



Pantoscripts Perusal

# Dick Whittington

by Tom Pieman

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## DICK WHITTINGTON – A PANTOMIME

By Tom Pieman

### Characters

|                                |                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DICK WHITTINGTON               | Our hero (principal boy). Brave and resourceful. Falls in love with Alice. Tommy's owner & companion. Solo song.           |
| TOMMY THE CAT                  | Courageous cat with a talent for catching mice. Given to Dick by Bowbells. Doesn't speak, but must act / dance.            |
| ALDERMAN FITZWARREN            | Local dignitary. Employs Delroy, Ronnie & Dick in his shop and Dame as his cook. Father of Alice. Slightly pompous.        |
| ALICE FITZWARREN               | The Alderman's daughter. Falls in love with Dick.                                                                          |
| GERTRUDE TROTT                 | Cook & housekeeper for the Alderman. Has three sons – Delroy, Ronnie and Jack. Traditional Dame character.                 |
| DELROY TROTT &<br>RONNIE TROTT | Work for the Alderman, but Cockney wide-boys on the side. Provide comic relief in the style of traditional 'broker's men'. |
| 'IDLE' JACK TROTT              | Youngest brother. Dim-witted, but aspiring comedian. Provides comic relief. Fancies Alice.                                 |
| CLAWS                          | The Alderman's minder. Doesn't speak but growls a lot.                                                                     |
| FAIRY BOWBELLS                 | Traditional fairy role. Talks in rhyme (unless in disguise).                                                               |
| KING RAT                       | The villain. Should be scary and over-the-top.                                                                             |
| GUSTAV GUTTS                   | Greedy butcher. One scene in Act I, plus lines at end of Act II.                                                           |
| PENNY PINCHER                  | Gutts' customer. A few lines in Act I only.                                                                                |
| SYDNEY SUCKER                  | Shop customer. One scene in Act I, plus lines at end of Act II.                                                            |
| CAPTAIN CARACAS                | Ship's captain. One scene in Act II only.                                                                                  |
| SHEIKH YABOOTY                 | Sultan of Morocco. Scenes in Act II only.                                                                                  |
| GUARD                          | Sultan's guard. Scenes in Act II only.                                                                                     |
| SAILOR                         | A few lines at start of Act II.                                                                                            |
| LOCALS / LADY / GENT           | Small speaking parts at start of Act I.                                                                                    |
| RATS                           | Two small speaking parts in Act II .                                                                                       |
| VICAR                          | Small speaking part at end of Act II                                                                                       |
| THIEF                          | Steals Alice's purse in Act I (non-speaking)                                                                               |
| GHOST                          | Ghost scene in Act II (non-speaking)                                                                                       |
| CHORUS                         | Locals, Sailors, Guards, Concubines, Servants                                                                              |
| CHILDREN                       | Locals, Rats, Servants, Sailors                                                                                            |

Scenes

|                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Act I, Scene I    | A London Market-Place                |
| Act I, Scene II   | Alderman Fitzwarren's House          |
| Act I, Scene III  | Alderman Fitzwarren's Store          |
| Act I, Scene IV   | Alderman Fitzwarren's Store, Evening |
| Act I, Scene V    | Alderman Fitzwarren's Store          |
| Act I, Scene VI   | Highgate Hill, overlooking London    |
| Act II, Scene I   | On board 'The Saucy Sally'           |
| Act II, Scene II  | Below deck                           |
| Act II, Scene III | Underwater scene                     |
| Act II, Scene IV  | The Shores of Morocco                |
| Act II, Scene V   | A Dungeon in the Sultan's Palace     |
| Act II, Scene VI  | Inside the Sultan's Palace           |
| Act II, Scene VII | Alderman Fitzwarren's Store          |

PantoScripts Perusal

**ACT I** (House lights down. Open tabs)

**SCENE I A LONDON MARKET-PLACE**

**MUSIC #1**

(Small children leave. Locals mill about the market-place, including ALICE.)

(Stall-holders drum up business. BOWBELLS enters SR)

**BOWBELLS**

Warmest welcome one and all, it's panto time - woohoo!  
So laugh and cheer and sing along and shout and hiss and boo.  
I'm Fairy Bowbells and it's my pleasure to introduce this tale  
Where good will conquer evil, and kindness will prevail.  
The hero of our story - Dick Whittington's his name -  
Has travelled down to London town in search of wealth and fame.  
With magical help from yours truly, and a clever, courageous cat  
Young Dick will thwart the wicked plans of the villain known as King Rat!

(KING RAT enters up aisle)

**KING RAT**

Don't count your chickens, Bow-Legs, I wouldn't be so certain.  
Your half-baked hero's sure to meet his match by final curtain!  
Dick's destiny just might not be as clear as you believe.  
I know your fond of your magic wand, but I've got some tricks up my sleeve.  
You'll all bow down before me, and pay me your respects -  
Ruler of rodents, monarch of mice, rattus rattus rex!  
Should I divulge my devious designs? No, I'll keep them vague;  
Good riddance, coronavirus - bring back bubonic plague!

(Exit SL with evil laughter)

**BOWBELLS**

Oh, just ignore my furry friend, always giving it all that (*hand gestures*)  
The ranting, raving, rancid, rabid, revolting, rotten rat! (*deep breath*)  
Now to our tale - the scene is set, the market-place is thriving,  
And into all this hullabaloo young Dick is just arriving.

