

BBC Learning English

Pantomime

Dick Whittington and his Cat



Words in **bold** are explained at the end

Scene 1 – A cat and his man

NARRATOR: We present: The story of Dick Whittington and his cat, a pantomime.
Featuring the cats and cast of BBC Learning English.

Let's start off by meeting our hero, Dick Whittington. He's just walking home after a long day at the office...Hey there Dick.

DICK: Hello!

NARRATOR: Tell us a bit about yourself. Where you're from, hobbies and so on...

DICK: Well... I'm a young man – not from London, originally – I came here last year looking for my **fortune**.

NARRATOR: Any luck so far?

DICK: Well, I've got a good job. I'm Assistant Paperclips Officer for a very large company. It's my responsibility to make sure we never, ever run out of paperclips.

NARRATOR: That sounds... really not a very good job...

DICK: *[downcast]* No, it isn't that good. *[upbeat]* But, you've got to start somewhere, haven't you? And tomorrow, things might just change for the better.

NARRATOR: Why, what's happening tomorrow?

DICK: It's the 134th London Rat-Catching Contest! The winner gets to be... Lord Mayor of London. I've always wanted to be Lord Mayor of London. It just... sounds so cool. 'Hi, I'm Dick – Lord Mayor of London'.

NARRATOR: But... Are you much good at catching rats?

DICK: No, But I've got a cat – Apple. He'll catch the rats for me.

NARRATOR: Apple's rather an odd name for a cat, isn't it?

DICK: *[put out]* Well... I don't think so, no. Anyway, you'll meet Apple in just a minute.

Hi Apple, I'm home!

APPLE: (*surly*) Where've you been? I was expecting you home an hour ago.

DICK: Sorry **old thing**. I got **held up** at the office.

APPLE: Oh right. Another paperclip 'emergency' I suppose.

DICK: Yes... something like that.

APPLE: Oh right... and how are your fingers?

DICK: They're... ok. A bit paperclippy, but.... Why do you ask?

APPLE: They haven't fallen off then?

DICK: No... Of course not, what are you talking about?!

APPLE: Well if your fingers haven't fallen off... why can't you phone and tell me you're going to be late?!

DICK: Oh please please can we just have one night without an argument?! I'm tired, I've had a long day...

APPLE: All right, all right **keep your fur on**. Your dinner's in the oven.

DICK: Thank you... Oh, rat **ragout** again! Do we really have to eat the same thing every day!?

APPLE: It's good for you - all the main **food groups** are present on that plate. And I've picked out all the tails...

DICK: Well that's something I suppose. Hey, speaking of rats, what are you doing tomorrow?

APPLE: Tomorrow – what time?

DICK: About three o'clock.

APPLE: (*Eating*) Three o'clock... let's see... I'm sleeping.

DICK: Well, how about, instead of sleeping, you take part in the 134th London Rat-Catching Contest?

APPLE: Ha! You're **having a laugh ain't cha?** No way!

DICK: Why not?

APPLE: (*in trance*) All that heartless, pointless killing ... the screams of the little creatures as they die... the blood that never comes off your paws... the horror, the horror...

DICK: But we eat rat every day!

APPLE: Yeah, frozen rat from the supermarket. If you want to kill something furry, get a professional!

DICK: I'll buy you a tuna steak...

APPLE: What's that you say? A tuna steak? Well... it wouldn't be that bad to be the Lord Mayor of London's cat....

DICK: You could eat tuna every day...

APPLE: Including weekends?

DICK: Of course. Are you going to help me, Apple?

DICK: Well, I'll give it a go.

APPLE: Yey!

Scene 2 – The 134th London Rat-Catching Contest

NARRATOR: *[As radio presenter]* So here we are at the 134th London Rat-Catching Contest, the most important and exciting event in the whole rat-catching **calendar**. What a glorious, sunny day it is for this important competition.

And there are literally thousands of cats and their owners here in Trafalgar Square... over there is Dick Whittington looking slightly **agitated** – we all know how much that young man wants to be Lord Mayor of London. And standing nearby – no! surely not – well, yes, it's that rich and successful banker, Franky Banky. What's he doing here?

FRANKY BANKY: *[fade up]* Yeah, yeah it doesn't matter if I don't win. I mean the Lord Mayor thing would just be **another string to my bow**. I'm in hedge funds, private equity, that kind of thing. Basically, I'm incredibly rich and successful. Would you believe I made 60 grand yesterday just on paperclips?

ADMIRERS: No, really? Wow.

FRANKY: Actually, there's a man who knows a thing or two about paperclips. Dick Whittington, what are you doing here?

DICK: Oh, hi Franky.

FRANKY: I was just telling these good people how **I made a killing on paperclips** yesterday and today I'm going to make another killing to become Lord Mayor of London.

DICK: Oh right.

FRANKY: Right! And, let me give you a free piece of advice. Don't waste your time, Dick. Go home now. Your little 'pet' doesn't stand a chance against my Tigger...

DICK: Tigger? Is that the name of your cat? That's very original, Franky.

