

DICK WHITTINGTON

A PANTOMIME BY

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DICK WHITTINGTON

CAST

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 WAZIR

CHORUS OF LONDONERS, SAILORS AND LADIES OF THE SULTANS HAREM.
 CHILDRENS CHORUS OF RATS

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 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 WHITTINGTON

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. Fitzwarrens 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 Cloth or curtain with a counter end on to 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 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 ships wheel on the other. Flats on either side show exterior parts of the ship and the cyclorama backs the scene.
 SCENE 4 2nd 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.

CHARACTERS

All fairly straightforward pantomime characters. The FAIRY and RATFACE both have East End accents. A boy or girl can play DICK. SARAH should be the typical panto Dame with outrageous costumes and as many changes as the wardrobe can manage! COD and SKATE need to be contrasting characters with SKATE being the slightly dim witted one. The WAZIR can be a man or woman and a more topical name can be introduced if the director so wishes.

The placing of musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences – particularly the younger members – like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of 'Dick Whittington' and have great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

ACT ONE
SCENE 1 THE SEWERS OF LONDON

[After the Overture, the music becomes minor key and rather sinister. In the distance the sound of dripping of 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 left over food. Well I'm going to show you a thing or two. I'm going to make you 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 come 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 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 who's 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 Oh 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 on.
- [SHE exits right and the lights come up on*

SCENE 2 WAPPING DOCKS

[On the left side of the stage is the exterior to 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 line attached. Up stage of Fitzwarren's store is an old dustbin. As the scene opens the CHORUS as citizens of London is on.]

CHORUS NUMBER

[At the end of the number, ALDERMAN FITZWARREN enters from is 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.
- 1st 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!
- 1st 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.
- 2nd 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.
- 2nd 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!
- 3rd 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.
- 1st 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
.....
- 1st MAN And he looked into your big round eyes.
- JACK And then I looked at his cute little nose
- 2nd GIRL And he looked at your cute little nose.
- JACK And then I looked at his big floppy ears
- 2nd 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 the 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.
- 3rd GIRL *[Stroking the rabbit.]* Oh Jack. So cute.
- JACK *[Misunderstanding.]* Thank you very much. You're not so bad yourself.
- 3rd 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 feeding 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.

- 1st 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.
- 1st 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.]* Great! Thank you very much. *[HE starts to exit.]*
- 2nd MAN Jack, I think you've forgotten something.
- JACK What?
- 3rd MAN They ought to have a practice.
- JACK A practice? You don't need a practice do you? You had one last year – and the year before that.
- 2nd GIRL It might be worth it. Just to be on the safe side.
- JACK Oh all right then. Just to be on the safe side. *[To the audience.]* Remember when you see the light flash call out "Jack, feed the rabbit". *[HE exits. The light flashes. Audience calls. HE enters.]* Well that wasn't bad, but if I'm a long way away I won't hear you and the poor thing will starve. Let's have another go. *[HE exits. Light flashes. JACK enters with a lettuce leaf and feeds the rabbit.]* That was much better.
- 3rd 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 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.]* 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 Oh, 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 Oh 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.

1st 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 in a very agitated state 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 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've 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 fathers' 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 Oh 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 goods and then you would have the capital to buy new stock.
- F/WARREN Oh, it sounds 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 percent
.....
- DICK *[Aside to FITZWARREN.]* Fifteen.
- F/WARREN *[Shooting him a look.]*..... fifteen percent 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 exit 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 hoards 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 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 Well 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 taking over London and becoming the new Lord Mayor! Oh what a great day that will be. All the people having to do what I want them to do. Taking orders from me. Oh what a turn-a-bout. 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 got 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.]* Strewth! 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 sharks 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're in need of 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.

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