

Ali Ba Ba and the 4 Tea-thieves

Christmas 2009

Cast:

Ali Ba Ba: Bev

Kassim: Manolo

Tree: Terry

Tea Growers

1. Alan
2. Linda
3. Olivia
4. Kate

Mustapha (Chief Thief) Jim

Three Thieves:

1. Tom
 2. Ursula
 3. Georgia
- + Freddie (if he wants to)

Guards:

1. Eva
2. Freddie
3. Megan

Belly Dancer: Brian

Marlene Dietrich: Grace

Set and Props:

- 4 large cardboard boxes with the names of the 4 teas on them
- Weeping camel on wall
- Tree with hole in trunk for face
- Cave (one side of large cardboard backdrop)
- Oriental cloth draped over cave for scene in the Weeping Camel pub
- Table
- Drapes (fine coloured cloth) to give Eastern look hanging on either side of the stage

Introductory scene

Ali enters from rear of hall, closely followed by Kassim. They mumble to one another (loudly) e.g. You said the market would be empty and look its full of idle, good for nothing Stocklinchers with nothing better to do than watch bungalows being converted into designer palaces. Oh no I didn't; Oh yes you did; Oh no I didn't; Oh yes you did ...

Ali leaps onto the stage and shows a leg. (Music – a few loud chords) Kassim leaps onto the stage and bumps into him.

Ali Baba Bev

You can see already what sort of panto this is going to be!

My name is Ali Ba Ba and **tonight** I'll be your guide,
I'll try to make some **sense** of this and keep you all onside.
This is my pal Kassim, he's a **loyal** and faithful hand,
He doesn't get many lines 'cos we've had **cutbacks** you understand.

Kassim Manolo

It is the year of **twenty ninety** and Olde England is awry,
Global warming has done its work and **Stocklinch** is now dry.
(**aside**) If you can believe that,
Where once the sheep and cows did **roam** on lynchets fair and green,
Now tea is grown and **poppies** sown and the profits are obscene.

What's all this talk about **tea**? What's wrong with good old **El Salvadorian coffee**? See me later and I'll get you a box, **cheap**!

Ali Baba Bev

That'll do. I'll continue!

Around Mead Lane there's paddy fields and camels graze at will,
But Ali Bri Faulkner grows some beet and rides **his tractor** still.
All seems peaceful in Stocklinch on this **brightest** summer day,
But there's mischief afoot and **good job too**, or we wouldn't have a play.

Kassim Manolo

The teas of Stocklinch have no peers, **their fame** is no misnomer,
Their prices make your eyes water but then **so can** the aroma.

(aside - Look, it rhymes, OK?)

And each year the **Sultan of Somerset** must receive his right and due,
One hundred pounds of **the finest tea** and a couple of strainers too.

Ali Baba Bev

So great a gift, so fine a tribute, has **worth** beyond men's dreams,
Kept safe in a cave, beyond men's grasp - but *not* so safe it seems!
The cave will open only, to the strange words '**Corky Dropwort**',
A phrase concocted by Wendy **Gustaffson** after most of a pint of port.

At the Weeping Camel **café**, ('twas once the Duke of York)
Low types are known to **congregate** and none of them eat pork.
My best friend and ally **Kassim**, not the brightest but no knave,
Was boasting to a belly dancer **of the riches** in the cave.

Kassim Manolo

He sought to charm the very **veils** off her, but little did he know,
That she was the woman of **Mustapha** who drinks at the Barley Mow.
Now Mustapha hails from Yeovil and **you know** what they are like,
He'd pinch the fillings from your teeth and **run** off on your bike.

Ali Baba Bev

So now our scene is set, you **know** who's good and bad,
I sincerely hope a good time **tonight** by all is had. (Who wrote this?)

So let's transport you to the **secret cave** above the manor house, *

Where the Sultan's gift is **being stored** safe from both man and mouse.
The cave is part of the property and **for sale** with all the rest,
One point three five million **to you squire**, and I do not make a jest.

