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Dramatic Publishing



Dick Whittington and His Amazing Cat

A new musical
based on an old favorite

By
Pat Hume

Music arranged by
Don m. Dorsey

Dick Whittington and His Amazing Cat

Musical. By Pat Hume. Music arranged by Don M. Dorsey. Cast: 8m., 5w., plus extras of either gender. Also suitable for an all-female cast. In this family friendly production featuring audience participation, an outrageous cat whose talents include karate and custard pies adds new twists to a favorite tale. Dick and a haughtily disdainful cat team up to seek their fortunes in London. A wealthy merchant hires Dick as a kitchen boy. The cantankerous cook makes life miserable for Dick and impossible for his cat. "Pussycat" escapes by boarding the merchant's ship bound for Morania. Morania is plagued with mice. The cat gets rid of them in an amusing way and becomes a queen. The ship returns to London heaped with gold and jewels for Dick in exchange for his wondrous cat. Charming music with clever character lyrics. *No sets necessary. 14th-century costumes. Piano-Vocal Score available. Approximate running time: 35 to 45 minutes. Code: DB4.*

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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CAST OF CHARACTERS: 9 boys, 4 girls, extras

DICK..... Teen-age boy. Naive quality.
PUSSYCAT..... Queenly, a small girl, preferably a dancer.
COOK Big. Cockney, heavy voice. Not pretty.
MR. FITZWARREN..... Older, stout, good-natured.
ANN Teen-age, pretty, likable.
CAPTAIN HOWSLEY Hearty, a seaman.
GRANSVILLE A snob, a dandy.
NANCY..... Young, a giggler.
JANE Young, bashful.
HOB..... Young, sure of himself.
PLUCKENHENN..... A country boy.
LONGSHANKS Stupid. (Mortimer Snerd)
A SAILOR..... Young. (Can double)
CHANCELLOR..... Tall, dignified, impressed with his position.
CALIPH Roly-poly, commanding, a complainer.
Slaves, dancing girls, specialty acts if desired (magician, acrobat, dancer)
MICE..... Children

Time: April, 1390 and a few months thereafter.

Place: An English Country Road; The Fitzwarren House's Front Door and later, the Fitzwarren Kitchen, and the Fitzwarren Hall; and Dock in Morania; the Caliph's Court.

Dick Whittington and His Amazing Cat

PROLOGUE

(Part of the cast enter from the back of the house and come down the right aisle singing and carrying a banner which says, "DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS AMAZING CAT." Other actors come down the left aisle. They meet on stage to finish the song.)

Here is a story of Londontown, Londontown.
Sing fa la la, la la lee.
Have you heard tell of a boy named Dick Whittington,
Born in the fourteenth cent'ry?
He was a poor lad who came to the city.
He heard that the streets were of gold.
He had a pussycat who became famous.
'Tis often a tale that is told.
'Tis a sad story, but you needn't worry
Because it will end happily.
When he grew up, Dick became Mayor of London.
So sing fa la la, la la lee.

The cast exits. A wooden road sign is placed stage left. It says, "London . . ." with an arrow pointing to the right, and "Canterbury . . ." with an arrow pointing to the left.

The Prologue can be played in front of the stage curtain.

SCENE 1

TIME: A morning in April, 1390.

SETTING: An English country road. *(Can be played in front of stage curtain.)*

DICK WHITTINGTON enters from the back. He comes down the right aisle. He is humming "Because I Know." Halfway down the aisle, he stops to chat with members of the audience.

DICK: *(Shaking hands with a child)* How d'you do? I'm Dick Whittington. What's your name? *(As he speaks to the children he establishes the fact that they are in England and he's on his way to London, which is a large city. He doesn't know how to get there. After someone points out the sign on stage, DICK goes up on stage, admits he can't read and has the children tell him which word is London. He thanks them for their help.)*

DICK: I'm an orphan. I've got no family.
Still I live happily.
Because I know.
There's a rainbow waitin' for me.
Don't want sympathy. Don't want charity.
Just want work I can do.
Because I know

If I try, my dreams'll come true.
I'm young and I'm free.
And for lads such as me,
There's a place called London to see.
I've said my good-byes.
For I know there's a prize
In the city waitin' for me.
Don't know readin', I don't know writin'.
But I can learn as I go.
Because I know
If I try reachin' high I can grow.
Gonna try . . . reachin' high, want to grow.
(During the song, PUSSYCAT saunters on stage. She pays no attention to DICK. She sits down to the right of him and proceeds to polish her ears. When DICK finishes the song, he starts walking stage right. He almost trips over PUSSYCAT. He bends down and pats her on the head.)

