

Dick Whittington

By

Mike Ralphson-Cook & Stockcross Panto Players

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Version 1.10

Cast of Characters

<u>Dick Whittington:</u>	Our hero
<u>Cat:</u>	The brains behind our hero
<u>Mrs Whittington:</u>	Dick's mother
<u>Flossie McCavity:</u>	A tooth-fairy godmother
<u>King Rat:</u>	Our hero's nemesis
<u>Alice Fitzwarren:</u>	The love of our hero's life
<u>Rats (assorted):</u>	Followers of the King Rat
<u>Belles of Bow:</u>	Three strange old women
<u>Lord Sweetie:</u>	The Lord of the manor of Stockcross
<u>Mrs Crumble:</u>	The Fitzwarren's Cook
<u>The Sultan of Morocco:</u>	Does exactly what it says on the tin
<u>Village Crier:</u>	A small part, but perfectly formed
<u>City Guard:</u>	An officious official
<u>Fruit Sellers:</u>	Two merchants of pure voice
<u>Alderman Fitzwarren:</u>	A voice off-stage
<u>Villagers / Apprentices:</u>	Fine folk of Stockcross

ACT I

Scene 1 - The village fair

The pleasant country village of Stockcross, in the summer of 1375.

The villagers are gathered for the annual hiring fair, where labourers are chosen to tend the fields for the harvest, servants are chosen for the big houses and young boys and girls hope to win an apprenticeship to a craftsman which will shape the rest of their lives.

Opening song and villager's dance. Something in the along the lines of Ralph McTell's "Hiring Fair" in spirit but probably something more fun than that.

VILLAGE CRIER

Hear yea! Hear yea!

FIRST VILLAGER

All right, no need to shout!

SECOND VILLAGER

Shh, it's important, it's the villager crier.

FIRST VILLAGER

What, like a town crier?

SECOND VILLAGER

Yes, but quieter. They start off crying to themselves, then they progress to crying to other people, eventually everyone gets fed up and gives them a job and they end up as a village crier, town crier or city crier. I heard of one guy in Wales had his own island.

FIRST VILLAGER

Really, who was that?

SECOND VILLAGER

Barry Cryer.

VILLAGE CRIER

Hear yea! Hear Yea!

FIRST VILLAGER

I think he needs the prompt already.

SECOND VILLAGER

He's probably going to say it's time for the apprentices to be chosen.

FIRST VILLAGER

And that afterwards the rest of the day will be a huge feast to celebrate the village's great fortune, before the real hard work of the year starts.

SECOND VILLAGER

Yes, I expect that'll be it.

VILLAGE CRIER

Hear... I don't think I'll bother now.

Enter stage right, the Lord of the Manor

LORD SWEETIE

Ahem!

VILLAGE CRIER

Pray silence for your Master, Lord Sweetie of Stockcross.

To the strains of Prokofiev's Dance of the Knights, Lord Sweetie enters.

LORD SWEETIE

My Lords (ah, that's just me then), Ladies (that'll be the wife), gentlemen ... put those cigars out! ... boys and girls...

(Looks around at the audience)
urchins, beggars, waifs and strays, it gives me great pleasure to announce the results of the 60th Annual Stockcross Young Apprentice-on-the-Glebe competition.

Reads from the scroll handed to him by the Village Crier

LORD SWEETIE

Dick Carter?

FIRST VILLAGER

Yes sir!

LORD SWEETIE

You have been apprenticed to Jensen the Cartwright. Hope the wheels don't come off that one. You're hired!

As each young lad is apprenticed, he catches the eye of one of the young village girls. They walk or dance to the sides of the stage.

Dick Cooper?

SECOND VILLAGER

Here sir!

LORD SWEETIE

You have been apprenticed to Bob Brewer at the pub, I'm sure it'll be a barrel of laughs. You're hired! Dick Smith?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Ooh, what a lot of... apprentices there are this year.

THIRD VILLAGER

Here!

LORD SWEETIE

You have been apprenticed to Shoe'em or Glue'em the Farriers. It's a hard, hot, sweaty, dirty kind of job, but after seven years...

THIRD VILLAGER

Yes?

LORD SWEETIE

You start getting paid! You're hired! And finally, our exchange student from Hamlyn in Germany, Dick Piper!

DICK PIPER

Ja?

LORD SWEETIE

Obviously you know you'll be needed at the Ratcatchers.

DICK PIPER

Ziss is ein other pub? How many are you having please?

LORD SWEETIE

No, not the pub, carrying on the excellent work with Roger the Verminator, which has seen all the rats driven out of Stockcross this year, making ours one of the happiest, most prosperous and above all, least itchy villages in the whole of Berkshire. Right, everyone else: knitting, ploughing, trying to invent the printing press, you know the drill.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Excuse me?

LORD SWEETIE

Yes?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Is that all the announcements?

LORD SWEETIE

Yes, ... oh, hang on, there's one more I've forgotten.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Oh, that's a relief. That'll be my Dick, I wonder where he'll be apprenticed? Then he can learn a trade, find a lovely girl from the village and settle down.

LORD SWEETIE
Where's the village cat?

CAT
Here, my lord.

LORD SWEETIE
Right, I've called you here to discuss your performance.

CAT
Thank you Lord!

LORD SWEETIE
Don't thank me yet. Your last task was to get rid of all the rats in Stockcross.

The Cat looks around the stage exaggeratedly, as if doing one last check for rats
How do you think you did?

CAT
Purr-fectly!

LORD SWEETIE
Your team leader on that task was Dick Piper wasn't it?

CAT
For all the good he was!

LORD SWEETIE
Management's not about doing all the work for your team you know. Why have a dog and bark yourself?

CAT
A dog? Where? Where?

LORD SWEETIE
It's just a saying. And other people have been saying you tried to take all the credit.

CAT
But I did all the work!

LORD SWEETIE
There's no "I" in "working together".

CAT
I think there is.

LORD SWEETIE
I meant "teamwork". It's hard to remember all these new clichés. To show you a good example of teamwork, I'm going to consult my advisors. Right boys and girls, shall I fire her?

Can't hear you etc, gets audience to shout
 Well who cares what you think you horrible lot! Maybe
 this will convince you. Cat, I've got your CV here...
 somewhere.

*The Village Crier hands Lord Sweetie another
 scroll. When unfurled it is very, very long.*
 Stockcross Primary School - junior vermin control
 operative. Park House Junior School - acting deputy
 infestation investigator. St Barts Free School
 Technical Academy and Borstal - school mascot. Oxford
 - double first in Pure and Applied Rodent Studies?

The Cat looks very proud.
 I had dinner with the Dean of Oxford. He's never
 heard of you.

CAT

Ah... no, not Oxford! Cambridge, it was Cambridge!

