

The
PICKWICK
PAPERS

by

Charles Dickens

Adapted by Christopher Denys

THE PICKWICK PAPERS**Characters:**

JOSEPH SMIGGERS
 CHARLES DICKENS (Aged 24)
 SAMUEL PICKWICK
 TRACY TUPMAN
 AUGUSTUS SNODGRASS
 NATHANIEL WINKLE
 CABMAN
 PIEMAN
 OSTLER
 MR. JINGLE

WAITER (London)

COACHMAN

WAITER/MAJORDOMO (Rochester)***A WEALTHY WIDOW***

SIR THOMAS CLUBBER
 LADY CLUBBER
 MISS CLUBBER
 MR. SMITHIE
 MRS SMITHIE
 MISS SMITHIE
 DR. SLAMMER
 THE HON. WENSLEY SNIPE
 OFFICER
 MR. WARDLE
 THE FAT BOY (JOE)
 RACHAEL WARDLE
 EMILY WARDLE
 ARABELLA ALLEN
 OLD MRS WARDLE
 MR. LUFFEY
 STABLE BOY
 TOLLGATE KEEPER
 SAMUEL WELLER
 CHAMBERMAID (London)
 MR. PERKER
 MRS BARDELL
 MRS CLUPPINS
 CHAMBERMAID (Ipswich)
 MR. PETER MAGNUS
 MISS WITHERFIELD
 CONSTABLES
 MR. NUPKINS
 MR. JINKS
 MRS NUPKINS
 MISS NUPKINS
 MR. JACKSON
MR. WICKS
 MR. DODSON
 MR. FOGG
 MRS SANDERS
 CLERK OF THE COURT
 MR. JUSTICE STARELEIGH
 SERGEANT BUZFUZ
 MR. PHUNKY
 TURNKEY
 ROKER
NEDDY
 SMANGLE
 PARSON
 LEG
 OLD DEBTOR

Plus: CLUB-MEMBERS, CRICKETERS, LAWYERS, JURORS, DEBTORS, MR. WARDLE'S RELATIONS

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Note: Characters listed in *bold italics* are intended to be played by DICKENS.

Casting and Production

Dickens was twenty-four when he wrote ‘The Pickwick Papers’ so the part can be played either by a young, clean shaven actor (as he then was) or by one in later years wearing the facial hair and looking more like the audience’s preconception of Dickens when he had achieved fame as ‘the Inimitable’.

While there are over sixty named characters in the piece - plus cricketers, debtors, club-members, etc., - it can be played by a cast of twelve men and five women. Dickens is intended to play (as a part of his storytelling) two waiters, a majordomo, a Cricketer, Mr. Wicks, the Clerk of the Court, and Neddy, a none-too-bright jailer. Only Mr. Pickwick and the Pickwickians play the same characters throughout, though even Winkle, Snodgrass and Tupman can appear discreetly as debtors

Costume changes should be as simple as possible (a basic with appropriate additions and subtractions) and, in Dickens’ case, simply by putting on a hat or an apron.

The following list indicates suggested doubles but there are many possible permutations according to the personalities of the actual cast involved.

Part One:

M1: Dickens/Waiter/M.Domo/Cricketer
M2: Pickwick
M3: Tupman
M4: Snodgrass
M5: Winkle
M6: Member/Jingle
M7: Smiggers/Coachman/Clubber/FatBoy
M8: Member/Pieman/Smithie/Nupkins
M9: Member/Ostler/Officer/Cricketer/ Perker/Magnus
M10: Member/Cabman/Snipe/Cricketer/Stableboy/Sam
M11: Member/Slammer/Luffey/ Tolgate Keeper/Jinks
M12: Member/Cricketer/Wardle/Constable

F1: Mrs Smithie/Mrs Wardle/Mrs Bardell
F2: Mrs Clubber/Rachael/Mrs Nupkins
F3: Miss Smithie/Emily/Housemaid
F4: Widow/Arabella/Housemaid/Miss Nupkins
F5: Miss Clubber/Mrs Cluppins/Miss Witherfield

Part Two:

Dickens/Wicks/Clerk/Neddy
Pickwick
Tupman
Snodgrass
Winkle
Jingle/Lawyer
Jackson/Judge/FatBoy/Turnkey
Dodson/Leg/Old Debtor
Fogg/Parson
Sam
Buzfuz/Smangle
Phunky/Wardle/Roker

Mrs Bardell/Mrs Wardle
Mrs Sanders/Debtor
Emily/Debtor
Arabella/Debtor
Mrs Cluppins/Debtor

As is well-known, Dickens toured this country and America giving dramatic readings of his works where, entirely alone, he filled the stage with his characters and this adaptation is intended to carry the flavour of those readings so that it can be presented as a full-scale scenic production or without any scenery at all.

The aim is for the action to flow smoothly from one scene to the next with no pauses, few blackouts and no interruptions for scene changes.

In the original production, the basic set represented a theatre of the late Regency/early Victorian period with proscenium doors and two false proscenias upstage with three sets of curtains and sliding pieces of painted scenery (running on curtain tracks but could just as easily slide) to suggest very simply the different locations.

The same furniture was repeatedly used, being moved about when in view by Dickens and the other characters.

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For the original staging details, suggested groundplan, prop and furniture settings, see the pages at the end of the script.

PART ONE:

The Curtains open to reveal:

A MEETING OF THE PICKWICK CLUB

SMIGGERS is at the head of the table with a large minute book before him and PICKWICK beside him. SNODGRASS, WINKLE, TUPMAN and the other MEMBERS sit around in a benevolent and tipsy haze. All have tankards and there are jugs on the table.

SMIGGERS: I, being Joseph Smiggers, Esq. - P.V.P.M.P.C. - Perpetual Vice-President -Member Pickwick Club - presiding.

MEMBERS: *CHEER.*

SMIGGERS: I ask members to note that the following resolutions are *unanimously* agreed to: - "That this Association has heard read, with feelings of *unmingled* satisfaction, and *unqualified* approval, the paper communicated by Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C.

PICKWICK rises and bows to cheers and applause.

SMIGGERS: General Chairman - Member Pickwick Club - entitled "Speculations on the Source of the Hampstead Ponds, with some Observations on the Theory of Tittlebats".

MEMBERS: *CHEER*

SMIGGERS: . . and that this Association does hereby return its *warmest* thanks to the said Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C., for the same.

MEMBER: Hear hear. Well said . . Splendid fellow . .

SMIGGERS: That while this Association is deeply sensible of the advantages which must accrue to the cause of science, from the production to which they have just referred to, they cannot but entertain a lively sense of the *inestimable* benefits which must *inevitably* result from carrying the speculations of that learned man into a wider field, from extending his travels, and, consequently, *enlarging* his sphere of observation, to the advancement of knowledge, and the diffusion of learning.

MEMBER: I'll vote for that.

MEMBERS: Hear hear.

SMIGGERS: That, with the view just mentioned, this Association has *sanctioned* and *approved* the forming a new branch of United Pickwickians, under the title of (*Grandly*) The Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club . .

MEMBERS: Hooray!

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SMIGGERS: . . to journey forth throughout the length and breadth of this sceptered isle . .

MEMBER: Very nicely put . .

SNODGRASS: Poetic . .

SMIGGERS: . . upon a voyage of discovery and to forward authenticated accounts of their journeys and of the whole of their *adventures* . .

MEMBERS: Wey-hey . . ! That'll take some telling . . The truth now . . Sly dogs . .

SMIGGERS: . . to the Pickwick Club, stationed in London. 'That the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club is therefore hereby constituted; and that Samuel Pickwick, Esq., G.C.M.P.C. . .

MEMBERS: Hooray . .

SMIGGERS: . . Augustus Snodgrass, Esq. . .

SNODGRASS rises and bows, to cheers and applause.

MEMBER: Our poetic member . .

MEMBER: Give us a poem, Snoddy . .

SNODGRASS: Hrrm . . “Dark the night and chill the wind when, twixt the castle’s ivyed walls”

SMIGGERS: (*Firmly*) Thankyou, Mr. Snodgrass . . Nathaniel Winkle, Esq. . .

WINKLE rises and bows.

MEMBER: Our s-s-s-sporting member . .

WINKLE: Th-th-thankyou . .

SMIGGERS: . . and Tracy Tupman, Esq.

MEMBER: Our *romantic* member . .

TUPMAN rises and bows in a romantic manner.

MEMBERS: *CHEERS. Shouts of “Go to it, Tuppy”, “Has she got a sister?” “Save one for me”, etc.*

SMIGGERS: . . are hereby nominated and appointed members of the same; and that this Association hereby signifies its perfect acquiescence therein.

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MEMBERS: *CHEERS.*

SMIGGERS: And now, gentlemen, as the hour is late and our *intrepid* adventurers set forth upon their quest at the dawning of the morrow, I declare this meeting to be . . . at an end . . .

MEMBERS: *CHEERS. Singing of "For They Are Jolly Good Fellows . . ."*

The meeting breaks up and all exit U.S. as the Curtains close - leaving DICKENS and WINKLE D.S.

DICKENS: *(Emerging from the meeting to D.R.)* It is with the highest pleasure that I lay before you, my friends, a *small* selection of the activities and adventures of the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club. These honourable and brave - nay - valiant men . . .

WINKLE: *(Left alone)* D-does anybody go my way home? I say . . . Will anybody walk with me to my house . . . Oh, d-d-dear . . . *(He exits nervously L.)*

DICKENS: . . . erm, valiant men . . . who selflessly forsake the shelter of their serene and comfortable lives, to brave all hazards which malevolent fate may hurl against them that we, safe here at home, may learn more of the world at large.

A cock crows. The Sun rises. MR. PICKWICK appears at his window in the door L.

DICKENS: And, sure enough, that punctual servant of all works, the sun, has barely risen on the thirteenth day of May, eighteen hundred and twenty-seven when Mr. Pickwick bursts like another sun from his slumbers, throws open his chamber window and looks out upon Goswell Street. Goswell Street to his left. Goswell street to his right. The other side of Goswell Street across the way.

PICKWICK: Am I to know nothing of this world but Goswell Street? *(He closes the window)*

DICKENS: And, with his portmanteau . . .

PICKWICK: *(Off)* I say there! Cabman!

DICKENS: . . . his telescope and his notebook, he commands a cab to convey him to Golden Cross and sets out into the unknown . . . Yet, lion of commerce as he is, scholar and philosopher as he is, is he - or, for that matter, are his learned and hitherto safe and comfortable companions - in any way fitted to confront the wider world and the many and varied people that dwell therein?

CABMAN: *(Entering D.L. and throwing the portmaneau down with a crash. A shillin'.*

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PICKWICK: *(Re-entering D.L. and looking back at the horse)* How old is that horse, cabman?

TUPMAN, WINKLE and SNODGRASS enter with their luggage R. A PIEMAN and an OSTLER enter. TUPMAN buys a pie. DICKENS takes off his coat and hangs it on a peg R. from which he takes an apron and puts it on. He then sets a small table (passed to him through the Curtains) and four chairs - all during the following:

CABMAN: Forty-two.

PICKWICK: *(Amazed)* Forty-two?

CABMAN: *(Holding out his hand)* Not that it's any concern o' yourn . . .

PICKWICK: Gracious! *(Writing in his notebook)* And how long do you keep him out at a time?

CABMAN: No more than two or three veeks,'

PICKWICK: Veeks . . er . . Weeks? And does he have no home in all that time?

CABMAN: He lives at Pentonwil when he's at home, 'but ve seldom takes him home, on account of his veakness.

PICKWICK: His veakness?

CABMAN: Yer. He's a tendency to fall down when he's took out the shafts, but when he's in 'em, ve bears him up werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can't werry vell fall down; and we've got a pair o' precious large wheels on, so ven he *does* move, they runs arter 'im, and he must go on or they'll catch 'im up.

PICKWICK: *(Writing)* Bless my soul!

CABMAN: 'Ere! 'Vot you doin' a'writin' down of all vot I says?