DICK: Hello, Pussycat. *(DICK continues to walk stage right)*

CAT: Meow. Hellooo.

DICK: *(He stops. Backs up toward cat.)* What a smart Pussycat! Got a name?

CAT: Pussycat . . . just Pussycat.

DICK: How d'ya do, Pussycat. I'm Dick Whittington. *(Shakes cat's paw.)*

CAT: Charrmed, Dick. Just charrmed. *(Holds up her right paw as though waiting for it to be kissed.)*

DICK: Do you live around 'ere?

CAT: No, I've lived all my life in that field. *(Pointing)* But it's cold there and it rains a lot. And there's nothing to eat except mice. EEEOW.

DICK: I thought cats liked mice.

CAT: Oh, I like to catch them . . . *(pantomiming actions)* and to bat them about a bit. But I don't fancy them for my dinner. My friend Tom tells me that there are much tastier things to eat . . . like chicken and fish . . . and creeeam.

DICK: Right you are!

CAT: Do you have good things to eat at your house?

DICK: Actually, I don't 'ave an 'ouse. I'm an orphan.

CAT: *(Patting DICK)* Too bad.

DICK: I've been living with my Aunt. But there wasn't enough food for the both of us, so I'm off to seek my fortune. *(Few steps toward stage right)*

CAT: Where are you going?

DICK: I'm going to the city. I'm going to London.

CAT: Are there good things to eat in London?

DICK: Anything you want. But there's something even better. *(Looks to see if anyone is watching.)* Can you keep a secret?

CAT: Cross my whiskers.

DICK: A peddler told me the secret and made me promise not to tell, but I think it's all right if I tell you, Pussycat.

CAT: I promise not to tell anyone, not even Tom.

DICK: *(Looking around again.)* I'd better whisper it to you.

CAT: I'm listening. *(Puts her hand up to her ear)*

DICK: *(Loud whisper)* The streets in London are paved with gold.

CAT: What?

DICK: *(Louder)* The streets in London are paved with gold!

CAT: *(Very loud)* Gold??

DICK: SSHhhh! *(Does a complete squatting turn, checking to be sure no one heard)*

CAT: *(Disgusted)* Meeeoow. You can't eat gold.

DICK: *(Defensively)* No, but you can buy anything you want with it.

CAT: Even cream?

DICK: Even cream. That's why I'm on my way to London.

CAT: Lucky you. *(Looks at DICK, then makes a hitchhiking gesture with right thumb.)*

DICK: Pussycat, why don't you come with me? Then when I find the gold, I'll buy you anything you want to eat.

CAT: Let's go, let's go. *(Jumping up and down)*

DICK: It's a long walk.

CAT: Then we better get started. You lead the way.

DICK: Are you ready?
Rumpety-bump. Rumpety-bump.
First take a step and then a jump.

CAT: Flippety-fleep. Flippety-fleep.
Hop on one foot and then you leap.

DICK: London is the magic word.

CAT: The streets are full of gold, we heard.

TOGETHER: To stay in the country would be absurd.
Rumpety-bumpety-bump. Rumpety-bumpety-bump.
Rumpety-bumpety, rumpety, bumpety, rumpety-bumpety-bump. *(They exit, arm in arm)*

SCENE 2

TIME: A foggy night.

SETTING: A street in fourteenth century London. The stage is empty except for the front door of the Fitzwarren house which is center stage right.

AT RISE: There is thick fog. DICK and CAT are crawling on the ground. DICK picks up something, peers at it, then throws it on the ground. They back into each other. DICK yells, CAT hisses and ends up on top of DICK. *(Like a lion pouncing)*

DICK: Pussycat, stop! It's me, Dick.

CAT: Sorry, Dick . . . have you found any gold?

