

A PURR-FECT TRADITIONAL FAMILY PANTO!

# Dick Whittington

AND HIS AMAZING CAT



A PANTOMIME SCRIPT  
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PANTOMIMES

# **Dick Whittington and his Amazing Cat**

**A traditional family pantomime**

**By MJ Baker**

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Running time: approx 110 mins

## CHARACTERS

**DICK Whittington** (M/F)

**Mr FLUFFLES**, his cat (M/F)

**ALDERMAN Fitzwarren**, pie shop proprietor (M)

**ALICE Fitzwarren**, the alderman's daughter (F)

**Idle JACK**, the alderman's lazy assistant and Sarah's son (M)

**SARAH the cook**, the pie chef (M)

**KING RAT**, the baddie (M/F)

**SPLAT the rat**, King Rat's sidekick (M/F)

**NAT the rat**, King Rat's sidekick (M/F)

**Fairy BOWBELLS** (F)

**Captain Gregory GROG** (M)

**The PHARAOH** (F)

### Chorus parts

**RATS**

**LONDONERS**

**SAILORS**

**BELLS**

**EGYPTIAN COURTIERS**

**Lazy SUSAN**, a courtier

**A chimney SWEEP**

**The KING** (King Charles lookalike)

**A MUMMY**

Despite the gender suggestions given, it would be possible to adapt some parts to the actors available.

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**ACT 1**                      **PROLOGUE**

**FRONTCLOTH – ON THE ROAD TO LONDON**

*Enter chorus as RATS. They scurry to and fro across the stage*

*MUSICAL NUMBER: CHORUS*

*Song suggestion: Sound of the Underground (Girls Aloud)*

*Enter KING RAT. RATS part to make way for him*

**KING RAT:**                      That's right, ratty minions. Scurry from your sewers into every home and shop in London Town. Fill the city with your foulness. You, my army of reckless rabble-rousing rodents, will have those humans cowering in fear, terrified to ever eat a chocolate raisin again!

*Exit RATS*

**KING RAT:**                      *(He sniffs the air then notices audience)* Eurgh! What's this? Children? I thought there was a nasty smell in the air. Sort of a nauseating, disgusting smell of crayons and sticky fingers and botty burps. *(Audience react)* Oh, get it out of your systems. Come on, show us your boos. *(He pretends to clock an audience member at the back)* Madam, please! I said show us your *boos*! I should've known you were one of those audiences. Staggered here straight from the **[local pub]**, didn't you? Well you can boo and hiss all you like because soon enough you'll be on your knees. Soon my rat army will have taken over the city and I, King Rat, will appoint myself Lord Mayor of London! And all you stinking little boys and girls and your rotten grown-up mums and dads will kneel before me as my subjects – oh yes you will! *(Encourages audience reaction)* Oh yes you will! Will will will! And after that, who knows? Today London, tomorrow... Guildford. And then the world is my halibut!

*Music cue: fairy theme*

*Enter Fairy BOWBELLS*

**BOWBELLS:**                      Not so fast there, King Rat! You seem rather certain  
That your plan will succeed before the last curtain  
You hadn't counted on me when you eyed your new crown  
Yes, 'tis I, Fairy Bowbells, the spirit of the town!

**KING RAT:**                      Spirit of the town? That's Beefeater, isn't it? *(He sniffs her breath)* You do sound like you've been on the gin. You fairies really should see a good psychiatrist about that rhyming business.

**BOWBELLS:** Sadly, there can never be any cure  
A fairy must rhyme to show her heart's pure  
It proves she is good, and sweeter than sugar  
But I must say, at times it's a bit of a... pain

**KING RAT:** Oh, yeah? Well two can play the rhyming game, sister.

*Music cue: Drum and Bass beat*

**KING RAT:** That's more like it!

*KING RAT adopts a rap pose and starts beatboxing*

**KING RAT:** You reckon you'll beat me with your weak magic spells  
But if you think you can win then you're trippin', Bowbells!  
I ain't got no headspace for those old-fashioned rhymes  
Glow up, fairy baby, it's time to get with the times!

