

# Rat Race

**A musical about rats, life and hope for everyone**

A musical play by Cenarth Fox

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## **Orchestrations**

*Rat Race* is scored for piano, guitar, bass, drum-kit, percussion, flutes, clarinets, trumpets and trombone. These band parts are available for hire and will give your production a real boost.

## **Production Package and Backing CD**

Groups staging a FOX play or musical receive free production notes (set-design, costumes, lighting, props, etc) plus with musicals, a free set of lyrics for chorus members and a free activity booklet to help performers. Colour photos and video recordings of *Rat Race* may be available. A backing CD has both an instrumental teach version and a full orchestra version for performances.

## **First Performance**

*Rat Race* was first staged in the Phoenix Theatre [Melbourne Australia] by the Middle Park Primary School in October 1984. It was a great success. *Rat Race* has since been performed to wide acclaim around Australia and in Britain, the USA, South America, China, Singapore and New Zealand. It's a marvellous musical!

Reviews of this popular musical staged by primary, middle and secondary schools and youth theatre

We had a wonderful time with *Rat Race* and it was a huge success! The characters were engaging and the music catchy! We all particularly loved 'Moggies'. Thank you so much for all your guidance. **Loreto Mandeville Hall**

RAT RACE is fast-moving, packed with action and guaranteed to generate laughs. It has bright and bouncy numbers to keep audiences humming and stomping along.

**Melbourne Herald Sun**

Enjoyed it immensely **Swan Hill HS**

RAT RACE voted a smash hit. It is a wonderfully written show **Moe PS**

Our RAT RACE production was a tremendous success. We have received wonderful feedback from parents **Templeton PS**

RAT RACE is a musical which combines comedy, action and suspense along with some very singable numbers. Dramatically, technically and musically, RAT RACE comes very close to the perfect primary and secondary school production **Middle Park PS**

A great success, incredibly well received. Thank you for being so prompt with rehearsal material. The show was great! We will definitely recommend you to all our associates!

**Marian College**

The show was very well received **Carey Baptist Grammar School**

The students thoroughly enjoyed this show with its unique characters and catchy tunes and were all disappointed that we were not doing a longer season! How wonderful it is to have a show that has band parts that can be played by students thus giving our instrumentalists a very special experience. Thanks for a great show

**Star of the Sea College**

An exuberant, amusing, light-hearted, imaginative piece of whimsy

**Christian Community College, Portland**

A roaring success. The children loved the songs which they sang beautifully. Parents left each show humming the catchy tunes. *Three Lovely Creatures* was an absolute show-stopper as was the big number *Nice*. Thank you for creating such wonderful scores.

Looking forward to further Fox follies. **Quarry Hill PS**

Smash hit! Great feedback. Thanks so much for everything. It was a great experience for us all **American HS, Brazil South America**

The play was great. We were all very happy and got some wonderful comments. We all loved the music. The kids walk through the school singing your songs at the top of their lungs. **Gibraltar School, WI USA**

Both parents and students enjoyed RAT RACE immensely **Braemar College**

RAT RACE is a brilliant musical, a superb production, a show not to be missed

**Nepean District Christian School**

Very successful and very enjoyable **Riverside Secondary College Singapore**

Thank you for a great musical. The kids and parents loved it

**Shanghai American School China**

Timboon students were a hit before 1000 people over three performances. All went well, another very successful show **Timboon PS**

RAT RACE was very successful **Helena College**

RAT RACE is a musical about rats finding the meaning of life. Creator, Gen Fox, was delighted by the school's masterly staging of this entertaining musical **Goonawarra PS**

We thoroughly enjoyed RAT RACE which was enthusiastically received by the audience **Nowra PS**

It was a wonderful opportunity to sing some great songs and deliver some great lines **Seaford Park PS**

The many catchy songs keep the show rolling along. This is a great show for kids

**Lyric Youth Theatre**

RAT RACE was great **Skye PS**

Thank you very much. We enjoyed RAT RACE immensely **Kumbia SS**

We found RAT RACE to be a top show. Musically it's very singable. The feedback after performances was extremely positive. Thanks for your help and direction hints. A great experience for our kids and the school **Echuca South PS**

The show was a huge success **Lismore PS**

The show was a great success. Thanks for your support **Ferny Creek PS**

RAT RACE is a light hearted musical fantasy to be enjoyed by both adults and children. As with all great musicals, good singing is required and RAT RACE is certainly no exception with the harmonious singing by the chorus and the splendid music played by the student-teacher band. RAT RACE is a great show!

**Dimboola Memorial SC**

Everyone agreed it was our most successful production ever some even suggesting we take the show on the road! Thanks for your help and suggestions and thanks for coming to see the show.

**Belgrave South PS**

Our presentation of RAT RACE was most successful. Both the story-line and musical numbers were well received and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed being rats. Thank you for your pleasant manner and helpfulness. We hope to do another FOX musical next year

**Peak Hill Central School**

The show was very successful. The children really enjoyed performing. Audience reaction was also very positive. It was a very good musical for kids of this age

**Gerringong PS**

The show was a great success and everyone, both audience and performers, enjoyed it immensely. We would appreciate information on your other musicals **Geebung SS**

Thanks so much for a wonderful musical. The show was a great success

**St Augustine's School Coffs Harbour**

Both the audience and cast enjoyed the experience **Korowa Anglican Girls' School**

Extremely successful and thoroughly enjoyed by the students and audiences. It makes for fine entertainment. If the children in this production or those who see it, can see some reason to be positive about their future, then this play has been successful **Rangeville SS**

RAT RACE was very well received **Bowral PS**

Although performed and enjoyed by children, RAT RACE has a deeper significance which will be appreciated by adults **Chatham PS**

Very successful and enjoyable **Marist Sisters College**

In the end the rats realize something very important – they have something to offer, they are worthwhile and they can succeed **Loyola College**

We created a visually stunning set and an excellent sound quality **Newcomb HS**

A musical for children **Wesley House Players**

A memorable occasion for the children **Glenhuntly PS**



## RAT RACE 2

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### Synopsis

*Rat Race* is about rats (or are they humans?) living in a street in your town. They are poor, suffering creatures who face a sad and lonely existence. Into this tenement of heart-ache steps a politician with promises of recovery and hope. Are these promises genuine? Will the rats find happiness? Read on and all will be revealed.

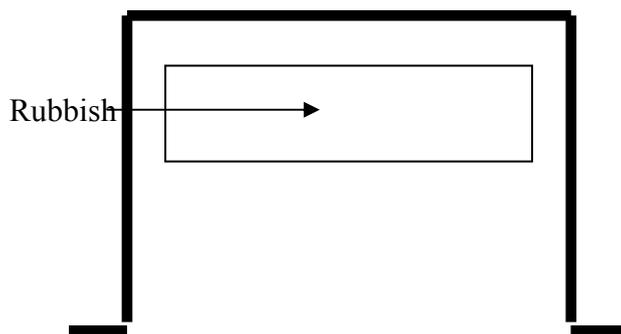
Note: The rats have no specific gender. "He" and "Him" may become "She" and "Her".

### Setting

The play takes place at night. There is only one set. The rats live at the end of an alley near a building. The area is run down. A pile of rubbish, home to the rats, fills most or all of the back part of the stage. Part of a building can be seen. The rubbish must be well built as the rats climb over it at times and this rubbish is later transformed into a staircase for the glittering finale. At first, everything is dirty and drab. The alley is not used, seldom cleaned and the factories nearby are closed.

The pile of rubbish is raised upstage sloping down to floor level. There is a hidden ladder upstage behind the rubbish enabling **Snortle** to enter and exit. The rubbish can spill offstage both in the wings and downstage. If you have a trapdoor, cover it with a large milk-carton and allow a rat/s to enter and exit from below ground.

More information is contained in the free Production Notes.



## RAT RACE 3

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### Costumes

The rats could be dressed as rats with whiskers, ears and tails. Alternatively they could be humans dressed according to character e.g. Cagney a gangster, Patrick in crumpled suit as down-on-his-luck comic, Nigel a trendy, up-market professional, Bopalopa a spy in trench coat and hat, Fellyside an absent-minded intellectual, Semolina and Pudding in home-made attire and Snortle in snazzy, even loud, sports jacket, hat and fashionable gear.