DICK: Not yet, but let's keep looking.

CAT: Oh, all right, but I can't see anything in this fog. *(Angrily)* *(They continue to crawl around and look. CAT finds a stone and holds it up to get a better look. DICK backs into her. They scream. This time DICK ends up on top.)*

CAT: It's mine, it's mine. You can't have it.

DICK: Is that you, Pussycat?

CAT: It most certainly is, and I've found gold!

DICK: Let me see . . . No, 'tisn't gold . . . 'tis just a shiny rock.

CAT: Are you sure? It has to be gold. I'm so hungry.

DICK: So am I, but it isn't gold.

CAT: And it's colder here than it was in my field. Eow. I don't like London.

DICK: Poor Cat, I shouldn't have brought you. *(He pets her)* Come on, let's have one last look. You look over there *(Points stage right)* and I'll look over here. *(Points downstage left)*

CAT: *(Petulantly)* Oh, all right! *(They start crawling away from each other.)*

DICK: Give a call if you find any. *(CAT feels her way over to FITZWARREN'S doorway center stage right. Then she feels her way up the side of the house.)*

CAT: Marco . . .

DICK: Polo. *(Trying to follow the voice.)*

CAT: Marco . . .

DICK: Polo. *(Getting closer)*

CAT: Marco . . .

DICK: Polo. *(Reaches the cat)* Have you found some?

CAT: No, but it's warmer over here.

DICK: Pussycat, you've found a house. *(Looking up.)*

CAT: Maybe the gold's inside.

DICK: Oh, but then it wouldn't be ours. It is warmer here, though. Do you suppose it would be all right for us to bed down here for the night?

CAT: It's worth a try. Could I crawl under your cape?

DICK: Of course you could. *(Sits down left of door and left of the CAT.)* Come on, let's try to get some sleep. I'm sure things will be better in the morning.

CAT: I hope so, Dick. I hope so. *(Lifts DICK'S cape as she speaks, then settles down.)*

DICK: *(Starts to hum as they snuggle. Then he sings)*

Go to sleep, go to sleep,

Pussycat, dear.

Go to sleep. Go to sleep,

Morning is near.

While you are sleeping,

Night will away.

When you awake,

'Twill be a new day.

La ah lah loo ooh loo

Lay ay loo lay.

Lights dim to blackout. The Bow Bells ring as the lights slowly come up to full daylight.

SCENE 3

TIME: The next morning.

SETTING: Same as Scene 2.

AT RISE: DICK and CAT are asleep in the doorway. COOK comes through the door with a pail of slops *(confetti)*.

COOK: What's this? What's this? Get up, you vagabond, you filthy beggar. What are you doing here?

DICK: *(Crossing left)* Begging your pardon, Mum, just trying to get out of the cold wind, this long night.

COOK: The wind, you say. You're lucky you didn't get hit in the head with this pail of slops. Get out of here. *(Spots CAT)* And get that filthy animal out of here, too.

DICK: *(Crossing in to CAT)* She's not filthy, Mum. She's a fine cat.

COOK: *(Crossing downstage to throw slops.)* I hate cats. If there's anything I hate, it's a cat. *(She throws the slops into the audience.)*

CAT: *(Clawing motion)* Meow.

COOK: *(Crossing up to DICK)* Come on, get out of here, I say.

DICK: Please, Mum, begging your pardon. Could we have just a wee bit of food?

COOK: What d'ya mean, food? We get beggars at the door every day. I can't be bothered with the likes of you. Now get out of here, and get out right now. *(She pushes DICK stage left.) (MR. FITZWARREN appears stage left and approaches them.)*

DICK: Please, Mum, please. We've walked a day and a night and we . . .

COOK: *(Shouting)* No, no, no! *(Pushing DICK further left. The CAT is still at doorway. Fitzwarren comes out of the house.)*

FITZWARREN: What's going on here? Hello, young man, what's up?

DICK: *(Tipping his hat to FITZWARREN)* And a good morning to you, sir.

FITZWARREN: I'm the owner of this house, boy. Is there something you wanted?

COOK: He's just a common beggar, sir.

FITZWARREN: Now, Cook, let the lad speak for himself, eh?