FRANKY: Well it's a lot better than Apple! What kind of a name is that for a cat?! Tigger! **Where's he got to**, we're going to be starting **any minute**. Tigger! Tigger! *[fade]*

TIGGER: *[fade]* Meow, mey meame is... meow... Tigger... and mi'm going to ...meow... kill meall the mice and mats and mey measter's going to mecome Lord Meayer ... meow of ... Meondon.

ADMIRING CATS Meo, meally? Meow.

APPLE: You know Tigger, you don't have to **put up with** that accent.

TIGGER: Mehuh?

APPLE: Your accent... *[mimicking]* 'mey meame is Tigger'. There's lots you can do to improve your pronunciation...

TIGGER: Meow!

APPLE: The most important thing is that you practise every day. Listen carefully to the way humans speak, and then repeat after them. Actually, I can recommend you a really good website for improving your English, it's called... have you got a pen?.. right... it's called...

SYLVANIA FULBRIGHT: Er... Testing Testing. Is this thing working?

APPLE: It's called BBC Learning English dot com. It's a brilliant resource for every aspect of your English studies – grammar, vocabulary, listening -

FULBRIGHT: Oh... sorry about that. My name is Sylvania Fulbright. Welcome to the 134th London Rat-Catching Contest. I can see quite a few familiar faces out there... and some new ones too....

FRANKY Get on with it!

FULBRIGHT: Yes, so... These are the rules... Owners are not allowed to help their cats catch the mice in any way. Cats are only allowed to use one life during the contest and are not permitted to take **stripe-enhancing drugs**. All cats have until four o'clock to catch as many rats as they can. The owner with the most will be made... Lord Mayor of London!

ALL: Oooh / Meow

TIGGER: Meow! See you at four o'clock, **kitty-cat!**

FULBRIGHT: I now officially declare this contest... **OPEN!**

APPLE: Umpf! Ow! Oh watch it, that was my tail! I'm walking here!

NARRATOR: And they're off to a flying start, with a great crowd of cats running up the Strand. Just listen to them go!

[sports commentator]

Taking the lead we have Franky Banky's cat, Tigger, a fine three-year-old **tabby** and I believe today is Tigger's **debut** on the professional circuit... so definitely one to watch.

But another young cat that's debuting today is of course Apple... but at the moment... Apple is actually towards... the rear of the group, and... oh!...he's just slipped down that **drain**... I wonder what he'll find there...

Scene 3 – Going Underground

APPLE: *[CLOSE]* Thank crikey for that... I very nearly became a luxury **doormat** for **the likes of** Franky Banky. It's a bit dark down here though... time to use the **old** night vision... Oh, I'm in a sewer, how delightful. I wonder... is there a warm little corner where I can curl up for ten minutes? All work and no sleep makes Apple a very very ... *[yawning]* tired cat.... **This'll do...**

RAT 1: Ow!

APPLE: What's that?

RAT 1: I said 'Ow'. You just sat on me – get off you great big furball!

APPLE: Oh hello! You're a rat.

RAT 1: Really? Is that right? I haven't checked the mirror today.

APPLE: Oh, **sarcasm**. You rats are always sarcastic. By rights I ought to catch you right now and take you back to my owner.

RAT 1: You could never catch me.

APPLE: No but I could probably catch something off you – get away with all your... horrible diseases!

RAT 1: You go away! You're in *my* home!

APPLE: [*scoffing*]This?! You call this home? It stinks! And how can you stand that dripping? Hang on... there we go.

RAT 1: Oh! How'd you do that?

APPLE: You must have left the tap on.

RAT 1: Well, that's very ...er... decent of you Mr Cat.

APPLE: Apple. My name's Apple.

RAT 1: Apple? That's a strange name for a cat.

APPLE: Yeah, I'm not too pleased about it but what can I do? What's your name?

RAT 1: Oh... you can just call me Rat 1. Er, let me introduce my family. This is my wife, Rat 2.

APPLE: Pleased to meet you.

RAT 2: Pleased to meet you Apple. I've been telling him about that dripping for weeks.

RAT 1: And this is my cousin, Rat 3.

APPLE: Hey Rat 3...

RAT 3: What's happening, Apple?

RAT 1: And this is my little sister, Rat 4

APPLE: Rat 4, Rat 4!... *Encantada*.

RAT 4: (*giggles*)Pleased to meet you!

APPLE: You er... you all look and sound quite similar don't you?

RAT 3: Yes, there is a **strong family likeness** but it's easy to **tell us apart**.

APPLE: Oh right, how do I do that?

RAT 1: Just download the script. But you haven't met the kids yet. Here they

are, Rats 5 to 30.

APPLE: Oh... hello.

MANY Hello!

RATS:

APPLE: Listen, you guys had better go and hide somewhere. Today's the day of the London Rat-Catching Contest. There are a lot of mean cats about who would just love to meet your family, if you know what I mean.

MANY HE'S BEHIND YOU!

RATS:

APPLE: Who? Who's behind me?

RAT 1: Quick, everyone! Run away!

FRANKY: Ha ha! Too late, too late little rats!

APPLE: Franky Banky!!!

FRANKY: That's right, it is I, Franky Banky and you can all **boo** if you like, I don't care, that's how bad I am! Thank you Apple, for introducing me to this cosy little rat family. Get them Tigger!

TIGGER: Meow!