### Characters

<b>Semolina</b>	self-starter, humble origins, keen to change society
<b>Nigel</b>	educated, trendy, ambitious, snobbish
<b>Patrick</b>	failed comic, working-class, practical joker, lively
<b>Fellyside</b>	vague, brilliant academic, away with the birds
<b>Bopalopa</b>	the original doity rat, a cheat, liar and thief
<b>Cagney</b>	heart-of-gold gangster, frustrated song-and-dance rat
<b>Pudding</b>	friendly, quiet, loyal, supports Semolina
<b>Snortle</b>	dynamic, extrovert, evangelist, politician, con-rat
<b>Company</b>	members of the rat community, the locals

### Musical Items

Overture	Orchestra
Be Miserable	Semolina & Company
Moggies	Semolina & Company
Outa Da Rat-Race	Bopalopa & Company
A Promise Is A Promise	Nigel & Company
Ideas	Snortle/Fellyside/Cagney & Co
Make Every Post A Winner	Snortle & Company
Three Lovely Creatures	Pudding, Patrick & Cagney
Make Every Post A Winner 1	Company
Living A Lie	Snortle
We're Nice (Dance)	Company
Living A Lie (Reprise)	Snortle & Bopalopa
We're Nice	Company
Make Every Post A Winner 2	Cagney & Company
Curtain Calls	Company
Playout	Orchestra

## 4 RAT RACE

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*(Overture is played. At a given point the lights come up or curtain rises revealing drab/dirty home of rats. Maybe a bit of colour in drink cartons and other discarded junk. The rubbish stands still and defiant. No-one is seen. Sound effects begin softly towards the end of the Overture. We hear traffic in the distance, a rubbish-bin lid clatters and the wind could whistle or moan. Papers are blown across the stage. This lack of action continues for a few seconds. The delay is important because the first rat movement is sudden and shocking. SEMOLINA races on DR chasing a rat we never see. En route, SEMOLINA grabs a piece of rubbish and hurls it UL after the escaping rat. This is a rapid, dangerous-looking move. SEMOLINA is fuming)*

**Semolina** *(Shouts) And don't come back - ever! I hate you! (SEMOLINA is seething but slowly calms. He wanders forward thinking aloud) I hate him. I hate this. I hate that. (Desperate shout) I hate everything! (Screams with frustration and kicks wildly at some rubbish. Sudden change to a sarcastic smile) But why be upset? I've got poverty, (Indicates surrounds) disease, humiliation. (MUSIC BEGINS. Sarcastic) I've got everything.*

### Be Miserable

**Semolina** *If you live on the wrong side of the tracks  
If you don't earn enough to pay income tax  
If you're dressed up to kill and still a battle-axe  
Relax, relax, relax.  
If you're never invited to a party or ball  
If you find that your friends they never bother to call  
If you feel that your life, it needs a big overhaul  
Stand tall, stand tall, stand tall.  
You can always be miserable, you can always live in pain.  
You can always be uncomfortable  
Live your life out in the rain.  
You can always find starvation, loneliness and misery  
You can always be something, be miserable like me.  
If you're out of a job with no work in sight  
If you couldn't outbid the widow and her mite  
If your future seems bleak and not the least bit bright  
Sit tight, sit tight, sit tight.  
If your bills keep arriving and your debts are high  
If you're hungry for fame but get served humble pie  
If you're caught in the act without an alibi  
Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry.*

## RAT RACE 5

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*(During the song, the RATS slowly emerge gradually from various directions. They join SEMOLINA in singing the repeat of the chorus. At the end of the song, some RATS congratulate SEMOLINA on this witty piece of black comedy. It's merely a diversion from their plight of fear and starvation)*

- Patrick** Hey Semo, great number. Just terrific. *(OTHERS agree)*
- Nigel** *(Over hubbub)* Come on, you don't believe that. It's all baloney.
- Pudding** *(Annoyed)* Hey, Nige, don't knock it. We liked it. Okay?
- Semolina** *(Calming PUDDING)* Easy Pudd, take it easy.
- Pudding** *(Getting into NIGEL)* You're always knocking. I've got a good name for you. Nigel Knocker. *(NIGEL scoffs, some laugh)*
- Patrick** *(Concerned)* Hey, easy, easy. I do da jokes. Remember?
- Nigel** *(Mocking)* Rats shall not live by songs alone.  
*(Most RATS dislike NIGEL. FELLYSIDE has no opinion on NIGEL)*
- Fellyside** Crikey! Is that your new anagram?
- Bopalopa** *(Derides FELLYSIDE)* Oh no! The fruit-cake speaks.
- Nigel** *(Serious)* All this back-slapping just delays the inevitable. Fun it may be but food is what we need. F double oh d.  
*(He's right. The OTHERS know it. Silence. PUDDING thinks aloud)*
- Pudding** Speakin' of food, my tummy makes funny noises.
- Patrick** Hey, so does mine. Maybe dey could chat to each udder. *(Thrusting out stomach and giving pathetic ventriloquist's speech)* Hello starvin' stomach. What's biting you? *(Answers)* What's biting me? Nuttin'. Dat's da problem. Get it? You don't? Well, neiva do I.  
*(PATRICK laughs a lot. He's always laughing. The OTHERS shake their heads in dismay)*
- Semolina** I think there's a rubbish-bin at the end of the street.
- Rats** *(Muttering)* Too far ... too dangerous ... no way.
- Nigel** I've got a suggestion. Let's try a brick. *(OTHERS puzzled)*
- Bopalopa** *(Staggered)* A brick!?
- Patrick** Far too heavy. We'd never lift it.
- Fellyside** The scientific possibilities are certainly remote. We'd have more chance with a lightweight crowbar.
- Nigel** Well I plump for the brick.
- Semolina** *(Angry)* Listen slick-features, bricks are stuck in walls, like your crazy suggestion - going nowhere.
- Cagney** *(Taking over)* Okay youse doity rats, listen. We got dis problem see, an' Neville here's da only one what's come up wid ...
- Nigel** Nigel. How many more times? My name is Nigel.
- Cagney** No interceptions. *(Back to his speech)* Now Norman's da only one what's come up wid da good oil.
- Patrick** E's come up wid da brick.

## 6 RAT RACE

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- Cagney** I ain't troo talkin', wise guy. *(To OTHERS)* Da rubbish is in da bin.
- Semolina** *(Sarcastic)* Brilliant.
- Cagney** Da lid is on da bin.
- Fellyside** Scientifically precise.
- Cagney** And Neddy 'ere says we use da brick to remove da lid. *(To NIGEL)*  
Right Nifty?
- Nigel** *(Miffed)* It's Nigel. You've got my name and my proposal wrong.  
*(OTHERS groan and show frustration. CAGNEY is impatient)*
- Cagney** Now listen Neil. Don't mess wid me. Okay?
- Nigel** I say the brick solves our problems. No food means we starve. I suggest we stand against that wall and wait for a falling brick.  
*(Explosion of horror from RATS. NIGEL shouts)* Well it removes your hunger pains. *(More protests)*
- Fellyside** We could attack from another angle. *(RATS settle)* Let's suppose the base of the bin is some inferior raw material.
- Patrick** I tink it's tin
- Fellyside** An underground approach presents a weakened target. The stress factor is reduced. We could penetrate from below.  
*(RATS not impressed. Some confused, others are sceptical)*
- Semolina** It would take ages to tunnel that far.
- Pudding** And we're so weak. *(OTHERS agree)*
- Bopalopa** Pity the bin ain't sitting on a drain.
- Cagney** *(Another brainwave)* Okay youse doity rats, I got dis idea. I saw dis movie where da hero goes down da tunnel and gits runned over by dis train. Dere was pieces ov poison all over da track. Dem trains sure pack a punch. *(EVERYONE stares in disbelief)* Hey, wot's wid da starin'? Cain't a guy chat about choo-choos?
- Patrick** Soitanly Mister Cagney but you'd be havin' a little problem.
- Cagney** Mumble to me.
- Patrick** Bopalopa said drain not train.
- (Pause. CAGNEY looks around then suddenly begins as if nothing has happened)*
- Cagney** As I woz sayin', I saw dis movie where a guy goes down a drain an' gits run over by dis tunnel. *(Stares at confused RATS)* Wot's da matter? Cain't I tell a little jokey? *(Feeble laughter)*
- Semolina** Even if we could tunnel underground, even if we could break into the bin and even if we do find some food ...
- Nigel** That's three if's.
- Patrick** Anyone know da if times table?
- Fellyside** You're talking very long odds.
- Patrick** One if's an if. *(PATRICK is ignored)*

## RAT RACE 7

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**Pudding** Well I think it's all very silly.  
**Patrick** Two if's a tif. *(Still ignored)*  
**Bopalopa** I agree. It definitely won't work.  
**Patrick** An' three if's a maybe. *(Looks for reaction. Il zilch)*  
**Semolina** The whole plan could be smashed like that - *(Snaps fingers)* - by one,  
*(MUSIC CHORD)* fat *(MUSIC CHORD)* cat!  
*(Horror from RATS. "Cat" is the scary word to end all scary words)*

### Moggies

**Semolina** *C A T spells murder! T O M spells death!  
P U S S, S O S mess, time for our last breath.  
Siamese, Burmese, Persian, Tabby, Tortoise-shell  
Moggies, Mongrels, Pedigree  
They make a rat's life hell.  
Gotta hate them moggies, gotta hate them cats*

**Rats** *Gotta hate them cats.*

**Semolina** *Gotta hate them flitty kitty kits what hate us rats*

**Rats** *What hate us rats.*

**Semolina** *Gotta flee from felines, gotta learn to scat*

**Rats** *Gotta learn to scat*

**Semolina** *Gotta run, gotta hide, gotta slide  
Gotta chide worldwide always avoid a rat.  
Gotta loathe them longhairs, gotta shun them shorts*

**Rats** *Gotta shun them shorts*

**Semolina** *Gotta 'scape from smelly alley Toms  
With evil thoughts*

**Rats** *With evil thoughts*

**Semolina** *Gotta keep from kittens, know where they're at*

**Rats** *Know where they're at.*

**Semolina** *Because today they're soft and fluffy  
But tomorrow hard and scruffy, oh beware*

**Rats** *Oh yes beware the cat.  
C A T, R A T, they don't go together  
C A T, R A T, always stormy weather  
C A T, R A T, wind storm and a feather  
C A T, R A T, off the tether, hell for leather  
Oh beware the cat.  
The cat. Meow! Ahhhh! The puss.*

