



# Dick Whittington

by Stephen Duckham

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DICK WHITTINGTONCAST

RATFACE – KING OF THE RATS

FAIRY BOW-BELLS

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

IDLE JACK

DICK WHITTINGTON

TOMMY THE CAT

ALICE FITZWARREN (Fitzwarren's daughter)

SARAH SUET

CAPTAIN COD

SKATE THE MATE

THE SULTAN OF MOROCCO

VIZIER – MINISTER

CHORUS OF LONDONERS, SAILORS AND LADIES OF THE SULTAN'S HAREM

CHILDREN'S CHORUS OF RATS

SYNOPSIS OF SCENESACT ONE

SCENE 1 THE SEWERS OF LONDON

SCENE 2 WAPPING DOCKS

SCENE 3 BEHIND FITZWARREN'S STORE

SCENE 4 FITZWARREN'S STORE

SCENE 5 BEHIND FITZWARREN'S STORE

SCENE 6 HIGHGATE HILL (Dick's Dream)

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 WAPPING DOCKS

SCENE 2 THE CARGO HOLD OF 'THE SAUCY SUE'

SCENE 3 ON DECK

SCENE 4 DOWN BELOW

SCENE 5 THE SHORES OF MOROCCO

SCENE 6 THE SULTAN'S PALACE

SCENE 7 BACK HOME

SCENE 8 THE MANSION HOUSE

Notes on the production of DICK WHITTINGTONCHARACTERS

RATFACE	The typical villain. A partial face mask of a rat, showing whiskers and a rat-like nose. At the back of his costume should be a tail. His accent should be London East End.
FAIRY	Her character is very 'with it'! Her costume could be anything representing the East End of London, and her accent should be the same.
DICK	Our hero should possess a strong, determined manner, while appealing to everyone he meets. A good singing voice is an advantage.
ALICE	Principal girl. A charming, likeable person who is a romantic at heart. Strong singing voice.
SARAH	Typical panto dame. Larger than life, and has a great rapport with her fellow characters and the audience. Great comic timing is an asset.
JACK	Lovable, easy-going character. Comic timing is essential. Must have a good rapport with the audience.
FITZWARREN	An Alderman and owner of a store. He tends to worry, sometimes unnecessarily, about things. Fatherly, but also a boss.
COD and SKATE	Seafaring comic duo. Cod is the captain, and Skate is his clumsy mate. Good comic timing is required.
SULTAN	Authoritative, but also rather laid-back. Only in Act Two, so can double in the Chorus.
VIZIER	The Sultan's second in command. Strong, no-nonsense character. Only in Act Two, so can double in the Chorus.
	Chorus of Londoners, Shoppers, Sailors, Onboard Workers and members of the Sultan's Palace.
	Children as rats, and also included in the production numbers, along with the adults.

SCENERY

The scenery can be as elaborate or as simple as your company can manage. The locations cover a number of areas, so I have given details of how to achieve the best results.

ACT 1

- SCENE 1           Black front tabs.
- SCENE 2           Use a low rostrum across the back of the stage to give the effect of a quay. Fitzwarren's Store is a set of flats with a practical door to stage left, and another shop or building is stage right. The scene can be backed by the cyclorama.
- SCENE 3 & 5       Front Cloth
- SCENE 4           A cloth or curtain with a counter end onto the audience, showing the safe. Shelves and display stands can be added as the space allows.
- SCENE 6           Again, the low rostrum can be used with tree wings on either side of the stage. A backcloth showing London in the distance or a cyclorama can be used.

ACT 2

- SCENE 1           The same as Act 1 Scene 2
- SCENE 2           Black tabs can be used, or a front cloth.
- SCENE 3           The rostrum is covered with a ground row depicting the side of the ship. If possible, a mast that can break into two pieces is to one side of the stage, and a ship's wheel on the other. Flats on either side show exterior parts of the ship, and the cyclorama backs the scene.
- SCENE 4           2<sup>nd</sup> set of black tabs for U.V. scene
- SCENE 5           Front cloth.
- SCENE 6           A typical Eastern Palace. The rostrum can be left at the back, and distant palm trees can be seen. The cyclorama can be used to back this scene.
- SCENE 7           Repeat Act 1 Scene 3 front cloth.
- SCENE 8           Backcloth depicting the Mansion House with flats right and left showing heraldic banners with grand designs.

ACT ONEOVERTURESCENE 1 THE SEWERS OF LONDONRATFACE'S THEME

*[After the Overture, the music changes to a minor key and rather sinister. In the distance, the sound of dripping water can be heard. The light picks out RATFACE, King of the rats. Around his neck is a medallion showing the self-imposed importance of his position. He is nibbling on some rotting fruit. Suddenly, he sees the audience.]*

**RAT**

*[Harshly.]* What are you doing down here? This is my home, and you're trespassing. No one is supposed to be down here except rats. And I'm Ratface, King of the rats! I don't like humans, and I especially don't like children. Nasty, noisy creatures. And you don't like rats, do you? No! You think we're diseased, likely to give everyone the plague. That's why we have to hide away down here and eat your leftover food. Well, I'm going to show you a thing or two. I'm going to make the stuck-up people of London realise you can't treat us rats this way. My army is growing every day, and very soon we'll rise up and take over the whole town. I hear they're looking for a new Lord Mayor. I think I would fill that position admirably. I can just see myself in the Mansion House giving out the orders while you grovel at my feet for a change. *[HE looks off.]* Ah, here comes my faithful rattlings with some fresh supplies. *[Children enter as Rats. They carry scraps of food.]* Well done! What a lot you've got. *[Looking closely at some food.]* Ah, I see you've been raiding Alderman Fitzwarren's stores again. Good. I hate that man. Always setting traps and putting down poison. One of these days, I'm going to teach him a thing or two, you just see if I don't.