RAT 1: Run everybody, run!

FRANKY: Ha ha ha ha. They won't get far! And neither will you, Apple. How about the two of us go for a little walk?

APPLE: Well, thanks for the offer, but I'd rather not. I was just settling down for a nap, you see.

FRANKY: Oh Apple. [*indulgent laughing*] Apple, Apple, Apple. I really think it's time you came with me...

APPLE: No, it's DEFINITELY time for a nap. **It's gone two o'clock!**

FRANKY: Apple, I'm telling you to come with me. Don't you know that very very bad people like me are always polite? In fact, the more politely we speak, the badder we are. Understand!?

APPLE: No no no no, you can't say 'badder', my friend. You mean 'worse'. Hey! ow! Where are you taking me?

Scene 4 – Zappo the Wonder Horse

- NARRATOR:** And so, the sweet and loyal Apple is being **catnapped** by that evil villain Franky Banky. What are you going to do about it Dick?
- DICK:** *[caught offguard]* Oh er... I've no idea really.... Call the police?
- NARRATOR:** Why not call, Zappo the Wonder Horse?!
- BIG VOICE:** *[slow]* ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!
- LITTLE VOICE:** *[fast]* 07700 900009. **Special rates apply.**
- DICK:** OK. *[punching in numbers]* I hope this isn't going to cost me a fortune... Hello can I speak to...
- Z. TOP:** Hello. Zappo the Wonder horse at your command!
- BIG VOICE:** *[slow]* ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!
- DICK:** Hello. That was quick! Oh! There are two of you!
- Z. TOP:** Yes... I'm the Top, you see.
- Z. BOTTOM:** *[sullen]* And I'm... lower down.
- Z. TOP:** Now, young man – what seems to be the problem?
- DICK:** Well... I'm looking for my cat, Apple.
- Z. TOP:** Looking for your cat's apple?
- DICK:** No, I'm looking for my cat, whose name is Apple. He's competing in the Rat-Catching Contest, but he's just been taken... by Franky Banky.
- Z. BOTTOM:** Franky Banky, you say?
- DICK:** Yes, the narrator tells me he's got him right now. But I've no idea where he's taking him.
- Z. TOP:** No, but wherever it is, we can tell you one thing.
- DICK:** What's that?
- Z. TOP:** It won't be very nice!
- DICK:** No....so... do you think that you might be able to help me...?
- Z. BOTTOM:** Unfortunately not - we're very sorry.
- Z. TOP:** Bottom – what are you talking about - ?
- Z. BOTTOM:** You see, Top half and I have agreed to stop fighting crime – and this definitely looks like a crime. Sorry.... It's just far too dangerous. We can recommend the police though - they're awfully good.

Z. TOP: Well, Bottom, we could maybe **make an exception**, on this one last occasion. After all, Franky Banky doesn't scare, Zappo the Wonder horse!

BIG VOICE: ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!

Z. BOTTOM: Yeah, but the trouble is... that if we make an exception for this guy then before long we'll be **running around after** every pantomime villain **on the block**. I'm sorry Top. If you want to go and look for this cat, fine, I'm going home.

Z. TOP: Unngh! Wait! I command you to stay!

Z. BOTTOM: Ow, let me go! You can't tell me what to do!

Z. TOP: Ungh.... We've got to find Apple....

DICK: Look guys, it really doesn't matter. I'll just look for the cat myself!

Z. TOP: Wait – don't go! Don't!..... go

Great. Well done Bottom, nice work. That poor man has lost not only his darling cat – but also his dream of becoming Lord Mayor of London!

Z. BOTTOM: Well, you know, that's really sad and everything, but it's not really our problem is it?

Z. TOP: It will be everyone's problem if Franky Banky becomes Mayor!

Z. BOTTOM: Oh. You might be right there.

Z. TOP: Come on Botto! If anyone can stop that from happening surely it's -

Z. BOTTOM: No – don't say it again, please.

Z. TOP: Surely it's.... Zappo the Wonder horse!

BIG VOICE: ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!

Scene 5 – The Shed of Nightmares

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, in another part of the city, Franky Banky and Apple have reached their terrible destination...

APPLE: *[fade]* So you see, there are rules for making comparatives, but there are one or two exceptions that you have to learn – and 'worse' is one

of them.

FRANKY: Shut up Apple, who cares about grammar?! Didn't you hear the narrator – we've reached our 'terrible destination'!

APPLE: Well... it doesn't look that terrible. This is just a garden **shed**, Franky.

FRANKY: *[laughing]* Right Apple. It looks just like any normal garden shed, but... in fact... it is... the SHED OF NIGHTMARES.

APPLE: What's that then?

FRANKY: The SHED OF NIGHTMARES ... is an **FX** cupboard, which has been specially loaded with the nastiest horribilest sound effects ever! Enjoy this creaky door, Apple. It's the last nice effect you're going to hear for a very very long time!

APPLE: Oh here we go.

FRANKY: Have fun!

[PAUSE]

APPLE: *[CLOSE]* Hmm. For an FX cupboard it's awfully quiet in here.... Well, let's have a look around... what's over here...? Ahhh! **Easy boy**, easy. Let's go over here... No, no, not the dentist! Stay calm Apple, stay calm, it's just an effect, not a real drill. Let's go over here... Oh no, oh no. The car's not starting! I'm gonna be late for an interview! Help me someone, help me! Dick! Dick where are you?

