fell over and I was too weak to get up.

**PhD1** But you did break something didn't you Ray

**Tiny Ray** Yes. My wrist.

**PhD2** OK, sorry. Now have we all brought the props we made.

**Ellie** Why are they still making props now? Surely they should have made them weeks ago!

**PhD2** Remind me again, why are we making these now? Surely we should have made these a couple of weeks ago?

**PhD1** (*confused*) What a strange thing to say. We're making them now because a certain grumpy Ellie hasn't given us any time off until now. I've made this manger scene (*holds rubbish manger scene*)

**PhD2** And I've got the Tin Man sorted (*holds up a roll of foil*)

**PhD1** Is that all you're doing for it?

**PhD2** Yeah (*shrugs*). It'll do

**PhD1** So we have the manger and Tin Man sorted all that remains is of course (*pause for effect*) the light sabre. Tiny Ray, did you manage to make one?

**Tiny Ray** Well I gave it my best shot but I only had toilet paper, cotton buds and sticky back plastic (*holds up an actual light sabre toy*)

**PhD1** Wow that's amazing Ray. Well done

**Tiny Ray** (*pleased as punch*) Oh. No one's ever said well done to me before.

**Ellie** Look John. Look at how proud he is. Bless his tiny cotton socks. They all seem to be so happy... But why isn't Bob here

**PhD2** Remind me again, why isn't Bob here?

**PhD1** Again. Why do you keep asking these

questions?

**PhD2** I don't know. I guess some people might be confused as to what's going on

**PhD1** As you well know that Ellie works him harder than a squirrel trying to bury his nuts in concrete

**Ellie** (*dawing on her that she may be in the wrong*) Maybe I do work him too hard? By missing out on the panto, he's missing out on all these opportunities for networking

**PhD2** I still say I'm upset we've gone for yet another safe choice for panto theme

**PhD1** Oh yes. Remind us again what you wanted to do

**PhD2** All Quiet on the Occluded Front

**PhD1** Yeah and you're still convinced that would be feasible.

**PhD2** Yes. Or maybe RMetGeddon

**PhD1** (*increasingly irate*) No. No. You idiot. Think about what you're saying

**PhD2** Or maybe Rainspotting

**PhD1** (*Fuming*) They're just puns on the names. That's all they are. None of them would work as pantos

**PhD2** Or how about "Gunfight at the Croquet Corral" with the new data assimilating Sherriff in town by the name of Amos Lawless, and his search for the perfect posterior.

**PhD1** (*looks as if they are about to tell PhD2 off again*).....OK granted. That one I like

**Tiny Ray** Oh lets stop all this fussing and a feuding. It's panto day!

**PhD1** Oh Yes. Of course. Friends still

**PhD2** Friends. You know what. I think the panto could stop any argument

**All PhDs** It's the most wonderful time of the year

*All PhDs leave singing*

**Ellie** Wow. I never realised the panto meant so much to everyone. Just look how happy everyone is. Gosh I really am beginning to drastically rethink everything I hold dear. Is it

time to go back?

**John M** Nearly, just one more stop.

*Both leave stage right lights down*

## Scene 4d – The Buffet

*A buffet table is laid out in the background Chris Scott (stage left),, Dan Peake (stage right), Nicolas Bellouin (stage right), Andy Turner(stage right) are in front of the buffet.*

*Lights up*

*Ellie and John enter (stage right)*

**Ellie** Right then Spirit. So what am I meant to be observing here that will help make me change my mind?

**John M** Nothing

**Ellie** Nothing? So why am I here?

**John M** What? You think I'm missing a free buffet when nobody can see or hear me? Get stuck in girl. Fill your boots

*John goes over to the table*

**John M** Wow. Look at all this pasta (*to Andy who can't hear him*) Who made all of this?

**Ellie** I thought they couldn't hear you John

**John M** Oh yeah. Ha. (*To Andy again*) Hey where did you get that pizza from?

**Ellie** They can't hear you John

**John M** Oh yeah right.

*John wanders to other end of table. Nicolas comes up to where Chris and Andy are stood*

**Chris** (*aggressively*) Hey what do you think you're doing?

**Nicolas** (*in an exaggerated French accent*) Pardon?

**Andy** You heard Nicoliar Bellouin What do you think you're doing?

**Nicolas** (*in surprise*)Oh Andy Turner, I was Just getting some food

**Chris** Well this is a Met table. Lyle tables are over there

**Nicolas** (*in surprise*) Oh right so we're now sworn enemies are we

**Andy** Yeah. We hate you and you hate us. We're like The Jets and The Sharks

**Chris** The Montagues and The Capulets

**Andy** England and the Nation of France.

**Nicolas** *Shrugs Gallic-ly* Boff

*The sound of guitar is heard. Paul Williams comes in wearing shades and dressed like a rock star from stage right*

**Chris** Well forget about all of that for now. Here comes Paul Williams He's been insufferable since he was on TV

**Paul** It's all right everyone. The party is about to start. Paul Williams is in the house!!! Fasten your seatbelts because things are about to get bumpy.