LORD SWEETIE

Cambridge don't use cats to chase rats. They use
 Ninja owls, they've always got to be different. This
 CV's a pack of lies! Shall I fire him boys and girls?

Again, gets audience to shout.

LORD SWEETIE

Doesn't matter! I've made my decision.

Ominous music.

Dick Piper can stay in charge of rat catching. You...

CAT

Yes?

LORD SWEETIE

You're fired! Right, everyone else, while I'm still
 in a good mood, take a half day holiday.

Villagers all cheer.

LORD SWEETIE

Unpaid!

Villagers all boo.

*Lord Sweetie exits through the audience,
 dispensing sweeties, trying to charge children
 for them, firing, and occasionally hiring as he
 goes. Everyone else leaves the stage dejectedly,
 leaving just Dick and Mrs Whittington*

DICK

Oh Mum! There's no apprenticeship for me. What am I
 going to do?

MRS WHITTINGTON

It'll be alright son, something'll turn up, you just see. I'm sure you can get a job at the Rising Sun.

DICK

Oh, I couldn't... you drink in there.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Well, then there's the Lord Lyon.

DICK

Dad drinks in there.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Well, what about the Post Office, the little shop, the B&B, the dry-cleaners...

DICK

They're all the same place!

MRS WHITTINGTON

(Defensively)

Well, it's a very small village.

DICK

It's no good, Mum. I'm going to have to leave and find my fortune.

MRS WHITTINGTON

What, with a stick over your shoulder and a knotted handkerchief containing half a stale loaf?

DICK

Actually I was more thinking along the lines of some sturdy walking boots, a good waterproof jacket and a lightweight sleeping bag, but whatever you think best. I'll go and find that stick.

Exits stage right.

MRS WHITTINGTON

What am I going to do? My only son, alone out there in the big scary world, with all manner of dangers and frights and...

The cat enters and taps Mrs Whittington on the shoulder

CAT

Excuse me...

MRS WHITTINGTON

Aargh! You frightened the life out of me. What do you want?

CAT

I was thinking I could go with Dick, keep an eye on him, make sure he doesn't get into trouble, that kind of thing.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Would you do that? Really? I wouldn't want Dick to think I was interfering.

CAT

No trouble. There's nothing left for me here now, so I might as well make myself useful.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Is there anything you need?

CAT

You couldn't just scratch between my ears could you?

Mrs Whittington does so

CAT

Oh, that's sooooo nice!

Exit both

Scene 2 - the Forest - dusk

Enter Dick, stage right. Lights low, sign? Ye Olde A4. "Roadworks, delays expected until 1623". Dick has an extremely long stick with his red and white spotted handkerchief on the end.

DICK

I'm not so sure this was a good idea. It's dark, it's scary, it's past my bedtime, I'm so far from home... It'll be even worse when I get past Thatcham. And I keep getting this feeling I'm not alone...

As Dick disappears into the wings, Mrs Whittington sneaks onto the stage, shushing the audience.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Don't tell anyone, but I just can't let my boy and that silly cat wander off alone in the woods! There's no way I can go all the way to London, his Dad can't be left alone for five minutes, the bar tab will be horrendous. If only there was someone I could call on for help...

(suddenly)

I know!

Mrs Whittington gets out a stick of rock or a lollipop and starts licking.

Nine! Nine! Nine!

There is the sound of a police-type siren, and a Fairy appears wearing a kilt and waving a large toothbrush.

FAIRY

And what do you think you're doing! That'll rot your teeth, they'll all go manky and fall out yer heed! Oh... it's you.

MRS WHITTINGTON

You did say if I ever needed help, I should just call on you.

FAIRY

I meant if you needed any whitening or root canal work, not babysitting yon waster on his gap year!

MRS WHITTINGTON

I thought you were supposed to be his fairy godmother, not just the family tooth-fairy.

FAIRY

Aye, with all these cutbacks we're having to double-up. I thought it'd be a doddle, being Fairy Godmother to a quiet young village lad, I thought, he's nae going to be any bother, won't go and get himself into any trouble... then what does he go and do, only run off to try and make his fortune through one of the most dangerous forests in the kingdom!

Dick has wandered back on stage and Mrs Whittington quickly hides. Dick has noticed the Fairy and taps her on the shoulder. The Fairy screams (in a Scottish accent)

DICK

Sorry! I didn't mean to scare you, I just overheard you saying something about this being... a dangerous forest?

The Fairy says the following while trying to dodge Dick's stick.

FAIRY

Well, one of the most dangerous yes. It's not like it's the Witches' Wood, or the Cannibal Clearing or the Heebie-jeebie hedgerows, but it's pretty terrifying yes.

DICK

Why, what's so bad about it?

FAIRY

They say it's the hunting-ground of an animal so hideous that no-one has ever lived to describe it properly.

DICK

I see.

FAIRY

They say, first you smell it.

DICK

Ooh, does it smell terrible?

FAIRY

No, that's the thing, it's supposed to smell
gorgeous, of honey, redcurrants and mint sauce.
That's how it tempts its prey.

DICK

Well that doesn't sound so bad.

FAIRY

Sound is the next thing! As it gets closer you hear
the buzzing!

DICK

The buzzing?

FAIRY

Aye, then a kind of high grunting noise like a gate
that's particularly grumpy about not being oiled. And
finally...

DICK

Yes...

FAIRY

Well, it bleats.

DICK

Bleats?

FAIRY

Like a sheep. Baaaaa!

DICK

For a beast that no-one has lived to describe, it's
lucky we know so much about it. Why on earth does it
smell so strange and make such a ridiculous noise?

FAIRY

Because it's a hideous cross between three different
kinds of animal. A male honeybee, a female deer and a
female sheep.

DICK

Not... ?

FAIRY

Yes, the dreaded Bee-Hind-Ewe!

*FX; traditional three dramatic chords:
der-der-derrr!*

Dick looks around

DICK

Where? Where?

*As Dick turns to look, the Fairy has to dodge
Dick's stick.*

FAIRY

No, you've got the wrong end of the stick. And so
have I! That's what it's called, the Bee-Hind-Ewe!

DICK

And is there any defence against this frankly rather
improbable-sounding beast?

FAIRY

Many have tried to capture it before, always in vain,
but legend says you must sneak up on it from the
side.

DICK

Why from the side?

FAIRY

Well the front-end has enormous spiky antlers like a
deer, and the back end has a huge poisonous sting
like a bee.

The fairy attempts to mime this. Badly.

DICK

And the middle bit?

FAIRY

Well, the middle bit's the most like a sheep, so it's
all woolly and fluffy and basically quite stupid and
obsessed with grass.

DICK

And that's its weakness is it?

FAIRY

Och aye, if you can lure it onto a piece of paper or
card covered in grass, give it a poke from the side,
the antlers all get caught up in the wings and you
can just pop a cup or a jam-jar over it while it's
confused.

