

ACT ONE
Scene 3

UNDERTAKER'S PARLOUR
Inside the Parlour.
MR. SOWERBERRY is present as
MR. BUMBLE enters with OLIVER.

MR. BUMBLE
Liberal terms, Mr. Sowerberry... Liberal terms? Five pounds!

SOWERBERRY
Well, as a matter of fact, I was needing a boy.

MR. BUMBLE
Good! Then it's settled. Five pounds please!

SOWERBERRY
If you don't mind! Cash upon liking... Mr. Bumble! Cash upon liking! Mrs. Sowerberry!

MRS. SOWERBERRY
(Shrieks off)
What is it!

SOWERBERRY
Will you have the goodness to come here a moment, my dear?

(MRS. SOWERBERRY enters)

MRS. SOWERBERRY
What do you want? Well! What is it?

SOWERBERRY
My dear, I have told Mr. Bumble...

MRS. SOWERBERRY
Hello, Mr. Bumble.

MR. BUMBLE
Hello, Mrs. Sowerberry.

SOWERBERRY
that we may consider taking in this boy to help in the shop.

MRS. SOWERBERRY
Dear me! He's very small.

MR. BUMBLE
Yes, he is rather small -- there's no denying it -- but he'll grow, Mrs. Sowerberry -- he'll grow.

(MRS. SOWERBERRY examines OLIVER doubtfully)

MRS. SOWERBERRY

Ah, I dare say he will, on our vittles and our drink. They're a waste of time, these workhouse boys - they always cost more to keep than what they're worth. Still, you men always think you know best. What're you going to do with him?

SOWERBERRY

There's an expression of melancholy on his face, my dear, which is very interesting. He could make a delightful coffin-follower.

(MRS. SOWERBERRY looks doubtful)

MRS. SOWERBERRY

A what?

SOWERBERRY

I don't mean a regular coffin-follower to follow grown-ups, but only for the children's practice. It would be very nice to have a follower in proportion, my sweet. A superb effect - the more I think about it!

MRS. SOWERBERRY

(Pausing for a while)

For once -- just for once - you might have a decent idea. Very well, then, boy - what's your name?

OLIVER

Oliver - Oliver Twist, ma'am.

MRS. SOWERBERRY

A singular name.

MR. BUMBLE

Aye ma'am, and one of my own choosing.

MRS. SOWERBERRY

Yours, Mr. Bumble?

MR. BUMBLE

Mine, Mrs. Sowerberry.

MRS. SOWERBERRY

How's that, Mr. Bumble?

MR. BUMBLE

The boy's mother came to us destitute ... brings the child into the world ... takes one look at him and promptly dies without leaving so much as a forwarding name and address.