PICKWICK: *(Writing)* Most instructive. *(Offering a coin)* Here's your fare . .

CABMAN: *(Throwing the coin on the floor)* You may *keep* your fare. For I sees now vot you're a'doin' of viv your writin' down.

PICKWICK: But I . .

CABMAN: Here. *(Pugilistic)* Come on. Put 'em up then, put 'em up. I'll show you how ve treats of nosy inspectin' sort o' folks like you . .

SNODGRASS: Are you mad, sir?

WINKLE: Or d-d-d-drunk, sir?

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- TUPMAN:** *(Mouth full of pie)* Or both, sir?
- CABMAN:** Ah. *And* you brung vittnesses. Come on then!' I'll take on all four on you.
- OSTLER:** Here's a lark! Go to vork, Sam!
- PIEMAN:** What's the row, Sam?
- CABMAN:** *(Prancing about - fists raised)* Row? Vot did he vont my number for?
- PICKWICK:** I didn't want your number.
- CABMAN:** *(Sparring and feinting)* Vot did you take it for, then?'
- PICKWICK:** I didn't take it,
- CABMAN:** *(Appealing to the others)* Would anybody believe it? Would anybody believe as an informer'ud go about in a man's cab and not only take down his number, but ev'ry vord he says into the bargain?
- PIEMAN:** Did he do that though?
- CABMAN:** Yes, he did, and then arter aggerawatin' me to assault him, gets three vittnesses here to prove it. But I'll give it him, if I've to serve six months for it. *(Dashing his hat upon the ground)* Come on! *(Knocks off PICKWICK's spectacles)* Come on, lively now . . . *(Punches PICKWICK on the nose.)*
- PICKWICK:** *(Staunching the blood)* Dat's by dose, sir . . . Bister Binkle . . . Bister Binkle . . . rescue, Bister Binkle!
- WINKLE:** *(Prancing about pugilistically but carefully staying out of range)* C-c-come on, sir. Come on. You shall answer to me for that att-tt-ttack, sir!
- CABMAN:** And you! *(Punching SNODGRASS's eye)* And you . . . *(Punching TUPMAN in the waistcoat)* And, most of the lot of 'em - You! *(Punches WINKLE who collapses.)*
- PICKWICK:** Where's an officer? Officer!

JINGLE enters.

- PIEMAN:** Put 'em under the pump,
- TUPMAN:** *(Gasping)* You shall smart for this . . .
- OSTLER:** Informers!
- CABMAN:** *(Prancing about, triumphant, brandishing his fists)* Come on . . .
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JINGLE: What's the fun?

PIEMAN: Informers!

PICKWICK: *(Through his handkerchief)* Be are dot!

OSTLER: Ain't you, though - ain't you?

WINKLE: *(Struggling up)* We most c-certainly are n-n-not!

JINGLE: *(Restraining the CABMAN)* Hold hard, I say - hold hard - pugilism in the street - bad thing - very. Here, *(Reading his badge)* No. 924, *(Picking up the coin)* take your fare, and take yourself off. *(Patting him on the shoulder)* Respectable gentleman - know him well - none of your nonsense - this way, sir - *(Leading PICKWICK upstage as the curtains open)* Where's your friends? Name of Jingle, sir - Jingle - ring a bell, eh? - ring a bell? Come now. All a mistake, I see - never mind - accidents will happen - best regulated families - never say die - Pull him UP. Put that in his pipe - like the flavour - damned rascals. *(Helping PICKWICK to a chair)* Here, waiter!

DICKENS as a WAITER, brings glasses and bottles. TUPMAN, SNODGRASS and WINKLE join them at the table.

JINGLE: Glasses round - brandy-and-water, hot and strong and sweet and plenty - thankee. *(Drinks)* Eye damaged, Sir? Waiter! Raw beef-steak for the gentleman's eye - *(Pours and drinks)* nothing like raw beef-steak for a bruise, sir; cold lamp-post very good, mind - but lamp-post inconvenient - look damned odd standing in the open street half an hour, with your eye against a lamp-post - *(Pours and drinks)* eh? Very good ha ha! Never mind - say no more; *(Pours and drinks - and keeps drinking while the WAITER brings a beefsteak which is applied to SNODGRASS'S eye.)*

JINGLE: Smart chap that cabman - handled his fives well; but if I'd been your friend in the green jemmy - damn me - punch his head, - 'cod I would - pig's whisper - pieman too - no gammon. Why, when I gave my Orlando - "As You Like It", don't you know - wrestling scene - different opponent needed every performance - bone-setters couldn't cope.

SNODGRASS: You are an actor, sir?

JINGLE: Actor? - *(Very theatrical)* Why, ye-e-ea-a-a, laddie - Hamlet - Coriolanus. Should see my Bottom.

SNODGRASS: Why, I . .

JINGLE: The Weaver - in the "Dream" . .

SNODGRASS: Ah.

WAITER: *(Shouting)* Commodore!

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COACHMAN: *(Shouting Off)* Any more for the Commodore?

WAITER: All aboard for the Commodore!

COACHMAN: *(Entering)* The Commodore about to depart.

JINGLE: Commodore! My coach - place booked - one outside - parting sweet sorrow - and so forth - leave you to pay for the brandy- and-water - want change for a five - bad silver - Brummagem buttons - won't do - no go eh? Very.

PICKWICK: We too are for the Commodore, sir.

JINGLE: Excellent - life ruled by coincidence, eh? - unbelievable - very.

COACHMAN: Up with you, gentlemen. Up with you . .

The Table and Chairs become the coach as the PICKWICKIANS and JINGLE clamber up onto it or hang from the sides during:

WAITER: Any luggage, Sir?

JINGLE: Who, I? *(Producing it)* Brown paper parcel here, that's all - other luggage gone by water - packing-cases - *huge* - nailed up - big as houses - heavy, heavy, damned heavy.

COACHMAN: Hup! Hup!

(The Coach sets off with a lurch and a clatter of hooves and all duck.)

JINGLE: Heads, heads - take care of your heads! Terrible place - dangerous work - other day - five children - mother - tall lady, eating sandwiches - forgot the arch - crash - children look round - mother's head off - sandwich in her hand - no mouth to put it in - head of a family off, eh? - shocking, shocking! *(To PICKWICK)* Looking at Whitehall, sir? - fine place - little window - King Charles's head off there, eh, sir? - *he* didn't keep a sharp enough look-out either - eh, Sir, eh?

PICKWICK: I am ruminating, on the strange mutability of human affairs.

JINGLE: Ah! I see - in at the palace door one day, out at the window the next. Philosopher, Sir?

SNODGRASS: *(Jotting rhymes in his notebook)* Travelling . . unravelling . . erm . .

PICKWICK: An observer of human nature, Sir,

JINGLE: Ah, so am I. Most people are when they've little to do and less to get. Poet, Sir?

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PICKWICK: My friend Mr. Snodgrass has a strong poetic turn

SNODGRASS: Adventure . . debenture . .

JINGLE: So have I, Epic poem - ten thousand lines - revolution of July - composed it on the spot - Mars by day, Apollo by night - bang the field-piece, twang the lyre.

SNODGRASS: (*Impressed*) You were present at that glorious scene, sir?

JINGLE: Present! Should say I was; fired a musket - fired with an idea - rushed into wine shop - wrote it down - back again - whiz, bang - another idea - wine shop again - pen and ink - back again - cut and slash - noble time, Sir. (*To WINKLE who is miming shooting at passers-by*) Sportsman, sir?

WINKLE: A little, Sir,

JINGLE: Fine pursuit, sir - fine pursuit. Dogs, Sir?'

WINKLE: Not just now,

JINGLE: Ah! You should keep dogs - fine animals - dog of my own once - pointer - out shooting one day - entering enclosure - whistled - dog stopped - whistled again - "Ponto" - no go; stock still - called him - "Ponto, Ponto" - wouldn't move - dog transfixed - staring at a board - saw an inscription - "Gamekeeper has orders to shoot all dogs found in this enclosure" - wouldn't pass it - wonderful dog - *valuable* dog that - very.

WINKLE: Singular c-c-circumstance that. Will you allow me to make a note of it?

JINGLE: Certainly, Sir, certainly - hundred more anecdotes of the same animal.

TUPMAN almost falls off in watching a GIRL pass by.

JINGLE: Fine girl, Sir.

TUPMAN: Very fine! Splendid . . ahrrm . .

JINGLE: English girls not so fine as Spanish - noble creatures - jet hair - black eyes - lovely forms - sweet creatures - beautiful.

TUPMAN: You have been in Spain, sir?

JINGLE: Lived there - ages.'

TUPMAN: Many conquests, sir?'

JINGLE: Conquests! Thousands. Don Bolaro Fizzgig - grandee - only daughter - Donna Christina - splendid creature - loved me to distraction - jealous father - high-souled daughter - handsome Englishman - Donna Christina in despair - prussic acid - stomach pump
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in my portmanteau - operation performed - old Bolaro in ecstasies - consent to our union - join hands - floods of tears - romantic story - very.

TUPMAN: Is the lady in England now, sir?

JINGLE: Dead, sir - dead Never recovered the stomach pump.

TUPMAN: And her father?

JINGLE: Remorse and misery. Disappeared - talk of the city - searched everywhere - public fountain in the great square ceased playing - workmen employed - water drawn off - father-in-law discovered - head first in main pipe - full confession in his right boot - took him out - fountain played as well as ever.

TUPMAN: Bless my soul!

SNODGRASS: Will you allow me to note that little romance down, Sir?

JINGLE: Certainly, Sir, certainly - fifty more if you like to hear 'em - strange life mine - rather curious history - singular.

SNODGRASS: Fountain . . mountain . .

DICKENS: And so, in this strain, with copious glasses of ale whenever the coach stops to change horses, Mr. Jingle talks and talks and the Pickwickians listen in wonderment and write all down so that the notebooks of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Snodgrass are completely filled with selections from his adventures by the time they reach . .

COACHMAN: (*Hauling back on the reins*) Rochester! Rochester!

DICKENS/WAITER: The Bull Inn. Who's for the Bull Inn, Rochester?

PICKWICK: (*As they climb down from the coach*) Do you remain here, Sir?

JINGLE: Here? Not I - but good house - nice beds - very.

The WAITER sets out the table and chairs during:

PICKWICK: You rendered us a very important service this morning, sir. Will you allow us to offer you dinner?

JINGLE: Great pleasure - broiled fowl and mushrooms - capital thing! Waiter! Fetch some wine, if you please!

The WAITER exits through the Curtains.

PICKWICK: (*To the others*) Evidently a traveller in many countries.

SNODGRASS: I should like to see his poem.

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WINKLE: I should like to have seen that d-d-dog.

TUPMAN: And that Donna Christina, the stomach pump, and the fountain . .
(Sighs romantically)

The WAITER returns with a tray of Bottles and Glasses.

JINGLE: (With jug, filling glasses) Glass of wine, Sir.

PICKWICK: With pleasure.

DICKENS: And the stranger takes wine, first with him, and then with Mr. Snodgrass, and then with Mr. Tupman, and then with Mr. Winkle, and then with the whole party together, almost as rapidly as he talks.

JINGLE: Devil of a mess on the staircase, waiter, Forms going up - carpenters coming down - lamps, glasses, harps. What's going forward?'

DICKENS/WAITER: Ball, Sir. Ball for the benefit of a charity, Sir.

TUPMAN: Many fine women in this town, do you know, Sir?

JINGLE: Splendid - capital. Kent, sir - everybody knows Kent - apples, cherries, hops, and fine women. Glass of wine, Sir!

PICKWICK: With great pleasure.

TUPMAN: I should very much like to go to that ball - very much.

DICKENS/WAITER: Tickets at the bar, Sir, half-a-guinea each, Sir.

JINGLE: (To TUPMAN) Beg your pardon, sir, bottle stands - pass it round.

