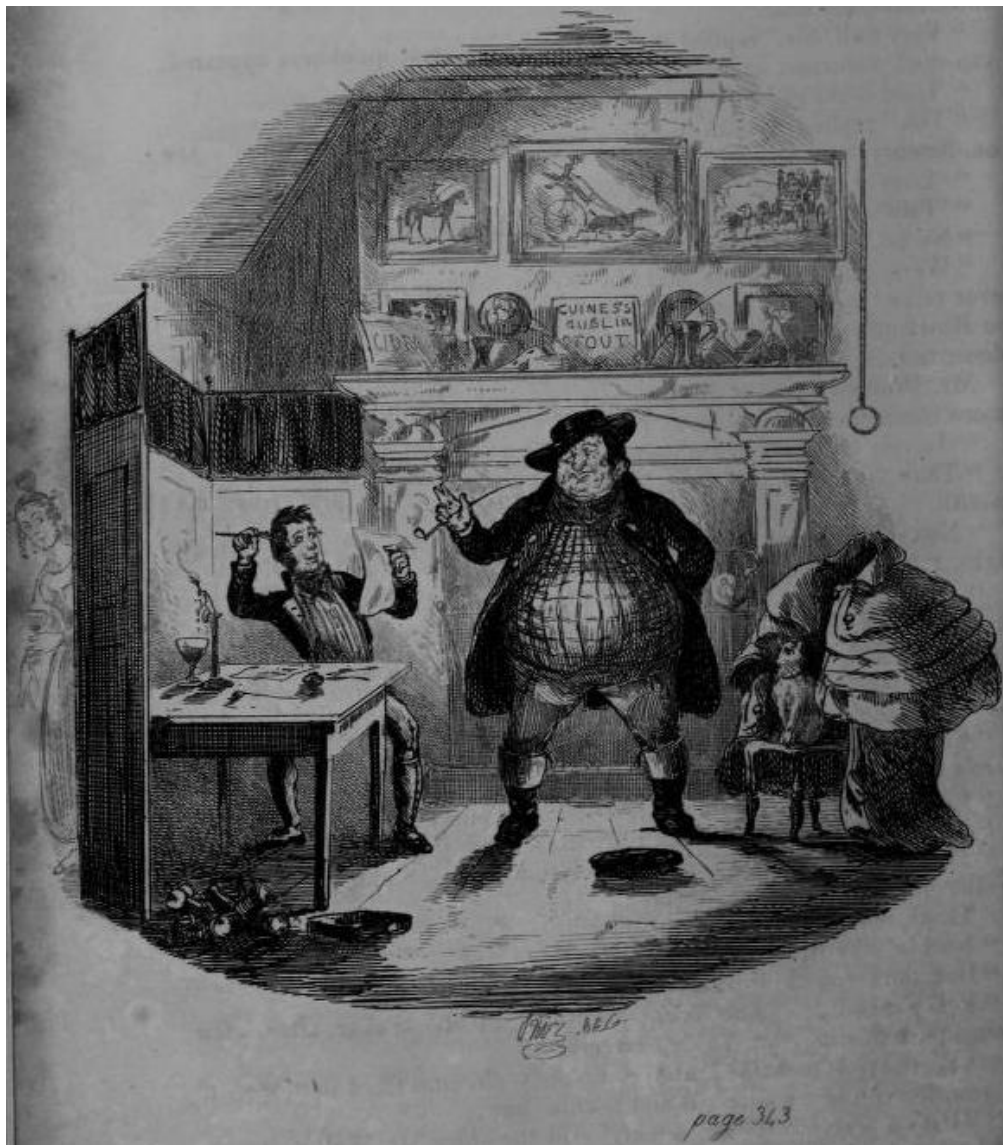


## *Pickwick's Holiday*

*By Mark J. Manhart adapted from Charles Dickens*



*by Browne & Weller*

This screenplay is based on Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* with his original dialogues, illustrations, notations, and poems set in 1837, London. All rights reserved, Omaha, NE 2020

FADE IN

INT. FURNAL INN & ALEHOUSE -- SMALL UPPER ROOM - DAWN

BEGIN

MANTAGE **VIEW WITH DIALOGUE BELOW.**

At the break of dawn in the DARK, dreary room above the tavern is dreary, cold with two small beds, a small table, desk and chair. TRUNDLE FINCH sleeps, his head on the desk, quill in hand on construction drawings spread out. He is Gov'ner of Dingley Dell Manor, London. A few days before Father Christmas HOLIDAY, FINCH is an abrupt, smart, well-groomed, exhausted, out of sorts, fully dressed businessman. His desk candle has burned to a black stub. His bed is untouched, two small bags and a wash table at the window with the curtain closed.

