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Hickory, Dickory, Dock

a pantomime

Norman Robbins

Samuel French
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HICKORY DICKORY DOCK

CHARACTERS

Dame Foxtrot
Mary Foxtrot, her daughter
Willie Winkie, the Dame's beau
David, a gipsy boy
Baron Hickory, a real bad lot
Baroness Hickory
Herbert Hickory, their son
Slap, **Tickle** } the Baron's henchmen
The Wizard of Bong, an evil magician
The Sprite, his deadly opponent
The Black Imp, a nasty piece of work
Fairy Queen Snowdrift
King Neptune, ruler of the Enchanted Lake
Rose, **Iris**, **Dewdrop** } fairies
A Pixie

Chorus of **Townsfolk, Servants, Spirits of the Clock, Clockwork Soldiers, Golliwogs, Fairies, Water Spirits, Mermaids**
Junior Chorus of **Mice, Elves, Pixies, Spirits of the Clock, Water Spirits**

Act I
Scene 1 The Village Square
Scene 2 A Quiet Street
Scene 3 Inside Dame Foxtrot's Cottage
Scene 4 A Corridor in Dickory Dock Mansion
Scene 5 The Hall of Dickory Dock Mansion
Scene 6 On the Way to Bed
Scene 7 The Village Square

Act II
Scene 1 The Never-Never Land
Scene 2 A Woodland Path
Scene 3 The Fairy Glen
Scene 4 By the Enchanted Lake
Scene 5 The Court of King Neptune
Scene 6 A Pathway
Scene 7 The Village Square
Finale The Hall of Dickory Dock Mansion

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(See also page ii)

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PRODUCTION NOTE

The huge Grandfather Clock that is the central pivot of this pantomine, is very simple in construction, and of necessity, quite light. Our original "Clock" was a kind of huge box-kite, with painted face and moveable hands. It had a large door at the front, and a black cloth back that could be moved aside to let the cast out unseen. Naturally we also had an opening in our backdrops to match, but there is no objection whatsoever to the Clock being placed at an angle to the wings of the stage, when characters either enter or exit through it. In Scene 5, however, it is better for the Imp to be in position when the scene opens. Small handles on the sides helped for lifting it. The sound of the Clock striking is, of course, done offstage.

In our original production, and several subsequent ones, the Fairies were played by men, which added a great deal to the fun, but women have also played them with success. Queen Snowdrift, is, as you will gather, played by a man, but to avoid giving away the surprise, was simply billed in the programmes "Snowdrift."

Music was chosen from popular songs of the day, and this must be left to the individual societies to select. The dialogue gives some obvious ones, but elementary surgery will allow almost anything to be used.

Keep the speed of the pantomime fairly rapid, and above all, enjoy yourselves.

Norman Robbins

For

ANN and ROY HUDD

and

JOHN BEDDING

ACT I

SCENE 1

The Village Square

A typical pantomime village scene. Dame Foxtrot's cottage is up left

When the CURTAIN *rises, the villagers are making merry with song and dance*

SONG 1

At the end of the number they scatter to either side as Dame Foxtrot comes rushing out of her cottage furiously waving a large broom

Dame Shoo. Scat. Scram. Buzz off. Get out of it. You noisy set of what-nots. Go sing in front of your own houses for a change. (*To the audience*) Oooooh. I get this *every year*, you know. I should have a seduction in me rates. *Up* goes that curtain and straight away this lot start screeching their heads off. It goes right *through* you.

Villagers (*brightly*) Good morning, Dame Foxtrot.

Dame (*glowering at them*) I'll give you "Good morning, Dame Foxtrot" if you don't clear off. You've woken me up from me beauty sleep.

A Girl (*contritely*) Oh, we *are* sorry. (*She peers at her closely*) Still if it's any consolation, it doesn't look as though it were doing you any good.

The Villagers laugh

Dame (*scowling*) Oh. Is that so? (*Fiercely*) Well let me tell you, little miss Smarty-pants, that this face (*She touches her face*) is the kind of face men dream about at nights.

A Boy Well—I suppose that's better than seeing it in *daylight*.

The Villagers laugh as the Dame whirls round to face the Boy

Dame I *resemble* that remark, I may be just past the first flush of youth, but look at what happened the last time I entered the beauty competition. I got several offers, didn't I?

A Girl Yes. But they were all from Plastic Surgeons.

