

HELEN You don't have to go on Thursday, you know. It's not compulsory.

KIPPS Don't worry. I'll go. I wouldn't want to let you down.

HELEN No, but –

MRS WALS. Helen!

(Music resumes. With a blushing smile, HELEN hurries after her mother.)

HELEN I hope you and James aren't plotting something.

MRS WALS. Of course not! But I would remind you that our place in the world is not what it has been, and *not what it should be.*

(HELEN and MRS WALSINGHAM exit.)

Music No. 8a: NEW ROMNEY

SCENE EIGHT

New Romney. Day.

KIPPS is with his uncle and aunt.

AUNT SUSAN Where are you living, Arthur? Are you still in that rented villa?

KIPPS Until I find the right place to buy. I wanted to stay in the part of Folkestone I know best.

UNCLE BERT That's not very adventurous.

KIPPS What about you? I was thinking you might like a cottage, with climbing roses round the door and the sun shinin' in, and a view of the sea.

AUNT SUSAN That does sound lovely, Arthur.

KIPPS What do you think, Uncle Bert?

UNCLE BERT It sounds cracking. O'course, I'd have to sell me stock . . .

- KIPPS No, I mean I'd *buy* one for you!
- UNCLE BERT *(Uncomfortable.)* I emme think about it a bit fust.
- AUNT SUSAN That's right. After all, we don't want to leave in a hurry.
- KIPPS But you always said you hated your house.
- UNCLE BERT So we do, lad. So we do. But, like your aunt says, we couldn't leave it in a hurry.
- KIPPS How about some money, then? Let me do that for you at least.
- UNCLE BERT We couldn't take your money, Arthur.
- KIPPS I've got an idea. Do you still spend your spare time collecting rubbi—collecting interesting old things that are looking for a home?
- UNCLE BERT Funny you should say that. I've got a nice little tea chest . . .
- KIPPS There you are, then. Suppose I give you money to find knick knacks and such like for the villa . . .
- AUNT SUSAN You'd enjoy that, Bert. You know you would.
- KIPPS That's settled then. So here's twenty pounds to get started.
- (There is a knock at the door. A young woman stands there.)*
- AUNT SUSAN Here's Ann. Arthur, you remember Ann, Sid Pornick's sister, don't you?
- KIPPS 'Course I do. *(He stands, but then he looks and is almost struck dumb.)* Ann? Blimey, you've changed.
- ANN It's been a long time, Arthur.
- AUNT SUSAN I told her you was coming down and she said she'd drop by.
- ANN I can't stay long. I haven't had a whole day off in ages, so I ought to be with me Mum.