

# **WHEREVER THERE'S A DREAM**

A Victorian Tale

by

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Music by

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**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

WHEREVER THERE'S A DREAM

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## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

This is a play set in Victorian days in a fishing port.

There are four scenes. Scenes 1 and 3 are set on the docks. Victorian houses painted on cardboard and standing along the back wall could be made to look as if they are across the river, and fairy lights behind the windows can be switched on for the night time scene. If a stage is available, the river could run across the floor in front of it with areas for the railway workers downstage right and the herring girls downstage left. The upturned hull of a boat can be made from cardboard. Masts, netting, boats, seagulls etc. can be made and put around the acting and the audience area.

Scene 2 is in the workhouse and needs only to be dingy and bare. A washing line slung across the stage is enough to create the right impression.

Scene 4 is in the Marrington's house and an impression of Christmas and wealth can be easily created with a decorated Christmas tree and perhaps chairs or a table draped with rich material.

There are seven songs as well as opportunities for dance, mime and carol singing. A solo voice singing or a recorder playing a folk song about fishing is an effective opening.

## THE SONGS.

*MUSIC 1* is a working chant by the railway men which will harmonise with a similar working song by the herring girls. (*Working Song*).

*MUSIC 2* is a faster, lively market day song involving a large crowd of townspeople and possibly incorporating a dance. (*Come to the Market*).

*MUSIC 3* is sung by the pickpocket gang and some of the townspeople if necessary, the children joining in as they go. (*Living in the Workhouse*).

*MUSIC 4* is a comedy song sung by the workhouse children (who may be able to double up as townspeople), and involving impressions of Miss Rumble and Miss Bustle by two of them. (*A Clean Road*).

*MUSIC 5* is sung by the fish chorus and could incorporate a mime of the fish gutting dream machine which the herring girls have been talking about. (*The Life of a Herring*).

*MUSIC 6* is a sad song sung while the children are in prison. (*Wherever there's a Dream*).

*MUSIC 7* is a big Victorian Christmas finale number. (*Because it's Christmas*).

*There are two opportunities for carols to be brought in.*

*In the market scene a folk dance and music could be included.*





# WHEREVER THERE'S A DREAM

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SCENE 1. *The Docks.*

*(It is morning and the RAILWAY WORKERS enter singing their working song. They move up into their area and start work, timing their actions to their singing. The HERRING GIRLS then enter singing their song and likewise start work. The two songs harmonise so that they can start together after they've each done a verse separately. They could dance as well. The song comes to an abrupt halt when the OVERSEER enters).*

## MUSIC 1 - WORKING SONG

**Herring Girls:** *The whip of the wind and the sting of the salt,  
We work in the sun and the snow and the rain,  
When anything's wrong it is always our fault,  
But there's no-one to listen if we complain.*

*Our hair is full of the smell of the fish.  
Our fingers are sore with the salt of the sea,  
We stand in the cold and we dream and we wish  
For a life with the time to be happy and free.*

**Railway Workers:** *Working every day,  
Working our lives away,  
Working without enough pay,  
Working every day,  
Working our lives away.  
In the rain and the wind in the morning.*

**Herring Girls:** *Dreaming every day,  
Sorrows will fly away,  
Time to be glad and gay,  
Time to be free.*

**Railway Boys:**            *Dreaming every day,  
Happy to rest and stay  
In the warmth of the sun,  
Every morning.*

*(These last two verses are repeated, but sung at the same time.)*

**Overseer:** Whatever is going on here? Get back to work all of you or you'll be on half pay for the week!

*(They all start work, silently, perhaps to a single drum beat keeping them in rhythm, and as the OVERSEER exits SL, the four children enter. POLLY is crying).*

**Ellen:** Oh, Polly. Please stop it! It's bad enough without having you howling all the time.

**Polly:** I want Mummy!

**Tom:** Well it's no good wanting. You've just got to get used to the fact that she's not here.

**Harry:** We all have. It's just as bad for the rest of us.

**Ellen:** Oh, don't be too hard on her, boys. She's only young, she can't understand. Cheer up, Polly. At least we've got each other.