Scene 6 – Looking for Apple

NARRATOR: But unfortunately Dick is on the other side of the city and definitely can't hear Apple. After giving up with Zappo the Wonder Horse -

BIG VOICE: ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!

NARRATOR: Yes, yes, yes, thank you. After giving up with – after giving up with the pantomime horse, he has decided to search for the cat himself.

DICK: *[Calling]* Apple! Apple!

SNOW WHITE: *[Calling]* Grumpy!.. Sneezzy!... Bashful!

DICK: Apple! Oh hello.

SNOW: Hello.

DICK: *[Nervous]* Sorry, I was just looking for my cat. And he's called Apple. I'm not, you know, one of those people who just walk around calling out the names of different fruit.

SNOW: *[Nervous]* No, of course not! But, you haven't seen seven very small people on your travels, have you?

DICK: Erm... children, you mean?

SNOW: That sort of height, but with pickaxes. And facial hair.

DICK: Oh, you mean dwarfs!

SNOW: Yes, only I'm not sure that's still a **politically correct term**, but yes, dwarfs.

DICK: No, I haven't. Are they friends of yours?

SNOW: Very good friends of mine. We're in this pantomime together called Snow White – I'm Snow White by the way – and I was supposed to be meeting them at three but -

DICK: Let me just stop you there. You're in the wrong pantomime, I'm afraid. This is Dick Whittington. In fact, I'm Dick.

SNOW: Oh! You're kidding!

DICK: No, I'm afraid I'm not. Unless... I've accidentally wandered into Snow White ...

SNOW: *[sighs]* Either way, this is all a **complete shambles**.

NARRATOR: Oh no it's not!

BOTH: Oh yes it is!

NARRATOR: Oh no it's not!

DICK: OK, OK, maybe it is, maybe it isn't. Listen – you would know this – is 'dwarfs' D-W-A-R-V-E-S or is it D-W-A-R-F-S?

SNOW: Ah well, it's either - you can spell it either way.

DICK: Oh really, I'd always wondered about that.

SNOW: Yeah, I tell you what, there's a really good website where you'll find

answers to all of your English language questions.

DICK: Oh right, what's that then?

SNOW: It's BBC Learning English dot com.

DICK: *[writing]* BBC... Learning English dot com. Tell me more.

SNOW: Well, they've got a section called 'Ask about English' which deals with all those **nigging** questions about the English language...

DICK: Right OK, but I think what I really need to improve is my listening comprehension...

SNOW: Then you'll love 'Talk about English' – the BBC's weekly talk programme aimed **specifically** at English language learners. With downloadable scripts and language support pages, it's exposure to English in context!

DICK: Right, so that's BBC Learning English dot com....

SNOW: ... for all your English language needs.

[PAUSE]

NARRATOR: Have you two finished?

DICK: Yeah... I'm not sure **what came over me** then...

SNOW: Hmm... weird.

Scene 7 - Ambush

NARRATOR: Well if you remember we left Franky Banky's cat Tigger in a sewer, chasing Rats 1 to 30. Haven't you caught them yet, Tigger?

TIGGER: *[Close]* Mo... I don't know where they ment. Meow... mewhen I get them... me-y master will definitely mecome M'Lord Meyor of Melondon....

RAT 1: *[singing]* Rat-a-tat-tat! Rat-a-tat-tat!

RAT 2: *[off]* Sssh, don't make so much noise, that awful cat Tigger might hear us...

RAT 1: No, don't worry about him, Rat 2, he'll never find us here. He's far

too stupid!

RAT 2: Yeah, I guess you're right rat 1. He IS pretty dumb. I mean, have you heard his English accent? Me-I meame's Tigger, me-I'm really stupid. Meow....

RAT 1: Ha ha ha ha, that's really very good Rat 2.

RAT 2: Yeah, I've always been a pretty good **copycat**...

TIGGER: *[to himself]* Mereally dumb heh? Mell, me'll just mee about me-at... ok, claws out... pouncing position... serious expression.... get ready to die, rats.... Well me-at's an interesting sound... sort of mechanical.... *[thoughtful]* meow.... Funny how it's getting louder... Meow! What bright lights!

[PAUSE]

RAT 2: RAT 2 to RAT 1... RAT 2 to RAT 1, **come in, over.**

RAT 1: Yes Rat 2, I'm hearing you loud and clear.

RAT 2: The cat is flat, repeat: The cat is flat. Over.

RAT 1: Good work Rat 2! Now let's rescue Apple.

RAT 2: **Roger that.**

[PAUSE]

COMM 1: I say, what IS THAT thing?

COMM 2: I say, Ugh!

COMM 3: I think it's a pizza.

COMM 4: No, it's some sort of furry... Frisbee.

TIGGER: *[very weak]* Meow...

TANOY: MIND THE CAT... MIND THE CAT...

Scene 8 – Derring-do

NARRATOR: So it looks like Tigger has lost one of his nine lives but what about

Apple? Will the rats reach him before the evil SHED OF NIGHTMARES sends him completely nuts?