The two exit to rear of Hall chatting as they go EG Ali:

"Would you buy a place like that. You'd see Henry having a dip every morning." **Kassim** : "Not a pretty sight."

Blackout

Act I. On the hill, at the cave

The Watching Tree stands outside the cave.

The **four growers**, Ali Ba Ba and Kassim enter from rear of hall with their crates of tea. They chat loudly as they move down the Hall Eg.

Linda: "Good crop this year, Abdul?"

Alan: "Not bad, Yasmin – Chris and Margaret Mossop are not the tea pickers they once were and Ian Partington's not the man he used to be since he's grown that beard."

Olivia – "I noticed that, it's more fuzz than beard. My Dad's coffee's going to pot as well."

Kate: "Nothing new then!"

1st Grower Alan

My name is Abdul Aziz and I grow the finest tea,
Mine is called Earl Mossop and it's as good as tea can be.

2nd Grower Olivia

My name is Yasmin Abbas, and *I* grow the finest tea,
Mine is called **Laptop Singsong** and it's **just** as sweet as me.

3rd Grower Linda

My name is Farah Salim and **there** can be no doubt
My **Orange Mobile** tea is the **bestest** hereabout.

4th Grower Kate

My friends speak nonsense, their **words** are so much piffle,
I'm Tariq Omar and there's nowt so fine as **my own PG Tipple**.

1st Grower Alan

Come friends let us not bicker, we have **matters** to address,
To prepare the Sultan's tribute and get **counselling** for our stress.
Be justly proud of our teas, since **this year's** crop's a bumper,
It's value must be **near** as much as Old Tom Kelly's jumper.

2nd Grower Olivia

The Sultan will be much overjoyed at **these** fine Stocklinch teas,
He'll grant us grace and **favour** and a feast of mushy peas.
With planning permission for **more extensions** to all our bungalows,
The village will grow and prosper and **about time** heaven knows.

3rd Grower Linda

The recession hit our village hard, people **driven** to extremes,
Olivia, Megan and Georgia's shop selling **out-of-date** baked beans.
Claire and Susi both are driven to holding **parties** up the pike
Some say Pampered Chef but **I think** Anne Summers more the like.

4th Grower Kate

Packs of wild dogs ran around like **a horde** of hungry rats
They banded together **mainly** in fear of Kate White's scary cats.
The Tratts have now turned car dealers their **stock** does multiply
They made enough for Bev to achieve **her dream** of watching Sky.

Ali Baba Bev

Now come my friends let's **seal** the cave with our own magic word,
To keep our riches safe from harm **we should not be** overheard.
'**Corky Dropwort**' is the word, there's **no one else** would guess it
The rarest plant for miles around and **in** our churchyard - innit.

The growers exit to Kitchen. Ali stays by kitchen door

Tree Terry

So he's written them all words in rhyme; I **must** make some for me,
I'm a bit of a poet on the side and a **comedian** to boot - you'll see.
My bark is worse **than my bite** and my roots are my boots you know,
I spread my arms all day long, er - and **I don't half** get stiff - oh woe!

Ali Baba (to audience)

Come fly with me, **let's fly**, let's fly away
Let's fly above the **poppies** and the hay, (is this right?)
Where on a hill above the trees, **the bad guys** make their plans,
To steal the grower's **tea leaves** and then their pots and pans.

Exit Ali to Kitchen

Act II. On the hill overlooking Stocklinch.

Mustapha and his three thieves enter from rear of Hall talking in very heavy whispers an ad lib Eg:

Tom: "Looks a bit like a new cottage conversion by Brian and Bills"

Ursula: "A bit of Tratt thatch on top and it 'ud be a good as new"

Georgia: "Where's Mustapha"

Tom: "Must have a what?"

All (singing): "Eh Mustaaapha, eh Mustaaapha"

They climb onto the stage and study it carefully. The tree stands by the cave door.