**Tom:** Do you want me to carry the baby for a while, Ellen? It's been a long way.

*(ELLEN hands the BABY to TOM and they stand for a moment looking around).*

**Harry:** Look. There are some people over there. Maybe they can tell us where we could get work.

*(They go across to the RAILWAY WORKERS).*

**Tom:** Excuse me, Sir. I wonder if there might be any work here? My brother and I are good workers.

**Harry:** And we've no food, nor anywhere to stay.

**1st Worker:** Well now. You are in a pretty pickle, aren't you? Where have you come from?

**2nd Worker:** And where are your parents to be letting the four of you out alone like this and the weather so cold?

**Ellen:** Please, Sir, there's five of us. *(She holds up the baby).* Our father is dead and our mother ....

**Polly:** *(Starting to cry again).* She's in prison.

**Ellen:** Only it wasn't her fault. She was going to pay for the bread later.

**Tom:** And we were all *so hungry*.

**Harry:** And it was only a very little bit of bread.

**Polly:** And it wasn't fair!

**1st Worker:** All right, all right! She's not the first to be put in prison for want of a few pennies. So you're all new to the town then?

**Tom:** We used to live in a farm cottage along the coast but when they took mother away, the farmer needed it for some one else.

**Harry:** So we've come into town to find work.

**2nd Worker:** The town's no place for a family of youngsters. You'd be best to stay in the country. This is hard, hard work.

**3rd Worker:** Start at first light, work till dark until you think your back's breaking.

**4th Worker:** Your hands are bleeding, the wind's like ice whipping your face.

**3rd Worker:** You daren't stop in case the boss sees you.

**4th Worker:** And all for three pence a day!

**1st Worker:** It's true. This is no life. Go back to the country. And good luck to you all.

*(Those who have stopped start work again, perhaps chanting another bit of their song. The CHILDREN wander over to the HERRING GIRLS).*

**1st Girl:** Well, my dears. What can we do for you?

**Ellen:** Please, ma'am, we're looking for work.

**Harry:** And a place to stay.

**Polly:** And something to eat!

**1st Girl:** My word! You'll be lucky to find all that round here. Especially for so many of you.

**2nd Girl:** You're very young to have a baby, aren't you?

**Ellen:** She's my sister. I'm looking after her for the moment.

**1st Girl:** Listen my dear. The docks are no place to be out alone with a baby and all these little ones. These streets are dangerous. Go back where you came from.

**2nd Girl:** And gutting herring is hard. You never get the smell off your skin.

**3rd Girl:** And your hands get sore and bleeding from the salt and the sea water.

**4th Girl:** And when there's a big catch we have to work all night as well to get the fish salted down before they go rotten.

**1st Girl:** And all for a few pence. Not enough to keep a flea alive. Go back to the country, that's my advice.

**Tom:** But we can't. We've no home, no family, no money. There's nothing to go back for.

**1st Girl:** Then it's the workhouse for you. At least you'll be safe enough there. You'll get a roof over your heads and something to eat.

*(There is the sound of a bell ringing, people shouting and perhaps music such as a barrel organ, tin whistle or concertina).*

**Tom:** What's that noise?

**1st Girl:** It's market day today. Go and see; the little ones'll like that. You pass through the square on your way to the workhouse.

**2nd Girl:** There's a special Christmas market today so it'll be busy. But watch out for pickpockets.

*(Curtains open to reveal the market scene. Traders with baskets, crowds of people, noise and bustle).*

## *MUSIC 2 - COME TO THE MARKET*

*Come to the market and see all the fun,  
There's something that's certain to please everyone,  
Bonnets for granny and fish for the cat,  
Ribbons and laces for trimming your hat.*

*Come to the market, the year's growing old,  
Come to the market, come out of the cold.*

*Come to the market, come to the fair,  
There's brooches and bracelets and clips for your hair,  
Candy and apples and cinnamon sticks,  
Jugglers and acrobats all doing their tricks.*

*Come to the market, come to the fair,  
The new Punch and Judy show's bound to be there,  
Come and buy turkeys and turnips for tea,  
And presents for Christmas to tie on the tree.*

*(Towards the end of the song the rich MARRINGTON Family comes in - LORD and LADY MARRINGTON, their daughter FLORENCE, and LIZZIE the maid. They start looking around at the goods for sale while the action of the Market continues around them and the song is still being sung quietly by a*

*small group. The CHILDREN stand watching, amazed by all this. Suddenly two of the PICKPOCKETS dart in and steal a purse from LORD MARRINGTON'S pocket).*

