

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: *(Curtain up on main stage, the Docks in London Town.)*

AT RISE: *(Chorus and Principals to sing as appropriate. Song 1 – Good Day Sunshine.)*

(ALICE enters stage right and joins THE CHORUS.)

ALICE Morning everyone!

CHORUS Morning Alice!

ALICE Isn't it a beautiful day? Not that I should be out here sunning myself when there's such a lot of work to do. We're preparing a huge Sale at Fitzwarren's Stores tomorrow to sell off as much as we can before we set sail for Morocco. Oh, it's so exciting. Are you all going to come and buy?

CHORUS "Yes Alice." "Certainly will." "Wouldn't miss it etc."

(Enter MR FITZWARREN.)

FITZWARREN Ah, there you are Alice. You're needed in the shop. We're still overrun by those dreadful *(Stops himself, looks around to make sure he's not overheard, then speaks again in stage whisper.)* ... rats!

ALICE Oh dear, father. Whatever are we going to do?

FITZWARREN I really don't know. I've been chasing them all over the store. There was one in Sports Goods, another in Furniture and even one in Ladies Underwear. Very peculiar!

ALICE What about traps?

FITZWARREN They're too clever to get caught in them.

ALICE Poison?

FITZWARREN All our special rat poison is already bagged up on the ship ready to send to Morocco to help the Sultan with his infestation. I'll just have to keep chasing them I suppose.

(FITZWARREN exits)

ALICE The only person who might be able to help is our apprentice, Idle Jack, but he's never around when you need him. I'll see if I can find him. Jack!

(ALICE goes off calling for him as JACK enters from other side of stage.)

JACK Hello kids! *(Whatever the response he goes off again, only to re-enter instantly.)* Hello kids! *(Repeat until he gets a good response.)* That's better. Let me introduce myself. I am Idle Jack and I am the apprentice at Fitzwarren's Stores. That's where I work. Well, I say work, but I try not to get my hands too dirty if you know what I mean. Who likes work anyway? Go on, put your hands up if you like working? Three. And hands up if you don't like hard work. Ha! Six thousand and two. And it's not just work at the moment. We've got...*(Looks around and stage whispers.)* ...a bit of an infestation at the moment. Rats. Everywhere you look. It's the cheese they're after, of course. Do you like cheese? What's your favourite cheese? Do you know what the strongest cheese is? Arnold Schwarzencheddar. How do you handle the world's most dangerous cheese? Caerphilly. What's Jay Z's favourite cheese? Brieonce. I've got loads more. What cheese do they eat in a galaxy far, far away? Boba Feta. Did you hear about the explosion in the cheese factory? There was de-brie everywhere. What about the cheese seller who painted his wife? He Double Gloucester. What's the best cheese to tempt a bear out of the woods? Come on bear. What hotel do rats stay at? The Stilton. Oh, talking of rats, we've still got our problem. But I've got another problem. Have you met Alice? I'm in love with her but she doesn't notice me. It's really sad. *(Audience reaction.)* No, it's sadder than that. I have a cunning plan. If I can solve the rat problem, then that will get me in her good books and she might start to like me. So I've built something special. See, I'm not always idle. There it is. *(Points to Ratometer).* Whenever I see a rat, if I shout loud enough the Ratometer will go off. Trouble is, I'm too lazy to do much shouting. Hey, I've got an idea! If you spot any rats, will you shout and set it off?

(At this point a rat or two appears so the audience can test it out. It works.)

That's brilliant, thanks very much!

(ALICE O/S) Jack!

JACK Right I've got to go. See you later and watch out for those pesky rats.

(JACK exits. Lights down main stage and up down left, still set as King Rat's lair. FAIRY DOT enters.)

FAIRY DOT Oh err, there's nobody here. *(She is facing the wrong way, away from the audience.)* Hello? *(Hopefully we'll get a 'behind you' going here and she'll eventually turn round.)* Aha! There you are. Now I'll set a trap to catch that wicked wolf before he can eat Red Riding Hood. But what would a wolf be doing in a place like this? Oh no, I've done it again. Is this King Rat's lair?

(Audience shout 'Yes')

Then this must be Dick Whittington, not Red Riding Hood. I'm Fairy Dot and I'm afraid I'm quite a forgetful fairy and I'm always muddling things up. Do you think you could help me out boys and girls? If you think I've gone wrong could you all shout out 'Fairy Dot you've lost the plot'. Shall we give it a go? Hang on. Now where have those seven dwarves got to?

(Audience reaction.)

Excellent, well done. I have to find King Rat within his lair. He cannot be allowed to be Lord Mayor. I'll go to London, try to find a hero to help me get his numbered rats to zero! Bye for now!

(Exit FAIRY DOT. Lights down stage left and lights up on main stage. Enter SARAH on supermarket trolley containing bags containing unidentified items.)

SARAH I'm going to get trollied tonight! Hello boys and girls! Mums and Dads! Carers and Personal Assistants! Pretend Uncles who aren't really uncles but come round for tea and are sometimes so tired they have to stay the night, especially when Dad's on the night shift! Let me introduce myself. I am Sarah and I am the cook at Fitzwarren's Stores. I sometimes take my work home with me, ahem. Do you want to see what's in my bag? Alright, I'll show you. *(Pulls out a bunch of bananas.)* Oh look, bananas from Fruit and Veg. Did you know they're not going to grow bananas any longer? No, they're quite long enough.