APPLE: *[shrill, crazy]* The **crackle** of an open fire! The **rustle** of Autumn leaves! **Swish**, swish! The jolly ice cream van doing his round! The warm **smack** of a cricket bat hitting a six! Oh... I don't know how much more of this I can take... Dick, where ARE you?!

RAT 2: My nose is telling me this is the right spot! Apple?

APPLE: Yes! Yes! It's me! Is that really you, Rat 1 or is it just another effect?

RAT 2: It's not Rat 1, but it's not an effect either! This is Rat 2. Rat 1 is outside together with rats 3 to infinity – we've all come to save you, Apple!

APPLE: Oh guys! *[speechless with emotion]* You're the best.

RAT 2: No time for that. Let's get out of here quick.

APPLE: Oh sweet sweet birdsong! How I longed for you in there! Rustle of trees, I thought about you **for every waking second** of my **ordeal!** Darling traffic noise, it was only when you were taken from me that -

RAT 3: Come on Apple, we need to **scram** before Franky comes back!

FRANKY: Oh yes, let's go before that nasty Franky Banky comes back!

APPLE: I wish he would stop creeping up on us like that!

FRANKY: Really, Apple I owe you SO much. That's twice in one day you've led me to huge numbers of rats. It's just a shame that I don't have dear Tigger here to catch them all for me. (I'm not sure what's happened to him – he seems to be delayed.) But anyway, it doesn't matter at all because I have this enormous electric chocolate stun gun! It will turn all of these rats into chocolate mice and make me Lord Mayor of London!

Let me just turn it on.... Come on, come on... It takes a little while to warm up... but it's a very special weapon, you'll see in a minute...

APPLE: Franky?

FRANKY: Hang on...

APPLE: I hate to tell you this, but, he's behind you...

FRANKY: Who is?

BIG VOICE: *[slow]* ZAPPO THE WON-DER HORSE!!!!

Z. BOTTOM: That's us. Now, everybody just take it easy, stay calm... this is quite a dangerous situation and we don't want any accidents....

Z. TOP: Hold it right there, Franky! Where's Apple?!

FRANKY: *[Demure]* Apple? – Why, he's right there! You can take him if you want. I have no further use for him.

Z. TOP: Oh. Are you OK, little cat?

APPLE: Well, I've had better days but... you know... I'm coping.

Z. BOTTOM: Well that's good news. You know, I think we've done a good job here, Top. We've found the cat, he looks fine, so let's take him back to Dick and then we can all have a nice cup of tea.

RAT 1: Wait! You can't leave us here with him! He's totally crazy! And he's got an enormous electric chocolate stun gun!

Z. TOP: No – don't worry little creatures, of course we won't leave you. **Hand over** the gun, Franky.

FRANKY: Ha! You must think I'm stupid!

Z. TOP: We mean it. Hand it over now.

Z. BOTTOM: Stop Top! He's going to fire it at us!

Z. TOP: Well, if you won't give it, we'll have to take it!

FRANKY: Ugh!

Z. BOTTOM: Ah!

APPLE: Ow!

RAT 2: Eek!

[PAUSE]

Z. BOTTOM: Top, What have we done?

Z. TOP: Bottom, I think we've just made Franky Banky a much sweeter man.

APPLE: That is, without a doubt, the largest chocolate mouse I have ever seen in my life.

Scene 9 –All’s well that ends

- NARRATOR:** So, where’s Dick Whittington all this time? Isn’t he supposed to be the hero? Doesn’t he want to be Lord Mayor of London anymore?
- SNOW:** *[fade up]* ... It’s very valuable, I think. I don’t know, it’s some kind of talking mirror, that’s what I’ve heard anyway...
- DICK:** A talking mirror?
- SNOW:** Yahuh. I think she bought it in America.
- DICK:** Is it for blind people?
- SNOW:** No, no, you ask it questions and it answers them. Like she asked it, Who’s **the fairest** of them all? and apparently this mirror said that I was...
- DICK:** Well, you know, that’s no surprise to me. You are very very pretty...
- SNOW:** Really? Do you think so?
- DICK:** Oh come on Snow, you must know you’re gorgeous!
- SNOW:** *[coy]* Well, I did have a suspicion... but it’s ever so nice to hear it confirmed.
- DICK:** You’re beautiful.... And if I were more than just a rotten Assistant Paperclips Officer I’d ask you to...
- SNOW:** Ask me to what, Dick?
- DICK:** Well... I’d ask you to be my girlfriend. But I know that a **swell** girl like you **would never be seen dead** with an ordinary guy like me..... would you?
- SNOW:** *[Thinking]* No-o.... but... maybe if your cat does really well in the Rat-Catching Contest and you become Lord Mayor then -
- DICK:** The Rat-Catching Contest! I completely forgot about that! It’s five past four - the tail counting will have already started! Come on, we’re late!
- FULBRIGHT:** *[fade up]* And lastly, with an absolutely incredible thirty-one tails we have Tiddles! Can we get a warm saucer of milk for young Tiddles? And will the owner please come forward?

DICK: I can't see Apple anywhere!
SNOW: They're about to announce the winner!
FULBRIGHT: [*off tanoy*] He doesn't have an owner? So... what do we do now? - we can't have a cat as Lord Mayor!

