

Boys: 14 - 16 years

Suggestion One

Cider With Rosie
Laurie Lee
(a stage adaptation by James Roose-Evans)

In this autobiographical piece, the young Laurie Lee - known as LOLL in the play - looks back on scenes of his childhood. In this scene he remembers a family picnic with his mother and brothers, and he reminds them of Uncle Sid and when he used to work for the bus company.

LOLL (Gloucestershire)

Our Uncle Sid was the best double-decker bus driver in Stroud, without doubt, even safer, more inspired when he drank. Everybody knew this, except the bus company. He began to get lectures, admonitions, stern warnings, and finally suspensions without pay. When this last happened, out of respect for our Aunt Alice, he always committed suicide. Indeed, he committed suicide more than any man I know. But always in the most reasonable manner. If he drowned himself, then the canal was dry. If he jumped down a well, so was that; and when he drank disinfectant there was always an antidote ready, clearly marked, to save everyone the trouble. He reasoned, quite rightly, that Aunt Alice's anger, on hearing of another suspension, would be swallowed by her larger anxiety on finding him again so near to death. And Aunt Alice never failed him in this and forgave him each time he recovered. The bus company were almost equally forgiving, they took him back again and again!

Suggestion Two

Oliver Twist
Charles Dickens

In this scene, Oliver is on his knees cleaning the DODGER's boots for him, while DODGER explains the advantages of joining Fagin's gang. Although the DODGER is young he has all the airs and manners of a man about town.

DODGER

(Sighs and resumes his pipe) I suppose you don't even know what a prig is? ... I am. I'd scorn to be anything else. So's Charley. So's Fagin. So's Sikes.

So's Nancy. So's Bet. So we all are, down to the dog. And he's the downiest one of the lot! He wouldn't so much as bark in a witness-box for fear of committing himself; no, not if you tied him up in one, and left him there without wittles for a fortnight. He's a rum dog. Don't he look fierce at any strange cove that laughe or sings when he's in company! Won't he growl at all, when he hears a fiddle playing! And don't he hate other dogs as ain't of his breed! - Oh no! He's an out-and-out Christian ... Why don't you put yourself under Fagin, Oliver? And make a fortun' out of hand? And so be able to retire on your property ... Fagin will make something of you, though, or you'll be the first he ever had that turned out unprofitable!