SARAH *(Cont.) (Pulls out a pair of knickers.)* These are from Lingerie. Jack told me he was at the gym the other day and there were two men getting changed and one of them put on a pair of lace knickers. His friend said, "how long have you been wearing ladies knickers?" and he replied, "ever since my wife found them in my glove compartment". Aren't there a lot of you? If I'd known you were coming, I'd have had me hair done at *[local hairdressers]*. I've been chasing rats all morning so I bet I look a mess. Do I look a mess? *(Audience reaction. She picks on someone.)* Well you can shut up for a start. I know where you live you know. Anyway, I'm the cook, did I tell you that? Oh yes, my dumplings are the talk of the town. And what a town it is, dear old London Town, home of *[Local TV show]*. I love *[local TV show]* and I'm pleased to say we've got some of the cast members in the audience tonight with us. There's *[Local TV show cast member]*, single-handedly keeping the cigarette and

sherry industries going. And look that's [*Local TV show cast member*], fresh from her new job at Walford's Cheese factory. She curdles the milk just by looking at it. And [*Bold local TV star*] is in. Ooops, I am sorry madam. That dress is cut very low though. [*Local TV show*], well it's so true to life, isn't it? Mind you, if you're invited to a wedding there don't go. Much too dangerous. Same with Christmas dinner. Or any family function at all come to think of it. In fact you are much better off staying here with us and enjoying the show. Right, I must be off to prepare tonight's meal. We're having ratatouille! Ta ta!

(*SARAH exits. Enter DICK and THE CHORUS as various townsfolk. Also at some stage TOMMY the Cat enters, curls up on the floor and indulges in cat-like actions – washing, priming whiskers, chasing tail, licking. Possibly has a rat to play with/taunt?*)

DICK Excuse me. Can anyone help me? I've walked all the way from Gloucester, via the remarkable [*Local village/town.*]

(*Hopefully cheers.*)

DICK (*Cont.*) whilst taking a detour around the notorious district of [*Neighbouring local village/town*]

(*Hopefully boos.*)

And it's taken me many days to get here. I'm desperate for work and I've heard the streets of London are paved with gold.

CHORUS #1 (*Has clearly trodden on something unpleasant.*) That's not what I heard mate.

DICK There must be some work to be had in a busy town like this.

CHORUS #1 Haven't you heard? There's still a recession on and we've still got horses territory.

CHORUS #2 I think you mean austerity.

CHORUS #1 You haven't seen what I just trod in. (*Looking at the bottom of his shoe.*)

(*Dick spots the cat and starts playing with him.*)

DICK Well you're a fine feline fellow, aren't you?

(*Cat rubs up against his leg.*)

DICK (*Cont.*) And friendly too. I shall call you Tommy if nobody objects.

CHORUS #2 No, no. Call it what you want.

(Enter Alice)

ALICE Oh, hello. Who are you?

DICK My name is Dick Whittington and I have come to London to make my fortune.

ALICE Well good luck with that!

DICK I don't suppose you know where I could get a job do you?

ALICE Well, I might.

(ALICE and DICK carry on a mimed 'conversation' whilst the FAIRY DOT enters unseen by the others.)

FAIRY DOT Well here I am. Now all I have to do is get Jack to sell the cow for those magic beans...

(Audience reaction.)

Oh, I've done it again, haven't I? Thank you so much. So this must be Dick Whittington. Doesn't look much like a hero, does he?

(TOMMY rubs up against her.)

FAIRY DOT *(Cont.)* But on the other hand here is a cat. And what thing better than to fight a rat. And this cat's strong and handsome, broad and tall. I think I've found my hero after all!

(Song 2 – Holding Out For a Hero. Song ends with TOMMY now upright on two legs.)

ALICE So we need to sell everything in a sale tomorrow so we can set sail to Morocco!

DICK Hang on a moment. You need someone to help sell the stock from Fitzwarren's Stores?

ALICE Yes that's it.

DICK And then you are all sailing to Morocco to poison the Sultans rats with your potent potion.

ALICE You've got it. Everyone's going, even Sarah our cook. You are quite smart aren't you? As well as handsome.

DICK Oh I don't know ... handsome?

(Enter FITZWARREN)

ALICE Oh father I've found another pair of hands to help sell the stock.

FITZWARREN Splendid! What's your name young fellow?

DICK Dick Whittington sir.

FITZWARREN Mick Trittington? Jolly good, jolly good. I'll give it some thought.

DICK No sir, its Dick ...

(FITZWARREN wanders off.)

ALICE Don't worry about him Dick. He'll get it right. Eventually.

(TOMMY pursues FITZWARREN and makes up to him, flexing his muscles and shadow boxing to get his attention.)

FITZWARREN Whose cat is this?

DICK Well, I suppose he's mine aren't you Tommy?

(TOMMY leans on DICK and nods in the affirmative.)

FITZWARREN Well I can certainly do with a cat to help chase all those rats away.
I'll tell you what, Rick Fittington. I could do with a new apprentice.
(Points at Dick like Alan Sugar from the tv. Series the apprentice.)
You're hired!

(The Apprentice theme as curtains close)

(CURTAIN)

(END OF SCENE)