**Lord M:** Oy! Stop! Stop thief! Catch those boys!

*(The CROWD takes up the shout. The POLICEMEN run in, blowing whistles, there is a chase during which one of the PICKPOCKETS, unseen by the POLICEMEN but seen by the CHILDREN, throws the purse into the river. The POLICEMEN capture the PICKPOCKETS).*

**Policeman 1:** Right, you little good for nothings. This time you won't be getting away.

**Policeman 2:** We've had an eye on you for quite a while.

**Policeman 1:** Are these the lads, Sir?

**Lord M:** They are indeed, Officer. I think you'll find my money hidden somewhere amongst their rags.

**Policeman 1:** Well, let's have a look, shall we?

*(They search the BOYS who wriggle and shout a bit. No purse).*

**Lord M:** There's no doubt about it. These are the boys. There are plenty of people here who saw them. Look! Ask these children; they were standing here all the time.

**Policeman 1:** You heard what the gentleman said. These boys stole his purse, didn't they?

**Policeman 2:** No use denying it. We know they did.

**Ellen:** *(Seeing the BOYS' faces).* Well, we really ....

**Tom:** No. We didn't see anything.

**Policeman 1:** No good asking the likes of them. They're all the same, these street children. Good for nothing!

**Tom:** We're not street children!

**Policeman 2:** Oh, we're not street children, aren't we? Well, we can see that from your beautiful clothes and your clean faces. You'll be telling me you're the aristocracy next, I suppose.

**Ellen:** We're from the country, Sir. We're looking for the workhouse.

**Lord M:** Listen, Officer. We haven't got time to waste like this. Are you going to arrest these boys or aren't you?

**Policeman 1:** Not quite that easy, Sir. No evidence and no witness, you see.

**Lord M:** *(To the CROWD).* But surely some of you saw it? You must have done.

*(They all shake their heads and mutter "No", etc.).*

**Florence:** Oh Daddy, let's go. It's horrible here. And those children are just so dirty.

**Lady M:** Don't say that, darling. They can't really help being so dirty. They probably haven't got anywhere to wash.

**Florence:** Then they should go to the workhouse and get washed there. They're horrible. And I want to go home.

**Polly:** We're not horrible! And I don't like you!

**Policeman 1:** Now then! That's enough of that kind of talk! It's about time you did what the young lady suggests and get yourselves off to the workhouse.

**Policeman 2:** The likes of you aren't welcome on these streets. Don't let me see you about here again!

*(The CROWD starts to disperse and at last only the CHILDREN are left)*

**Ellen:** Which way do you think it is to the workhouse?

**Tom:** I don't know, we should have asked someone.

**Harry:** And now they've all gone. And it's so freezing cold.

**Polly:** No, here's someone. Look!

*(The PICKPOCKET GANG run in. Two of them lower one down to the river to retrieve the purse. The CHILDREN watch).*

**Ellen:** Excuse me, can you tell us the way to the workhouse?

**Pickpocket 1:** What do you want to go there for?

**Pickpocket 2:** It's awful there!

**Pickpocket 3:** They make you eat cockroaches there!

**Pickpocket 4:** And rats!

*(POLLY starts crying again).*

**Ellen:** Oh, hush, Polly. Don't tell her that.

**Tom:** We've got to go there. There's nowhere else for us. And we can't manage on our own with the little ones and the baby.

**Pickpocket 1:** Well, you wouldn't catch me there, that's for sure!

**Pickpocket 3:** Wait a minute. You're the ones who told the policeman you hadn't seen anything, aren't you?

**Tom:** I didn't like those policemen.

**Pickpocket 2:** But you HAD seen us take the man's purse.

**Tom:** Well, sort of.

**Pickpocket 1:** Seems to me that one good turn deserves another. Come on. We'll show you the way to the workhouse.

**Pickpocket 3:** And don't worry. It's not that bad.

**Pickpocket 1:** That's what you think!

**Pickpocket 2:** Listen. We'll tell you all about it.

### *MUSIC 3 - LIVING IN THE WORKHOUSE*

*Cockroach in your dinner.  
Beetles in your bed,  
Daytime full of misery  
Night time full of dread  
Did you see a werewolf?  
Could there be a ghost?  
Living in the workhouse  
Is really not the most.*

*Living in the workhouse,  
No time to have a snooze,  
Living in the workhouse  
Is not the life we'd choose.*

*Clean up all the nasties,  
Where the dirt is thick  
Where the rain is leaking in  
Where the cats's been sick,  
Have you scrubbed the fireplace?  
Searched the bed for fleas?  
Living in the workhouse  
Is not a life of ease.*

