

CHARLOTTE

Dear! Dear! I don't know mother - unless we send for the Bow Street Runners.

(Enter NOAH and MR. BUMBLE through the shop door. Music cadence and out)

NOAH

The beadle!

CHARLOTTE

Mister Bumble!

MRS. SOWERBERRY

Oh! Mister Bumble!

MR. BUMBLE

(With control)

Where is he? Dead?

MRS. SOWERBERRY

Very much alive.

(THEY all point to the coffin. There is complete silence as MR. BUMBLE tiptoes over and taps twice on the coffin lid)

MR. BUMBLE

Oliver?

OLIVER

You let me out of here!

MR. BUMBLE

Do you know this here voice, Oliver!

OLIVER

Yes!

MR. BUMBLE

And ain't you afraid of it, Oliver! Ain't you a-tremblin' while I speak, Oliver?

OLIVER

No!

(MR. BUMBLE staggers back and looks at the three bystanders in astonishment)

MRS. SOWERBERRY

Of course, the boy's insane, Mr. Bumble. *No boy in half his senses could venture to speak so to you!

CHARLOTTE

(Off)
What's up!

(Scream)

MRS. SOWERBERRY

(Off)
What on earth can be happening? Coming...coming, Noah.

(Scream.)

THEY enter from the kitchen.
CHARLOTTE sizes up the situation immediately, and grabs OLIVER with HER utmost force, which is about equal to that of a moderately strong man in particularly good training)

CHARLOTTE

Oh, you horrid wretch! You little ungrateful, murderous villain.

(MOTHER and DAUGHTER grab an arm each of OLIVER, and shake HIM like two furies battling for the village pump. This gives NOAH the opportunity to get up, and pommel OLIVER from behind. THEY finally drag OLIVER to a coffin, lock HIM in it, and then all sit on it. MRS. SOWERBERRY sits on the coffin - exhausted. SHE bursts into tears)

MRS. SOWERBERRY

Noah, get help! Charlotte, some water quick!

CHARLOTTE

Oh my dear, she's going off!

(OLIVER begins kicking on the inside of the lid. NOAH exits to street)

MRS. SOWERBERRY

(Panting)
Oh, Charlotte! Oh, Charlotte! We could have all been murdered in our beds!

(CHARLOTTE pours the water over MRS. SOWERBERRY's head)

Eeeek! Heaven help us! I wanted a drink - a drink! Oh Charlotte, what's to be done?

(OLIVER kicks harder)