DICK

A jam-jar? Phew! I thought it was going to be this
big...

FAIRY

Oh aye, always make sure you've got a jam-jar with you.

Dick starts checking his pockets and spotted handkerchief-on-a-stick

FAIRY

An eight-foot wide one should just about do it...

DICK

I knew there'd be a catch! Nothing's ever simple.

FAIRY

I tell you what, I'll set up an early warning system with all my magical helpers.

To audience

That's you lot! Come on, pay attention, you have to do your bit as well you know! If you hear anything that sounds like all those horrible bits of animals, you have to shout out a warning, shout out BEE! HIND! EWE! as loud as you can.

They practice

And remember, there's the smell it uses to tempt people, so if you get a whiff of honey, or venison and roast lamb, shout BEE! HIND! EWE! But.. we do have to be a bit careful with that one, we thought the village was about to be overrun by a whole flock of bee-hind-ewes, turned out to just be the new tasting menu at the Vineyard.

DICK

And that's supposed to protect me? A raggeddy bunch of elves, pixies and gnomes? Well at least they might be some help now, but I bet they'll be rubbish after the interval. Haven't you got any other advice for me?

FAIRY

Yes... keep brushing your teeth. I'm not made of money! But if you ever need me, here's my card!

DICK

Flossie McCavity, Tooth-Fairy-Godmother, fillings and tricky extractions a speciality... Pity she doesn't do crowns.

Spotlight on Dick as the Fairy leaves the stage (sound effect of dentist's drill and tooth being pulled - Pop!)

DICK

All alone again, and nothing to show for it apart from some zoological mumbo-jumbo and elementary toothcare advice. Even that stale bread would come in

(MORE)

DICK (cont'd)

handy now. I'm starving. What I wouldn't give for a great big Sunday roast! All the vegetables, the juicy meat, all the sauces! Oh, I can smell it now!

Sniffs the air like a Bisto-kid

Mmmm! Parnips with honey! Potatoes and mint sauce! Roast lamb!

Dick carries on sniffing as we start to hear the buzzing, snuffling, high-pitched barking and bleating that can only mean one thing.

Mmmm.... dinner!

Just as (hopefully) the audience are going wild warning Dick, we hear the sound of a sheet of paper being slid across the floor, some munching, and then a very large jam-jar being dropped on top and settling.

The Cat enters, looking very pleased with herself.

CAT

Well that was a stroke of luck!

DICK

What was?

CAT

I was just just about to be skewered on a set of antlers and stung all over when I realised this monster was only after my supply of kitty-grass. Backing away I happened to bump into this eight-foot wide jam-jar which someone had left lying around, and the rest was easy!

DICK

You mean?

CAT

Yes, you're safe!

DICK

No, ... no dinner! What are you doing in the forest anyway?

CAT

I've come to keep you company, and keep you safe...

The Cat takes Dick's stick off-stage, we hear the sound of frantic sawing. When the Cat comes back on stage, the stick is now much (ridiculously) shorter.

CAT

That's better! There's nothing for me in Stockcross. I did all the work getting rid of the rats and that Snide Swiper of Hamyln has taken all the credit. I thought I'd come with you and make my fortune in London as well.

DICK

What kind of fortune does a cat need?

CAT

Well enough for a nice pair of boots maybe?

DICK

Why?

CAT

It'd give me a headstart on next year's panto. That one's got magic shoemakers in it.

DICK

Cobblers?

CAT

No, it has, honest!

DICK

Well I certainly feel a lot safer now I'm not on my own, and you got rid of the Bee-Hind-Ewe.

CAT

Where? Where?

DICK

No, the creature.

CAT

Oh yes, we're definitely safe from that.

DICK

It's a bit of a swizz we didn't actually get to see it though.

CAT

Ah, that's why you have to buy the DVD of the panto... for all the deleted scenes! And the director's commentary.

DIRECTOR

(voice - off-stage - or very large
megaphone at side of stage)
Get on with it!

DICK

Well, I'm quite looking forward to the trip now. They say London's streets are paved with gold. And if there are as many roadworks as I've heard, then there

(MORE)

DICK (cont'd)
must be lots of gold just sitting around, I'm sure they won't mind if I have just a little bit to make my fortune. In fact it's such a good idea I'm glad I've kept it to myself, otherwise everyone would be doing it!

Possible song; Gold by Spandau Ballet?

They exit happily on their way to London. Lights down. They have not noticed a small furry creature which has crept onto the stage. Spotlight on rat?

Lights up on a solitary rat

RAT
Got rid of all the rats, eh? So she's the one! I know someone who's going to be very interested to hear about that.

The rat scurries off stage right, squeaking urgently.

Scene 3 - The Forest at Night

The King Rat is seated on his throne of dirty rags, rat tails, skulls and gnawed bones.

KING RAT
With every rat that is driven out of its rightful hole, another soldier is recruited to my army. Every time our numbers grow, I feel my magical powers increasing! Oh, we will have revenge against the villainous villagers of Stockcross and their moth-eaten moggy.

The King Rat rises from his throne
We will tear those pathetic peasants limb from limb!

If heckled: Oh yes I will etc
We will break their bones and nibble on their knees, skin their shins, gnaw on their noses and eat their ears! Some of them even hiss and boo at that old fool Lord Sweetie! They don't know how good they have it now. Wait until they see what real evil can do when they are all subjects of the King Rat!

A small rat enters stage right

RAT
Master! Master! Where are you master?

The King Rat sits back on his throne and beckons the rat to attend

KING RAT

Who dares scrabble and scurry in my presence?

RAT

Only me, your majesty, your humble servant, Roland.

KING RAT

And what business do you have with your master?

RAT

I have found her! The one we squeak, I mean seek.

KING RAT

The felonious feline that drove my kin from
Stockcross? Second only in hatefulness to the dreaded
Bee-Hind-Ewe?

RAT

What? Where?

KING RAT

No, the monstrous creature that is the mortal enemy
of all rat-kind.

RAT

Ah, yes, master. The cat, she has been seen on the
road to London, but not alone.

KING RAT

Not alone?

RAT

She's with one of the young humans from the village.

KING RAT

The stampers? The poisoners? The beaters, chasers,
setters of traps and inventors of things that can't
be nibbled or gnawed-on as is right and proper?

RAT

Yes master.

KING RAT

Then we have a score to settle with both of them.
That is an itch I have longed to scratch!

RAT

Ooh, lovely, itchy, scratchy! Eeek!

KING RAT

Be quiet! We must plan our attack, we too will travel
to the human's city and we shall gather all of my
followers along the way. And then... our revenge will
begin with the cat and the boy!

Scene 4 - The outskirts of London

The road setting again, only this time the sign reads "Ye Old A4, London 0, Stockcross 62.7 Miles" or similar.