DICKENS: (As the Pickwickians fall under the influence until PICKWICK and SNODGRASS carry WINKLE off to bed L.) The wine is passed. Fresh supplies are ordered. Mr. Jingle talks and talks and talks and the Pickwickians listen and listen - while frequently rescuing Mr. Winkle from his tendency to slide onto the floor - until all but the romantic Mr. Tupman find it necessary to retire . .

The sounds of a small orchestra tuning.

JINGLE: Ha - starting upstairs, hear the company - fiddles tuning - now the harp.

The orchestra strikes up a quadrille.

JINGLE: And there they go. The first quadrille.

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TUPMAN: *(Sadly)* How I should like to go to the ball.

JINGLE: So should I - confounded luggage - nothing to go in - odd, ain't it?

TUPMAN: I should be very happy to lend you a change of apparel for the purpose . . . but you are rather slim, and I am . . .

JINGLE: Rather fat - ha ha - grown-up Bacchus - ha! ha! pass the wine.

TUPMAN: *(Stiffly)* I was about to observe, Sir, 'that though my apparel would be too large, a suit of my friend Mr. Winkle's would, perhaps, fit you better.

JINGLE: Just the thing.

TUPMAN: I couldn't wake him now, but I know he has a dress coat in a carpet bag and, suppose you wore it to the ball and took it off when we returned, I could replace it without troubling him at all about the matter.

JINGLE: Capital - famous plan - damned odd situation - fourteen coats in the packing cases and obliged to wear another man's. Very good notion that - very.

TUPMAN: *(Rising unsteadily)* We must purchase our tickets.

JINGLE: Ah. Not worth splitting a guinea. Toss who shall pay for both. *(Tossing a coin and turning it on his wrist, not showing it)* Heads. And heads it is.

TUPMAN: *(Going L.)* Get the tickets. Get the coat. Get the . . .

JINGLE: *(Calling after)* And get another bottle as you pass the Waiter. *(Aside)* Fallen on your feet again, Jingle.

The WAITER clears the Table and Chairs during:

TUPMAN: *(Returning with the coat)* It's a new coat - the first that's been made with our club button - you see? Bust of our founder and the letters P.C. on either side

JINGLE: P.C? Queer. What does P.C. stand for? Peculiar coat?

TUPMAN: *(With inebriated dignity)* Sir. The Pickwick Club.

JINGLE: *(Putting on the coat)* There now - borrowed plumage - what a lark, eh - fit for a frolic - very.

(They move upstage as the Curtains open to reveal the BALLROOM where the WIDOW sits alone.)

DICKENS/MAJORDOMO: What names, sir?

TUPMAN: I am . . .

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JINGLE: No names at all - names won't do - very good names in their way but - incog. - (*To the MAJORDOMO*) Gentlemen from London.

DICKENS/MAJORDOMO: (*Announcing*) Two gentlemen from London . .

JINGLE: Distinguished foreigners . .

DICKENS/MAJORDOMO: Distinguished foreigners.

The CLUBBER FAMILY enter.

TUPMAN: Charming women.

DICKENS/MAJORDOMO: Sir Thomas Clubber, Lady Clubber and Miss Clubber

JINGLE: (*Confidentially to TUPMAN*) Commissioner - head of dockyard - great man - remarkably great man . .

The SMITHIE FAMILY enter.

DICKENS/MAJORDOMO: Mr. Smithie, Mrs Smithie and Miss Smithie . .

TUPMAN: What's Mr. Smithie?

JINGLE: Very big in the yard.

SNIFE and DR. SLAMMER enter.

DICKENS/MAJORDOMO: Captain the Honourable Wilmot Snipe and Doctor Slammer of the 97th Regiment of Foot . .

JINGLE: Great family - the Snipes - *huge* in Rochester - very.

DOCTOR SLAMMER immediately pays court to the WIDOW.

TUPMAN: (*Approaching potential partners but being always snubbed*) Damn charmin' women . . I say damn charmin' women. Never could resist a charmin' woman . .

JINGLE: (*Aside to the AUDIENCE*) Popular fellow - that doctor - round that old widow woman - wasp round treacle - rich dress - *profusion* of ornament - desirable addition to man of limited income . . Lots of money - old girl - pompous doctor - dandy Jingle - good fun - very.

TUPMAN: (*To MISS CLUBBER*) I beg your . . Madam, may I . . ? (*She snubs him*)

JINGLE: Watch me, Tuppy. I'll dance with the widow . .

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TUPMAN: But isn't she with . . ?

JINGLE: (*Elbowing the DOCTOR aside and bowing to her*) Ma'am, your servant - admired from afar, etcetera - at your pretty feet, ma'am - honour of this dance, ma'am - to still a beating heart - pity on a poor devoted slave . . (*He pulls the WIDOW into the dance and whirls her round*) - capital . . !

DICKENS: The stranger is young. The widow is flattered. Not for half a century has she been whirled about in the arms of so dashing a young man - and so accomplished a dancer. The Widow is entranced. The Doctor is astonished. The Widow is elated. The Doctor is insulted. The Widow is *thrilled*. The Doctor is *furios*. The Doctor's attentions are unheeded by the widow and the Doctor's indignation is wholly lost on his imperturbable rival. The Doctor is paralysed with rage. He!

SLAMMER: (*To the AUDIENCE*) Doctor Slammer of the 97th . .

DICKENS: . . to be extinguished in a moment . .

SLAMMER: (*To the AUDIENCE*) . . by a man whom nobody has ever *seen* before.

DICKENS: . . and who nobody knows even now!

SLAMMER: (*To the AUDIENCE*) Impossible! It cannot be!

DICKENS: Yet it is!

SNIPES: I say, Slammer, you're not goin' to stand for this wascal's wudeness I hope? Honour of the wegiment and all. Honour of the wegiment. What, what?

SLAMMER: (*Pulling JINGLE round*) Sir! My name is Slammer, *Doctor* Slammer, sir - 97th Regiment of Foot - Chatham Barracks - (*Giving card*) my card, sir, my card.

JINGLE: Ah! (*Taking it*) Doctor, eh? - touting for business? - not ill just now - but knock you up when I need you. (*Returns the card*)

SLAMMER: (*Incandescent with rage*) You - you're a *shuffler*, sir - a *poltroon*, sir - a coward, sir - a liar - a . . a . . Will *nothing* induce you to give me your card, sir?

JINGLE: Oh, I see. Negus too strong - liberal portions - (*Feeling the DOCTOR's forehead*) hot rooms - elderly gentleman - suffer for it in the morning - cruel - cruel.

JINGLE kisses the WIDOW and leads TUPMAN out L. while:

DICKENS: And, having taken his fond leave of the Widow and leading a confused and befuddled Mr. Tupman . .

TUPMAN: Fine women . . Charmin ' women . .

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DICKENS: Mr. Jingle takes his leave . .

JINGLE: (*Calling back, off*) Suffer for it in the morning, sir. Cruel. Cruel.

The Curtains close on the Ballroom during:

DICKENS: But the rising sun finds another sufferer venturing tentatively abroad . .

WINKLE enters L. wearing the coat JINGLE has just taken off, very hung-over, and reacts at the brightness of the sun. An OFFICER enters R.

DICKENS/WAITER: Ah there you are, sir.

WINKLE: Am I? I s-s-suppose I am, young fellow.

DICKENS/WAITER: A gentleman, sir, enquiring after the man in the blue coat with the funny buttons. Gentleman says he'll not detain you a moment, sir, but he'll take no denial.

WINKLE: (*Puzzled*) Very odd.

OFFICER: (*Very fierce*) Mr. Winkle, I presume.

WINKLE: My name is W-Winkle, sir.

OFFICER: You will not be surprised - SIR! When I inform you - SIR! That I have called here this morning on behalf of my friend Doctor Slammer of the 97th.

WINKLE: Doctor Slammer . . ? S -S-Slammer . . ?

OFFICER: Doctor Slammer - SIR! He begged me to express his opinion that your conduct of last evening was such as no *gentleman* could endure.

WINKLE: Well, I . .

OFFICER: My friend, SIR! Doctor Slammer, SIR! requested me to add that you were intoxicated and possibly unconscious of the insult you were guilty of.

WINKLE: (*Aside*) I was certainly int-t-toxicated but . . Slammer . . ?

OFFICER: However, insult there was and there is of course only one manner in which such can be expunged between gentlemen.

WINKLE: I . . Were you entrusted with this message to me by name?

OFFICER: I was not present myself and in consequence of your firm refusal to give your card to Doctor Slammer, he has instructed me to identify the wearer of a very uncommon coat - (*Prodding WINKLE*) *this* uncommon coat, sir. I see that you are the man in the case.

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WINKLE: *(Aside to the AUDIENCE)* Good lord. I certainly took too much wine after d-d-dinner and have no recollection of how I got to my room. I m-must have been very d-drunk - must have got up - gone somewhere - and insulted this . . Doctor S-S-Slammer.

OFFICER: SIR!

WINKLE: *(Starts)* Ah!

OFFICER: Will you refer me to your second to arrange the time and place of meeting?

WINKLE: Second? M-m-meeting? Oh dear . . I say . . Second?

OFFICER: Shall we say sunset?

WINKLE: S-S-Sunset.

OFFICER: You know Fort Pitt?

WINKLE: I saw it yesterday.

OFFICER: If you will take the trouble to turn into the field which borders the trench where the affair can be conducted without fear of interruption. I shall provide the pistols.

WINKLE: P-P-P-Pistols . . ??

OFFICER: Nothing more to arrange, I think.

WINKLE: But I . . Well, I . . Oh dear . . !

OFFICER: *(Turning on his heel and marching out R.)* Good morning.

WINKLE: Good m-morning.

SNODGRASS enters L. with his notebook, composing a poem.

SNODGRASS: Good morning.

WINKLE: Good m-m-m-morning.

SNODGRASS: Fine day . . Good to be alive.

WINKLE: Oh, it is. Very good. If only one may s-s-stay that way. Snodgrass, my dear fellow, can I rely upon your secrecy?

SNODGRASS: You can. Hear me swear . .

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- WINKLE:** No, no. Don't swear. Don't swear. It's quite unnecessary.
- SNODGRASS:** Then?
- WINKLE:** I shall want your assistance, my dear fellow, in . . . an affair of honour.
- SNODGRASS:** *(Very impressed)* Affair of honour?
- WINKLE:** With a . . . Dr. Slammer . . . of the 97th Regiment . . .
- SNODGRASS:** *(Clapping him on the back)* Brave fellow. You shall have it.
- WINKLE:** With p-p-pistols - in a lonely field - beyond Fort Pitt.
- SNODGRASS:** I will attend you. What a poem it will make . . .
- WINKLE:** The consequences may be dreadful . . .
- SNODGRASS:** But think of the poem . . . *(Jotting in his notebook)* Pistol - Bristol - whist-ol -
- WINKLE:** The Doctor may be a very good shot.
- SNODGRASS:** Undoubtedly. Most military men are. *(Jotting)* Shot - blot - lonely spot . . . But so are you, ain't you?
- WINKLE:** Well, I . . .
- SNODGRASS:** There you are then. *(Jotting)* Death - dying breath . . .
- WINKLE:** But do you realise that if I fall, or if the Doctor falls, my dear Snodgrass, you will be arrested - *tried* - as an accessory before the fact - and be *transported* to *Botany Bay* - for life!
- SNODGRASS:** In the cause of friendship, I would brave all dangers . . . *(Jotting)* Gore - pistol's roar - breathes no more . . .
- DICKENS:** And so, as the setting sun of evening paints the meadows in golden hues . . .

The Curtains open to reveal DR. SLAMMER, the OFFICER and a SURGEON.

WINKLE: Snodgrass, whatever you do, do *not* let me be baulked in this matter. Do *not* give information to the local authorities. Do *not* obtain the assistance of several strong peace officers to take me or the Doctor into custody and so prevent this duel. I say do *not*!

SNODGRASS: Not for the worlds, my dear fellow! *(Writing, inspired)* 'See where he lies bleeding . . . ' Lies bleeding - pleading - receding - weeding . . .