**MUSIC #2**

(DICK walks up aisle)

**DICK**

(*Gazing round, awe-struck*) This is it, old London town at last. All these fancy buildings, and so many people. (*Enters stage, trying to get someone's attention*) Excuse me, sir (*gent ignores him*). Begging your pardon, madam...

**LADY**

Out of the way, boy!

**DICK**

Sorry (*steps back into the path of GENT*)

**GENT**

Watch where you're going!

**DICK**

Gosh, everyone's so busy - the hustle and bustle of the big city.

**LOCAL 1**

You all right there? You look a bit lost, cockle.

**DICK**

Well, I suppose I am. What part of London is this?

**LOCAL 2**

This, squire, is Peckham - the heart of the East End.

**LOCAL 3**

I can tell you ain't from round here. Travelled far, have you?

**DICK**

Yes, I've been on the road for days. I've come to seek my fortune.

**LOCAL 1**

You and a million others, sunshine!

**LOCAL 2** So where you from then?

**DICK** A small village in [Lancashire, Yorkshire, etc].

**LOCAL 1** Hear that, he's from 'oop north'. Ecky thump! I'll go to't foot of our stairs!

**LOCAL 2** E bah gum, lad, where's tha whippet and clogs?

**LOCAL 3** Ignore them two – just you keep your wits about you, darling. East End folks are the salt of the earth, but there's a few rogues to watch out for. (*THIEF sneaks up to ALICE and there is a tussle as he tries to grab her purse*).

**ALICE** Help... thief! (*THIEF escapes through the crowd SR*).

**LOCAL 3** See what I mean.

**ALICE** Somebody stop him, please! (*DICK chases after THIEF*)

**GENT 2** (*A crowd gathers around ALICE*) Are you all right, madam?

**LADY 2** Did he hurt you?

**ALICE** No, I'm fine, thank you, just a bit shaken up. It was all so sudden. And the thief stole my purse!  
(*DICK re-enters SR, out of breath and holding the stolen items*).

**DICK** I didn't manage to catch the scoundrel, but he dropped this (*hands over purse*).

**ALICE** My purse, oh thank you so much. (*Looks inside*) And my locket's safe.

**DICK** Glad I was able to return it – I'm only sorry I didn't apprehend the villain, miss....?

**ALICE** Fitzwarren... Alice.

**DICK** Dick Whittington at your service, ma'am.

**ALICE** I can't tell you how grateful I am, Master Whittington. The locket has the only picture of my beloved late mother, so it means the world to me. (*Rummages in purse and pulls out a coin*) Oh, but I've only got a single shilling to give you as a reward.

**DICK** No need for that, miss. Anything to help a young lady in distress (*slaps thigh*).

**ALICE** I insist (*puts coin in his hand – their eyes meet and they linger until...*)

**ALDERMAN** (*Off stage*) Alice, my dear.

**ALICE** That's my father calling. I mustn't keep him; he has important business to attend to at his store. Such a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Dick, and thank you again (*gives him peck on cheek, leaving lipstick mark*). I do hope we meet again (*exits SL*).

**DICK** (*Touches cheek*) Goodbye Alice. (*To audience*) I might never wash my face again! (*Sees LOCALS walking off SR and goes after them*) Say, you don't happen to know where I might find some work? (*exit SR*)

**MUSIC #3**

(*DAME enters up aisle, laden with shopping.*)

**DAME** Eh, the market's busy today Jack. (*Turns round*) Where's he got to now, the lazy so-and-so. I shouldn't be carrying all this stuff with my condition (*puts down bags*). The doctor says I've got acute angina. Eh, it's not that kind of show! Suppose I should introduce myself while I'm waiting for that duck-egg. The name's Trudie Trott – cook, housekeeper and general skivvy for Alderman Fitzwarren. My boys have jobs in his shop too – Delroy and Ronnie that is. Jack wouldn't know hard work if it kicked him in the backside. Here he comes now (*JACK enters up aisle holding bag and list*). What have you been doing?

**JACK** Sorry, Ma.

**DAME** Did you get all the shopping I wanted?

**JACK** (*Hesitantly*) Er, I think so. But your handwriting's as bad as my reading.

**DAME** Just give me the list (*Snatches list, holds out in front, squinting*). Hold on, I haven't got me readers. Right, green beans?

**JACK** (*Confidently produces Heinz baked beans*) Yes, I made sure to get the green tin. Aren't these the ones that give you terrible wind (*fart gesture*)!

**DAME** How very dare you! What about the cornflakes?

**JACK** Here we are (*holds up sweetcorn*) Corn (*holds up Cadbury's flakes*) Flakes! Here, put this on while we're going through the list (*passes bandana, puts one on himself*).

**DAME** What are these supposed to be?

**JACK** Bandanas – you wanted a bunch, but I could only find two!

**DAME** I'll tie it round your bloomin' neck! Bananas, you bonehead. What about mustard?

**JACK** (*Holds up custard*) Ah... right colour at least!

**DAME** Cornflour?

**JACK** (*Holds up cauliflower*) Sorry!

**DAME** Salt & pepper?

**JACK** (*Holds up salt... and a red pepper*) Well, that one was half right! (*Holds up wine*) Oh, and I managed to find some Polish wine.