DICK: It's true, sir. I did ask for food. I've never begged before, but we're that close to starving.

FITZWARREN: Do you live in London?

DICK: No, sir, we walked a day and a night to get here. I heard the streets of London were paved with gold and I thought once we got here, we'd never by hundry again.

COOK: You see, sir? He's not only a beggar, he's stupid! Send him on his way. *(Freeze. Whenever the CAT speaks, the other characters freeze. COOK gestures with thumb pointing away from the house. FITZWARREN has index finger pointing at COOK, warning her. DICK looks frightened.)*

CAT: *(To audience)* If I weren't such a lady, I'd scratch her and send her on her way. *(End of freeze)*

FITZWARREN: Go in the house, Cook. I'm sure you have something better to do than to stand here and make fun of a poor country boy.

COOK: But, sir, I was only trying to protect . . .

FITZWARREN: *(Warningly)* Cook!

COOK: *(Pause)* Yes, sir. *(She glares at DICK, starts toward house, gives the CAT a kick and enters door.)*

FITZWARREN: So you thought you'd find streets of gold in London, did you?

DICK: Yes, sir. But I've found out it isn't true.

FITZWARREN: That's right . . . um, what's your name?

DICK: Dick, sir. Dick Whittington.

FITZWARREN: No streets of gold here, Dick. *(Pats DICK on shoulder, then starts toward door.)* You have to work just as hard in London as you do in the country.

DICK: (*Following FITZWARREN*) Oh, I'm a good worker, sir. I'd do anything you asked for a bit of food. Pussycat and I've had nothing to eat for two days.

FITZWARREN: Two days! Can't have that! Come in the house and I'll have Cook fix you breakfast before you start your long walk home.

DICK: Thank you, sir, thank you. But, sir?

FITZWARREN: Yes, Dick?

DICK: I don't have a home, sir. I've come to seek my fortune. Do you know anyone I could work for, here in London?

FITZWARREN: You want to work, do you? I like that in a boy. And you have nice manners, too. I'm sure Cook can find work for you in the kitchen.

DICK: (*Shaking his hand*) Oh, thank you, sir. Thank you. (*Freeze. FITZWARREN and DICK shake hands.*)

CAT: (*To audience*) Work for the Cook! That's bad news for me. She hates cats. (*End of freeze.*)

FITZWARREN: There's a room in the attic you can sleep in. There are mice up there, but I'm sure your cat will get rid of them. (*Freeze. FITZWARREN points to attic. DICK looks up.*)

CAT: (*To audience*) Mice, yecchh!! (*Holding her stomach*) (*End of freeze.*)

DICK: Pussycat can live here, too? Oh, thank you again, sir. She's the only friend I have.

FITZWARREN: Come in and we'll see about some food for you. (*He opens the door. CAT goes in.*) Oh, and . . . um, Dick, never mind about Cook. She's bad-tempered but she cooks a fine meal. You'll see.

DICK: I'm sure she does sir. And I'll work very hard for her. (*They go through door into the house and close the door. The door opens. The cook shoves the CAT out.*)

COOK: One beggar in the house is enough. Scat!

CAT: (*To audience*) Oh, rats!

BLACKOUT OR FAST CURTAIN.

SCENE 4

TIME: The next morning.

SETTING: The kitchen. The entrance to The Hall is upstage center. The outside door is downstage right (or offstage). Upstage right is a large fireplace with a hanging pot. There is a large work table centerstage. The spit is downstage left.

AT RISE: DICK is turning the spit. The CAT is asleep next to him. PLUCKENHENN and LONGSHANKS are sitting on the table. JANE and HOB are behind it. NANCY is leaning on it. There is a great babble. They are all talking at once and laughing. It is obvious COOK is out of the room.

COOK: *(Entering from upstage door.)* What's this?

(The servants run to their places and start to work at tremendous speed.)

(COOK goes to LONGSHANKS who is sweeping downstage right. She takes his broom and shows him how to sweep, keeping time to the music. After four sweeps, she hands him the broom and he sweeps in tempo.)

(COOK goes to NANCY who is sitting on a stool downstage right of the table. She is embroidering a tablecloth. COOK demonstrates the correct way, then hands it back to her.)