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WINKLE: There's the officer - in the blue cloak.

SNODGRASS: And the other party and a surgeon, I suppose.

WINKLE: My friend, sir, Mr. Sn-Sn-Snodgrass

SNODGRASS: The poet . .

OFFICER: We have nothing further to say I think, gentlemen.

WINKLE: N-n-nothing. Ever . .

OFFICER: Will you step forward?

SNODGRASS: *(Pushing WINKLE forward but with his back to SLAMMER)*
Certainly.

OFFICER: *(Presenting a case of pistols)* You will find these pistols excellent.
Do you object to using them?

SNODGRASS: *(Taking a pistol and giving it to WINKLE)* Certainly not.

OFFICER: We may place our men then, I think.

SNODGRASS: I think we may. *(He steers WINKLE backwards to the rear of DR. SLAMMER.)*

OFFICER: Gentlemen, you will take five paces to my COUNT and then TURN and FIRE!

SNODGRASS: Yes. *(Jotting excitedly)* Fire - dire - expire . .

OFFICER: Do you understand?

WINKLE: Y-y-yes.

OFFICER: Very well. One - two - three - four - five.

SNODGRASS: Dead . . through the head . .

OFFICER: TURN. Take AIM. Fire at will.

SLAMMER: *(Seeing WINKLE for the first time)* What's all this?

WINKLE's pistol goes off BANG. A bird squawks. WINKLE faints.

SLAMMER: That's not the man.

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OFFICER: Not the man?

SNODGRASS: Not the man?

WINKLE: (*Coming round*) Not . . the . . man . . ?

SLAMMER: Certainly not. That's not the person who insulted me last night.

SNODGRASS: But, as he's here . . and *seemed* to be the man - could we not proceed to . . ?

SLAMMER: He is not the man.

WINKLE: (*Recovering*) I am not the p-p-person? I didn't think I . .

SNODGRASS: Then isn't his imposture an affront and a sufficient reason for proceeding immediately - to the death?

SLAMMER: (*To WINKLE*) Why did you not communicate this fact to me immediately, sir?

WINKLE: Because, sir, you described an intoxicated and ungentlemanly person as wearing a coat which (*becoming heroic*) I have the honour, not only to wear but to have invented - the uniform, sir, of the Pickwick Club of London. The honour of that uniform I feel bound to defend and I therefore, accepted the challenge.

SLAMMER: My dear sir, I honour your gallantry. Permit me to say, sir, that I highly admire your conduct and shall feel proud of your acquaintance. (*Offering his hand*)

WINKLE: (*Shaking his hand fervently*) It will afford me the greatest pleasure to know you, sir.

SLAMMER: I think we may adjourn.

WINKLE: Certainly.

SNODGRASS: Unless Mr. Winkle feels himself aggrieved by the challenge, in which case I submit *he* has the right to satisfaction.

WINKLE: No no no no! I must express myself completely satisfied, sir.

The DOCTOR leads WINKLE off D.L.

SNODGRASS: But my poem! My poem! Ruined . . !

He follows as the Curtains close.

DICKENS: Such is the fame of the Pickwick Club of London that, wherever our itinerant Pickwickians wander, they receive a positive shower of invitations and offers of
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hospitality from the gentry of the district. Yet none is as welcoming - nor as hospitable - nor as joyful - as that received from the genial and irrepressible Mr. William Wardle of Manor Farm in the lovely hamlet of Dingley Dell where they arrive to a tumultuous welcome . . .

The Curtains open to reveal:

THE PARLOUR AT DINGLEY DELL

The WARDLE FAMILY are seated by the fire and the FAT BOY lies asleep on the hearthrug. From outside, a cacophony of barking dogs, honking geese, chickens and an occasional cow.

WARDLE: *(Off, shouting over the noise)* Get down, Speedwell. Leave Mr. Pickwick alone, Ethel . . . Heel, damn you - heel! *(Entering followed by the PICKWICKIANS)* Come along, sirs. Pray come in. *(Kicking the FAT BOY ineffectually)* Joe. Help the gentlemen.

MRS WARDLE: *(Rising in a panic)* What is it? Oh lor! Oh lor! Oh lor! The kitchen chimney ain't afire is it? *(Screaming)* Fire! Fire!

WARDLE: *(Sitting her down)* No no, Mother. It's our guests have arrived. Joe! Damn that boy. He's fast asleep again. *(Pinching his leg)* Joe!

JOE: Ow! *(Belligerent)* What? *(Immediately goes back to sleep)*

WARDLE: See to the gentlemen's bags and fetch us the punchbowl. Well, gentlemen, very glad to see you - and welcome to Dingley Dell.

MRS WARDLE: Are you sure the kitchen chimney ain't afire?

WARDLE: Quite sure, Mother.

MRS WARDLE: Could ha' swore I smelt summat burnin' . . .

WARDLE: *(Shaking hands)* Welcome! Welcome! Know you very well, gentlemen, though you mayn't all of you remember me. I spent some evenin's in your club last winter. My friend Tupman here introduced me. Well, sir, how are you, sir? You do look uncommon well to be sure. My gals these are, gentlemen - my daughter, Emily . . .

SNODGRASS: *(Instantly smitten)* Miss Emily . . . delighted . . . delighted . . . erm . . . dimples . . . pimples - no - simple - no . . .

WARDLE: My niece, Arabella . . .

WINKLE: *(Just as instantly smitten)* My dear M-M-Miss Arab-b-b-b . . . *(Hits himself)* Bella!

WARDLE: And my sister, Miss Rachael Wardle. She's a Miss, she is - and yet she ain't a Miss - eh, Mr. Tupman - eh?

RACHAEL: *(Coquettish)* Lor, brother!

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WARDLE: True, true. Nobody can deny it. Now we seem to be precious short o' chairs. So I suggest the ladies should sit on the gentlemen's knees, eh? Eh?

TUPMAN: *(Kneeling on one knee and offering the other to RACHAEL)* Your humble servant, ma'am.

RACHAEL: *(Shrieking but delighted)* Oh . . Mr. Tupman . . !

WARDLE: Joe, Joe! Damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again. Be good enough to pinch him, sir - on the leg, if you please. Nothing else wakes him.

PICKWICK pinches JOE's leg

WARDLE: Harder.

PICKWICK pinches JOE's leg harder

JOE: Ow!

WARDLE: Thankyou. Fetch wine, Joe.

JOE struggles to his feet and exits L. slow and surly, looking daggers at PICKWICK.

MRS WARDLE: *(Sinister)* That boy'll murder us all in our beds one day, I shouldn't wonder.

WARDLE: This here's my mother.

MRS WARDLE: Murder us in our beds. See it in his eyes. Murder . . !

WARDLE: *(Shouting)* Mr. Pickwick, Mother

MRS WARDLE: Not a bit of good. Can't hear you.

EMILY & ARABELLA: *(Both shouting)* Mr. Pickwick, Grandma!

MRS WARDLE: No. Young people these days got no breath. Well, it don't much matter. He don't care for an old ooman like me, I dare say.

PICKWICK: *(Bellowing)* I assure you, Ma'am, that nothing delights me more than to see a lady of your time of life heading so fine a family and looking so young and well.

MRS WARDLE: All very fine I dare say; but I can't hear him.

EMILY: *(To SNODGRASS)* Grandma's rather put out now, but she'll talk to you presently.

RACHAEL: How dear Emily is flirting with the strange gentleman.

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JOE returns from L. with wine and glasses.

WARDLE: Oh, I don't know. All very natural I daresay. Nothing unusual. Mr. Pickwick, some wine, sir?

SNODGRASS: Wine - fine - decline - be mine . .

EMILY: (*Admiring*) Lor, Mr. Snodgrass, how clever you are . .

RACHAEL: Emily, my dear - don't talk so loud, love.

EMILY: Lor, Aunt!

ARABELLA: Aunt and the little old gentleman want to have it all to themselves, I think.

RACHAEL: Young girls have *such* spirits

TUPMAN: Will you permit me? (*Offering his knee again*)

RACHAEL: Oh, sir! (*Sitting coyly*) Do you think my dear nieces pretty?

TUPMAN: I should - if their aunt wasn't here.

RACHAEL: (*Delighted*) Oh! You naughty man! But really - if their complexions were a *little* better, don't you think they would be nice looking girls - by candle light?

ARABELLA: I'm sure aunt's talking about us. I'm quite certain. She looks so malicious.

EMILY: Is she? Hem! Aunt, dear?

RACHAEL: Yes, my dear love?

EMILY: I'm so afraid you'll catch cold, aunt. (*Offering her handkerchief*) Have a silk handkerchief to tie round your dear old head. You really should take care of yourself. Consider your age.

WARDLE: Now this is just what I like. The happiest moments of my life have been passed at this old fireside. And I am so attached to it that I keep a blazing fire here every evening until it actually grows too hot to bear it. Why, my poor old mother here used to sit before this fireplace upon that little stool when she was but a girl, didn't you, Mother?

MRS WARDLE: Ah . . All gone now . .

WARDLE: You must excuse my talking so about this old place, Mr. Pickwick, for I love it dearly and it's like a living friend to me. And now it - and Mother here, and myself and all of us - bid you very welcome.

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The LADIES retire and the scene changes to **WOODLAND** during:

DICKENS: And so they are embraced into the friendship of this warm-hearted family to enjoy in the days that follow - the most pleasant of company, the most excellent of food - and more than a little of liquid refreshment.

WARDLE: (*Presenting WINKLE with a gun*) And if you've come for a country life, I swear I'll give you plenty of it.

WINKLE examines the gun in bewilderment.

DICKENS: So Mr. Winkle - the sporting member - finds himself clutching a weapon whose function is as mysterious to him as are the deeper philosophies of the ancients, while boys are sent to climb up trees . .

WARDLE: (*Calling upwards*) Hup, lads - hup you go!

PICKWICK: Bless my soul! You don't use the boys as targets?

WARDLE: (*Roaring with laughter*) No, sir, no. Bless you, no! They're up there to scare the rooks.

PICKWICK: Rooks?

WARDLE: For the rook pie. Delicious.

A cawing of rooks. WARDLE fires. There is a squawk and a rook falls to the ground.

WARDLE: Go take him up, Joe. Now then, Mr. Winkle, as you're the guest, I'll leave the rest for you, sir.

MR. WINKLE waves the gun about, bewildered.

DICKENS: But, after several mishaps and misfires and out and out misfortunes, the only creature Mr. Winkle manages to shoot . .

The gun goes off and knocks him over backwards.

TUPMAN: (*Off*) Ah!

DICKENS: Is Mr. Tupman . .

TUPMAN staggers on clutching his arm and collapses. MRS WARDLE, RACHAEL and the DAUGHTERS rush on.

WARDLE: Don't be frightened.

RACHAEL: What's the matter?

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- WARDLE:** Mr. Tupman has met with a little accident, that's all.
- RACHAEL:** *(Faints)* Ah!
- WARDLE:** Throw some cold water over her.
- RACHAEL:** *(Recovering hastily)* I am better now. Bella, Emily - a surgeon. Is he wounded?
- MRS WARDLE:** It's that Joe. I knew he'd murder us one day.
- RACHAEL:** *(Rushing to cradle TUPMAN in her arms)* Is he dead? Is he . . . ?
- TUPMAN:** *(Heroic)* Calm yourself. Dear . . . dear madam, calm yourself . . .
- RACHAEL:** It is his voice. He speaks!
- TUPMAN:** Do not agitate yourself, I entreat you, dearest madam. I am . . . ah! . . . very little hurt, *(Fading gracefully)* I assure you . . .
- RACHAEL:** Then you are not dead? *(Shaking him)* Oh, say you are not dead.
- WARDLE:** Don't be a fool, Rachael. What's the use of his *saying* he's not dead.
- TUPMAN:** No no, I am not. I require no assistance but yours. Let me lean upon your bosom. Oh, Miss Rachael . . . *(Sinking down)*
- RACHAEL:** He sleeps. Dear . . . Dear Mr. Tupman.
- TUPMAN:** Oh, say those words again!
- RACHAEL:** Surely you did not hear them.
- TUPMAN:** Yes, yes. I did. If you would have me recover, repeat them.
- RACHAEL:** *(Helping him up)* Hush! My brother.
- WARDLE:** Damn nuisance. Shall be one down for the cricket now.
- TUPMAN:** *(Weakly)* Cricket?
- WARDLE:** Muggleton against Dingley Dell. Depending on you to make up the eleven, Tupman. Don't suppose you could bowl left-handed?
- TUPMAN:** *(As RACHAEL and the other LADIES lead him off U.L.)* I regret, I . . .
- WARDLE:** *(Pinching the FAT BOY)* Damnation.
- FAT BOY:** Ow!