The Villagers laugh

Dame One more remark like that, cherub, and you're not going to be around for the next scene change. For your inflamation, me and the Venus de Milo are like twins. (*She strikes a pose*)

A Boy Yes. You're both very old, and not all there.

The Villagers laugh. Dame Foxtrot gives a bellow of rage and lashes out with the broom, knocking herself off her feet

The villagers exit laughing as she tries to sort herself out. Mary Foxtrot enters down right

Mary (*spotting her*) Mother? (*She hurries to her*) What happened?

Dame (*getting up wearily*) Oh, Mary. My little daughter Mary. (*Puts her arms around Mary's waist*) It's nothing, love. Just them village lads and lasses again.

Mary (*sympathetically*) Poor Mother. They *do* tease you, don't they?

Dame It's "poor mother" all right. That old skinflint Baron Hickory's after the rent money again, and he says if he doesn't get it *this* time, out we go. Lock, stock and barrel. (*Downcast*) Whatever are we going to do?

Mary We shall have to *pay* him, of course.

Dame (*startled*) Pay him? What with? We owe him *ten years' rent.*

Mary (*puzzled*) But Mother—what happened to the money we saved for a rainy day?

Dame Well—we had a very poor summer last year, didn't we?

Mary So it's all gone?

Dame (*nodding*) Every brass farthing. In fact we've got so little, I can't even afford to change the date on the calendar.

Mary Oh, *Mother.* (*She hugs her*) Still I suppose it *could* be worse, couldn't it? Come on. Cheer up. Things have *got* to start getting better soon. I can sense it in the air.

Dame Don't talk daft. That's the smell from the gasworks. Here—and talking about the gasworks—I've got the kettle on for a nice cup of tea. I'll just pop inside and see if there's any milk left in the cat's saucer.

Dame exits into the cottage

Mary (*sadly*) Poor Mother. She works *so* hard to keep up appearances. But I'm afraid things are starting to look black. If we don't get money from somewhere, I don't know *what's* going to happen to us.

Willie Winkie enters down left

Willie Hello, Mary.

Mary (*turning to see him*) Hello, Willie. (*She looks him up and down*) My, you *do* look smart this morning. Something special?

Willie (*shyly*) Well (*He squirms*)

Mary Don't be shy. You can tell *me.*

Willie (*embarrassed*) I'm going to propose.

Mary (*delightedly*) Oh, *Willie.* Mother *will* be pleased.

Willie I don't think she will. I'm not proposing to her.

Mary Oh? (*Puzzled*) Then—who's the lucky girl?

Willie (*squirming again*) It's you.

Mary (*laughing kindly*) Me? But Willie. I can't marry *you.*

Willie Why not? (*He laughs*) I bet it's never happened before. The Principal Girl marrying the local idiot.

Mary You're not an *idiot.*

Willie Yes I am.

Mary (*laughing*) You're *not.*

Willie (*insistently*) I *am.*

Mary is silent

Well don't just *stand* there. Tell me I'm *not*.

Mary (*bursting out laughing and wagging her finger at him*) You don't want to marry me *at all*, do you? Come on, now. Admit it.

Willie (*grinning*) No. You're right. Your mother's the only one for me, and I'd marry her tomorrow if it wasn't for one little thing.

Mary And what's that?

Willie Well, she won't tell me how old she is.

Mary I should think not indeed. No woman gives away secrets like that, you know. But I'll give you a tip. Try counting the candles on her next birthday cake.

Willie No fear. The last birthday party she had, there were so many candles on the cake, half the guests went home with suntans.

Mary (*laughing*) Willie.

Willie It's true. It looked like a forest fire.

Mary (*trying not to laugh*) She's not *that* old. As a matter of fact, I heard her telling our next door neighbour, only yesterday, that she'd *just* turned thirty.

Willie (*amazed*) Just turned *thirty*?

Mary That's right.

Willie (*scornfully*) Huh! It must have been a *U turn*.

Mary Now, Willie. Anyway, what does it matter *how* old she is? She's still a remarkable-looking woman. Do you know—when she was seventeen, the King of England gave her a *beauty prize*.

Willie Oh, come off it. William the Conqueror never bothered with all that silly stuff, did he?

Mary glowers at him

I'm sorry, Mary. I'm only pulling your leg. Me and your mother are going to get married as soon as we know that you've found a nice young man for yourself and you're ready to settle down.

Mary Oh—well I'm afraid you'll be in for quite a long wait, in that case. You see—I haven't met the right man yet, and until *he* comes along—I'll just have to stay single.