Third Thief Georgia

Don'tcha find it a bit of a thrill
To climb up on **Hackpen** Hill
With it's **gnarled** and **twisted** tree
Where **our dog** always goes for a **ppp**

Tree Terry

Ugh! You're telling me! And less of the **gnarled**.

Mustapha Jim

I see Peter Dimond's **leylandii** have gone,
There are no obstacles in my way,
Gone is the greenery in front of the cave,
It's gonna be a bright (bright) sun-shiny (sun-shiny) day

2nd Thief Ursula

Oh yes, the cave's no longer hid by trees
And inside you can see the boxes of teas
But where **have** all Peter's leylandii gone?
Can this be a cunning cue for a **song**?

Grace enters from Kitchen dressed as Marlene Dietrich (long mac with collar turned up) Music strikes up.

Grace

Where have Peter's leylandii gone?
Long time passing
Where have the leylandii gone?
Not long ago
Where have the leylandii gone?
Paul King's got 'em every one
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?

(from off 'Get on with it!) (from off: "Nice one Gracy, we'll let you know"). Grace takes a bow and goes into audience.

2nd Thief - Ursula

In that cave lie untold riches, **enough** to pay ten bankers,
No not quite that much, since there's **no pleasing** those - er - chaps.
We must find our way past the guards, **and get** the magic word,
But those growers all take **such great pains** to not be overheard.

1st Thief Tom (points)

But study for a minute master, the guards who **stand** at hand,
It's Mahmoud and his brother Kevin, the **thickest** in the land.
I've stolen all their mowers, **their shovels** their forks and saw,
And sold them back to them the **very** next day by knocking at their door.

Mustapha Jim

A good idea my friend, in **those two berks** the solution lies,
Our wits are so much sharper and **on us** there are no flies.
We'll get the magic word from them and **ply them** with some liquor,
That will put them both to sleep and our **heist** will be the quicker.

1st Thief Tom

But our problem is to reach that cave, **without** our being suspected,
Grandfather Speed is on patrol, and **we'll soon** be detected.
A way to succeed must be found, **that tea** is worth much boodle,
I'll work the plans out in my head or **maybe** have a doodle.

2nd Thief Ursula

We must look normal master, as seen in Stocklinch **every** day,
People who arouse no suspicion, who are **regular** in every way,
I have it sire! Now here's some folk that **no-one** will ever heed,
A bunch of BT **engineers**, trying to **increase** our broadband speed!

Mustapha Jim

Your brainwave is, well, brilliant, **to use** the common argot,
After this we must consider **shaking down** Wells Fargo.
Our women will make our **uniforms** and we'll **nick** a BT van,
I'll fence the stuff in Islamabad, **that's** my cunning plan.

They depart to rear of Hall. (Except Ali Ba Ba who stands by Kitchen door.)

Tree Terry

I have another poem. You'll like this one:

I am everywhere and nowhere baby, you last saw me by the cave,
Two minutes later I'm on the hill, what a clever way to behave.
I've heard Mustapha plotting so to the Weeping Camel I'll go,
To tell Ali Baba of their plan and to get a reward. Um, or maybe no.

' I wonder if they're going to make their getaway in a car,
To leg it really quickly they'll need a very fast jam jar.
They'll need a quick driver, not the bloke who drives the hearse,
I'd recommend Manolo, but he can never do reverse'

Ali Ba Ba (to audience)

As quick as a flash, since he has mysterious power,
The Tree is at the café, to give us the news on the hour.
At the Weeping Camel café it's difficult to be discrete,
It's a bit like the bar in Star Wars, except for the smell of feet.

Exit to kitchen

Blackout

**The cave is turned round and an oriental cloth is placed over it.
The Weeping Camel sign is hung on the back wall.**

Act III – At the Weeping Camel

Ali Baba, Kassim and the Tea Growers enter from Kitchen and are in conference, centre stage. They joke and slap one another on backs etc. Eg.

Alan: "I'd love a drop of Peter Parson's best, wouldn't you? He gets it down the co-op, you know.