DICK: *Quelle surprise.* I knew Apple wouldn't help me become Lord Mayor. He really is the most selfish animal in the whole world...

SNOW: Wait Dick....

DICK: What?

SNOW: That music.... It must mean Apple's coming back just in time...

DICK: You're right!

FULBRIGHT: Well, it's the first time it's happened in eight hundred years, but I can now announce that... hang on, I think we have a last-minute entrant... we have a cat at the back of the crowd... who appears to be floating...

DICK: Look! There's Apple! But he's not floating, he's being carried...

SNOW: By rats!

APPLE: Good people of London... do not run away in fright! I come in peace and goodwill as an ambassador for my good friends, the rats of London, who today saved my life.

I have something very important to say about the rats of London. Too long they've been **confined** to the shadows and sewers of our great city, afraid for their tiny lives, while we hunt them down with traps and poisons and **so-called** 'sporting events' like this. Too long, we have **retained** false ideas and **stereotypes** about our **fellow** creatures – who are actually very clean animals....

SOMEONE: What about **the Plague** then?

APPLE: Oh, that was ages ago! You know, Plagues... happen from time to time, and everybody goes a bit crazy, and some people die, but we haven't had a plague in this country for over three hundred years ... I just think... we need **to get over** the Plague... If you make my master, Dick Whittington, Lord Mayor of London, he'll work with the rats of London to ensure that we never see a plague ever again!

FULBRIGHT: *[very moved]* What is your name, good cat?

APPLE: My name is Apple, my lady.

FULBRIGHT: That's a very strange name for a cat, but I can now tell you that you are the winner of the 134th Rat-Catching Contest! Who is your master?

DICK: That's me, I'm his master, my lady. Here I am, Dick Whittington. Well done Apple. ConRATulations. Get it? ConRATulations-

FULBRIGHT: Is this man really your master?

APPLE: Hmmm.... I'm not sure actually...

DICK: Apple! What do you mean, 'I'm not sure'? It's me, Dick! Your old **buddy!**

APPLE: I've never seen this man before in my life.

DICK: How can you say that? I'm your oldest friend. Come on, let's go out to celebrate. I'll get you that nice tuna steak I promised.

APPLE: Oh you're all friendly now, now that you're about to become Lord Mayor of London. Where were you when I needed you? Getting cosy with Princess over there, **no doubt.**

DICK: Ah yes, Apple. I want you to meet Snow White...

SNOW: Hello Apple. I've heard all about you.

APPLE: I'm sure you have.

FULBRIGHT: Look, I really need to get home. Is he your owner or not?

APPLE: Maybe.... Oh all right. Yes, he's my owner.

DICK: Oh Apple, thank you! I'll never forget this!

FULBRIGHT: Dick Whittington, I hereby pronounce you Right Honourable Lord Mayor of London!

NARRATOR: (Twee, 1940's) And so, the Lord Mayor's carriage makes its way slowly down Oxford Street, surrounded by crowds of rats, cats and people. What a fine summer's day to have a Lord-Mayor-making-celebration. Yes and what a fine young man this Richard Whittington is. Let's just hope he's got enough **spunk** for this most difficult and challenging job. There are so many things that a Lord Mayor has to do... he has to ensure that Big Ben is fed twice a day, and that all tourists pronounce the word 'Greenwich' correctly and of course his most important job of all is to make sure that the entire city of London never, ever runs out of paperclips...

DICK What's that you say? Paperclips! I thought I **was finished with** all that! Oh well, at least as Lord Mayor of London I'll be able to marry Snow White...

SNOW: What's that you say? Marry you! I said I'd **go out with** you, but no one ever mentioned the big white dress! **One step at a time**, Lord Mayor!

DICK OK, OK... one step at a time. But... you will go out with me, won't you?

SNOW: On a trial basis..... OK. I'll go out with you.

NARRATOR: And so they might not be **happy ever after**, but let's hope our friends Dick Whittington, his cat Apple and Snow White will be moderately content for a good amount of time... The End.

Dick Whittington was played by Jackie Dalton, Apple by William Kremer; Neil Edgeller was Franky Banky; Snow White was played by Elena Newton and Amber Barnfather was Tigger. Rats 1-30 were all played by Catherine Chapman, Zappo the Wonder Horse -

BIG VOICE ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!

LITTLE VOICE: *[fast]* 07700 900009. Special rates apply.

NARRATOR: Yes, all right. Zappo the Wonder Horse was played by...

BIG VOICE ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!

- yes, all right - by Nuala O'Sullivan as Top and Dima Kostenko as Bottom; Sylvania Fulbright was Paul Scott... and my name is Callum

Robertson.

ALL: Good-bye!

