

BROWNLOW

Thank you, Mrs Bedwin.

MRS BEDWIN

Mr Brownlow.

MR BROWNLOW

How do you feel today, my boy?

OLIVER

Very happy, sir. May I stay here always, sir?

BROWNLOW

If you wish, dear boy, if you wish. Here's the doctor come to see you.

GRIMWIG

Well, he's certainly looking better. But you're still not sleeping well, are you?

OLIVER

Oh yes, I sleep very well sir.

GRIMWIG

Ah. Bad dreams, though, I've no doubt. Nightmares eh?

OLIVER

No sir, I don't have dreams.

GRIMWIG

Thought so! But you're hungry aren't you?

OLIVER

No, doctor.

GRIMWIG

No. You're not hungry. Not thirsty are you? If that boy is thirsty, I'll eat my head!
Are you?

OLIVER

Yes sir. I am rather thirsty.

GRIMWIG

Just as I expected. It's very natural he should be thirsty. You may give him a little tea.

MRS BEDWIN

Thank you, Doctor.

OLIVER

May I get up sir?

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...

OLIVER and MRS BEDWIN have appeared at the top of the stairs.

BROWNLOW shouts after the MESSENGER BOY.

(BROWNLOW)

Hey! Come back! Oh really, really, really and I particularly wished some books to be returned today.

GRIMWIG

(cannily)

Why not send Oliver with them.

OLIVER

Yes! Do let me take them for you please, sir.

BROWNLOW

Oh! Em—oh very well my boy very well if you wish, you shall. Now I'll tell you what I want you to do. You will give Mr Jessop these books, it's just down the road, and say you've come to pay the four pounds ten that I owe him - here's five pounds. No need to rush but I shall expect you back in ten minutes.

#35 – Portrait Music

OLIVER is about to go but BROWNLOW holds his hand, then his eyes move to a portrait on the wall. OLIVER looks.

OLIVER

She's a very pretty lady, isn't she, Sir?

BROWNLOW

(Watching Oliver)

Yes it's a portrait of my daughter Agnes...

OLIVER

I'll take the books then sir...

BROWNLOW

(absently)

Yes... you take the books

OLIVER exits.

GRIMWIG

Ha! You don't really expect him to come back, do you? With a new suit of clothes on his back and a five pound note in his pocket? My dear Mr Brownlow, if he does I'll eat my head.