

CHARLES DICKENS

OLIVER TWIST

Retold by: Stella Sørensen

Illustrations: Peter Bay Alexandersen

Series editor : Paulette Møller

EASY CLASSICS

Series editor: Ulla Malmrose

Editorial assistance:
Hanne Harboe, Aschehoug

Cover layout: Mette Plesner
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CHARLES DICKENS
(1812-70)

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth on 7th February, 1812. He was the second of eight children. Although his father was hard-working he was unable to support his family, so Charles Dickens knew well what it meant to be poor in his day.

His first job, at the age of twelve, was labelling bottles. When his father came out of prison, where he had been sent for failing to pay his debts, Charles Dickens returned to school where he did well. At fifteen Charles began work in a law firm. Here he taught himself shorthand. Eighteen months later he began work as a freelance reporter in London. When he was twenty-one his first articles, or sketches, appeared under the name of Boz.

In 1837 Charles Dickens began *Oliver Twist*. Serialised in weekly magazines edited by himself, he was paid by the number of lines that he wrote. A man of high spirits, he also took part in amateur theatre. He had ten children by his first wife. He became a great social critic, although he always supported the norms of the day. It is thought that his book *David Copperfield* reflects his own childhood.

Oliver Twist, the adventures of a boy born in a workhouse, is perhaps his best-known work and is as popular today as when it was first published.

Chapter One

Oliver Twist was born in a place called the *workhouse*. His mother died there the day he was born.

When Oliver's mother died the medical man, who passed for a doctor in those days, said to his drunken female assistant:

"More problems for us. Give the child some *gruel* and then arrange for a coffin for its mother."

No one knew where Oliver's mother had come from, and she wore no wedding ring.

Oliver became a *parish* child. Soon after his birth, he was sent out to live with an old lady.

Mrs Mann's *philosophy* of life was simple. The less one gave a child the less it needed. The parish gave Mrs Mann a little money every week to look after Oliver. She spent most of it on herself. She believed a child could be trained to live on almost nothing. She did not care if it died of cold or fell into the fire or scalded itself to death on washing day; but washing was almost unheard of at Mrs Mann's.

Any death was, of course, looked into by a doctor and the *beadle*. They always opened the body but never found anything inside, which was, after all, only to be expected.

workhouse, place set up by a parish to look after people with no money
gruel, thin mixture of oatmeal boiled in water
parish, local church district
philosophy, outlook on life
scalded, burned
beadle, officer of the church

But despite this tender Christian care by the Christian authorities Oliver did reach his ninth birthday. He was celebrating this, locked in the coal cellar, when Mr Bumble, the beadle, arrived. Oliver and his friends had been beaten and locked up for complaining of hunger.

Mrs Mann was surprised to see the fat healthy beadle coming up to her door.

Quickly Oliver and the other two *brats* were taken from the cellar and washed. She called to Mr Bumble: "Goodness! How glad I am to see you!"

Mr Bumble was not happy to be kept waiting.

"Mr Bumble," she continued, "I was just saying to the dear children, who are so fond of you, that I thought it might be you."

Mrs Mann's smile put Mr Bumble in a friendly mood so he sat down and took a little drop of gin.

"Just a very small drop with a little cold water and a lump of sugar."

Mr Bumble approved of Mrs Mann's kind and warm way of treating the children in her care.

"You are like a mother, Mrs Mann." (He stirred the gin and water.) "I drink to your health, Mrs Mann," and he swallowed his gin.

Oliver was made to *bow* to Mr Bumble. As he straightened up he saw Mrs Mann shaking her fist at him, from behind Mr Bumble's back of course. The sight of her fist made Oliver ask:

brat, unkind name for a child
bow, to bend the head



“Will sh - will she go with me?”

He was told she would come and see him sometimes. At this he cried. The *hugs* Mrs Mann then gave him were not what Oliver had hoped for. He wanted, and this time got, a piece of bread and butter. Now he would be a little less hungry when he arrived at the workhouse.

At the workhouse Oliver met the *board*. They quickly decided he was a fool. Oliver had been frightened and so did not answer his name clearly enough for them. He was told to start work early the next morning.

In the *dormitory*, on the rough and hard bed, he lay crying himself to sleep.

The members of the board fed the *inmates*. The food, or gruel as it was called, was an unlimited supply of water mixed with small, very small, amounts of oatmeal. Three meals of this lovely food was given every day, with - oh yes - an onion twice a week and half a roll on Sunday.

In the large stone hall where the boys ate was a *cupper*.



hug, to hold tightly with the arms
board, here - a group of people who run the workhouse
dormitory, a room with beds for several people
inmates, people who live in an institution

From this the gruel was *ladled out*.

Three months after Oliver's return to the workhouse there was talk among the boys that hunger was driving them to eat one another. *It was true that the undertaker had been busier than before.* A meeting was held. It was decided that one boy should ask for more. Oliver was chosen.

The evening arrived. The boys sat at the table. The gruel was eaten. *Then Oliver got up from the table. He walked slowly up to the master by the copper. He put his basin and spoon up to the master's face and spoke more clearly and loudly than ever before.*

"Please, sir, I want some more."

The master turned pale. There was silence in the hall. The master looked at Oliver, opened his mouth and shouted:

"What! What did you say?"

Oliver repeated his request. The master quickly hit Oliver with the ladle, grabbed him and shouted for Mr Bumble. Mr Bumble went straight to the board to tell them what had happened.

The chairman of the board raised his head and said:

"For more?"

"He did, sir, yes," replied the excited Mr Bumble.

"*That boy will be hanged,*" added another board member.

The others agreed. *It was decided to lease Oliver out to anybody who would pay five pounds for him.* Until

ladle, a large spoon. To ladle out: serve by the spoonful

undertaker, one whose job it is to bury the dead

lease, to let or rent out



humble =
bescheiden

that time Oliver was to be locked up. It was, said the humble Christian gentlemen of the board, for his own good.

Das war, sagten die bescheidenen Christlichen gentlemen vom Aufsichtsrat, für sein eigenes Wohl.

Chapter Two

Mr Sowerbury, the undertaker, finally took Oliver. The agreement between Mr Sowerbury and the workhouse board was very simple. Mr Sowerbury was allowed to make Oliver work as much as he liked for the next seven years. The board expected Mr Sowerbury to feed Oliver; but how much, and of what kind, was up to him. The board paid five pounds to get rid of Oliver Twist. 5

Once more Oliver followed Mr Bumble, this time to the undertaker's home. He thought about what he had been told if he *complained*. He would be sent to sea. To be sent to sea in Oliver's time meant the captain could flog him to death or knock his brains out with an iron bar for even a very small mistake. 10

With these thoughts in his head Oliver entered the undertaker's shop. It was closing time. 15

"Aha!" said the undertaker, looking up from a book, "is that you, Bumble?"

"Yes it is, Mr Sowerbury," replied the beadle. "I've come with the boy." 20

Mr Sowerbury called for his wife.

"Dear me!" said the wife, "he's very small."

"Well ... um ... yes," replied Mr Bumble, "but he'll grow, Mrs Sowerbury, he'll grow."

"Yes, I dare say he will ... on our food and drink, Mr Bumble," replied Mrs Sowerbury sharply. She opened the door to the cellar. 25

rid, to be free of

complain, to express dissatisfaction

flog, to hit hard

"Get downstairs, *bag of bones*," she cried. With that Oliver found himself pushed down a steep flight of steps.

5 In the stone cellar he was given some food by a servant girl. His food turned out to be what the dog had left that morning.

10 But Oliver knew he was lucky. He might have gone to sea or have been hired out to a *chimney sweep*. It was well-known that a chimney sweep's boy did not live very long. Many were burned or *choked* to death when cleaning the chimneys of the rich people.

bag of bones, very thin person
chimney sweep, one who sweeps (cleans) chimneys
choke, to stop breathing

Chapter Three

At the undertaker's, Oliver's *immediate boss was a charity school boy*. He was very unkind to Oliver. He teased Oliver whenever he could. Oliver *tolerated* a lot from Noah but he did not, however, tolerate the following episode:

5 "Hey you!" cried Noah. "Your mother was awful."

"What did you say?" asked Oliver.

10 "A real bad sort!" continued Noah. "And it's good she died when she did otherwise she would have been transported."

Oliver went deep red with anger, stood up, knocked over a chair and jumped on Noah. He hit Noah so hard that Noah fell down. Noah screamed loudly. Mrs Sowerbury came running to see what the matter was.

15 "He's murdering me," cried Noah. "He's murdering me, help! help!"

20 "You *ungrateful child!* Leave him alone!" shouted Mrs Sowerbury. She hit Oliver hard. She hurt her own hand and she began to cry. Oliver did not stop however, so she hit him again, despite the pain to herself.

This little episode stopped only when all were tired. I must add that Mrs Sowerbury and Noah got tired

charity school, school set up by a charity to give a basic education. Pupils wore a uniform to show which charity school they came from
tease, to upset, annoy or torment
tolerate, to put up with
transport, to punish prisoners by sending them to prison in a different country, usually Australia
ungrateful, not showing thanks for kindness

long before Oliver. But Mrs Sowerbury and Noah did, finally, get Oliver into the cellar.