Dick and the Cat enter stage right. As they cross the stage, their way is blocked by a City Guard. The Guard holds his torch up to see who is approaching, it looks suspiciously like an olympic torch.

CITY GUARD
Halt! Who goes there?

DICK
Hugo's where?

CITY GUARD
Hugo who?

DICK
I don't know, I'd never heard of him till you mentioned him.

CITY GUARD
Who?

DICK
Hugo!

CITY GUARD
I never said any such thing!

DICK
Oh yes you did!

CITY GUARD
Oh no I didn't!

Etc

CAT
Maybe I can help? I speak jobsworth... Excuse me, stout yeoman of the guard!

CITY GUARD
Yes?

CAT
We've come to London to make our fortune. Could you tell us where the gold is, please?

CITY GUARD
The gold? What gold? Haven't you heard, there's a recession on.

DICK

But... I thought the streets were paved with it.

CITY GUARD

Listen sonny, London's streets are home to nearly a hundred thousand people, there's no proper toilets or sewers, and apart from the river, everything comes in and goes out on horseback. So the streets are certainly paved with something, but it's not gold!

CAT

That explains the smell. I thought it was you.

The city guard sniffs his armpit just in case

CITY GUARD

That's why the Mayor (spit) introduced the tax.

DICK

What tax?

CITY GUARD

The Indigestion Charge. Every horse that comes in is charged 2p... to pee, and a thrupenny bit to have a...

CAT

Yes, we get the idea!

CITY GUARD

You're entering the Indigestion Zone. All the money goes to him (spit) the Mayor... (spit) Boo-Hiss Johnson.

DICK

Boo-Hiss Johnson?

CITY GUARD

Yes, the new Mayor. At least he's better than the old one, Ken Livingwage... he wanted to introduce double-length horses that bent in the middle when they went round corners. The only good thing about that was it reduced unemployment round this time of year.

DICK

Why's that?

CITY GUARD

Every pantomime horse had one front end and three back ends!

DICK

London's beginning to sound awful... no gold, wicked mayors... and now I think I've trodden in something.

CAT

We can't just leave, with our tail between our legs... Well, I mean I could, you probably couldn't.
(to city guard)
We haven't got any horses, so can you just let us in so we can see about this gold for ourselves?

CITY GUARD

Have you got any innuendoes?

DICK

Innuendoes?

CITY GUARD

You know, like double entendres.

DICK

Even if I did I wouldn't give you one.

CITY GUARD

Fivepence!

DICK

For what?

CITY GUARD

Suggestion Charge! Any questions?

DICK

Yes, where am I going to get five pence from?!

CITY GUARD

That's another five pence! Question Charge! Have you seen any rats?

CAT

Certainly not!

CITY GUARD

Infestation Charge you know. Can't be too careful, seen loads round here the last few days...

DICK

Is there anywhere we can go to look out over the city and see for ourselves if we can spot just a little bit of gold?

CITY GUARD

You can try all the hills in the city. There's Lavender Hill, Parliament Hill, Primrose Hill, Shooter's Hill, and if you're still looking, Highgate Hill. If you get to Harry Hill, you've gone too far. But what are the chances of that, eh?

Dick and the Cat trudge off sadly.

Two fruit sellers enter.

CITY GUARD

Halt! Hugo's where? I mean, Huge Nose-Hair, I mean...

FRUIT SELLER 1

Who goes there?

CITY GUARD

Erm, I do, the city guard.

FRUIT SELLER 2

Is there only one of you?

CITY GUARD

Well there should be a whole battalion, from G4S, only they never turned up. You're not going to cause trouble are you?

FRUIT SELLER 1

No, we're just going round selling fruit outside the churches.

CITY GUARD

Sounds like a cue for a song...

Sing-a-long Oranges and Lemons

Scene 5 - Highgate Hill

CAT

It's dead round here, quiet as the grave!

DICK

And it's cold, and windy, and miserable, and I'm hungry, and my shoes are worn out, and we have to keep stopping for you to have naps!

CAT

I'm a cat - it's how we roll.

DICK

We can see for miles around and all I can see is dirt and houses and... some kind of overgrown sports day in the East End. That'll never catch on.

CAT

So what do we do now?

DICK

Give up. Head home. Turn back.

From off-stage we hear voices...

FIFI-BELLE

Turn back!

CAT

Turn back?

TRIXI-BELLE

Turn back!

CLARA-BELLE

Turn back!

DICK

That's the weirdest thing... who ever heard of a hill
with an echo?

*Enter Fifi-Belle, Trixi-Belle and Clara-Belle.
The first two are typical ugly-sister types.
Clara-Belle is a bit butch.*

FIFI-BELLE

Hello dearie!

TRIXI-BELLE

Hello darlings!

CLARA-BELLE

Alright?

*The cat instantly goes up to the Belles and rubs
her head against them, allowing herself to be
tickled. She is a good judge of character*

DICK

Err, hello! Who are you?

FIFI-BELLE

I'm Fifi-Belle...

TRIXI-BELLE

And I'm Trixi-Belle...

CLARA-BELLE

And I'm Clara-Belle.

FIFI-BELLE

We're the Belles of Bow.

TRIXI-BELLE

And we're here to tell you to turn back!

DICK

No need, I'd already decided that for myself.

CLARA-BELLE

No, we mean turn back to London and stop being such a
misery.

DICK

Why?

FIFI-BELLE

Because you have to fulfill your destiny. We're good at spotting potential.

TRIXI-BELLE

Sort of scouts.

CAT

What is this, "Panto's Got Talent"?

CLARA-BELLE

We see the future in our dreams! We told that Edward he'd be king.

FIFI-BELLE

Edward the Third, that was.

TRIXI-BELLE

And we told those Two Wise Men to advertise for a mate.

CLARA-BELLE

We told Sir Lancelot that he'd be a knight, first in France, and then England and finally a Knight of the Round Table.

FIFI-BELLE

And three times a knight is enough for anyone.

DICK

And what about me?

TRIXI-BELLE

You're going to be a Mayor.

CLARA-BELLE

Three times. Unsurprisingly.

CAT

Mayor of Stockcross! That'll be the day.

FIFI-BELLE

No, Mayor of London.

DICK

Ah, so you're lumping me in with Boo-Hiss Johnson and the bendy-horse obsessed newt-fancier?

TRIXI-BELLE

No, you're going to be a good Mayor, really useful and popular and value for money. Like...

CLARA-BELLE
Like...

FIFI-BELLE
... anyway, a really good Mayor.

DICK
But how do I get to be Mayor? I don't even have
anything to eat or anywhere to sleep.

TRIXI-BELLE
Positive Mental Attitude young lad.

CLARA-BELLE
You won't get anywhere unless you believe in yourself
you know.