**Andy** Oh right yeah. Who are you again?

**Paul** Come on. You all know who I am

**Nicolas** Non

**Andy** Are you John Oliver from the Daily Show

*A spot the difference picture of John Oliver and Paul Williams appears on the backdrop*

**Paul** Like you don't know. Paul Williams? TV star? Famous nationwide? (*pointing to Andy*) Like he doesn't know who I am. Look at his little face. Yes, you really are talking to THE Paul Williams.

**Andy** I really have no idea who you are

**Paul** Oh yeah right. I know you've all been on my website and checked out all of the videos of me on the news. (*to Nicolas*) Here do you want me to sign that plate for you?

**Nicolas** Non. I would prefer to... how you say...cut my own ears off and feed them to mon chat.

**Paul** (*Dawning on him that they don't recognise him*) Oh, right. Sorry

**Chris** Here Paul. You know what the trouble is?

**Paul** No

**Chris** It's the name mate. Not nearly grand enough. Why don't try....(*grandly*) Carlos Danger

*Scoffing from others*

**Chris** Johnny Ra? Oh you guys just don't recognise a good name when you hear one

*Chris, Paul, Nicolas drift to sidestage to. Dan Peak comes to centre stage and is holding and looking intently at a piece of paper*

**Andy** Oh Daniel Peake. I didn't know you were coming tonight. What have you got there?

**Dan** It's another one of my challenges. You've got to name the 50 best selling board games of all time. I've got a bit stuck though.

**Andy** Oh well. Let's have a look at what you've got. I'll see if I can get any more for you

*They stare at the paper..*

**Andy** How about Snakes and Ladders?

**Dan** Oh of course. If you have anymore just shout them out?

*John wanders across*

**John M** Oh wow look at these sandwiches. Who made all these?

**Andy** Guess Who?

**John M** (*confused*) Well I don't know - that's why I asked. (*Distracted by sandwiches*) Ah look at these rolls. They look really tasty. But they're just those little rolls. They're far too small

**Dan** Connect 4

**John M.** Brilliant. I'll do that. I'll use these cocktail sticks

**Andy** Mastermind

**John M** (*pleased with himself*) One of my better ideas certainly. Although looking at it. It looks tricky ... too ... erm ..... delicate ...an ... erm ...

**Dan** Operation?

**John M** Yes, something like that. But hang on, there's no need. Someone's made bigger

rolls. Those rolls the American's call Subs. I've often wondered, if these are submarines, what do they call full sized baguettes

**Andy** Battleships?

**John** Possibly. Possibly. You know this is the life isn't it. I wouldn't change this for the world

**Dan** Balderdash!

**John M** No, it's true!

**Ellie** They can't hear you John

**John M** Oh! Why not?

**Andy** Articulate

**John M** O-K. CAN YOU HEAR ME KNOW?

**Andy** Hey let's forget about this for a while. Come on everyone. This is panto day. The happiest day ever. Come on all of you, met staff, Lyle staff heck even Paul and Chris

**Chris** Actually we're now Ramon and Jamaal

**Andy** Who cares. Let's all go to the panto

**All** It's the most wonderful time of the year

*All leave to stage right.*

**Ellie** Just look John. Look at what people will do for the panto. They've brought in all this food. They're willing to make props, write songs and make fools of themselves because of it. It even brought met staff and lyle staff together. Come on, I'm to meet one more spirit before the night is through aren't I

**John M** Are you?

**Ellie** Yes. The Ghost of Pantos Yet to Come?

**John M** Who? *(thinks about it)* Oh yes. Peter Jan. Well if you go out into the wilderness and find the bridge of sorrows he'll be there