Kate: "Get away with you - he gets Francis to crush his own grapes."

Linda: "How about a game of bridge – I hear Grace's giving Tom Kelly lessons."

Kassim Manolo

Oi Ali, with women you know **I have** so little resistance
And something special approaches **in** the smoky distance (gazes up hall)

Wow! This is so much better than **even** breakfast telly
Have you ever set your sore eyes on **such** an exotic belly?

Belly dancer (Brian) enters from rear of Hall, to Music. He performs the routine and leaves via Kitchen. The growers salivate – "ooo...ah..wow.. etc...", except for Olivia who says:

Grower 2 Olivia (poshly)

That's **quite** enough of that you lot
Belly dancing's **a load** of rot
And, as you know, **I'm** no fool
Since I go to a very good **grammar** school!

Others all groan.

Ali Baba Bev

To business my friends.

The news the tree has brought us is **food for thought** indeed,
We must make plans to defend **our wealth**, our very precious weed,
But first there is an important task, to **pay** the rent and heat,
A few words from our sponsor about **a product** that can't be beat.

Kassim Manolo

This is the Weeping Camel, a **luxuriously** appointed joint,
And here's some product placement, I'm **sure** you'll get the point,
Quincestyle quilts and cushions make **your home** just like a dream,
Just call Eva or Kate for a nifty quote and **samples** by the ream.

Ali Baba Bev

Back to business now, the **Tree** has told us every detail,
Oh and Kassim forgot to **mention** that the girls do trade **and** retail.
Mustapha must be nicked, but it's a **question** of where and when,
I want that villain banged up **right good** to quote old Jack Regen.
(coughs)

1st Grower Alan

If they're coming in as BT men, we could **pinch them** up their poles,
Hold matches underneath and threaten to **burn them** on their soles.
Grab them and tie them and lock them up, somewhere safe and quiet,
The Hart's Wendy House would do if they **don't** mind a chicken diet.

2nd Grower Olivia

Set Di Haw's feral cat on them, that would **scare** them all to death,
It's got the attitude of Attila the Hun, but I **think** its name is Beth.
Or set the Stocklinch Labradors on them, **they're** as hard as nails,
They'd lick them into submission and then **beat** them with their tails.

3rd Grower Linda

They might dig up Owl Street Lane, just **to lend** some authenticity,
But Henry Leeds patrols up there and will **not** stand for duplicity.
His 2CV is not so fast, but with a **flashing** blue light on top,
Would cause the rogues to panic and assume that he's a cop.

4th Grower Kate

There's something to be said, for **keeping** our powder drier,
Catch Mustapha in the act, and his **sentence** will be much higher,
If we take pictures on our mobiles of his **hands** upon the loot,
They could appear in the Chard and Ilminster, now **that** would be a hoot.

Ali Ba Ba Bev

Your plan is sound I like it best, we'll **pinch** them on the spot,
And when they go before the beak they're **bound** to catch it hot.
My main concern is to ensure that **our guards** are up to speed,
They're as thick as two short planks and **I think** they both smoke weed.

Exit to Kitchen, except for Ali Bab Ba.

Ali Ba Ba (to audience)

So now the trap is set and Mustapha's **motley** band draws near,
They've practised all their moves and **last night** stayed off the beer.
They have their BT uniforms, their **overalls** and their hats,
Looking as we've come to expect, like **a bunch** of average prats.

All is calm throughout the village, **all** at its normal pace,
The villagers go about their **weekend** pleasures as ever is the case.
Stephen White is building a Panzer Tank, **nothing** wrong with him,
But he yearns for a holiday in **Poland**, or Stalingrad, just on the rim.

The Partington's boat sits at rest, it's really **just** for looking at,
Ian and Fudge prefer **dry land**, and the Duke of York at that.
Trevor Tratt is on the roof, **piling** on much wheat,
Bev's at home watching football, **that's** her favourite treat.