Vocabulary

Scene 1

fortune - ‘...I came here last year looking for my fortune’

a lot of money. *To look for or seek your fortune* is an old-fashioned phrase meaning to become successful in some way.

old thing – ‘Sorry old thing’

this isn't a rude phrase but an old-fashioned term of endearment, like 'mate' or 'dear'

to get/be held up – ‘I got held up at the office’

to be delayed

to keep your fur on - ‘All right, all right keep your fur on’

this is Apple's way of saying *Keep your hair on*. This phrase means *Calm down – don't be so angry*.

ragout – ‘Oh, rat ragout again!’

a stew, a mixture of boiled vegetables and meat

food groups - ‘...all the main food groups are present on that plate’

the main kinds of nutrition – fat, carbohydrate, protein etc.

to have a laugh – ‘You're having a laugh ain't cha?’

a British expression meaning to kid someone, to lie for fun

ain't cha – ‘You're having a laugh ain't cha?’

London slang meaning *aren't you?*

Scene 2

calendar – ‘...the whole rat-catching calendar’

here, *calendar* means all the events that normally take place every year

to be agitated – ‘over there is Dick Whittington looking slightly agitated’

nervous, anxious

strings to my bow – ‘...the Lord Mayor thing would just be another string to my bow’

skills and abilities are *strings to your bow* – they are things which make you look good in a job interview, for example

to make a killing on something – ‘I made a killing on paperclips yesterday...’
to make a lot of money by buying and selling something. Franky Banky made a lot of money by selling paperclips at a higher price than he bought them.

‘Where’s he got to?’

Where has he gone?

any minute – ‘we’re going to be starting any minute’

very soon (you can also say *any minute now*)

to put up with something – ‘you don’t have to put up with that accent’

to not complain or to not try to change something unsatisfactory

stripe-enhancing drugs – ‘Cats are ... not permitted to take stripe-enhancing drugs’

a rat-catching version of *performance-enhancing drugs*. Athletes at the Olympics are not allowed to take drugs which enhance, or improve, their performances

kitty-cat – ‘See you at four o’clock, kitty-cat!’

a children’s word for *cat*

tabby – ‘a fine three-year-old tabby’

a type of cat with dark marks on brown or grey fur

debut – ‘I believe today is Tigger’s debut...’

someone’s first public appearance or performance. We can either say someone *makes his debut* or *he debuts*.

drain – ‘he’s just slipped down that drain’

a pipe which carries water or waste material

Scene 3

doormat – ‘I very nearly became a luxury doormat...’

something that people wipe their feet on before they enter a house

the likes of – ‘I ... nearly became a ...doormat for the likes of Franky Banky’

a group of people similar to the stated person. Apple nearly became a doormat for Franky Banky or someone similar to Franky Banky.

old – ‘... time to use the old night vision’

this isn’t actually something old, but something useful and reliable. Apple might also have said *...time to use the good old night vision*.

This’ll do – ‘... is there a warm little corner where I can curl up for ten minutes? ... This’ll do’

Do here means to be good enough. E.g.:

It's not perfect but it'll do.

You can't use this in progressive forms. It is usually intransitive and can be followed with a prepositional phrase with *for*:

This lamp will do for the bedside table.

sarcasm

making statements which are different from your real feelings in order to be funny or make a point, e.g., if B thinks that A never does any housework then he might make the following *sarcastic* remark:

A: Why don't you ever wash up?

B: Oh right, because you wash up every day, don't you?

***Encantada* – 'Rat 4, Rat 4!... *Encantada*'**

Spanish for *Delighted to meet you*. Apple likes Rat 4.

a strong family likeness – 'Yes, there is a strong family likeness'

A visual similarity amongst family members

to tell something / someone apart – 'it's easy to tell us apart'

to be able to identify a person or object from someone or something very similar. This can also be used in the plural, e.g.:

The twins are so similar, only their mother can tell them apart.

to boo – '...you can all boo if you like'

to make a noise like this: *Boooooo!* This noise is called *a boo*. At pantomimes, audiences usually boo the villain.

In English, we also say *Boo!* when we want to surprise someone, but this is not *to boo* or *a boo*.

It's gone [a certain time] - 'It's gone two o'clock!'

informal expression meaning that it's later than this time. We often use it when we are late or delayed.

Scene 4

to catnap – 'Apple is being catnapped by that evil villain Franky Banky'

A cat version of *to kidnap* – to take a person away by force

'Special rates apply'

this is used when a service charges more money than is usual. Calling Zappo the Wonder Horse costs more than a normal phone call.

to make an exception – ‘we could maybe make an exception, on this one last occasion’

to ignore a rule for a special situation. e.g.:

They said they didn’t normally accept entries on Saturdays, but that they would make an exception for me.

To run around after someone – ‘we’ll be running around after every pantomime villain on the block’

To work or do tasks for someone, e.g.:

I’m sick of running around after your friends! Next time they come over, you can cook dinner for them yourself!

on the block – ‘...every pantomime villain on the block.’

an American expression used for emphasis. A *block* is a building or group of buildings between two streets.

Scene 5

shed – ‘This is just a garden shed, Franky’

a very small one-storey building used for keeping garden tools etc.