FAIRY BOW-BELLS THEME

*[FAIRY BOW-BELLS enters right. SHE is a very 'with it' FAIRY, not at all like the usual ones and possibly with an 'East End' accent.]*

**FAIRY**

Oh yes! And what sort of things are you going to teach him?

**RAT**

Oh no. Fairy Bow-Bells! Eavesdropping as usual. What brings you down here? Slumming it, aren't you?

**FAIRY**

Too right I am, and I've broken a fingernail. *[SHE takes out a file and starts to work on the finger.]*

**RAT**

Get back to swinging in your bell tower where you belong.

**FAIRY**

And when I'm in my tower, I can see all of London. I can also see what you and your rabble of an army are up to.

**RAT**

I don't know what you're talking about.

**FAIRY** Stealing food and striking fear in the hearts of the good people of this town.

**RAT** Good people? For years I've had to fight to survive. Watching out for traps; hiring food tasters to make sure nothing is poisoned. *[The other rats look at him, then at the food, and throw down anything they are eating.]*

**FAIRY** You've no one to blame but yourselves. Living like this in all this filth. Ugh! One of these days, you'll start a plague.

**RAT** Yes, a plague on all your houses, then the mighty rat population will take its rightful place in the world - *[All the rats agree.]* - and we'll show that pompous Alderman Fitzwarren he can't treat us like vermin any more.

**FAIRY** Not if I've got anything to do with it, you won't. I am guardian to all the people born within the sound of Bow Bells, and I'll make sure they won't come to any harm.

**RAT** Oh, yes? You and whose army? *[ALL the rats laugh.]*

**FAIRY** You may laugh all you like, but I have someone in mind who will be my champion and fight to preserve the good name of London Town.

**RAT** I've heard enough of this codswallop! Come on lads, let's go and see what other rich pickings we can find. And you - if I catch you down here again, I'll set all the rats in London onto you, nibbling and gnawing until you're just a pile of fairy dust. *[To the audience.]* And you can clear out as well. *[To boos from the audience, HE exits left, followed by the rats.]*

**FAIRY** Don't let him bother you. I've got someone who will be a perfect adversary for him and his gang. On the road to London is a young man - and a right gorgeous hunk he is as well - who is in search of his fortune. Well, fame and fortune he will find, but before then, many adventures lie in his way. *[SHE looks off stage.]* Ah, I see he is approaching the outskirts of the town. I must get back to my tower and keep a watchful eye on all that he does. His first stop will be the docks at Wapping. Ooh, I must go and do something with my hair. I'll see you later.

*[SHE exits right, and the lights come up on ...*

SCENE CHANGE 1 - 2

SCENE 2 WAPPING DOCKS

*[On the left side of the stage is the exterior of Alderman Fitzwarren's store. On the right side is another building, and across the back is the quayside with a set of stone steps down to stage level. A low wall backs the quayside, and on it is a lifebelt with a line attached. Up stage of Fitzwarren's store is an old dustbin. As the scene opens, the CHORUS of citizens of London is on.]*

CHORUS NUMBER

*[At the end of the number, ALDERMAN FITZWARREN enters from his store. HE carries a sign that reads "Assistant Required".]*

- F/WARREN** Good morning, everyone.
- ALL** Good morning, Alderman Fitzwarren.
- F/WARREN** It's a fine morning.
- 1<sup>st</sup> MAN** It is that, sir.
- F/WARREN** I shall be opening the store in a moment, and then you can all come in and buy lots of things from me!
- 1<sup>st</sup> GIRL** Have you got anything new, or the same old things you've been selling for years?
- F/WARREN** The same old things?? *[In a posh voice.]* I'll have you know this is a high-class *hestablishment* with only the finest quality goods. We're a cut above - *[Local clothes store name.]* - you know.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> GIRL** Yes, and so are your prices.
- F/WARREN** If you want the best, I'm afraid you have to pay for it. But ladies, my ship, the Saucy Sue, is docking today with all sorts of fabulous new things from the Orient. Laces, silks and colourful fabrics to make into the *chicest* of gowns. Also, delicious spices full of aromatic flavours to enhance your culinary concoctions.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> MAN** Anything new in the men's department?
- F/WARREN** Oh yes, I've ordered a new line in gentlemen's underwear made by Tupperware. They're not particularly comfortable, but they do keep what you've got fresh!
- 3<sup>rd</sup> MAN** Sounds just what I need.

**F/WARREN** So I'd heard. And look – [*HE holds up the sign.*] – to cope with the expected extra demand, I'm advertising for a new assistant. [*HE sticks the sign on the shop window.*] And I hope whoever I get is more reliable than the one I've already got. Has anyone seen that Idle Jack anywhere? [*ALL shake their heads and so "No".*] Well, give him a shout, will you? He's got to be around here somewhere. [*ALL call "Idle Jack". FITZWARREN speaks to the audience.*] Will you help us? [*ALL encourage the audience to call "Idle Jack". They look off left.*] He's not down there. Let's try over here. [*ALL cross to look off right and call again. JACK enters left and mimes "Ssh" to the audience. HE crosses to the group.*] He's not down there either. What about up here? [*HE points up right and they all cross and call again.*]

**JACK** [*Standing behind FITZWARREN and tapping him on the shoulder.*] Who are you looking for?

**F/WARREN** That good-for-nothing lazy layabout, Idle Jack. You haven't seen him, have you, Jack? [*HE realises who he is talking to.*] Jack!! Why you ..... What are you messing about at? The shop should have been open ten minutes ago.