Peter Parsons is in his **wine cellar**, counting his claret stock,
Marriage to Frances **suits him well**, but he's **had** to get in more Hock.
The Tuckers watch the GP race on their **huge great** TV screen,
So wide you can see what's coming, **as well** as what's just been.

Henry enters his swimming pool, it's **not** a pretty sight,
Young Amy tried it once as well, but he gave her **such** a fright.
Brian Faulkner makes his **plans** for Stocklinch Business Centre,
No silage and no mucking out, it's **much** more inviting venture.

Exit Kitchen

Act IV At the Cave on the hill again

The three guards, stand guard at the cave door.

2nd Guard Freddie

Oi, Sharif old pal
Why aren't you dressed up like a gal?

1st Guard Eva

None of your business, **cheeky** Hamal
And, anyway I'm **not** you pal. And,
I hate this job you got us stuck with
Standing here like three **dimwits**.

3rd Guard Megan

Oh just listen to **that!**
He's just a **scaredy** cat

2nd Guard Freddie (going up to Eva and pointing at her)

Yes, your a coward and **not** very brave
You're just **too scared** to guard the cave.

1st Guard Eva

Oh no I'm **not!** (pushing Freddie and Megan)

2nd and 3rd Guards Freddie and Megan (pushing back)

Oh, **yes** you are!

1st Guard Eva (stamping)

Oh no I'm **not!**

2nd and 3rd Guards Freddie and Megan (waving to audience)

Oh, **yes** you are!

1st Guard Eva (sulking)

Not!

2nd and 3rd Guards Freddie and Megan (pointing)

Are!

3rd Guard Megan

Look Sharif watch me, I'm **super-brave**
I'll even have a look inside this **haunted** cave.

She begins to open the cave door and snake comes out. All three run about, shouting:

Megan: Snake!

Eva: Snake!

Freddie: Yoiks!

Eva: (to audience) "Is there a man in the house? - No Trevor, I said a wanted a MAAAAN!" **(said sexily)**

Megan: Quick the tree.

They run to the tree.

Tree Terry

Oi! you lot it's no good trying to flee
You're barking (barking - get it?) up the wrong tree
I can't give you any shelter
So get going quick before I belt'ya

Oi! Leave my trunk alone you naughty so and so's
Or I'll get my Shirl to bop you on your nose.
By the way I hope you've twigged it (get it?)
But my part this year, well, it takes the biscuit.

Quick, I hear strange voices on the hill
Or could it be Jack Harding yodelling?

The Guards hurry back to their posts.

The thieves enter from rear of Hall and approach the cave.

Tom: I do like my uniform. It make me very smart.

Georgia: Not before time!

Tom: And what's wrong with my old jumper?

Ursula: Shhh ..ush you lot, the guards 'll hear you.

Mustapha Jim

Almost there and not yet rumbled, our **disguise** works well so far,
BT engineers are two a penny hereabouts, a **dozen a week** is par.
Now here's the cave and the guards stand ready, **scimitars** in hand,
A couple of burly characters these, they could **grind** us in the sand.

Third Thief Georgia

Hail good sirs we understand, your **cave phone line** is dead,
We're the people to put it right, **despite** what you've heard and read.
We have the necessary bits of wire, the **relays** and the feed,
We even managed the **impossible** and got John Gauterin up to speed.

1st Guard Eva

We haven't been told of a problem, but then **nobody** talks to us,
All we know is to look out for robbers, then **not** to make a fuss.
Have you seen any strangers, although they **may not** look like thieves,
We've heard they might come in jars of oil, so the **fairy** tales believe.

Mustapha Jim

I don't believe we can help you, we've seen **no one** of that description,
Robbers in Stocklinch sound to me **more like** a work fiction.
Now if you'll open up the cave we'll **check** your handset there,
If it's faulty or it's knackered we'll **soon** make a good repair.