Willie But how will you know if he *is* the right man?

Mary Oh, I'll *know*.

SONG 2

After the song, Mary exits into the cottage

Willie (*to the audience*) Hey—isn't she a nice girl, eh? I could really fall for her. In fact I would do if it wasn't for her mother. Have you met her, yet? Have you? I thought you might have done. (*He laughs*) Funny old thing, isn't she? And that dress she wears. Did you notice it? She's had it for so many years it's been back in fashion five times. I asked her where she got it from and she told me it was the latest model from Paris. Latest model. It's more like a terrible *example*. (*He laughs*) Mind you—she's very intelligent. She's found a smashing way of getting rid of Peeping Toms. She doesn't

draw the blinds. Still—I mustn't make fun of her, must I? After all, I *am* going to marry her. And that reminds me, I'd better have a little practice at me proposal, so will you excuse me a minute? I won't be long. (*He moves up centre and strikes a pose*) Gerty, my darling—Gerty, my sweet— Gerty, beloved—you've got big feet. (*Pause*) No—I'd better not say that. Ah—I've got it. (*He kneels*) My own little Gertitude. Make me the happiest of men—and marry somebody else. (*Pause*) No, I'd better not say *that*, either. (*He thinks*) I know—I'll shut me eyes and then I won't be able to see her face while I'm asking her. (*He closes his eyes*) My own little sherbert lollipop.

Herbert Hickory enters right and moves to Willie

Will you do me the honour of—er—er—er

Herbert What?

Willie Of being my own little—er—er You *know*.

Herbert No I don't.

Willie But you *must* do. We've been courting long enough.

Herbert Have we?

Willie Course we have. So how'd you like to marry me?

Herbert Not very much. You're not my type.

Willie (*opening his eyes*) Eh? *Herbert*. Herbert Hickory. (*He gets to his feet*) What are *you* doing here?

Herbert I'm getting proposed to. (*He laughs*)

Willie Huh, *you've* some hopes. The last time I saw a head like yours in this village, it had a *nosebag* on it.

Herbert Is that so? Well let me tell you, Willie Winkie, I happen to be a lot smarter than I look.

Willie Well that's *something* to be thankful for, I suppose. With a face like that you ought to join the Ku-Klux-Klan.

Herbert What for?

Willie You'd look better with a hood over it.

Herbert (*indignantly*) I'll have you know I've got a very sympathetic face.

Willie Well it's certainly got *my* sympathy.

Herbert Huh. *You've* some need to talk, Willie Winkie. My dad says they put better heads than yours on sledgehammers. *And* he knows why you're always wearing that stupid grin on your face.

Willie Oh, he does, does he? And why *am* I always wearing this stupid grin, then?

Herbert It's because you *are* stupid. (*He smirks and sticks his tongue out*)

Willie (*annoyed*) Oh, that's done it. Come here. (*He waves his fists*).

Herbert (*terrified*) Daddy—help.

Herbert scuttles off up left

Willie (*dashing after him*) Come back.

Willie exits up left. Slap enters down left Tickle enters down right

Slap (*imitating a trumpet*) Tant-a-ta-ta. Ta-ta-tan-tan-tan-tan-ta-ta-ta. Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-taaaaaaaaa.

Tickle His Grasping Greediness, Baron Harchibald Hickory ..

They both turn to indicate Baron Hickory

Baron Hickory strides savagely in up centre

Baron (*snarling loudly*) Out of my way, dogs. Scum. Peasants. (*He looks round as he moves down*) Where *is* everybody?

Slap and Tickle shrug

How can I be expected to terrorize the entire village if there's nobody here? Bah. (*Lashes his leg with his whip in fury, and gives a yelp of pain*) Yeoowwww.

Slap and Tickle laugh

(*furiously*) Silence. Now then (*He looks around cautiously*) Do you two idiots know why I've brought you here today?

Slap and Tickle shake their heads

Then I'll *tell* you. It's because of something absolutely *terrible*. Dame Foxtrot's *clock*.

Slap Well, she *is* an old woman.

Tickle Everybody gets wrinkles at her age.

Baron (*cracking his whip with fury*) Fools. I'm talking about her *Grandfather's* clock.

Slap Oh, well—we haven't seen his, so we wouldn't know, would we, Tickle?

Tickle No idea, Slap.

Baron (*grabbing Slap's ear*) Listen, blockhead. I've just discovered that Dame Foxtrot owns a very valuable Grandfather clock. A clock like no other Grandfather clock in the world. It's absolutely *unique*. And I want it for my collection.

