

*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 parochial '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.*

workhouse boys. They always cost more to keep than what they're worth. But, 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. . .

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 process 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.*