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WARDLE: Joe! Wake up. You're eleventh man.

The CRICKETERS enter and take their places onstage and in the auditorium. MR. LUFFEY, with the ball, looks particularly menacing. JINGLE enters D.L.

DICKENS: The wickets are pitched. The umpires behind them. The scorers are waiting to notch the runs. Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass, opening for the Dingley Dellers, walk, bat in hand to their wickets. Mr. Luffey, the highest - nay biggest - most gigantic - ornament of the Muggletonians and the village blacksmith, no less - is pitched to bowl. The lookouts are placed around the field, stooping as if making a back for some beginner at leapfrog. It is generally supposed that it is quite impossible to 'look out' properly in any other position.

UMPIRE: *(Off)* Play!

The BLACKSMITH bowls a ferocious ball. There is a cry of pain from SNODGRASS off R. and a thwack and a fielder runs backwards up the aisle, trying to make a catch. SNODGRASS and WINKLE cross the stage running with bats, passing each other as:

ALL: Run - run another - Now then - throw her up - up with her - there - another - no - yes - take another - no - yes - throw her up - throw her up!

The auditorium fielder throws the (imaginary) ball to a fielder onstage - too late - cries of despair and blame from other fielders.

JINGLE: Capital game - smart sport - fine exercise - very.

PICKWICK: Why! Mr. Jingle. *(Shaking his hand)* How splendid to renew your acquaintance, sir.

JINGLE: This way - this way - capital fun - lots of beer - hogsheads - rounds of beef - mustard - cart-loads. Glorious day - make yourself at home - glad to see you - very.

PICKWICK: Mr. Wardle - *(Introducing JINGLE)* a friend of mine.

WARDLE: Friend of yours! My dear sir, how are you? Friend of *my* friend - give me your hand, sir.

PICKWICK: Well and how came you here?

JINGLE: Stopping at Crown - Crown at Muggleton - met a party - flannel jackets - white trousers - anchovy sandwiches - devilled kidneys - splendid fellows - glorious.

UMPIRE: *(Off)* Play!

Another ferocious ball, another cry of pain - this time from WINKLE - again WINKLE and SNODGRASS - already beginning to flag - run past each other.

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JINGLE: Now, butter fingers - Muff - Humbug!

WINKLE falls.

JINGLE: He's down . .

SNODGRASS helps WINKLE to his feet.

JINGLE: He's up . .

WINKLE sets off in the wrong direction.

JINGLE: He's lost -

LUFFEY: *(Triumphant)* Owzat!

JINGLE: Capital game - well played - some strokes admirable - very.

WARDLE: You have played it, sir?

JINGLE: Played it? Think I have - thousands of times - not here - West Indies - hot work - very. Bowler - couldn't get me out - bowled all day - all night - dropped dead, sir. Thirsty work - watching cricket - porter and sandwiches in the marquee.

The PICKWICKIANS, WARDLE and JINGLE move off D.L and the scene changes to AN ARBOR AT MANOR FARM during:

DICKENS: And the party retires to the marquee while, in spite of the best efforts of Mr. Snodgrass . . (*SNODGRASS limps off*) and Mr. Winkle . . (*WINKLE is carried off*), the Muggletonians proceed to thrash the Dingley Dellers. But what of Mr. Tupman, recovering from his wounds at manor farm?

The Scene changes to THE ARBOR. A blackbird is singing. RACHAEL is seated wistfully in the arbor. TUPMAN enters furtively R. She pretends not to see him but turns her better profile. TUPMAN smoothes his hair, checks his breath and approaches on tiptoe.

TUPMAN: Miss Wardle . .

RACHAEL: *(Acting startled)* Ah! Why . . Mr. Tupman?

TUPMAN: *(Sitting beside her and taking her hand)* Miss Wardle!

RACHAEL: Oh . . Mr. Tupman . .

TUPMAN: Miss Wardle . . You are an angel.

RACHAEL: Mr. *Tupman!*

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TUPMAN: Nay, I know it but too well.

RACHAEL: All women are angels, they say . .

TUPMAN: Then what can *you* be? Or to what, without presumption, may I compare you? Where is the woman who resembles you? Where else could I hope to find so rare a combination of excellence and beauty? Where else could I seek to . .

RACHAEL: *(Withdrawing her hand)* Men are such deceivers . .

TUPMAN: They are! Oh, they are. But not *all* men. *(Rising and turning away)* There lives at least one being who would be content to devote his life - his whole existence - to your happiness - who lives but in your eyes - who breathes but in your smiles - who bears the heavy burden of life itself - only for you.

RACHAEL: Could such an individual be found?

TUPMAN: But he *is* found. *(Turning to her)* He is *here*, Miss Wardle, *(kneeling)* at your feet.

RACHAEL: *(Thrilled)* Mr. Tupman, rise!

TUPMAN: Never. Oh, Rachael! Rachael - say you love me

RACHAEL: Mr. Tupman - I - but I - you are not wholly indifferent to me.

He embraces and kisses her rapturously. The FAT BOY enters R.

RACHAEL: *(Ecstatic)* Mr. Tupman . . Mr. Tupman . . Oh . . Mr. *Tupman!*

RACHAEL sees the FAT BOY and screams.

TUPMAN: So sorry. *(Kisses her more gently)*

RACHAEL: Mr. Tupman! We are observed!

TUPMAN: What?

RACHAEL: We are discovered!

TUPMAN: *(Rising, furious- to the FAT BOY)* What do you want here, sir?

FAT BOY: Supper's ready.

TUPMAN: Have you just come here, sir?

FAT BOY: Just.

TUPMAN: Just?

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FAT BOY: Just.

TUPMAN: And you saw nothing?

FAT BOY: What nothing?

TUPMAN: Any nothing.

FAT BOY: Not seen no nothing.

TUPMAN: Good lad. Run along.

FAT BOY: *(Incredulous)* Run? *(He exits shuffling)*

TUPMAN: *(Returning to RACHAEL)* He knows nothing of what has happened.

RACHAEL: Nothing.

TUPMAN: He must have been fast asleep.

RACHAEL: I have not the least doubt of it.

They, laugh, embrace and exit L. The scene changes to:

THE PARLOUR

Sounds of drunken, raucous singing approaching from off L.

MRS WARDLE: I told you! The kitchen chimney *is* on fire? *(Screaming)* Fire! Fire!

EMILY: Is anything the matter?

The revellers enter, very drunk, largely held up by JINGLE.

PICKWICK: Nothin' the matter. We . . . we . . . we're all right.

SNODGRASS: I say, Wardle, we're alright, ain't we?

WARDLE: I should think so. My dears, here's my friend, Mr. Jingle - Mr. Pickwick's friend, Mr. Jingle - come 'pon a li'l visit.

EMILY: Is anything the matter with Mr. Snodgrass, sir?

SNODGRASS: Nothing the matter, ma'am. Cricket - wicket - thicket . . . Dinner - glorious party - capital songs - old port - claret - good - very good - wine, ma'am, wine.

WINKLE: I' wasn' the wine . . . I' was the s-s-salmon.

DICKENS: *(To the AUDIENCE)* Isn't it extraordinary that it's never the wine?

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WINKLE: Damn that salmon!

RACHAEL: Hadn't they better go to bed? Two of the boys will carry the gentlemen upstairs.

ARABELLA: You should go to bed, Mr. Winkle, sir . .

WINKLE: I *won't* go to bed.

SNODGRASS: No living boy shall carry me.

WARDLE: Hurrah!

PICKWICK: Hurrah!

WINKLE: Let's - have - nother - bottle . .

MRS WARDLE: What a shockin' scene. Not seen nowt shokin'er since Uncle Zachariah's time - an' 'e were a *dirty* man . . !

RACHAEL: Dis-gusting.

JINGLE: Dreadful - dreadful - horrid spectacle - very. Avert eyes, ladies - Jingle - name of Jingle - ring a bell? Eh? Eh?

The LADIES laugh, delighted - immediately enchanted by JINGLE.

JINGLE: Eh? I'll see to the gentlemen - never fear - strong right arm - not a sight for ladies - shocking - come along now, gents - walking wounded - up the stairs - no company for ladies! (*He shepherds the men off U.R.*)

RACHAEL: What a very nice man.

ARABELLA: Mmm. Good looking too.

RACHAEL: Oh, decidedly.

They follow the men off as the FAT BOY waylays old MRS WARDLE.

FAT BOY: Missus. Missus!

MRS WARDLE: (*Starled*) Ah!

FAT BOY: Missus.

MRS WARDLE: Well, Joe. What is it you want. (*Frightened*) Why do you look upon me so evil, Joe? I'm sure I have been a good mistress to you - have always treated you kindly. You never have too much to do and you always have plenty to eat.

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FAT BOY: *(Sinister)* I knows I does.

MRS WARDLE: Then what can you want to do now?

FAT BOY: I wants to make your flesh creep!

MRS WARDLE: *(Terrified)* Aah! Help . . !

FAT BOY: What do you think I seen in that there arbor this very night?

MRS WARDLE: Seen . . ?

FAT BOY: In that there arbor . .

MRS WARDLE: Bless us!

JINGLE enters U.R., unobserved.

FAT BOY: The strange gentleman - him as had his arm hurt - a-kissin' and a-huggin'.

MRS WARDLE: Who, Joe? None of the servants, I hope.

FAT BOY: Worsen than that.

MRS WARDLE: Worsen? Not one of my grand daughters?

FAT BOY: Worsen than *that*.

MRS WARDLE: Worse than *that*, Joe? Who was it, Joe? I insist upon knowing.

FAT BOY: It were . . Miss Rachael!

MRS WARDLE: What? Speak louder.

FAT BOY: *(Bellowing)* Miss Rachael, Missus!

MRS WARDLE: *(Shocked)* Ah! My daughter?

FAT BOY: Ar . .

MRS WARDLE: And she *suffered* him?

FAT BOY: I seed her a-kissin' of 'im back - agin and agin - 'ard!

MRS WARDLE: Without my permission. At her time of life. Might have waited till I was dead . . Just wait till my brother hears of this . . *(She exits L. followed by the FAT BOY)*

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JINGLE: *(Aside)* Well, damn me, Jingle - capital fun - and capital *capital* to be made of it too.

DICKENS: And a plan falls swiftly into place in that fertile and inventive - though utterly unscrupulous - mind.

The scene changes to:

THE ARBOR.

RACHAEL is again seated in the arbor. Moonlight. A nightingale sings. JINGLE turns to her - furtively.

JINGLE: Miss Wardle - forgive intrusion - short acquaintance - no time for ceremony - all discovered.

RACHAEL: Sir!

JINGLE: Hush! Round boy - dumpling face - piggy eyes - rascal.

RACHAEL: I presume you allude to Joseph, sir?

JINGLE: Yes, ma'am - damn that Joe - treacherous dog, Joe - Tupman and your gracious self - kissing - hugging - that sort of thing - arbor - told the old lady - old lady furious - wild - raving - eh, ma'am? Eh?

RACHAEL: Mr. *Jingle*, if you come here, sir, to insult me . . .

JINGLE: By no means - overheard the tale - came to warn you of your danger - tender my services - prevent the hubbub. But - you think it an insult - *(turning to go)* leave the room. . .