*(The RATS collapse from hunger/despair. SEMOLINA recovers)*

## 8 RAT RACE

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- Semolina** A small announcement folks. I'm off. (*PUDDING and OTHERS protest*) I think Nigel's idea stinks, I'm petrified of the cats but I'm damned if I'm gonna lie down and die. (*Starts to exit*)
- Nigel** (*Calls sarcastically*) Oh, deserting the sinking ship are we?
- Semolina** (*Turns on NIGEL*) Now don't you start. I've had you up to here. All this garbage about falling bricks. You make me sick.
- Nigel** Yeah, well it's called facing facts.
- Semolina** It's called giving up, gutless, being too weak to have a go.
- Pudding** You tell 'em, Semo.
- Semolina** I'd rather be a cat's supper than take my own life. You're pathetic. (*NIGEL threatens SEMOLINA. CAGNEY takes over*)
- Cagney** Okay you doity rats, freeze. (*RATS respect/fear CAGNEY*) We got dis problem, see. Some wiseguys bin musclin' in on our territory. Dey cut off our supply and no low-down doity rat's ever gonna mess wid me. I say we give 'em a taste of dere own medicine. Come on. (*Points*) Out dere's da food. Let's go get it. (*OTHERS look round, shrug then reluctantly exit. They may as well go hunting food. Without it they'll surely starve*)
- Patrick** (*Fussing over CAGNEY*) Lemme help you wid dis, Mister Cagney.
- Cagney** Gimme dat violin-case. (*PATRICK does so*)
- Patrick** Y'know Mister Cagney, I ain't never seen youse playin' dat ting. (*CAGNEY and PATRICK start to exit after the OTHERS*)
- Cagney** Maybe t'night, wiseguy. We'll fill 'em full of arpeggios. (*They're gone. The stage is empty. Lights dim but shine on BOPALOPA'S place. Pause. BOPALOPA enters. He checks to see he's alone, moves DC. He's nervous. He has an important rendezvous. He settles then calls without conviction. He is speaking to a cat located at the back of the theatre*)
- Bopalopa** (*Frightened whisper*) Piddles! ... Piddles! (*Pause. No reply. Louder*) Piddles! (*We can't hear the cat speak. BOPALOPA can*) Pardon? Oh sorry. Tiddles. ... Yes you did tell me ... Yes I know ... Listen is everything okay? ... Of course I will. I always keep my word ... They've gone looking for food. Should be back shortly. (*BOPALOPA looks around to see if all is clear*) Can we go over the deal once more? ... I provide details of rat movements in exchange for a guaranteed accident-free life. Correct? ... Oh you'll get lots of leads. I'm an excellent agent. (*Is complimented. Smiles/preens*) Thank you. It's a pleasure doing business. Oh and for your friends, here. (*Mimes tossing a business card*) My card ... That's right. Bopalopa - the rat who rats. Nice printing, huh? ... Certainly. No trouble. Same time tomorrow? Bye.

## RAT RACE 9

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*(BOPALOPA cringes as Tiddles departs. Perhaps a shadow could pass across the stage and over the crouching rat. Tiddles gone, BOPALOPA wipes his brow and slowly rises. Suddenly he leaps into the air as if he has just won the lottery. MUSIC BEGINS. He lets out a cry of delight and spins around)*

### Outa Da Rat-Race

**Bopalopa** *I'm outa da rat-race, I'm in from da cold  
I'm away from da coal face and pickin' up gold.  
I'm livin' in clover beside a rainbow  
I'm tinglin' all over, I'm rollin' in dough.  
Gonna say goodbye to the sprain  
To the pain of the strain of the life that once I led.  
To the sneer and the tear and the atmosphere  
That'd make you wish you're dead.  
To the woe and the snow and the status quo  
With its tentacles outspread.  
I'm off like a toff with a whooping scoff  
I'm a new-born thoroughbred.  
Gonna bid farewell to the spell, to the smell of the cell  
Where I spent each yesterday.  
To the misery and the quizzery of a world in disarray  
To the looks of the crooks with their comp'ny books  
And a tax-free dossier  
I'll quit with a fit prerequisite, stand back I'm on my way.  
Stand back I'm on my way.*

*(In this song, BOPALOPA has escaped the rat-race - or so he thinks. As marked on the score, a group of rats could enter perhaps dressed in cowboy/girl gear. They help BOPALOPA celebrate in good old country and western style. The song finishes. BOPALOPA is on a high. The joy on his face turns to despair as a loud wailing sound comes from within the rubbish. The chorus RATS exit in fear and BOPALOPA is close to panic. He darts upstage. The other RATS enter from the food expedition and talk excitedly about the strange wailing which occurs in isolated bursts. What's happened? What's that noise? BOPALOPA thinks he's been discovered. EVERYONE except CAGNEY and PATRICK are now back on stage. Lots of hubbub)*

**Pudding** *In there, it came from in there.  
(SEMOLINA followed by NIGEL climbs onto/into the rubbish. The OTHERS watch anxiously murmuring amongst themselves. SEMOLINA re-emerges, pushes through the rats and moves DL. NIGEL emerges and the RATS turn to him. He is serious but direct)*

## 10 RAT RACE

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- Nigel** We need a foster mother - there are eight babies.  
*(Sadness/despair from RATS. A mother rat has died giving birth. Two rats move to NIGEL, chat then disappear into the rubbish)*
- Fellyside** Oh dear. A most regrettable incident.
- Bopalopa** *(Relieved he wasn't caught)* Indeed. Very sad, very sad.
- Semolina** *(Looks back in anger)* Regrettable? Very sad? It's a damn disgrace. There was no need for that rat to die.
- Nigel** Semolina, we all have to die sometime.
- Semolina** And we all have to *care* sometime. That rat has delivered eighty-four babies. Eighty-four! And while she lay there having eight more, who stayed behind to help? No-one. Not one!
- Bopalopa** We were out looking for food.
- Semolina** I didn't see you.
- Bopalopa** *(Momentarily thrown)* Ah ... no. I tried somewhere else.
- Nigel** Look, none of this is helping. The mother's dead, the children will be cared for and life goes on.  
*(SEMOLINA is furious. OTHERS are distracted by noises off-stage as CAGNEY and PATRICK enter climbing down over the rubbish)*
- Cagney** Here. Take me violin, take it, take it. *(PATRICK does so)*
- Patrick** I still ain't hoid y'play dis ting.  
*(CAGNEY and PATRICK stumble down to the OTHERS. NIGEL addresses them)*
- Nigel** Well what did you find? Where's the food? *(OTHERS are hopeful)*
- Cagney** *(Looks them over)* I was gonna ask youse da same question.  
*(Despair from the OTHERS. No-one found any food. It's hopeless)*
- Semolina** We returned in time to see a mother rat have eight babies then roll over and die.
- Patrick** Aw, now dat's a terrible ting, to be sure, to be sure.
- Cagney** Ev'ry doity rat's gotta kick da bucket some time.
- Semolina** Don't you start. *(Mimics NIGEL)* We all have to die sometime. *(Angry at everyone)* I hate that kinda talk.
- Fellyside** *(To CAGNEY)* I gather your search, like ours, proved fruitless.  
*(PATRICK slightly indignant)*
- Patrick** Hey, nobody said we was lookin' for fruit.
- Cagney** Youse is unfortunately coirrect. In fact oi've got some bad news an' some very bad news. *(RATS groan)* Da bad news is we ain't found no food and da very bad news ... I tink we have t'move.
- Rats** What? Have to move? What do you mean? *(etc)*
- Bopalopa** *(Aghast)* We can't move! I've made special arrangements to ...  
*(Realises and covers up)* Ah, I've spent a lot of time and money on this place.

## RAT RACE 11

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- Semolina** Yeah, and all for yourself.
- Cagney** *(Removing crumpled newspaper)* I found dis doity newspaper. It says ... *(CAGNEY is not a literary gangster)* "City Clean Op ... Oop" Ah, dat's "City Clean Ip" I ain't got my spectacles. *(NIGEL steps forward, politely removes newspaper and reads aloud. CAGNEY and PATRICK, who is even worse at reading than CAGNEY, both mime slightly behind NIGEL'S dulcet and dignified tones in a pathetic attempt to prove they are not illiterate)*
- Nigel** "City Clean-Up Campaign". *(RATS murmur)* "The health risk caused by rubbish in the streets is to be removed. All garbage will be collected immediately". *(RATS upset. NIGEL moves aside and studies the article)*
- Semolina** Starvation and now homeless.
- Patrick** Dis is a terrible ting. A rat's rubbish is 'is castle.
- Fellyside** We can't fight the rubbish-truck. The power of that machine is equivalent to four thousand sweeping brooms or nine hundred marauding cats. *(RATS despair. NIGEL interrupts)*
- Nigel** Not so fast. This clean-up is no certainty. It's only a promise.
- Cagney** A promise is a promise. When I gives me woid - dat's it.
- Bopalopa** Me too. Rats never rat. *(Oh yeah?)*
- Nigel** Maybe, but what about politicians? *(RATS puzzled. Politicians?)*
- Semolina** Don't you ever give up? All this fancy talk doesn't fool anyone.
- Nigel** I'm talking facts. Look, politicians need votes to win office. They get votes by making promises which cost nothing to make and even less to break.
- Fellyside** Several assumptions, Nigel. Are you saying all politicians break promises, or most politicians or some politicians or a few politicians or one particular politician or ...
- Patrick** Just a minute, just a minute. You've got too many politicians.
- Fellyside** There are hundreds of permutations.
- Cagney** Hey, no swearin'!
- Nigel** This article's about a politician who's promised to clean the city. It's not definite because it's a promise. *(MUSIC BEGINS)* It's possible. It's probable. But it's also political.