**DAME** Eurgh! Hang on (*checks list*) not Polish wine – polish and wine! Furniture polish, for buffing the Alderman's Chippendale. (*Despairing*) Have you got anything I wanted?

**JACK** I got the last thing on the list – here, a lovely apple turnover (*Pulls out pastry*).

**DAME** (*Checking*) Eggs, apples, turn... that's an instruction to turn over the page, you pillock!

**JACK** What, there's more on the other side? (*DAME makes to attack him with the bottle. JACK holds up eggs in defence*) Watch the eggs!

**DAME** Get out of my sight and take all this with you. I'll get the rest of the stuff – I don't think the Alderman would appreciate cauliflower custard surprise for dinner, especially with a drop of Polish red! I need to be back by four – what time is now?

**JACK** (*Eggs fall out of box when he looks at watch*) Time I wasn't here! (*Runs off SL*).

**DAME** Jack! (*Chases off after him, brandishing bottle*).

**MUSIC #4**

(*DELROY & RONNIE walk up aisle*)

**DELROY** 'Ere Ronnie, how've you got on shifting that hooky gear in the lock up?

**RONNIE** Not too well, Delroy.

**DELROY** You amaze me! Any joy with the stationery supplies?

**RONNIE** They're just not moving...

**DELROY** How about the rabbits' feet?

**RONNIE** No luck.

**DELROY** What about sales of them sledges?

**RONNIE** Going downhill fast!

**DELROY** And the glue?

**RONNIE** It's like flogging a dead horse!

**DELROY** Dare I ask about the trampolines?

**RONNIE** Oh, you know, a bit up and down!

**DELROY** Gordon Bennett! Carry on like this and we'll be back to selling bottled tap water. Let's hope you do better with this job. *(Takes violin out of bag, gives to RONNIE).* Right, here's the violin. Managed to blag it for a couple of knicker – cheap as chips!

**RONNIE** Who's the mark this time, Delroy?

**DELROY** That greedy geezer on the butcher's stall. Ma says he's a right rip-off merchant – dodgy weighing scales, short-changing people, sawdust in his sausages, the lot.

**RONNIE** He'll be worse off after I 'meat' him.

**DELROY** Leave the jokes to me, Ronnie. Focus on the job in hand. Same as last time, yeah?

**RONNIE** Okay, Delroy, here goes *(he wanders past a couple of stalls, violin in hand, before reaching the butcher's – sign says "G. Gutts – Butcher")*

**GUTTS** Morning guvnor, what can I do you for today?

**RONNIE** I'll take some brisket for my Sunday dinner and a few bangers for tonight's supper.

**GUTTS** Very good, sir *(wraps up meat)*. That'll be three-and-sixpence.

**RONNIE** *(Puts down violin and checks pocket)* Bit more than I was expecting – I've only got three shillings on me *(hands over coins)*. Tell you what, I'll just nip across to the bank if you don't mind – shouldn't take me more than ten minutes.

**GUTTS** Not a problem, sir, I'll put this to one side for you. *(RONNIE exits SL, DELROY enters SR and starts browsing. PINCHER steps up)* What can I get you madam?

**PINCHER** Do you have chicken legs?

**GUTTS** No madam, I always stand like this! Only joking, how many are you after.

**PINCHER** Half a dozen. And some bacon.

**GUTTS** Lean back?

**PINCHER** *(Leaning back, chuckling)* Go on then! Four rashers.

**GUTTS** I likes a lady what likes a laugh. There you go luv – that'll be two shillings.

**PINCHER** Two bob! You're the one having a laugh. 'Ere! *(Begrudgingly pays, snatches meat and walks off grumbling)*. Two shillings indeed.

**GUTTS** And a very good day to you too, madam! *(Sees DELROY approaching)* Could I interest you in some quality meat products, sir? A juicy sirloin, perhaps?

**DELROY** (*Dismissively*) Not today, thank you. (*Just about to walk past when he spots violin*) I say, that violin, is it for sale?

**GUTTS** Violin? Oh, I'm afraid not, sir. A customer left it here by accident.

**DELROY** Mind if I have a closer look? (*inspects violin*) Hmm... interesting. Nice piece, some lovely workmanship.

**GUTTS** You know about instruments, then?

**DELROY** Antiques – I'm a dealer. Shame the owner's not here. I'd like to discuss its history.

**GUTTS** He should be back before long. D'you, er, think it might be worth a bit then?

**DELROY** (*Casually*) With a little restoration, I should think forty to fifty pounds, possibly more. I've a hunch that it was made by the great Italian violin maker, Concetto Artistini (*stress the Con and Artist bits*) – I'm sure you've heard of him.

**GUTTS** (*Pretending*) Oh yes, of course.

**DELROY** (*Looks at watch*) Is that the time... I really must dash. Would you be so kind as to give my card to the owner when he returns, old chap? (*hands card & violin to GUTTS*).

**GUTTS** Certainly, sir (*looks at violin as DELROY exits SL. After he's gone*) Not likely! This is my lucky day. (*Rubs hands and throws away card*) Why should that toffee-nosed gent make all the profit? (*RONNIE enters SL*)

**RONNIE** Here's the sixpence I owe you. My violin! I forgot all about it. My old dad used to say I'd forget my head if it wasn't screwed on.