*(They exit to set off for the workhouse).*

*SCENE 2 The Workhouse.*

*(MISS RUMBLE, who is fat and loud, is sitting on a raised dais centre stage, shouting instructions to a group of WORKHOUSE GIRLS who are scrubbing an invisible wall/window facing the AUDIENCE. They have cloths and buckets).*

**Miss Rumble:** Number 54, come here!

*(One of the GIRLS, Number 54, leaves the others and comes over, carrying her bucket and cloth).*

**Miss Rumble:** I thought as much. You have got a spot of dirty water on your pinafore. You careless child!

**No. 54:** I'm sorry, Miss Rumble.

**Miss Rumble:** Sorry! I should think you are. This workhouse has seen fit to provide you with beautiful clothes and you treat them like that.

**No. 54:** I didn't mean to, Miss Rumble.

**Miss Rumble:** You don't deserve any clothes if you can't keep them clean, you wicked girl. What am I always telling you?

**No. 54:** Please, Miss Rumble, the road to heaven is a clean road.

**Miss Rumble:** Indeed it is, child, and those with dirty clothes will not be on it. Now get back to work. And tomorrow morning you will bring me that pinafore and I shall expect it to be spotless.

**No. 54:** Yes, Miss Rumble. Thank you, Miss Rumble. *(She curtsies and goes back to join the others who are still scrubbing).*

**Miss Rumble:** You'll have to scrub harder than that, girls. It won't do, not at all. And if you haven't finished by supper time, then there won't be any supper!

*(The sound of MISS BUSTLE'S voice is heard shouting and the group of BOYS with besom brooms enter sweeping the path outside, i.e. the floor in front of the stage. MISS BUSTLE follows them in. She is thin and hyperactive).*

**Miss Bustle:** Sweep, two three four! Sweep, two three four! Get on with it, you lazy good-for-nothings! I can still see dust on this path. Sweep harder! Number 66, why aren't you sweeping?

**No. 66:** Please, Miss Bustle, my broom's broken.

**Miss Bustle:** Broken? Broken? You mean you have, in your abject carelessness, broken a valuable piece of workhouse equipment! You should be ashamed to hold your head up!

**No. 66:** I'm sorry, Miss Bustle. It just sort of broke off in my hand. I was sweeping so hard.

**Miss Bustle:** But never hard enough, boy! You can never work hard enough. What am I always telling you?

**No. 66:** Please, Miss Bustle, the hardest work is the lightest load.

**No. 65:** *(Under his breath).* And you'd have to be really stupid to believe that!

**Miss Bustle:** What was that? Who spoke?

**Boys:** No one, Miss Bustle.

**Miss Bustle:** I find it hard to believe that. You are a disgraceful and lazy bunch of children. If I find the least speck of dust left on this path, then there'll be nothing but half rations of bread and water for the rest of the week!

*(She sees MISS RUMBLE and goes up to meet her, downstage left. The CHILDREN continue their work).*

**Miss Bustle:** Oh dear, Miss Rumble, my nerves have been torn into pieces!

**Miss Rumble:** It's a very hard path for us to tread, Miss Bustle, but we must always remember our duty.

**Miss Bustle:** And not look for thanks, Miss Rumble.

**Miss Rumble:** Oh dear me, no. There are no thanks to be had from such an ungrateful, lazy bunch of ragamuffins, Miss Bustle.

**Miss Bustle:** Oh dear, Miss Rumble, I think I feel one of my turns coming on!

**Miss Rumble:** It's the stretching of the nerves, Miss Bustle. That's's what does it. I feel just the same. Oh dear!

**Miss Bustle:** Oh dear! I think I shall have to go and partake of a little refreshment. For medicinal purposes, you understand.

**Miss Rumble:** Oh of course, purely medicinal! I'm afraid I may have to do likewise, Miss Bustle, if my poor legs will carry me as far as the parlour. Oh dear!