Tickle Well, why don't you ask her to sell it to you?

Baron (*outraged*) *SELL* me it? You must be *mad*. I've never paid for anything in my life and I'm certainly not going to start now. No. (*He throws Slap from him*) That old faggot owes me ten years' rent, so I'm going to throw her out into the street and confiscate *all* her furniture—including the *Clock*. (*He laughs evilly*) What do you think to *that* idea?

Slap Sounds all right—but what did you want *us* to come along with you for?

Baron To do the dirty work, of course. (*He indicates the cottage with his whip*) Into the street with her.

Tickle Here—now wait a minute. You don't expect us to throw her out on our own, do you? Not Dame Foxtrot.

Baron And why not, pray?

Slap Well the last time we tried to do it, she had a fit of historics.

Baron *Historics?* You mean *hysterics*, you fatheaded fool.

Tickle No he doesn't. He means historics. She told us what our ancestors were.

Baron Bah, you yellow livered cowards. I'll do it myself. Out of my way.

Slap Nobody's in it.

Baron Oh. Well. Yes.(*He marches over to the cottage door and knocks loudly*) Come out, you fleabitten old floormat.

The cottage door opens and Dame Foxtrot appears

Dame Oh, it's the River, himself.
Baron *River?*
Dame Yes. The biggest part of you's your *mouth.*
Baron Bah. I want my rent money.
Dame Thank goodness for that. I thought you wanted mine.
Baron (*roaring*) I *mean* yours, you decrepit looking lunatic. Either I get my money, or you get the shove. Understand?
Dame Well you'd better start shoving, Samson, because you'll get no money from me.
Baron Very well. (*To Slap and Tickle*) Throw her out.

Slap and Tickle dash into the cottage and bring out a chair. As they go back in, the Dame picks up the chair and hurries in after them. They exit with another chair and go back inside. The Dame rushes out, picks up the chair and rushes back inside with it. Slap comes out carrying the Dame, puts her down and goes back inside. The Dame picks up the Baron as Tickle comes out carrying Slap

Baron (*struggling*) Get off me, you old fool. Put me down.
Dame (*looking up*) Eeek, a gargoyle. (*She drops him*)

Mary enters from the cottage and Villagers enter L and R to observe

Mary (worried) What's happening? What's going on?
Dame We're being turned out. Convicted. It's a daylight moonlight.
Villagers Boo. (*They wave their fists at the Baron and his men*)
Baron (*snarling*) Silence, dogs. This old has-been owes me ten years' rent, and I want it.
Villagers (*loudly*) Boo. Shame. (*They crowd in on him*)
Baron (*cracking his whip*) Back. Back. Any more from you lot, and I'll turn *you* out as well. Now go on. Clear off.

The Villagers exit, jeering

Mary Oh, Baron Hickory. Won't you *just* give us a little more time?
Baron I'll give you five minutes, and if you don't cough up by then, you'll be out on your ears. (*He counts*) One-two-three-four-five. You're out.
Dame Here. They were quick minutes.
Baron I know. My watch is fast.
Dame (*wailing*) Oh. Turned out after all these years. Owwwww.

David, a young wanderer, enters up centre

David What's the matter, dear lady? Are you ill?
Baron (*snarling*) Who are you?
David My name is David, good sir. A traveller of the King's highway and owing allegiance to no man.
Baron (*prodding him with the whip*) Is that *so*? Well, I suggest you keep *on* travelling and don't poke your nose into things that don't concern you.
David (*annoyed*) I don't like your attitude, sir, and I like your face even less. Anything that causes distress to a member of the fair sex *is* my concern.

Baron Then I'll give you something to be concerned about. (*To Slap and Tickle*) Throw him into the duck pond.

Slap and Tickle grab David, laughing with glee. With a quick movement, he lifts his arms, then jabs his elbows into their respective stomachs. They stagger back groaning

David (*To the Baron*) Now if you'll excuse me? (*He turns to the Dame and Mary*)

Baron Not so fast, fancy pants. Do you know who I *am*?

David I've no idea but you're definitely the kind of man who'd make a perfect *stranger*.

Baron I am Baron Hickory of Dickory Dock Mansion and this old faggot owes me ten years' rent.

David (*to the Dame*) Is this true?

Dame (*sadly*) Yes. I have got a little behind.

Baron (*aside*) Not from where *I'm* standing, she hasn't.

