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
No, it isn’t that good. 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 the 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
Well… I don’t think so, no. Anyway, you’ll meet Apple in just a minute. Hi Apple, I’m home!

APPLE
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 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
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
All that heartless, pointless killing … the screams of the little animals 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?

**APPLE**
Well, I'll give it a go.

**DICK**
Yey!

**Scene 2 – The 134th London Rat-Catching Contest**

**NARRATOR**
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**
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. That’s amazing.

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!

TIGGER  
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 …of… Meondon.

ADMIRING CATS  
Meow, meally? Meow.

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

TIGGER  
Mehuh?
APPLE
Your accent… ‘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 Sylwania 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! Did you hear them? 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
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… 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
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
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 RATS
Hello!

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 RATS
HE’S BEHIND YOU!

APPLE
Who? Who’s behind me?

RAT 1
Quick, everyone! Run away!

FRANKY
Ha ha! Too late for you, my 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. 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
Oh er… I’ve no idea really… Call the police?
NARRATOR
Why not call, Zappo the Wonder Horse?!

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

LITTLE VOICE
Call 07700 900009. Special rates apply.

DICK
OK. 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
ZAPPO THE WON-DER HOR-SE!!!

LITTLE VOICE
Call 07700 900009. Special rates apply.

DICK
Hello. That was quick! Oh! There are two of you!

Z. TOP
Yes… I’m the Top, you see.

Z. BOTTOM
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!!!

LITTLE VOICE
Call 07700 900009. Special rates apply.

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!!!

LITTLE VOICE  
Call 07700 900009. Special rates apply.
Scene 5 – The Shed of Nightmares

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

APPLE
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
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 horribiest 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!

APPLE
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
Apple! Apple!

SNOW WHITE
Grumpy! Sneezy! Bashful!

DICK
Apple! Oh hello.

SNOW
Hello.

DICK
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
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 … 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
BBC… Learning English dot com. Tell me more.

SNOW
Well, they’ve got a section called ‘Ask about English’ which deals with all those nigling 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.

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, inclusive. Haven’t you caught them yet, Tigger?

TIGGER
Mo…I don’t know where they ment. Mwhen I get them… me-y master will definitely mecome M’Lord Meyor of Melondon….
RAT 1
Rat-a-tat-tat! Rat-a-tat-tat!

RAT 2
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
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…. meow…. Funny how it’s getting louder… Meow! What bright lights!

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.

COMMUTER 1
I say, what IS THAT thing?

COMMUTER 2
I say, Ugh!

COMMUTER 3
I think it’s a pizza.

COMMUTER 4
No, it’s some sort of furry… Frisbee.

TIGGER
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
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! 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 gets 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 a huge number 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
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
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!

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
…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
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
No… 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
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
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
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 Lord Mayor of London!

NARRATOR
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
CALL 07700 900009. Special rates apply.
NARRATOR
Yes, all right. Zappo the Wonder Horse was played by…

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

NARRATOR
-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
Goodbye!

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 the rat is imitating a cat.

come in … over… Roger that
these are traditional ways of talking on walkie-talkies or radios. Come in means speak 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.

cracke ... 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 scram – ‘...we need to scram 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.