FIFI-BELLE
Get down there and knock on the first door you see,
and tell them who you are and that you want a job.

DICK
Right, I will! Thanks!

Dick and the Cat exit stage right

TRIXI-BELLE
Do you think that'll work?

CLARA-BELLE
No idea love.

FIFI-BELLE
We should probably stop eating that cheese before
bedtime.

*Lights down, the Belle's exit stage left. Lights
up, Dick and the Cat return to stage. Dick is
rubbing his nose.*

DICK
People can be quite rude can't they?

CAT
They can.

DICK
Twenty seven doors I've knocked on, twenty eight
slammed in our faces.

CAT
Twenty eight?

DICK
Yes, there was the one who slammed the door, opened
it again, threw a barrel of fish guts over us and
slammed it again.

CAT
Mmmm, yes, that was great!

DICK
I suppose we can try one more.

Dick knocks at a door (can be just a sound effect). It opens to reveal Alice Fitzwarren.

ALICE
Hello!

DICK
Hello, my name's Dick Whittington, and I was wondering if you had any jobs going? I'd work really hard, you don't need to pay me, I just need somewhere to sleep while I try and work out how I'm going to make my fortune and, I dunno, marry someone gorgeous...

ALICE
Sorry, don't think so.

Alice is just about to close the door when she remembers something.
Can you cook?

DICK
Oh yes!

ALICE
Daddy? Do we need a cook?

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN
(voice off-stage)
No!

ALICE
Oh. Can you clean?

DICK
Oh yes!

ALICE
Daddy? Do we need a cleaner?

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN
No!

ALICE
Oh. Can you get stones out of horses hooves?

DICK
Yes!

ALICE

Daddy! ...

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

No!

ALICE

I haven't said what it is yet!

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

Sorry.

ALICE

Do we need a stable-boy?

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

Ah. Good question. I was just thinking about that this morning... No!

ALICE

Sorry.

She closes the door. Just as Dick is about to turn away dejectedly, it reopens.

ALICE

Daddy? Do we need a cat?

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

What a ridiculous question! Of course we do! Have you seen the size of the rats around here lately?

ALICE

Is that your cat?

DICK

Well, not really... she's quite independent.

CAT

Silly boy!

(to Alice)

We're a team. Wherever I go, he goes.

ALICE

In that case I'm sure we can come to some arrangement. Daddy will probably let you sleep in the attic or something.

(Shouts off)

Daddy! I've just employed a cat, and a boy to do... servanty things! Is that alright?

(to Dick)

Come in, lets get you some new shoes, and maybe get those fish heads out of your hair.

DICK

Finally! Things are starting to go my way! Maybe I will live happily ever after!

CAT

Doh! Don't say that!

*Song - odd-couple / togetherness theme? Me And
My Shadow?*

Curtain.

ACT IIScene 1 - the Fitzwarren Kitchen- Night

A clock strikes three, an owl hoots. Gentle snoring. Under blue moonlight, we see that rats are sneaking into the kitchen, exploring and beginning to dance happily.

Possible song - Cool for Rats, to the tune of Cool for Cats by Squeeze

As the song finishes, the King Rat enters, stage left

KING RAT

What is the meaning of this!

RAT ONE

We've found them your majesty.

RAT TWO

Found them! Found them! The cat and the boy!

KING RAT

Good work my vigilant vermin. We can destroy them both, return and conquer the whole of Stockcross!

RAT THREE

Or...

KING RAT

Who are you?

RAT THREE

Nora, my lord.

KING RAT

Of course. Explain yourself...

RAT THREE

We can use this house and its riches as a base to take over the whole city, spreading disease and driving all the humans out! Imagine not just a village, but a whole city of rats. With you as King, obviously.

KING RAT

Ah, yes, exactly... I see you understand my plan perfectly. Now my resourceful rodents, to action!

Lights down, King Rat exits stage left, the rats stage right.

Lights up to reveal the kitchen in daylight. Mrs Crumble the cook enters.

MRS CRUMBLE

Boy! Boy! Where's that good for nothing, lazy,
useless country bumpkin got to now!

DICK

Yes Mrs Crumble!

MRS CRUMBLE

Now! Not in five minutes!

DICK

No Mrs Crumble!
(stage whisper)
Three bags full, Mrs Crumble!

MRS CRUMBLE

Right, I need you to stir this pie mix. Just that.
Keep stirring, everything else is done. Don't taste
it, don't fiddle with it, the Alderman and the young
Miss love my pie, the recipe's perfect, but you do
have to keep stirring it. Never stop!

DICK

Yes, Mrs Crumble.

MRS CRUMBLE

I've got to go out to get more cheese for the traps.
That cat's as useless as you are! And don't forget,
keep stirring!

Exit Mrs Crumble stage right

DICK

What does she take me for? I'm not a fool. I can stir
a spoon without messing up. I was always helping Mum
round the kitchen.

*He puts a finger into the mixing bowl and tastes
a tiny bit from the back of the spoon*
Mmmm... not bad... but not enough sugar...

*Dick tries to reach the sugar while continuing
to stir. He either can't reach or knocks things
over in his attempts.*
Cat! Cat! Where's that cat?

*The cat enters, blearily rubbing her eyes,
stretching and yawning*

CAT

What? I'd only just got back to sleep after a big
yawn and stretch.

DICK

Stir this, there, keep stirring.

Dick gets the sugar and pours some in.

His hand gets knocked by the cat and the whole bag of sugar goes in.
Oh no! All that sugar! It's going to ruin the pie.

CAT

I know, it's ok, put a bit of salt in so it isn't so sweet.

DICK

Salt... salt... Keep stirring!

Dick finds the salt but collides with the Cat again and all the salt goes in
Oh no!

From the wings we hear Alice's voice

ALICE

Dick? Dick? Could you come and help me?

DICK

It's Alice... oh, Alice...

CAT

Who the heck's Alice?

DICK

Miss Fitzwarren! The Alderman's daughter. I'll just go and see what she wants. Keep stirring!

CAT

Will do!

Exit Dick stage left

The cat experimentally tastes the pie mix
Hmmm... not bad... but definitely not fishy enough.
Fish... fish... ah, fish stock! That'll do.

The cat adds a generous glug of fish stock to the pie mix
That's better. My arm's getting tired. Time for a quick cat nap I think.

To the audience:
Just one thing, if you see a rat, do me a favour and shout "Rat Attack Rat!" Can you do that for me?

When the Cat is happy with the level of shouting, she starts to nod off, still stirring the mixture, but slower and slower.

At the side of the stage, Alice and Dick are in conversation

ALICE

Daddy was wondering if you had anything to invest in his latest shipping expedition. I told him not to be so silly, that you were poor, but I don't think he quite understood the concept.

DICK

What does he do?

ALICE

He's a merchant...