**JACK** Ah, well, you see, I've got a very good excuse for being late.

**F/WARREN** I don't want to hear your excuses. I'm fed up with listening to your excuses. [*Bearing down on him as he accentuates his words, spitting in JACK'S face.*] You're perpetually late, you're permanently lazy, you purport to be a person from whom people may purchase a plethora of possessions to make me a profit, but all you do is potter around procrastinating!

**JACK** They can't touch you for it, can they?

**F/WARREN** My ship is due to dock any minute. If that shop isn't open and doing a roaring trade by the time I get back, I'll be advertising two vacancies. [*HE crosses up stage and exits.*]

**JACK** I think he's a bit upset.

**1<sup>st</sup> GIRL** Where have you been, Jack?

**JACK** Well, you see, I was watching this Animal Rescue programme on the television, and there was this furry little rabbit that was in need of a good home. I've always wanted a rabbit, so I ran down to the animal centre this morning to see him. Well, I looked into his big round eyes .....

**1<sup>st</sup> MAN** And he looked into your big, round eyes.

**JACK** And then I looked at his cute little nose .....

**2<sup>nd</sup> GIRL** And he looked at your cute little nose.

**JACK** And then I looked at his big floppy ears .....

**2<sup>nd</sup> MAN** And he looked at your .....

**JACK** All right, all right! Anyway, I knew he was destined to live with me, so I've adopted him. Would you like to see him?

**ALL** Oh yes.

**JACK** Just a minute. *[HE exits left and returns with a box that looks like a small rabbit hutch. On top of the hutch is an opening and a light.]* Here he is. I'll just put the hutch down over here. *[HE crosses down right and puts the hutch on a special stand. There must be an electric lead that JACK can plug into so the light can be operated from off stage. HE opens the up stage end of the hutch and gets the rabbit out. It is a glove puppet, so JACK folds his arms to operate it.]* There.

**3<sup>rd</sup> GIRL** *[Stroking the rabbit.]* Oh Jack. So cute.

**JACK** *[Misunderstanding.]* Thank you very much. You're not so bad yourself.

**3<sup>rd</sup> MAN** *[Also stroking the rabbit.]* Ow! He's bitten me.

**JACK** Oh, that means he's hungry! They told me at the animal centre that he needs to be fed an awful lot. But he's very intelligent. Whenever he's hungry, he presses a button in his hutch and that light flashes. Then I know it's time for a feed.

**1<sup>st</sup> MAN** Really?

**JACK** Yes. Look, I'll show you. *[HE puts the rabbit back in the hutch. The light flashes, and JACK takes out a lettuce leaf and puts it through the opening on the top.]* There.

**1<sup>st</sup> GIRL** That's amazing. But what happens if he's hungry and you're not around to feed him?

**JACK** Oh, I never thought of that. I need someone to watch the hutch and call me if the light flashes. *[Looking at the audience.]* Now I wonder who could do that. *[To people in the audience.]* Could you do it, sir? Or you, madam? Or what about you at the back? I know. I've just had a marvellous idea. Why don't you all do it? *[Audience reaction.]* Every time you see the light flash, just call out – "Jack, feed the rabbit!" and I'll come running. Would you do that? *[Audience reacts.]* Let me hear you then. *[HE ad-libs to get the audience to shout out.]* That's great. Just remember to shout when the light flashes. *[HE starts to exit, and the light flashes. The audience calls, and JACK moves back.]* Thank you very much. *[HE feeds the rabbit.]*

**3<sup>rd</sup> GIRL** You've always loved animals, haven't you, Jack?

**JACK** Yes. I talk to them, and you know, sometimes I think they understand me.

SONG – JACK AND CHORUS

*[At the end of the song, Jack crosses towards the shop.]*

- JACK** I'd better open the shop before Alderman Fitzwarren gets back. See you all.
- ALL** Bye Jack. [*JACK exits into the shop. DICK WHITTINGTON enters up left with his stick and bundle over his shoulder. HE looks around and crosses down stage.*]
- DICK** London! At last! I've been walking for days from my home in Gloucestershire, and now I'm finally here. I've heard the streets are paved with gold, and so I've come to make my fortune. [*To one of the CHORUS MEN.*] Excuse me, sir, but where can I find the streets that are paved with gold?
- MAN** I don't know, but when you've found them, let me know. [*HE laughs and exits with some other member of the chorus.*]
- DICK** [*To one of the GIRLS.*] Miss, could you tell me where the streets of gold are?
- GIRL** Streets of gold? Here in London? Who's been telling you tall stories like that?
- DICK** It's what I heard back home in Gloucestershire.
- GIRL** If they're all as simple as you are, I think I'll give that part of the country a miss. [*The rest laugh and all exit.*]
- DICK** Oh dear. I have been a fool. I was so determined to make my fortune that I believed everything people told me. Now here I am - alone and friendless in this big city without even enough money to buy a decent meal. [*There is a noise from the dustbin, and the lid flies off.*] What on earth is going on? [*TOMMY the cat appears behind the bin and puts his head in searching for some food.*] Hello there. Are you hungry too? [*TOMMY looks at him and nods.*] And what sort of delicacy are you hoping to find in there? [*TOMMY meows "Rats".*] Hats? I don't think they'd be very tasty! [*TOMMY meows "Rats" again.*] Oh rats! Well, rather you than me. [*TOMMY can't find any rats and crosses down to DICK.*] No luck, hey? [*TOMMY rubs against DICK'S legs.*] I say, you are a friendly fellow. In fact, you're the first friendly face I've seen since arriving here. My names Dick - Dick Whittington. Now let me guess what yours is. [*HE thinks.*] Tiddles? [*TOMMY looks at him, slightly disgusted.*] No? How about Sylvester? [*TOMMY rolls about laughing.*] You don't think much of that either? I know. Montmorency! [*TOMMY folds his arms and taps his foot in disgust.*] Oh, I give up. [*TOMMY attracts his attention and starts to mime as in charades. First, he taps the top of his head.*] Name. Yes? [*Now TOMMY holds up one paw.*] One word. [*TOMMY indicated his ear.*] Sounds like? [*TOMMY now thinks, then walks around like a woman.*] Girl? Woman? [*TOMMY nods and then mimes holding and rocking a baby.*] Woman with a baby? Mommy? [*TOMMY nods vigorously and indicates his ear again.*] Sounds like mommy? Donny? Ronnie? [*TOMMY is shaking his head.*] Connie? [*TOMMY shoots him a look.*] Sorry! I know. Tommy? [*TOMMY nods happily.*] Well, I'm very pleased to meet you, Tommy. [*HE and TOMMY shake hands.*] At least I've found a friend. Now all I need is a job. [*TOMMY has seen the vacancy notice and draws DICK'S attention to it.*] I say, what a stroke of luck. [*HE reads the notice.*] "Assistant Required. Must be of good character. Honest, trustworthy and not afraid of hard work." Well, I think I fit the bill, don't you, Tommy? [*TOMMY nods his head.*]

