

Playstage  
Junior

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# VICTORIANS...

## in the Dragon's Den!

**What would happen if a group of Victorian entrepreneurs and inventors pitched for investment from the Dragons?  
(with apologies to the BBC)**



Written by  
Stewart Auty

# CAST

In order of appearance

PRODUCER

TWO CAMERA OPERATORS

DRAGONS; DEBORAH, DUNCAN, PETER, PIERS, KELLY

JULIA - presenter

JOSEPHINE - presenter

INVENTORS:

WINZER

DAVY

DURAND

YEATES

OUSTERHOUDT

HOUGHTON

SIM

LAENNEC

BRAILLE

DOCTOR

SOLDIER

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

NURSE

TREVITHICK

STEPHENSON

BRUNEL

DAIMLER

MACMILLAN

DUNLOP

RENO

PRESCOTT

OTIS

BISSELL

JUDSON

WALKER

MACKINTOSH

HILL

MORSE

BELL

NOBEL

JULIA M.CAMERON

QUEEN VICTORIA

42 SPEAKING PARTS BUT THIS NUMBER COULD BE LESS BY DOUBLING UP  
ON THE INVENTOR PARTS.

## MUSIC

*Backing tracks can be purchased and downloaded for a modest fee from various sources, as shown below. Or, you could source the original artiste's recording from amongst parents/grandparents and just have the children sing along to it, as many schools do. If you cannot source them from amongst the school community, then Amazon sell very cheap downloadable MP3 tracks for hundreds of thousands of songs. These can be purchased, downloaded on to a computer and then burnt on to a CD for performance. Below we give the song title and source of backing tracks. Where it says "Traditional" or "Disney" this means there is no backing track we know of but it may be in sheet music form in your school or on a children's school music compilation CD.*

### SUGGESTED SONGS:

FAME (FAME the musical)

[www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY, I'VE GOT THE TIME (Willie Nelson)

[www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

HAND ME DOWN THAT CAN O' BEANS (Paint Your Wagon the musical)

[www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

I'M GONNA WASH THOSE LICE RIGHT OUTTA YOUR HAIR (SOUTH PACIFIC)

(The musical) [www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

THE RUNAWAY TRAIN (Traditional)

[www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

PLEASE MR POSTMAN (The Carpenters)

[www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

FLASH BANG WALLOP! (HALF A SIXPENCE the musical)

[www.ameritz.co.uk](http://www.ameritz.co.uk)

## VICTORIANS IN THE DRAGON'S DEN

## SCENE 1

*The set is a TV studio, with 5 chairs arranged in an arc left of centre stage. Two cameras are at the front, stage right and stage left, facing the arc of chairs, a stool for the producer, and one spare chair. There is a flip chart on which contributors can display pictures.*

*All the cast, apart from the PRODUCER and CAMERA OPERATORS need to be in Victorian costume. All the cast are on stage milling about.*

### Song 1 - FAME (Theme from 'Fame!' the Musical) - (Everyone)

I got more in me

And you can set it free

I can catch the moon in my hands

Don't you know who I am?

Remember my name,

Fame !

I'm gonna live forever

I'm gonna learn how to fly - high!

I feel it coming together

People will see me and cry,

Fame !

I'm gonna make it to heaven

Light up the sky like a flame,

Fame

I'm gonna live forever

Baby, remember my name

Remember, remember

Remember, remember

Remember, remember

Remember, remember

PRODUCER (*wearing headphones and microphone, holding clipboard*)

Places everyone!

*(People scatter. Most people go offstage apart from the two CAMERA OPERATORS, the PRODUCER, JULIA, and the five DRAGONS. The DRAGONS sit down in their chairs facing the audience.)*

OK! Let's go! Over to you, cue.... Julia!

*(PRODUCER goes to stool at the side and sits)*

JULIA *(Addresses audience and reads from an iPad, or clipboard)*

Good evening everyone, and welcome to this special edition of the Dragons' Den. Tonight, for your entertainment, education and edification we have invited famous inventors from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to offer their ideas. So, ladies and gentlemen, before your very eyes, in widescreen 3D Technicolor with Dolby stereo sound, I present to you the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Inventors in the Dragons' Den!

*(CAMERA OPERATOR holds up a card which says "Applause" and audience respond)*

Without further ado, let me introduce the Dragons in our den tonight. First of all, a lady who needs no introduction, but she'll get one anyway, the first lady dragon, former lady in waiting for a train at Waterloo Station, yes it's Deborah!