5 "What shall we do?" asked Mrs Sowerbury. "Mr Sowerbury's not home. There's no one at home. He'll kick that door down in minutes and murder all of us," cried Mrs Sowerbury.

"Run to Mr Bumble, Noah, and tell him to come here immediately."

10 Noah Claypole quickly ran through the streets and into the workhouse.

"Mr Bumble! Mr Bumble!" he screamed. "Oh, Mr Bumble, sir, sir," he continued out of breath, "Oliver, sir, - Oliver has, has ..."

15 "What? What?" asked the beadle. "Has he run away?" "No, sir, not run away sir, but he's trying to murder me, sir, and Mrs Sowerbury!"

"Well? Where is Mr Sowerbury?" asked Mr Bumble. He did not wish to hear about Oliver any more.

20 "He's not at home or Oliver would have murdered him too," replied Noah.

"Um!" replied Mr Bumble and went to fetch his coat. "That boy really will be hanged."

25 He carefully put on his coat and marched off in the direction of the undertaker's shop with Noah running behind him.

| immediately, without delay

Chapter Four

"Oliver!" called Mr Bumble.

"You let me out!" replied Oliver.

"Do you know who this is, Oliver? Do you know my voice?"

"Yes," replied Oliver.

5 "Ain't you afraid of it? Ain't you frightened of me when I speak?" asked Mr Bumble.

"No!" replied Oliver. Mr Bumble was so surprised that he fell into deep thought. The family waited. Oliver waited.

10 "Meat!" announced Mr Bumble. "Meat."

"Pardon?" asked Mrs Sowerbury.

15 "Meat, ma'am, meat," replied Mr Bumble, sternly. "He's gone mad 'cause you've given him meat, ma'am. If you had kept him on gruel this would never have happened."

It is true Mrs Sowerbury had been generous with the food she had given Oliver - all those dirty scraps - nobody else would eat. She thought Oliver would enjoy these left-overs, and indeed he had.

20 Mr Sowerbury now returned. He liked Oliver but his wife was angry and Mr Bumble looked very strict so he had no choice but to take Oliver out of the cellar and beat him. This beating was followed by another one from his wife, who then sent Oliver into a back room for the rest of the day.

| ain't, are you not - considered bad or poor English

announce, to make known - here, to declare

'cause, because

scraps, small pieces left over

Early the next morning Oliver decided to run away. As soon as it was light he opened the door to the street and stepped out to freedom. He was holding a bundle of clothes and a one-penny piece he had been given by Mr Sowerbury. Mr Sowerbury had given Oliver that penny one day when Oliver had been especially helpful at a funeral.

He headed for the London road as quickly as he could. London. In that big city even Mr Bumble would not find him.

He got to London seven days later. He was completely exhausted. He had slept in fields. He had begged for food and spent his penny on a piece of bread.

He sat in the doorway of a shop. He believed his last hour had come. Someone dressed in very fancy clothes spoke to him. The boy's name was Jack Dawkins, or as his friends - and enemies - called him: *The Artful Dodger*.

"Got anywhere to sleep?" he asked Oliver.

"No," replied Oliver.

"Got any money?" he asked.

"No," replied Oliver.

"Come with me, I'll take care of you," replied the Dodger.

That night Dodger took Oliver into the centre of London. He told Oliver that he knew an old gentleman who would happily give Oliver a place to sleep; and it

exhausted, tired out

The Artful Dodger, a harmful young boy who was very clever at keeping out of everyone's way especially when he had done something wrong



was true. The old gentleman did give Oliver a place to sleep and was very pleased to meet him.

"We are very pleased to meet you, Oliver, very pleased," said the old man, whose name was Fagin.



Fagin was cooking sausages. Oliver ate some and then drank a large warm gin. After this he went to bed. He slept on sacks along with the other boys. There were many boys who lived with this happy, kind, friendly but *cunning* old fox of a man.

| *cunning*, clever in a dishonest way

Chapter Five

The next morning Oliver woke up slowly. He lay watching Fagin. All was still and they were alone. Fagin was busy looking at some jewels in a box. Oliver carefully and quietly moved a little. He looked more closely. Fagin removed one or two of the jewels and spoke lovingly to them. The jewels shone brightly in that dark place. Oliver moved again. This time Fagin heard him. Fagin quickly shut the box and turned to Oliver.

“What’s that?” he asked. “Why are you watching me? Speak boy, what did you see? Speak, quick if you value your life.” Fagin picked up a large knife.

“I couldn’t sleep any more, sir.”

“Did you see any of my pretty things, my dear?” asked

15 Fagin in a soft voice. **Bleich**

“Yes, sir,” replied Oliver.

“Ah!” said Fagin turning pale. “They - they’re mine, yes, all mine, Oliver. For my ... um ... old age. Yes, for my old age. People call me a miser, my dear. A miser.”

20 Oliver decided the old man must be a very mean man to live in such a filthy place. He gave Fagin a thoughtful look. He asked if he might get up.

“Certainly my dear, certainly,” replied Fagin.

25 Oliver had just finished washing when Dodger and his friend, Charley Bates came in. They showed Fagin the handkerchiefs they had brought home.

Taschentücher
(aus Stoff)

“Very nice, boys, very nice,” said Fagin. Oliver watched but did not understand why these handker-

miser, one who keeps all his money and spends little on himself
mean, not generous with money

chiefs should be greeted with such pleasure.

“He’s so green,” cried Charley.

“Yeh, so green,” echoed Dodger.

At this both boys fell about laughing. Oliver did not understand what they were talking about. These were kind people, he decided. 5

After breakfast, and probably for the first time in his life, Oliver enjoyed laughter and joy and a game. Fagin, Dodger and Charley Bates began to play a game! A game which Oliver found so funny that he laughed until the tears ran down his face. 10

The game began as the two boys tried to get close to Fagin, who pretended not to see them. He pretended to be an old man walking up and down the street. He pulled a snuff box, and then a handkerchief from his pockets. These he then put back again. He did the same with a watch. To make believe he was looking into shop windows, he would stop at the fireplace, or the door, or next to the stove. Whenever he turned around the two boys would quickly run out of sight. At last Dodger ran across Fagin’s toes and Charley pushed into Fagin. Quickly the snuff box, watch and handkerchief were taken from Fagin’s pockets. The boys ran away. 15 20

Oliver sat laughing and enjoying himself. The pickpockets were doing a wonderful job of showing Oliver their trade. 25

As they played, two women, one of whom was called Nancy, came in. The game was stopped and there was

green, here - innocent

fall about, to fool around

snuff, powdered tobacco for sniffing up into the nose

pickpocket, one who robs people’s pockets

Taschendieb

a lot of talk. Then the women and the two boys went out. This left Oliver alone again with Fagin. Fagin asked Oliver if he would like to learn the game.

5 And so our little Oliver was taught, without ever realising, how to become a pickpocket.

Oliver tried very hard to be good at the game and Fagin gave him a shilling.

10 "You're a clever boy. You'd do well to listen and learn from boys like Dodger and Charley Bates. They are very good at their game. They will become great men."

Oliver looked at the shilling and could hardly believe his eyes. He wondered what the game and his chances of becoming a great man had to do with each other.

| shilling, one twentieth of a pound

Chapter Six

After many happy days with Fagin, he got his chance to go to work with Dodger and Charley. Oliver was very happy. He wanted to make himself useful. He wanted to go to work and show his gratitude for what his new friends had given him. But he was still so innocent he did not realise what sort of work he was about to do.

10 The boys walked slowly along the road; so slowly that Oliver was beginning to think that they were not going to work after all, and that Dodger and Charley were cheating on the old man. Oliver was about to ask why they were going so slowly, when Dodger put his finger to his lips.

"What's the matter?" asked Oliver.

15 "Sh ... sh ..." replied Dodger. "Do you see that old man at the bookshop across the road?"

"Yes."

"He'll do," replied Dodger.

"A prime target," added Charley.

20 Oliver froze in horror. The two boys began to play Fagin's little game on the very respectable looking gentleman.

25 Dodger suddenly put his hand into the old man's pockets, found a handkerchief and, in the space of a second, put the handkerchief into his own pocket.

In an instant Oliver understood everything. The jewels, the handkerchiefs, the watches. THE GAME. But there was one thing he did not understand, until it

| gratitude, thankfulness
a prime target, excellent choice



was too late. Like Dodger and Charley, he should have run away. Dodger and Charley were gone in a second down a side street, taking with them what they had stolen. Oliver moved only when the gentleman turned to look at him. That was too late because everyone now believed that he, Oliver, was the thief. 5

The words "Stop thief!" are magical words. They make everybody, no matter who they are, want to run after the thief. There is a deep hunting instinct in man, even for a helpless child who looks terrified. 10

"Stop thief!" cried the crowd.

"Stop thief, stop thief!"

After quite a chase Oliver was stopped by a *punch* on the mouth. He lay covered with mud and dust, bleeding from the mouth. The gentleman was dragged and pushed forward to *identify* Oliver. 15

"Yes," said the gentleman, "I am afraid this is the boy."

"Come, get up, boy," said the old man gently.