In the other bed resides SAMUEL PICKWICK, a Knight of the Joyful Countenance, Secretary to FINCH, manages the Manor and often travels with FINCH. An older fellow, mannered and learned, PICKWICK is constantly making notes. Their hats, coats and half of his clothes are tossed about. He sleeps restlessly, is half dressed, a silly night cap and his spats perfectly placed at the bedside. Their snores and stirrings become a sonata in tune with the SOUNDS of London awakening.

#### **DIALOGUE**

JOSEPH SMIGGINS (V.O.)

RAP, RAP, RAP! This meeting will come to order, May 12, 1837, Editor and Vice President presiding on behalf of Samuel Pickwick, Perpetual President of the United Pickwickians, London, England.

Be it resolved and simultaneously agreed upon that the Pickwick Papers be presented this evening with careful attention, indefatigable assiduity, and brilliant discrimination of the multifarious events confided to me our esteemed founder, Samuel Pickwick, Esquire.

Furthermore, it is with unmingled satisfaction and unqualified approval that these communications here entitled "Pickwick's Holiday" are some of the sanctioned, authentic accounts properly nominated and appointed by the Pickwick Club. Meetings are held monthly at this the Furnival Inn, London. Tonight's guest is Mr. Trundle Finch, Pickwick's life-long employer and gentleman's confidant. RAP, RAP, RAP.

END MONTAGE

INT. FURNIVAL INN UPPER ROOM - LONDON -- DECEMBER 23, 1837

MADAM SNUPHANUPH a scruffy, light-haired maid Pickwick's age, housekeeper, spunky, sharp voice, taps lightly on the door.

SNUPH (O.S.)

Mr. Finch? Mr. Pickwick? (Pauses)

SHE taps again, loader. FINCH is aroused a bit. PICKWICK snorts, sleeps again.

SNUPH (CONT'D)

Mr. Finch, sir? Mr. Pickwick? (She peeks IN, YELLS)  
Excuse me, gov. You did ask me to knock you up.

She bursts INTO room, sets pitcher and basin on table, tosses drapes back, opens the window. The BRIGHT, CHILLY morning floods the room.

SNUPH (CONT'D)

Good morning, gents! We've a sunny day! Ought to be a holiday!

FINCH sits up, coughs, chokes to get his voice and reacts badly to her entrance.

FINCH

Good Godfrey! Must you? Gad zooks!

PICKWICK

Oh, my gracious, ugh. It's Snuphanuph, sir.

He moans and pulls the covers over his head while SNUPH moves about picking up things.

SNUPH

Best of times, your worship. Heavenly morning.

FINCH gets to his feet, puts papers together.

FINCH

I'm certain it is, but its brightness seldom lasts the day, madam.

SNUPH

Ah, yea need to rise early, to see the sun in all its spender. Snuph, if you don't mind, Gov.

PICKWICK (Peeks out)

Must you be so, obtrusive, Madam Snuphanuph?

FINCH

You speak truly. The morn of day and morn of life are too much alike, Bardell. I mean, ah, you are not Lucey Bardell, madam?

SNUPH

No sir, Lucey was the tart Mr. Pickwick wrote the love letter to, only to end up in Newgate jail a spell.

PICK (With head OUT)

Quite so, my dear, and we've all had our chuckles over that, but not so early in the day.

SNUPH

The morn's too fine to last, sir. Now put yourself into your clothes and bustle! Bustle! I did knock you up, as you asked, soon as the sun struck the roof. Ordered your carriage, Gov.

PICK

Quite so, my dear, but our meeting carried on quite late into the evening. So please give me another wink, madam. (DISAPPEARS again)

SNUPH

Tarry not, gents. There's a bleak and bitin' wind come up. Now, up with you.

FINCH (Packing and a snicker)

We take your point, Snupha, a what?

PICKWICK (Peeks OUT)

Snuphanuph, sir. Madam, you scarcely allow a person to get his bearings.

SNUPH (Pulls at his covers)

Come out of it, Mr. Pickwick, while the day is bright, afore the day dwindles away. (to FINCH) You might have used the bed for all you've put up for a night's lodging.

Helps FINCH with his coat, nudges him toward the door.

PICKWICK

Grave lodgings, you mean.

SNUPH (upset)

Grave lodgings, indeed! (Tosses clothes at him)

FINCH

Madam, we appreciate the Furnival Inn. The lodgings are rather, grave but adequate.

WINKLE (V.O. young boy, at door)

Coach is up!!

FINCH

I'm off, Pickwick, to Yorkshire and Master Squeers.

SNUPH

Old One-eye Squeers. A humbug, if I ever seen one.

FINCH

Likely he is, madam, but that's your Tory government.

