

SHOPPERS
ESTABLISH YOUR POSITION

APPRENTICES
STITCH THEM UP COMPLETELY

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ESTABLISH YOUR POSITION

SHOPPERS / APPRENTICES
UP AND DOWN THE SOCIAL SCALE

(The last of the customers leave. FLO is about to shut up shop for the day when two women enter. The older one, MRS WALSHINGHAM, is a fussy, tiresome individual, full of self-importance. But her daughter, HELEN, is a real beauty . . .)

HELEN Oh, dear. Are you closed? I'm afraid we're too late, Mama.

MRS WALS. Nonsense. Where is Mr Shalford?

SHALFORD What is it?

(He has stuck out his head in a fury. Now, he sees them.)

Ah, Mrs Walsingham, Miss Walsingham. What a pleasure it is to welcome you here.

MRS WALS. Of course they weren't closed. Not for *us*.

HELEN You all look dreadfully busy.

SHALFORD Nonsense. Never too busy to serve you, Miss.

HELEN We need some curtain material. Mama wants new ones in the dining room.

MRS WALS. That horrid cretonne you sold me has quite faded.

SHALFORD Then we shall show you a selection of our very best, Madam. Buggins, what do you think you're doing?

BUGGINS Having me lunch, Mr Shalford.

- SHALFORD Then why don't you –
- HELEN No. This is who usually serves me. It is you, isn't it?
- KIPPS It is, Miss. I'm surprised you remember me.
- SHALFORD Well then, Mr Kipps! Look lively!
- HELEN I'm afraid we're rather a nuisance.
- KIPPS Oh, no, Miss. You could never be that.
- HELEN We want something a little smarter this time. Perhaps a damask?
In pink or even red?
- KIPPS Right away, Miss.
- (He starts to rummage around in the shelves behind him.)*
- SHALFORD So, how are you, Miss Walsingham? Still teaching your classes to
the fortunate few?
- HELEN I don't know how fortunate my pupils are, but you're right, there
aren't very many of them.
- SHALFORD Free classes in woodcarving? Taught by a lady like yourself? I'm
surprised there's an empty seat in the house.
- HELEN Might you come, Mr Shalford?
- SHALFORD If only I could, Miss Walsingham. If only I could. Mr Kipps!
You're always reading books! Now's a chance to learn something!
And it's free!
- HELEN Would you, Mr Kipps?
- KIPPS If you really want me to, Miss.
- (KIPPS is smitten and all thought of curtain fabric vanishes, which
frustrates MRS WALSINGHAM.)*
- MRS WALS. We can't waste all day on it. Find some samples for us, Mr
Shalford, and we'll look at them next time. Helen!

SHALFORD Very good, Madam.

(MRS WALSINGHAM and HELEN start to leave but HELEN turns at the door.)

HELEN Remember, Mr Kipps. Eight o'clock tonight. In the old grammar school.

(They've gone. KIPPS is in a daze. SID notices KIPPS's expression.)

SID Oh, dear. Struck by Cupid's arrow? Again.

KIPPS Lay off!

SHALFORD Come along! Chop Chop! I want this sorted and tidied by the end of the day.

SID But Mr Shalford, will we get any overtime?

SHALFORD Forgive me, Mr Pornick, but are you saying you're anxious to leave my employment?

SID No, Mr Shalford.

SHALFORD That's settled, then.

Music No. 3a: LOOK ALIVE – Reprise

(A bravura burst of activity – not unlike a black-and-white Keystone Cops sequence – as the shop is miraculously returned to a state of tidiness. Towards the end of the sequence the set transforms to the boys' dormitory. SHALFORD and FLO step forward in light while this is happening.)

SHALFORD Upstairs with you to the girls' dormitory, Miss Evans, and don't dawdle.

FLO Goodnight, Mr Shalford.

(SHALFORD exits whilst FLO lingers, looking mischievous. The lights come up and FLO steps back into the boys' dormitory.)