

GRIMWIG

Say aahhh...

(Inserting a spatula into his mouth.)

OLIVER

Aahhh

DR GRIMWIG

I think you may. And take a little fresh air. Don't keep him too warm Mrs Bedwin, but be careful that you don't let him be too cold.

(rises and makes to leave the bedroom)

Will you have the goodness?

MRS BEDWIN

Certainly, Doctor.

BROWNLOW

You'll be glad to be up again, Oliver.

OLIVER

(To Mrs Bedwin seeing his new clothes)

Do I wear these?

MRS BEDWIN

Well, you can't wear your old ones, they've gone into the furnace. Hurry now.

BROWNLOW and GRIMWIG leave the room and go downstairs speaking as they go. OLIVER jumps up and gets dressed with the help of MRS BEDWIN.

BROWNLOW

He's a fine looking boy, don't you think Grimwig?

GRIMWIG

Couldn't tell you. I only know two sorts of boys. Mealy boys and beef-faced boys.

BROWNLOW

And which is Oliver?

GRIMWIG

Mealy! Where does he come from?

BROWNLOW

You know I haven't the faintest idea. He was arrested for stealing my pocket handkerchief. And when the shopkeeper told us what really happened and he was released by the magistrate, I brought him here to make what amends I could. But I must confess I find myself strangely attached to the child.

GRIMWIG

He's deceiving you my good friend. He has had a fever. What of that? Fevers are not peculiar to good people are they? Bad people have fevers sometimes don't they? He stole your pocket handkerchief didn't he? Then he'll steal more sir. What do you know of him? Nothing.

BROWNLOW

Only that he's an orphan

(suddenly thoughtful)

And yet...

(He ponders, puzzled).

...It's strange. There's something in that boy's face...I can't explain it, but... somewhere I seem to have seen him before... somewhere a long time ago.

GRIMWIG

Stuff and nonsense. You're imagining things.

A bell rings and a MAID appears.

BROWNLOW

Yes, what is it?

MAID

There's someone to see you sir.

A boy enters running.

BROWNLOW

What does he want?

BOY

Books you ordered from the bookseller, sir.

BOY exits.

BROWNLOW

Ah yes, thank you...

(he turns away)

Now, I've got to give you some...

(the BOY has fled)

Hey! Wait a moment...

MR BUMBLE

(heatedly)

If the Law supposes that, then the Law is a ass! If that's the eye of the Law, then the Law is a bachelor! And the worst I wish the Law is... that His eye may be opened by experience...

#44 - *The Locket*

By experience!

BUMBLE exits.

BROWNLOW is left alone looking at the locket in his hand.

MRS BEDWIN enters, looking flustered.

MRS BEDWIN

There is a young woman enquiring for you, sir.

MR BROWNLOW

Mrs Bedwin... take a look at this miniature. Can you see who it is?

(he hands her the locket.)

MRS BEDWIN

(amazed)

Why it's, Miss Agnes, sir!

MR BROWNLOW

Yes. My daughter Agnes. She must have found her way to the workhouse and had the child there.

MRS BEDWIN

If only she had told us.

NANCY appears in the doorway.

MR BROWNLOW

(Seeing her)

Mrs Bedwin, who is this?

MRS BEDWIN

(Turning to MR BROWNLOW)

It's about the boy sir.

MR BROWNLOW

Have you news of Oliver?

NANCY

He's in danger—in bad company. He was dragged off the day you sent him out with them books.

MR BROWNLOW

Who took him?

NANCY

Me and...

(she stops)

...and someone else.

MR BROWNLOW

Where can I find him? Who is this other person you speak of? Take me to him.

NANCY

No! No, I can't! I shouldn't have said that!

MR BROWNLOW

Now come, sit down. You want to help the boy, don't you? Why else are you here?

NANCY

I do want to help—but...

MR BROWNLOW

Then at least tell me where I can find him.

NANCY

I can't. But I'll bring him to you. Not here. It's too far.

MR BROWNLOW

Where then?

NANCY

The Bridge, London Bridge. Tonight. At midnight.

MRS BEDWIN looks at MR BROWNLOW, alarmed for his safety.

And you've got to come alone. Promise me you'll come on your own—I'll find a way of getting him to you.

MR BROWNLOW stares at her, doubtful and suspicious.

You don't believe me, do you? But if you want Oliver back, then you've got to believe me.

MR BROWNLOW

(making up his mind)

Very well—I'll be there.