**Miss Bustle:** Oh dear, oh dear, my poor nerves! Here, lean on me, Miss Rumble.

*(They exit and 2 of the CHILDREN [54 and 66 perhaps] take the lead parts in the next song, doing impressions of them).*

**"Rumble":** Come on girls! Scrub harder. It won't do!

**Girls:** Sorry, Miss Rumble!

**"Rumble":** What is the road to heaven, child?

**Girl:** It's a clean road, Miss Rumble!

**"Bustle":** And what makes the lightest load, children?

**Boys:** The hardest work, Miss Bustle!

**"Bustle":** Then work harder!

*MUSIC 4 - A CLEAN ROAD*

**All:** *We haven't got a minute to stop and have a chat,  
We've got to clean the kitchen and we've got to clean the cat,  
We've got to scrub the windows and the ceiling and the floor,  
And however much we clean for them, there'll always be some more,  
We polish and we dust until we think we will explode,*

*Because:-*

**"Rumble" and "Bustle":** *What's the road to heaven?*

**All:** *It's a clean, clean road!*

*We've got to scrub the kitchen and the parlour and the sheds,  
We've got to do the laundry and we've got to change the beds,  
The dust that's in the attic, the spiders in the vault,  
You can be completely certain it'll always be our fault.  
We clean in every corner of this horrible abode.*

*Because:-*

**"Rumble" and "Bustle":** *What's the road to heaven?*

**All:** *It's a clean, clean road!*

*(At the end of the song, MISS RUMBLE and MISS BUSTLE enter with ELLEN,  
POLLY, TOM and HARRY).*

**Miss Rumble:** Line up!

**Miss Bustle:** Quickly now!

*(The CHILDREN form lines and stand to attention).*

**Miss Rumble:** You! There! Join on the end of the line!

**Miss Bustle:** And you boys, over there!

**Ellen:** Can't we stay together? We've never been split up before.

**Miss Rumble:** What? Boys and girls together! Never heard such nonsense.

**Polly:** But I want my brothers!

**Miss Bustle:** Be quiet this instant, you naughty child, or we shall put you in the coal hole!

**Miss Rumble:** You two boys will join the railway workers first thing in the morning after you've finished your cleaning.

**Miss Bustle:** And the girls will be gutting herring with the others.

**Ellen:** But what about Polly and the baby?

**Miss Bustle:** What about them? That snivelling little girl is quite old enough to work and you'll just have to take the baby with you. There's nowhere here to leave a baby.

**Miss Rumble:** Now! Left turn and quick march. Hurry up!

*(As they exit they start singing the work chant from SCENE 1: they remove any workhouse props, the lighting changes and the HERRING GIRLS enter with any props necessary to start work. ELLEN and POLLY follow them in, looking lost).*

**1st. Girl:** You're new, aren't you, dear? Let me show you what to do. Make sure your knife's sharp. Slit the fish open like this and take out its innards, cut its head off and pack it in the barrel. See?

**Ellen:** You make it look easy but the fish is so slippery.

**2nd. Girl:** You'll get faster at it. And your little sister can pack the salt down over the fish. Like this, look.

**Polly:** But it stings my hands. It's horrible and I want to go home.

**Ellen:** You'll get used to it, Polly. Please try to be brave. Here, why don't you look after the baby for a while.

**3rd. Girl:** Oh, it's hard work, all right, but your hands get tough so you won't notice. And at least it's a job.

**4th. Girl:** Sometimes I think about the new machines my uncle says they have in the wool factory where he works in Yorkshire. He says they can work much faster.

**1st. Girl:** Maybe one day they'll make a machine to do this,

**2nd. Girl:** And we could all have a day off.

**3rd. Girl:** Yes! Just imagine.

*(They all stop work for a minute and sit down in "dreaming mode". The FISH CHORUS enter).*

*MUSIC 5 - THE LIFE OF A HERRING*

*The life of a herring, a life in the sea,  
A herring is happy and lively and free,  
We play with the shrimps where the water is cool,  
We dart in the sunlight of current and pool.*

*Oh the life of a herring, a life in the sea,  
The life of a herring's the life for me!*

*A herring is silver, a herring is gold,  
A herring is happy and playful and bold,  
Wherever the seaweed is blown in the spray  
You'll see us in shoals as we jump and we play.*

*Far out in the ocean, close in to the shore,  
We dart from the surface where waves leap and roar,  
When fishing boats come then we race and we flee,  
But if they should catch us we're good for your tea!*

*(As the FISH exit, the GIRLS wake up and start again. The OVERSEER comes in).*

**Overseer:** Have you girls been chattering again? This isn't much to show for a day's work. You'd better work for an extra hour today to make it up. It's always the same when any new ones start.