**DICK (cont)** I wonder who I have to see about the job. *[HE looks at the sign above the shop.]* Alderman Fitzwarren. Oh well, here goes. *[TOMMY stays down right as DICK crosses to the door. HE is just about to open it when it opens, and ALICE FITZWARREN enters.]* Oh!

**ALICE** Hello. Can I help you?

**DICK** *[Struck by how pretty she is, he becomes tongue-tied.]* I – er – I – no thank you. *[HE dashes down right where TOMMY stops him and pushes him back towards ALICE.]* Well, that is – I was wondering about the vacancy for an assistant.

**ALICE** You'll have to speak to my father about that. He'll be here shortly.

**DICK** You're the Alderman's daughter?

**ALICE** Yes. My name is Alice Fitzwarren. And you are?

**DICK** *[Very smitten.]* Yes I am. Very much.

**ALICE** What?

**DICK** *[Snapping out of it.]* Er, I'm Dick. Dick Whittington, newly arrived from Gloucestershire.

**ALICE** Gloucestershire? That's a very long way.

**DICK** I came here ready to make my fortune, thinking the streets were paved with gold. But they are cobblestones, just like back home.

**ALICE** So that's why you're looking for a job?

**DICK** Yes. I've not a penny to my name and nowhere to stay. *[TOMMY nudges DICK.]* Oh, and nowhere for my cat either.

**ALICE** You've got a cat. Hello there, aren't you a handsome creature? *[TOMMY preens.]* What's your name?

**DICK** He's called Tommy.

**ALICE** Well, I'm very pleased to meet you both.

**DICK** And we're very pleased to meet you. *[THEY are staring at each other. TOMMY nudges DICK, who comes out of his 'trance'.]* Now all we need is a place to stay.

**ALICE** Oh, that's not a problem. Accommodation goes with the job.

**DICK** But I haven't got it yet.

**ALICE** I'm sure I'll be able to persuade Father to take you on. You look trustworthy, and you're not afraid of hard work, are you?

**DICK** Oh no.

**ALICE** Then just leave it to me.

**DICK** Things are really starting to look up. I've got a new pet, a new friend, and hopefully somewhere to live and work. Coming to London may not have been such a bad idea after all.

DUET - DICK AND ALICE

*[After the number, they exit into Fitzwarren's store, followed by TOMMY. There is a lot of noise off stage. Whistles and cheering as the CHORUS rush on stage to watch the arrival of the 'Saucy Sue'. FITZWARREN hurries on from up stage.]*

**F/WARREN** She's here. My ship has finally arrived. *[The 'Saucy Sue' pulls into the dock. The figurehead on the front of the ship is so designed that SARAH (the cook) has her head showing, but the rest of her body hidden. She looks like Britannia. The CHORUS cheer as the ship pulls in.]* Wait 'til you see the wonderful things that will be on display in my store.

**SARAH** Help someone! Get me down from here.

**1<sup>st</sup> MAN** It's Sarah, your cook, Alderman Fitzwarren.

**F/WARREN** Sarah! What on earth are you doing up there?

**SARAH** A scene from Titanic! What's it look like? *[SHE is helped down onto the stage. HER outfit consists of a top, a hooped skirt with just the frame and a pair of multicoloured bloomers. SHE is very agitated, staggering about.]* Oh, just a minute, I'm trying to find my land legs. *[SHE stands still and feels down to her legs.]* One. Two. At least they're still there. *[HER legs buckle, and SHE starts to stagger again. TWO MEN hold her up.]* Oh, thank you, boys. *[SHE looks at them.]* Oh, are you available all day? I think I may take some time to recover. *[The MEN let go of her quickly.]* Please yourselves!

**F/WARREN** But what has happened to you?

**SARAH** Oh, it was terrible, terrible. I can't bring myself to tell you. *[ALL mutter "All right then" etc. and start to exit.]* But if you insist. You know I've been away visiting my sister in Penzance.