DICK

Banker?

ALICE

How dare you! No, he's honest! He's merchant trader. He finances ships which sail all over the world. They trade goods everywhere they go. He's very successful, that's why they made him an Alderman.

DICK

An older man? Taken its toll has it?

ALICE

No, an Alderman, like a councilor.

DICK

I expect he needs one, with everyone telling him he looks so old!

A Rat sneaks on stage, and is trying to release the last bit of cheese from a trap

When the audience wake the Cat, she starts chasing the Rat around the kitchen. The cheese ends up in the pie mixture.

Mrs Whittington enters, stage left

MRS WHITTINGTON

Hello! Don't mind me! I'm not interfering, just popped in, you know...

CAT

Can't stop now! Rats!

MRS WHITTINGTON

I quite understand dear, no problem. Ignore me, I'm not here.

(Winks)

I just popped in to check on my Dick. I got this postcard saying things were looking up, and he'd found a job, and a place to stay, and he'd met this lovely girl and... could I come and collect his dirty laundry. I don't know... Boys!

CAT

Could you... just stir that?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Of course dearie, my pleasure. Let's take a look, what have we got here... Sweet and sour cheesy fish plum duff.... Interesting. Guess it's all the rage in London with their sophisticated city ways.

(She tastes it)

Bleurgh! That's disgusting!

(Looking around)

What it needs is a little... pepper, a touch of garlic, some rhubarb, a dash of castor oil, some mint, jam... and Marmite. Got to have Marmite.

The Cat has finally seen off the Rat, and comes back to the stove to relieve Mrs Whittington from stirring duties.

There you go, I'll just leave some fresh socks and things there, no need to make a fuss. Dick doesn't need to know I was here, I just wanted to check everything was ok. I'll be off then, but you let me know if there's any trouble!

CAT

Will do!

Just after Mrs Whittington exits stage left, Dick crosses back to the centre of the stage

DICK

Who were you talking to?

CAT

Me? No-one, nope, no siree. No-one here, that's for sure.

Dick takes over stirring duties and tastes the pie mixture

DICK

Hmmm... how strange! That tastes just like one of Mum's Friday night usey-upey specials.

Mrs Crumble re-enters stage left, carrying her rolling pin

MRS CRUMBLE

There you are boy!

CAT

Does that make him a spotted Dick?

Mrs Crumble shoo's off the Cat with her rolling pin

MRS CRUMBLE

Glad to see you haven't deserted your post. Have you been stirring all the time?

DICK

Oh yes, definitely. Just me, stirring, nothing added, just like you said.

Mrs Crumble tastes the mixture... A long slow approving slurping turns into a grimace of horror and she spits it out.

MRS CRUMBLE

What have you done? You've spoiled my famous pie filling! There's going to be hell to pay! Mr Fitzwarren loves my pies. That's it. Supper ruined. You're going to be out on your ear lad! Alderman Fitzwarren!

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

(off-stage)

No!

Mrs Crumble exits, still calling for Alderman Fitzwarren

DICK

Oh no! What am I going to do! I can't believe everything's gone so wrong! And I really wanted to do a good job, to make something of myself, and to impress Alice.

CAT

What about your Tooth-Fairy Godmother?

DICK

Well yes, obviously I'd like her to be proud of me as well, but it was really Alice I was thinking of. She's so... perfect you see.

CAT

No, I mean can't your Tooth-Fairy Godmother help? Isn't that what she's supposed to be there for?

DICK

Good idea! Hang on, I've got her business card here somewhere.

Dick finds the business card

In emergencies, open wide and shout Nine-Nine-Nine!

Dick does so. There is no response. Dick asks the audience to help.

With her customary sound effect, the Fairy appears.

FAIRY

And I'll tell you again young Davey, you're no the man yer pa was. That Robert the Bruce... eh? Where am I?

DICK

London, sorry.

FAIRY

Oh, it's you. Dragging me around willy nilly without a by-your-leave. This had better be important, I was talking to kings and queens and, there was going to be haggis an' neeps an' tatties!

DICK

It's this pie. All sorts of things have been put into it and it's ruined. We're in so much trouble with Mrs Crumble, and she's gone off to tell Alderman Fitzwarren and Alice...

FAIRY

Alice? Alice? Who the ...

CAT

I've done that one.

FAIRY

Right, so let me get this straight. You've magicked me four hundred miles to correct a culinary catastrophe?

DICK

Well, yes... if you put it like that.

FAIRY

Four hundred miles! To rectify a recalcitrant recipe?!

DICK

Sorry!

FAIRY

Don't be! I love a challenge. Didn't I say fillings were my speciality?

The Fairy waves her magic toothbrush over the pie filling.

There, get yer laughing gear round that.

Dick and the Cat very cautiously taste the pie filling.

CAT

Oh, that's good.

DICK

That's very good!

FAIRY

You'd better leave some, or you'll be in as much trouble for eating it all as for messing it up in the first place. And if you've quite finished with my services, I'll be back off home. There's a wee nip of whisky wi' ma name on it.

The Fairy pops off again, as before.

CAT

Excellent day's work all round. Time for a kip I think!

The cat curls up and goes to sleep on the stage, purring happily.

Mrs Crumble enters, dragging Alice with her.

MRS CRUMBLE

Just taste it! That's all you'll have to do. Then you'll know what this useless, good for nothing, idle layabout has done to my famous pie recipe!

Mrs Crumble picks up the pie dish and holds it out to Alice. Alice very reluctantly tries a tiny taste of the pie filling.

ALICE

Well, I don't know what Dick's done to your pie, Mrs Crumble...

MRS CRUMBLE

There, I told you so. Told you!

ALICE

But that's so much better than it's ever tasted before. It must be his unjaded honest country palate.

Mrs Crumble is so shocked she staggers back, trips over the sleeping cat and ends up pie'ing herself in the face. She exits, spluttering.

Well done, Dick!

Alice gives Dick a peck on the cheek. Dick blushes instantly and gazes dewey-eyed at Alice.
I've been thinking. I think Daddy should let you go on his next ship, even if you are poor and haven't got anything to trade. It's quite romantic to think of you travelling all that way, by sea, being away for months and months. It'll be hard to see you go, but it's obviously for the best if that's what you've decided.

(calling off-stage)

(MORE)

ALICE (cont'd)
Daddy!

ALDERMAN FITZWARREN
(off-stage)
No!

Scene 2 - The dock / ship's deck

The King Rat is addressing his troops

KING RAT
And why have you brought me here?

RAT ONE
This is the Alderman's ship. Look at all the
treasures headed for distant lands.

RAT TWO
Gold, and silver, and Mrs Crumble's pies and little
round things which taste like chocolate.

RAT ONE
You know what that makes us?

RAT TWO
Pie Rats of the Carob-Bean.