SNUPH roughly pops a fur hat on FINCH'S head, backwards and challenges his comment.

SNUPH

Mr. Finch, your hat? A note, Pickwick, the latest scurrilous row. The artist Seymore's drawing of the *Dying Clown* was almost finished when he walks into his summer house in Isling Garden, puts into his mouth the muzzle of his fowling pistol, and blows out his brains.

FINCH

What's that? Seymore?

PICKWICK (Peeks OUT)

'Tis the worst of times, Gov.

SNUPH

Bless his old quarters. Killed himself. Makes me flesh creep.

PICKWICK (comes OUT)

Your collaboration with Mr. Nickleby is a wonder, sir.

FINCH

Yes, yes. And Nickleby's description was accurate. So now changes are due for Dotheboys Hall. Molestations, my Lord! Goodson & Fogg will bring some water to his eyes. Mum's the word, right? Pickwick, you did take record of our business.

PICKWICK

I was about to say, every word, Mr. Finch And how well you handled our meeting last night. We do appreciate that, sir.

FINCH

Good show. Have your notes in summary by weeks end, and I'll look them over.

SNUPH

Ah, no rest for holiday, Gov?

FINCH

Madam Snuph, ah, whatever. May we conduct our own affairs? There's other ale houses we might engage.

SNUPH

Ooh, no Gov. We ever so very much enjoy having you and, your gentlemen, right Mr. Pickwick?  
(PICKWICK is OUT and SITS)

PICKWICK

And ah, Mr. Finch, our club does function most efficiently when you preside, sir.

FINCH ready to go with papers, coat, scarf and carpet bag.

FINCH

Thank you, PICKWICK. Ah yes, you will be aware of holiday distractions? How I prefer things? We count on your attention to matters at the Manor.

PICKWICK

Yes, sir. I'll do my best.

FINCH (rapid commands)

Your "best" sir, will be concentration, intense work, on my diagrams, illustrations, arrangements for my schedule, and deadlines. PICKWICK, we have deadlines!

PICKWICK

Right, right you are, sir. We'll have no distractions round the Manor.

SNUPH

Well, ain't that the berries?

PICKWICK

Ah, yes sir. All will be shipshape.

WINKLE (V.O at door)

Your coach, sir!

FINCH (Glares at SNUPH)

Thank you, Pickwick.

FUNCH opens door to leave, WINKLE is OUTSIDE, FROZEN.

FINCH

I'll be a few days in Yorkshire. There may be a snap of weather about.

SNUPH

Foul weather, sir. My knee has set to achin'. That means...

PICKWICK

Nothing, Mr. Finch. We look to your prompt return. Don't we, madam?

SNUPH

A word in your ear, sir. "Toil and travel stirs a troubled brew."

FINCH (Shouts)

Oh, bugger off, woman! Pickwick, you have my orders. Set to it!

EXITS, bumps WINKLE who stumbles OFF, door SLAMS. PICKWICK OPENS the door and CALLS after him.

PICKWICK

Good day to you, sir! Keep to the road!  
(CLOSES the door) Must you spite him so, madam?

SNUPH

Oh, take a load, Pick. I hear what's up.

SHE helps him on with his clothes.

PICKWICK

So, you do ease drop on our meetings! Well, what is up is his business in Yorkshire. Those houses for children, you know how terrible they are.

SNUPH

And what about our "business"? Your high and mighty "gatherings" are poppycock. And with Mr. Finch joining in, well, look where it's left us.

PICKWICK

I am sorry about the way things have fallen so apart for us.

SNUPH

Boz, you did take mean advantage of me.

SHE SITS on the bed. He SITS with her.

PICKWICK

I know, and I'm doing my best for you, and the lad, WINKLE

SNUPH

Where's time for us? Can't you arrange things, like with the lassie you fussed with over that love letter, indeed!

PICKWICK

I'm sorry, dear. 'Tis regrettable! That Tim Sparts! The entire matter never should have happened. A mere greeting card. Disgusting! You know how miserable it was? Six months in Westgate? Good god, just to protect you and WINKLE

SNUPH

Oh, Boz. I'll be forever grateful.

PICKWICK

My dreams are still full of that prison! The hopeless wretches, children like slaves in a shoe-blackening factory (Nearly cries).



SNUPH

There, there, Boz, my love. Don't beat your head on it. Now, get into your clothes. Best be off to the manor.

SHE starts toward door. HE gathers his eyeglass, pad, pencil, small purse, checks his pocket watch and prepares for notes.

PICKWICK

Venus, dear? A word.

SNUPH

Yes, my Boz, I'll be here when you come round next month.

PICKWICK

I know, but there's a matter, a situation.

SNUPH

Now what? Boz, you're a humbug in the morning. What's the bother?