**F/WARREN** Yes.

**SARAH** Well, the 'Saucy Sue' put in there to take on water, so I thought I'd hitch a ride back and take in some sea air. No sooner had we set sail than pirates attacked us. The notorious Pirates of Penzance!! They robbed us of everything.

- F/WARREN** Everything? Do you mean to say that all my cargo is gone?
- SARAH** Every last crate. They stole the lot.
- F/WARREN** Oh no! I'm ruined!
- SARAH** You're ruined? What about me?
- F/WARREN** What about you?
- SARAH** There I was, a defenceless young woman – [*Someone sniggers.*] – left alone with all those rough, cigarette-smoking, rum-drinking men. I fled to my cabin with four of them after me. I locked myself in, ignoring them as they were beating on the door. In the end, I had to relent and let them out! They took their fill of everything on board, tied me up there like some sort of plaything and left me to face the elements.
- F/WARREN** How did you get back here to port?
- SARAH** Well, as luck would have it, I remembered my survival training in the Sea Scouts. I knew all that dib, dib, dibbing would come in handy one day! I ripped off my skirt and used it as a sail. There was a good wind, and I managed to navigate around the coastline and back home. [*ALL cheer.*] Oh, you're too kind!
- F/WARREN** What happened to the crew?
- SARAH** I expect they're having tea with King Neptune by now. They were all made to walk the plank!
- F/WARREN** This is terrible. All my new stock is gone.
- SARAH** Well, look on the bright side. At least I've come back, safe if not altogether sound, so you've still got someone to cook your meals.
- F/WARREN** If I have nothing to sell, I won't have the money to buy food for you to cook! Oh, we're all going to be paupers, thrown out onto the streets. [*ALICE enters, followed by DICK.*]
- ALICE** Father. I've got some good news. I've found an assistant to help in the shop.
- F/WARREN** What shop? There isn't going to be any shop.
- ALICE** I don't understand.
- SARAH** It's true, Alice dear. Pirates have stolen all your father's new stock! I was lucky to escape with my life and a packet of liquorice allsorts I keep up my knicker leg.
- ALICE** But this is terrible.

- DICK** *[Stepping forward.]* Alice, I think I may have an idea.
- F/WARREN** Who's this?
- DICK** I am Dick Whittington, sir. I am newly arrived in London and would like to apply for the post of assistant in your emporium.
- F/WARREN** Didn't you just hear what I said? There isn't going to be an emporium to be an assistant in.
- DICK** If I may make a suggestion, sir.
- F/WARREN** I suggest you seek another place of employment.
- ALICE** Father, please listen to him.
- DICK** Sir, Alice has been showing me around your shop, and I notice you have a tremendous amount of stock.
- F/WARREN** Old stock – yes.
- DICK** Well, why don't you have a grand sale and get rid of as much as you can?
- F/WARREN** Sale? You mean reduce the prices?
- DICK** Yes.
- F/WARREN** But nobody around here does that.
- DICK** Exactly. So you would have people flocking to your shop because of the lower prices. They would buy all your old goods, and then you would have the capital to buy new stock.
- F/WARREN** Oh, it sounds like a crazy idea. It'll never catch on!
- ALICE** I think it's a splendid idea.
- SARAH** So do I. People love a bargain, you know.
- F/WARREN** *[Looking from one to another.]* Well – I don't know. Still, I don't suppose I've got anything to lose. All right, I'll do it. *[To the CHORUS.]* Listen everyone. I have an important announcement to make. Starting today, everything at Fitzwarren's superstore will have a ten per cent.....
- DICK** *[Aside to FITZWARREN.]* Fifteen.
- F/WARREN** *[Shooting him a look.]*..... fifteen per cent reduction. *[Reaction from the CHORUS.]* Tell all your friends there will be bargains galore. Best goods at the best prices, all available at Fitzwarrens. *[The CHORUS exits talking excitedly.]* Well, Master Whittington, your idea had better pay off or else your time here will be short-lived.

- ALICE** Does that mean he's got the job?
- F/WARREN** Well, I shall have to have someone to serve the hordes of people we're expecting.
- ALICE** Oh Dick, that's wonderful. Thank you, father. [*SHE kisses FITZWARREN'S cheek.*]
- SARAH** [*To DICK.*] I don't think we've been properly introduced. I'm Sarah Suet. Gourmet extraordinaire to our dear Alderman here.
- DICK** I'm very pleased to meet you.
- SARAH** You look as though you could do with a good meal.
- DICK** I've been on the road for days with a very small ration of food.
- SARAH** Then how about a nice dumpling stew? There's nothing like my dumplings to give a man an appetite, is there Alderman?
- F/WARREN** [*Looking at her ample bosom.*] Er ..... quite!
- DICK** Well that's very kind of you. [*To FITZWARREN.*] Where shall I be staying, sir? Alice said there was accommodation with the job.
- F/WARREN** Yes. It's not very palatial, I'm afraid. There is a place behind the counter you can use as a bed. Not very comfortable though.
- DICK** After sleeping in hedgerows and ditches for the past few weeks, it'll be like staying at the finest hotel. [*TOMMY comes bounding on, ending up by DICK.*] Tommy, there you are. Meet our new employer, Alderman Fitzwarren. [*TOMMY rubs up against FITZWARREN.*]
- F/WARREN** What on earth ..... get away from me, you mangy moggie! Does this flea-bitten creature belong to you?
- DICK** Yes sir, Tommy is my cat.
- F/WARREN** Well, I'm sorry, but there is no place for him in my establishment. What will the customers think?
- DICK** But sir, in your cellar you have grain and wheat, don't you?
- F/WARREN** Yes.
- DICK** And I bet you are plagued by rats nibbling away at your stock.
- F/WARREN** Yes indeed. For years, I've put traps and poison down, but it doesn't seem to do any good. They are getting smarter by the day.