**Ellie** And how will I recognise him

**John M** *(mysteriously)* Oh don't worry you'll recognise him

**Ellie** But what does he look like

**John M** *(equally mysteriously)* Oh don't worry you'll recognise him

**Ellie** You've forgotten what he looks like

haven't you

*Pause*

**John M** Yes

**Ellie** Well I guess I just have to see if I can find him. Are you coming?

**John M** No I think I'll stay here. Why would I leave when there's still all this food?

*Ellie leaves stage left lights go down john leaves stage right*

## **Scene 5 - The Ghost of Panto's yet to come**

**Character ( Narrator , Ellie, Peter Jan, Ed Hawkins, Javier, Rowan Sutton, Dawn Turner, Neil Blanchonnet, Old Gill, Paul the Porter, Phd2, Phd3 and Phd4**

*PJ enters stage right and stands in the back corner of the stage in the darkness. He is in a black cloak with a hood.*

**Narrator:** Ellie has started to see how people enjoy and treasure the panto and even how she used to enjoy it her self. Ellie has embarked on a journey to the Wilderness in search of the Ghost of Pantos-yet-to-come. In hope to see what the future holds. A fog has descended and the temperature has dropped. Suddenly a tall, hooded figure can be seen out of the darkness.

*Creepy generic night noises are played (e.g. foxes/bug noises). <Smoke machine provides fog?>. PJ emerges from back of stage as the lights come up. Ellie enters (opposite side). She is looking around, on edge.*

**Ellie:** Hello? Hello...

*Ellie jumps when she sees PJ.*

**Ellie:** Ahhhh! *(shouted)* *(pause)* Are you Peter Jan the Ghost of Pantos yet to come?

*PJ nods slowly. ominous music/sound, bell or gong?*

**Ellie:** I fear you the most of the 3 spirits...

*No reaction.*

**Ellie:** *(nervously)* Tell me ... What does the future hold? *(pause)* Where are we going?

*PJ looks up and points back the way Ellie came. He glides offstage with Ellie to stage left*

*Javier Ed and Rowan come on from stage left*

*Lights up to show (older-looking) Ed Hawkins and Rowan in the corner of the Met Coffee Room. On the whiteboard in said corner, the words "Leaving Party - 11am" are written. PJ and Ellie enter stage left and stand at edge of stage.*

**Ed:** Hey Rowan, are you off to the leaving party this morning?

**Rowan:** Hello Ed , what party was that?

**Ed:** That old head of the department. (*Points to board*). Come Monday and we'll be free from her grumpy ways!

**Rowan:** Hawkins, you know I haven't been to a party since IPCC AR7!

**Ed:** Don't remind me of AR7. When you guys predicted that a global sea level rise of 0.2 meters per century was only "very slightly somewhat considerably likely" I didn't expect the croquet lawn to get submerged so quickly!... Not to mention we have to play the Golden Mallet in December now global temp has gone up.

**Rowan:** Ah yes.... But look on the upside...it'll show those Daily Mail naysayers who read your blog you were right all along!

*Javier enters stage.*

**Ed:** Javier! Are you going to the leaving do this morning?

**Javier:** You Guys! You know that thursday is my Shakespeare recital day!

*Lights down, spotlight/torch on Javier.*

**Javier:** (*monologue*) To go, or not to go--that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous viva wine

Or to take arms against a queen of grump

And by opposing, end them. To dine, to eat--

*Awkward pause.*

**Ed:** Right...so do you guys think there would be any food?

**Javier:** I could be tempted if there's going to be a free buffet!

**Rowan:** (*abruptly*) I wouldn't even go if there was! (*more calmly*) I'll be celebrating on Monday when they have gone.

*Everyone freezes on stage. Ellie steps into the middle of stage.*

**Ellie:** Who is leaving? Who would be this disliked in the department? Will there be free food?

*Blank look from PJ*

**Ellie:** Is it Maarten?

*PJ shakes head. Lights down*

*Ed Javier and Rowan leave stage left and transition to Stephen Gill's office. Stephen enters from stage right, lights come up*

*Enter Dawn from stage right holding mug and stationary.*

**Dawn:** Oh hello Old Gill! How's all that health and safety coming along today?

**Old Gill:** Ahh Dawn. It's always the same. You have to take those pesky students through the same stuff, year after year, day after day. Got to make sure there is no horse meat in the buffet's.

**Dawn:** I can imagine. Oh gosh I've completely forgotten what I came in here for!

*Enter Neil wearing nerdy computer shirt holding the sunray and screen and Paul wearing policeman outfit holding the post and slingshot. From stage right*

**Dawn:** Ah, Neil Blanchonnet, Paul...the Porter! What brings you in here?

**Neil:** Now that woman is leaving, we're selling on her wares. We need the extra funding these days! I've got this Sunray terminal and screen. I would give it to the PhDs but they'll make do with those old ones they've had since 2013. (*evil laugh*).

