



Preview Script

# **Whittington**

**a one act musical for schools**

**by**

**Les Emmans**

# Whittington

by Les Emmans

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**NOTE : This is a preview version, and does not contain the full script.**

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## Characters

**Principals** (4m, 2f, 2m/f)

*\* denotes a singing role*

**Richard Whittington** \* - a young 15th Century man

**Master Fitzwaryn** - a wealthy member of the Mercers Company of London

**Captain** \* - a kindly and sensible seafaring type

**Sultan** - a friendly potentate of an Eastern or Middle Eastern country

**Mrs Hogg** \* - housekeeper to Master Fitzwaryn, a tyrant, unhappy with her lot

**Alice Fitzwaryn** \* - a young 15th Century girl, befriends Richard

**Cat** \* - taken in from the street by Richard (Can be played by either sex)

**Tom** \* - the ships cat, (sings, but doesn't speak. Can be played by either sex)

**Supporting Cast** (1m, 1f, 6m/f)

Sir William Whittington - Richard's father

Lady Whittington - Richard's mother

Narrator - optional part, may also read the optional short poem (m/f)

Servant \* - employed at the Whittington's family home (m/f)

Stranger - meets Richard in London (m/f)

Voice 1 and 2 - either a sailor or a servant (m/f)

Chief Minister - the Sultan's assistant (m/f)

Official - a member of the Sultan's staff (m/f)

Choruses  
London - Bell Chorus  
London - Street Traders  
London - Fitzwaryn Kitchen Staff / Servants (inc seven small solo parts)  
Sailors  
Morroco - Rats and Mice  
Morroco - Sultan's Courtiers

## Musical Numbers

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) The Bell Chorus                  | 18) On The Sea                       |
| 2) The London Streets               | 19) We're Rather Lucky Rats and Mice |
| 3) The Bell Chorus (Reprise)        | 20) Fanfare For The Sultan           |
| 4) Street Cries                     | 21) Entry Of The Sultans People      |
| 5) The Bell Chorus (Reprise)        | 22) Oh, What a Calamity              |
| 6) It's Just Not Right              | 23) A Cat?                           |
| 7) Alice's Song                     | 24) The Cats Chase the Rats and Mice |
| 8) The Housekeeper's Song           | 25) Hornpipe Dance                   |
| 9) The Housekeeper's Song (Reprise) | 26) Fanfare for the Sultan           |
| 10) The Bell Chorus (Reprise)       | 27) Entry of the Sultan's People     |
| 11) The Empty Street                | 28) Cat's Duet                       |
| 12) The Two of Us                   | 29) Master Fitzwaryn's House         |
| 13) The Two of Us (Reprise)         | 30) Hornpipe                         |
| 14) Kitchen Music                   | 31) Good Gracious Me! (Reprise)      |
| 15) Good Gracious Me                | 32) Closing Dance                    |
| 16) Alice and Richard               | 33) The Bell Chorus                  |
| 17) Hornpipe Song                   | 34) Curtain Calls                    |



## Scene 2 - A Busy and Crowded London Street

Here is an opportunity to explore and use street cries of the period. These are some examples:

“Jaw work ... up and under jaw work. A whole pot for a halfpenny, hazel nuts!”

“The boot laces - AND the boot laces!”

“Fine warnuts, penny for ten, all cracked!”

The Street Cries music can be used over or between the cries. Richard enters, his bundle on his shoulder, approaches a passer-by and asks for directions to Master Fitzwaryn’s house. The passer-by points down the street. Richard nods a “thanks” and leaves the stage.

### **MUSIC #4 : STREET CRIES**

**Traders**      *Listen to the street cries  
Urgent and exciting.  
Watch the milling crowds,  
See the urchins fighting.*

*Pity all the beggars,  
Reaching out for arms, sir.  
Spare a tiny coin,  
Press one in their palm, sir.*

*Step aside for gentry,  
With their airs and graces.  
Carriage wheels spin round,  
Flinging mud in faces.*

*Hold on to your purse, sir,  
If you should be wealthy.  
Watch for cunning thieves,  
Dangerous and stealthy.*

*Step around the drunkards,  
Such a sad affliction.  
Nothing you can do,  
Victims of addiction.*

*Dangerous yet lively,  
Makes your senses tingle.  
Join the teeming throngs,  
Come with us and mingle.*

### **MUSIC #5 : THE BELL CHORUS (REPRISE)**

**Chorus**      *Ding dong, ding dong  
Richard’s here in London.*

## Scene 3

The kitchen at the house of the London Mercer Master Fitzwaryn. The kitchen staff are bustling about doing various kitchen jobs. Mrs Hogg enters and starts chasing the staff about.