**GUTTS** Thought I'd better look after it until you got back. There are some crooks round here.

**RONNIE** Funny, I heard that too. Well, it's seen better days – I can't see it being worth much to any thieves.

**GUTTS** (*Casually*) Don't suppose you'd be interested in selling it – I could give you a fiver?

**RONNIE** Really? I could do with the cash... but I am rather fond of it. My old dad used to play it, you know. I remember...

**GUTTS** (*Impatiently interrupting*) All right, a tenner – that's my final offer.

**RONNIE** (*Hesitating*) I shouldn't really... go on then. My old dad would be spinning in his...

**GUTTS** Done! (*grabs violin, gives him cash and meat, puts up closed sign and disappears SR*).

**RONNIE** You have been! (*DELROY enters SL*)

**DELROY** How much did you get for it?

**RONNIE** Ten quid! (*hands over the notes*)

**DELROY** Lovely jubbly! Serves him right, greedy get. (*Counts out three notes, passes to RONNIE*) Here's your share.

**RONNIE** Are you havin' a giraffe? That ain't half!

**DELROY** Ronnie, Ronnie, Ronnie... it's not that simple! What with your overheads, your expenses, your commission and the like. Look, you leave the business side of things to me and I'll see you right. Three quid ain't bad for half an hour's work.

**RONNIE** I suppose.

**DELROY** Come on, we'd best get back to the shop (*DELROY and RONNIE exit SL*)

(*BOWBELLS enters SR, disguised as blind woman, with TOMMY. DICK enters SL*)

**DICK**                   Somebody somewhere must have a job for me – guess I'll just have to keep looking. (*TOMMY walks over and starts nuzzling DICK affectionately*) Hello puss, you're a friendly little thing. I've no food to give you, sorry. Pretty hungry myself – I've not had a proper meal in days. (*TOMMY walks back to BOWBELLS*)

**BOWBELLS**           Where have you wandered off to this time, Tommy? Sniffing out a rat for your dinner? Or chasing the birds again? (*TOMMY nuzzles BOWBELLS*) Oh, there you are.

**DICK**                    Pardon me, ma'am – your cat seems to have taken a shine to me.

**BOWBELLS**           How curious. He's normally very wary of strangers. There must be something special about you, young man.

**DICK**                   Me, special? Pah! (*Dejected*) All I've got in the whole world is this knapsack. (*Remembers coin in his pocket*) Oh, and this shilling. (*To audience*) I was looking forward to some hot food... but here (*gives it to BOWBELLS*) you should have it.

**BOWBELLS**           I may be blind, but I can see you have the kindest of hearts. And you're destined for great things, mark my words.

**DICK**                    But I haven't got any money, or a place to live, or even a job.

**BOWBELLS**           Listen here, my boy. Tommy is a marvellous mouser, and London is riddled with rats. He'll catch them all day long for you, and rich folk will pay good money to be shot of the pests. I want you to look after Tommy for me.

**DICK**                    (*Protesting*) But...

**BOWBELLS**           You gave me your only shilling, lad, so I'm giving you all I have in return – one good deed deserves another, so they say. Truth is, I'm too old to be looking after Tommy nowadays. He needs someone with a bit of life about him. And I can tell he's very fond of you, Dick Whittington. (*BOWBELLS casts spell, everyone freezes*).

This simple act of charity deserves to be applauded  
Dick's selfless generosity will not go unrewarded  
Tommy's talent for catching mice will set them on their way  
A faithful friend through thick and thin, close by Dick's side he'll stay  
Tommy and Dick, their fates entwined, together everywhere  
Like Batman & Robin or Ant & Dec they'll make the perfect pair.

(*BOWBELLS ends spell, exits SR, everyone unfreezes*)

**DICK**                    Where did she go? And how did she know my name? (*They look round for her*) She's disappeared! Well, it looks like it's just you and me after all, Tommy (*DICK consoles TOMMY. Spots coin on floor*) Must have dropped her shilling, too. How about an extra large portion of fish 'n' chips to cheer us up, eh? (*exit SL*).

**MUSIC #5**

(*KING RAT enters, in disguise, to finish song*)

**KING RAT**            Here comes the candle to light you to bed... (*removes disguise and chases children*) And here comes the chopper to chop off your head!

(*Children run around screaming before they exit SL*)

Go on, clear off you little brats! Oh, please don't get me wrong, I love the little children – I could eat them all day long! It's time to plot a scheme to wipe the smile off Bow-Peep's face; With boy and cat united, she thinks everything's in place. I'll bide my time while Whittington builds up his reputation, then hatch my plan and revel in his complete humiliation!

(*KING RAT exits up aisle. DICK & TOMMY enter SL*)

**DICK** (*Screws up paper*) Those chips definitely hit the spot. How about your fish, Tommy? (*TOMMY rubs tummy*). Right, we need a plan for using your mouse-catching skills. (*TOMMY twitches and races off again*) Off again – after some pudding, eh?