(COOK sees the CAT. Grabs her by the neck, rushes her to the outside door and throws her out.)

(Scolding DICK in pantomime, as she goes to him, COOK turns the spit in time with the music. DICK continues to stay with the beat.)

(COOK goes to PLUCKENHENN who is stirring a pot at the fireplace. Holding his arm, she gets him in tempo.)

(COOK goes to HOB who is cutting up vegetables at the right end of the table. As with the others, she demonstrates the correct tempo, which he copies.)

(COOK goes to JANE who is working at the right end of the table. She is putting a meringue topping on a pie. Once COOK has her on the beat, they are all on the same beat, keeping time with the music. The effect should be that of synchronized mechanical toys.)

(COOK walks down to centerstage, turns her back to the audience and conducts them as though they were an orchestra. She turns and takes a bow.)

(ANN enters from upstage door. She is carrying her letter cards.)

ANN: Cook, Father says you'd best buy new candles for the Captain's dinner. Do you know the kind he likes?

COOK: Indeed I do, Mistress Ann, but I don't trust none but m'self to fetch them. Though there's much to be done 'ere, too, Mistress.

ANN: You'd best go now, Cook. Captain Howsley will be here soon. *(COOK goes for basket at stage right door.)* Oh, and Cook, a Mr. Granville will be here for dinner, too.

COOK: Very well, Miss Hob, while I'm gone, you and Plunckenhenn clean the hall . . . Longshanks, you can sweep in there . . . and mind the corners. Jane and Nancy, it's up to you to set the table, and be neat about it.

ALL: Yes, Mum. *(They exit through upstage door.)*

COOK: And you, Dick, mind the spit and the pots. If anything burns, I'll box your ears, I promise you.

DICK: Yes, Mum.

COOK: *(Going to outside door)* And don't try to sneak that blasted cat in here again, or out you go, too.

DICK: Yes, Mum. *(COOK exits)*

ANN: (*Coyly*) Is it hard to turn the spit?

DICK: Oh, no, Mistress Ann. It's easy, but it's all Cook will let me do, for she thinks I am stupid.

ANN: Stupid? I'm the stupid one. My tutor says I must learn these letters, and I can't . . . I swear it.

DICK: Would that I could help you, Mistress Ann, but I know no more of letters than I do of cooking.

ANN: Tell you what, I'll turn the spit and you help me with my letters. All right?

DICK: Please, Miss, 'twould make Cook angry, I know.

ANN: Never mind Cook. Here, let me try. (*Hands cards to DICK, takes handle of the spit.*) Is this the way?

DICK: Yes, Miss Ann, that's just right.

ANN: Now, you must help me, too. Hold my cards so that I can't see the letters.

DICK: As you say, Miss.

ANN: Perhaps if I can teach them to you, 'twill make it easier for me to remember them.

DICK: I'd quite like that, Miss.

ANN: I've made up a rhyme with my letters. Would you like to hear?

DICK: Oh, yes, Mistress. I'd like that more than anything. (*Music introduction.*)

ANN: A and B and C and D are letters thou must know.

DICK: D and C and B and A if backwards I wouldst go.

ANN: E and F and G, H, I. You can learn them if you try.

DICK: (*Simultaneously*) E and F and G, H, I.

ANN: J, K, L, M.

DICK: That's half of them.

ANN: N and O and P and Q, are easy ones to learn.

DICK: N and O and P and Q, are easy ones to learn.

ANN: R and S and T and U should show you no concern.

DICK: R and S and T and U should show you no concern.

ANN: Then V and W.

DICK: Then V and W.

ANN and DICK: (*Simultaneously*) They'll never trouble you.

ANN: That leaves only XYZ.

DICK: The alphabet is through.

ANN: Now you know your ABC's.

DICK: Many, many thanks to you.

ANN: Good, Dick, now try them alone.

DICK: I'm sorry, Miss, I can't.

ANN: Oh, come on, Dick. Give it a try.

DICK: Oh, no, I can't . . . really.

[This reprise optional recommended only for younger audiences.]

ANN: *(To the audience)* Do any of you know your ABC's? Raise your hand if you do. Oh, good. Would you help Dick? Let's say them together with a clap, like this . . . A . . . B . . . C . . . Let's try it . . . fine. Now here's what we'll do. All of you on this side *(pointing left)* say them with me.