RACHAEL: Stay, sir! *(Rising to him)* What *shall* I do? My brother will be furious.

JINGLE: Of course he will - outrageous.

RACHAEL: Oh, Mr. Jingle, what *can* I say?

JINGLE: Say he dreamt it. Pooh pooh - nothing more easy - blackguard boy - lovely woman - fat boy horsewhipped - you believed - end of the matter - all comfortable.

RACHAEL: Thankyou, Mr. Jingle, for your concern. I see that you are a gentleman, sir.

JINGLE sighs elaborately and turns away.

RACHAEL: You seem unhappy, Mr. Jingle. May I show my gratitude for your kind interference by inquiring into the cause with a view, if possible, to its removal?

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JINGLE: Ha! Removal! Remove *my* unhappiness and your love bestowed upon a man who is insensible to the blessing - who even *now* contemplates a design upon the affections of the niece of the creature who he *pretends* to - but no. (*Heroic*) No! He is my friend. I will not expose his vices. (*Turning to go R.*) Miss Wardle . . Farewell.

RACHAEL: Stay, Mr. Jingle. You have made an allusion to Mr. Tupman - explain it.

JINGLE: Never! Never!

RACHAEL: Mr. Jingle - I entreat - I implore you - if there is any dreadful mystery connected with Mr. Tupman, reveal it.

JINGLE: Can I . . ? Can I see - (*strokes her cheek*) lovely creature - sacrificed at the shrine - heartless avarice! (*Struggling with his 'conscience'*) Tupman he . . Tupman he . . Tupman . . only wants your money.

RACHAEL: (*Furious*) The wretch!

JINGLE: (*Aside*) So she *has* got money! (*To her*) More than that - loves another.

RACHAEL: Another! Who?

JINGLE: Short girl - ringlets - dark eyes - good teeth - niece - Emily.

RACHAEL: It can't be. I won't believe it.

JINGLE: Watch 'em.

RACHAEL: I will.

JINGLE: Watch his looks.

RACHAEL: I will.

JINGLE: His whispers.

RACHAEL: I will.

JINGLE: He'll sit next her at table.

RACHAEL: Let him.

JINGLE: He'll flatter her.

RACHAEL: Let him.

JINGLE: He'll pay her every possible attention.

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- RACHAEL:** Let him.
- JINGLE:** And he'll cut you.
- RACHAEL:** *(Incensed)* Cut me? He'll cut me, will he?
- JINGLE:** You will convince yourself.
- RACHAEL:** I will.
- JINGLE:** You'll show your spirit.
- RACHAEL:** I will.
- JINGLE:** You'll not have him afterwards?
- RACHAEL:** Never!
- JINGLE:** You'll take somebody else?
- RACHAEL:** I'll . . . Why, I . . . *(Defiant)* Why shouldn't I? Yes.
- JINGLE:** *(Rushing to her)* Miss Wardle - Rachael - accept my - *(Keeling)* Ouch - on knees - deep devotion - worship from afar - humble slave - so forth - very . . .
- RACHAEL:** Mr. Jingle, I . . . *(Aside)* Oh . . . ! Be still, my beating heart . . .
- JINGLE:** *(Offering his arm)* Arm, ma'am - beautiful lady - eyes like pools - lips like . . . lips - stroll - take the air - through the garden - smell the . . . flowery things . . .
- RACHAEL:** *(Taking his arm)* Why, Mr. Jingle . . .
- JINGLE:** Nice night - stars - bird warbling - moon and suchlike - romantic - very.
- RACHAEL:** *(Romantic)* Oh . . . Mr. Jingle . . . *(They exit R.)*
- DICKENS:** It now only remains to ensure that Mr. Tupman will play his part in the deception . . . *(JINGLE returns from R. at once with TUPMAN)*
- TUPMAN:** *(Amazed)* But . . . does Rachael wish it?
- JINGLE:** Of course - don't like it - afraid of brother - no help for it.
- TUPMAN:** And I must *seem* to pay court to Emily?
- JINGLE:** All your attention to the niece - rather rude than otherwise to the aunt.

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- TUPMAN:** Rude?
- JINGLE:** Only way. She implores you - *begs* you - for her sake . .
- TUPMAN:** If that is her wish . .
- JINGLE:** Most definite - positive - she insists - flatter the niece.
- TUPMAN:** I will.
- JINGLE:** Sit next to her.
- TUPMAN:** I will.
- JINGLE:** Spinster Aunt - not a look.
- TUPMAN:** Not a wink.
- JINGLE:** Not a syllable.
- TUPMAN:** Not a whisper. But - does she not send me any message?
- JINGLE:** Kind regards . .
- TUPMAN:** *Regards . . ?*
- JINGLE:** (*Hastily*) Ah . . Love - *best* love - unalterable affection - passion and so forth - throbbing, d'know - very. Can I say anything for you?
- TUPMAN:** Carry her my best love. Say how hard I find it to dissemble . .
- JINGLE:** Certainly, certainly.
- TUPMAN:** Oh, my friend, how can I ever repay you for your disinterested kindness?
- JINGLE:** Don't talk of it. Please don't talk of it. Not a word . . Bye the bye - can't spare ten pounds? - very particular purpose - pay you in three days.
- TUPMAN:** Ten pounds? I dare say I can. (*Taking a note from his wallet*) Three days, you say?
- JINGLE:** (*Pocketing the note swiftly*) Only three days - all over then - no more difficulties - meantime - not a look.
- TUPMAN:** I'll take care of the niece . .
- JINGLE:** (*Aside to the AUDIENCE*) And *I'll* take care of the aunt . .

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The scene changes to:

THE PARLOUR.

The WARDLE family assembled round the fire. TUPMAN, to SNODGRASS's fury, is paying court to EMILY.

DICKENS: And so, whenever the company is assembled . .

RACHAEL: Will you not sit by me, Mr. Tupman?

TUPMAN: Beg pardon, Ma'am, but I am promised to the fair Emily and I cannot desert so enticing a creature. I see, Miss Emily, that Snodgrass and I must fight a duel over you.

RACHAEL: Mr. Tupman?

TUPMAN: *(Coldly)* Were you addressing me, ma'am?

RACHAEL: Indeed I was. *(She holds out a bowl of flowers)* See, I have dressed a bowl of primroses especially - as you declared 'em your favourite flowers.

TUPMAN: Why I find myself quite wearied of primroses since I observed the bunch of pretty violets which Miss *Emily* wears at her bosom . .

RACHAEL: *(Furious)* Mr. Tupman . . !

TUPMAN: Nay, Miss Emily, even they are quite dimmed by the brightness of your eyes.

WARDLE: *(Aside)* Damn that boy. He must have dreamt the whole thing - been asleep the whole time. It's all imagination, Mother!

RACHAEL: But Mr. Tupman . . !

TUPMAN: I beg you'll excuse me, ma'am . .

RACHAEL: *(Rising. Aside to the AUDIENCE)* Traitor! Dear Mr. Jingle was not deceiving me. Ugh! How I hate the wretch!

DICKENS: For two whole days, Mr. Tupman ignores and slights the spinster aunt and pays his addresses to Arabella to the fury of Mr. Winkle or to Emily - to the fury of Mr. Snodgrass - and, in both cases, to the fury of the spinster aunt.

RACHAEL: *(To the AUDIENCE)* The beast! The beast! *(Taking JINGLE's arm)* Oh, dear Mr. Jingle! *(She exits with JINGLE L.)*

DICKENS: Now the supper is ready laid in the dining room, the chairs are drawn around the table, bottles, jugs and glasses are arranged upon the sideboard and the company have but to enter to enjoy the most convivial period of the day when:

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WARDLE: Where's Rachael? *(Calling)* Joe! Emily, my dear, ring the bell.

EMILY does so.

PICKWICK: Ay, and Jingle?

WARDLE: Dear me. I wonder I haven't missed him before. Why, I don't think I've heard his voice for two hours at least.

The FAT BOY enters L.

WARDLE: Where's Miss Rachael?

FAT BOY: Couldn't say.

WARDLE: Where's Mr. Jingle.

FAT BOY: Dunno.

WARDLE: Never mind. Turn up presently, I dare say. Never wait supper for anybody.

PICKWICK: Excellent rule that - admirable.

WARDLE: Pray, let us . . .

STABLE BOY: *(Rushes in L. Breathless)* Mas'r! Mas'r! Oh, 'ere's a to do!

WARDLE: What the devil's the meaning of this?

MRS WARDLE: The kitchen chimney ain't afire, is it, Em'ly? *(Screaming)* Fire! Fire!

EMILY: Lor, Grandma, no!

WARDLE: What's the matter?

STABLE BOY: They ha' gone, mas'r - gone clean off, sir!

WARDLE: Who's gone?

STABLE BOY: Mus'r Jingle and Miss Rachael, in a po'chay, from the Blue Lion, Muggleton. I was there but I couldn't stop 'em; so I run off to tell 'ee.

TUPMAN: Gone?

PICKWICK: Gone?

STABLE BOY: Ar! Gone!

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TUPMAN: But . . . I paid his expenses. He's got ten pounds of mine! Stop him! He's swindled me! I won't bear it! I'll have justice, Pickwick! (*Raving*) I won't stand it!

PICKWICK: Lord preserve us. He's gone mad. What shall we do?

WARDLE: Do! Put the horse in the gig. We must follow 'em instantly. Where? Where's that villain, Joe?

The furniture is cleared and the Table becomes th Gig during:

FAT BOY: Here I am but I hain't a willin.

WARDLE: Let me get at him, Pickwick. He was bribed by that scoundrel Jingle to put me on a wrong scent by telling me a cock and bull story of my sister and your friend Tupman here. Let me get at him . . .

PICKWICK: (*Holding on to WARDLE*) Don't let him!

ARABELLA: There'll be murder done.

WINKLE: (*Helping PICKWICK*) You shall not harm the ch-ch-child!

WARDLE: I won't be held! Mr. Winkle, take your hands off! Mr. Pickwick, let me go!

STABLE BOY: The gig's ready, sir!

MRS WARDLE: Don't let him go alone. He'll kill somebody.

PICKWICK: I'll go with him.

WARDLE: You're a good fellow, Pickwick. Emily, give Mr. Pickwick a shawl to tie round his neck. Make haste. Look after your grandmother, girls, she has fainted away. Now then. Are you ready?

PICKWICK: I am, sir.

STABLE BOY: The horse is in the gig, sur!

WARDLE: How much are they ahead?

STABLE BOY: Not above three quarters of an hour.

PICKWICK: We're sure to catch 'em - I think.

WARDLE: *I'll catch 'em!* (*WARDLE leaps into the gig*) And when I do . . . ! Hup! Hup!

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He whips up the horse and they set off at a gallop.

PICKWICK: *(Nervously, holding on to his hat)* Fine night.

WARDLE: So much the worse. For they'll have all the advantage of the moonlight to get the start of us and we shall lose it. It will have gone down shortly.

PICKWICK: *(Terrified)* It will be rather unpleasant going at this rate in the dark, won't it?

WARDLE: I dare say it will. *(Whipping up)* Yo-yo-yo

PICKWICK: *(Weakly)* Yo-yo-yo!

WARDLE: Woah, there. *(WARDLE hauls back on the reins and the gig skids to a stop)* You there! In the lodge!

TOLL KEEPER: *(A head emerging through the window L.)* Sur?

WARDLE: How long is it since a post chaise went through here?

TOLL KEEPER: *(Racking his brains)* How long?

WARDLE: Ah.

TOLL KEEPER: *(Very slowly, considering)* Why I don't rightly know. It worn't a *long* time ago, nor it worn't a *short* time ago - summat just between the two perhaps.

WARDLE: Has *any* chaise been by?

TOLL KEEPER: Oh ah! Yer, there been a shay go by.

PICKWICK: How long ago, my friend? An hour?

TOLL KEEPER: Ah, I dare say it might be.

WARDLE: Or two hours?

TOLL KEEPER: Well . . . I shouldn't wonder if it was . . .

