

KITTY WHITTINGTON

A RAGS ^{TO} RICHES STORY

Tom Kirkham and Matthew Crossey

Script Sample

ACT ONE, SCENE FOUR

Groves (Butler) & Bernard (Footman) are in the kitchens on the ground floor of Mr Fitzwarren's smart townhouse in a well-to-do neighbourhood of London. Elsewhere on stage are Cecily and Mary – young kitchenhands – who are chopping vegetables.

Groves Now then, Bernard, is the table laid for dinner?

Bernard Yes, Mr Groves, all done and dusted.

Groves You dusted it too! Oh well done.

Bernard Dusted it, waxed it, polished it until I could see your face in it.

Groves My face? You saw my face in it?

Bernard Just an expression, sir.

Groves An expression? Was I frowning?

Bernard No sir, smiling if I remember rightly.

Groves I never smile, Bernard, are you sure it was my face you saw?

Bernard Hmm, well, it could have been mine I suppose. The table was so grubby it was hard to make it out.

A bell rings, distracting them from this rather odd conversation.

Groves That's the master calling.

Bernard He sounds more and more like a bell every day.

Groves You'd better go upstairs. I'll join you shortly.

Bernard exits dutifully. Mr Groves exits in the other direction, leaving Cecily and Mary alone on stage.

Cecily You'll never guess what he said to me earlier?

Mary Who?

Cecily James, of course.

Mary I thought so. Did he say "why are you always staring at me?"

Cecily (*annoyed*) No, actually, he didn't.

Mary Go on then, tell me ... before you explode.

Cecily He told me I was a "marvel".

Mary A marble?

Cecily No, a marvel, a wonder.

Mary Oh. Why?

Cecily He couldn't find his shoes.

Mary And you found them for him?

Cecily No, I gave him a foot massage.

Mary Oh, Cecily. You're lucky you didn't catch a verruca. That's no way to a man's heart.

Cecily Then what is?

Mrs Tilbury has just entered with gusto and booms out an answer to Cecily's question.

Mrs Tilbury Food is! My beautifully cooked, delicious food. And if you two don't stop gassing then there won't be any dinner and you'll find yourself looking for it in the bins?

Cecily What, dinner?

Mary No, food. She means we'll be out of a job.

Mrs Tilbury That's precisely what I mean. How you got into a job in the first place I can barely imagine. You're as useful as a hollow tea strainer, but you take up far more space.

Cecily I'm sorry, Mrs Tilbury, I'll double my efforts. Triple them, even.

Mrs Tilbury Ha, I'll believe that when I see it. Now, go and throw this into the Thames and hurry back, you daft ha'p'orth.

She hands Cecily a bucket. Cecily looks into the bucket and screws her face up in disgust, perhaps even holding her nose.

Cecily What is this?

Mrs Tilbury Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies. Go on, beat it.

Cecily Gosh, really? Pass me a spoon, Mary.

Mary Cecily! She means "go".

Cecily Oh, well that's a relief.

Cecily hurries offstage with the bucket. Mary watches her leave. Mrs Tilbury addresses Mary.

Mrs Tilbury And what are you, a flamingo? Go and ask Mr Groves what time he expects the master home.

Mary I think I just heard him come in.

Mrs Tilbury Did you indeed? Eavesdropping I imagine. Well, I've no doubt he'll be down here in my kitchens again, sniffing around for a late supper. Honestly, why people can't stick to their own areas of the house I just don't know.

Cecily enters quickly and anxiously, without the bucket.

Cecily Mrs Tilbury, there's someone lying on our doorstep.

Mrs Tilbury What on earth are you talking about? Where's my bucket?

Cecily There's a person on our doorstep. I think it's a girl, though it might be a boy.

Mrs Tilbury It could be the King himself for all I care, he's not coming in without an appointment.

Cecily I'm not sure they're very well. Shouldn't we at least take a look?

Mrs Tilbury No, we should mind our own business and leave others alone to mind theirs.

Mary But we can't just leave them there.

Mrs Tilbury You're absolutely right. I won't have my doorway being cluttered in a fine neighbourhood such as this. What would the neighbours say? Where's my broom? I've got some sweeping to do.

Mrs Tilbury takes her broom and they all make her way to the doorway. They see Kitty curled up on the ground, weak, hungry and exhausted.

Mrs Tilbury Why, you cheeky little beggar. Who do you think you are? If you want to sleep on my doorstep then you pay for it, you hear me?

Mrs Tilbury starts sweeping Kitty away. However, unbeknown to her, Mr Fitzwarren and his son James have entered. They move over to see what is happening.

Mr Fitzwarren What's this? Or should I say, who's this?

Mrs Tilbury Oh, er, nobody, Mr Fitzwarren. At least, nobody of any importance. I'll get rid of him, sir, no need to trouble yourself for the likes of him.

Mr Fitzwarren Thank you, Mrs Tilbury. Your generosity of spirit is rivalled only by the generosity of salt in your stews.

Mrs Tilbury I only meant ...

Mr Fitzwarren (*interrupting*) I know what you meant, Mrs Tilbury. Now, let's have a closer look.

He moves in and bends down to see Kitty properly.

Mr Fitzwarren Why, it's a child. A girl no less.

Mrs Tilbury Is it? I mean, is he? I mean, is she?

Mr Fitzwarren Yes, Mrs Tilbury. Just like you were once. I imagine. Well we're not going to leave her warming the doorstep for us, whoever she is.

James Prepare a bed for her, Cecily. It will have to be in the attic.

Cecily Of course, Master James.

Cecily exits.

Mr Fitzwarren Make some soup, Mrs Tilbury. And go easy on the salt, we don't want her dehydrating any further. Come on, James, help me get her up.

James and Mr Fitzwarren reach down and ease Kitty from the ground as the lights go down.

Suggested scene change music: A Better Way – Interlude 1