### A Promise Is A Promise

- Nigel** *A promise is a promise is a promise  
The words of which you really must accept*

## 12 RAT RACE

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*A promise is a promise is a promise  
But who's to say the promise will be kept?  
The promises that we get from politicians  
Turn faithful into Doubting Thomases  
Because the only promise that a politician can keep  
Is to promise not to keep their promises.  
Some say that rules are there just to be broken  
And promises are made both day and night  
I promise that I'm gonna give up smokin'  
But first I wonder have you got a light?  
I promise that I'm gonna give up drinkin'  
I promise not to be inebriate  
And on the day I promise to quit drinkin'  
I'll down a glass or two to celebrate.*

*(The RATS congratulate NIGEL on helping allay their fears)*

**Semolina** Now hold y'horses. Just what have we got to celebrate? We've got no food, a dozen or more killer cats, *(Points at rubbish)* scandalous medical facilities and a rubbish truck about to bulldoze us into oblivion. *(RATS despair again)*

**Patrick** I tink y'forgot da bad news.  
*(No-one laughs. PATRICK tries to raise a smile. RATS despondent. Truth is obvious. EVERYONE despairs. SEMOLINA joins them. Pause. From off-stage come sounds of a chase)*

**Cagney** I tink I hoid sometin'.  
**Fellyside** No, Cagney. Hallucinations are common when hunger racks the body. *(Noises again. There may be no sound only the actors hearing it)*

**Bopalopa** No, listen. I definitely heard something.  
**Cagney** Sounds like a doity cat. *(Fear amongst the RATS. CAGNEY climbs onto the rubbish)* It's a rat. Look, over dere.  
*(Other RATS climb onto the rubbish. They look UL)*

**Nigel** It's being chased by a cat! *(Horror from RATS)*

**Semolina** Two cats!  
*(More horror. BOPALOPA uses hubbub to cover his getaway. He grabs a battered suitcase and sneaks DR)*

**Cagney** *(Calling to RAT)* Over here you doity rat.

**Nigel** He'll never make it.

**Semolina** *(Calling, distressed)* There's another cat!

**Pudding** *(Panics, calling)* Behind you! Look out!

*(A vicious snarl and scream of terror. The RATS turn away and bury their faces. Slowly, they climb down. Great despair)*

## RAT RACE 13

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- Fellyside** At least it was a swift death. He probably died from acute dismemberment of the body. This involves the pulling apart of ...
- Nigel** Yes, Fellyside, all right. Spare us the gory details.
- Cagney** Wot a way t'go. 'e died wid 'is boots on.
- (The RATS return to their positions of gloom/despair before the rat chase. BOPALOPA sneaks his suitcase back home and joins others. Pause. SNORTLE appears, head only, high up UC above rubbish. The audience can see SNORTLE. The RATS don't know he's there)*
- Snortle** Sanctuary? *(RATS spin round and look upstage)*
- Nigel** You!
- Semolina** He made it!
- Snortle** *(Still not sure)* Sanctuary?
- Patrick** Sorry but dere's no-one here wid dat name.
- Fellyside** Certainly. Come down. We guarantee sanctuary.  
*(SNORTLE rises and surveys the scene. The RATS rise and survey SNORTLE. He senses he is safe, tosses his pack/case down and slides/clambers after it)*
- Snortle** Greetings my friends. Glorious evening.
- Cagney** We taught you woz finished. Moided.  
*(SNORTLE moves amongst them shaking paws as he speaks)*
- Snortle** Finished? Me? My dear rat I haven't even started. Snortle Tozer's the name. Wizardry's the game.
- Patrick** Snortle Tozer! *(SNORTLE continues shaking paws)*
- Snortle** In the fur. Delighted to meet you - every single one of you.
- Nigel** *(A bit wary)* Listen Snortle, we have no food.
- Snortle** No food! *(Scoffs)* Mere trifle.
- Patrick** Dat's wot 'e said. We ain't got no trifle.
- Fellyside** And we're constantly attacked by ferocious felines.
- Snortle** Yes I met some of your neighbours. Bit timid I thought.  
*(RATS buzz)*
- Semolina** And our facilities are disgraceful. Look!
- Snortle** Well, time they were changed. *(SEMOLINA impressed)*
- Cagney** Listen you doity rat. You picked da wrong gang in da wrong place at da wrong time. In short, ya blew it.
- Snortle** Not so fast, buster. You're addressing the greatest problem-solver this side of the city tip. *(Substitutue "dump" for tip if required. The RATS are impressed)*
- Rats** The city tip!
- Patrick** You've been to da city tip?
- Snortle** Several times. *(Wow! This rat is somebody)*
- Fellyside** I say, are you a philosopher? Are you a rat of letters?

## 14 RAT RACE

---

**Snortle** Please, no labels. I am a traveller. I wander life's highway to fight for truth, justice and the rights of rodents.

**Nigel** *(Sarcastic)* Oh yes, and all for free no doubt.

**Snortle** My friends, what I offer is priceless. My gift to ratkind transcends financial inducement. I have ... *(MUSIC BEGINS)* ... ideas.

### Ideas

**Snortle** *Ideas my dears remove all your fears  
They banish your trouble and strife.  
They sparkle your senses and cut your expenses  
They give a new meaning to life.  
A motion of notion is more than a potion  
I certainly can guarantee  
No jeers but cheers for your new careers  
Ideas my dears from me, from me.  
I've got an idea*

**Rats** *He's got an idea*

**Snortle** *I've got an idea*

**Rats** *He's got an idea*

**Snortle** *I've got an idea to make us nice and fat.*

**Rats** *Oh nice and fat.*

**Snortle** *With a complexion clear and rosy  
We will be comfy and be cosy  
And we will never want for this or that*

**Rats** *For this or that.*

**Snortle** *I've got an idea*

**Rats** *He's got an idea.*

**Snortle** *I've got an idea*

**Rats** *He's got an idea*

**Snortle** *Oh why can't a rat become an aristocrat?  
We can save all our old trash  
And sell it for cold cash  
To some dumb pussy cat.*

**Rats** *Tongue tongue tongue twister  
Idea coming here it is.*

**Fellyside** *I've got an idea*

**Rats** *He's got an idea*

**Fellyside** *I've got an idea*

**Rats** *He's got an idea*

## RAT RACE 15

---

**Fellyside** *I've got an idea to keep us safe and dry*  
**Rats** *Oh safe and dry*  
**Fellyside** *With a construction sound 'n stable*  
*We will astound the fit and able*  
*When we erect a giant dragonfly*  
**Rats** *A dragonfly.*  
**Fellyside** *I've got an idea*  
**Rats** *He's got an idea*  
**Fellyside** *I've got an idea*  
**Rats** *He's got an idea*  
**Fellyside** *Oh why must a rat live in an old pig-sty?*  
*With an insect to scare 'em*  
*We'll sneak out and snare 'em*  
*And build our food supply.*  
**Cagney** *I've got an idea*  
**Rats** *He's got an idea*  
**Cagney** *I've got an idea*  
**Rats** *He's got an idea*  
**Cagney** *I've got an idea to bring us affluence*  
**Rats** *Us affluence.*  
**Cagney** *Using a plot so strange yet funny*  
*We'll have a ball and make some money*  
*In a production with an audience.*  
**Rats** *An audience*  
**Cagney** *I've got an idea*  
**Rats** *He's got an idea*  
**Cagney** *I've got an idea*  
**Rats** *He's got an idea*  
**Cagney** *Oh why can't we rats use our intelligence?*  
*We can trot out some new joke*  
*And entertain you folks*  
*A show with excellence.*  
**Rats** *A show with excellence.*  
*Got an idea!*

*(Any RATS who departed to care for the baby rats could return for this number. At the end of the song, everyone bombards SNORTLE with questions. "What about our food?" "What about our homes?" "What about the cats?" etc. SNORTLE raises hand for quiet - nothing happens. CAGNEY moves to an elevated position and points his violin-case at the crowd. An instant hush)*

