



DICK WHITTINGTON

& The Cat

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Bitesize Theatre Co., 8 Green Meadows, New Broughton, Wrexham, LL11 6SG

DICK WHITTINGTON (New version)

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Cast: DICK SAILOR2
BUTCHER ALICE CAT
FRUIT SELLER FITZWARREN COOLIO
COSTER POLICEMAN AUNT SALLY SHABBA RANKS
BAKER RATCATCHER SAILOR1

Scene 1 Covent Garden Market, London

[*While the audience is still coming in, the Street-sellers enter and move around the audience selling their wares. Dick enters with a bundle on a stick. He speaks with a Sheffield {or Manchester} accent. He looks weary but cheerful. He wanders about looking hungrily at what's on sale, stopping to share his thoughts {adlib} with the audience.*]

DICK: Hello there. [**audience: Hello**] Oh, come on. I'm sure you can do better than that. Hello. [**audience: Hello**] That's better. My name is Dick Whittington and you've no idea how glad I am to be here, in London, at last. I've come to London to make my fortune. But in order to get here I've had to walk for days and days and it's a really long way from my home up North. So, I'm really tired and hungry. Everything here looks so nice doesn't it ? And I'd really like to buy something to eat but... unfortunately, I haven't any money. Sad, in't it. [*encourages the audience to give him sympathy. audience Awww.*] I said sad, in't it [**audience: Awww**] Oh, come on ! It's much worse than that. [**audience: Awww**] I mean it's not as bad as livin' in't shoe box in't middle of road, but I am penniless, I'm in a strange town with nowhere to live and no one to look after me. Sad, in't it [**audience: Awww**] That's better. It's real nice of you all to be so sympathetic, but unfortunately sympathy doesn't keep body and soul together, does it? You'll know what I mean, missus ? Yes, I thought so. But I'm so hungry I'll try anything. So, here goes. [*He comes centre stage and talks to the Baker.*] Hello.

BAKER: Hello there, young sir. What can I do for you ?

DICK: I was wondering, sir, if you could perhaps spare me some bread. You see I've come a long way and I'm very hungry.

BAKER: Well, you can buy any loaf you see, it's all for sale.

DICK: Well, actually, I was hoping you might let me have some, for now.

BAKER: You mean you've no money.

DICK: Well no, not yet.

BAKER: Then come back when you have some, and I'll gladly sell you anythin' you want.

DICK: But I'm hungry now, I haven't eaten for days. *[to audience]* Sad in't it. *[gets the audience to sympathise. **audience: Awww**]*

BAKER: Look lad, if I gave bread away to every poor person what asked me, I'd be begging on the streets myself before long, wouldn't I ? So I'm sorry. No money, no bread.

DICK: I promise to pay you for it, indeed, I'll pay you double, once I've made my fortune.

BAKER: Made your fortune ? And how long do you think that's gonna take you.

DICK: Not long, I hope to be rich by the end of today, tomorrow at the latest.

BAKER: *[laughs]*. Here, lads, listen to this. This lad here reckons he has a way of gettin' rich by tonight.

BUTCHER: Oh, yeh and how's that then ?

COSTER: I bet it ain't legal.

BUTCHER: Yeh ! What are you gonna steal, lad, the crown jewels? *[They all Laugh]*

DICK: Oh, I wouldn't steal anything, that would be wrong.

BUTCHER: Oh, yeh. Silly me.

COSTER: So how is it that you're gonna be rich by tonight then?

BAKER: This I must hear.

DICK: Well I've been told that the streets of London are paved with gold and so all I'll have to do is just pick the gold off the ground. And then I'll be rich. *[The street traders all laugh.]* What's funny ?.... Well, if you're going to be like that, you can keep your bread. I'll just find the gold covered streets and then I'll buy a mountain of bread.... and some nice new clothes and I can live happily ever after, like all the rich people in London.

FRUIT: *[coming forward]* Alright. alright. *[to the other traders]* That's enough. Leave the lad alone.

COSTER: It was just a bit of fun.

[*The Coster and the Butcher go about their business. The Baker exits.*]

FRUIT: Don't mind them, they don't mean any harm. What's your name lad ?