**BOWBELLS:** Oh, so that's how we'll play it? A battle in song?  
Then honey, this is on like Donkey Kong's thong!

*She dons sunglasses and they rap battle*

**BOWBELLS:** I've got power, and a wand, and a ticket to ride  
Not only that, I've got good on my side  
Rodent boy, better haul your wormtail back to school  
Coz ain't no rapping rat can defeat this girl, fool

**KING RAT:** A wand, are you kidding? There's more power in my hat  
I ain't scared of no stick. I'm the mighty King Rat!  
I've an army of vermin, so fix on that frown, clown  
Coz when three days have passed, I'll be mayor of this town!

*Music cue: King Rat's theme*

*Exit KING RAT, laughing evilly*

**BOWBELLS:** Three days! That's not long to outwit the old rat  
But hang on. Who's approaching? Why, a boy and his cat!  
A cat for a rat... That might just save the day  
I'll hide myself here and hear what they shall say

*Exit BOWBELLS*

*Music cue: fairy theme*

*Enter DICK and Mr FLUFFLES*

**DICK:** Crikey, Mr Fluffles. It seems like a million years since we left [**local place**] to seek our fortune. Let's rest awhile.

*They sit*

**FLUFFLES:** I have got a *banging* headache. I can't even remember the last time I had a mani-pedi. I've a good mind to report you to the RSPCA.

**DICK:** I know, it hasn't been much fun for you. I'm sorry, Fluff.

**FLUFFLES:** I'm not one of those mangy moggies you find raiding bins round the back of **[local shop/supermarket]**, you know. I'm a pedigree. I could enter feline Crufts... if I could be bothered. *(He rubs his foot)* Oooh, look at that. Blisters all over me little pink pawsies. The least you could do is carry me.

**DICK:** You weigh twelve stone, mate. You're not that little kitten I could fit in one hand any more.

**FLUFFLES:** I don't know why we had to leave home in the first place.

**DICK:** We had to get out of **[local place]**. We were so poor, I was living off the scraps from the pig feed and my dad's old toenail clippings.

**FLUFFLES:** And I was on own-brand cat food. Own-brand! From *Lidl!*

**DICK:** But everything's going to change for us soon. I've heard tell of a wondrous city, Fluff. A place where there's jobs for the asking, and all the Sheba a cat can eat.

**FLUFFLES:** Dunno, I can eat a lot. Where is this place?

**DICK:** Oh, it's the most magical city in the world. They say money flows there like water and the streets are paved with solid gold. It's called... Doncaster.

*Music cue: fairy theme*

*Enter Fairy BOWBELLS*

*DICK and FLUFFLES jump to their feet*

**DICK:** Blimey! Hello, Mrs Fairy. My name's Richard Whittington, but most folk call me Dick.

**FLUFFLES:** Figures.

*DICK extends his hand, but BOWBELLS ignores it. She examines him, unimpressed*

**BOWBELLS:** Well, it's not much to work with but they're all that I've got  
A pampered old puss and a thick country clot  
But a cat, even this one, is, after all, still a cat  
And I need me a moggy who can take on a rat



Plus I'll make a Lord Mayor out of this country bumpkin  
You'll soon see how this fairy can get coaches from pumpkins

**DICK:** Here, what did she just call us?

**FLUFFLES:** I think she called you a pumpkin.

**DICK:** Cheeky mare! What was all that about a rat?

**FLUFFLES:** *(Shudders)* Ugh, I hope I don't meet it. I'm scared to death of the horrid things. I need a lie down just from thinking about it.

*He stretches himself out dramatically*

**DICK:** Who are you then, Missus? Our fairy godmother?

**BOWBELLS:** My name is Bowbells, and I'm not yours nor your kitty's  
You might say I'm the spirit of yonder big city

**DICK:** You're the actual spirit of Doncaster? Amazing!

*She hits him with her wand. The church bells of London begin to play softly*

**BOWBELLS:** Your destiny doesn't lie in South Yorkshire, you prat  
What I need is for you, Dick, and Fluffles your cat  
To get backsides in gear and keep your eyes down  
As you make your way swiftly to old London Town!