PICKWICK

The boy, Winkle? I see he's about this morning.

SNHPPH

Why yes, he's a good plenty busy in the cellar.

PICKWICK

Ah, right you are a Venus. May I ask, ah. Well, do you think it's a greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?

SNUPH

La the day, Pickwick! What a question!

PICKWICK

Well, do you?

SNUPH

That depends, a good deal on the person, and whether it's a careful and saving person.

PICKWICK

That's very true, my dear. But the person I've in mind, I think possesses those qualities, and has a

considerable knowledge of the world, and a great deal of sharpness.

SHE moves on him to more than just talk.

SNUPH

Well forever, Samuel. I thought you'd never ask.

PICKWICK

I do. I do, indeed. My golden-haired, Venus. We've had our times, haven't we?

SNUPH

Oh, dear Boz, the best of times. You're a good man, Samuel (Drifts off, to PICKWICK)

'Twas the first day of light  
Which illuminates the gloom.  
'Twas the worst of times."  
Look sharp, my merry Boz.

PICKWICK

'Twas the age of reason  
The spring of hope too soon.  
'Twas the best of times."

'Twas times I had enough  
With my Venus, Snuphanuph.  
'Twas circumvented times."

SNUPH

You merry dog, you! (They LAUGH.)

PICKWICK

Now madam, I have made up my mind. You may think I am rather strange. No, I have never consulted you about this matter. May I speak openly, my dear?

SNUPH (All aglow)

Yes, we're quit alone.

SHE Starts to take off his clothes.

PICKWICK

Well, what do you think? Would you consider an arrangement between the two of us? A permanent, arrangement?

SNUPH (Trembling)

Samuel! You are very kind. After all these years.

PICKWICK

Won't it save a good deal of trouble?

SNUPH

Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, my dear. (MOVES on to the bed). And of course, I'll take more trouble to please you than ever. It's so kind of you to have consideration of my loneliness (Starts taking off her clothes).

PICKWICK

To be sure, I never thought of that. When I am out of the city, you'll always have someone to sit with.

SNUPH

Samuel, I'm certainly a very happy woman. (Hovering over him).

PICKWICK

Ah, ah, yes, and the boy?

SNUPH

Yes, bless his heart.

PICKWICK

He too will have a companion.

SNUPH

Oh, my dearest kind, good, playful dear!

She SOBS into tears, FAINTS on him.

PICKWICK (Astonished).

Good lady! My dear! Bless my soul. What a situation! Pray consider! If someone...

He gets up, leans over her, pats her cheeks to revive her. There is a NOISE at the door. KNOCKS. He covers her.

SNUPH (Comes to, grabs him onto her).

Oh, let them come. I'll never leave you, Boz!

PICKWICK

Mercy. Sssshhh, there's someone, don't, don't you think? There's a good creature (she FAINTS again.)  
Madam, you must...

Door opens, WINKLE ENTERS and is upset. NATHANIAL WINKLE is a messy, ruddy, chimney sweep of 8 years, independent, tough boy off the streets, stares at them and the clothes, beddings tossed about. He howls, SCREAMS and ATTACKS both of them.

PICKWICK

You're mad! Get away! Back off! You little villain!  
She's merely fainted. Now, help. Fetch me the water.

Gets WINKLE gets water pitcher as PICKWICK tries to soothe her.

WINKLE

Here! Yea ole hag! (SPLASHES it in her face.)

PICKWICK

See here, young rascal! Your mother will come round without that! Hold off!

WINKLE

She ain't me mum! (SNUPH is awake and mad.)

PICKWICK

Well, she certainly is!

WINKLE

She ain't. The old witch ain't me mum. A sweep, I am.  
On my own and lovin' it.

SNUPH

Shut up, boy! (She grabs him.) He escaped from the orphanage, sir. I been carin' for him,

WINKLE

Blast me! What I knows is off the street. By myself.  
It's the only way to be sharp.

PICKWICK

I can well imagine.

SNUPH

He's a no-good troublesome ragamuffin. An unsavory lowlife.

WINKLE  
Yea old witch!

He gets away and dashes about over the bed, around PICWICK.

SNUPH  
Why you little rat-nosed pipsqueak!

WINKLE  
Whipped me, she did! Made me eat her slop! Knocks me about and locks me up! She'll kill me!

SNUPH  
You ungrateful guttersnipe! He's a rotten little twit! Get your fine bottom over here, you smelly sweep! I'll beat the truth out of you!

## THE SCABBLE ENSUES...

For complete SCRIPT contact: [www.goptheatre.org](http://www.goptheatre.org)



*The Empty Chair: Gad's Hill, Ninth of June 1870 by F. G. Kitton*