## 16 RAT RACE

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- Cagney** Dat's better. I don't tink youse doity rats'd like da music I can play wid dis. Now Snortle don't need youse wiseguys speakin' outa toin. One atta toim. Do it.
- Semolina** Mister Tozer, I'd like to ask ...
- Snortle** Please, it's Snortle. Call me Snortle.
- Semolina** Okay, Snortle. I'm concerned about health. Rats carry disease wherever we go. If this could be eradicated, maybe cats and people wouldn't hate and hurt us. *(RATS agree)*
- Snortle** Excellent point. Any more?
- Fellyside** Yes, I have a technical problem. *(Some RATS groan)* We rodents are famous for chewing everything.
- Patrick** Hey, dat's right. My uncle was Charley da Chomper.
- Fellyside** Sometimes we chew the wrong things. For example, electric cables are often eaten by rats with disastrous results.
- Patrick** Shockin'. Da whole ting is shockin'. *(Terrible pun ignored)*
- Fellyside** There's no food in the cables, only deadly electric currents, and our chewing creates sparks which in turn start fires.
- Nigel** Rats are responsible for burning their own homes.  
*(Murmurs of agreement from the RATS. The problem is worrying)*
- Fellyside** Why can't we learn which things are dangerous?
- Snortle** Why not indeed? My friends, the solution to both these problems is simple. You need a new image. *(RATS confused)* At present you're dirty, diseased and dangerous. Your faults are obvious, your bad points up in lights for all to see.
- Patrick** *(Looking up)* I don't see no lights.
- Snortle** Take disease. You'll never eradicate germs, so, use them to your advantage.
- Bopalopa** But how? People hate germs and people hate us.
- Snortle** And people hate people. If one group is trying to kill or harm another, they'll fight with bombs, bullets, nasty words - anything. In fact they're always looking for new weapons to hurt each other.
- Cagney** *(Indicates violin-case)* If youse is lookin' for weapons, I can play dat kinda moosic.
- Snortle** *(To RATS)* Rats could work for people. You could be their weapons. Instead of hating and hunting you, they'd love and care for you. *(Buzz of excitement)* You'd infiltrate enemy lines, spread disease and return home a hero. You could retire and live on cheese and lemonade. *(More excitement)*
- Bopalopa** *(Stunned)* You mean people'd like us? People would like rats?
- Snortle** You help them, they'll think you're great.

## RAT RACE 17

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- Fellyside** But what about my scientific problem? What's the solution for that?  
**Snortle** Same as before.  
**Fellyside** But if we chew cables and cause damage, who will like us?  
**Snortle** People. *(Confused reaction from rats)*  
**Fellyside** But we destroy their property.  
**Snortle** And that's exactly what they want. *(More confusion)* Not everyone in business makes money, in fact some lose heaps. But there's a way to save a dying business. *(Pause)* Burn it. *(Even bigger reaction from RATS, "Burn it!" "What?!" etc)* The owner takes out insurance, throws in a match then collects the money.
- Pudding** But that's dishonest.  
**Bopalopa** And illegal.  
**Cagney** I like it.  
**Snortle** If the police or insurance company can prove the fire was deliberately lit, the owner is in big trouble.  
**Fellyside** *(Shocked)* You're not suggesting we start the fires?!  
**Snortle** Why not? Offer your services to struggling companies. Chew a cable, up goes the business and everyone wins.
- Semolina** Except the insurers.  
**Snortle** *(Ignores SEMOLINA)* Your fee could be two kilos of cheese. *(Huge buzz from RATS. "Two kilos of cheese. Wow!")* Top quality mind. None of this laundry-soap muck.
- Bopalopa** Oh I get it. We convince people we can do useful things.  
**Snortle** Exactly. Turn your bad points into good points.  
**Nigel** *(He twigs)* You mean, change our image?  
**Snortle** Right on, Nesbitt.  
**Nigel** *(Quickly annoyed)* Nigel.  
**Semolina** It sounds very dangerous.  
**Snortle** It is. But think of the benefits, the rewards. People will love you. Rats no longer hated. Rats in demand and highly regarded, even popular. It works my friends, believe me it works. And best of all, it can work, for ... *(MUSIC BEGINS. Go straight into song, no break)*

### Make Every Post A Winner

- Snortle** *You've got to make every post a winner  
You've got to make every pitch a strike  
You've got to make every fault a chance to unbolt  
A lifestyle you are sure to like.*

## 18 RAT RACE

---

*You've got to make every move assertive  
You've got to change all your cons into pros  
You've got to make every post a winner  
And watch while your fortune grows.  
Everyone has faults including this here speaker  
I have lied and spied, I've been a low-down sneaker  
Don't be overcome by trying to be meeker  
There is a way to make your day  
Seem bright and much more sleeker.*

*(The RATS join in the repeat of the chorus and by song's end are bubbling with enthusiasm. They congratulate one another on their good fortune and particularly SNORTLE. CAGNEY and PATRICK are not so keen. They mime a brief chat then PATRICK addresses the gathering)*

- Patrick** Excuse me. *(RATS ignore him)* I say, excuse me.  
*(A few RATS turn and see PATRICK. They nudge others and soon most are looking, maybe laughing at the waving PATRICK. CAGNEY suddenly points his violin-case at the rats and an instant hush occurs. The rats break away from SNORTLE who sees the angry CAGNEY)*
- Snortle** Cagney, my dear rat. Don't tell me you're unhappy?
- Cagney** I don't wanna be da doity rat what breaks up da party but I have to admit youse have missed da most important ting.
- Snortle** My dear fellow, I am fascinated.
- Cagney** Doity rats also have dare good points.
- Semolina** *(Sarcastic)* Yeah, like caring for expectant mothers.
- Cagney** You have taken some of our faults an' made 'em good.
- Bopalopa** Too right. It's a stroke of genius.
- Cagney** Well how come you ain't woiked on some of our good points?
- Patrick** Dat's right. Make our good points gooder. *(Knows it's incorrect and corrects himself)* I mean more gooder. *(Oh dear)*
- Snortle** Now let me understand. You're suggesting there's a rat who possesses something which actually appeals to people? Something which doesn't need a change of image?
- Cagney** Dat's eggzakly wot I'm suggestin'.
- Snortle** Fascinating. And just what are these nice characteristics?  
*(Pause. CAGNEY and PATRICK not sure what he means)*
- Pudding** Well how's this for starters? I'm a perfect pet.
- Semolina** Good on ya, Pudd.
- Pudding** I'm clean, quiet, house-trained and friendly.
- Nigel** Hey! People have pet mice, why not pet rats?

## RAT RACE 19

---

*(EVERYONE speaks at once. Some address SNORTLE, "Why didn't you think of this?" Some offer their good points "I'm friendly" "I could be a pet rat" "People will definitely like me" etc. They stop when SNORTLE raises his hand for silence)*

**Snortle** Gentlerats, please. I hear what you're saying. I've taken it on board.  
**Patrick** (To CAGNEY) 'e says 'e's taken it on boid.  
**Cagney** Oh yeah? Well where's da ship? Now listen Tozer, I too haves me good points. Sometin dat a poison would automagically fall in love wid. I ... *(Does a simple soft-shoe step/s)* ... can dance.  
*(RATS are impressed, some applaud)*

**Patrick** Me too, me too. Ah, I'm da bottle of laughs.  
**Nigel** I think you mean *barrel* of laughs.  
**Patrick** Ah no. Da bottle ones are easier t'crack. *(Some groan. NIGEL is furious that he's taken in)* Get it? Crack da bottle.  
*(PATRICK tries hard to get a laugh but as before, fails again)*

**Snortle** Well here I am using all my experience to turn nasties into niceies and two of you are the good guys.

**Pudding** Three. I'm a goodie.  
**Snortle** Sorry, three of you are niceies already. I'm sure I can help but please, I need more information.  
*(MUSIC BEGINS. TRIO to their singing position. OTHERS watch)*

### Three Lovely Creatures

**Pudding** *I'm house-trained*  
**Patrick** *I tell jokes*  
**Cagney** *I sing and I dance.*  
**Trio** *We're three lovely creatures you see.*

**Pudding** *I'm friendly*  
**Patrick** *I'm funny*  
**Cagney** *I'm fond of romance.*  
**Trio** *We promise personality.*  
*You'll love our good points, you'll love our style*  
*You'll find our presence indeed worthwhile.*

**Pudding** *You see I'm house-trained*  
**Patrick** *I tell jokes*  
**Cagney** *I sing and I dance*  
**Trio** *We're three lovely creatures you see.*  
**Pudding** *Take me, I'm perfect, the ideal kiddies' pet*  
*I'm clean and lean and never mean, I know my etiquette.*

## 20 RAT RACE

---

- Patrick** *Take me, I'm faultless, you never will regret  
A rat to pat and have a chat to, I'm your pet.  
Take me, I'm funny, I tell a jolly joke (ho ho)  
I tease and squeeze and always please  
Your laughter I provoke.  
Take me, I'm waggish, I'll entertain you folk (he he)  
A clown to drown or give a crown to I'm your bloke.*
- Cagney** *Take me, I'm snazzy, I dance up quite a storm  
I tap and rap and give a snap to any uniform  
Take me, I'm classy, I'm cool but also warm  
A song 'n dance man, jubilation fan  
Check out my form.*
- Trio** *My/His form, my/his form.*
- Snortle** *(Applauding with OTHERS)* Top number. Excellent. Now with all this talent my presentation will be sensational.  
*(RATS excited. The anticipation of good times ahead is showing)*
- Fellyside** May we know the nature of this presentation? I mean is there some complex symbolic language whereby you communicate with people?
- Snortle** Hell no. We just make a movie. *(RATS talk at once. "A movie!" "What?" "What's a movie?")* Let me explain. *(RATS settle)* Making a movie's easy. Some Japanese rats have come up with a tiny camera. I've got one *(Pats pocket)* right here. What I haven't got is a team of talented superstars just bustin' to strut their stuff. Any takers? *(RATS very keen, all jump and call "Me" "I'll do it" "Take me" etc)* Okay, okay. *(RATS settle)* You can all be in the movie. *(RATS buzz with happiness)* It'll take lots of rehearsing and heaps of hard work. But I know you can do it. Right? *(RATS call as one. "Right")* And I suggest we start tomorrow. *(Big sigh of disappointment from RATS)* Aw come on, even top image-makers need their beauty sleep. *(RATS understand)*
- Bopalopa** *(Big gesture to SNORTLE)* Please, Maestro Tozer. My home is at your disposal.
- Snortle** Why thank you ... *(Searches for his name)*
- Bopalopa** Bopalopa.
- Snortle** Bopalopa. Most kind. *(To RATS)* There you are folks, tomorrow's the start of a new night. *(MUSIC BEGINS)* And better still, *(Enthusiastic)* the start of a new life!  
*(Big cheer from RATS over song introduction)*