2nd Guard Freddie

I do wish we could remember, **what** the Growers told us to do,
About letting people in and what to say **and where** and who.
Our thoughts sometimes get all mixed up, and we **do** so get confused,
But they didn't say nothing about BT men, so **you** mustn't be refused.

1st Guard Eva

But there's another problem, we've lost the **password** for the cave,
They wrote it down for us **in case**, it was something I should save.
I stuffed it in my pocket or so **I thought** I did last week,
But now it's not there anymore and we're **really** up the creek.

Mustapha Jim

Tell me guard in earnest do you **not remember** the word,
It's vital that we have it or your **phone calls** will be overheard.

1st Guard Eva

We surely can't remember which is **why** they wrote it down,
Something rare I know that much, but **excuse** me while I frown.

Mustapha Jim

So what is **rare** hereabouts, are there any strange diseases,
Some obscure **medicinal name**, to describe odd coughs and wheezes?
Could it be an exotic **foreign** word, Gustaffson or Calderon suit well,
Tratt and Speed are both **right oddities** and Catchpole rings a bell.

Ist Thief Tom

Perhaps we could jog your wits **my friends** with a little glass of
porter,
Time is pressing and in another hour, **we'll all** be on time and a
quarter. **(They drink)**

2nd Guard Freddie

A very tasty liquor this, but it **makes** my head feel thicker,
I need a little lie down in the churchyard, **before** I get much sicker.

1st Guard Eva

I think I'll join you for a snooze, this **stuff** is worse than port,
But be careful not to lie on that **precious Corky Dropwort**.
(They sink to the ground asleep as the cave swings open)

Mustapha Jim

So! at their last waking moment they have **given up** the magic word,
How could anybody ever have invented that, it **really** is absurd.
Now the tea will all be ours we'll **grab it** and be on our toes,
We have to leave in a BT van, but I'll buy a **Roller** next week I knows.
(They grab the tea)

2nd Thief Ursula (Holding up a box of tea)

I've got a box of **Earl Mossop's** Lap sang tea
Why it's so special, is a **mystery** to me
But at the Chantry, Ian'll make it **frisky**
With a good shot of his best **scotch whisky!**

Ist Thief Tom

I've got a box of Speedy's **PG Tips**
And this is gonna make me **rich**

I sell it down at **Bridport** market
And buy a plane for **Little** Marky
(This doggerel gets **worse** by the minute!)

3rd Thief Georgia

Yep, Tom **old pal**, these lines are pretty bad
But then, again, have you heard my **Dad?!**
He reckons tea's much better than **coffee**
But personally, I prefer a stick of **toffee!**

2nd Thief Ursula

Come on, you lot, we've gotta scam
The **cops'll** be onto our BT van
So I'm going to say Ta Ta
Oh, NO! Here comes Ali Ba Ba

Ali Ba Ba and Kassim enter from Kitchen with the Growers and arrest them.

Ali Ba Ba

You and your cronies are **nicked** old lad, we've **got you** bang to rights,
We even brought **our guns** along, to avoid the need for fights.
You're caught **red-handed** gentlemen, and there's no protesting sir,
You fell into our trap, and you'll be spending **the rest** of your lives in stir.

We'll ask the judge for the maximum, **Guantanamo** won't be in it,
We've devised a punishment so **very cruel**, well beyond the limit,
You'll all be sent to solitary cells and given **only** one diversion,
Watching recordings of Stocklinch Pantos, the **ultimate** perversion.

THE END!

TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

On the first day of Christmas my true love
sent to me **A doggy under every tree**

On the second day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Two swimming poolers**

On the third day of Christmas my true love
sent to me **Three dodgy shoppers**

On the fourth day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Four Sat Navers**

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love
sent to me **Five Tratt cars**

On the sixth day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Six cats a-ratting**

On the seventh day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Seven guests at wedding**

On the eighth day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Eight travellers' vanning**

On the ninth day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Nine new Leylandii**

On the tenth day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Ten chefs a-buying**

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Eleven stolen mowers**

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true
love sent to me **Twelve home conversions**