

Outside Tommy and Anna's house

The clock continues to strike. The CURTAIN opens to reveal the outside of a house. ANNA is looking out of a bedroom window

ANNA It's Christmas Day, Tommy.

TOMMY (off) No, it's not, it's the middle of the night

ANNA I heard the clock strike midnight.

TOMMY (off) Don't wake me up when it strikes one.

ANNA *turns away.*

SNOTTLE *enters and dashes across the stage. ANNA returns to the window. SNOTTLE hides behind a dustbin.*

ANNA I'm going to watch here all night.

TOMMY *appears at a window*

TOMMY Don't be dumb, Anna. What do you expect to see at this time of night?

ANNA Santa, of course.

TOMMY If he sees you looking out of the window, he won't come near our house, that's for sure.

ANNA Don't you think so, Tommy?

TOMMY Even Dracula wouldn't come near if he saw your face.

ANNA *thumps him. SNOTTLE dashes off. BUG runs on and hides behind the dustbin*

ANNA I'm too excited to sleep. Don't you wonder what presents you'll find in the morning?

TOMMY I already know.

ANNA You would. You're that sort of brother. *(She mimics Tommy)* Don't you know this, Anna? Don't you know that, Anna? Oh, you are stupid, Anna!

TOMMY You can't expect more than one clever person in every family. In our family, it's me.

ANNA Rats! I bet you don't really know what you're getting.

TOMMY The Encyclopaedia Britannica.

BUG I'm getting a train set.

SNOTTLE (off) Be quiet.

TOMMY I also know what you're going to get, Anna.

ANNA Don't tell me.

Tommy leaves the window

Tommy!

She turns. BUG exits SNEERGRIFE enters. TOMMY appears at the window SNEERGRIFE hides behind the dustbin

You could whisper it.

TOMMY Frostbite! Now, let's get some sleep.

He draws the curtains

SNEERGRIFE (*emerging from behind the dustbin*) I should think so, too. Don't children ever go to bed nowadays? When I was a young goblin, I had to be tucked in by eight o'clock sharp or else no bat droppings for breakfast. Let me introduce myself. Sneergripe's the name—master criminal and evil genius. Here, have one of my business cards. Any teachers anyone want sorted out? You, sir, you must know someone who should go for a swim with concrete boots on. My fees are very reasonable, I can assure you. Just leave your name and address at the box office, and I'll call round when I'm free. At the moment, though, I'm busy with a particularly dastardly crime, so you'll have to keep very quiet. Anyone who makes even the tiniest sound won't get any Christmas presents. Mind you, by the time I've finished, none of you are going to get any presents anyway.

ANNA (*drawing back the curtain*) There's something in the garden. I bet it's a squirrel.

SNEERGRIFE *tries to act like a squirrel*

TOMMY (off) Don' tbe silly, Anna. Squirrels sleep all winter. It's probably a rabbit.

SNEERGRIFE *hops about*

Or a cat.

SNEERGRIFE (*becoming a cat*) Make up your mind, boy.

ANNA It doesn't look like a cat.

SNEERGRIFE Miaow! Miaow!

The noise of a window opening. A shoe hurtles towards **SNEERGRIFE**

VOICE (off) Shut your noise.

Sneergripe waves a fist back

ANNA That's odd. The cat shook its fist at Mr Hopkins.

TOMMY (off) Stop talking nonsense and go to sleep.

ANNA *draws the curtain*