FX – ‘The Shed of Nightmares an FX cupboard’

sound or visual effects – sounds or images that radio or TV producers use in programmes that sound or look like something in the story

boy – ‘Easy boy, easy’

boy is an affectionate term for a dog; *easy* here means *Don’t get excited*

Scene 6

politically correct – ‘I’m not sure that’s still a politically correct term’

if language is politically correct, it isn’t offensive to minority groups and is seen as a reasonable way of talking about something or someone. Recently in the UK, the phrase has taken on a slightly negative meaning, e.g.:

He won’t tell you the truth – just a load of politically correct nonsense

a shambles – ‘this is all a complete shambles’

informal - something which is very badly organised, or very messy. Note that the word is singular, and is often used with *complete* and *total*. Look at these two other uses of the word:

*The narrator made a shambles of his lines
You can tell I've been away – the house is (in) a complete shambles*

niggling – ‘...which deals with all those niggling questions about the English language...’

if something niggles, it annoys you slightly over a long period of time, so *niggling doubts* are worries that don't go away, and *niggling questions* are questions you can't find an answer to. Note that *to niggle* also means to ask too many questions or have too many doubts, e.g.:

It's really good news – stop niggling!

specifically – ‘...aimed specifically at English language learners’
especially

to come over – ‘I'm not sure what came over me then...’

A way of describing unexpected changes of mood, feeling or behaviour, e.g.:

*She suddenly came over very dizzy and had to sit down.
I don't know what's come over her recently – she's been acting really weird...*

Scene 7

a copycat – ‘I've always been a pretty good copycat...’

this is an informal, negative word for someone who copies someone else's work or style. It is being used in a humorous way here, since Tigger is imitating a cat.

come in ... over ... Roger that

these are traditional ways of talking on walkie-talkies or radios. *Come in* means *speaking now*; *over* means *I've finished talking* and *Roger* means *I understand*.

Scene 8

Derring-do

an old-fashioned, humorous word for acts of bravery. e.g.:

These accounts show the derring-do of ordinary soldiers in 1916.

crackle ... rustle ... swish ... smack

These are onomatopoeic nouns: they each describe the noise that they sound like. There are also verb forms of these, e.g.:

The leaves are rustling in the trees.

‘for every waking second’ – ‘I thought about you for every waking second’

this is used to emphasise that something has not stopped over a period of time

ordeal – ‘I thought about you for every waking second of my ordeal!’

a very bad experience. We often use *to go through* or *to get through* with this word, e.g.:

They're going through a really terrible ordeal.

If we can get through this ordeal, we can achieve anything!

To scam – ‘...we need to scam before Franky comes back!’

informal word meaning *to run away* or *leave quickly*

to hand over something / someone – ‘Hand over the gun, Franky’

to give somebody something or someone

Scene 9

‘All’s Well That Ends’

This is a humorous misuse of the Shakespearian phrase *All’s well that ends well* – which means that a happy ending to something is more important than how it is achieved

the fairest – ‘Who’s the fairest of them all?’

an old-fashioned word meaning *the most beautiful*

swell – ‘...a swell girl like you...’

American slang meaning great, super

would never be seen dead – ‘...a swell girl like you would never be seen dead with an ordinary guy like me’

would hate to be seen by people in that situation, e.g.:

I wouldn’t be seen dead wearing that skirt

I wouldn’t be seen dead with her

‘Quelle surprise’

a French phrase occasionally used in English. It’s used sarcastically, to show that we are not surprised by something.

to be confined – ‘...they’ve been confined to the shadows and sewers of our great city’

to be kept somewhere, not allowed to leave

so-called – ‘so-called ‘sporting events’ like this’

used to show that other people describe something in this way, but we don’t necessarily agree with their words. Apple does not think that hunting rats should be called a ‘sport’.

to retain – ‘... we have retained false ideas ... about our fellow creatures’
a formal word, meaning *to keep*

a stereotype – ‘...false ideas and stereotypes about our fellow creatures’
(negative) an idea which is commonly thought about a group of people, but which is not true of everyone in that group, e.g.:

It's such a stereotype that British people only eat fish and chips

fellow – ‘...about our fellow creatures...’
an adjective describing someone who has a similarity to you: cats, rats and humans are all creatures

the Plague – ‘What about the Plague then?’
the Great Plague was a disease that killed around 100,000 people in England in 1665. It was spread by rats. The word *plague* is still used to describe a disease that causes fever, swelling and death.

to get over something – ‘...we need to get over the Plague...’
informal, to gradually recover from something:

*I'm cautious about getting into another serious relationship at the moment. I've only just got over my last boyfriend.
It took years for her to get over the shock.*

Apple is using the phrase to mean *to accept something*, e.g.:

Look, I don't like your friends, all right?! Get over it!

buddy – ‘Your old buddy’
American slang for *friend*

no doubt – ‘Getting cosy with Princess over there, no doubt.’
probably, I expect

spunk – ‘Let's just hope he's got enough spunk for this ... job’
energy and spirit

to be finished with something – ‘I thought I was finished with all that!’
to not have to do something any longer. It can also be used when you are really tired of doing something and want to stop, e.g.:

Right! I'm finished with all this nonsense! I quit!

to go out with someone – ‘I said I'd go out with you...’
to date someone, to be in a couple with them

‘One step at a time’

a phrase meaning to do something gradually, and not in a rush.

You might become a manager, but in this business you really have to go one step at a time.

happy ever after – ‘...they might not be happy ever after...’

an old-fashioned phrase meaning *for the rest of their lives*. It is often used in fairy tales at the end of the story, e.g.:

... and they lived happily ever after. The end.