DICK: *(Downstage right)* And all of you on this side say them with me.

ANN: Here we go . . . *(They go through the alphabet, picking up speed as they go. ANN's side says them first, DICK'S side repeats them.)*

DICK: Thank you ever so much. I think I've got it now. Let's give it a go. *(Ann and DICK repeat the song as they dance around the room. The COOK enters on "Now you know your ABC's." She comes up behind ANN to see what's going on. ANN turns and the pie she's holding hits the COOK in the face.)*

BLACKOUT OR FAST CURTAIN

SCENE 5

TIME: That evening after dinner.

SETTING: The Hall, which is a combination dining and living room. The door to the kitchen is upstage right. There is a large table centerstage covered with a long cloth. There is a small writing table upstage left.

AT RISE: FITZWARREN, ANN, GRANSVILLE, and CAPTAIN HOWSLEY are seated at the table. There is a wine glass at each place. FITZWARREN sits in a chair left of the table. ANN sits at his right. GRANSVILLE is in the middle and the CAPTAIN to his right.

FITZWARREN: *(Standing)* A toast, a toast, I say. *(OTHERS stand)* To Captain Howsley. May he guide well our ship, The Warrington, on its voyage to Morania. To your health and safety, sir. *(They drink and FITZWARREN sits)*

GRANSVILLE: *(Crossing himself)* I pray that Morania is where the Captain THINKS it is.

CAPTAIN: 'Twill be there, mate, don't you worry. *(Rising)* And I propose a toast to Mr. Fitzwarren, owner of the good ship, Warrington. May we sell his fine goods and prove worthy of his trust. *(They drink. The CAPTAIN sits.)*

ANN: Is this your first voyage on my father's ship, Mr. Gransville?

GRANSVILLE: Yes, Mistress Ann, quite, quite. I'm SO looking forward to seeing Morania. After all, no Englishman has ever laid eyes on it. Quel adventure! Ah ha . . . ah ha ha ha.

ANN: It sounds exciting. I wish I could go.

HOWSLEY: No place for a young lady, Miss. We have no idea what we'll find when we get there. *(Enthusiastically)* But we have fine goods aboard, and if the country is as rich as we've heard, we'll all have coins to jingle in our pockets upon our return.

GRANSVILLE: I DO hope there are no cannibals there. Ooh, nasty thought!

FITZWARREN: No cannibals, Gransville, be assured of that. I wouldn't risk my crew to cannibals . . . or my ship, either, eh, Captain? *(He and the CAPTAIN chuckle.)*

CAPTAIN: Right you are, sir.

ANN: How long do you think the voyage will take, Captain?

CAPTAIN: With good weather, Mistress, and if we can trade our goods quickly, we should return 'ere the first rose blooms in the spring . . . not counting the roses of your fair cheeks.

ANN: *(Smiling)* Thank you, Captain.

GRANSVILLE: It's up to you to find Morania, Captain. Once we're there, never mind. I'll see that the goods are sold . . . and get a fine price, too. I swear it!

ANN: Mr. Gransville, 'tis Father's custom to have everyone in our household send along something on the voyage . . . to trade, don't you know. *(She takes off a ring.)* I send this ring. Here, take it . . . May it bring you luck on your journey.

GRANSVILLE: I'm sure it will, Miss. And let's hope 'twill bring you a jewel in return.

FITZWARREN: Might as well get on with it. *(He claps his hands and calls.)* Cook! Cook! *(COOK appears and comes down to table.)*

COOK: Yes, sir?

FITZWARREN: Fine dinner, Cook.

COOK: Thank you, sir.

FITZWARREN: Will you have the staff come in now and bring whatever they wish to send along with the Captain?

COOK: Yes, sir. *(She exits.)*

FITZWARREN: Ann, would you fetch a pen for Mr. Gransville?

ANN: Certainly, Father. *(She crosses to small table, gets writing material and gives it to GRANSVILLE.)*

CAPTAIN: 'Tis said the Moranians have the finest jewels in the world. Let's hope they're willing to exchange them for the goods we have.