Mary (*to David*) We're being turned out because we can't pay.

David (*smiling*) Don't worry. I'll see you're not turned out. (*To the Baron*) How much do these good people owe you?

Baron One hundred pounds, and not a penny less. (*He smirks*)

David (*astounded*) A hundred pounds? (*He recovers*) Very well. (*He takes out his purse*) Take this. I think you'll find the right amount in there. (*He tosses it scornfully to the Baron*)

Baron (*gloating as he grabs it*) A hundred pounds. Mine. All mine.

Slap What about the Grandfather clock?

Tickle Don't you want it now?

Dame Grandfather clock? He's not getting his greasy creepy-crawly measly mucky maulers on *my* Grandfather clock. I've had that ever since it was a wrist watch.

Baron Bah—keep your rotten old clock. *I've* got the rent money. (*He waves the purse*) Come on, you two. Back to Dickory Dock Mansion.

The Baron, Slap and Tickle exit up left

David (*watching them go*) Well, there goes my fortune.

Mary (*horrified*) You mean you gave away all your money, just to help *us*?

David Every penny of it. I never could resist a lady in distress.

Mary But we'll *never* be able to repay you.

David Never mind. Money isn't everything. It can't buy happiness.

Dame No, but at least you can be miserable in comfort.

David (*doffing his hat to them*) Well—good-bye. (*He moves away*)

Mary (*quickly*) Where are you going?

David Who knows? I'll just follow the road until it comes to an end, and hope to find my fortune waiting for me.

Dame You can stop and have a cup of tea before you go, can't you? I've got the kettle on.

The Dame hurries inside her cottage

David I mustn't stay too long.

Mary Why not? Don't you like it here?
David I think it's charming, but I have to press on to where fame and fortune will welcome me with open arms.
Mary Couldn't they welcome you *here*?
David (*looking into her eyes*) With you beside me—I think they *could.*

SONG 3

At the end of the song, David and Mary exit into the cottage as the inner CURTAINS *close.*

SCENE 2

A quiet street

The Wizard of Bong enters down left

Wizard So this is—(*he mentions the local district*)—and the last place on my list. The Magic Clock must be here *somewhere.* The Clock that holds the Black Imp a secret prisoner—trapped by the Fairy Queen—until the striking of the hour of one. (*He peers around*) But who can have it? And what is more important—do they suspect its secret?

The Sprite enters down right

Sprite (*brightly*) And what mischief are you up to now, dear Wizard?
Wizard (*startled*) The Sprite. Ten thousand curses. Can't you *ever* leave me alone?
Sprite Not if I can help it. It's my job to keep you out of trouble, so wherever you go, I won't be far behind.
Wizard (*annoyed*) Bah—well you won't stop me *this* time. When I lay my hands on that Clock I'll (*He realizes*) Oooops.
Sprite (*laughing merrily*) So *that's* it. You're after the Clock of Silas the Gnome. Well you're out of luck, my friend. It was accidentally sold over a hundred years ago, and has never been seen since. It completely vanished, taking the Black Imp with it. Trapped for ever.
Wizard (*grandly*) Not for ever. Only until the Clock strikes one, and then the Imp will be free again.
Sprite (*carelessly*) And what makes you think the Imp will still be inside the Clock? After all—a hundred years is a long time.
Wizard Because the Clock had *stopped* when the Fairy Queen imprisoned him, and only one key in the entire world can set it going again. The Key made by Silas the Gnome and now in *my* possession. (*He shows the Key*) All I have to do is wind up the Clock—and wait.
Sprite That's all very fine—but you still haven't explained why you're so anxious to free the Imp.
Wizard (*snarling*) Fool. It's because *he* can lead me into the Never-Never land and help me steal the Jewel of Miracles.
Sprite (*horrified*) You. In the Never-Never Land? You wouldn't *dare.*

Wizard Wouldn't I? Just you wait and see.

The Wizard laughs and exits left

Sprite (*distressed*) He's got to be stopped. If he finds the Magic Clock, there's no knowing what will happen. Fairyland could be destroyed. I've got to get help at once. (*Exits right*)

The Sprite exits right. Baron Hickory enters left

Baron (*muttering*) It's no use. It's no *use*. I've just *got* to have that Clock for my collection. Now how can I get my hands on it? (*He thinks, with a fearful frown on his face*)

Baroness (*off right*) Archibald.

Baron (*jumping*) Blast. It's the wife.