(*DELROY & RONNIE enter SR. TOMMY rushes in front of them and exits SL*)

**RONNIE** Supposed to be bad luck that, Delroy – a black cat crossing your path.

**DELROY** I don't believe in all that nonsense. (*TOMMY enters SL with a mouse, goes to DICK*)

**RONNIE** Try telling that to the rat he's just caught!

**DELROY** (*To DICK*) That your cat is it, squire?

**DICK** Yes, sorry if he got in your way. There's no stopping him when he's chasing a rat.

**DELROY** A good mouser, eh? Well, you might just be in luck. I happen to know that the Alderman is having problems with mice in his basement. Skirting board's got more holes than [local football team's] defence. There might be a shilling or two in it for you.

**DICK** Much appreciated, sir. I'll head there right away. Whereabouts is it?

**DELROY** You go down the frog and road, round the Little Jack Horner, past the rub-a-dub-dub and it's on your left.

**DICK** (*Confused*) Sorry, I... er... can't see a frog or a toad?

**DELROY** Pardonnez-moi, pardonnez-moi! Seems you ain't familiar with the local London lingo. Cockney rhyming slang, my old china. China plate – mate, see?

**RONNIE** So you go down the frog and toad – road – around the Little Jack Horner – corner – past the rub-a-dub-dub – pub – and it's on your left.

**DICK** (*Understanding*) Right.

**RONNIE** No, left. Make sure you go in the servant's entrance, mind.

**DELROY** Oh, and you might want to clean up your daisy roots on the way (*looks at Dick's boots*) – I think you've stood in a Richard the Third, if you take my meaning.

**DICK** (*Looks at boots and pulls a face*) Eurgh!

**RONNIE** The streets might be paved with gold, but you still have to watch out for sh...

**DELROY** (*Interrupting*) Shouldn't you be getting on your way, my son.

**DICK** Thanks so much for your help, gents. Come on, Tommy (*Exit DICK & TOMMY SL*).

**SCENE II ALDERMAN FITZWARREN'S HOUSE**

*(JACK is stacking cards. Knock on door. Cards collapse. JACK opens door to DICK & TOMMY, wearing shades)*

**DICK** Begging your pardon, I believe you have pest problems?

**JACK** Who are you?

**DICK** Allow me to introduce myself – Richard Whittington, esquire – you can call me Dick. Specialist in rodent removals. And this is my cat Tommy, aka 'the Verminator' *(enters like Arnie)*.

**JACK** I'm Jack Trott. So how did you know about the rats, Mick?

**DICK** It's Dick, actually. Two chaps in town sent me – said I had to ask for Gertie.

**JACK** *(Laughing)* Call her that and you'll be the one getting exterminated! That's my old ma, see, Gertrude Trott. Calls herself Trudy but I'd stick with Mrs if I were you. You've obviously met Delroy and Ronnie then, my older brothers – they call me Idle Jack, just because I don't work for the Alderman like them. But they spend more time trying to make money on the side with their dodgy deals than earning an honest living. Anyway, I'm going to be a stand-up comic, me. Do you want to hear one of my jokes?

**DICK** Oh yes, I love a good gag.

**JACK** Okay here goes. What's the fastest cake in the world? Scone! *(rhyming with bone)*

**DICK** I think it should be 'scone' *(rhyming with gone)*. Have you got any others?

**JACK** Try this one. I dreamt I was eating a pillow last night and when I woke up this morning, my giant marshmallow was gone! *(TOMMY shakes his head, etc)*

**DICK** You, er, might have got that mixed up a bit. Maybe one more try?

**JACK** Alright. What time did the Chinese man go to the dentist? Half past two!

**DICK** You mean, two-thirty. Don't give up your day job... oh, sorry, you haven't got one.

**JACK** *(Disappointed)* Wait through there while I fetch ma *(DICK & TOMMY exit SL)*. *(To audience)* When I told people I was going to be a comedian, they laughed – well, they're not laughing now! Who am I kidding, I'll never make it as a funny-man. There's only one joke in this house – me *(Exit up aisle to aaaahs)*.

**MUSIC #6**

*(DAME enters SR)*

**DAME** Jack! Where's that good-for-nothing got to now? *(DICK enters SL)*

**DICK** Good day, Ger... Mrs Trott. I believe you've got a problem... downstairs?

**DAME** *(Outraged)* I beg your pardon! What are you trying to insinuate?

**DICK** An infestation... so to speak.

**DAME** How very dare you!

**DICK** Rats... in your basement.

**DAME** *(Flustered)* Oh, er, yes – rats, of course. How did you know about that? And who are you anyway?

*(JACK enters SL)*

**JACK** This is Nick Whittington. Delroy sent him and his cat – a good mouser, he reckons. (*TOMMY enters SR with dead rat, gives it to DAME*). Looks like he's right.

**DICK** Good boy, Tommy.

**DAME** (*Looking aghast at rat*) Yes, well there's plenty more down there so you've got your work cut out. What am I supposed to do with this now?

**JACK** Stick it in a rat-atouille!

**DAME** Another one of your so-called jokes. Well, why don't you make yourself useful and set the table – the Alderman will be here any minute, and that minder of his, Claws. I guess we'll have to feed this chap too. So let's have three chairs.