**DICK** Meet Tom, the world's greatest rat catcher. There's not a rat or mouse safe when he's around. *[TOMMY shows off his prowess in front of SARAH and FITZWARREN as DICK relates the following.]* He is a trained hunter. His powers of stealth are second to none, and when he is on the scent, nothing can stop him catching his quarry. Just watch the way he pounces on his prey and tears it apart in his bare claws.

**SARAH** Oh, I'm feeling quite faint!

**ALICE** Don't you think Tommy would be a great asset to us, Father?

**F/WARREN** I don't know. Is he any good?

*[A percussive sound is heard, and a rat is seen running across the front of the stage. (It is pulled across on a thin line.) TOMMY bounds after it and chases it off stage. He returns with it in his teeth and deposits it in the dustbin. ALL cheer.]*

**DICK** Well done, Tommy.

**F/WARREN** I suppose it's worth a try. All right, my feline friend, you're on a week's trial, but I'd better see a decline in the rat population pretty soon. *[TOMMY "purrs" and rubs up against FITZWARREN.]* Yes, all right, all right. Now come along, everyone, we've got a lot of work to do. Where's Jack? Shirking his duties as usual, no doubt.

*[The light on the hutch starts to flash, and the audience reacts. JACK comes running on with some lettuce and feeds the rabbit.]*

**JACK** Thank you very much.

**F/WARREN** Jack, what are you doing?

**JACK** Just feeding my rabbit.

**F/WARREN** Rabbits. Cats! Anyone would think I was running a zoo! *[HE exits into the store.]*

**SARAH** I'd better make a start on that meal I promised you and change into another dress. I'm beginning to feel a gale blowing round the trossocks! *[SHE also exits into the store.]*

**ALICE** Jack, I'd like you to meet our new assistant, Dick Whittington.

**DICK** Pleased to meet you, Jack.

**JACK** Likewise, I'm sure.

**ALICE** And this is Tommy.

**JACK** Hello, puss. I hope you don't chase rabbits. *[TOMMY shakes his head.]* That's good, 'cos I'm very fond of my rabbit, even if he is eating me out of house and home. *[The light flashes. Audience reacts.]* Oh dear, I think he wants desert! *[HE takes out a carrot and puts it in the hutch. FITZWARREN appears at the door.]*

**F/WARREN** If you lot don't mind, I would like to get this sale started sometime today.

*[ALL say "coming" etc. and exit into the store. The lights dim and RAT enters down left.]*

**RAT** What's this I see, Fitzwarren taking on another assistant? And a cat! I expect you think that will put paid to all my plans. Well, nothing of the kind. My army of rats grows bigger every day, and no amount of cats can stop me from taking over London and becoming the new Lord Mayor! Oh, what a great day that will be. All the people will be taking orders from me. Oh, what a turnabout. King Rat the greatest creature alive. *[FAIRY enters.]*

**FAIRY** What a lot of hot air. You should do well in politics!

**RAT** You can sneer all you like, but remember, I have my army backing me. What have you got? Just a few old bells ringing out what little cheer they can.

**FAIRY** That's what you think. How do you know there isn't someone ready to take you on? Someone who will keep this city of ours free from the likes of you. Someone destined to be the rightful Lord Mayor of London not once but three times?

**RAT** Who is this impostor?

**FAIRY** Wouldn't you like to know? One thing you can be sure of, he isn't far away.

**RAT** Then I shall tear him limb from limb. Nobody can get the better of me.

**FAIRY** Just watch your back, King Rat and remember - deeds are always stronger than words! *[SHE exits.]*

**RAT** She's bluffing. Trying to weaken my resolve. *[HE thinks for a moment.]* On the other hand, if she has someone as an ally who could prove to be a minor irritation, I'd better watch out. And I bet it is someone connected with old Fitzwarren. As an Alderman, he has a say in who the next Mayor will be. I shall have to be extra vigilant if I'm to stay one step ahead of that meddling Fairy Bow-Bells! *[HE exits. There is a commotion off stage. CAPTAIN COD is heard shouting.]*

**COD** Be careful. You're going to hit the dock. Hard to starboard, hard to starboard. Trim the main sail. Batten down the hatches! Ohhhh, shiver me timbers!!  
*[There is a loud crash and splintering of wood.]* Man overboard! *[CAPTAIN COD is seen pulling himself over the dockside up centre. HE shouts down to someone.]* You idiot! Here, grab hold of this. *[HE throws a lifebelt over the dock and holds onto the end of the line.]* Put it around you, and I'll pull you up. *[HE backs down stage, pulling the line.]* Stewth! You're heavy. *[HE puts the line over his shoulder and turns to face down stage. SKATE THE MATE enters up right on the dock. He has a mouthful of water. HE crosses down to the side of COD.]* Are you nearly there? *[SKATE nods his head. COD does a double-take and turns to look up stage. A shark's head appears with the life belt in its jaws. COD yelps and lets go of the line. The shark disappears, and COD falls over.]* What are you playing at? *[SKATE shrugs. COD stands.]* Don't just stand there, you gormless streak. Spit it out. *[And SKATE does, right in COD'S face.]* Ooh, I'll have you hanging from the yardarm for this.