*(He exits, ELLEN starts to cry).*

**Ellen:** Oh, it isn't fair! I haven't been chattering. I'm so tired!

**1st. Girl:** Don't cry. It's not your fault. He says that every time a new girl starts.

*(The workhouse boys enter with TOM and HARRY).*

**Tom:** Come on, you two. It's time to finish.

**Ellen:** No it isn't. We've got to work an extra hour because we haven't done enough.

**Harry:** But that's not fair. And you'll be too late for your supper.

**Ellen:** I'm so hungry. I don't think I can work another day like this. What are we going to do? It's all so awful.

**Tom:** Working on the railway was awful too.

**Harry:** I think we should go. I don't want to spend Christmas here

**Ellen:** But you know what those ladies said about running away from the workhouse. It's not allowed. They'd only catch us and bring us back.

**Tom:** Not if we went at night. We could be well on our way before they knew about it.

**Ellen:** But would it be any better?

**Harry:** ANYTHING would be better than this!

**Tom:** We'll work out how best to do it. Don't worry.

*(The BOYS exit and the GIRLS carry on working).*

**Ellen:** Oh, Polly, what are we to do? Mother would be so upset if she knew what is happening to us.

**Polly:** Don't cry, Ellen. Tom and Harry will find a way for us to escape. It'll be all right and we'll all have Christmas together - somewhere.

*SCENE 3. The docks.*

*(It is night time. TOM and HARRY run in).*

**Harry:** Oh, where are the girls? If we don't get out of the town quickly we'll be caught and sent back.

*(There's a noise off).*

**Harry:** What was that?

**Tom:** Don't worry. It's only cats. You look over there and see if you can see them coming.

**Harry:** No sign of them. But I can still hear that noise. It doesn't sound quite like cats.

**Tom:** HIDE! There's someone coming!

*(They both hide and the GIRLS come in).*

**Ellen:** I'm sure this is where the boys meant us to meet them. Can you see anyone,

Polly?

**Polly:** I can't see anything, it's too dark. I'm scared, Ellen.

**Ellen:** Don't be scared. We'll soon be safe.

**Tom:** We're here, don't worry. Come on, we need to get out of town as quickly as possible.

*(The noise off is heard again. It sounds like a cat or a child crying. They all freeze).*

**Harry:** It's that noise again.

**Polly:** What is it?

**Tom:** It's just a cat. I told you. Come on!

**Ellen:** Wait a minute. It doesn't sound quite like a cat to me.

*(They hear it again).*

**Polly:** It's someone crying!

**Tom:** It's nothing to do with us. Come on. We've got to hurry!

*(There is a louder cry and the sound of other voices).*

**Polly:** We can't just go. Someone's in trouble. Let's go and see if we can help.

**Tom:** But there's not time!

**Ellen:** Come on, Tom. She's right. We can't just leave them.

**Tom:** It's too late, anyway. They're coming this way. Hide!

*(The CHILDREN hide and the PICKPOCKET GANG enter with FLORENCE, the daughter of the rich family. They are teasing her and laughing at her, she's trying to run away from them).*

**Florence:** Go away! Leave me alone!

**Pickpocket 1:** But we thought you'd like a nice paddle.

**Pickpocket 2:** The water's lovely!

**Pickpocket 3:** And you'd get your clothes washed at the same time!

**Florence:** No, no! I don't want to. Go away!

*(They start pushing her towards the edge of the dock).*

**Florence:** Don't, I don't like water. I can't swim!

**Pickpocket 4:** Oh, it's not very deep. Just muddy!

**Florence:** Go away! I'm frightened. Help!

*(The CHILDREN come out of hiding).*

**Tom:** Stop it! Leave her alone.

**Pickpocket 1:** Who says?

**Pickpocket 2:** Somebody else who wants a swim?

**Ellen:** It's not fair, bullying her like that.

**Pickpocket 3:** And who do you think you are to be telling us what to do?

**Pickpocket 4:** Wait a minute! You're the ones who were at the market the other day, aren't you? Why aren't you safely tucked up in bed in the workhouse?

**Polly:** We're running away. It was horrible there.

**Florence:** I've run away too. My parents wouldn't buy me a new pony for Christmas so I've run away.

**Harry:** A pony! But you've got everything else you want - food and clothes. Why run away just because you want a pony?