WARDLE: The man's a dunderhead! Drive on . . . Hup! Hup! Hup!

They set off again at a gallop.

TOLL KEEPER: *(To the AUDIENCE)* Dunderhead I may be an' all but you'm a idiot. If thee'd give I a guinea, I might a' told thee what *they* give I a guinea *not* to tell thee. *(He withdraws)*

The scene grows dark.

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WARDLE: Damnation! The moon's gone in!

The light fades to BLACKOUT.

PICKWICK: I cannot see anything . .

WARDLE: No more can I. *(Cracking whip)* Hup! Hup!

PICKWICK: Shouldn't we rather . . slow down or . . Look out . . ! . . !

The Horse neighs, the wheels skid on gravel, there is a huge crash followed by galloping hooves receding.

A dim light returns.

WARDLE: Pickwick?

PICKWICK: *(From D.L.)* Over here. I seem to be in some species of tree. Ooops! Holly, I imagine from the . .

WARDLE: The gig's lost a wheel, the traces broke and the horse galloped off.

PICKWICK: What shall we do now?

WARDLE: What we still can. We must walk. I know where we are on the outskirts of the City. I shall collect my lawyer, Mr. Perker on the way and then we must set about finding them. They'll be at an inn somewhere on this road. *(They exit D.L.)*

INN - YARD AND ROOM

SAM WELLER enters D.R.. He is cleaning boots, of which he has a basket.

MAID: *(At door R.)* Sam!

SAM: Hollo!

MAID: Number twenty-two wants his boots.

SAM: Ask number twenty-two whether he wants 'em now or when I've cleaned 'em.

MAID: Come, don't be a fool, Sam, the gentleman wants his boots directly.

SAM: Vell, you're a nice young ooman for a musical party, you are. Jes' look at these 'ere boots. Eleven pairs o' boots and one shoe vhat belongs to number six viv the vooden leg. Who's number twenty-two that's to put all the others out? No reg'lar rotation, as the 'angman said ven he tied 'em all up.

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- MAID:** And them shoes are wanted for the lady in the private sitting room, number five.
- SAM:** Number five. Ladies shoes and a private sitting room! I suppose *she* didn't come in the vaggin.
- MAID:** Come in early this mornin' - with a gen'l'man in a post shay.
- SAM:** I already done his vellingtons. (*Cleaning the shoes*) Private room and a lady too. If he's anythin' of a gen'l'man, he's vurth a shillin' a day, let alone the errands. She shall have her shoes forthvith. (*Knocks at the door L.*)
- JINGLE:** (*Off*) Who is it?
- SAM:** Lady's shoes, sir.
- JINGLE:** (*Opening the door*) Thankyou. (*Calling*) Your shoes.
- RACHAEL:** (*Off*) Dear man . . . Bless you! Oh, bless you . . .
- JINGLE:** (*Aside to the AUDIENCE*) Rum old, girl. (*SAM is still waiting*) Ah. (*Patting his pockets*) No change - settle later - change a guinea . . . (*Closing the door*)
- SAM:** (*Aside*) If you've so much as a guinea of your own, my name ain't Sam Veller!
- (*PICKWICK, WARDLE - carrying his horsewhip - and PERKER enter D.R.*)
- PERKER:** Calm yourself, Wardle. No use getting in a state . . .
- WARDLE:** All very well for you, Perker. She's not your sister . . .
- PERKER:** They *must* be at one or other of these places. (*To SAM*) My friend.
- SAM:** Vell, sir?
- PERKER:** Have you got many people stopping here? Pretty busy, eh?
- SAM:** Oh, werry vell, sir. Ve shan't be bankrupts. Ve eats our biled mutton without capers and don't care for horseradish when ve can get beef.
- PERKER:** Ah, you're a wag, ain't you?
- SAM:** My eldest brother vas troubled vith that complaint - it may be catching - for I shared a bed viv 'im.
- PICKWICK:** We want to know who you've got in the house at present.

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SAM: There's a pair of hessians in thirteen, two pair of halves in the snugger and a vooden leg in number six. Oh, and there's a pair o' Vellingtons a good deal worn and a pair o' lady's shoes in number five.

WARDLE: *(Swiftly)* What sort of shoes?

SAM: Country make.

WARDLE: Any maker's name?

SAM: Brown.

WARDLE: *(Excited)* Of?

SAM: Muggleton.

WARDLE: *It is* them. By heavens, we've found them.

SAM: Hush, sir. *(Confidentially)* The Vellingtons've been to Doctors' commons.

WARDLE: Oh no!

SAM: Oh yes. For a license.

WARDLE: We're in time. Show us the room; not a moment to be lost. See this guinea? Show us into the room at once without announcing us and it's yours.

SAM: This way, guv'nor . . .

They are shown in through the door L as the Curtains open to discover JINGLE and RACHAEL in an embrace. RACHAEL shrieks and faints into an armchair. JINGLE smiles equably.

JINGLE: Well, well - pretty good time - fleet of foot - for *your* age - very.

WARDLE: You - *(Raising his whip)* you are a nice rascal, aren't you?

PERKER: *(Restraining him)* My dear sir, my dear sir, pray consider - pray - assault - defamation of character - action for damages. Calm yourself, my dear sir, pray . . .

WARDLE: How dare you drag my sister from my house?

PERKER: Ay - ay - very good. You may ask that. How dare you, sir?

JINGLE: Who the devil are you?

WARDLE: Who is he? You scoundrel! *He's* my lawyer. Mr. Perker of Gray's Inn. I'll have you prosecuted - indicted - I'll ruin you. And you - *you*, Rachael, at a time of
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life when you ought to know better! What do you mean by running away with a vagabond - an *actor*! Disgracing your family and making yourself a laughing stock. Get on your bonnet at once.

JINGLE: (*Masterful - to RACHAEL*) Do nothing of the kind. (*Turning on WARDLE*) Leave the room, sir - no business here - lady free to act as she pleases - more than one and twenty.

WARDLE: More than one and twenty? More than one and forty!

RACHAEL: (*Outraged*) I ain't!

WARDLE: You are. You're fifty if you're an hour.

RACHAEL shrieks and faints again.

PICKWICK: A glass of water. Bring a glass of water.

WARDLE: Bring a bucket and throw it over her. Do her good and she richly deserves it.

RACHAEL: (*Recovering hastily*) Ugh, you brute . .

PICKWICK: (*Trying to comfort her*) Poor dear. Come now . . There now, don't give way so. Come along. I'll carry her downstairs.

RACHAEL becomes noisily hysterical.

JINGLE: Boots. Get me an officer.

PERKER: (*To JINGLE*) Stay, stay, sir. Consider.

JINGLE: I'll *not* consider. She's her own mistress - who *dares* to take her away from me? - unless she wishes it.

RACHAEL: I *won't* be taken away . . I *don't* wish it . . (*She lapses into sobs*)

PERKER: (*Drawing WARDLE and PICKWICK aside*) My dear sir, we're in a very awkward situation. It's a distressing case - very. I never knew one more so. But really, my dear sir - really - we have no power to control the lady's actions. I warned you before we came that there was nothing to look to but a compromise.

PICKWICK: What kind of compromise do you recommend?

PERKER: We must be content to suffer some . . pecuniary loss.

WARDLE: I'll suffer any loss rather than submit to this disgrace and let her, fool that she is, be made miserable for life.

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PERKER: I rather think it can be done. (*Leaving them and smoothly taking JINGLE aside*) Mr. Jingle . . . Now sir. We know very well, my dear sir, that you have run off with this lady for the sake of her money. Don't frown, sir. We are all men of the world, sir.

(*JINGLE winks and holds his hand out as if for money.*)

PERKER: Very good. Now the fact is that, beyond a few hundreds, the lady has little or nothing until the death of her mother - a fine old lady, my dear sir.

JINGLE: But very *old!*

PERKER: Why yes, you are right. She is *rather* old. Comes of an old family though - old in every sense of the word. The founder of that family came into Kent with Julius Caesar - only one member of it since that hasn't lived to eighty-five - and *he* was beheaded by one of the Henrys. The old lady is but seventy-three now, my dear sir . . .

JINGLE: Well?

PERKER: I put it to you - don't you think that - fifty pounds and liberty would be better than Miss Wardle and . . . expectations?

JINGLE: Not enough. Not half enough.

PERKER: Nay, nay, my dear sir - good round sum - man like you - man of the world - could treble it in no time - great deal to be done with fifty pounds, sir.

JINGLE: More to be done with a *hundred* and fifty.

PERKER: Well . . . say seventy.

JINGLE: (*Turning away*) Won't do.

PERKER: Don't go away, sir. Eighty. (*Producing a cheque book*) Come, I'll write a cheque for you at once.

JINGLE: Won't do.

PERKER: Well, my dear sir - just tell me what *will* do.

JINGLE: Expensive affair - out of pocket - (*Counting up on his fingers*) post chaise - nine pounds - license three - that's twelve - compensation, a hundred - a hundred and twelve - breach of honour . . . Oh - (*an afterthought*) and loss of lady . . .

PERKER: Say a hundred - come.

JINGLE: Say a hundred and twenty.

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PERKER: Come come, I'll write you a cheque and we can get the lady away meanwhile. A hundred.

JINGLE: And twenty.

PERKER: My dear sir . .

WARDLE: Give it him. And let him go. Now leave this house instantly.

PERKER: My dear sir . .

WARDLE: Be quiet, Perker. *(To JINGLE)* Leave the room, sir.

JINGLE: *(Pocketing the cheque. Cheerfully)* Off directly.

RACHAEL: *(Rising tearfully)* But . . Mr. Jingle . . My dearest . .

JINGLE: By bye, old thing. Bye bye, Pickwick.

PICKWICK: *(Furious)* Bye bye . . ?

PERKER: *(Restraining him)* My dear sir . .

JINGLE: *(Offering the licence to PICKWICK)* Here. Get the name altered - take home the lady - do for Tuppy.

PICKWICK: *(Making to rush at JINGLE)* You . . You . .

JINGLE exits with a wave.

SAM: *(Holding him back)* Now then, sir. It's over, and can't be helped, and that's one consolation, as they says in Turkey, ven they cuts the wrong man's head off.

PICKWICK: But I should like to . .

SAM: Business first, pleasure arterwards, as King Richard the Third said ven he stabbed t'other king in the Tower, afore he smothered the babbies.

PICKWICK: You are right, of course. The lady . . I must see to the lady.

SAM: Leave 'er to me, sir. *(Assisting RACHAEL)* Come along then, Missus. Werry sorry to 'casion any personal inconwenience, ma'am, as the house-breaker said to the old lady when he put her on the fire. . .

PICKWICK: *(To SAM)* You have been a great help to us, my man. I should like to know your name.

SAM: Veller, sir. Samivel Veller.

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PICKWICK: My recent . . erm . . adventures lead me to believe that I should benefit from the assistance of a manservant - one who perhaps knows more of the ways of the world than I. Might you be interested in such a post? Would it be enough to get if I were to better your wages in this establishment?

SAM: Oh, quite enough to get, sir, as the soldier said ven they ordered him three hundred and fifty lashes.

The Curtains close as SAM escorts RACHAEL off D.R.

DICKENS: Mr. Pickwick decides to stay on in London and to await the return of his friends and he is much relieved to find himself once more in the comfort and safety of his chambers in Goswell Street while his landlady, Mrs Bardell, fusses round him.

The Curtains open to reveal:

PICKWICK'S CHAMBERS

MRS BARDELL is dusting. PICKWICK is seated in the Armchair.

DICKENS: The more he considers the advantages of employing a manservant, the better he likes the idea - particularly as the manservant he has in mind - a certain Samuel Weller - would seem to be better versed in the ways of an unpredictable world than he himself. He feels at peace. He feels secure. After all, what adventure can possibly assail him here?

PICKWICK: Mrs Bardell?

MRS BARDELL: Sir?

PICKWICK: Do you think it a much greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?

