

MR WOPSLE AUDITION PIECE

P 11

MRS JOE has a letter,

MRS JOE And here's a letter come. And me worn down to skin and bone.

WOPSLE Open it, Mrs Joe.

MRS JOE If you ask me to, Mr Wopsle.

WOPSLE I ask, Mrs Joe. I beg. I supplicate. As the poet says.

MRS JOE Boy. You're summonsed. Be grateful.

Grateful for them that brings you up by hand

JOE But where ?

MRS JOE Where's he summonsed?

WOPSLE Miss Havisham's. Miss Havisham wants the boy to go and play.

MRS JOE And he will go. And he will play. Or I'll work him.

But look at him. Lor a-mussy me, just look at the state of him. .

Did you ever see such a dirty boy?

*MRS JOE cleans PIP and dresses him)

WOPSEL This'll be the making of him, Mrs Joe.

MRS JOE If I ever get the dirt off of him, Mr Wosple, it will,

WOPSLE Miss Havisham is very rich. And she wants him, Mrs Joe, it could mean money.

I can feel my muse shake and stir his wings.

MRS JOE Oh dear, Good on you, Mr Wopsle.

WOPSLE I can see the tremulous hand of fate
swoop down upon the boy and lift him up
Take him from the dirt and dust and grime

12

and mount him on the highest shelf
With the golden cufflinks and the fancy ties
With the silver watch chains and the better class of sock
In the great haberdashery of life. Now, boy.

32

JOE Well, Pip's a gentleman of fortune. And God bless him in it!

PIP No more low wet grounds. No more dykes and sluices. No more grazing cattle. No more dull work.

Farewell all of you. Farewell. I'm done with you for ever!

MR WOPSLE appears, carrying PIP's new gentleman's clothes.

MR WOPSLE Dear boy. Dearest, dearest boy. I knew you would turn out well. I knew it. I always knew it. And didn't I always say it? Didn't I? Didn't I? Always, dearest boy, always. And may I? May I? We must render thanks, dear boy, to the gracious Miss H

PIP It is a secret, Mr Wopsle.

MR WOPSLE I know, dear boy. My lips are sealed. Observe. Sealed. But may I? And now, if I may have the

Privilege... your clothes, sir. Your new clothes. Your finery. Your splendour. You did say ready money? Of course. If I may be so bold but try them dear boy. try them on.

Here is a boy on whom the eye of Heaven shines. And this th'optician, tailor, sage opines. As the poet says.

(PIP is dressed in his new clothes.)

The poet is speechless. Positively speechless.

Joseph! Come and admire the boy.

And so I take my leave.

Farewell, dearest of urchins, Farewell.