### **MUSIC #6 - IT’S JUST NOT RIGHT**

**Mrs Hogg**      *Come on you lot and pull your weight.  
You’ll never be finished by half-past eight.  
So no pay for you and no supper tonight.  
You’ll work and work, 'till you get it alright.*

Mrs Hogg bustles out, glaring around as she leaves.

**Servants**      *It’s just not right, it’s just not right!  
We’re bullied and chivvied from morn 'till night.  
If we tell about her, she’ll skin us alive.  
We’re scared to death, and it’s hard to survive.*

*She'll make us drink water and eat pig swill.  
She'll keep her promise, we know she will.*

*It's just not right, it's just not right!  
We quiver and tremble in mortal fright.  
We just pray that someone will topple her throne.  
We'll have a chance to come into our own.  
It's no use complaining we're just her slaves.  
She'll lose her temper, and rant and rave.*

*It's just not right, it's just not right!  
We quiver and tremble in mortal fright.  
We just pray that someone will topple her throne.  
We'll have a chance to come into our own.  
We'll stick together, ignore her wrath.  
We'll ditch the swill, and dine on broth.*

*This is followed by a suitable kitchen-like dance routine (stomping and clanging etc). Mrs Hogg returns afterwards, glaring at the staff in the kitchen.*

**Mrs Hogg** Leave the kitchen ... immediately! Find work in the scullery. *(She waves them out of the room. They hurry out, pushing each other in their haste to get away from the old tyrant. She calls through the kitchen door).* Come in please!

*Richard enters, escorted by Alice, the Master's daughter.*

**Alice** Thank you, Mrs Hogg. I will talk to this young man – alone! *(Mrs Hogg flounces out. Alice indicates that Richard should sit at the kitchen table).* So you have come to join us and learn to be a mercer.

**Richard** Yes, Miss Fitzwaryn.

**Alice** You must work hard, and do as you are told.

**Richard** Yes, Miss Fitzwaryn

**Alice** You may call me Alice. What is your name?

**Richard** If you please Miss Alice, my name is Richard, though my friends call me Dick.

**Alice** I shall call you Richard. Now, I think you must be tired by your long journey from Gloucestershire. *(She calls to Mrs Hogg, who enters).* Show this young man to a room in the attic, then bring him back here and feed him well.

**Mrs Hogg** Yes, Mistress.

**Richard** Thank you Miss Alice.

*He leaves with Mrs Hogg.*

#### **MUSIC #7 : ALICE'S SONG**

**Alice** *A fine young man, with gentle ways.  
I hope he stays.*

*He has a noble look.  
His face an open book.*

*A fine young man, with gentle ways.  
I hope he stays.*

#### **Scene 4**

*The kitchen the next day. Mrs Hogg is working on her own.*

#### **MUSIC #8 : THE HOUSEKEEPER'S SONG**

**Mrs Hogg** *I scrubs and cleans for most of the day,  
With little thanks and not much pay.  
I'm on my knees on the kitchen floor,  
And look at me hands! Red and raw!*

*I peels and chops and scrapes and mops,  
I lifts and heaves, and all the time grieves  
Of who I think I should surely be:  
A grand ladies' maid, smart and free.*

*I'm sick and tired of feeling so used  
And now's the time to get me dues.  
I'll find a way to make them pay.  
I'll have my way - make them pay!*

*Enter Richard*

**Mrs Hogg** Ah! There you are young man. Come here. I need to discuss a matter of business with you. *(She ushers him to sit with her at the table. She addresses him in a conspiratorial manner).* You play your cards right and we can do very nicely out of this household. Young Miss Alice seems to have taken a shine to you, and you'll have her eatin' out your hand in no time at all. It's like this, the master has business with some very rich cargoes coming and going, and I have contacts who'd like to get their hands on some of it - if you get my meaning?! All you have to do is keep your ears open, and then tip me the wink when you hear that rich cargoes are on the move. I have good friends who will pay us well for that kind of information. It's a chance for us to make some easy pickings. What do you say to that young fellow? *(She gives him a poke in the ribs).*

**Richard** If you are asking me to help you and your friends to rob the Master and his dear daughter Alice, you can count me out, you evil woman. I wouldn't lift a hand to help you, and be careful that I don't tell the Master what you are plotting!