**SKATE** We haven't got a yardarm.

**COD** And thanks to your inadequacies in the steering department, we haven't got a boat.

**SKATE** It's not my fault. I told you we needed a rudder.

**COD** When I took you on, you told me you had years of sailing experience.

**SKATE** I have.

**COD** What on?

**SKATE** The boating lake! *[Shouts.]* Come in, number five!

**COD** Now, thanks to you, we're a Captain and Mate with no boat.

**SKATE** Someone is bound to want a crew. What about that boat? *[Points to the Saucy Sue.]* Maybe they need some extra hands.

**COD** Doesn't seem to be anyone on board. *[They move up stage. The light on the hutch flashes. Audience reacts. JACK runs on and feeds the rabbit.]*

**JACK** *[To audience.]* Thank you very much.

**COD** Ahoy there!

**JACK** *[Giving COD a strange look.]* Of course, I'm a boy.

**COD** *[Turning back to JACK.]* No, ahoy. It's an old nautical term for hailing another vessel.

**JACK** Oh, I see. Ahoy.

**COD** Now then, me hearty, are you a seafaring man?

**JACK** Oh no, I get queasy just taking a bath.

**COD** Then you won't know who the owner is of this fine ship.

**JACK** Oh yes, it's my boss, Alderman Fitzwarren.

**SKATE** Alderman? Is he important then?

**JACK** I'll say. This is his shop.

**COD** And would you know if he is in need of a couple of experienced hands for his next voyage?

**JACK** He's in need of an entire crew.

**SKATE** Why, what happened to the last lot?

**JACK** They were attacked by pirates and all made to walk the plank.

**SKATE** Pirates? That's it. I'm off back to the boating lake. *[HE turns to go, but COD grabs him by the scruff of the neck and drags him back.]*

**COD** Oh, pirates are not a worry, not to an old sea captain of my standing.

**JACK** Are you a captain?

**COD** Captain Cod at your service. And this is Skate, the mate.

**SKATE** Soon to be the late mate!

**COD** *[Aside to SKATE.]* Be quiet. This is our chance to be masters of our own ship and sail the world. *[To JACK.]* My good man, is Alderman Fitzwarren at home?

**JACK** Yes, he's preparing for a big sale.

**COD** Is that the fore sail or aft sail?

**JACK** Eh?

**COD** Or is it his main sail?

**JACK** Of course, it's his main sale. It's the first one he's ever had!

**COD** You mean he's preparing for a maiden voyage?

**JACK** Well, Sarah the cook is giving him a hand!

**COD** Ah, he has the catering arrangements all organised. Very important.

**JACK** *[Not understanding.] I'll tell him you would like to see him. [HE exits into the store.]*

**COD** Oh, this is splendid.

**SKATE** What's splendid? Being captured by pirates and made to walk the plank? No thank you.

**COD** All we need is one voyage to foreign parts. The mystic east, or North Africa and we could make a fortune.

**SKATE** You mean we could be rich?

**COD** Of course. Haven't you heard the stories? Those places are full of fabulous treasures. Gold, silver and jewels!

**SKATE** I don't believe it.

**COD** It's true. Why do you think so many ships set sail for those parts of the world?

**SKATE** Yes, but do they ever get back? *[FITZWARREN enters, followed by SARAH, DICK and ALICE.]*

**F/WARREN** Captain Cod?

**COD** At your service, sir. And this is Skate the mate.

**SKATE** How do?

**F/WARREN** I understand you are experienced in the art of navigation.

**SKATE** No, we want a job on board a ship. *[COD claps his hand over SKATE'S mouth.]*

**COD** I have been an old salt on the high seas for many years.

**F/WARREN** Really? And what about your friend there?

**COD** Oh, I've taught him everything he knows, sir. He's a dab hand at swabbing the decks and splicing the main brace.

**F/WARREN** Well, it so happens that I am looking for a crew to man my ship, the Saucy Sue.

**COD** Then look no further sir; we're your man – er – men!

**F/WARREN** I shall want to set sail in the next few days, so you'd better start work and make everything ready.

**COD** Very good, sir. *[HE turns to SKATE with the thumbs up sign.]*

**F/WARREN** *[To ALICE.]* Well, Alice. Today hasn't turned out so bad after all.

**ALICE** No father.

**F/WARREN** I've got a new crew, a new assistant – *[TOMMY runs on holding two rats by the tails.]* – a master rat catcher. And if all goes well, a sale that will put my business back on track. *[To DICK.]* I hope your idea is a success, my boy.

**DICK** Isn't it time to get things going?

**SARAH** Yes, everything is marked up, so all we need now are customers.

**DICK** Leave that to me. I've thought of a new way of advertising. *[HE calls.]* Jack, we're ready for you. *[JACK enters wearing a sandwich board advertising FITZWARREN'S sale.]*

**JACK** I feel a right 'nana wearing this.

**F/WARREN** Jack. *[The light flashes.]*

**ALL** Feed the rabbit!

NUMBER – FULL COMPANY

*[The CHORUS enters and joins in the number. At the end, the lights fade, and the scene changes to .....]*

SCENE CHANGE 2 – 3

PantoScripts Perusal

SCENE 3 BEHIND FITZWARREN'S STORE

*[A front cloth. RAT enters down left.]*

**RAT** The arrival of this Dick Whittington has upset my plans somewhat. His feline friend is proving a great annoyance, attacking my army. I must get rid of them both, but how? Fitzwarren seems to have taken a liking to the boy, so I must find some way of making him lose favour. But I shall need an accomplice. Someone gullible, easily manipulated and not too bright. *[Off stage, we hear CAPTAIN COD speaking.]*

**COD** Oh, a life on the ocean waves. What a glorious feeling to be at sea again.

**RAT** The Captain and mate. Perfect. I'll use some of my special hypnotic powers to get them to do anything I ask.

*[COD enters DR calling.]*

**COD** Come on, Skate. Get your skates on. *[SKATE enters.]*

**SKATE** I still don't think it's a good idea to take this job with Fitzwarren. If those stories about pirates are true, we might never see land again. We'll be hung from the yardarm, skewered in the gizzards with a cutlass, and goodness knows what they'll do with the mainbrace.