DEBORAH *(stands)*

And I'm very pleased to be here tonight. I'm intrigued about the Victorian entrepreneurs who will appear later on in the show. *(And sits)*

JULIA

More about that later, Deborah. Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Next, let me introduce to you dashing, debonair Duncan, a delightful and distinguished dragon! A round of applause, if you please, ladies and gentlemen! *(pause)* That's enough! We don't want him getting big-headed!

DUNCAN *(stands, bows slightly, and sits)*

You are too kind! I just hope I can live up to your expectations!

JULIA

Our second lady guest this evening is the very glamorous, design-conscious, Kelly, who - despite winning numerous design awards, couldn't be bothered to match her shoes with her handbag this evening.

*KELLY (raises hand in acknowledgment)*

Well Julia, I think you should know that matching handbags and shoes is sooo yesterday. Trust me - I'm a designer.

**JULIA**

I'll have to take your word for that, Kelly. Next, we have Peter. Now what can I say about Peter? Let me think, this isn't easy. Suffice to say that Peter made his fortune in women's underwear - make of that what you will! A round of applause for Peter, please.

**PETER**

A pleasure as always, Julia.

**JULIA**

Finally, and by no means least, sitting at the end of the row is Piers - who started his first business at the age of thirteen and isn't much older than that now! What can I say about Piers? He's young, good looking and loaded. He's definitely getting my phone number after the show!

*KELLY (loudly)*

I don't think flirting with the panel should be allowed!

*PIERS (stands and bows)*

I thank you for your kind words, Julia. I was born in a small mill town up North and went to the local comprehensive school and here I am - a multimillionaire celebrity and TV personality in my early thirties, there's hope for everyone!

**JULIA**

Well now we've met the modern celebrities - let's meet some of yesterday's shakers and movers! The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of massive invention and innovation. We now present some of the characters and personalities of that time, men, mostly, who changed lives! Now, here's Josephine, who will introduce tonight's entrepreneurs and inventors.

*(Enter JOSEPHINE, also holding iPad or clipboard)*

*JOSEPHINE (Smiling)*

Good evening everyone!

**JULIA**

Josephine - who will be first in the Dragons' Den tonight?

JOSEPHINE

From such an important time, it will be hard to select which people made the inventions which changed history. So I thought we could introduce people in groups, connected by a common theme....

JULIA

What a wonderful idea, Josephine.

JOSEPHINE

Now we have chosen to group together the inventors who came up with such wonderful ideas to change lives. So we will look at home life, the world of work, medicine and social care, developments in transport, with some surprises along the way.

DUNCAN

I'm not sure how this fits with the format of the Dragon's Den.

PETER

Just what are we supposed to do?

DEBORAH

We can't invest time or money in something which was invented one hundred years ago.

JULIA

I'm getting to that. Your role, Dragons, is to pretend you are living in the Victorian era and make critical comment on each invention, as if you were hearing the ideas for the first time.

KELLY

So that's why we're in costume! I get it now!

JULIA *(sarcastically)*

Oh, well done. I would have thought that was obvious!

KELLY

You've definitely got it in for me, haven't you? *(JULIA ignores her)*

PETER

So we judge each idea, as if it was new, as if it was an innovation?

JULIA

Yes. OK? Everyone happy? Josephine - bring on our first group!

JOSEPHINE

Ladies and gentlemen, and Dragons in the Den, our first guests this evening are Friedrich Winzer and Humphrey Davy.

*(Enter WINZER and DAVY)*

PIERS

Ah, Davy, I think I've heard of you. But you sir, your name is Winzer?

WINZER *(Awful German accent)*

That is correct, and I would like to demonstrate my invention. In this cast iron flask, which is very heavy, I have heated coal. When coal burns it not only gives off heat, but it gives off a gas, which gentlemen and ladies, can be ignited! *(Flicks switch)* I give you gaslight! (SEE

PRODUCTION NOTES)

KELLY

Very useful, I must agree. But how will it be used? What is its purpose?

*(PETER starts wrinkling his nose, looking round and sniffing)*

WINZER

During the day, it has no purpose at all. But at night, there will be light! I think it said in the bible 'Let there be light!' - well, my invention provides it!

DEBORAH

Why would anyone need a light at night? If it's dark, it's time for bed. Simple! You would want to change all that?

KELLY

Day length changes according to the season. Winter nights are long. Would this light be strong enough to read by?

WINZER

Yes! That's why it is such a wonderful invention!

PETER *(Still sniffing)*

As far as I'm concerned, there are two drawbacks. One is the awful, disgusting smell from your apparatus, and secondly, and most importantly, the majority of people in the Victorian era cannot read. So I'm out.

