

Readers' Theatre - 'Mr Dickens'

By Duncan Jefferson.

First Narrator: Second Narrator: Fagin: Davy: Dodger.

First Narrator. Dodger gave Davy a wink and indicated with his head that they should go back to the street.

Davy: "Mr. Fagin, sir, it seems to me that there's more to you than meets the eye."

Second Narrator. His comment was met with a chuckle and a shaking of Fagin's bony shoulders.

Fagin: "Good, good, my dear, never go on appearances. Isn't that what I've always said, Dodger? Never trust your eyes, it's what's in here that counts,"

Second Narrator : .. and he tapped his long finger against his heart.

Davy: "Well, sir, I'm an American and I live in Cincinnati, Ohio, with my Ma and Pa . . ."

First Narrator: ... he stopped and tugged at his hair as if trying to drag some thought from its roots.

Davy: "What I mean to say is, how come I'm here?"

Fagin: "Ha,"

Second Narrator:Fagin said, dramatically pulling on his sparse beard, his eyes sparkling as he approached the young boy.

Fagin: “Life can be a strange mystery, my dear.”

First Narrator: The old man paused and rested his hands on Davy’s shoulders.

Fagin: “Sometimes it’s good to find the answers to those mysteries, and sometimes it’s better to just accept them because it may be that the answers are not what you really wanted to discover!”

Second Narrator: Davy looked up at Fagin, and despite the old man’s ravaged face and the faint white line of an old scar that ran the length of his right cheek, there was a mildness in his expression which soothed Davy’s tumbled emotions.

Dodger: “C’mon, Davy, you stand there any longer, and you’ll take bleedin’ root!”

First Narrator: Dodger headed out the door.

Second Narrator: Giving Fagin a rapid ‘Thank you,’ Davy swiftly followed behind.

Davy: “Does Mr. Quilp live nearby?”

Dodger: “Nah. It just seems to be a long way, ’cos there are certain gentlemen of a’ inquisitive nature, notable for their preference to wear blue uniforms and what blows whistles loudly at innocent children like me, what needs to be avoided like the very plague itself.”

First Narrator: With that, he ducked down a dark alleyway and it was some twenty minutes later that the two of them emerged in an area that led down to the muddy swamp that was the Thames at low tide.

Dodger: “Stinks, don’t it?”

Second Narrator: ...exclaimed Dodger. He turned along the edge of the morass, avoiding the accretion of debris that had been sucked into the mud or thrown from the overhanging buildings. Davy recognized what appeared to be a bed amongst the mire and was about to comment on it when Dodger said,

Dodger: “We’re ’ere,”

First Narrator: ...and disappeared into a cleft between two crumbling buildings.

Dodger: “Careful,”

Second Narrator: ...he whispered back over his shoulder,

Dodger: “the stairs is a little rotten, so just walk where I does.”

Second Narrator: The two of them mounted the stairs, avoiding the missing and moldy steps. A low rumbling noise came from above their heads. They froze like mad mannequins, standing on one leg and not daring to place a foot on the squeaking wood. As they listened, they became aware that the rumbling had a rhythm.

Dodger (whispering): “Blimey, the geezer’s singing to ’isself.”

Davy: “Who is it, Dodger?”

First Narrator: ...Davy whispered in his companion’s ear. The smile that wreathed his friend’s face was worth a thousand words, but only one issued from his mouth:

Dodger: “Quilp