DICK: Dick Whittington, maam, and I've come down from up North to make my fortune.

FRUIT: So you said. But, turn around Dick Whittington. Tell me what you see. Do we look well-dressed ? Do we look rich?

DICK: Well no.

FRUIT: No. So don't you think, that if there was all this gold just lying around,... we might be?

DICK: Perhaps, the gold pavements are in another part of London.

[**song: Streets of London**]

FRUIT: There are no gold-covered pavements, lad. Just the same dirty streets there are everywhere.

**Look at these people who work the streets of London ?
Dirt in their hair and their clothes in rags
Just hoping that a passer-by
Will stop and listen to their cry
And pay them a penny for the goods that they sell.**

ALL: **You say you've come looking for a golden street
And a fortune's there, for you to find
Let us take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London,
Nothing there is golden, nothing's that refined.**

[*Enter the Ratcatcher. He picks one of the street-sellers pockets and listens.*]

DICK: But there must be golden streets. I've travelled all this way to find them.

FRUIT: I'm sorry, lad. [*The Fruitseller gives Dick an apple.*] Here, have this.

DICK: Thank you. But I can't pay you for it ?

FRUIT: It's alright, you can have it. I'll survive. You just see that you do too, alright. [*she finds a customer*]

DICK: Thank you.

RATCAT: Psst!..... Psst!

DICK: What ? Oh, can I help you, sir ?

RATCAT: No, but I think I can help you. Did I happen to hear you say you was down on your luck, sonny ?

DICK: You could say that.

RATCAT: Then I suppose you might be lookin' for a way to make a few bob, eh!

DICK: Well, yes. I do need to find work as soon as possible.

RATCAT: Then you just come along with me. I've a bit of work for you.

DICK: Oh, thank you. What sort of work is it?

RATCAT: Well, let's just say I'm in theredistribution of wealth. Sort of like... like Robin Hood. [*chuckles*] That's quite good, that, Robin Hood. Yeh ! [*chuckles*].

DICK: Oh, so... sort of charity work ?

RATCAT: Yeh! You could say that.

DICK: That's just what I need to start me off on my way to fame and fortune here in London.

RATCAT: Yeh well, let's not get carried away. I can make sure you has food to eat and a bit for yourself, but that's all. Alright ? [*Dick nods eagerly*] Now, what do they call you, Lad?

DICK: I'm Dick Whittington, and I come from up North.

RATCAT: Really, and so nobody will know you, here in London, then ?

DICK: No, no one.

RATCAT: Good! Well, most folk call me the Ratcatcher, on account that once upon a time I used to catch Rats for a livin'.

DICK: Isn't that very dangerous ?

RATCAT: It is indeed. I could tell you some tales, Dick..... in fact, I'll tell you one now. You see, there was one day I was called to this house,... not far away from here in fact, belonging to an Alderman Fitzwarren. They wanted me to catch some rats, that were loose in the yard. Well, I'd picked up a lot. Indeed, I had one in each hand an' another against me knee. An' I came on a sheaf o' straw, which I turned over and there was a rat there. Well, I couldn't lay hold of him, cos me hands was full, an' as I stooped down, he ran up the sleeve of me coat an' bit me on the arm. I shall never forget it. Me arm swole up, an' it was so painful I couldn't bear anyone to touch it. I was kept in bed for 2 months cos o' that bite.... So now I has a healthy respect for rats..... And you better stay well clear of any you come across.

DICK: Are there many rats about?

RATCAT: The place is infested with them, Dick. You wouldn't believe the number of rats there are in London. More and more every single day.

DICK: Oh, dear.

RATCAT: What's wrong ?

DICK: Well, I had hoped that London would be such a nice place. Where everyone was happy and rich, and..... and it's not.

[*The Coster exits. song & dance routine: Always Look on the Bright Side of Life.*]

RATCAT: Well, never mind. Life's like that. You just have to stay cheerful, that's my philosophy.

**Some things in life are bad, they can really make you mad.
Other things just make you swear and curse.**

BUTCHER: **When you're chewing on life's grisle,**

FRUIT: **Don't grumble**