**Paul:** Well I've got all this post to sell on, what with the Royal mail being privatised these days, we cannot afford to pay for those returned item extras. It's not like it used to be, slow, paying extra for everything... tut tut..

**Dawn:** Oooohhh yes, I've got things which need to be sold too... What are we going to do with this slingshot and old misery guts' mug?

**Neil:** You think you've got it bad... I've got to try and flog this out of date bit of junk. I've got 100 other things to do, least of all training for the golden mallet

**Old Gill:** I cannot possibly buy that old junk. What do you think I am, a solution to everyone's problems? What would I want with this hardware, what does it run on? Raspberry PI? .But I guess I could take the mug off your hands, I don't think we should let it be used by anyone else.

**Paul:** Oh yes, and I've got the office list here, who are you moving into that drafty old office?

**Old Gill** Im planning on moving 100 new post docs into her office.

**Paul** How are you going to fit them all in that space?

**Old Gill:** Well I've been designing these Triple Decker desks. The latest development in office space management.

*Picture of triple decker desks appear*

**Neil** Are you sure that's safe

**Old Gill** Yer they will be fine (shrugs shoulders)

*All cast freeze and Ellie walks to the front of the stage*

**Ellie** Wow they have no respect for that person I hope I never end like that.

*Lights down Old Gill Paul, Neil and Dawn leave stage right Ellie and PJ also leave stage right*

*Transition to PhD office.*

*PhD2 ,3, and 4 (Stage Left) are sitting around a desk*

*3 depressed looking PhDs are sat crammed in frantically working at their desks. Tiny Ray's crutch and hat are left on a desk in the corner.*

*Lights up*

*Ellie and PJ walk in stage left*

**Ellie** Ah the Phd offices, a place of great happiness at this time of the year

**PhD2:** I've been here years, and I still have no idea what to write... Will I ever finish this PhD??? You know there used to be a Panto this time of year? Now it's just me left to remember those days and even Tiny Ray is gone!

**PhD3:** Don't worry you will soon be able to taste that smooth smooth viva lager

**PhD2** We used to have viva wine not that I miss it. We used to have twenty new Phd's a year, since the panto was stopped we have had no more than three applications in a year.

**PhD 4:** Tell us again, what was it like when we had a panto? Why don't we have it anymore?

**PhD2:** Oh it was the most wonderful time of the year. I wish it was still on but that grumpy professor stopped it. It was because someone ran off with her mug and she went into a fit of rage. She took it out on everyone by taking the panto away from us. Only Tiny Ray stood up to her... and we all know how that ended...*(all look at the crutches)*...still, Ray would have wanted us to celebrate Christmas...

*All PhDs put their party hats on, and blow slowly and pathetically into party blowers. They then cough like Tiny Ray and then start to sob into their mugs of cheap drinks.*

**PhD2:** *(sighs)* Oh well, back to work. Only 12 more hours and I can go home for my 2 hours sleep.

*All freeze. Ellie moves to centre stage.*

**Ellie:** I don't understand... what have you shown me, that's not the department surely? People would never be that miserable. Who cares about a mug anyway?

*Peter Jan shrugs*

**Ellie:** You're not telling me that Sue Gray has become that much of a stick in the mud?

*Peter Jan shakes his head sharply...*

**Ellie:** What are you trying to tell me???

*PJ points to a door on powerpoint, which zooms into a close up of her name badge on the old office door (we can take a photo and edit it in photoshop)*

**Ellie:** *(dramatic)* Nooooo! *(disbelieving)* How could I have done all of this? Please tell me how I can change this...Is this a definite outcome based on future observations...or is it a single ensemble member projected forward stochastically...

*PJ points slowly to a sequential data assimilation scheme of the future on the powerpoint. It is called 24DVAR. Department happiness vs. time. Initial observation labelled 'grumpy Ellie'*

**Ellie:** Is that what I just saw?

*PJ points back at the chart. The initial conditions are changed and shows a very different path. Observations labelled 'Panto loving Ellie'*

**Ellie:** I'll have to change my forcing, how did I let myself come to this. How did I let the department fail, what did I do to tiny ray!

END OF SCENE LIGHTS DOWN

*PhD's leave stage left along with PJ and Ellie*

## Scene 6 – Panto Morning

**Characters (Narrator, Ellie, Dog Walker, Tiny Ray, Phd 2, Phd 1, Bob Cratchit, Giles, Ted Shepherd, (All cast for final song))**

*Ellie comes on Stage left and sits at her desk as if she has fallen asleep at it. Lights up.*

**Narration** With all this new information ellie has been given how will this change her ways.

*Ellie wakes up, stretches and looks around confused. Looks at backdrop (snowing) and acts surprised.*

**Ellie** (Gasps) Im back in my office, maybe its not too late to change my ways, perhaps I can still avoid those terrible things I saw.