**Mrs Hogg** You'd better not! I'll make you very sorry indeed if you even think of it!! Now get away to your work, before I beat you!

*Richard hurriedly leaves the room.*

#### **MUSIC #9 : THE HOUSEKEEPER'S SONG (REPRISE)**

*Mrs Hogg* So the foolish boy ignored a good ploy.  
To my disgust couldn't steal a crust.  
We could have worked it so nice and neat  
And feathered our nests. What a treat!  
  
*I still scrubs and cleans for most of the day,  
With little thanks and not much pay.  
I'm on my knees on the kitchen floor,  
And look at me hands! Red and raw!*

*Mrs Hogg stomps out of the kitchen*

#### Scene 5

*An empty London street.*

#### **MUSIC #10 : THE BELL CHORUS (REPRISE)**

**Chorus** Ding dong, ding dong  
Richard's leaving London.

#### **MUSIC #11 : THE EMPTY STREET**

*Richard slowly enters to the subdued sounds of the bell music. A stranger enters in the opposite direction, closely followed by a cat. As the stranger nears he "shoos" at the cat.*

**Stranger** *(To Richard)* This wretched animal has followed me all the way from Bow. I wish it would leave me alone. It must be a stray.

**Richard** *(Stroking the cat)* Hallo cat! You look as miserable as I feel.

**Cat** Miaow!

**Richard** I guess we're both not wanted. I couldn't stay where I was with that dreadful Mrs Hogg and I reckon you're in a similar situation.

**Cat** Miaow!

**Stranger** It seems that she's taken to you, and you're welcome! I'm off!

*He hurries away.*

**Richard** It looks as though it's just the two of us together.

**Cat** Miaow!

## MUSIC #12 : THE TWO OF US

**Richard**     *Instead of just me there's the two of us.  
Down on our luck, the two of us  
I have no money and nowhere to go.  
Just me and you, and the bells of Bow.*

*Instead of just me there's the two of us  
Both so forlorn, the two of us.  
Here in the city, a sad lonely street,  
No one to meet us, and no friend to greet.*

**Richard**     Perhaps I shouldn't have left Master Fitzwaryn's house. I've done nothing wrong. I should have been strong and stood up to that horrid Mrs Hogg. Alice and the Master were very kind to me, and my father will be very annoyed if I leave my apprenticeship so soon.

## MUSIC #13 : THE TWO OF US (REPRISE)

*Bow Bells can be heard in the distance.*

**Richard**     Can you hear those bells? They seem to be telling me to "Turn again ...". It must be a sign. (He *obviously makes up his mind*). Come with me little cat. We'll go back to Master Fitzwaryn. I'm sure all will be well with us, and in any case, we will have each other.

**Cat**             Miaow!

**Richard**     *Instead of just me there's the two of us.  
Down on our luck, the two of us  
I have no money and nowhere to go.  
Just me and you and the bells of Bow.*

## Scene 6 - The Fitzwaryn Kitchen

### MUSIC #14 : KITCHEN MUSIC

*All the staff enter with the music, talking excitedly. Each person is carrying a parcel except Richard, who is accompanied by the cat.*

**Mrs Hogg**     Quiet! QUIET!! The master has something very special to tell us. Take your places and settle down.

*Master Fitzwaryn enters, together with Alice, a ship's captain and some sailors.*

**Fitzwaryn**     As you all know, we mercers send much of our cloth to countries overseas. Although this business is very good, we would like to increase it even more, and to that end I have asked the good captain here to take our wares to a country none of us has ever visited. It is called Morocco. We have very high hopes that the Sultan and his people will find our wares very acceptable and I am very anxious that you all should share in this exciting venture. I do not think that the people of Morocco will know much about the kind of goods we enjoy in London, so I have asked each one of you to bring an item which the captain here will sell for you in Morocco. I am told that Morocco is a very wealthy country, and if you have chosen well, you should make a very handsome profit.