**ACT 1****SCENE 1****CHEAPSIDE, LONDON**

*CHORUS and ENSEMBLE on stage dressed as Londoners – pearly kings and queens, market traders etc*

*MUSICAL NUMBER: CHORUS and ENSEMBLE*

*Song suggestion: Consider Yourself (Oliver!)*

**TRADER 1:** Apples and pears! Apples and pears!

**TRADER 2:** Syrup of figs! Get yer syrup of figs over here!

**TRADER 3:** Whelks! Jellied eels! All fish fresh last Tuesday!

*Exit CHORUS and ENSEMBLE. SARAH remains. They say good morning to her as they pass*

**SARAH:** Nice to see the town bustling. *(She notices the audience)* Ooh! Hello, you lot! I've not seen you around here before. I'm Sarah the cook. They call me that because, well, my name's Sarah and I'm a cook. How about a big London "wotcha, Sarah" for me?

**AUDIENCE:** Wotcha, Sarah!

**SARAH:** Come on, wake up! You lot sound like you've had your bedtime Horlicks already. Wotcha, **[local place]**!

**AUDIENCE:** Wotcha, Sarah!

**SARAH:** That's better. Now as I was saying, I'm a cook and I work over there at Fitzwarren's International Pie Emporium with my son Jack. *(She nods importantly to a woman in the audience)* That's right, love, we're *international*. You're not looking at a Gregg's here. What do they call you then?

**AUDIENCE WOMAN:** Laura (or whatever).

*SARAH ad-libs some banter with LAURA before moving on*

**SARAH:** Now, have you put your teeth in tonight, Laura? Because we sell all sorts of exotic pies and pastries at Fitzwarren's. We've got pretzels and pasties and crisp apple strudels. We've got macaroons and cameroons and baked meringue poodles. We've got hot sausage rolls and some choux pastry rings *(she breaks into song)* and *these are a few of my favourite...* Oh, no no no, what am I on about? I was getting carried away there. Anyway, the pie emporium is run by Alderman Fitzwarren and his daughter Alice. He's lovely, the alderman. Really

knows how to fill a pair of breeches, if you know what I mean, Laura. Oh, you do, don't you? I bet you've had more men than hot dinners, haven't you, love? Cougars, they call the likes of me and you nowadays. Embrace it, darling, embrace it! I'm a widow myself. My husband passed away ten years ago, and do you know, I haven't felt myself since. *(She peers offstage)* Ah, here comes my son Jack with the pies to sell at market. It'll certainly get me some Brownie points with the alderman if we can flog a couple. There's a plague of horrid little rats around here and they've been eating us out of house and shop. This bit's the plot so I hope you're listening, Laura. Yes, that's right, there is a plot. Hard to believe, I know.

*Enter Idle JACK with a trolley. On top are three large pie lids*

**JACK:** Heyup, Mum!

**SARAH:** Now then, our Jack. Glad to see them pies are safe.

**JACK:** Told you I'd look after them. *(He nods to the audience)* Who're this lot?

**SARAH:** Drunks, I think. Wandered in to keep warm. They seem harmless.

**JACK:** Here, do they want to buy our pies?

**SARAH:** I don't know, do I? Give them your sales patter.

**JACK:** Sounds like hard work.

**SARAH:** *(She clips him round the ear)* Go on, you lazy toerag, do a day's graft for once. I'm off to find the alderman to see if I can tempt him with me yum-yums.

*Exit SARAH*

**JACK:** There's no answer to that. *(He turns to the audience)* Hiya, everyone! My name's Jack, but everyone round here calls me Idle Jack. It's very unfair. OK, I know hard work never killed anyone, but I just think, why take the chance? Can you say hello to me? *(Audience mumble)* Oh come on, you can do better than that. Tell you what, how about every time I come on, I shout out "How are you, kids?" then you lot shout back "I'm all right, Jack!" Yeah? Shall we practise it now? *(Audience react)* OK, here we go. How are you, kids?

**AUDIENCE:** I'm all right, Jack!

**JACK:** Hmm. Not bad but I think you can do better. We'll do it properly. I'll go off first, then I'll come back on.

*He exits then re-enters*

**JACK:** How are you, kids?

**AUDIENCE:** I'm all right, Jack!

**JACK:** That was loads better, but I think there was one person who wasn't joining in. I think it might have been someone a bit grown-up shaped. Did you notice a mum or dad not joining in, kids? *(Audience respond)* I think it was... *(He points across the audience)* ...you! And you know what that means, don't you? It means that according to pantomime law, this time you have to do it all on your own. What's your name?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Jim (or whatever).