KING RAT
You will be punished for that. What good is all this
to me?

RAT ONE
With a ship we can go anywhere, not just a city, but
imagine the whole world run by rats.

RAT TWO
With you as King. Obviously.

KING RAT
Obviously! But even with my army, how could we take
over the entire world?

RAT ONE
With all the treasure, we can make the greedy humans
do our work for us.

RAT TWO
Without knowing it, they will turn their world into
one that's only fit for rats.

KING RAT
I see. We can make them build houses too close
together, to build rubbish dumps instead of schools,
to turn the rivers into sewers, we can bribe their
politicians to pass laws to arrest anyone who has a
cat. Don't just stand there, put my plan into action!

Exit all

Scene 3 - The ship's hold

Darkened stage with hessian covering anything not removed from stage. We hear seagulls and crashing of waves etc. Dick and the Cat stumble from side to side as the ship rolls.

DICK

Daddy! Daddy! That's all she has to say... and Daddy puts us on his ship. Third class! Stuck in the hold for weeks on end. I don't even know where we're going.

CAT

Morocco. I heard one of the sailors say he was going to go

(does bad Spanish accent)

mucho loco at the Go-Go Rococo Casino in Morocco.

DICK

Where was he from with an accent like that?

CAT

Boxford.

DICK

Small world! They're a funny lot, this crew. They all seem to be scared of something. Even Captain Jack.

CAT

Oh yes, the cockney Captain, Jack Barrow. He's probably the most afraid, of the thing they call...

DICK

Yes?

CAT

The Walt Disney Lawyers.

DICK

You know, the crew are awfully quiet...

Enter stage left, the King Rat. His rat hordes enter stage right and surround Dick and the Cat

KING RAT

That is because they've all jumped overboard! I am in command of this ship now, and you are my prisoners. When this ship arrives in Morocco and the Sultan's guards find all the treasure gone and just you two aboard, as well as a hastily scribbled description of your mutinous actions which I forced the best mate to enter into the ship's log... you will be staked out in the desert to die, with no food, no water, and no factor 50!

DICK

You fiend!

KING RAT

Not just a fiend. A very rich and powerful fiend! I'm going to take over the whole world! We will drive all the filthy Bee-Hind-Ewes into the sea! My rats will run, scrabble, scratch, claw and gnaw their way through anything and everything they like.

CAT

Like they're doing now?

KING RAT

Exactly!

CAT

Gnawing through the planks of this ship...

KING RAT

Exactly... Oh I see.

We begin to hear the sound of rushing water
My rats! Time... to leave!

The King Rat exits stage left and the Rats stage right.

CAT

You know what it means when rats leave a ship, don't you?

DICK

No?

CAT

We're sinking!

They exchange a glance.

DICK

Help!

CAT

Help!

The Cat passes Dick a set of water wings and they start inflating them.

Lights down.

Scene 4 - A Desert Island

Lights up, music: "By the Sleepy Lagoon"

The cat enters, stage right

CAT

Dick? Dick?

Dick enters.

DICK

Here! Well, I've been right round the island this way. Have you seen anyone?

CAT

No, no-one at all. No houses, no people, no animals, Just sand and palm trees. How about you?

As Dick and the Cat stand looking out towards the audience, a tour guide holding an umbrella troops across the back of the stage leading as many tourists as possible and urging them to keep up.

DICK

Completely deserted! Apart from one very odd woman who refused to talk to me until I'd told her my eight favourite songs, my favourite bedtime story and chosen a luxury item. She did say I could have the complete works of Geoffrey Chaucer as well. I gave it back. Modern rubbish.

CAT

I hear the King granted Geoffrey Chaucer a gallon of wine a day... for life!

DICK

Anything to stop him from writing I expect.

CAT

Did this woman say anything about how to get off this island?

DICK

I don't think she wanted to get off the island. She said it was her job to interview anyone called Dick who got stranded here after a shipwreck.

CAT

Don't tell me, for "Desert Island Dicks"?

DICK

How did you guess? She did give me a wine bottle though, said something about it being on expenses.

CAT

Is it a good vintage?

DICK

Chateau Completely Empty 1365. It'll come in useful though. I'm going to write a message to Mum and Alice and put it in the bottle and throw it in the ocean.

CAT

How are you going to write a message to both of them with just one bottle?

DICK

Simple, when Mum's read it she can chuck it in the river Kennet and it'll float down to the Thames to Alice.

CAT

I'm glad you've thought that through. I can't help thinking about what's happening back in Stockcross.

DICK

I can't help thinking about Alice.

CAT

I bet that Dick Piper is letting everything go to wrack and ruin. I tried to tell them that it was me that got rid of all the rats, but there he was, in his lederhosen, waving his disgusting sausage, shouting "Nein! Nein! Nein!"

With her usual sound effect, the Fairy appears

FAIRY

You called?

DICK

We didn't mean to...

FAIRY

Oh, right you are then, I'll be off.

CAT

But we are very glad to see you. Aren't we?

DICK

Oh yes, of course!

FAIRY

What kind of trouble have you found yourselves in this time? Stranded on a desert island, with only the BBC for company. It's like "Sun, Sand and Suspicious Sassenachs"!

DICK

Is there anything you can do?

FAIRY

Of course there is, where there's a drill there's a way! I can get you out of this mess, I've always been good at extractions!

Scene 5 - Morocco - The Bazaar

The same set as the desert island, with fabric drapes, and a table and a couple of chairs to indicate stalls and a cafe?

Enter Dick and the Cat

DICK

She could have dropped us somewhere more convenient! We've been walking for weeks and this is the first town we've come to.

CAT

If you don't count the mirages.

DICK

Yes, we'd agreed not to mention those again.

CAT

It was quite embarrassing seeing you try to book bed and breakfast accommodation from a camel.

DICK

Yes, he got the right hump. At least this place seems to be real enough.

As Dick and the Cat sit down at the Cafe, the waitress enters stage right to greet them. It's Mrs Whittington.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Hello dears... what'll it be? Oh Dick! Fancy seeing you here.

DICK

Mum! What are you doing here?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Now, I'm not interfering...

CAT

Heaven forbid!

MRS WHITTINGTON

But I got your note...

DICK

What note?

MRS WHITTINGTON

The message in the bottle! I thought I'd just pop over and make sure everything was alright.

DICK

You just happened to pop over? How did you know where we were?

MRS WHITTINGTON

I did what you said and sent your note on to that nice young Miss Fitzwarren. When she replied she told me where her father's ship was headed for.

DICK

She replied? With a message in a bottle? Thrown into the Thames? Upstream?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Don't be so silly. She sent a carrier kitten. It's like a carrier pigeon but cuter and less like a flying rat.

(to the Cat)

Hello love!

