

Cast

There are about 40 speaking parts in A Pudding for the Chimney Sweep, from principals to one-liners, with plenty of scope for extras. For a smaller cast, use one chorus group for the Customers, Factory Workers, etc. Do cast girls in the boy roles if you need to.

- Jim** The little chimney sweep, or Climbing Boy. A central character - **sings solo** in 'Nothing In This World'.
- Boyle** The Sweep - Jim's bullying master. **Sings solo** in 'Light Fingers'.
- Quigley** The Rent Collector - dishonest, vain and talkative. **Sings solo** in 'Light Fingers'.
- Gradshaw** The Factory Overseer - the most powerful and sinister of the three villains. **Sings solo** in 'Light Fingers'.
- Mrs Perkins** Kind-hearted owner of the pie shop, with a houseful of adopted orphans. Good part without solo singing.
- Lizzie, Jack, William, Bob, George, Elsie, Kitty, Molly, Maggie, Ned**
The orphans adopted by Mrs Perkins. Mostly small but fun roles: Lizzie is a more important part.
- Mr Mortimer** Rich mill-owner. Lots of important lines - an authoritative figure.
- Mrs Mortimer** His foolish wife.
- Charlotte** The eldest Mortimer daughter, intelligent and curious.
- Grace, Edward, Eleanor, and Beatrice Mortimer**
The younger Mortimer children are all good parts. The Mortimer children sing as a group in '**Nothing In This World**'.
- Anne** One of the Factory Workers - a strong, feisty woman. Sings a big solo in '**This is a Horrible Place to Work**'.
- Katie** Anne's small daughter.
- Widdop** Struggling accounts manager at the Mill.
- Old Lady** A small but significant part.
- Factory Workers** As many as possible: 4 speaking parts.
- Town folk, including Holly Seller, Chestnut Seller, Road Sweeper, Shoeshine Boy, Ribbon Seller, and Policeman.**
- Customers** As many as you like: 9 speaking parts.

Extract from : A Pudding for the Chimney Sweep

Scene 1. Street Scene

(A busy Victorian street in a Northern factory town. A mixture of rich and poor people hurry to and fro, some buying from street sellers who have hot chestnuts, holly, ribbons, candles, etc. A large sign indicates Mrs Perkins' Pie Shop. Various Factory Workers including Anne and her daughter Katie are on their way to the next shift at the factory.)

Song 1: Here Comes Christmas

(All)

CD 1/12

Hurry, quick quick quick, here comes Christmas
Arm in arm with old Jack Frost
Hurry quick quick quick here comes Christmas
Not a moment to be lost!

I'm running out of time
I've got to make a list
My holly's off its trolley
and my tinsel's in a twist

Hurry, quick quick quick, here comes Christmas
Arm in arm with old Jack Frost
Hurry quick quick quick here comes Christmas
Not a moment to be lost!

I'll never get it done
I'm frantic as can be
My mistletoe is missing
and there's trouble with the tree

Repeat chorus

I think it would be best
To have a little rest
I'll finish off tomorrow... *(snores)*
(solo, spoken) But what about presents?
(all) Oh no!
Father, mother, sister, brother, auntie, uncle, grandma, grandpa,
Three best friends and next door neighbour
Don't forget the dog!

Repeat chorus

Not a moment to be lost!

(After the song most people exit, leaving Anne, Katie and the street sellers)

Anne: Hurry up, Katie. Shift starts in five minutes.

Katie: Coming, Mum.

Holly Seller: You're not starting little Katie at Mortimer's Mill?

Anne: I've no choice! We've got five children at home and the rent to pay.

Katie: I don't mind. I'm big enough to earn a living.

Chestnut Seller: Living death, more like, in that place.

Anne: But what can we do? It's that or the workhouse.

(Exit Anne and Katie)

Road Sweeper: Poor little mite! That'll be a twelve hour shift working those great machines.

Shoeshine boy: It's not her mother's fault. Why don't Mortimer pay decent wages?

Road Sweeper: He just leaves it all to Gradshaw.