MRS BARDELL: *(Startled)* La, Mr. Pickwick. La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!

PICKWICK: Well, but *do* you?

MRS BARDELL: *(Becoming coy)* That depends. That depends a good deal upon the *person*, you know, Mr. Pickwick; and whether it's a *saving* and *careful* person, sir.

PICKWICK: That's very true. *Very* true. *(Looking at her)* But the person I have in my eye . . I think possesses these qualities. And has, moreover, a considerable knowledge of the world and a great deal of sharpness, Mrs Bardell, that may be of material use to me.

MRS BARDELL: *(Breathless)* La, Mr. Pickwick . .

PICKWICK: And, to tell you the truth, Mrs Bardell, I have made up my mind.

MRS BARDELL: *(Flustered)* Dear me, sir . . I never . . Oh . . Dearie me . . !

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PICKWICK: You'll think it very strange now that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it, till I sent your little boy out this morning, eh?

MRS BARDELL: Oh . . . I *see* . . . You sent him . . . out of the way . . . so you could . . .

PICKWICK: Well? What d'you think?

MRS BARDELL: (*Emotionally*) Oh, Mr. Pickwick! You're very kind, sir.

PICKWICK: It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?

MRS BARDELL: Oh, I never thought *anything* of the trouble, sir. And, of course, I should take more trouble to please you than *ever*. But it is *so* kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness.

PICKWICK: Ah to be sure. I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have somebody to sit with you. To be sure, so you will.

MRS BARDELL: (*Coy*) I am sure I ought to be a very happy woman . . .

PICKWICK: (*Rising*) And your little boy . . .

MRS BARDELL: Bless his heart . . .

PICKWICK: He too will have a companion - a lively one - who'll teach him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year.

MRS BARDELL: (*Rushing at him and embracing him*) Oh, you dear . . .

PICKWICK: (*Astonished*) I beg your . . . ?

MRS BARDELL: (*Kissing him copiously*) Oh you kind, good, playful dear . . .

PICKWICK: Bless my soul. Mrs Bardell, my good woman. Dear me, what a situation. Pray consider. Mrs Bardell, don't. If anybody should come?

MRS BARDELL: (*Hugging and kissing him*) Oh let them come. I'll never leave you. Dear, kind, good soul . . .

Footsteps and voices off.

PICKWICK: Mercy upon me. I hear somebody coming up the stairs.

MRS BARDELL: (*Fainting with joy into his arms*) Oh, Mr. Pickwick . . . Oh, my dear Mr. . . .

PICKWICK: Don't! Don't, there's a good creature, don't!

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Enter TUPMAN, WINKLE and SNODGRASS U.L. with MRS CLUPPINS peering over their shoulders.

PICKWICK: (*Flustered*) I cannot conceive what has been the matter with the woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a manservant, when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you now find her. Very extraordinary thing.

TUPMAN: Very

SNODGRASS: Very.

WINKLE: V-V-Very.

SNODGRASS: Hrrm . . (*with notebook*) Flagrente - erm - plenty . . erm . .

SAM WELLER enters behind them.

PICKWICK: Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation.

TUPMAN: Very.

SNODGRASS: Very

WINKLE: V-V-V-Very.

MRS CLUPPINS: (*Helping MRS BARDELL to a chair*) The poor soul's delirquent wiv delight, sir. (*Poking him saucily*) You saucy old gen'l'man you . .

PICKWICK: But I never said . . . I never meant . . . That is . . .

MRS CLUPPINS: (*Nudging him*) Oh, us women knows as you gen'l'men'll say *anythin'* at all when the fit is on you, sir . . . If it's a case of gettin' us to . . . (*elbowing him*) know what I mean? A wink's as good as a nod to a blind 'orse - as the sayin' is . . .

PICKWICK: But, *truly* . . . I . . . I . . .

SAM: (*Stepping forward*) Good day to you, sir. Would I be right in supposin' as how I have arrived in the nick o' time - as the barber said ven he cut the man's ear awf - to be of assistance? (*To MRS CLUPPINS*) Come along now, Missus, and help your friend to her room . . .

MRS CLUPPINS escorts MRS BARDELL out L. during:

PICKWICK: (*To the PICKWICKIANS*) This is the man I spoke to you about. I sent that lady's child to fetch him from the Borough this morning.

SAM: Werry glad to see you, indeed, gen'l'men, and hope our acquaintance may be a long 'un, as the gen'l'm'n said to the fi' pun' note. It's alright, sir. The lady's bein' looked after. Now - we look compact and comfortable, as the father said ven he cut his little No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electrical, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

boy's head off, to cure him o' squintin'. Had you come to wisit my master upon some reg'lar business?

SNODGRASS: Ah! Yes! Indeed! Pickwick, we have news . .

TUPMAN: Of that rascal who has *ruined* my life - that . . *Jingle* . . !

WINKLE: From a s-s-sporting friend of mine in S-S-Suffolk . .

SNODGRASS: We hear that this upstart, Jingle, is even now at Ipswich posing as a *Captain*, no less . .

WINKLE: As a certain Captain F-F-Fitz-M-M-M-M-Marshall.

PICKWICK: Then we must hasten there at once before he betrays other poor folks. I shall set out today, Sam. Pack my portmanteau. The rest of you follow on as soon as you may. If we hurry, we may yet catch the mail coach - for Ipswich!

They are leaving as the Curtains close.

DICKENS: *(Setting a small table and two upright chairs C.)* In the main street of Ipswich stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of "The Great White Horse", rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing main and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse which is elevated above the principal door. The Great White Horse is known throughout the neighbourhood for its labyrinth of gloomy, uncarpeted passages, its clusters of mouldy ill-lighted and dusty rooms, its large numbers of small dens for eating bad food and sleeping badly in and its poorly furnished apartments and parlours with dirty grates containing small fires making wretched attempts to be cheerful but fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place. I know. I have *stayed* there.

PICKWICK, SAM and MR. MAGNUS are shown in by a HOUSEMAID at the door L.

DICKENS: Into just such a parlour as those now referred to, Mr. Pickwick is ushered in company with a gentleman whose acquaintance he has made upon the journey.

PICKWICK: *(Sitting at the table)* I am happy at the prospect of your company, sir.

MAGNUS: Ah, it's a good thing for both of us, isn't it? *(Sitting)* Company is, you see - well, a very different thing from solitude - ain't it?

SAM: *(To the AUDIENCE)* That's what I call a self-evident proposition, as the dog's-meat man said when the housemaid told him he warn't a gentleman. *(Exit. L.)*

MAGNUS: Ah. Friend of yours, sir?

PICKWICK: The fact is he's my servant but I allow him to take a good many liberties. For, between ourselves, I flatter myself he's an original and I'm rather proud of him.

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MAGNUS: Ah. I am not very *fond* of anything original. I don't like it. Don't see the necessity of it. What's your name, sir?

PICKWICK: Here is my card, sir

MAGNUS: Ah. Pickwick - that's *quite* a good name. My card, sir. *Magnus* you will perceive, sir - Magnus is *my* name. It's rather a *good* name - rather a *majestic* name, I think, sir.

PICKWICK: A very good name.

MAGNUS: What do you think, Mr. Pickwick - I have come down here for?

PICKWICK: Upon my word, it is entirely impossible to guess - upon business, perhaps?

MAGNUS: Why then . . . he he he . . . what would you think if I had come down here to make . . . ho ho ho . . . a proposal?

PICKWICK: Think? That you are very likely to succeed.

MAGNUS: Ah. (*Earnestly*) But do you *really* think so, Mr. Pickwick? *Do* you though?

PICKWICK: Certainly.

MAGNUS: No but you're joking though.

PICKWICK: I am not indeed.

MAGNUS: Why then, to let you into a little secret, *I* think so too. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Pickwick, although I'm *dreadful* jealous by nature - horrid - that the lady is in this house. Wouldn't do to see her now though - having just come off a journey. Wait till tomorrow sir. Double the chance then. She's a fine creature, sir.

PICKWICK: Is she?

MAGNUS: Very. I heard that she would be staying here tonight and all tomorrow forenoon and am come down especially to *seize* the opportunity. I think an inn is a good place to propose to a single woman in. She is more likely to feel the *loneliness* of her situation in travelling perhaps than she would at home. What do you think, sir?

PICKWICK: I think it is very probable. (*Winding his watch and placing it on the table*)

MAGNUS: What's the time, Mr. Pickwick?

PICKWICK: Past twelve.

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MAGNUS: Dear me, it's time to go to bed. *(Rising)* It will *never* do sitting here. I shall be pale tomorrow. I must *not* be pale tomorrow . .

He exits L. as the HOUSEMAID with a candle guides PICKWICK through an imaginary labyrinth.

DICKENS: Mr. Pickwick is conducted through a multitude of the aforementioned tortuous windings of passages and stairways to his chamber.

The Curtains open to reveal:

A BEDROOM *(There are two fourposter beds with curtains L. and R., a chair D.L., a dressing table and a small fire U.C.)*

HOUSEMAID: This is your room, sir.

PICKWICK: Nobody sleeps in the other bed, of course?

HOUSEMAID: Oh, no sir.

PICKWICK: Very good. Tell my servant to bring up some hot water at half-past-eight in the morning and that I shall not want him anymore tonight.

HOUSEMAID: Yes, sir. *(Curtseying and going U.L.)* Goodnight, sir.

PICKWICK: Goodnight. *(Undressing down to his shirt and putting on a nightcap which he takes from his pocket)* So - Captain are you now, Jingle? And what poor innocents do you seek to abuse on this occasion? Captain Fitz-Marshall - how could anybody of sense be deceived by such a fabrication? No. Be fair, Pickwick. He has fooled you - and better men than you. Now, the time must be . . Ah. My watch. Dear me. I left it on the parlour table.

DICKENS: And so he retraces his steps . .

PICKWICK mimes retracing the labyrinth during:

DICKENS: . . for the watch is a valuable one - and finds the parlour and his beloved timepiece. But now he must find his way back to his room. *(PICKWICK begins his return journey.)* But, each time he feels confident that he has found it . . *(PICKWICK tries an imaginary door)* "Who the devil's that?" *(PICKWICK tries another door)* "What do you want here?" Until, eventually . .

PICKWICK: *(Re-entering the BEDROOM)* Right at last! *(Chuckling to himself)* It is the best idea, my losing myself in this place, and wandering about all those staircases, that I ever heard of. *(Getting into the Bed R. and drawing the curtains)* Droll, droll, very droll.

The sound of Footsteps. A light approaching.

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PICKWICK: *(Head through the downstage curtains)* A robber? Some evil minded person who saw me come upstairs with a handsome watch?

A Lady, MISS WITHERFIELD, enters in her nightdress and wearing yellow curling papers in her hair, bearing a candle.

PICKWICK: *(Aside)* Bless my soul! What a dreadful thing!

MISS WITHERFIELD: Hem! *(checking her appearance and admiring herself in an imaginary mirror D.C. - humming to herself)*

PICKWICK: *(Aside - to the AUDIENCE)* I never met anything so awful as this. Never. This is fearful. I cannot allow things to go on in this way. By the self-possession of the lady, it is clear that I must have come to the wrong room. If I call out, she'll alarm the whole house. But if I stay in the bed and she should happen to . . . the consequences would be even more frightful. *(Aloud)* Ha Hum!

MISS WITHERFIELD: *(Freezing)* Gracious heavens! What's that?

PICKWICK: It's . . . It's only a gentleman, ma'am.

MISS WITHERFIELD: *(Horrified)* A gentleman?

PICKWICK: *(Aside)* It's all over! I shall be . . .

MISS WITHERFIELD: A strange man! *(About to scream)* Hel . . .!

PICKWICK: *(Leaping out of the bed)* Ma'am! Ma'am!

MISS WITHERFIELD: *(Cowering D.L.)* Wretch! What do you want here?

PICKWICK: Nothing, ma'am. Nothing whatever, ma'am.

MISS WITHERFIELD: *Nothing?*

END OF SAMPLE SCRIPT

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