"It wasn't me, sir, it wasn't. It was the other boys," said Oliver *desperately*. "They are here somewhere." 20

The police officer pushed the gentleman aside.

"Oh no, they are not," said the officer. This was true. When the crowd began to chase Oliver, Dodger and Charley ran as fast as they could in the opposite direction. Then they went back to Fagin to tell him what had happened. 25

"Will you stand on your legs, you young devil!" continued the policeman to Oliver.

punch, hard strike

identify, to recognize

desperately, without hope

Oliver was taken, with the old gentleman, to the nearest *magistrate*. This magistrate was known to be unkind and cruel. He was also drunk most of the time. Oliver's future again looked dark.

5 In front of Mr Fang, the magistrate, the old gentleman looked more closely into Oliver's face.

"There is something in that boy's face," he said to himself. "Where have I seen that face before?"

10 The old gentleman bowed and *presented his calling card*.

Mr Fang looked up from his newspaper. He was in a bad mood.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The old gentleman pointed to his card.

15 "Officer!" shouted Mr Fang, throwing away the old gentleman's card. "Who is this fellow?"

The old gentleman said his name. Mr Fang then asked what the old man had done wrong.

20 "He's not charged at all, *your worship*," said the police officer.

"Swear him," snapped Mr Fang.

"Before I am sworn, I want to say something," said the old gentleman, whose name was Mr Brownlow.

"Be quiet, sir," said the magistrate.

25 "I will not, sir," replied Mr Brownlow.

"How dare you speak like that to a magistrate!"

magistrate, local judge who enforces the law

present, give

calling card, card on which is printed one's name and profession

your worship, correct way to address a magistrate

swear, take an oath on the Bible

answered Mr Fang. "You are being rude. Swear this person. I'll not hear another word."

Mr Brownlow was very angry but he did not show it. He decided, probably for the best, that if he upset Mr Fang, Mr. Fang would be harder on Oliver.

5 "Where's the policeman?" asked Mr Fang. "Explain what has happened."

The policeman did so. He also explained that he had found nothing on Oliver.

"Witnesses?" asked Mr Fang.

10 "None," replied the policeman.

Mr Brownlow was then, and only then, allowed to speak. The old man said he had run after the boy only because he saw the boy run. He added that he believed the boy was *innocent* but that he had been with two others who looked like thieves.

15 "I think he looks very ill," ended the old man.

"Oh yes, he is," added Mr Fang with a *sneer*.

20 "Come now, none of your foolishness, you young criminal," shouted Mr Fang to Oliver. "Officer, find out his name!"

The officer asked Oliver his name. Oliver was too scared to answer anybody. The officer knew this could mean a longer sentence for Oliver, so he made a guess.

25 "He says his name is Tom White, your worship," said the policeman.

"Where does he live?" asked Fang.

"On the streets," continued the policeman.

"Does he have any parents?" asked Fang.

witness, person who has seen what happened

innocent, not guilty

sneer, an ugly sarcastic look

"They died when he was a baby," the policeman finished.

Oliver spoke - very, very quietly - but he spoke.

"May I have some water?" he asked.

5 "Stuff and nonsense!" exploded Fang, "don't make a fool of me!"

"I really think he is ill, your worship," added the policeman.

"I know better," added Fang.

10 "Look out," cried the old gentleman, "he is going to faint!"

"Stand away," shouted Fang cruelly, "let him faint if he wants to."

15 Oliver did as the magistrate said he could; he fainted and fell to the floor. No one dared move towards him to help.

"Let him lie there," said Fang. "He will soon get tired of it. I find him guilty and he will do hard labour for three months. Clear the court!"

20 Two men tried to carry Oliver away but a man pushed his way past them. He was the owner of the bookshop.

"Stop! Stop! Don't take him away! For heaven's sake, stop," he cried.

25 Mr Fang was not very happy about this. He always liked his own way in his court.

"What is this? Who is this man? Turn him out now! Clear the court!" he shouted.

"I will speak," cried the man. "I will not be turned out. I saw what happened. You must hear me."

stuff and nonsense, complete nonsense
faint, lose consciousness
labour, work

The noise was too loud now to ignore.

"Swear this man," said the magistrate.

The man was sworn and allowed to tell his story. He told how he had seen two other boys take the handkerchief. He told how surprised and shocked Oliver was at what took place. 5

"Why didn't you come here before?" asked Fang, when the book store owner had finished.

"I had to find someone to look after the shop. Every one had run after the boy, so it was rather difficult," answered the owner. 10

At this Mr Fang saw his chance to be very nasty.

"Mr Brownlow was reading outside your bookshop then, when this happened?" asked Mr Fang.

"Yes, sir, the same book he now has in his hand," replied the owner. 15

"Has he paid for it?" asked Mr Fang, looking down his nose and over his glasses at Mr Brownlow, whom, by now, he disliked very much.

"No, he has not," replied the owner. 20

"Dear me," exclaimed Mr Brownlow, "I forgot all about it!"

Mr Fang now became very nasty as he shouted at Mr Brownlow:

"You are a nice person to bring a charge against a poor boy! You are the one who should go to prison. Does the bookshop owner wish to press charges?" 25

The bookshop owner was very confused and shook his head.

"You, Mr Brownlow, are a very lucky man. You have 30

ignore, pay no attention

in your hand a book you have stolen and yet you *accuse* a poor boy of stealing. Case *dismissed*. The boy is free to go. Clear the court. I will hear no more."

Mr Brownlow was very angry but he knew he must not answer back. The court was cleared. Mr Brownlow was pushed out of the court. He found Oliver lying on his back on the pavement, shaking all over.

"Poor boy, poor boy," said Mr Brownlow. "Someone call a coach to take us home."

accuse, to bring a charge against
dismissed, ended

Chapter Seven

And so Oliver came to live with Mr Brownlow. Oliver took many days to get well. He was given the best care, the best food, and the best doctors.

Weak and thin, he finally awoke from his illness.

"Dear me," said a voice near to him. "What a lovely boy! What would his mother say if she had sat by him as I have, and could see him now?"

Oliver opened his eyes to see a middle-aged lady sitting by his bed. He looked around him. He was in a large, clean, beautiful room. On the wall hung a *portrait* of a very pretty young lady. The picture interested Oliver. He spent a lot of time looking at it.

After three more days he could sit up in a chair.

"You're very kind to me, ma'am," said Oliver.

"Do you like the picture, dear?" asked the lady who had taken care of him. Her name was Mrs Bedwin. She was Mr Brownlow's housekeeper.

"Oh yes," replied Oliver, "but the eyes look so sad. From where I sit they seem fixed on me. It makes my heart beat faster," said Oliver quietly.

This *conversation* made Mrs Bedwin uneasy. It was true that Oliver did look very much like the picture. Mrs Bedwin decided that the picture was making Oliver think too much. She turned his chair away from the portrait.

There was a knock on the door and in walked Mr Brownlow. With his hands behind his back, he took a long look at Oliver. Oliver tried to stand up but he

portrait, drawing or painting of a person
conversation, talk

could not. Mr Brownlow was a very kind man and he almost cried when he saw Oliver.

"Poor boy, poor boy, how do you feel, my dear?" he asked.

5 "Very happy, sir," replied Oliver, "and very grateful indeed, sir, for your goodness to me."

"Good boy," said Mr Brownlow pleased with Oliver's good manners. He asked Mrs Bedwin if Oliver was getting the food he needed.

10 "He's had good soup today, sir," was the reply.

"Ah, good. Now, boy - Tom White, isn't it?" asked Mr Brownlow.

"My name's Oliver, sir."

15 "Oliver?" said Mr Brownlow. "Oliver what? Oliver White, eh?"

"No, sir, Twist. Oliver Twist."

"What a strange name. What made you tell the magistrate your name was White?"

"I never told him, sir," answered Oliver.

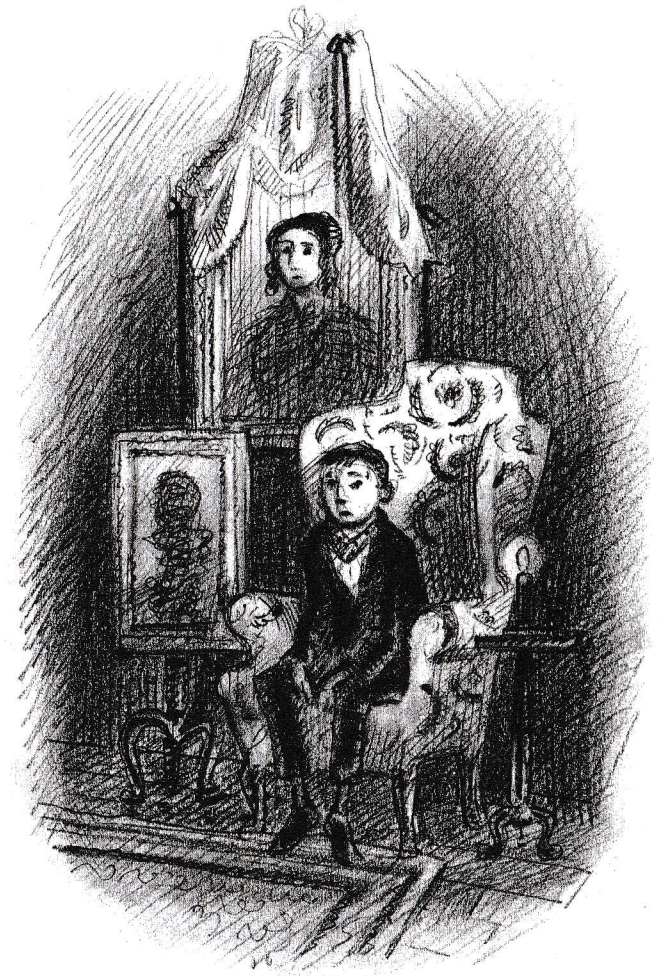
20 To Mr Brownlow this was a lie. He looked deeply into Oliver's face; but he could see no lie there, only truth.