**Make Every Post A Winner**

**Company**            *You've got to make every post a winner  
You've got to make every pitch a strike  
You've got to make every fault a chance to unbolt  
A lifestyle you are sure to like  
You've got to make every move assertive  
You've got to change all your cons into pros  
You've got to make every post a winner  
And watch while your fortune grows.*

*(The RATS retire. They exit in various directions chatting with happiness and could even depart on the final few bars of the song. They shake hands with SNORTLE as they go or wave or pat him on the back. PATRICK helps CAGNEY with coat, hat and violin-case. All exit except BOPALOPA and SNORTLE. The lights dim. BOPALOPA fetches some rubbish which serves as a chair e.g. fruit-box)*

**Bopalopa**    Please, sit down, make yourself comfortable.  
**Snortle**        *(Sitting)* Thank you. *(Looking around)* Nice place you've got here.  
**Bopalopa**        *(Intimate voice)* I have a little refreshment.  
**Snortle**        Food!  
**Bopalopa**        Shhh! *(Indicates rubbish)* The others. *(Goes to cache)* Nothing fancy.  
Just a few scraps for an important occasion like this.  
**Snortle**        *(Enjoying the perks)* Ah, this is the life.  
**Bopalopa**        *(Preparing supper which could all be mimed)* I can't tell you what an honour it is to entertain such a famous rat as yourself.  
**Snortle**        Thank you.  
**Bopalopa**        Wait'll my cousins hear about this. Boy will they be jealous.  
**Snortle**        You're too kind. *(BOPALOPA brings food to SNORTLE)*  
**Bopalopa**        Here you are. Sorry it's a bit stale. Can I toast it?  
**Snortle**        *(Eating)* No no, this is fine, just fine.  
*(BOPALOPA could drag over another chair/piece of rubbish)*  
**Bopalopa**        I still can't get over your speech tonight.  
**Snortle**        *(Eating and refers to the food)* This is very good.  
**Bopalopa**        *(Refers to speech)* Good? It was brilliant ... inspirational ... eloquent ... unforgettable.  
**Snortle**        Any sauce? *[ketchup]*  
**Bopalopa**        *(Oblivious to SNORTLE'S request)* To think I've rubbed shoulders with the famous. Wait'll I tell my friends.  
**Snortle**        *(Decides to confess)* Listen, can you keep a secret?  
*(BOPALOPA leans forward expecting a pearl of wisdom)*  
**Bopalopa**        Certainly. I'm the soul of discretion.

## 22 RAT RACE

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- Snortle** Listen buddy, I hate to ruin a beautiful friendship but there ...
- Bopalopa** Oh I'm so sorry. I forgot the sauce. *(Hops up)*
- Snortle** No wait.
- Bopalopa** *(Stops)* No sauce?
- Snortle** *(Matter of fact)* No sauce. And no genius either.
- Bopalopa** *(Doesn't understand)* Pardon?
- Snortle** I said I'm no genius. Well, maybe at telling lies.
- Bopalopa** *(Still confused)* Lies?
- Snortle** Everyone a doozie. *(Pause. Big confession)* My friend, I'm a phoney, a con-rat. Everything I said tonight was a load of cobblers. *(BOPALOPA stunned)* Lies, falsehood, baloney. A cock 'n bull story.
- Bopalopa** *(Laughs)* Oh very good, very good. I love your sense of humour.
- Snortle** It's no joke. *(BOPALOPA serious)* Aw come on. You hide food, I hide the truth. What's the difference?
- Bopalopa** *(Getting angry)* What's the difference?
- Snortle** I've got no movie camera, I can't contact people and I'm dead-scared of cats. I'm just like any other rat. In fact, I'm just like you. We both cheat.  
*(BOPALOPA pauses then steps forward and snatches SNORTLE'S plate or food. SNORTLE is knocked off balance or over)*
- Bopalopa** *(Furious)* You dirty rat. You ate my food.
- Snortle** You gave it to me.
- Bopalopa** You tricked me - and the others. You'll pay for this. I'm gonna tell them. *(BOPALOPA starts to exit)*
- Snortle** What about the food? *(BOPALOPA freezes)* They won't like you hiding grub. *(BOPALOPA moves to SNORTLE)*
- Bopalopa** *(With contempt)* You dirty human. *(Suddenly furious)* I'll kill you m'self!  
*(BOPALOPA lunges at SNORTLE to strangle him. SNORTLE is fighting for survival rather than trying to kill BOPALOPA)*
- Snortle** Wait! Stop! Let me explain!  
*(Fight continues with grunting etc till BOPALOPA is grabbed in a head or armlock)*
- Bopalopa** Let go. You're breaking my paw. I'll kill you.
- Snortle** *(Maintains hold)* Quiet, you'll wake the others. *(BOPALOPA struggles then calms when he can't break free)* Listen. I've got something to say.
- Bopalopa** Nothing you say can excuse your lies.

## RAT RACE 23

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- Snortle** You oughta talk. *(Pause)* Listen, before I came here tonight, every rat was miserable, waiting for death. No food, oh except for certain illegal supplies, and no prospect of finding any. You face starvation, vicious cats and a giant garbage truck. In short, you're history. *(BOPALOPA is slowly released)*
- Bopalopa** So are you.
- Snortle** But thanks entirely to me, those same miserable rats are right now safely tucked in bed dreaming of a new and fabulous future.
- Bopalopa** Liar.
- Snortle** I gave them what they needed - hope. Their stomachs are empty, their lives in constant danger but tonight, they're happy.
- Bopalopa** They're going to die.
- Snortle** Ah yes, but happy. Listen, if you can't give 'em food, give 'em a promise.
- Bopalopa** *(With contempt)* You ... politician.
- Snortle** *(Changes tack)* Okay, do it your way. Go ahead, wake them. Tell them everything I've said. Tell them the truth.
- Bopalopa** Don't push y'luck.
- Snortle** Assuming they believe you, the best you'll get is my body being torn to pieces.
- Bopalopa** Sounds beautiful.
- Snortle** And imagine how they'll feel. Think of the fear, the desperate sadness when their dreams are shattered. You rat on me and you'll crush them forever. *(Pause. BOPALOPA in a quandary. Suddenly decides to have nothing to do with SNORTLE, pretends he never existed. Goes to his house)*
- Bopalopa** I've just remembered, the spare bed was blown away last night. Guess who's sleeping outside ... *(About to enter his home)* ... with the cats?  
*(BOPALOPA exits into house. If it has a door, this could be slammed. His house may simply be an opening in the rubbish or a crude cardboard box. SNORTLE is alone. The lights dim and he reflects upon life and the current situation. MUSIC BEGINS)*

### Living A Lie

- Snortle** *When I was young I thought I'd be a doctor  
Someone who'd help his fellow creatures live  
Or maybe I would drive a train  
A fire-truck or fly a plane  
I'd take a bit but also learn to give.*

## 24 RAT RACE

---

*When I was young I dreamed and schemed my future  
Believed I'd be a somebody some day  
But now that I am old and if the truth be told  
I must confess and very sadly say.  
I'm living a lie, just living a lie  
A perfect hypocrite and sham  
I flatter, cheat, pretend, the truth I often bend  
My middle name is Bunkum and Flim-Flam.  
I'm living a lie, just living a lie  
Each day my hoaxes multiply  
I'm great at invention but soon cause dissension  
And all because I'm living a lie.*

*(During the last 16 bars of the song, reduce lights to a single spot. In the darkness, the RATS enter and stand ready to dance. SNORTLE'S solo finishes, BLACKOUT, applause, then lights up and MUSIC BEGINS for the next number)*

### We're Nice (Dance)

*(We've skipped ahead in time. SNORTLE has been training the RATS for some time and the dance routine is the result. Everyone is tired but tries hard. SNORTLE removes jacket, loosens tie, rolls up sleeves. He wears a hat [boater?] and carries a cane [dancing stick]. During routine, SNORTLE moves about calling over the music)*

**Snortle** Heads up ... face the front ... come on, kick those legs ... smile! ... be happy! etc. *(The routine finishes, the RATS collapse, happy but exhausted. Even SNORTLE is puffing)* As a rehearsal, not bad. For the real thing, I want it twice as good.  
*(A few RATS groan. NIGEL is suffering, so too BOPALOPA)*