**JACK:** All right, Jim, stand up. Are you ready? Just you this time. How are you, Jim?

**JIM:** I'm all right, Jack!

**JACK:** Well done, that was much better. You can sit down, and thanks for being a good sport. *(He nods to his trolley)* Here, do you lot like pies? *(Audience respond)* Business at the pie shop has been dreadful recently. Every pie Mum makes, these huge hairy rats sneak in and gobble it up. You haven't seen any rats around here, have you, boys and girls? *(Audience respond)* I'm not surprised, they're all over the place. Alderman Fitzwarren says if he can't get rid of them, he'll have to shut down the shop! Honestly, we've tried everything. We've even had Billie Piper in. Actually, that was a case of mistaken identity. Turned out it was the Pied Piper we needed, not Billie Piper. Well she tried her best, poor love, but it was a bit above her paygrade. After that we got Rentokil round. Soon as they clocked the size of these rats, they jumped in their van and took the M4 out of London. They still haven't brought it back. The alderman hasn't been able to pay me and Mum any wages for weeks.

**AUDIENCE:** Aww!

**JACK:** We're more broke than that.

**AUDIENCE:** AWWW!

**JACK:** Anyway, I've been guarding these pies with my life so no rat could get at them. *(He shadow boxes the air)* Strong, vigilant, alert, that's old Not-at-all-idle Jack! You lot will shout if you see any rats around, won't you? *(Audience react)*

*A RAT scurries across the stage. AUDIENCE shout but JACK polishes his pies obliviously. Another RAT scurries the other way*

**JACK:** Did you lot say something?

*Another RAT runs behind him. AUDIENCE shout*

**JACK:** Are you trying to tell me something? You need to speak up.

*Enter chimney SWEEP with a shopping basket*

**SWEEP:** Wotcha, cock!

**JACK:** Why? Oh right, I see what you mean. Wotcha, chimney sweep.

**SWEEP:** Pies, yum! I fancy some pie and jellied eels for my tea, what with being a salt-of-the-earth genuine cockerney chimbley sweep, cor blimey luv a duck, guv'nor. *(He examines them)* No rats have had their teeth in them, have they?

**JACK:** Nope! I've been watching them like a... person who is good at watching things. These pies haven't been out of my sight since this morning.

**SWEEP:** You never let them out of your sight? Not even for one cheeky little snooze, Idle Jack?

**JACK:** Listen, Dick Van Dyke, I am *not* idle!

**SWEEP:** All right, all right! What flavours have you got?

**JACK:** Hang on, I'll look. We've got... *(He lifts the first pie lid, and a rat puppet pops up)* rat... *(He lifts the second lid, and another rat pops up)* ...rat... *(He lifts the third lid, and the same happens again)* ...or rat.

**SWEEP:** I've got just the thing for you.

*SWEEP exits and return with a large inflatable baseball bat, which he gives to JACK. JACK tries to hit each rat but another one always pops up (Sound FX: whack-a-mole type music). Finally, two RATS run on and steal the trolley*

**JACK:** Oi! Come back with that, you little perishers! *(He smiles apologetically at the SWEEP)* Um, how much will you give me for the pear drop in my pocket? Only half-sucked and I'll pick the fluff off for you.

*SWEEP hits him with the baseball bat and exits*

**JACK:** Oh well, that's just great, that is. Mum is not going to be pleased with me. And if she's not pleased with me, the alderman's not pleased with me. And if the alderman's not pleased with me, his daughter Alice isn't pleased with me, and that is not good. *(His face takes on a sappy expression)* She's lovely though, Alice. Do you want to know a secret, boys and girls? *(Audience respond)* Are you sure you want to know? Oh, go on then. I love her. *(Audience react)* I do, I love her to bits. But I'm too shy to tell her. Do you think I should tell her?