25 "Um, some mistake," said Mr Brownlow. Again he looked at Oliver's face. Then he looked at the picture behind Oliver's chair. He looked back at Oliver for such a long time that Oliver said:

"I hope you are not angry with me, sir."

"No, no," replied the old man. "Gracious God, what's this? Bedwin, look, look there."

30 Mr Brownlow pointed to the picture above Oliver's head, and then to the boy's face. The eyes, head, mouth were all the same. Oliver did not understand what was happening. He turned to look at the portrait trying to



understand why his likeness to the portrait should cause such alarm.

Chapter Eight

It took Charley and Dodger some time before they realized what might happen now that Oliver had been caught.

“What’ll Fagin say?” asked Charley.

5 “What’ll Fagin say, what’ll he say,” replied Dodger. “That’s not the problem. It’s what he’ll do to us, that’s the problem.”

10 The noise of their footsteps on the wooden stairs up to Fagin’s dirty old *warehouse*, which he and the boys called home, made just enough noise to tell Fagin that only two of the boys were returning. It did not tell him which two.

“What’s this?” asked Fagin, “only two of ‘em? Where’s the third?”

15 The door opened slowly. Dodger and Charley were met by the angry old man.

“What’s happened to Oliver? Where is he?” asked Fagin. “Speak out or I will choke you to death.” He moved a step closer to the two boys, picking up a large

20 knife as he did so. He grabbed Dodger and shook him. Charley dropped to his knees and started crying.

“The police have him,” said Dodger. “Let me go!”

25 With one movement Dodger *wriggled* free from Fagin. Fagin was left holding only Dodger’s coat. Dodger picked up a fork but this did not frighten Fagin. They were interrupted by a deep voice from behind them.

warehouse, building where goods are stored
wriggle, to move like a worm

“Why, what’s going on here, then?” asked the evil voice. “I might have known that nobody but that rich, stealing, stinking old Jew could afford to take the time to fight with his boys. What’s it all about, Fagin? Tell old Bill Sikes won’t you?”

5 The man who growled out the words was an evil looking man, strongly built, about thirty-five years old. He wore a black *velveteen* coat, dirty black trousers, short boots with fat legs sticking out over the tops. He wore a very dirty handkerchief around his neck. On his head was a brown *crumpled* gentleman’s hat. His two evil eyes looked out from an unshaven face.

10 With him was a white bulldog, whose face was scratched and torn in twenty different places. The dog, like his master, was also a fighter. Bill kicked the dog into a corner as it tried to walk in front of him.

“Lie down!” *growled* Sikes.

To Fagin he said: “What are you up to? Ill-treating the boys, you nasty little man?” Bill Sikes sat down. “I’m surprised they don’t just murder you in your bed; I would if I was them.”

15 “Hush! Hush! Mr Sikes,” said Fagin, trembling; “don’t speak so loudly.”

Mr Sikes had two or three glasses of spirits before he again looked at the boys, and at Mr Fagin. He began talking with Fagin and soon found out that Oliver had been caught by the police.

25 “I’m afraid,” said Fagin, “that he may say something which might get us into trouble.”

velveteen, fabric made of cotton but which looks like velvet
crumpled, full of wrinkles
growled, to growl: to make a sound like an angry dog



"That's very likely," replied Sikes. He grinned at the thought of old Fagin being taken by the police.
"And I'm afraid, you see," added Fagin, moving close

to Sikes. "I'm afraid that, if *the game is up* with us, it might also be up for you too, Bill, dear."

Sikes stopped grinning at once and turned round on Fagin. But the old man had his shoulders up to his ears and looked so innocent that Bill Sikes could do no more.

After a long silence, Bill spoke.

"Somebody has got to find out what has happened to him."

The Jew nodded.

"If he hasn't talked, but is in prison, then there's no fear till he comes out. Then he must be taken care of, if you understand my meaning."

Again Fagin nodded.

They all sat and looked at one another. Not one of them wanted to go near a police station. The problem was solved when Nancy appeared at the doorway.

"Just who we need!" said Fagin. "You'll go, won't you, my dear?"

"Where to?" asked Nancy.

"Only just to an office," replied Fagin kindly.

Nancy was as clever as she was pretty. She knew immediately what Fagin meant by using the word office. She was very kind but she did not want to go into a police station just because her friends did not dare go themselves.

"It's no use asking, Fagin, I won't go," she replied.

"What do you mean by that?" said Mr Sikes, looking very angry.

"What I say, Bill," replied the young lady.

"Why, you're just the person to do it," Sikes replied.

the game is up, everything has been found out

Turning to Fagin he added:

"She'll go, Fagin, she'll go."

"Oh no, she won't, Fagin," replied Nancy.

5 "Yes, she will, Fagin, she'll go," said Bill Sikes. He stood up and took Nancy out of the room.

Mr Sikes was right; Nancy did go. How he *persuaded* her to go is not quite clear. It is enough to say he was a very cruel man.

10 Nancy was not only pretty and clever, she was a very good actress. When she came back into the room she *pretended* to be at the police station. She did this so well that Bill Sikes, whom she dearly loved, and Fagin, who was very fond of Nancy, believed she would do her best for them. Nancy, however, was beginning to feel
15 sorry for Oliver.

"Oh, my brother! My poor, sweet, innocent little brother!" she cried as she went around the room. She burst into tears and added: "Where have they taken him to? Oh, do tell me what's happened to my dear
20 sweet brother."

All of this made Bill Sikes and Fagin laugh very much. Dodger and Charley were also *taken in*. She put on a clean white apron over her dress, tucked her hair up under her bonnet and made her way to the station
25 where Oliver had been taken earlier that day.

As Nancy made her way to the station she had other plans as to how to find out what had happened to Oliver. She entered the station by a back door and tapped very quietly on one of the cell doors. She tried several

persuade, to make a person do or think something
pretend, to make believe
taken in, to fool someone

cells but got no answers from the prisoners. Finally she had to act the way she did back at Fagin's house. She did a very good job in front of the station's officer.

"I haven't got him, my dear," said the officer, who really did believe she was Oliver's sister. 5

"Where is he?" Nancy cried again.

"Why, the gentleman's got him," replied the officer.

"What gentleman?" asked Nancy drying her tears.

And so it was not long before Fagin and his gang found out where Oliver had gone. Nancy had no choice; she had to tell Bill and the others where Oliver was. It did not take the band of *rogues* long to find the exact street. It did not take much effort, either, to set up a watch for Oliver. They decided that as soon as he took one step
10 outside the house alone, they would kidnap him. All they had to do was wait. 15

It was not long before Oliver did go out alone.

rogue, dishonest man

Chapter Nine

In the days after Oliver's recovery, the likeness of Oliver to the portrait was not talked about in the Brownlow household. But it was on everyone's mind. The picture was taken down. Oliver could not find out why it had been removed.

The days of Oliver's recovery were very happy. He was in a clean, well ordered, quiet house. Everybody was kind. To Oliver it was like heaven on earth. As soon as he was strong enough to put on clothes, Mr Brownlow had a complete new suit, shoes and a cap, made for him. He was told he could do what he liked with his old ones. He gave them to Mrs Bedwin, who sold them. Oliver did not expect to see his old clothes ever again. But he could not know that the buyer of the clothes gave them to Fagin, who carefully put them away until they could be used once more for Oliver.

About a week later, as Oliver was sitting talking to Mrs Bedwin, Mr Brownlow sent for him.

With Mrs Bedwin's help, Oliver quickly made himself smart and went to Mr Brownlow's study. Here he found Mr Brownlow reading. Oliver had never seen so many books.

"You may read them all, if you behave well," said Mr Brownlow. "How would you like to grow up a clever man, and write books?" the old man asked.

"I think I would rather just read them, sir," replied Oliver. This made Mr Brownlow laugh.

The door opened. A servant came in to announce that a friend had arrived to have tea with Mr Brownlow. Mr Brownlow smiled, and turned to Oliver.

"Mr Grimwig is a very good friend of mine," said Mr

Brownlow. "I would like you to meet him."

Mr Grimwig entered the room carrying a thick walking stick. This rather *stout* man was *lame* in one leg. He also had an unkind sense of humour but Oliver could see that the two men were indeed good friends.

After a while Oliver was sent out of the room while the two gentlemen continued to talk.

"That boy is not honest. He is no good," said Mr Brownlow's friend. "You are much too good to him."

