
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Christmas Panto

Dick Whittington and his Cat

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, meow meow 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 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! 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 I

Ow!

APPLE

What's that?

RAT I

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

APPLE

Oh hello! You're a rat.

RAT I

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 I

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 I

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 horriblest 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! Sneezzy! 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 **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.

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. Mewhen 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 leafs! **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 I

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

CAII 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 *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

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.