*Murmurs of excitement.*

**Voice**             Three cheers for our good and kind master.

*He/she leads the company in three cheers.*

**Richard**         But alas, I have nothing to offer.

**Voice**             Send the cat!

**Cat**                 Miaow! Miaow!

**Richard**         I cannot part with my very special friend.

**Cat**                 Miaow!

**Fitzwaryn**       I'm sorry Richard, but I have made a rule that everyone must contribute to the success of this voyage. And who knows, your cat may take very well to life on ship, and could even find a husband there.

**Cat**                 *(Excitedly)* Miaow! Miaow!

**Richard**         *(To the cat)* You are my special friend, but if you are happy to go, then so be it.

**Cat** Miaow!  
**Fitzwaryn** Excellent. Then that's settled. Now, all of you form an orderly line and give your goods to the sailors here.

*During the chorus which follows, they hand over their goods. Richard comes last with cat. He fondly strokes her as a sailor leads her away. At the end of the chorus all leave except Richard and Alice.*

### **MUSIC #15 : GOOD GRACIOUS ME**

*Chorus of servants with Mrs Hogg. The parts marked 'Voice' may be sung by individuals from the Servants Chorus or by the whole chorus, as appropriate to vocal resources.*

**Mrs Hogg** *Good gracious me, good gracious me,  
We might gain a fortune,  
Just wait and see.*

**Voice 1** *I'll give a broach,*  
**Voice 2** *And I some lace,*  
**Voice 3** *And I some balm,  
To smooth a face.*

**Mrs Hogg** *This beats the rest, this beats the rest!  
My choice is the finest,  
Mine is the best!*

**Voice 4** *I don't have much.*  
**Voice 5** *And mine's too small.*  
**Voice 6** *And mine's got squashed.*  
**Voice 7** *And mine's too tall.*

**All** *What shall we do, what shall we do,  
If one of us prospers?  
It could be you!  
Here's what we'll do,  
We'll pool the lot,  
Divide it up,  
And share the pot.*

*Good gracious me, good gracious me,  
We might gain a fortune, just wait and see.*

*Repeat the music of "Good Gracious Me" for the cast to leave the stage, leaving Alice and Richard alone. Richard looks lost and forlorn.*

**Alice** Don't be too downcast, Richard. Your cat will have a wonderful time on the ship chasing rats and enjoying the company of kindly sailors. Everybody loves a ship's cat, and who knows, she may well find a partner on board and live happily ever after!

**Richard** I suppose you are right, but I shall miss her a lot.

**Alice** Now you must think about your own future here with us. Life here is very comfortable and happy.

### **MUSIC #16 : ALICE AND RICHARD**

**Alice** *My days are filled with happiness.  
My family most blessed.  
I help with all the simple things,  
Enjoying the gifts they bring.*

**Richard** *I love the place where I was born,  
With childhood's country friends.  
And now an unknown life begins,  
And simple pleasures end.*

**Alice** *Perhaps you'll find a better way,  
The winds of change may blow.  
Good fortune smiles on those who wait,  
And take the hand of fate.*

**Both**        *Perhaps you'll / I'll find a better way,  
The winds of change may blow.  
Good fortune smiles on those who wait,  
And take the hand of fate.*

*Music plays as they leave hand in hand.*

## Scene 7 - Onboard Ship

### **MUSIC #17 : HORNPIPE SONG**

*Enter Captain and Sailors.*

**Captain**    *Listen well my lads!  
For we'll soon be off to sea.  
I've a clean trim ship.  
That's the way it has to be.  
Swab the decks and stow the grub,  
Mend the ropes then have some breakfast.  
Check for rats and feed the cats before you settle down.*

**Captain**    *To your posts, my lads!  
See how well you do your work.  
Have I chosen well?*

**Sailors**    *You will never see us shirk.  
Rig the sails and man the wheel  
Clean the bilges, have some breakfast  
Check for rats and feed the cats before we settle down.*

**Captain**    *Heed your Captain, lads!  
For we'll soon be off to sea.  
I've the finest crew,*

**Sailors**    *And with that we all agree!*

**Captain**    *Plan the watch and sign the log.*

**Sailors**    *Store the biscuits and the grog!  
And check for rats and feed the cats before we settle down.*

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