DICK

But how did you get here?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Oh the local school's always sending teenagers to Morocco, it's a tradition. I said I'd come along and help out. You know, if the nights get too rowdy, too late or one of the locals gets a bit too friendly...

DICK

Then the kids can take you home and put you to bed?

MRS WHITTINGTON

You know me so well. It's funny, of all the gin joints, in all the towns, in all the world, you walk into mine.

DICK

Gin?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Bit early for me, but go on, twist my arm! Now you must tell me how you ended up on a ship, and how you got shipwrecked...

CAT

Rats.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Where? Where?

CAT

No, it was rats, hundreds of them. And one particularly big, mean, nasty, sort of King Rat.

MRS WHITTINGTON

That sounds like the same kind of trouble they've been having at the Sultan's palace.

CAT

The Sultan?

MRS WHITTINGTON

Yes, he's the ruler of all Morocco. He's supposed to be a good man, but the last few days the whole country has ground to a halt.

CAT

Why?

MRS WHITTINGTON

The Sultan's wife, the most beautiful woman in Morocco has been stood on a table in the highest tower in the palace, refusing to come down until all the rats are gone. There's a fantastic reward for anyone who can rid the palace of all the rats.

DICK

And the Sultan's devoted to her?

MRS WHITTINGTON

The Sultana? She's his raisin for living. Apart from her currant situation, everything's been peachy since they went on their first date. The Sultan's going bananas. Oh yes, I wouldn't risk getting fruity with the Sultana.

DICK

No fear, I've found the love of my life already. But she's so far away. I'm desperate to get home, even without making my fortune, but I think we should try and do something about the rats at the Sultan's palace, I feel responsible because it's kind of our fault they're here.

MRS WHITTINGTON

Oh Dick, you are a good lad. But what can you do? How are you going to drive off a horde of rats?

CAT

Come on, I have a cunning plan!

Scene 6 - The Fitzwarren Home

In front of drapes, Alice enters.

ALICE

It's awfully quiet without Dick and the Cat around. I quite miss them. All those weeks away, and only one note. Oh, I wish I knew why it bothers me...

On Alice's 'wish', the Fairy appears.

FAIRY

Och! It's obvious, you're as much in love with him as he is with you, you silly wee thing.

ALICE

Dick's in love with me? Oh why didn't he tell me? I know what Daddy will say about that.

*Song: It Must Be Love - or similar.
Alternatively, something more traditional like
Maybe It's Because One's a Londoner?*

Scene 7 - The Sultan's Palace

Re-use Kitchen set but with drapes from bazaar?

As the lights come up, we see the Sultana standing on the table, just legs painted on the backdrop reminiscent of Tom & Jerry.

The Sultan, Dick and the Cat enter. The Sultan hands one of two large scimitars to Dick.

SULTAN

Agreed! Your plan is... the only one we have. Usually I would tell my subjects that if they win my favour I will reward them greatly, but if they fail me, I will
(swish)
cut off their heads! But, you are a gentleman, and a guest in our land.

DICK

Phew!

SULTAN

If you fail, I will do you the honour of allowing you to cut off your own head. The cook tells me the ovens are lit and all the preparations have been made. So you and I must to battle!

The Sultan and Dick exit stage left.

CAT

(Addressing the audience)
Right, when the Sultan and Dick drive the rats up here to the tower, we're going to make them think the
(MORE)

CAT (cont'd)

biggest Bee-Hind-Ewe they've ever heard is after them. I need you in three groups. All the men, you have to buzz really loudly, like a bee. All the ladies, you have to make a high-pitched bark like a deer. Yes, I know it's not as easy. That's why we gave the buzzing to the men! And all the boys and girls, we need you to baa like sheep.

The cat and the audience practice, first separately, the bees, then hinds, then ewes.
Is this really the best the Sultan can come up with? I think you've just been sitting around on your backsides too long! I think some of you might even have been... drinking!

(if heckled)

Oh yes you have! Come on all together, let's try it again.

The Cat leads the audience all together, bees, hinds and ewes, bees, hinds, ewes.

At this point the Rats invade the stage, having been driven up the palace stairs by the Sultan and Dick. They start taunting the Sultana, nibbling and gnawing at the furniture. They surround the Cat and seem to have the upper hand. The Rats laugh at and mock the audience.

Dick and the Sultan enter stage left, pursued by the King Rat, who is holding the two scimitars menacingly.

KING RAT

So kind! To show me the rest of my palace before I dispose of you all. And what do we have here? The boy and the disgusting feline creature! Oh this day just gets better and better! I can be rid of you all in one stroke. What a perfect day for a rat takeover! The perfect setting, a palace to call my own, a base to start the year of the rat, endless treasure and...

(he sniffs the air)

really great catering! Mmmm, roast venison, lamb, honey! There will be great gnawing tonight!

CAT

Now! Now!

The Cat starts the audience Buzzing, Barking and Baa-ing.

The Rats start to panic.

RAT ONE

Master! Master, a Bee-Hind-Ewe!

RAT TWO
It's come to get us!

RAT THREE
It's a trap!

RAT ONE
We have to get out of here!

The rats jump from the stage and flee in all directions.

KING RAT
My rats! My rats! Stay! Fight! ...
(becoming frightened)
Don't leave me on my own!

The King Rat leaps off stage, we hear the crash of glass and the sound of a long, long fall.

SULTAN
Dick! A thousand thank-you's. You've saved my kingdom, restored order to the land...
(addresses the Sultana)
my darling, you may vacate your table now.

DICK
It wasn't really my idea. It was Cat's.

SULTAN
Then the mistress Cat shall be made an honorary commander of my army, and will always be welcome in these lands.

DICK
I think a bowl of tuna would probably have done.

SULTAN
But what about you Dick? Take from my palace treasury all the gold and diamonds you can carry! Your bravery and honesty shall be rewarded with wealth beyond imagination.

DICK
I think I just want one thing, one thing I know that can make me happy.

SULTAN
Name it. It shall be yours.

DICK
Do you have a ring? A small one. Alice has got such delicate hands you see.

SULTAN
I see you have great wisdom beyond your years, riches mean nothing to you without the woman you love. I will make you take one more thing though.

DICK

Yes?

SULTAN

A letter of introduction to the King of England. I think he would do well to find you a job. Perhaps Mayor of London?

Mrs Whittington calls Coo-ee and enters stage right

MRS WHITTINGTON

Hello! Not interrupting anything am I? Don't mean to interfere, but I overheard my son saying he was going to ask Alice to marry him.

SULTAN

Yes?

MRS WHITTINGTON

I don't suppose you know where I could buy a hat?

Community song, Where Did You Get That Hat? / Get Me To The Church On Time etc etc

Scene 8 - A Suitable Song and

Wedding Walkdown

Something like 'All You Need Is Love' (Rat-a-tat-a-tat!), but possibly something more modern!