*(Audience react)* You really think I should ask Alice on a date? Here, it's her birthday tomorrow. I've bought her a new fridge. I can't wait to see her face light up when she opens it. *(Peers off stage)* Oh heck, here she comes. Schtum, you lot.

*Enter ALICE*

**ALICE:** Hello, Jack.

**JACK:** *(Kicks heels)* Hiya, Alice.

**ALICE:** My father sent me to see if you'd sold any pies yet. *(She looks around)* Oh! You've sold them all! Daddy will be pleased.

**JACK:** Um, well, no. Some rats nicked the lot.

**ALICE:** Oh, Jack. Asleep on the job again?

**JACK:** Don't blame me! Blame them lot! *(Points at audience)* They were supposed to be watching them for me.

*Enter chorus members as TRADERS, who stand at the back of the stage and mime chatting*

**ALICE:** Well, all right, I'll believe it wasn't your fault. But only because you're my best friend. *(She kisses his cheek)* I really don't know what I'd do without you.

**JACK:** *(To audience)* What do you think, boys and girls? Shall I ask her now? *(Audience react)*

**ALICE:** Ask me what, Jack?

**JACK:** All right, it's now or never. Um, Alice?

*Enter DICK, who mimes speaking to TRADERS behind them*

**ALICE:** Yes, Jack?

**JACK:** You know your birthday tomorrow?

**ALICE:** Oh, yes. Daddy's showing Sarah my gift now. I can't wait to see what it is.

**JACK:** And your dad's given us the morning off work before we set off on the big sea voyage?

**ALICE:** Yes?

**JACK:** Well, I wondered if you, um... if you wanted to go out with me. *(ALICE has caught sight of DICK and is gazing at him dreamily)* I could buy you a Flump. I mean, it doesn't have to be a Flump. It could be a

Chupa Chup. As long as it doesn't cost more than 17p because that's all I've got.

**ALICE:** *(Still staring at DICK)* Gosh!

*DICK approaches the front of the stage*

**DICK:** Oh, it's no use. I must have spoken to all the shopkeepers in London and not a single one has a job for me. So much for the land of opportunity. *(He spots ALICE gazing at him)* Gosh!

**ALICE:** *(Barging JACK out of the way)* Hello. I'm Alice Fitzwarren.

**DICK:** *(Dreamily)* Dick.

**ALICE:** I beg your pardon?

**DICK:** Dick. *(He pulls himself together)* Dick Whittington. That's what they call me, because... it's my name.

**ALICE:** I've never seen anyone like you before, Dick. I bet you come from somewhere dead exotic.

**DICK:** Yes, I'm from **[local place]**. Alice, are you feeling what I'm feeling?

**ALICE:** Yes, I think I am.

*MUSICAL NUMBER: DICK and ALICE*

*Song suggestion: Accidentally in Love (Counting Crows)*

**ALICE:** What's brought you here to London, Dick?

**DICK:** I came looking for work, but no one seems to have a job for me.

**ALICE:** Yes, business is bad. But never mind that. Are you busy tomorrow? Only it's my birthday, and my father says I can have the morning off. I thought you might like to, you know... go out.

*JACK pushes between them*

**JACK:** Er, hello? Aren't we forgetting something, Alice? I believe I already asked you out for Chupa Chups and Flumps tomorrow.

**ALICE:** Oh, Jack, me and you can hang out any time. *(She turns to DICK)* Dick, this is my best friend, Idle Jack. Jack, this is Dick Whittington.