Chestnut Seller: Gradshaw? Is he the factory manager?

Holly Seller: That's right. He's a nasty piece of work.

(Enter Boyle, the Sweep, and Jim, the Climbing Boy.)

Boyle: Hurry up, you miserable little shrimp, or I'll knock your block off!

Jim: Coming. *(Pauses outside Pie Shop.)*

Ribbon Seller : How's the chimney sweeping trade, then?

Boyle: Terrible. This boy I've got does nothing right. *(Jim is staring into the Pie Shop.)*

Jim: *(Breathing deeply)* Mmmm... smells lovely!

Boyle: You'll never guess where we're off to tomorrow.

Ribbon Seller: Where?

Boyle: Mortimer Hall.

Shoeshine Boy: Mortimer! He owns the factory, don't he?

Boyle: He owns half the town!

Jim: Oh please sir...

Boyle: What?

Jim: Could I have a pie? I'm starving.

Boyle: A PIE?! Do you think I'm made of money?
(*Drags Jim off*)

Song 2: Here Comes Christmas (reprise)
(All) CD 2/13

(Exit all during song.)

Scene 2: Mrs Perkins' Pie Shop.

(Lizzie, Molly, Jack, Ned, George, Maggie, Kitty, Bob, Elsie and William, the Pie Shop children, are busy washing up, sweeping etc. Mrs Perkins is studying some papers. She is kind and patient, but very busy and worried.)

Jack: Those were lovely pies we made today.

Molly: You should know, you ate most of them.

Ned: They're always lovely!!

Maggie: (*Hugging Mrs Perkins*) Of course. They're Mrs Perkins' Pies.

Mrs Perkins: That's right, dear.

Jack: I only ate my share.

Mrs Perkins: Good boy. Has someone polished the pie-dishes ?

Kitty/Maggie: We did!

Kitty: We only broke two!

Maggie: And one of them was already cracked.

Mrs Perkins: Has someone put up the 'closed' sign?

All: I'll do it/Me!/Let me! (*They stampede to help*)

Bob: (*Looking over her shoulder*) Can I help you do that, Mrs Perkins? I'm good with numbers. 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12...

Mrs Perkins: Oh, no, no thank you.

Elsie: Shall we sing to you, Mrs Perkins?

Mrs Perkins: I'm a bit busy, dear. *(Elsie and Molly start singing.)*

William: Watch this! *(William/George do leapfrog game. Others applaud)*

Lizzie: Is everything all right, Mrs Perkins?

Mrs Perkins: Well...

Lizzie: We saved a pie for you. *(Lizzie has set table, etc. for Mrs Perkins)*

Mrs Perkins: What good children you are.

(There is a knock at the door)

All: I'll get it!/ Let me! I'll go! Etc.

(Enter Quigley, the Rent Collector. The children fall quiet and watch him suspiciously.)

Quigley: Good evening, Mrs Perkins.

Mrs Perkins: *(Not at all pleased)* Do come in, Mr Quigley.

Quigley: I see you have a pie left.

Lizzie: Not for sale! *(The children hide it.)*

Quigley: *(Offended)* This is a serious matter. I've come about the rent.

Mrs Perkins: Oh dear. Children, I think you'd better go to bed.

Ned: Already?

Molly: It's my turn under the sofa.

Kitty: I'm in the broom cupboard.

George: Am I sleeping in the bath again?

(Exit children except Lizzie and Jack who stay behind, hide and listen)

Quigley: There's more and more of these children, Mrs Perkins

Mrs Perkins: They help me in the shop.

Quigley: But they're not yours, are they?

Mrs Perkins: I've taken them in. They have no-one else.

Quigley: It's ridiculous! It's like an orphanage in here!

Mrs Perkins: I can't turn them away if they're starving!

Quigley: Street urchins and beggar's brats, dragged in off the streets.

Mrs Perkins: How dare you!

Quigley: This is Mr Mortimer's property. Where's the rent?

Mrs Perkins: I can't afford it, Mr Quigley.