**Nigel** I'm not sure this is such a good idea.

**Fellyside** The body can only absorb a certain amount of punishment.

**Snortle** Fair enough. *(Starts packing or re-dressing)* No movie. Back to your lives of fear and starvation.  
*(RATS instantly horrified that SNORTLE may abandon them/plan)*

**Rats** No! ... Wait! ... We're sorry ... Please stay ... etc

**Nigel** *(Going after SNORTLE)* I'm sorry, Snortle. We really think your idea's terrific. *(To OTHERS)* Don't we? *(RATS agree)*

**Fellyside** Definitely. It's highly commendable.

**Pudding** Please, Snortle. We'll see it through to the bitter end.

**Snortle** Nothing bitter about it. Your hard work plus my genius equals good news.

## RAT RACE 25

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- Semolina** And some of it's here already. *(RATS interested)* I've just been behind that wall. *(Buzz from RATS)*
- Cagney** Hey, dat's dangerous territory.
- Semolina** There's a sign announcing a new building project. *(RATS excited)* The old factory's being turned into a sparkling shopping complex ... *(RATS even more excited)* part of which includes *(Louder)* a take-away food shop!  
*(RATS cheer and celebrate by hugging, dancing, clapping. NIGEL calls just as the noise settles)*
- Nigel** That's the best news we've had since Snortle arrived.
- Pudding** It happened *because* Snortle arrived. *(RATS agree)*
- Patrick** Three cheers for Snortle. Hooray.
- Rats** Hip hip.
- Patrick** Hooray.
- Rats** Hip hip.
- Patrick** Hooray.
- Rats** Hip hip. *(RATS delighted except BOPALOPA)*
- Semolina** Come and read the sign. *(RATS agree and start to exit)*
- Bopalopa** No wait! *(RATS stop and turn)* There's something I have to tell you. *(Pause)* It's about Snortle. *(Pause. BOPALOPA about to spill the beans but is grabbed by NIGEL)*
- Nigel** I do the thank-you speeches, Bopa. Now come on.  
*(BOPALOPA dragged out protesting. Lots of noise as happy RATS exit. SNORTLE waves to them then starts packing, talking aloud)*
- Snortle** Right old rat, time to spread your magic elsewhere.  
  
*(Lights dim. SNORTLE moves to one side. He is distracted and hides. BOPALOPA enters in sneaky fashion, goes to "cat-chat" position. Perhaps only two lights. One on BOPALOPA who faces audience, other on SNORTLE who watches BOPALOPA)*
- Bopalopa** Tiddles! Tiddles! Look, I've got some vital information. The rats will be in the alley in about five minutes. You can have a real feast ... Oh and there's one special rat. Go for him first. He'll have a hat and a cane ... Got that? A hat and a cane. And just remember where you heard it first. I'll scratch your back and you can ... *(Embarrassed laugh)* ... ah, you can let me go ... Same time tomorrow? Okay. Bye. *(Starts to leave but scurries back)* Oh, and bon appetit.  
*(A giant shadow could again pass over stage. BOPALOPA cringes then creeps backwards towards SNORTLE. More lights come up)*
- Snortle** Meow. *(BOPALOPA nearly dies. He cringes/pleads, facing front)*

## 26 RAT RACE

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- Bopalopa** No, no! It's me! It's me! Bopalopa. Please, no. *(Pause. Nothing happens. BOPALOPA peers out. Nothing. He sits up, looks around and sees a grinning SNORTLE. BOPALOPA is furious)* You!
- Snortle** Good evening. Judas Rat-scariot I believe.
- Bopalopa** *(Getting up)* You're history. You're dead. If the cats don't get you, the rats will. I'm telling everyone.
- Snortle** Course I've got a spot of news myself. *(Mimics BOPALOPA)* Tiddles. I'll scratch your back ...
- Bopalopa** They'll never believe you.
- Snortle** Don't bet on it. *(Pause. MUSIC BEGINS)* You know it's rather strange but I think we've got something in common.
- Bopalopa** *(Scoffs)* Ha! Now that is an insult.

### Living A Lie (Reprise)

- Snortle** *We're living a lie, just living a lie*
- Bopalopa** *A perfect hypocrite and sham*
- Snortle** *We flatter, cheat, pretend*
- Bopalopa** *The truth you often bend*
- Snortle** *My middle name is Bunkum and Flim Flam.*
- Bopalopa** *You're living a lie, just living a lie*  
*Each day your hoaxes multiply.*
- Duet** *I'm/You're great at invention*  
*But soon cause dissension*  
*And all because I'm/you're living a lie*  
*(Duet ends. Immediately RATS enter, happily singing Make Every Post A Winner. BOPALOPA threatens SNORTLE)*
- Bopalopa** Say nothing or else. *(Noisy RATS enter and surround SNORTLE)*
- Semolina** *(Calling)* What did I tell you? Have we got new shops?
- Rats** Yes!
- Pudding** Have a we got a take-away food shop?
- Rats** Yes! *(Clapping, whistles, etc)*
- Snortle** *(Calls for quiet)* Okay, bit of shush. *(RATS are excited)*
- Nigel** Is it goodbye to hunger?
- Rats** *(Huge roar)* Yes!!  
*(Clapping. SNORTLE can't get attention. CAGNEY goes to elevated position, whistles and points violin-case. Instant silence)*
- Snortle** Thank you Cagney. My friends, your good news is really great news. I couldn't be more happy for you. But those shops won't open for months. *(Joy turns to despair)*

- Fellyside** That's true. The technical requirements mean a long and complicated construction.
- Snortle** The food next door is terrific but my movie ... sorry, our movie means a new life for all rats. *(RATS cheer up)* I say we get stuck into the routine. Agreed?
- Rats** Yes! ... Let's do it! ... Agreed ... *(etc)*
- Snortle** Fine. But before we start, something very important's just come up. It concerns our friend and colleague, Bopalopa.  
*(RATS open up/turn to BOPALOPA who stares at SNORTLE)*
- Bopalopa** *(Softly)* It takes two t'tango, Tozer.
- Snortle** C'mon Bopalopa, own up. Honesty's the best policy.
- Bopalopa** Sauce for the goose, Snortle.
- Patrick** Goose? Nobody told me it was Christmas.
- Snortle** *(Smiling)* I've discovered one of Bopalopa's secrets - something he's been keeping to himself.
- Bopalopa** *(Threatening)* This is your final warning.
- Snortle** Bopalopa's working on a very important project. *(Pause then points at BOPALOPA)* This rat's having secret meetings ... *(Hubbub. BOPALOPA about to retaliate)* ... learning how to dance. *(Bigger hubbub. BOPALOPA momentarily speechless)*
- Cagney** *(Upset)* Hey, just a minute. Wot's goin' on?
- Snortle** Come on Bopalopa, own up. You want to star in our movie so you've done something about it. Right?
- Pudding** *(To BOPALOPA who is stunned)* It's okay Bopa. Don't be ashamed.
- Nigel** On the contrary. You should be proud.
- Semolina** Good for you, Bopa. *(Confused BOPALOPA congratulated)*
- Snortle** So I'm sure no-one will object when I announce that the leading role in the movie's finale will be played by *(Loud)* Bopalopa! *(RATS agree, this is great. Congratulations for BOPALOPA who thanks his fans and makes veiled threats to SNORTLE)* Enough of this talk. Let's get the show on the road! *(RATS are bubbling)* I'll go out front ... *(Points)* ... and set up the camera. You lot get ready. And remember, give it everything you've got. Today it's rubbish, tomorrow, the world!  
*(RATS cheer/roar their agreement. They want to do well. They exit chatting excitedly. Lights are killed except for one or two DR. In the darkened wings and upstage, the RATS are quickly preparing for the finale. We're Nice MUSIC BEGINS. SNORTLE steps into a light. BOPALOPA runs down and joins him)*
- Bopalopa** This better not be a trick, Tozer or you're dead.  
*(A RAT rushes by and drags BOPALOPA off to join the others. NIGEL rushes on)*

## 28 RAT RACE

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- Nigel** Snortle, what can I do? Let me help.
- Snortle** No Nifty, please. I'm fine.
- Nigel** But I want to help. I want to learn the tricks of the trade.
- Snortle** Tricks! There are no tricks. Listen Nathan ....
- Nigel** *(Exasperated, annoyed)* Nigel! My name is Nigel.
- Snortle** In showbusiness, everyone has a particular role. Mine is to organise, to inspire. Yours is to march triumphantly onto that stage and captivate your audience. We need performers with talent, style and good looks. Believe me Norman, you're that performer.
- Nigel** *(Believes every word of it)* You really think so?
- Snortle** Nick, I know so. Now go! *(Points LC)* Your public awaits.
- Nigel** *(Running into darkness, calling)* Hold it! Wait for me.  
*(SNORTLE looks after him and shakes his head. BLACKOUT. SNORTLE'S voice is heard - this could be pre-recorded or spoken live through a megaphone)*
- Snortle** Ladies and gentle-rats, *Stiff Cheddar Productions* proudly present,  
*The Rat Show.*  
*(Lights up. Start small. Build lights, music and effects)*