**JACK:** Well the lady is otherwise engaged tomorrow, Mr Dickington, because I asked first. So have that *[raspberry]*.

- ALICE:** *(To DICK)* Excuse me while I have a word with my friend. *(She takes JACK aside)* Look, I'm trying to get a date here.
- JACK:** But I was going to take you on a date.
- ALICE:** I mean a real date, silly sausage. You know, like when a girl likes a boy, and he *(whispers)* and then she *(whispers)*. And then they both *(long whisper)*. And then everyone lives happily ever after.
- JACK:** You've been reading those EL James books again, haven't you?
- ALICE:** Oh, please, Jack. Dick's so handsome *(DICK preens to the audience)* and strong *(DICK flexes muscles)* and just such a sweet little fluffy duckling that I want to put him right in my pocket *(DICK looks disgusted)*. It'll make me so happy.
- JACK:** Will it really?
- ALICE:** Oh, yes! It is my birthday, after all. The only gift I want this year is Dick.
- JACK:** All right. If it means that much to you, Alice.
- ALICE:** Jack, you're the best! *(She hugs him and returns to DICK)* So what time do you want to pick me up, Dick?
- DICK:** I'd love to take you out, Alice, but I haven't got a penny to scratch my bum— I mean, I haven't got any money.
- ALICE:** And I haven't had any pocket money from Daddy for weeks. *(She looks hopefully at JACK)*
- JACK:** Oh, no. You two are not having my last 17p.
- Enter FLUFFLES. He is wearing loads of London tourist tat*
- DICK:** Now I can introduce you to my best friend too! Alice, Jack, this is my pet cat Mr Fluffles.
- FLUFFLES approaches, looking bored and scrolling on a mobile phone. He pauses to take a selfie*
- DICK:** Where've you been all this time?
- FLUFFLES:** Seeing the sights. And I must say, a bigger dump I've never set foot in. Streets paved with gold indeed! I don't know what I stepped in just now but it wasn't a precious metal. Have you got a job yet? My belly's rumbling.
- DICK:** Sorry, Fluff. It's turning out to be harder than I thought.



- FLUFFLES:** What? No food? *(He leans dramatically against a pillar)* Fine. If you can live with this hungry pussy cat's untimely death on your conscience, so be it.
- JACK:** What a drama puss!
- ALICE:** He's a funny sort of cat. What's he like as a pet, Dick?
- DICK:** Well, he's lazy, greedy, selfish, vain, staggeringly disloyal, and he has this habit of sticking his backside in your face while you're watching television. He's a cat, basically. *(Changes tone to sickening sweetness)* But he's also the sweetest, cutest Mr Flufflewuffles in the whole world. Fluff, roll over and let the nice lady scratch your tum-tum.
- FLUFFLES:** I beg your pardon?
- DICK:** *(Ignoring him)* And, he does tricks!
- JACK:** Such as what?
- DICK:** Well, he can talk.
- JACK shrugs*
- DICK:** Tough crowd. All right, watch this.
- A boombox appears. DICK takes a tape from his pocket and it plays a musical montage: can-can, Scottish dancing etc. FLUFFLES acts as if hypnotised, performing energetic actions for each piece of music. Finally it plays the opening bars to Memories, and FLUFFLES raises his arm as if about to start singing. DICK hastily switches it off. FLUFFLES blinks as if unsure where he is.*
- ALICE:** Oh my goodness, that was amazing!
- DICK:** You wouldn't say that if you'd heard him sing.
- JACK:** So can you get him to do anything, just by playing the right music?
- DICK:** Yeah, weird, isn't it?
- FLUFFLES:** Get who to do anything?
- ALICE:** *(Stage whisper to DICK)* Doesn't he remember?
- DICK:** No, he never does. *(He approaches FLUFFLES and pats his cheeks)* Nothing to worry about, Fluff. You have a rest.
- FLUFFLES:** I do feel tired. I suppose it's the lack of food. *(He glances into the wings)* Ooh, there's a nail bar! My poor chipped claws are desperate for some Shellac. I'm out of here.

*Exit FLUFFLES*

**DICK:** I hope I can find some work soon. Mr Fluffles isn't the only one with a rumbling tummy.

**ALICE:** *(Glancing offstage)* Here come my father and Sarah. *(She clutches DICK's arm)* Maybe he can give you a job! He's always saying he could use another pair of hands around the shop.

**JACK:** You what? He can't even afford mine and Mum's wages, let alone this no-hoper.

**DICK:** I don't know much about pies, Alice. *(He takes her hands)* But I'd love to stay close to you.

**JACK:** *(To audience)* I do not like him, folks. I don't care if he is the hero. No one gets away with muscling in on my Alice.

*Enter ALDERMAN and SARAH*

**SARAH:** ...and then the rhinoceros said, "Madam, will you kindly remove your umbrella?" *(ALDERMAN laughs raucously)*

**ALICE:** Oh, Daddy, I've met the most wonderful young man! *(She draws DICK forward)* This is Richard Whittington, but everyone calls him Dick.