**JACK** Hip hip hooray!

**DAME** I could swing for you! (*Thrusts rat at JACK*) And get rid of that!

**JACK** All right (*takes rat*). Follow me, Vic. (*To DAME, as he exits SR*) Rat-bag!

**DAME** I heard that!

**MUSIC #7**

(*ALDERMAN walks up aisle with CLAWS*)

**ALDERMAN** Evening, Mrs Trott. What's on the menu tonight – caviar, steak, lobster perchance?

**DAME** Chops.

**ALDERMAN** Again!

**DAME** Well it is Thursday.

**ALDERMAN** Remind me, Gertie, what do I pay you for?

**DAME** Putting up with you mostly! You're lucky to get three square meals a day on what you pay me. And for the umpteenth time, it's Trudy not Gertie – as well you know! If you're lucky there might be a bit of my special crumble crumble.

**ALDERMAN** (*Perking up*) Ooh, with plums?

**DAME** Plums, in January? They don't grow on trees you know! Look, whatever you're given, just eat it. (*sound effect – did somebody say just eat – they look bemused*)

(*TOMMY runs through from SR to SL chasing something*)

**ALDERMAN** Good lord, was that a cat?

**DAME** It's that sharp eye for detail that got you where you are today. Of course, it was a cat!

**ALDERMAN** Since when did you have a pet?

**DAME** It's not mine. Some lad brought it round to get rid of the rats. I think he's still here somewhere. (*Shouts unnecessarily loudly*) Jack!

**ALDERMAN** Splendid. Those rats are a real nuisance. (*TOMMY enters SL with another rat*). Looks like he's got one already.

(*JACK enters SR with DICK*)

**JACK** Were those your dulcet tones, Ma? Evening Alderman, this is the pest controller, Rick, and his cat, Timmy (*They shake their heads*). I see he's caught another one.

**ALDERMAN** Marvellous! The house will be rid of the blighters in no time. Greetings, young man, Fitzwarren's the name. (*Offers card to DICK*) Here's my card.

**DICK** (*Reads*) Fitzwarren Associated Retail Trading.

**JACK** F... A... R... T (*sniggers – mouths 'fart' to children at front*)

**ALDERMAN** That's enough from you. (*CLAWS moves towards him growling and he scarpers SL*). Thank you, Claws. (*To DICK*) Claws here is my... financial advisor (*CLAWS glares*).

**DICK** (*Intimidated*) I'm afraid I haven't got a card to exchange. I've only just arrived in London, to be honest.

**ALDERMAN** Well, it looks like you've already got the makings of a business with this cat of yours. I can always use a resourceful young chap in my organisation, you know.

**ALICE** (*From off stage*) Father, I'm back.

**ALDERMAN** That'll be my daughter, Alice.

**DICK** (*Touches cheek*) Alice? (*To audience*) Of course, Miss Fitzwarren (*ALICE enters SR*).

**ALDERMAN** Alice, this is...

**ALICE** ... Dick! I mean, Master Whittington. Oh father, this is the gallant gentleman who chased down my attacker this very afternoon.

**DICK** A pleasure to see you again, miss.

**ALDERMAN** Nonsense my boy, the pleasure is all ours. Resourceful and brave, eh!

**DICK** It was nothing, sir.

**ALDERMAN** Modest as well – a rare combination indeed.

**ALICE** And I didn't get chance to show you my gratitude earlier. I only had a single shilling.

**DICK** That was enough for me to buy Tommy, as it happens. (*TOMMY shoots off again SL*).

**ALDERMAN** A shrewd investor too. Well, here's a guinea – the least you deserve for seeing off that ruffian and retrieving my daughter's precious locket.

**DICK** Gosh, a whole guinea – I've never had so much money. That should get me board and lodgings for a few weeks at least.

**ALICE** But we've got rooms made up here – you simply must stay the night, and join us for supper, I insist.

**ALDERMAN** Absolutely my dear. And I think a toast is in order.

**DICK** Is it toast for supper – will there be jam?

**ALICE** He means a drink, to toast your health. Claws, could you pass the brandy and then tell Mrs Trott to add a place for dinner. (*CLAWS passes bottle, growls at DICK as he exits SL*). Oh, don't mind him – he doesn't take to new people, but he's a big teddy bear really.

**ALDERMAN** Here's to Master Whittington ... (*TOMMY enters SL with two more rats*) and Tommy!

**ALL** Cheers!

**ALDERMAN** So, Dick, how do you fancy being my new apprentice?

**DICK** Really, me?! Thank you for the opportunity, sir.

**ALDERMAN** Excellent. You can start at the shop on Monday, 8am sharp. The Trott boys will show you the ropes. Until then, makes yourself comfortable here. Right, let's have some dinner!

(Exeunt SR. Close tabs).

MUSIC #8

PantoScripts Perusal

**SCENE III. ALDERMAN FITZWARREN'S STORE**

*(Open tabs. DELROY chatting to RONNIE)*

**DELROY** 'Ere, Ronnie, pass me that newspaper.

**RONNIE** *(Picks up paper)* The Worcester Times – how come you're reading that?

**DELROY** Well, I wanted to read the new Charles Dickens story, 'A Tale of Two Cities', and they were only serialising it in a couple of papers – it was The Bicester Times and the Worcester Times. *(DICK enters, carrying big heavy box)*.

**DICK** *(Exhausted)* That's the last of the boxes unloaded off the cart.

**RONNIE** Good lad. Old Fitzwarren knows a good worker when he sees one, eh Delroy?

**DELROY** Very smelly.

**DICK** Beg pardon?

**DELROY** Oh, just trying to finish this crossword. Twelve across – the clue is "Found on a farm, very smelly". Seven letters – C, something, W, S, H, something, something.