### We're Nice

- Company** *Nice, we're nice, no vice, no lice  
Advice, throw rice, not dice, good price.  
Nice on ice, precise, concise,  
Nice, a slice of spice, we're nice.  
We can brighten your moods bring pleasure  
We can righten your feuds for measure  
We can quieten your broods bring leisure  
Yes we can we know we can.  
We can tally your debts and pay them  
We can rally your pets and spay them  
We can bally your threats and slay them  
Yes we can we know we can.  
We can tackle your foes 'n thrash 'em  
Hibernacle your beaux 'n stash 'em  
We can shackle chateaux and gnash 'em  
Yes we can we know we can.  
We can snaffle a star and quote you  
We can raffle a car, promote you  
We can baffle and spar, big-note you*

*Yes we can we know we can.  
You see we're nice for you, good for you  
Doing what we should for you  
Why not put us to the test?  
In fact we're right for you, great for you  
Just the perfect mate for you  
We are simply the best.  
Open the case, open the case, open the case [repeat]  
Open the case.  
We're nice, we're nice, we're very, very nice [three times]  
We're nice. Oh yes we're nice.*

*(During this song, which is part of SNORTLE'S movie, the RATS sell themselves. This is the film which will win over humans. The production and costumes resemble a Busby Berkeley routine. Flags and banners with slogans such as "Rats are Beautiful" and "I Love Rats" are displayed. The climax develops with BOPALOPA being brought to the top of the rubbish which is transformed into a glittering staircase. BOPALOPA is uncertain in his starring role. After the dance break, the RATS chant "Open the case". This is CAGNEY'S violin-case which is passed up the chorus line to BOPALOPA. Drum roll. BOPALOPA tentatively opens the case. His face shows horror. A rat could whisper, "Get on with it". BOPALOPA pauses then withdraws two items from the case - a hat and cane just like he described to Tiddles. Poor BOPALOPA. What a choice. The RATS stare at him and he suddenly thrusts the hat and cane high and the orchestra plays original tune. The RATS cheer, the finale of the finale begins and everyone bursts into song. The song progresses, balloons and ticker tape fall onto the performers. BOPALOPA slowly gets into the swing of things. He starts to enjoy it. He kick-steps his way down the staircase and reaches the bottom just as the song ends. He is the focus of attention of the company which finishes the song with arms aloft in true showbiz style. Before the audience applauds, all lights except one are extinguished. A blinding white follow-spot burns onto the frozen-with-fear BOPALOPA. Pause. Silence)*

**Bopalopa** *(Frightened and soft)* Tiddles!

*(Suddenly BOPALOPA lets go an unbridled scream of terror and the RATS run in all directions, screaming as they go. They bump into one another in a choreographed piece of panic. Tiddles is moving in for the kill and, as instructed, goes first for the rat with the hat and cane. The follow-spot bounces around the stage as the RATS run helter-skelter. BOPALOPA is killed. We don't see it. He exits in the confusion. After a brief panic there is a BLACKOUT and total silence. A time-lapse occurs. This could be only a few seconds. It represents several minutes since the attack by Tiddles. A few dim lights come up revealing a battlefield after a battle. The RATS, their movie costumes torn, damaged or dirty, lie prostrate on the stairs, rubbish or ground. Some groan, some cough. Some Red-Cross RATS attend to the wounded. A RAT is carried off on a stretcher.)*

### 30 RAT RACE

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*(It is difficult to see the rats in the gloom. Obviously a complete costume change cannot be made in a few seconds. One way is to have several stained bandages on hand which the rats simply put on. Others could slip on torn garments and scruffy wigs. Everyone speaks the following speeches with great difficulty. Take your time. Add soft groans)*

**Snortle** *(He is battered)* My friends, allow me to say, you were ... superb.

**Cagney** Damn dose cats. How come dey fight so doity?

**Patrick** Oh fightin' doity is it? Next you'll be fightin' clean.

**Fellyside** Is there any word on Bopalopa?

**Semolina** He's missing ... presumed dead  
*(Sadness/groans from survivors. Pause)*

**Pudding** I wish I could die.  
*(SNORTLE rises to deliver his emotional address)*

**Snortle** I know this may sound insensitive but ... life must go on. The movie's complete and I can take it to my agent for human consumption. *(The RATS perk up a little)* You're feeling low right now but soon, maybe real soon, rats here and all over the world, can start a new and better life. And it's all because of you.

**Semolina** *(Emotional)* No it's not. It's all because of you.  
*(The RATS agree. "That's right" "You did it, Snortle" etc)*

**Cagney** *(Into Snortle)* Listen Snortle, I met some tough operators in my toim, some chiselers and woisguys, some hustlers and rustlers, but you are da smartest, toughest and doitiest rat I ever clapped eyes on. *(Cagney extends his paw)* Put it dere.  
*(They shake hands. This is moving. Some RATS give feeble applause)*

**Snortle** Thank you Cagney and thank you everyone. It's been great meeting you guys but this movie just has to be delivered. *(Pats pocket)* Got it right here. *(Looks them over)* I'll never forget you rats.

**Pudding** We'll never forget you. *(RATS agree)*

**Snortle** *(Ready to leave)* Take care. Oh and good luck with that take-away food store.

*(Soft laughter for the first time. SNORTLE begins climbing the rubbish or staircase. The RATS he passes reach out to touch him or shake hands/paws. Some are too weak to do even that and SNORTLE may pat them as he passes. They say "Good luck" or "Thanks Snortle". SNORTLE reaches the top of the rubbish and turns back to the RATS. They all stare up at him. He waves. They wave back. Pretty pathetic waves. He then turns and disappears the way he first entered. The RATS turn back. Some could quietly cry. Gloom settles over the company. SNORTLE had given them a reason to live. He will be sadly missed. Suddenly NIGEL leaps to feet. He grimaces in pain but continues)*

**Nigel** The camera! Snortle forgot the camera!

## RAT RACE 31

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*(The RATS are distressed. "What?" "The camera!" etc. What does NIGEL mean? Has all their work been for nothing?)*

**Semolina** Are you sure?

**Nigel** Positive. He set it up over there. I'll go and get it.  
*(NIGEL moves DR and PATRICK clammers up the rubbish)*

**Patrick** *(Calling)* Snortle! Snortle! Y'f'got y'camera! Snortle!  
*(The RATS turn upstage. Suddenly the lights upstage go out leaving only NIGEL lit downstage. He looks in real or imaginary rubbish)*

**Nigel** Where is it? It's got to be here. *(More searching)* Nothing. I saw it myself when he ... *(Stops. Realises)* No I didn't. He stopped me. He sent me back. *(Pause)* Maybe there was no camera. Maybe the whole thing was ... *(Gasps)* a promise.

*(NIGEL turns slowly, moves upstage. Lights come up on OTHERS who are dejected because PATRICK had no luck with SNORTLE)*

**Patrick** 'e's gone. Gone forever.

**Semolina** The camera, where's the camera?

**Nigel** It's gone.

**Pudding** Gone?

**Fellyside** You mean he didn't forget it after all?

**Nigel** *(Pause. Rats look pathetic)* No. No he didn't forget it.

**Patrick** Well what are we worryin' for? Da filum's on it's way t'glory.  
*(NIGEL decides not to share his doubts)*

**Nigel** Yes. The film's on its way.

**Cagney** Okay you doity rats, it's toim we told da woild we ain't troo. Gimme dat ting.

*(CAGNEY is handed violin-case. EVERYONE spellbound. Slowly he opens the lid and removes a ukulele or banjo. EVERYONE sighs and smiles. MUSIC BEGINS. It could just be CAGNEY playing. He plays [or mimes] a few chords and sings. The RATS join in. The song builds until all are singing with gusto giving their future a strong dose of optimism)*

### Make Every Post A Winner

**Cagney** *You've got to make every post a winner*

*You've got to make every pitch a strike*

**Company** *You've got to make every fault a chance to unbolt*

*A lifestyle you are sure to like.*

*You've got to make every move assertive*

*You've got to change all your cons into pros.*

*You've got to make every post a winner*

*And watch while your fortune grows.*

CURTAIN

## 32 RAT RACE

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### Curtain Calls

*Gotta hate them moggies, gotta hate them cats. Gotta hate them cats  
Gotta hate them flitty, kitty kits what hate us rats. What hate us rats.  
Gotta flee from felines, gotta learn to scat. Gotta learn to scat  
Gotta run, gotta hide, gotta slide. Gotta chide worldwide, always avoid a cat.  
Gotta loathe them longhairs. Gotta shun them shorts, gotta shun them shorts  
Gotta 'scape from smelly, alley Toms with evil thoughts, with evil thoughts.  
Gotta keep from kittens know where they're at, know where they're at  
Because today they're soft and fluffy but tomorrow hard and scruffy  
Oh beware, oh yes beware, the cat! The cat.  
You've got to make every post a winner. You've got to make every pitch a strike.  
You've got to make every fault a chance to unbolt a lifestyle you are sure to like.  
You've got to make every move assertive.  
You've got to change all your cons into pros  
You've got to make every post a winner  
And watch while your fortune grows. Your fortune grows. It grows.  
Nice, we're nice, no vice, no lice, advice, throw rice, not dice, good price.  
Nice on ice, precise, concise. Nice, a slice of spice, we're nice.  
We're nice, we're nice, we're very, very nice. Oh yes we're nice.*

### Playout

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