*She runs to the window and flings it open.. A dog walker is walking past below.*

**Ellie** *(shouts at the dog walker)* Hello you there! What day is it?

**Dog walker** (offstage) What er It's Thursday!

**Ellie** Is it panto day?

**Dog walker** (offstage) What I have no idea what you are on about I'm just taking my dog for a walk! Did you know there's an injured owl out here?

**Ellie** TINY RAY am I glad to see you!

**Tiny Ray** (offstage) Oh boy thank you Professor scrooge.

**Ellie** What day is it today?

**Tiny Ray** (offstage) Why it's panto day, the happiest day of the year! *(coughs)*

**Ellie** Panto day! The spirits managed it all in one night!

**Tiny Ray** (offstage) Have you been drinking Professor *(cough)*

**Ellie** Much better than that, Where is everybody

**Tiny Ray** (offstage) They're all in the coffee room *(cough)* getting ready for the panto.

**Ellie** Brilliant... thank you Tiny Ray, There's still time for me to save the future of the department! *(goes to close the window, stops)*. Wait, Tiny ray... *(pause)*... What do people want most at panto time???

**Tiny Ray:** (offstage) World peace *(cough)* or alcohol!

**Ellie:** Of course! Go and buy a 6 pack of beer.... no, wait, go to ZeroDegrees and buy the biggest keg of beer you can carry!! Here, take this money and keep the change

*Ellie throws her purse at Tiny Ray*

**Tiny Ray** ARGHHHH! My tiny fragile body \*cough\*

**Ellie:** Oh and see to that owl while you are at it! No one should be left out at panto time.

*Lights down Ellie exits stage right*

CHANGE LOCATION: Coffee room

*PhD 1 & 2 enter from stage left*

*Ellie enters stage right*

**Ellie:** Today is Panto day! The sun is shining, and the snow is falling, well, it is Britain! Where is Bob?

**PhD 2:** I heard he was still in his office?

**PhD 1:** I heard he was here all night?

**PhD 2:** I heard he has been here for a week?

**Ellie:** But it's panto day, someone go and fetch him straight away. Blow the work, everyone needs to enjoy the panto.

*PhD2 leaves stage left*

**Ellie** How many tickets have you got left? I cant wait to see a panto that includes a manger scene a tin man and a light sabre

**PhD 1:** Aye? What? how did you know about that? we have a spy among our ranks! We're down to 42 now, I don't know how we're going to shift them all before tonight though.

**Ellie:** I'll buy them all! Every last one of them! I'm sure I can find people to give the tickets to, especially as I have convinced Hillary Weller to move tomorrow mornings numerical modelling exam to January,

**PhD 1:** Oh thank you so much Ellie, we don't have to sit in the coffee room selling these anymore, we can go make some props!

*Giles enters stage left*

**Giles:** Ellie, are you feeling ok?

*Ellie turns to Giles*

**Ellie:** I have never felt better, I can see it all so clearly now! But I have an urge to sing... I want to sing, can I still join in on the interval act.

**Giles:** Of course, you can play Chris Scott's DigareedooDAR, he is still trying to figure out what his name is.

*Bob cratchet enters with PhD2 following from stage left.*

**Bob** What is this some kind of Joke, If I don't get this draft completed, Ellie will throw me out of the university and my parents will denounce me.

**Ellie:** Bob, I know you've almost finished that draft but you should leave it, today is Panto day!

**Bob:** *(sceptically)* What? *(pause)* Wait, I know what you're trying to do. I'm not going to give you any more of that chocolate from the coffee room!

**Ellie:** No, I really mean it. Here I bought your ticket.

**Bob:** Oh Ellie...thank you so much. I better go and learn my lines

*Pause. Tiny Ray starts to drag a small keg of beer on stage with all his effort.*

**Phd1** Come on tiny ray what have we told you about pushing yourself

**Tiny Ray** God bless us everyone \*cough\*

*Pause Collapses in middle of stage. Ted shepherd runs on from stage left*

**All** GASP

**Ted** Out the way out the way!

*(Jazz hands as he passes through crowd picks up keg)*

**Ted** *(holding keg aloft)* Its okay!!!

**SONG-** I WISH IT COULD BE PANTO EVERYDAY