

They all pause for a moment, thinking.

MR LORD: So exactly what are the penalties for breaking the new laws?

MR MORLEY: Substantial fines.

MR LORD: *(Horried)* Fines?!

MR CARTWRIGHT: Do you mean to tell me that I will have to pay if I fail to obey this Factory Act?

MR MORLEY: Yes.

MR LORD and MR CARTWRIGHT look at each other in horror.

MR MORLEY: Well, there would be no purpose to appointing inspectors who had no powers of enforcement, would there?

MR CARTWRIGHT: So, I either lose profit by complying, or it gets taken from me through fines.

MR LORD: I think I may actually make one or two changes after all.

MR CARTWRIGHT: Me also. *(To MR MORLEY)* What would you suggest?

MR MORLEY: Well, the most important is that you keep a Time-Book.

MR LORD: A what?

MR MORLEY: Time-Book. Your overlooker has to record in it all of the hours, and minutes even, worked by your employees.

MR CARTWRIGHT: Good grief!

MR MORLEY: I know, but the issue of hours worked is a sensitive one and this is just the sort of thing that owners will be prosecuted for.

MR CARTWRIGHT turns to his clerk.

MR CARTWRIGHT: Henry, would you go and fetch Benjamin Jenkins for me, please?

HENRY: Yes, Mr Cartwright.

HENRY exits.

MR CARTWRIGHT: *(Sighing)* 1833 is turning out to be a very difficult year.

MR LORD: At least we don't have to fill in the Time-Books ourselves. Imagine all that work!

MR MORLEY: My worry is that my overlooker will expect a pay rise as compensation for the additional responsibility.

MR CARTWRIGHT: Well, mine can expect all he likes, but he won't get. Any nonsense and I'll simply get another overlooker.

MR MORLEY: Good point.

HENRY enters, accompanied by BENJAMIN JENKINS.

JENKINS: You wanted to see me, Mr Cartwright sir?

MR CARTWRIGHT: Ah, yes. Thank you, Henry. Now, Benjamin, I have a little job for you...

The lights fade quickly to blackout and they all exit.

SCENE FIVE: *Outside the Mill*

LOUISA, JESSICA, JOSEPH, ELIZA, ALBERT, BESSIE and VICTORIA enter and begin playing 'Oranges and Lemons'. VIOLET WILLIAMS enters, walking with difficulty. The children stop playing.

ELIZA: You going to join in, Violet?

VIOLET: No. Me feet hurt.

ELIZA: What's up with them?

VIOLET: They're all cut and bleeding from running up and down on that mill floor.

LOUISA: You want to put some salt on them.

VIOLET: Salt? Won't that hurt?

JOSEPH: Yeah. It hurts like mad.

LOUISA: But it makes the skin go hard.

BESSIE: My feet got so bad when I started, I couldn't hardly walk for days.

VICTORIA: Sometimes milk and water helps.

LOUISA: Naw, that's no good. You want salt.

ALBERT: I wish we could wear our clogs.

JESSICA: Yeah. *(Pause)* Why can't we?

ALBERT: Because the sparks might set fire to the cotton.

BESSIE: And then, 'whoosh', everything would burn.

VICTORIA: At least we wouldn't have to work then.

LOUISA: Yeah, but we'd have no money neither.

VICTORIA: Oh yeah.

VIOLET: Did you hear that Ada got strapped.

JESSICA: Yeah. Poor little thing.

ELIZA: Her sister, Harriet, tried to keep her out of Jenkins's way, didn't she?

JESSICA: *(Nodding)* Made no difference, though.

JOSEPH: What did she get strapped for?

VIOLET: Falling asleep.

JOSEPH: *(To LOUISA)* I've seen you do that.

LOUISA: You have not, Joseph Owen!

JOSEPH: Have so!

LOUISA: You take that back!

JOSEPH: I'm just saying, that's all.

LOUISA: You're telling lies.

JOSEPH: Am not.

LOUISA: You are, and if you don't take it back, I'll get me big brother to thump you. *(Shouting)* Freddie!

JOSEPH: *(Pretending not to care)* I'm not bothered. Your Freddie doesn't scare me.

FREDDIE BROCKLEHURST enters.

FREDDIE: What d'you want?

LOUISA: Joseph's telling lies about me.

JOSEPH: *(Nervously)* I'm not. Honestly, Freddie.

LOUISA: *(To FREDDIE)* He is. He said that he's seen me fall asleep.

FREDDIE: *(To JOSEPH)* Is that what you said?

JOSEPH: Yes... No... Well, sort of.

FREDDIE: I don't like people telling lies about my little sister, Joseph Owen. Now come here while I thump you!

JOSEPH runs away quickly. The rest of the children follow excitedly, with VIOLET the last to leave. Other children enter and sing Song 3:

CHILDREN: Watch us poor children and grieve out your heart,
The gloom lets the hand-loom take its fair share
Of more than our labour, more than our sweat,
We'll be lucky to live with nowt to regret.
Watch us poor children and grieve out your heart,
No master will help us when we are sore.
No gold for our doctors, no gold for our bread,
We are nobbut rags when all's displayed.
Watch us poor children with hope in your hearts,
Our masters are planning to cut down our hours.
What Owen and Shaftesb'ry and John Fielden do
Will lessen our working behind these hand-looms.

The children exit.