

'DICK WHITTINGTON' at Buxton Opera House

Alderman Fitzwarren/Percy the Pest Controller Audition Scene

CHARACTER NOTES:

Alderman Fitzwarren is a skinflint shopowner with an eye to making a quick groat (either honestly or dishonestly). He's a London Alderman, so probably more posh than your average medieval city retailer.

Percy the Pest Controller is an annoying little man on a mission to the uphold rules and regulations of his trade.

(Fitzwarren is counting the money from the till. Percy enters)

Percy Ahem.

(Fitzwarren ignores him)

Excuse me?

Fitzwarren Alright, wait a minute, can't you?.

Percy Shop! *(Rings the bell)*

Fitzwarren Look, what is it?

Percy I'm from the Council.

Fitzwarren Council, eh? So you got my letter?

Percy What letter? I'm ...

Fitzwarren ... About your business rates! Half a groat a year! Extortionate! I mean, how do you expect a poor, struggling entrepreneur like me to make a living? Oh, and while I've got you, the pavements round here are full of potholes and as for the fortnightly refuse collection...

Percy I'm afraid that's not my Department. I'm Pest Control. Percy Prigsworth, Rodent Elimination Operative: here to inspect your premises.

Fitzwarren Keen to explore one of the city's finest retail establishments, eh?

Percy No, we've had a compliant. About vermin in your shop.

Fitzwarren I think that's a bit hard. Some of my customers can be a bit rough, but I wouldn't call them vermin.

Percy Not your customers! I'm talking about Rats.

Fitzwarren Rats?

Percy Yes Rats.

Fitzwarren Surely not?

Percy Surely yes. *(Looking at his clipboard)* Several members of the public have observed droppings in areas used to prepare and serve food

Fitzwarren *(Interrupting)* Well, we may have spilt a few raisins here and there ...

Percy ... So I need to inspect the premises for rats.

Fitzwarren Is that really necessary?

Percy Yes.

Fitzwarren There are no rats here, Mr Prigsworth. But let's say – in theory – you **did** find one ... what would happen exactly?

Percy I'd have to close you down.

Fitzwarren But you can't. Where will people shop?

Percy Lidl, I expect. It's cheaper and the quality's better.

Fitzwarren But I'll be ruined!

Percy Not my problem, Alderman. Rules are rules. Right, I'll need to start in the cellar.

Fitzwarren What's the rush? Can't I tempt you with a fairy cake?

Percy Are you trying to bribe me? Because that would be a serious offence ...

Fitzwarren Not at all! These were freshly made by my cook, Sarah. Go on. Go on. Go on. I know you want to.

Percy They do look delicious.

Fitzwarren Yes, they do, don't they?

Percy *(Taking a bite)* Ugh! That's revolting.

Fitzwarren ... But I didn't say they'd be edible.

Percy I can see now I'm going to need to do a risk assessment before I start work in these premises. It may take a while, but don't think for a moment I've forgotten. I'll be back.

(He exits)

Fitzwarren A risk assessment? Good. While he's writing ten pages of A4 I'll have time to sort out those rats.