Baroness Hickory enters right, grim faced as ever

Baroness (*loudly*) So—*there* you are, Archibald. Hand it over at *once*.

Baron (*nervously*) Hand *what* over, my sweet?

Baroness The *money*, of course. Herbert tells me that Dame Foxtrot finally paid up.

Baron (*scowling*) How *kind* of him. I must remember to give him something for being so thoughtful. (*Aside*) A thick ear, for instance.

Baroness (*grandly*) Well? (*She holds out her hand*)

Baron (*handing over the bag with bad grace*) Here it is, my poppet. I *was* going to give it to you as soon as I saw you. After all you know money means *nothing* to *me*.

Baroness (*sniffing*) Only too well. Whenever *I* ask for any, I usually *get* nothing. I've never *known* anyone as miserly as you are. We must be the only house in the village with a padlock on the *dustbin*.

Baron (*outraged*) Miserly? *Me?*

Baroness Yes, you. Why can't we have a new car, like all the other Society people round here. Ours is so old the insurance policy covers theft, fire, and Viking raids.

Baron (*snarling*) If you didn't spend so much on new dresses, we might be able to *afford* a new car.

Baroness (*grandly*) I may spend a "certain amount" on clothing, Archibald, but for your information—nothing *I* wear will ever go out of style.

Baron No. It'll look just as ridiculous, year after year.

Baroness (*annoyed*) Indeed? I shall remember that remark, Archibald. And as soon as I return from the hairdresser, I'll have something to say. (*She turns to leave*)

Baron Hairdresser? *Hairdresser?* Did you say you were going to see the Hairdresser?

Baroness I did. I feel it's about time I had a change of colour.

Baron Again? But Medusa—you've had your hair dyed so many different shades, you're getting technicolored dandruff. You've got to stop spending, before I go completely bankrupt.

Baroness (*snorting*) Bankrupt. Hah. Before we were married, you told me you were well-off.

Baron (*sourly*) I *was*—but I didn't realize *how* well off. (*Groaning*) It's no wonder I've not been myself lately.

Baroness (*smiling sweetly*) Never mind, *darling*. Everyone's noticed the improvement.

The Baroness sweeps off right in triumph

The Baron glares after her with hatred

Baron Bah. That's really ruined my day. I'm so annoyed, I've a good mind to dash into Marks and Spencer's and shout "Woolworths" (*He looks around*) Where are those two idiots, Slap and Tickle?

Slap and Tickle enter left

Slap Here we are, Boss.

Tickle Do you want us?

Baron (*growling*) Not really—but you'll have to do till something better comes along. Now come closer and listen.

They move in to flank him

I've got to get that Clock from Dame Foxtrot. So tonight—when everyone's asleep—I want you to climb into her cottage through the bedroom window—and hand it down to me. Understand?

Slap (*puzzled*) What do you want the bedroom window for?

Baron (*hitting him over the head*) I *don't* want the bedroom window, you half-baked nincompoop. I want the *Clock*. (*Quieter*) Grab the Clock, lower it out of the window, and I'll be there waiting to carry it off to join the rest of my collection.

Tickle And what do we get out of it?

Slap Yes. We've been working for you nearly ten years, and we haven't had a penny wages yet.

Baron Why do you think you've been working for me nearly ten years?

Tickle Well, no money

Slap No Clock.

Baron Oh, very well. I'll give you your wages the minute we get it back to Dickory Dock Mansion. But remember—not one scratch on it—or *else*. (*He begins to move left*)

Slap Leave it to us, Boss. It'll be in your hands before you can say Jack Robinson.

The Baron exits left

(*Gleefully*) Did you hear that, Tickle? We're going to get paid at long last.

Tickle I'll believe it when I get it. The last time *he* took a pound note out of his pocket, the Queen blinked at the light.

Slap Yes, but this time it'll be different. Because if we don't get paid we'll tell Dame Foxtrot who's pinched her Clock, and he'll be up to his neck in hot water.

Tickle And so will I, if I don't get some money soon. I'll have to give up being a Juvenile Detergent and go back to inventing.

Slap Inventing? I didn't know you did any inventing.
Tickle Oh, yes. I've got a very mechanical mind.
Slap Yes, but it's too bad that most of the screws are loose. Anyway—what sort of things have you invented?
Tickle Well—I took the wheels of a Rolls-Royce, the engine of a Jaguar, and the body of a Cortina.
Slap The wheels of a Rolls-Royce, the engine of a Jaguar, and the body of a Cortina. All right. You took all these. And what did you get?
Tickle (*glumly*) Six months.