**Florence:** I wish I hadn't now. Look, I'm all dirty.

**Pickpocket 1:** And you'll be even dirtier after you've been in the river!

*(They move as if to push her in, the other CHILDREN try to stop them, shouting, and then the POLICEMEN'S whistles are heard).*

**Pickpocket 2:** Look out! It's those policemen! Run!

*(The PICKPOCKETS exit, the 2 POLICEMEN enter).*

**Policeman 1:** Got yer! I knew you lot were trouble the minute I set eyes on you!

**Policeman 2:** Attacking a poor young girl like that! It's a serious offence, is that.

**Policeman 1:** Oh yes. And especially THIS young girl. Miss Florence's father is one of the most important men in the town. He'll have something to say about this all right.

**Ellen:** But we weren't, officer!

**Policeman 1:** You'd better be quiet, young lady, or I'll have you for resisting arrest as well.

**Policeman 2:** Come on, Miss Florence. No need to cry now. We'll take you home just as soon as we've seen these ruffians safely locked up in the prison.

**Policeman 1:** What were you doing out in the middle of the night anyway? Kidnapped you, did they? I thought as much.

**Tom:** No, we didn't!

**Policeman 2:** Oh dear, this is looking very serious. If I were you, I wouldn't say

another word!

**Policeman 1:** Come along. A night in a damp cell will soon quieten you down.

*(Sad music as they are led away. Perhaps a recorder playing the tune of "Wherever there's a Dream". They could walk round the stage and the POLICEMEN throw them into whatever area is the prison. It could well be an area downstage left or right, with some bars which the POLICEMEN could stand in front of them before they leave. The music continues softly over the next bit of dialogue before they go into the song).*

**Polly:** Oh, it's horrible here. Look at that enormous spider!

**Harry:** And there's a rat too!

**Ellen:** Come and sit by me. If we all huddle together it'll help to keep us warm.

**Tom:** Look. You can see the river from here.

**Ellen:** And the big houses on the other bank. Can you see the lights in the windows? It must be so lovely inside one of those houses.

**Polly:** Do you think Florence lives in one of them?

**Ellen:** I wouldn't be surprised.

**Harry:** Fancy running away from all that just because she couldn't have a pony.

**Ellen:** But you see that's her dream. Everyone has to have a dream.

*(Music goes into the song introduction and other SINGERS come on to the back of the stage - WORKHOUSE CHILDREN and the PICKPOCKET GANG).*

### *MUSIC 6 - WHEREVER THERE'S A DREAM*

**Chorus:**        *Wherever there's a dream,  
There'll be a dream come true,  
You only need a dream  
To help to get you through.*

**Verse:**        *When life is cold and sad,  
And no-one seems to care,  
Don't ever lose your hope,  
The dream is always there.*

**Chorus:**        *Wherever...*

**Verse:**        *It isn't hard to find,  
It doesn't cost a thing,*

*Just see it in your head,  
Just teach your heart to sing.*

**Chorus:**            *Wherever ...*

*SCENE 4 Inside the Marringtons' house.*

*(The scene change could be done by SERVANTS bringing props in at the beginning, cleaning, dusting etc. There is a Christmas tree. LORD and LADY MARRINGTON are standing by the fire, obviously very agitated).*

**Lord M.:** I just can't understand it. You say that she was there when you went up to kiss her goodnight?

**Lady M.:** Yes, of course she was. But I happened to go back up later to fetch my sewing, and she was gone!

**Lord M.:** Well, I've sent the servants out to search the grounds, but perhaps we should start looking further afield.

**Lady M.:** Oh dear, whatever can have happened to her? I'm so worried.

**Lord M.:** Don't upset yourself, my dear. We shall find her.

*(There is a knock on the door and LIZZIE, the servant, enters).*

**Lord M.:** Yes, Lizzie?

**Lizzie:** Please, sir, there's two policemen here and they've brought Miss Florence back!

*(The POLICEMEN and FLORENCE enter).*

**Lady M.:** Oh, Florence! Where have you been? And how did you get so dirty?

**Florence:** There were some awful children and they tried to push me in the river. I was really scared.

**Policeman 1:** Don't worry, Madam, they're safely under lock and key now.

**Florence:** But I keep trying to tell you! You caught the wrong children! It was the others who were horrible.

**Lord M.:** What others, Florence?

**Florence:** The boys. The ones who ran off.

**Policeman 2:** Oh, I don't think so, Miss. We don't make mistakes.

**Florence:** But you did! The children you put in the prison were trying to help. They told the others to stop.

**Lady M.:** Well, if this is true, they certainly shouldn't be in prison.

**Lord M.:** I think we need to talk to them. Perhaps you could fetch them here, Officer. But I shall be very cross if you're not being completely truthful, Florence.

