

Inside the Undertaker's Parlour

MR SOWERBERRY., (a gaunt man, attired in a suit of black, with darned cotton stockings to match and shoes to answer. His features are not naturally intended to wear a smiling aspect, but he is in general rather given to professional jocosity. His step is elastic and his face inward pleasantry.)

Enter MR BUMBLE with OLIVER

MR BUMBLE

Liberal terms, Mr Sowerberry. . . Liberal terms? Three pounds!

SOWERBERRY

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

MR BUMBLE

Good! Then it's settled. One porochial 'prentis. Three pounds please!

SOWERBERRY

If you don't mind! Cash upon liking, Mr Bumble! Cash upon liking!

He calls out to MRS SOWERBERRY

Mrs Sowerberry!

MRS SOWERBERRY

(off)

What is it!

MR BUMBLE

(To Oliver)

Oliver! Stand over there boy and hold up your head, sir!

MRS SOWERBERRY enters

A thin squeezed up woman with a vixenish countenance.

MRS SOWERBERRY

Well! What do you want? What is it? Oh, Mr Bumble!

SOWERBERRY

My dear, I have told Mr Bumble that we may consider taking in this boy to help in the shop.

MRS SOWERBERRY

Dear me! He's very small.

Oliver goes onto tip-toe

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.

*(She gives a short hysterical laugh)
another hysterical laugh*

SOWERBERRY

But there's an expression of melancholy on his face, which is very interesting. He would make a delightful coffin-follower.

MRS SOWERBERRY stops.

I don't mean a regular coffin-follower to attend the grown-ups, but only for the children's practice. It would be very novel to have a follower in proportion my sweet

They all eye OLIVER speculatively

MRS SOWERBERRY

Yes it's a possibility. 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. We name our fondlings in alphabetical order. The last was an S-Swubble I named him. This was a T- Twist I named him.

MRS SOWERBERRY

An orphan then, Mr Bumble?

MR BUMBLE

Indeed Mrs Sowerberry. The child'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.

MRS SOWERBERRY

(to OLIVER)

Well then, Oliver Twist, do you think you could look like that gentleman up there?

(points to sign near door)

OLIVER

Maybe. Perhaps if I had a tall hat. . .

SOWERBERRY

(lost in imagining great things)

Never mind about tall hats. . .

MRS SOWERBERRY

(interrupting)

The boy is quite right. These things must be done proper and correct.
Get the boy a tall hat. Stand underneath the picture, boy.

OLIVER moves over to the picture. SOWERBERRY puts the top hat on OLIVER 's head.

SOWERBERRY

Delightful.

MR BUMBLE

(enthusiastically)

Very becoming.

MRS SOWERBERRY

Yes. . . yes. For once Henry, you might have had a decent idea.
Can you keep that expression for a long time, boy, with a crowd watching you?

OLIVER

Yes, ma'am, I think so.

As the SOWERBERRYS sing this song, a ghostly funeral procession past the outside of the shop and off into the distance. It is what SOWERBERRY is describing, and it is in OLIVER'S imagination. So, of the people on stage, only he sees it.

SOWERBERRY

(sings)

HE'S A BORN UNDERTAKER'S MUTE.
I CAN SEE HIM IN HIS BLACK SILK SUIT.
FOLLOWING BEHIND THE FUNERAL PROCESSION..
WITH HIS FEATURES FIXED IN A SUITABLE EXPRESSION.
THERE'LL BE HORSES WITH TALL BLACK PLUMES
TO ESCORT US TO THE FAMILY TOMBS,
WITH MOURNERS
IN ALL CORNERS
WHO'VE BEEN TAUGHT TO WEEP IN TUNE.

THEN THE COFFIN LINED WITH SATIN.
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MRS SOWERBERRY

THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

SOWERBERRY

LARGE ENOUGH TO WEAR YOUR HAT IN.
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MRS SOWERBERRY

THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

SOWERBERRY

WE'RE JUST HERE TO GLAMORISE YOU FOR THAT ENDLESS
SLEEP.

BOTH

YOU MIGHT JUST AS WELL LOOK FETCHING
WHEN YOU'RE SIX FEET DEEP.

MRS SOWERBERRY

AT THE WAKE WE'LL DRINK A TODDY
TO THE BODY BEAUTIFUL.

SOWERBERRY

THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MRS SOWERBERRY

NOT OUR FUNERAL.

BOTH

THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

SOWERBERRY

IF YOU'RE FOND OF OVEREATING
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MRS SOWERBERRY

THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

SOWERBERRY
STARVE YOURSELF BY UNDEREATING
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MR BUMBLE
THAT'S MY FUNERAL?

MRS SOWERBERRY
VISUALISE THE EARTH DESCENDING ON YOU CLOD BY CLOD.
YOU CAN'T COME BACK WHEN YOU'RE BURIED
UNDERNEATH THE ... SOD.

BOTH
WE WILL NOT REDUCE OUR PRICES.
KEEP YOUR VICES USUAL.

MR SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL ...

MRS SOWERBERRY
NOT OUR FUNERAL.

SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

*MR BUMBLE turns to go but is stopped by MR and MRS
SOWERBERRY.*

MR BUMBLE
I DON'T THINK THIS SONG IS FUNNY.

SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MRS SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MR BUMBLE
HERE'S THE BOY, NOW WHERE'S THE MONEY.

SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MR BUMBLE
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL.

MR BUMBLE exits

BOTH
WE DON'T HARBOUR THOUGHTS MACABRE,
THERE'S NO NEED TO FROWN.
IN THE END WE'LL EITHER BURN YOU UP OR NAIL YOU DOWN.

WE LOVE COUGHS AND WHEEZES
AND DISEASES CALLED INCURABLE.

SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR FUNERAL

MRS SOWERBERRY
NO-ONE ELSE'S FUNERAL

SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR. . .

MRS SOWERBERRY
THAT'S YOUR. . .

BOTH
FUNERAL!

(End of song)

MRS SOWERBERRY
Very will then, that's your job. Junior coffin-follower. . . have you eaten yet?

OLIVER
No, ma'am, not since. . .

MRS SOWERBERRY
(shouting)
Charlotte! Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE
(off)
What?

MRS SOWERBERRY
Bring in some of them cold bits we put out for the dog. It hasn't been in all day, so it can go without 'em. I daresay the boy ain't too dainty to eat 'em - are you boy? Charlotte, this is the new boy. . . give them to him.

CHARLOTTE
That's all there is.

Charlotte neters with a plate of scraps/ OLIVER
devours the meagre meat on the bones as the
SOWERBERRY family looks on in silent horror.

MRS SOWERBERRY
Charlotte, don't just stand there! Pull down the blinds. Henry, get to bed.

SOWERBERRY
A superb effect the more I think about it. A follower in proportion.

MRS SOWERBERRY
Have you done?

OLIVER
Yes, ma'am.