PIERS

The smell is too off putting for me too. Good idea, but impractical. That's me done too.

DUNCAN

Davy - what have you got to say about this?



DAVY

The idea of extending daylight is one with many attractions. Think of this, as I'm sure you are interested in the more commercial applications of science.

DUNCAN

Tell us more.

DAVY

In wintertime, when it's dark, the factory has to close. But what if artificial lighting could extend the working day?

PETER

I get it! The workers could work for longer, production would rise...

DEBORAH

And so would our profits! Wonderful!

PETER *(still pulling a face at the smell)*

Any worker working in that atmosphere could well be poisoned by the fumes.

WINZER

This is a prototype; I am obviously working on improvements. Your investment would be a great help.

DAVY

I may be able to offer a solution. Create light, but not by gas, but electricity! Much cleaner! Much more environmentally friendly! I'm working on an idea to connect a carbon strip to a battery.

KELLY

Are you able to demonstrate this? Have you a model we can see?

DAVY

Not yet. I need investment.

**SONG 2 - IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY- I'VE GOT THE TIME (Willie Nelson)**

**If you've got the money honey I've got the time**

**We'll go honky tonkin' and we'll have a time**

**We'll have more fun baby all way down the line**

**If you've got the money honey I've got the time**

**There ain't no need to tarry let's start out tonight**

**We'll have fun oh boy oh boy and we'll do it right**

**Bring along your Cadillac leave my old wreck behind**

**If you've got the money honey I've got the time**

*[piano - harmonica]*

**We'll go honky tonkin' make every spot in town**

**We'll go to the every spot and leave all gold around**

**If you run short of money I'll run short of time**

**If you've got no more money honey I've got no more time**

**If you've got the money honey I've got the time**

**We'll go honky tonkin' and we'll have a time**

**Bring along your Cadillac leave my old wreck behind**

**If you've got the money honey I've got the time**

DAVY

If I may return later, I may have something else of interest to show you.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you Mr Winzer, and thank you too Mr Davy.

*(Exit WINZER and DAVY)*

PETER

If I can summarise? Great idea to produce artificial light, with perhaps more use in a place of work than at home. I'm really attracted to the idea of prolonged working hours.

PIERS

Such a pity about the smell. Made me quite nauseous!

DEBORAH

And reading - for the working classes? If they're not at work, they should be sleeping, getting ready for work the next day!

JULIA

Let's move on! Josephine, who is next on your list?

JOSEPHINE

Ladies and gentlemen, I present Peter Durand!

*(Enter Durand)*

DUNCAN

I'm afraid your name is not known to me.

DURAND

What I am about to show you is not my idea, I should say that from the start, but I have applied for the British patent.

JOSEPHINE

I should explain that a patent is used to protect an invention, to save it from being copied.

DURAND

Thank you. This is the invention. (*Holds up large plain tin can*) Let me explain. Food lasts for only a short time, and then it begins to go off.

DUNCAN

Is this all types of food to which you refer?

DURAND

Yes. Fruit, vegetables, even cooked meat. This metal container, which I have named 'tin can' will help to preserve food for long periods.

DUNCAN

So how does it work?

DURAND

Simply by excluding air. The food is put in the can, which is then sealed. Food exposed to air begins to rot, especially if the atmosphere is both warm and moist.

KELLY

So let me get this clear. Food in your *tin can* is protected from the atmosphere?

DURAND

Yes, exactly right! The can is airtight. It is sealed, so no air can get in.

DEBORAH

I'm impressed. There is far too much food wasted. This invention sounds a great idea. I'm very interested.

DURAND

Imagine storing tins at home, in your larder, rather than always having to buy fresh food every day.

PETER

I have some questions. You say the can is sealed?

DURAND

That is correct. It is essential to keep the air out.

PETER

Then how do you get the food out?

DURAND

Ahh! You have spotted the weakness in my invention. I can put the food in the can. I can seal the can, but I haven't yet thought of a way to open it.

PIERS

I think you need to do some more research.

PETER

I think someone had better invent a can opener!

JOSEPHINE

Then let me introduce Mr Robert Yeates!

*(Enter YEATES)*

YEATES

In my job, I make cutlery and surgical instruments. I've designed a tool with a claw which will open tin cans! Look! *(Holds up over size model can opener, claw type)*

DURAND

That's brilliant! That's just what I need!

DEBORAH

The two of you had better get together - you may be on to something!

JOSEPHINE

But wait! There's another development! Meet Mr J Osterhoudt!

*(Enter OSTERHOUDT)*