**Florence:** But I am, really! And I'm sorry I ran away. I won't do it again.

*(The CAROL SINGERS are heard outside. This could be an opportunity for the recorders to come in and play as well as a group singing).*

**Lady M.:** Oh listen! It's the carol singers! Fetch them in, Lizzie, and we'll listen to them while the police officers fetch these children.

*(LIZZIE and the POLICEMEN exit and LIZZIE returns immediately with the CAROL SINGERS who then do their bit. At the end of their performance the POLICEMEN return with the CHILDREN).*

**Policeman 1:** Here they are, Sir. And a scruffier looking lot of trouble I never did see.

**Lord M.:** I think we'll decide about that after they've given their side of the story, officer.

**Lady M.:** Are these the children who tried to help you, Florence?

**Florence:** Yes. You tried to stop those boys from pushing me in the river, didn't you?

**Lord M.:** Well, did you?

**Ellen:** Yes, sir.

**Lord M.:** And what exactly were you doing out by the docks in the middle of the night?

**Polly:** We were running away!

**Tom:** Ssh! Be quiet, Polly!

**Lord M.:** You too? The town seems to have been full of people running away tonight.

**Lady M.:** But your poor parents must be really worried about you. We must send a message to them straightaway.

**Ellen:** But there isn't anyone. I mean.... well, our father's dead and our mother's ....

*(They all start to talk at once; the next lines all spoken over each other).*

**Polly:** In prison. But it wasn't her fault, and it's not fair, and ....

**Harry:** She only did it because we were starving and ....

**Tom:** We ran away because it's so awful at the workhouse and ....

**Lord M.:** All right! Just a minute.

**Policeman 2:** I told you, sir. No good the lot of them.

**Lady M.:** Please be quiet and let's hear what they have to say.

**Ellen:** We were in the workhouse because there's nowhere else for us but we haven't done anything wrong.

**Tom:** And we're willing to work.

**Harry:** We were going back to the country so we could all stay together for Christmas.

**Polly:** Please, PLEASE don't send us back to the workhouse!

**Lord M.:** Well, I don't know what to say. But it does rather look as if you haven't caught the right children, officers. I don't think these youngsters need to be taken back to prison.

**Policeman 1:** Right you are, sir. Back to the workhouse then.

*(He starts to move them towards the door).*

**Florence:** Couldn't they stay here?

**Lord M.:** What?

**Florence:** Just for Christmas perhaps? They could help with the work. *(To CHILDREN).* Couldn't you?

**Ellen:** Well, yes, we could work, but we don't want to be a nuisance.

**Lady M.:** What do you think, my dear? I suppose it would be possible.

**Lord M.:** I don't see why not. They look like honest enough children to me. Let them stay. After all, it is Christmas!

**Lizzie:** Please, Sir, there's some more carol singers at the door.

**Lord M.:** Bring them in, Lizzie. We might as well have a party!

*(LIZZIE brings in the PICKPOCKET GANG who are singing. - Opportunity for another carol).*

**Ellen:** What are you doing here?

**Pickpocket 1:** Trying to make a few pennies for some food.

**Policeman 1:** Aha! These'll be the ones who were bullying your daughter, sir. Always in trouble this lot.

**Lord M.:** Is that right, Florence? Are these the ones?

*(FLORENCE looks at the CHILDREN who all shake their heads. She smiles and says):*

**Florence:** Oh no, Daddy!

*(All the CHILDREN cheer and go into the next song which is the big finale number).*

**MUSIC 7 - BECAUSE IT'S CHRISTMAS**

*Because it's Christmas  
Bells will ring tonight,  
A star will shine to send the world  
A promise in its light,  
In every house the children wait  
Excited, for the dawn,  
And once again the tale relate  
Of how the Babe was born.*

*Because it's Christmas,  
Wrongs will be undone,  
Gifts will be sent to bring delight  
And love to everyone.  
The dinner is enough for all,  
The sweetmeats on the tree,  
The mistletoe inside the hall  
Hangs up for all to see.*

*Because it's Christmas,  
Shepherds came to tell  
News of the promises which say  
That all will soon be well.  
So bring the holly, pour the wine,  
Roast chestnuts in the coal,  
Bring the hungry in to dine  
And gladden every soul.*

**THE END**