Slap chases Tickle off left, beating him with his hat. Dame Foxtrot and Willie Winkie enter right

Dame (*as she enters*) And another thing. I'm fed up with seeing that old Clock standing about the place. It doesn't work, so first thing tomorrow morning, you can get rid of it for me.
Willie (*eagerly*) I can chop it up for firewood and sell it, can't I? Here. I say, though. What shall I do with the works?
Dame Give 'em to Baron Hickory. I've been wanting to give him the works for a long time. Oh, and that reminds me. Speaking of time—don't you think it's about time we got married?
Willie Yes, I do—but who'd have us? And anyway—when *I* get married, I'm going to marry the most beautiful woman I can find.
Dame (*coyly*) I'm here.
Willie Oh, good. You can help me to look for her.
Dame (*warningly*) Watch it.
Willie I'm only kidding, Gerty. As a matter of fact, I was going to propose to you tonight after supper.
Dame (*pleased*) *Were* you? Oh, Willie. I knew this was going to be my lucky day. I'll tell you what. I'll do us a special celebration dinner, instead. Now—what will I get if I make you a meal like the one I did for your last birthday?
Willie My life insurance, I think. Can't we go *out* for a meal, Gerty?
Dame Go *out*? What for? There's nothing wrong with *my* cooking.
Willie Well, nothing a miracle couldn't change. Oh, I'm sorry, Gerty, but I can't face fish again. I've had so much lately, I'm starting to grow gills.
Dame But it's good for the brain, is fish. My first husband wouldn't eat anything else. He had fish for every meal. Bird's Eye made a fortune out of me.
Willie Bird's Eye fish for every meal?
Dame Frozen Cod for breakfast. Frozen Haddock for lunch. Frozen Plaice for tea, and Frozen Kippers for supper.
Willie And didn't he ever get fed up of it?
Dame He didn't have time. He died of frostbite.
Willie Anyway—I can't propose to you tonight, after all. I haven't any money to buy a ring with.
Dame Well, I'm not getting engagified without a ring, and that's final. How much will it cost?
Willie I don't know—but I'll tell you what. You lend me a pound, and I'll go out and get one.

Dame (*to the audience*) A *pound*. Can't you tell that this is a long time ago? You couldn't buy the wrapping paper now at that price. (*To Willie*) All right, spendthrift. I'll lend you a pound, but you'll have to give me an I.O.U.

Willie I.O.U.??

Dame I owe you one pound.

Willie (*pleased*) Do you? Well in that case I needn't borrow anything need I?

Dame (*to the audience*) There's one in every village, isn't there? (*To Willie*) Listen, Einstein. I.O.U. doesn't mean I.O.U. It means U.O. *me*. (*She gets a sheet of paper out*) Look write it down.

Willie (*producing a pencil*) All right. What do I put?

Dame I.O.U. one pound.

Willie (*writing*) You owe me, one pound.

Dame (*annoyed*) I don't. U.O. *me* one pound.

Willie (*baffled*) But that's what I've written.

Dame (*snatching the paper and pencil*) Come here. Let me do it. (*As she writes*) I.O.U. one pound. Right? (*She hands the paper back to him*)

Willie Right.

Dame Now I give you the money. (*She hands over a pound note*)

Willie And I give you the paper. (*He hands over the paper*)

Dame Then I sign it. (*She signs it*) And hold on to it until you pay me back. Get it?

Willie Simple. Well, I'll get off and buy the ring then. Ta-ta.

Willie exits right

Dame (*beaming*) Oh—I'm going to be bridalized at last. My trough is blighted and (*she stops suddenly, looks at the paper and reacts*) Eh? (*Furiously*) Willie—WILLIIIIIIIE.

The Dame dashes off after Willie, waving the paper. The Wizard enters left

Wizard So—Dame Foxtrot has the Magic Clock, eh? Thank goodness I overheard their conversation. (*He laughs*) Ha ha. 'Twill be easy to get it from *her*.

Herbert Hickory enters right

Herbert (*spotting the Wizard*) Oh. Hello.

Wizard (*aside*) H'mm. Maybe *he* can help me—without knowing it, of course. (*To Herbert*) Come here, lad. What's your name?

Herbert Herbert.

Wizard (*musing*) Yes—you *look* a right Herbert. (*With false joviality*) Tell me, Herbert, where do you *live*?

Herbert Here.