"I'll answer for that boy with my life!" replied Mr Brownlow sharply.

"And I will give you my head that that boy is not what you think he is!" replied Mr Grimwig angrily.

Fate now played a part in Oliver's life. Mrs Bedwin came into the room with a small parcel of books to be returned to the book shop.

Mr Brownlow decided to prove to his friend that Oliver could be trusted.

"Call the boy back, Mrs Bedwin," he said. "I have a job for him to do."

Oliver was given the books and a new five-pound note.

"I owe the book shop four pounds and ten shillings, Oliver, so you must return with ten shillings," explained Mr Brownlow.

"I will only be ten minutes, sir," replied Oliver, happy to help at last.

He buttoned up his coat. He put the bank-note carefully in his pocket, picked up the parcel and was let out of the front door.

stout, a little on the fat side
lame, unable to walk properly

“Bless his sweet face!” said Mrs Bedwin as Oliver turned to wave goodbye to her.

He ran down the steps of the house, turned right to go along the street, ran around the corner, and ran straight into Nancy.

“Let me see; he’ll be back in twenty minutes, at the longest,” said Mr Brownlow pulling out his watch and putting it on the table.

“Oh! you really expect him to come back, do you?” asked Mr Grimwig.

“Don’t you?” asked Mr Brownlow, smiling.

“No, I do not,” answered his friend, banging the table with his fist. “I do not. The boy has a new suit of clothes on, a set of valuable books under his arm and a five-pound note in his pocket. You will not see him again. He’ll join his thieving friends and laugh at you. If ever that boy returns to this house, sir, I’ll eat my hat!”

With these words the two friends sat in silence with the watch between them.

It grew darker.

Oliver did not return.



Chapter Ten

Nancy had watched Mr Brownlow's house all week. From the size of the house and the number of servants going in and out, she knew Oliver was in good hands. She felt happy for him. Here was his chance to have a life she could never have. But her first love was Bill, so she reported back to him what was happening at Mr Brownlow's house.

"First chance, Nancy, first chance, we'll kidnap him," said Bill.

As soon as Oliver bumped into Nancy, she began to scream:

"Oh my dear brother, my dear sweet brother. Oliver! Oliver! Oh you naughty boy! To make me suffer so! Come home now!"

Bill Sikes, who was waiting in another street, heard Nancy's shouts. He ran to help. Nancy's act meant that anyone who saw what was happening would do nothing to help, thinking it was a family matter.

Quickly the two of them dragged Oliver down a side street, gagged him, and took him back to Fagin.

The gas-lamps were lit at Mr Brownlow's house. Mrs Bedwin was waiting with the front door open wide. A servant had run up and down the road at least twenty times, but there was no sign of Oliver. The two old

gagged, to gag - to put a cloth into someone's mouth so they cannot speak

gentlemen sat waiting and hoping; Mr Brownlow hoping that his friend was wrong and Mr Grimwig hoping he was right.

Chapter Eleven

Fagin was very pleased to see Oliver.

"Delighted to see you, my dear," he said as Oliver was pushed through the door.

Dodger appeared. Charley Bates appeared. They both laughed at the way Oliver was dressed.

"Look at his clothes!" cried Dodger.

"Real upper class!" said Charley.

Dodger went closer to Oliver and felt in his pockets. He found the five-pound note. Fagin quickly snatched it away.

"Hello, what's that?" asked Sikes. "That's mine, Fagin."

"No, no, my dear," said Fagin. "Mine, Bill, mine. You take the books."

"Do you think Nancy and I have got nothing better to do with our time than kidnap back boys who you lose?" shouted Bill. "Give it here you old skeleton!"

He moved towards Fagin looking very evil. He took the note from between Fagin's finger and thumb and quickly tied it in his handkerchief.

"That's for our share of the trouble," he continued, "you may keep the books."

"They belong to Mr Brownlow," cried Oliver, trying to wriggle free. His hands had been tied and he was now lying on the floor. "He will think that I stole them. You are not to take them. You must give them back. They were all so kind to me. Keep me here all my life if you want, but please send the books back."

Oliver's outburst was greeted with silence. Quick looks were exchanged between Fagin and Bill.

"He's right," grinned Fagin, "they will think that he

has stolen them. You're right, Oliver, you're right. Good boy, well done. They will think you have stolen them. It couldn't have turned out better. Ha! Ha!"

Oliver looked around desperately. He slipped free, jumped up and tried to run out of the door. He screamed for help. His voice only echoed in the big old house. He ran outside but was quickly followed by Fagin and the two boys.

"Keep the dog back, Bill, keep the dog back. It will tear him to pieces," screamed Nancy as Bill Sikes' dog made a move towards the door. She quickly closed the door before the dog got out.

"Serve him right!" cried Sikes. "Get away from me, Nancy, or I'll split your skull."

"I don't care, Bill, I don't care," screamed the girl, struggling violently against Bill: "the child won't be torn apart and killed by a dog, not unless you kill me first."

Bill took the girl and with all his power, threw her to the far end of the room. Fagin and the two boys came in, dragging Oliver with them. Nancy did not care that she was hurt. She had saved Oliver from the bulldog. She was beginning to be sorry she had ever helped any of them.

"So you wanted to get away, my dear, did you?" asked Fagin to Oliver, picking up a *club*.

Oliver made no reply.

"Wanted to call for help, did you? Call for the police, did you?" sneered Fagin, catching Oliver by the arm and hitting him on the shoulders with the club.

club, type of stick carried by a policeman

He was going to hit Oliver again but Nancy stopped him. She tore the club from his hand and threw it into the fire.

5 "I won't stand by and see it done, Fagin," cried the girl. "You've got the boy, what more do you want? Leave him alone or I shall report you all to the police and you'll all be hanged." She looked at all of them in the room. She was so angry that they knew she meant what she said, even if it meant her own death too.

10 Fagin saw it would be hopeless to do any more with Oliver at this time. He did not want to make Nancy any angrier. He looked at Bill.

Mr Sikes felt his manly pride threatened.

15 "Do you know who you are, and what you are?" he growled, as if he was talking to his dog.

"Oh yes, I know all about what I am and what I do," she said, looking quickly at Bill. "God help me! I wish I had been struck dead in the street before I had helped you all tonight. You have made Oliver into a thief, a liar, a devil, all that's bad. Isn't it enough, without trying to kill him as well?"

20 "Nancy, be quiet and think what you are saying," said Fagin.

It did no good.

25 "Think! Think! You ask me to think. I have thieved for you since I was half his age. My trade and what I do for you, you know very well, don't you, Fagin?"

"Yes, yes Nancy, I do. It's your living."

30 "Yes, it is. My living is on the streets. The cold, wet and damp streets, and you're the man that drove me there, and who'll keep me there until I die."

Nancy was now exhausted and fell down on the floor. She pulled at her hair. This gave Bill Sikes the

chance he was looking for and he grabbed her wrists. Nancy fainted and Bill set her down in a corner. He would deal with her later.

They turned once more to Oliver. He was made to take off his new clothes and put on his old ones. The same clothes he had given to Mrs Bedwin to sell. 5

Once again poor little Oliver cried himself to sleep.

Chapter Twelve

Mr Bumble was sitting waiting for the coach to London. He had very important business to attend to and the board had decided that he, and only he, could do it properly. So, at six o'clock in the morning, he was sitting reading the paper waiting for the coach when, all of a sudden, the following notice caught his eye:

FIVE GUINEAS REWARD

A YOUNG BOY, BY THE NAME OF OLIVER TWIST, RAN AWAY, OR WAS TAKEN AWAY, FROM HIS HOME AND HAS NOT BEEN HEARD OF SINCE. THE ABOVE REWARD WILL BE PAID TO ANYONE WHO CAN GIVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT OLIVER TWIST THAT WILL LEAD TO HIS DISCOVERY, OR TO ANYONE WHO KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT THIS BOY'S PAST.

Then there was the name and address of Mr Brownlow, as well as a full description of what Oliver had been wearing.

Mr Bumble almost dropped the paper. He carefully read the advertisement several times and then rushed out of the coach house leaving his food and hot gin untouched.

"Is Mr Brownlow at home?" he asked the girl who opened the door at Mr Brownlow's house.

Mr Bumble did not know that Mr Brownlow was hoping to hear good things about Oliver. The story Mr Bumble told was of a boy born to low class, violent

parents. A boy who, from birth, had inherited all their bad qualities of *treachery* and *ingratitude*. Mr Bumble told, in great detail, how Oliver attacked Noah. He then sat down and wiped the sweat from his face.

"I fear it is all too true," said the old gentleman, "but I would happily have given you three times as much money if only you could have told me something good about the boy."

Mr Bumble would probably have changed his story had he known this in advance; but he had to take the five guineas and go. He could not change his story, could he? In the Brownlow household Oliver was declared an *imposter* who was never to be spoken of again.

treachery, dishonesty
ingratitude, lack of thankfulness
imposter, one who pretends to be someone else

Chapter Thirteen

Meanwhile Bill Sikes had decided to make Oliver into a true criminal. Bill was planning an especially difficult robbery. He needed a small boy to help him. Someone the size of Oliver.