**COD** I've told you there's nothing to worry about. When you get that sea air in your lungs, you'll forget all your troubles. It's a grand life aboard ship.

**RAT** I couldn't agree more. *[THEY turn to see him.]*

**SKATE** Ahhh, who are you?

**RAT** Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Ratface, King of the rats.

**COD** Well, you keep away from us. We've got some very big traps in the store, you know.

**SKATE** Yes. *[Aside.]* Have you seen the size of Sarah the cook's mouth!

**RAT** I couldn't help overhearing what you said about the call of the sea. Nothing like the salty breeze blowing in your face.

**SKATE** And a force eight gale blowing up your Y fronts!

**COD** *[Hitting him.]* Shut up! *[To RAT.]* Are you a sailor yourself then?

**RAT** You've got to be joking! Er, I mean, yes of course. You know what they say about rats and ships.

**SKATE** Yes, they usually desert a sinking one.

**RAT** All highly exaggerated, I assure you. *[HE takes the medallion from around his neck and starts to swing it in front of COD and SKATE, hypnotising them.]* There's nothing better than the rolling motion of the ship as it ploughs through the billowing waves. Up and down, side to side. On and on, tossing and turning. *[By now, HE thinks they are hypnotised. COD is, but SKATE only pretends to be. During the next sequence, when RAT looks away, SKATE is animated, looking around and miming to the audience. When RAT looks at them, SKATE looks as though HE'S in a trance.]* Good, they're now hypnotised, and I can instruct them to do whatever I want. *[To them.]* Now listen very carefully. *[Looks away.]* You think you're going to be masters of Fitzwarren's ship, *[Looks back.]* but there is someone else who will usurp your position. Dick Whittington, the new assistant, is already making his mark and will be elevated to a higher position very soon. *[Looks away.]* You must stop him if you want to keep control of the ship. *[Looks back.]* Do you understand me?

**COD** *[Still in a trance.]* Yes. But what should we do?

**SKATE** *[Pretending to be in a trance.]* Oh, tell us, what should we do?

**RAT** The store is doing very well today. The sale is generating a lot of customers, and they're all spending a lot of money. Fitzwarren will put the takings in the safe, ready to go to the bank in the morning. If they were to find their way into Dick Whittington's bundle, the Alderman might think he had engineered the sale for his own benefit.

**COD** But I don't think Dick would ever steal anything.

**RAT** No, but if the money were found in his belongings, it would *look* as though he had.

**SKATE** You mean if someone else put it in there?

**RAT** Now you're getting it. *[HE looks at SKATE, who goes back into a trance.]*

**COD** But who? *[THEY look at RAT. RAT looks straight at them. THEY look over their shoulders and then back at RAT, who is still looking straight at them. THEY point to themselves.]* You mean – us? *[RAT smiles and nods slowly. COD and SKATE seem to come out of their trance.]* Oh, we couldn't. That would be dishonest. *[RAT makes a pass, and they both go back into a trance.]*

**RAT** You have your orders. Tonight, when everyone is asleep, you must carry them out. Now go. *[HE makes a pass and they exit right.]* That's one problem out of the way. With Whittington gone, his cat will go too. Then I shall be free to raid Fitzwarren's stores, put him and all the other traders out of business and claim the title of Lord Mayor. *[HE laughs loudly and exits left. The light flashes, and the audience calls out. JACK enters right and feeds the rabbit.]*

- JACK** Thank you very much. We're all rushed off our feet. The sale is going better than expected. Alderman Fitzwarren should make a great deal of money. Not that I shall see much of it. He doesn't exactly pay top rates, and I've never got enough money left at the end of the week! *[A shout is heard off.]* Hello, what's going on? *[SARAH enters right with a large frying pan. SHE is chasing a rat.]*
- SARAH** Get out of here, you piece of vermin. *[SHE bangs the pan down onto the floor.]* Missed! *[SHE kneels and bangs the pan down again.]* Keep still while I clobber you on the bonce! *[SHE knee walks across the stage, banging down the pan. When SHE is almost off stage left, SHE falls flat on her face with the pan in the wings. TOMMY enters right with a prop rat that he is twirling around by the tail.]* Typical! I do all the chasing, and he ends up with the prize. *[SHE stands, leaving the pan off stage.]* Get that dirty thing away from me! *[TOMMY exits left.]* Jack, what are you doing stood standing around here?
- JACK** Oh, Sarah, I was just thinking to myself about the low wages I get for all the hard work I do.
- SARAH** Hard work? When did you last put in a full day?
- JACK** Well, there was –
- SARAH** Yes?
- JACK** – and then there was –
- SARAH** Yes?
- JACK** – but I'm here most of the time!
- SARAH** Doing very little. They don't call you Idle Jack for nothing.
- JACK** You couldn't lend me some money till payday, could you?
- SARAH** Lend you some money? Who do you think I am, the NatWest Bank?
- JACK** But I've got to buy a birthday present.
- SARAH** Who for?
- JACK** You!
- SARAH** *[Smiling.]* Oh well, in that case – here you are. *[SHE takes out fifteen pounds in three five-pound notes and gives them to him.]* Here's fifteen pounds.
- JACK** Thanks. *[HE starts to exit.]*
- SARAH** Just a minute. That leaves me with no money.