**RONNIE** I'm useless with puzzles.

**DELROY** And everything else! *(Thinking out loud)* Found on a farm... very smelly.

**DICK** It must start with C, O, W – 'cow'.

**DELROY** I think your right. C, O, W... S, H, something, something.

**RONNIE** Oh, I know, it's cowsh...

**DICK** *(Interrupting)* ... shed. "Found on a farm, very smelly" is 'cowshed'.

**DELROY** 'Course it is! Bright boy we've got here, Ronnie.

**RONNIE** *(Deflated)* Shed – that's now what I was going to say!

**DELROY** Brains and brawn – I reckon the Alderman's got big plans for you, son. Just as long as he don't put you in charge here, eh? Watch and learn from your uncle Delroy and you'll be sweet as a nut *(SUCKER enters SR, starts browsing)*. *(Discreetly)* Take this old fella, Sydney Sucker, more money than sense.

**SUCKER** Afternoon, Trott. My granddaughter's just started school and needs a thesaurus.

**RONNIE** Is that some kind of dinosaur? *(DELROY kicks him)*

**DELROY** You plonker! I think we've got one knocking about. Dick, fetch that blue book there for Mr Sucker. *(DICK passes book to DELROY)* Here you go, Roger's Thesaurus – to you, 5 bob. I'm glad you popped in actually – I've got just the thing for you. *(Points to a rock on the counter)* Special offer, limited edition, one-day-only – yours for just 7 shillings.

**SUCKER** *(Puzzled)* Looks like an ordinary rock to me. What's so special about it?

**DELROY** This, my friend, is an anti-tiger rock. Put this in your garden and you won't have any problem with tigers. Works on all the big cats – lions, panthers, leopards. 100% effective or your money back.

**SUCKER** But I've never had a problem with tigers?!

**DELROY** Really? Well, I suppose you could hope your luck holds out. But if you want to guarantee a tiger-free garden, get yourself one of these. Only one left, mind.

**RONNIE** I got one a couple of years ago and I ain't seen a single tiger round my allotment.

**SUCKER** Go on then, I'll take it.

**DELROY** A wise decision, Sydney – wouldn't expect anything less from you. (*Passes rock to SUCKER, who studies it*). So, let me see, 6 shillings for the book and 8 for the rock, so that's just... 17 shillings (*RONNIE stops DICK from correcting DELROY*).

**SUCKER** I've no change, sorry. Here's a pound note (*puts note on counter*).

**DELROY** (*Puts note in till and takes coins out*) And there's your 3 shillings change. If you're short of coins, I could swap you 5 florins for a 10-bob note?

**SUCKER** (*Finds note and puts note on counter*) Oh, er, most kind of you.

**DELROY** (*Takes note and puts pile of coins on counter*) Here you go. Better check it – wouldn't want anybody saying I was trying to fiddle them! (*Puts note in back pocket*)

**SUCKER** Of course not. (*Counts them*) 1, 2, 3, 4 – oh, it's one short.

**DELROY** Very sorry about that, Sydney. (*Gives another coin*) There, that's five. Tell you what, how's about I give you a couple of crowns with those florins and change the whole lot for a pound note (*puts two more coins on counter*).

**SUCKER** (*Confused*) Er, I suppose so. (*Finds note, puts on counter and picks up change*). Much obliged to you, Trott... I think. Anyway, I really must be heading off now. Good day to you.  
(*exits SR*).

**DELROY** Pleasure doing business with you! What did I tell you, Dick – one born every minute. I thought my luck was in when the old fool went for the rock (*takes money out of back pocket*), but then he let me sting him changing the cash.

**RONNIE** Oldest trick in the book, that one! He ain't going to miss ten bob, that's for sure.

**DICK** Still, it was rather... dishonest. And that rock won't protect him from any big cats, especially cheetahs! What would the Alderman say?

**DELROY** Oh, lighten up, goody two-shoes! Ronnie, stick another rock on the counter. (*ALDERMAN enters SL*).

**ALDERMAN** Afternoon gentlemen, I trust business is booming?

**DELROY** Never better, boss.

**ALDERMAN** Excellent. I have news for you all. A trading opportunity has come up in Gibraltar. I'm too long in the tooth for such a voyage, so Alice will be taking my place and I'm sending you two with her – oh, and your mother to cook in the galley (*DELROY & RONNIE groan*). I deserve a break from her food – I'll just eat takeaways (*sound effect – did somebody say just eat?*) I've got one last job for you, Dick – pass the test and you'll be joining them on the ship. The week's takings are in the safe and I need you to stay here tonight and guard the shop until morning.