5 "Don't be afraid, Oliver," said Fagin when he told Oliver of his fate, "you will come back to us again, don't worry! But you do as you are told. Bill can be very rough and is not afraid of killing."

10 Late that night Nancy arrived. She was pale and upset.

"Nancy," cried Oliver. "What's wrong?"

"You are to come with me. I have come from Bill," she said to the boy.

Oliver looked very unhappy.

15 "I saved you from being beaten once and I will again, but, for now, you must come with me. I have promised that I will bring you safe and sound and without trouble. See what has happened already because of you."

20 She pointed to some large *bruises* on her neck and arms.

"Hurry up now, give me your hand!" she cried.

25 Outside Nancy had a cab waiting to take Oliver to his new home. It did not take long to get there. Any cry for help along the way would have been useless. It would only have got him and Nancy into trouble.

"This way," said Nancy. "Bill? Bill?" she called as they entered.

"Hallo!" replied a deep, dark voice. "So you've got

| *bruise*, blue mark on the skin

the boy then, have you?"

"Yes, here he is," replied Nancy to the voice from the dark.

"Did he come quietly?" asked Bill reaching for his belt. 5

"Like a lamb," replied Nancy.

"I'm very glad to hear it," said Bill.

"Now first," he continued, "do you know what this is?"

10 "Yes," said Oliver, looking at the gun which Sikes was pointing at him.

"You're coming with me, aren't you?" he asked.

"Yes," mumbled Oliver.

"Without any noise?" asked Bill.

15 "Yes," replied the terrified Oliver.

Nancy watched them go out into the dark night, and felt very sad. From this night Oliver would be a thief. If he told anyone what really had happened to him Bill would certainly shoot him in the back of the head.

Chapter Fourteen

Sikes hired a cab and they went from the very poor part of the East End of London to the richer West London. At Brentford they reached a pub called The Coach and Horses, where they left the cab and went down a side road.

The night was very dark and a damp mist covered the fields. Early the next morning they passed Sunbury Church. A little while later they entered an old empty house where a friend joined them. His name was Toby. They rested for the rest of the day before going on again late the following night.

Soon they stopped at a large house.

Slowly and very quietly they all climbed over the garden wall. As he was being lifted over the garden wall by Sikes and Toby, Oliver understood that robbery, perhaps even murder, were Bill's plans.

There was a little window at the back of the house, through which one could see stairs. The stairs led up into the hall and to the front door. There was only enough room for a boy of Oliver's age to climb through. Now Oliver understood why he had been brought along on such a long trip.

"Oh please don't make me do this," he begged Sikes.

Sikes pointed the pistol at Oliver's head.

"Now listen," whispered Sikes. "I'm going to put you through there. Go softly up the steps in the cellar, along the hall to the front door, and open it. Quietly! Take this lantern with you," said Sikes.

Oliver decided that, even if he died in the attempt, he would rush up into the hall and make enough noise to wake up the sleeping people in the house.

"Come back," yelled Bill, suddenly and loudly. "Back! Back!"

The quiet and silence of the house was broken. Two men appeared at the top of the stairs; one holding a gun. Shots rang out. Sikes burst through the front door, grabbed Oliver, turned around, and ran for his life. Oliver, however, had been hit and was bleeding badly.

"God, so much blood!" screamed Sikes as he handed over Oliver to Toby.

They ran over the fields and along the lanes. Oliver became heavier and heavier. Toby needed to run more quickly to escape. Toby looked at Oliver and decided to throw him in the nearest *ditch*. He believed that even if Oliver was not yet dead he soon would be.

Bill ran on. He did not realise Oliver had been left. They ran over fields and lanes in the cold and misty night, through ponds and wet mud. They could think only of reaching home.

Bill Sikes was very ill when he got home. It took Nancy several days to nurse Bill back to health. Nancy thought about Oliver but decided the best thing for him was to be dead. Death was much better than returning to a life with the thieves. She did nothing to find him.

It was not until Bill was feeling better that he realised Oliver had not come home with them. He and Fagin decided to find out what had happened to Oliver. They contacted their many friends. It did not take Bill and Fagin long before they found out where Oliver was.

ditch, long narrow trench usually with water in

Chapter Fifteen

Mrs Corney, the matron of the workhouse where Oliver had been born, was sitting at a table by the fire in the kitchen. She was thinking about her life - and her dead husband. He had been dead for some time now and she was lonely. She had just finished her first cup of tea of the evening when there was a light tap on the door.

5 "Come in!" she said sharply, not wanting to be disturbed. "Some old woman dying I suppose," she continued.

10 "It's only me, ma'am," replied a man's voice.

"Dear me!" cried the matron in a much sweeter tone. "Is that you, Mr Bumble?"

"Indeed it is, indeed it is, ma'am."

15 Mrs Corney let him in and then went to get another cup and saucer from the cupboard. Mr Bumble sat down at the kitchen table and made himself comfortable.

20 Now Mr Bumble was very fond of Mrs Corney and enjoyed his visits to her. Mrs Corney was also very fond of Mr Bumble and they shared many secrets about what happened in the workhouse. They had even talked about getting married. Mr Bumble began to tell Mrs Corney about his trip to Mr Brownlow.

25 The beadle drank his tea to the very last drop. He put his arms around Mrs Corney and was about to kiss her.

"Mr Bumble," cried the lady - in a whisper, that is!

"Mr Bumble," she continued in a whisper, "I shall scream."

30 Mr Bumble made no reply but slowly, and in a very dignified manner, put his arm around the matron again

and kissed her.

There was a knock at the door. Mr Bumble nearly fell over himself as he tried to cross the room. He wished to get as far away from Mrs Corney as possible before the knock was answered. He was a beadle and because of this he did not want any gossip about himself and Mrs. Corney. He managed to reach the drinks table before the door opened.

5 "If you please, mistress," said an old female voice, "Old Sally is dying."

10 "Well, what do I care?" replied the matron.

"She's troubled in her mind. She wants to speak to you. She says she's got something to tell. She'll never die till you come, mistress," continued the old woman.

15 Now Old Sally had been the helper at Oliver's birth. Mr Bumble and Mrs Corney looked at one another. Mrs Corney left her tea, Mr Bumble and her warm rooms. She made her way along the cold, dark corridors of the workhouse. The board believed it was not good for the inmates to have heating. It would make their lives too comfortable and might encourage them to be even more trouble to the Parish. Mrs Corney felt the cold very much as she went along. Anyone other than Old Sally and she would have stayed in her rooms; but what Mr Bumble had just said was very interesting.

20 "If she lasts a couple of hours, I shall be surprised," said the helper as they arrived at Old Sally's bed.

Mrs Corney sat down on the bed.

"Did she say any more?" she asked.

25 At the sound of the matron's voice, Old Sally woke up a little.

"I will tell her, I will," she said loudly.

She pulled at Mrs Corney's shoulder.



“Now listen to me,” said the dying woman. “In this very room - I nursed a pretty young girl who gave birth to Oliver.” Her voice got weaker. Mrs Corney moved closer. Was this just the *ramblings* of an old woman or was there more to this child Oliver Twist than all had realised? 5

“What about her?” asked the matron.

“I robbed her, I robbed her,” said old Sally. She fell back on her bed. “It was gold, gold,” she continued. “They would have treated him better if they had known.” 10

“Known what?” cried Mrs Corney. She pulled at Old Sally. “For God’s sake speak, woman.”

“They called him Oliver,” *babbled* the old woman. “The gold I stole was ...” She lay dying on her bed, but struggled to give Mrs Corney a piece of paper. “It’s his,” she whispered and gave the piece of paper to the matron. 15

The matron looked at it. Old Sally *passed away*. The matron would hear no more from her. The piece of paper was nothing more than a *pawn broker’s* ticket. She took this back to Mr Bumble and told him what had happened. Mr Bumble made no comment about the gold but he told Mrs Corney, that he would look into the matter and that she was not to worry about it. He slowly slipped the ticket into his pocket and said goodbye to his friend. He told her he was off to arrange for a coffin to be sent for the body. 20 25

rambling, talking in a confused way

babbled, to babble - to talk without purpose

pass away, to die

pawn broker, one who lends money for articles left with him

As soon as he was outside he went as fast as his legs could carry him to the pawn broker's.

The ticket was old and Mr Bumble was not sure that the pawn broker would still accept it. Indeed it would probably cost Mr Bumble some money to get back whatever it was that Old Sally had stolen and pawned. He wondered how much money she had got for the pawned article.

The pawn broker's was still open and Mr Bumble walked in.

"Good evening Mr Bumble," said the pawn broker. "Not one of our regular customers, are you?" asked the pawn broker, wondering what Mr Bumble wanted. In his *haste* to get to the bottom of the matter, or more exactly his hands on any gold there might be, Mr Bumble had forgotten how it might look for a parish beadle to be seen entering a pawn shop.

"Um ... it is not for myself, you understand, that I came. It is Old Sally who - God rest her soul - has passed away and her dying wish was that this article be returned to the safe keeping of its owner," replied Mr Bumble.

The pawn broker took the ticket and disappeared. After a few minutes he returned holding a small golden *locket* in his hands. He gave it to Mr Bumble who was very disappointed.