Wizard (*looking around*) Don't you find it a little draughty?

Herbert I mean here in the village. My dad's the Baron and my Mum's the Baroness. I'm their only child.

Wizard Indeed? Once bitten, twice shy, I suppose. Now tell me—where does Dame Foxtrot live?

Herbert (*smirking*) Everybody knows that. It's just down the road. (*He points left*)

Wizard Splendid. In that case, I'm sure you'd be only too willing to take me there, wouldn't you?

Herbert What will I get if I do?

Wizard You'll get a black eye if you *don't*.

Herbert Oh. Come on then.

Herbert escorts the Wizard off left, as Mary and David enter right

Mary —and this is Coronation Street.

David (*looking around*) Well, it certainly *is* a nice village. I think I'm going to like it here.

Mary I hope you do.

David Don't worry, Mary. Home is where the heart is, and mine is here with you.

SONG 4

As the song ends, the Sprite enters right

Mary (*surprised*) Look.

David (*startled*) A *fairy*.

Sprite No, not a fairy. Just a Sprite. But I need help desperately. There is an evil Wizard here in the village, searching for a Magic Grandfather Clock.

Mary (*amazed*) *Here?*

Sprite The Clock is under a spell placed there by the Fairy Queen herself. Long, long ago, Fairyland was menaced by a Black Imp who caused more trouble than all the Witches and Goblins put together. However, the Fairy Queen tricked him into hiding inside an old Grandfather Clock and managed to trap him with her strongest spell of all. Unfortunately, though, the Clock had been built by Silas the Gnome, a great friend of the Imp, and was made in such a way that when it chimed the hour of One, the spell would be broken and the Imp set free again. Luckily the Fairy Queen found out in time and managed to stop the Clock, taking away the key so that no-one could ever start it again. But somehow it's been stolen by the Wizard of Bong, and he means to free the Imp.

David But can't the Fairy Queen stop him?

Sprite Unfortunately, no. For over a hundred years ago, the Clock vanished from the old antique shop where it had been left for safekeeping, and has never been seen since. Until we can find it, we're helpless.

Mary What do you want *us* to do?

Sprite I'm sure the missing Clock is here—in *your* village, and I must get to it before the Wizard does. You can help by telling me the names of anyone here who owns a Grandfather Clock. Anyone at all.

Mary Well, Mother has one, to begin with—but there must be *hundreds* of them. The Baron has an entire collection.

Sprite Then I must find them *all* and pray that I'm in time.

The Sprite exits right

David Wait. Too late. She's gone. We've got to help her, Mary.
Mary But how?
David By looking for a Clock that hasn't worked for at least a hundred years.
Mary Then perhaps we'd better start with *ours*. So far as I know, it's never worked at *all*.
David (*eagerly*) Right. Come on, then. Back to *your* house.

David takes Mary's hand and they hurry off

The Lights fade

Scene 3

Inside Dame Foxtrot's Cottage

A typical panto cottage set. A table and two chairs are centre left. A large tablecloth conceals the false table top and plastic bucket beneath it. A huge canteen teapot is on the table, as are place settings for supper, and two small cups and saucers. One cup has a hole in its base and in the saucer, and is placed over a hole in the table which is over the bucket. An immense Grandfather Clock is left, fingers set at a few minutes to one. The inside of the Clock is stuffed with metal objects such as buckets, pans, dishes, and one or two brooms

Dame Foxtrot and Willie are sitting at the table having supper

Dame Eeh, I *do* like fish and chips.
Willie (*unenthusiastically*) So I'd noticed. (*More brightly*) Here, I say. I nearly forgot to tell you. There was a fight in the fish and chip shop tonight.
Dame (*amazed*) Was there?
Willie Yes. Two fish got battered. (*He laughs*)
Dame Oh, get on with your supper.
Willie Here, Gerty. (*He looks round the table*) What's happened to the sauce bottle?
Dame It's in the place it's always in.
Willie Where's that?
Dame In the cupboard with my weekly payments cards.
Willie That's a funny place to keep it.
Dame No it isn't. It's *H.P* sauce.
Willie Well can I go get it?
Dame You can if you want.

Willie exits right

(*Calling*) Do you want some more tea?
Willie (*off*) Yes.
Dame (*calling*) Yes, *what*?
Willie (*off*) Yes, I do.

The Dame glares off at him, then turning back to the table, picks up the teapot and pours tea into one of the cups. She goes on pouring as the scene continues.

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