**DICK** You can rely on me, sir.

**ALDERMAN** I'm sure I can, lad. Right, I must go and make preparations  
(*exits SL*).

**MUSIC #9** – (On Stage Characters) The below in the style of Old McDonald

Old Fitzwarren had a store, ee-aye-ee-aye-oh  
 And in that store he had a till... with a kerching here  
 And in that store he had a bell... with a ding-a-ling here  
 And in that store he had a clock... with a tick-tock here  
 And in that store he had a phone... with a ring-ring here

*(Children exit SL. Close tabs. KING RAT enters SR, continuing the song initially)*

**KING RAT**

Old Fitzwarren had a safe... but nothing's safe from me!  
I'll stitch up Master Whittington and his cursed cat, you'll see.  
Just one toot from my magic flute will send them both to sleep,  
And out of sight in the dead of night, into the shop I'll creep.  
With the numbers to unlock the safe from my secret rodent spies  
I'll swipe the Alderman's bag of dosh – imagine his surprise!  
He'll find Dick sleeping on the job, the safe door open wide,  
The boy will be prime suspect when no money's found inside.  
A quick search will reveal the stolen cash in Dick's coat pocket  
And for good measure, old Fitz will find his daughter's precious locket.  
In disbelief, they'll call Dick thief, not knowing he's been framed.  
He'll get the sack – "And don't come back!" – then head for home, ashamed.

**MUSIC #10**

*(KING RAT exits up aisle to boos)*

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#### SCENE IV. ALDERMAN FITZWARREN'S STORE, EVENING

*(Open tabs. Shop in dim light. DICK enters SR)*

**DICK** Well, that's all the takings in the safe and the shop locked up for the night. I've got a little supper in my knapsack (*TOMMY takes a mouse out of his own little knapsack*) and it looks like you have too, Tommy. Come the morning, the Alderman will take away his money and we'll be heading off to sea for new adventures (*slaps thigh*) – Alice will be on board too (*TOMMY gestures DICK smooching*). Hey, cheeky cat! (*KING RAT's flute music starts, gradually growing louder*) Without her father around, maybe I'll get the chance to show Alice I love her. (*TOMMY's ear's prick up*). Another rat? (*shakes head*) That music – where's it coming from? (*they start feeling woozy*) It's enchanting... suddenly, I'm feeling very tired, Tommy (*they yawn, etc*) ... think I'll just rest my head for a minute... (*they both fall asleep, heads on knapsacks*)

*(Lights down, KING RAT enters SR under spotlight, holding flute & singing)*

**KING RAT** Old Fitzwarren had a safe... (*spotlight off, evil laughter as tabs close*)

#### SCENE V. ALDERMAN FITZWARREN'S STORE

**MUSIC #11**

*(ALDERMAN, ALICE and JACK enter up aisle)*

**ALDERMAN** I'll have to get used to opening up the shop while you're all on this trip. (*Open tabs. They see DICK & TOMMY sleeping*) What the...? Fast asleep, the pair of them.

**ALICE** (*Shakes DICK*) Dick, wake up. And you, Puss.

**DICK** (*Groggily*) What's happening? (*Brightens up*) Alice!

**ALDERMAN** The safe – it's ajar (*goes to inspect*)

**JACK** I wouldn't put all my cash in a jar – too easy to break..

**ALDERMAN** It's empty! We've been robbed. (*Sound effect from EastEnders*) Dick, what on earth happened? Where's the money?

**DICK** I... can't explain, sir. Last thing I remember was hearing a flute...

**ALICE** Surely, father, you can't suspect Dick?

**ALDERMAN** Jack, check his pockets.

**JACK** (*Counts*) 1, 2, 3 – how many should he have?

**ALDERMAN** Look inside them, you fool! Check if there's any money.

**JACK** (*Pulls out cash*) What, like this?

**ALDERMAN** I can hardly believe it. Dick, I trusted you.

**DICK** But... I don't understand... honestly, I've no idea how that got there.

**ALICE** There must be some mistake, an innocent explanation?

**ALDERMAN** Nonsense, he's nothing more than a common thief who's been caught red-handed.

**JACK** (*Showing locket*) I found this too.

**ALICE** No... Dick, how could you? (*ALICE takes locket, exits SL upset, followed by JACK*)

**ALDERMAN** I welcomed you into my home, gave you a job in my shop, and this is how you repay me! Count yourself lucky I don't call the police. Now get out of my sight and don't return. (*Pointing theatrically*) You're fired! (*DICK trudges off SR*)

**DICK** Come on, Tommy (*TOMMY follows. Close tabs. KING RAT enters up aisle, followed by his rats*).

**KING RAT** Behold my mousey minions, my plan worked like a dream!  
Dick got the chop from Fitzwarren's shop, thanks to my sneaky scheme.  
Abandoned by Alice, dismissed in disgrace, he's on his way back home,  
And with that pesky puss in tow, you'll all be free to roam.  
London's at our mercy, a rodent infestation –  
Come on, let's drink to Dick's demise and have a celebration!

**MUSIC #12**

(*Music ends abruptly as BOWBELLS enters SR. Rats hide behind KING RAT*)

**BOWBELLS** Sorry to spoil you party, but who's counting their chickens now?  
Dick and Tommy will pick themselves up and turn things round somehow.  
You might be leading the game at half-time, but play to the final minute;  
I'll bet my fairy wand and wings, the boys will come back to win it!

**KING RAT** Not you again, Bow-Nidle – they must still be changing the set!  
If you're willing to offer a wager, then I'm happy to take your bet  
If the prat and his cat make a fool of King Rat, and prove you're good at gamblin'  
I'll leave London's sewers forever and go live with my cousins in Hamlin.

(*Exit BOWBELLS SR, exit KING RAT and rats SL. Tabs open*)