Mr Bumble returned to Mrs Corney the following day.

Together they looked at the locket. They opened it

haste, speed

locket, little case hung around the neck on a silver or gold chain

carefully and saw an *inscription* which read "Agnes". Mr Bumble and Mrs Corney sat and drank a cup of tea. They were both very disappointed. After all, the locket was not so valuable. They discussed whether they should keep it, sell it, or go again to Mr Brownlow.

"There is no rush," said Mr Bumble, "Shall we not first discuss our plans of marriage?"

The locket lay forgotten until after their wedding. Mr Bumble gave up being a parish beadle and became master of the workhouse. The more Mrs Corney, or as she now was, Mrs Bumble, bossed him around the more he came to regret his marriage. He became a very *henpecked* husband. Soon, however, Mrs Bumble again began to think of ways to earn money. Her thoughts turned to the locket and its possible connection to the gentleman in London; the gentleman had money. Mrs Bumble decided it was time to take the locket to Mr Brownlow.

inscription, writing on something - here, on the locket

henpecked, word used to describe a man whose wife does not allow him to have his own thoughts or wishes

Chapter Sixteen

Oliver, who had been left for dead in the ditch, *crawled* out and made his way back to the house. He sat on the doorstep and fainted. It was there that Mrs Maylie found him the next morning.

5 "It's the boy who was shot last night," she cried. "Here, give me a hand."

The voices Oliver could hear seemed very far away. He had lost so much blood that he could do nothing but hope they would help him. The warmth of the
10 room and the sound of kind voices reminded him of Mr Brownlow's. He began to call for Mr Brownlow.



| *crawled*, to crawl - to move slowly on hands and knees

Chapter Seventeen

Fagin was very unhappy that Oliver had been left behind. He was worried that he might still be alive.

About a week after the robbery Sikes was well enough to tell Fagin what had happened. It was decided that they must *once and for all* silence the boy. Nancy was in the room while they were talking. 5

"What's the matter with you?" asked Bill.

"Nothing, Bill," replied Nancy.

"Oh yes there is - speak out," said Bill. Sikes' bulldog growled. He knew that the tone of his master's voice meant trouble. 10

"I was just thinking," said Nancy, "that the boy would be better off dead anyhow than coming back to you lot of thieves." With that she put on her shawl and went out. Once outside she burst into tears. The hopelessness of her life was too much. 15

"We must watch her," said Fagin. "She's sorry for that boy. It'll make her do something desperate."

"Yes," replied Bill, "but there isn't a girl who is more faithful. If she betrays us I'll cut her throat." 20

Nancy came back carrying shopping. She had decided what she must do. Her decision had turned her very pale and shaky.

Later that night, after Fagin had gone home, Bill called for his usual gin drink. Nancy was shaking as she mixed it. She had her back to him so he did not see what she put into the drink. When she had gone shopping 25

| *once and for all*, finally

earlier, she had stopped to buy a very powerful sleeping mixture. She now mixed this into his drink. She had decided Oliver's only hope was to be returned to Mr Brownlow. She had decided to risk her life and go to the house which Bill had tried to rob. She would somehow find a way to get Oliver safely back to Mr Brownlow.

Bill slipped into a deep, deep sleep as Nancy left the house. She had enough money for a cab part of the way. The rest of the way she walked. She didn't care how, or when, she got home again.

"Now, young woman," asked a smartly dressed servant who opened the door, "what do you want here?"

"A lady who lives here by the name of Mrs Maylie," replied Nancy.

"What name shall I give?" the servant asked.

"It's no use giving any, she doesn't know me," replied Nancy.

"What business then?"

"I just want to speak to her," continued Nancy. The servant tried to close the door on Nancy.

"I must see the lady," cried Nancy and put her foot in the door. "Isn't there anybody here," she said, "who can see a simple message carried from a poor girl like me to the boy Oliver?"

Mrs Maylie heard the noise and came to the door. Nancy was by now so upset she refused to be quiet. She calmed down a little when Mrs Maylie appeared. She moved forward and grabbed Mrs Maylie's arm.

"I am about to put my life in your hands," said Nancy. "I am the girl that dragged little Oliver back from Mr Brownlow's house into the thieving, cruel arms of

Fagin," she continued. "I will not see it happen again," she finished.

At the sound of Mr Brownlow's name, Mrs Maylie knew Nancy was a link between the robbers and Oliver. She invited Nancy into the hallway. Nancy told the whole story and she pleaded for Oliver to be given another chance in life. Then suddenly Nancy became afraid and tried to leave.

"Stay with us, my dear," said Mrs Maylie. "We will try to find Mr Brownlow and return Oliver."

"No," said Nancy calmly. "I must go back, I must go back to my man." She would not tell on Bill. "I do so love him," she finished.

"Will you take some money from me then, to help you out of this way of life?" asked Mrs Maylie. "Take a little, dear, at least until we meet again."

"Not a penny," said Nancy and ran off down the road in the direction she had come.

Bill Sikes was brutal and violent but he believed in Nancy's faithfulness. Fagin knew more about women than Bill. And Fagin did not believe in Nancy. He asked Dodger to watch her twenty-four hours a day. So it was Dodger who saw Nancy running out of the house. He reported back to Fagin, who told Bill.

"Bill, Bill, a word," cried Fagin. "A word, Bill, only a word." Fagin was frightened by the change in Bill's face when he told Sikes what Dodger had seen.

"You won't be ... too ... violent ... will you, Bill?" he pleaded. They exchanged looks before each went their way. They knew that if Nancy had told all, and they now believed she had, it would only be a matter of

time before they were all found out and caught. It was time to pack up and move on. Fagin went to collect his box of jewels. As he did so he remembered that Oliver had also seen what was in the box, that day when he
5 had first arrived. Fagin packed quickly, putting every-
thing he could into his pockets.

Chapter Eighteen

It was about this time that Mr and Mrs Bumble arrived to visit Mr Brownlow. Although he was not happy at the mention of Oliver's name again he did give them his time. Mr Bumble came straight to the point.

"Good news," he cried as he entered Mr Brownlow's study again. Mr Brownlow was not so impressed with Mr Bumble as Mr Bumble was with himself; but Mr Brownlow allowed Mr Bumble to continue. Mr Bumble pulled out the little golden locket. Mr Brownlow sat down in a state of shock.

As Mr Bumble told his story of Oliver, this time more correctly, Oliver's mother, the locket and old Sally's theft, he looked at Mr Brownlow. He hoped Mr Brownlow would give him money for his trouble. There was none. He soon discovered that Mr Brownlow was extremely angry.

"Why did you first come and tell me a different story? Why have you kept this truth to yourselves for such a long time?" asked Mr Brownlow.

"Yes, um ... " mumbled Mr Bumble. He began to explain. "The wedding, you see, and my new duties at the workhouse have made it ..."

Mr Brownlow cut in.

"Complete nonsense," he said. "You are the most dishonest and *incompetent* person I have ever known and you, Mrs Bumble, should be removed from your job as soon as possible for allowing such things to happen. This locket belonged to my niece. A wonderful, lovely girl who made one mistake. She fell in love with a

| *incompetent*, not good enough at doing a job

rogue who deserted her the first chance he had. In her disgrace she ran away from home and gave birth to Oliver in your workhouse. At no time have you ever tried to find relatives or friends of the girl. From all you
5 have told me you have seen Oliver as part of unwanted and unnecessary duties to the Parish. It seems to me that people like you believe the *Poor Laws* were made only to help you get richer and more comfortable. Go, just go.”

10 Mr Bumble was blue with rage. Never in all his time as a beadle had anyone dared to speak to him so. Mrs Bumble saw her life's work being taken away from her. She blamed everything on Mr Bumble. Their future together would not be a happy one. Indeed they did
15 lose their jobs.

When they had left, Mr Brownlow looked from the locket to the picture of the girl, which now hung in his study.

20 “Oh, Agnes,” he said. “I will do what I can to find the boy, and to think I had him in this room, in my house and now most likely he is also gone for good. What a waste! What a waste!”

As Mrs Bedwin came back in, Mr Brownlow stood up.

25 “Mrs Bedwin, we are going to find that boy,” he told her.

Mrs Bedwin cried with joy.

Mr Brownlow did not have to search at all for Oliver.

Poor Laws, Laws passed in 1834 supposed to help the poor of the land but which caused much hardship and suffering

The very next morning Oliver was brought to his house by Mrs Maylie.

That day was a very happy day indeed in the Brownlow house.

Chapter Nineteen

Bill Sikes returned home to the room he shared with Nancy. It was late and he had been drinking. Nancy was making his supper. She turned to look at him. She knew from the look on his face that her *time had come*.

5 “Why - Bill what’s wrong?” she asked.

“You know what’s wrong,” answered Bill, taking his belt off. He hit her across the face with the back of his hand.

10 “Oh, Bill, don’t,” she cried, “I didn’t do any harm to you. It was only the boy I wanted to save. Honest.”

“You betrayed me, Nancy, betrayed me. You must pay for that, Nancy, you must pay!”

15 He started to beat her. He began about the head and then moved slowly down all over her body. He punched and kicked her down on to the floor. When she was down he continued to kick her. Slowly and brutally he beat Nancy to death. He left her lifeless body on the floor of the room. His bulldog looked on.

