

Scene 1

*(As **Intro Music** plays (CD track 11) the cast enters. The lights come up on a small staged area to one side of the main stage, where a group of villagers merrily drink from tankards and chew on chicken legs. Away from the group, in front of the stage, Dick watches their revelry, rubbing his tummy hungrily.)*

Narrator ~ *(reading from an old book)* A long time ago, in a village the name of which is not important, in a part of England the name of which is also not important, lived a poor, motherless, fatherless and homeless boy called Dick Whittington. Now, his name *is* important, as it's a name that was to live on for centuries. But why, you ask, is the name of where he lived not important? Well, to be honest, in those days, there was only really one place in England that **was** important.....

Villager 1 ~ London! That's where you've got to be if you want to get on in life! In London.

(S/he throws away a chicken-leg bone, which Dick picks up and gnaws eagerly.)

Villager 2 ~ I tell you, if I was ten years younger I'd up-sticks and go to London to find my fortune.

Villager 3 ~ You know what they say, don't you? They say in London the streets are paved with gold! There's so much of the stuff, people are tripping over it!

Villager 4 ~ Ha! Unlike round here, where the only thing we're likely to trip over in the street is a steamin' pile of horse dung!

Villager 5 ~ Yeah, either that or skinny ragamuffins like young Whittington over there, making the place look untidy. Here, Dick, *(tossing him another chicken-leg bone)* fatten yourself up a bit why don't you!

(Dick picks up the bone and approaches the group.)

Dick ~ Is it true? Are the streets of London really paved with gold?

Villager 6 ~ You'd better believe it! But that's only the half the story. Listen.....

Song 1 – Go To London *(CD track12, lyrics p18)* *(Villagers supported by whole cast)*

(Dick sits to one side, open-mouthed, as the villagers sing. As the song finishes, they exit, leaving Dick alone. The main stage is lit up, with a backdrop depicting Tudor-style buildings – see staging suggestions/scenery.)

Narrator ~ Dick's mind was made up! He would pack all his worldly belongings and head for London to seek his fortune. But for a boy as poor as he was, his worldly belongings didn't really amount to much, and could easily be bundled up in nothing bigger than a spotty old hanky, tied to a stick.

(A 'bundle-on-a-stick' is thrown on. Dick picks it up and examines it.)

Dick ~ Hmmm. Well, they do say it's better to travel light. Ok, best foot forward!

*(As **Bustling Music** plays (CD track 13) lots of Londoners enter and busy themselves about the stage. There are vendors selling from baskets, ragged children chasing around, women carrying buckets, and one or two well-dressed individuals. Dick moves among them, bewildered.)*

Narrator ~ *(over the music)* After a lengthy hike, Dick arrived in London, exhausted and hungry. This strange town was certainly different to any place Dick had ever visited before. It was noisy, crowded and...yes...a little bit whiffy! Remembering what the villagers had said, he scoured the ground for gold.

(Dick looks down, examining the ground. The music ends abruptly with a sloshing sound, as a woman empties a bucket over his feet! Everyone stops and turns to look, then they snigger to each other.)

Dick ~ Eurgh! That's not what I think it is, is it?

Londoner 1 ~ Err...sorry about that guv'nor! You kinda got in the way!

Londoner 2 ~ Ha! I'm guessing from the bundle on the stick, and the strange accent, that you ain't from round these parts.

Londoner 3 ~ Hey, everyone! We've got another one 'ere! An out-of-towner come to seek his fortune!

Londoner 4 ~ I'll bet my last turnip that he's gone and fallen for that 'streets-paved-with-gold' nonsense. Am I right, mate? I am, aren't I. You northerners, you're so gullible!

Londoner 5 ~ When are you lot gonna learn, eh? You're no better off 'ere than anywhere else! You shoulda stayed at 'ome!

Song 2 – This Is London! *(CD track14, lyrics p19)*
(Londoners supported by whole cast)

(As the song finishes, the Londoners exit. Dick ambles about aimlessly.)

Narrator ~ It could be safely said that this was not the greatest of starts to Dick's quest for a better life! He therefore began re-tracing his steps, his intention to return to his village and set the locals straight on their idiotic ideas about life down south! But tiredness and hunger forced him to take a breather in the porch of a rather nice-looking house. Hoping nobody would think he was casing the joint, he curled up for forty winks. Little did he know that these were forty winks that would change his life forever!

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