**SARAH:** They used to call my husband Dick. He hated it.

**ALDERMAN:** Why was that, Sarah?

**SARAH:** His name was Fred.

**ALICE:** Dick is from **[local place]**, Daddy.

**ALDERMAN:** Is that so? I'm from Aldringham myself.

**DICK:** So you're an alderman from Aldringham?

**ALDERMAN:** Yes, I left home to seek my fortune as a lad. My wife was a local girl though. She owned a dress shop in Fitzrovia.

**DICK:** You mean she was a clothier from Fitzrovia?

**ALDERMAN:** That's right. My father, on the other hand, had a hairdressing establishment on the Yorkshire coast.

**DICK:** Let me guess. He was a barber from Scarborough.

**ALDERMAN:** *(Putting an arm around him)* I like you, my boy. Sharp as a whip. What brings you to London?

**DICK:** I came seeking work, sir. My family are so poor, we've had to sell all our earthly possessions. We've got nothing left in the world except a 1972 *Crossroads* annual and an old Justin Bieber album.

**ALICE:** Couldn't you employ Dick, Daddy? You're always saying how much you need another assistant, what with Jack being so lazy.

**JACK:** Oi!

**ALDERMAN:** I'd love to take you on, Master Dick, but I simply can't afford to. I haven't sold a pie for weeks. My last hope is that the sea voyage I've arranged to foreign lands will bring us succour.

**SARAH:** We're the suckers if we think that's going to help. What does it matter what recipes we bring back when they'll be gobbled up by the rats?

**ALDERMAN:** I know, my dear, but it's our last hope.

**DICK:** Are you putting to sea, sir?

**ALDERMAN:** That's right, Dick, we're off on a mission to discover the finest pastry recipes in existence. To explore strange new pies, and maybe the odd tart. To boldly split infinitives that no alderman has split before!

**JACK:** What's wrong with the odd tart you've got at home? (*SARAH reacts*)

**ALDERMAN:** (*Frowning at JACK*) That's enough standing around idle, Idle Jack. I've got a job for you.

**JACK:** Oh, what? Sounds like hard work.

**ALDERMAN:** I need a captain for tomorrow's voyage. I want you to scour London for a reliable, sober chap with seagoing experience.

**JACK:** Reliable, sober, seagoing. Got it.

*JACK exits*

**ALICE:** Oh, Daddy. I wish the sea voyage was the way to revive our fortunes, but Sarah's right. The rats will still eat our pies before we can sell them.

**DICK:** Are rats the problem, Alderman?

**ALDERMAN:** That's right. They're all over London.

*Two RATS scurry across the stage carrying a large pie. RATS continue to scurry across the back of the stage throughout the next bit, one wearing a dame wig*

**ALICE:** You see? There's another!

**ALDERMAN:** And another!

**SARAH:** And that little so-and-so's half-inched one of my wigs!

**DICK:** I think I can help. Hang on.

*Exit DICK, who returns dragging a reluctant FLUFFLES*

**FLUFFLES:** Do you mind? I was just about to have my whiskers curled. *(He looks around)* Ugh! Rats! You know I'm scared to death of them, Dick. I'm off.

**DICK:** Don't go yet. Just stand here.

*He puts a tape in the boombox and a heroic piece of music plays (song suggestion: Eye of the Tiger). FLUFFLES starts shadow boxing, flexing muscles and generally looking fierce and brave. A fight scene takes place to the music until FLUFFLES has seen off all the RATS*

**SARAH:** That was wonderful!

**ALICE:** Oh, Dick, well done! *(She goes to FLUFFLES and hugs him)* You were ever so brave, Mr Fluffles.

**FLUFFLES:** Why am I being manhandled like this? And where did those awful rats go?

**ALDERMAN:** This is a marvellous animal, Dick. *(He puts his arm around DICK and FLUFFLES)* You have saved my business. How can I possibly thank you?

**DICK:** Did you mention a job?

**ALDERMAN:** Of course! Young man, you and your cat will start work as my official ratcatchers first thing tomorrow.

**CURTAIN**