20 It was there Nancy was found the next morning by one of her friends.

25 Word soon got around that Nancy had been murdered and, for his own safety, Bill left London for the country. People had always been afraid of him. He was known to have a bad temper but many, many people could not forgive him for what he had done to Nancy.

| *time has come*, a saying used when one knows one is about to die



A little while after the murder Bill heard that Fagin had been arrested. He was concerned for his friend, so he decided to return to London to find out if the rumour was true. Indeed it was.

5 Fagin had been arrested a few days after Nancy's murder and, although not accused of that, he was found guilty of many other crimes. He was *sentenced* to be hanged by the neck until dead. He was in prison, hoping his friends would help him, when Bill returned
10 to London.

By chance it happened that Mr Brownlow was walking over London Bridge when he heard a crowd of people shouting. He heard the name of Bill Sikes and Nancy, as well as Fagin. He followed the crowd and it soon
15 became clear that Bill had been seen in London again, and that the crowd intended to do something violent to him.

The angry crowd pushed its way through some very dirty and muddy backstreets. In these streets one could
20 see poverty and human life at its worst.

Mr Brownlow mixed with the crowd as best he could. He heard that Fagin was to be hanged the next day and that Dodger had disappeared. The crowd were saying now that Bill had come back to London to see
25 Fagin's hanging. But the people of London's East End had not forgiven Bill for his crime against Nancy.

Bill may have escaped from the police but he could not escape from his old friends. When he returned to London he went to find some of the boys who had

| *sentenced*, to sentence - a punishment given by a court



lived with Fagin. But they disappeared like rats down a hole as soon as they saw him.

It did not take the crowd long to find out where Bill was. He called for some of the boys to help him. There
5 was no answer. His only escape was across the roofs of London. He jumped out of a window onto the rooftops.

Slowly at first but then more quickly, as the crowd called after him, he slipped and slid over the tops of the houses. His faithful bulldog attempted to follow
10 him, but lost its footing and slipped to its death.

Bill became careless as he ran more quickly. He slipped and fell to his death in very much the same way his dog had done a few minutes earlier.

15 The crowd were satisfied and made their way home. Bill died in the dirt of the streets where he belonged.

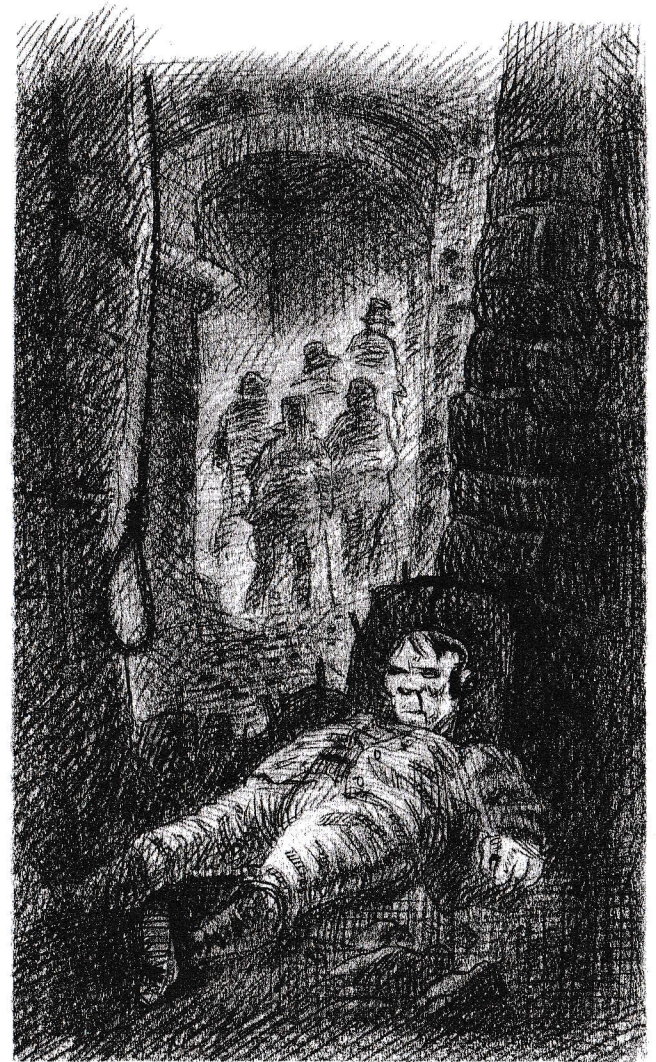
Mr Brownlow returned home to Oliver to tell him what had happened.

20 Fagin was hanged the following morning. Dodger was never heard of again.

And Oliver? The boy born in the workhouse, mistreated and starved for most of his young life by the authorities whose job it was to help him? *Condemned* as a trouble-maker by society before he was able to talk.
25 Condemned to become a thief and a rogue through no fault of his own.

With Mr Brownlow's guidance, help, and financial support, Oliver was able to become a gentleman. He

| *condemned*, to condemn - to sentence, to blame



was educated, well-read and respected in society by all who met him.

5 It has often been said that if his mother could have known what became of the son born in that cold, dark workhouse, she would finally rest peacefully in her grave.

QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT

Chapters One to Five

1. Describe what you think life in the workhouse was like.
2. What was Mrs Mann's philosophy of life?
3. Do you think she was right?
4. How does the Navy recruit its people today compared to how they did in Oliver's time?
5. Why did Oliver hit Noah Claypole?
6. What do the expressions "to be artful" and "to dodge" mean?

Chapters Six to Eleven

1. Why did people call Fagin a miser?
2. Are there pickpockets today? If so, where are you most likely to find them?
3. Are there still second hand bookshops in your neighbourhood?
4. Do you think that in another 100 years there will still be book shops?
5. What sort of person do you think Fang was?
6. Should Fang have been respected?
7. Why did Nancy have to tell Bill everything?
8. Why did Nancy call Oliver her brother?

Chapters Twelve to Nineteen

1. Why was Fagin so pleased to see Oliver?
2. What was Nancy's "living" on the streets?

3. Describe what happened at the robbery in which Oliver took part.
4. When Nancy bought the sleeping mixture did she know she might be killed if Bill found out, or had she given up wanting to live?
5. What happened to Fagin?
6. Describe how Bill died.
7. Do you think Oliver was happy in his new life with Mr Brownlow? Give reasons for your answer.
8. What may have happened to the Dodger?

Questions on Interpretation

These can be discussion and/or essay questions.

1. Describe the main characters. Use the text to help you.
2. Why did Nancy decide to help Oliver?
3. Nancy would not give any information about Bill to Mrs Maylie. Why was this?
4. Fagin can be seen as evil and bad, but in many ways he was kinder to Oliver than Mr Bumble, a church representative, had been. Can you find, in the text, ways in which Fagin was both kind and unkind to Oliver? Can you find any ways that Mr Bumble was kind to him?
5. When Fagin plays the game of stealing handker-

chiefs with Dodger and Charley Bates in Chapter Five, he was being especially cunning towards Oliver. In which way was he being cunning?

6. If you had to choose between living with Mr Bumble or Fagin, who would you choose? Give reasons for your answer.
7. Why is everyone so shocked when Oliver asks for "more" ?
8. Do you think what happened to Oliver was typical for that time, or is this just a story Charles Dickens invented?
9. Oliver had no control over his life. Things just happened to him. Do you ever feel that you have no control over your life, or have times changed for young people since Oliver's time?
10. Do you think Oliver was a weak or a strong character? Give reasons for your answers. Can you find parts from the text to show what sort of character Oliver had?
11. The Artful Dodger was a fun-loving, mischievous rogue. He was still a thief and a criminal. Why do you think Charles Dickens allows him to go free at the end of the book?
12. In the last chapter, just before Bill Sikes dies, the boys are described as disappearing from him "like rats down a hole". Why are criminals and thieves

often portrayed like rats living in dirty conditions?

13. In which ways does Charles Dickens support the values of his time?
14. In which ways does Charles Dickens criticize the values of his time?
15. In Charles Dickens' time, money and wealth could buy education and training. How have times changed today? Do you agree with the changes?
16. "Despite this tender Christian care by the Christian authorities, Oliver did reach his ninth birthday ..." (page 5, line 2) What does this tell us about Charles Dickens' view of the authorities in those days?
17. What is the usual meaning of the following words:
 - fang
 - dodge
 - grim
 - wig
 - bumble
 - corney
 - sourberry (Sowerberry)
18. How does Charles Dickens use words like these to describe his characters more clearly?

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ENGLISH

Approximate Levels

After 2 years of English

Hans Christian Andersen: *The Ugly Duckling and Other Fairy Tales*
Rudyard Kipling: *The Jungle Books*

After 3 years of English

Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations*
George Eliot: *Silas Marner*
Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Lewis Carroll: *Alice in Wonderland*
Harriet Beecher Stowe: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

After 4 years of English

Sir Walter Scott: *Ivanhoe*
Charles Dickens: *Oliver Twist*
Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*
Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe*
Stories from the Old Testament

FRENCH

After 3 years of French

Victor Hugo: *Notre-Dame de Paris*