

CALICO *ILLUSTRATED* CLASSICS  
*Charles Dickens's*

# Oliver Twist



**ADAPTED BY:**  
Lisa Mullarkey

**ILLUSTRATED BY:**  
Howard McWilliam



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## Despised by All, Pitied by None



On a date long forgotten, in a poor town in England, a boy was born in a workhouse. There was almost no story to tell. For the first minutes of Oliver's life were almost his last. His breaths came slowly until he finally sneezed and let out a long wail. This let the poor workers know that they had another mouth to feed.

As Oliver gave proof of the power of his lungs, a pale face lifted from the pillow. "Let me see my child before I die."

The surgeon had been sitting by the fire. "You must not talk about dying yet," he said.

"Bless her dear heart," said a nurse. She deposited Oliver in the woman's arms.

The mother pressed her pasty lips to Oliver's forehead, passed her hands over his face, then fell back onto the pillow and died.

"It's all over," said the surgeon. "You needn't send for me if the baby cries. Just feed it gruel." He paused and looked at the woman. "Where did she come from? She was quite pretty."

The nurse scooped the baby into her arms. "She was brought here last night. She was found lying in the street. Her soles were worn through. Her feet bloodied. Where she was walking to nobody knows."

The nurse wrapped the baby in a blanket. She put him down to rest. She knew he'd be despised by all and pitied by none. Just like all the people of the workhouses were.

When Oliver was about ten months old, he was sent to another workhouse. This workhouse was run by a woman named Mrs. Mann. Mrs. Mann was in charge of twenty-five children.

Do not be fooled into thinking Mrs. Mann loved—or even liked—children. She took them

in because she was paid to do so. Part of her payment was to feed and clothe the children. Being a greedy woman, she kept all the money for herself. Oliver and the others got used to going to bed with empty bellies.

Word would come to Mrs. Mann when an inspection was to take place. It was only at these times the children were bathed, spruced up, and given a full meal.

When Oliver Twist was nine, the head of the workhouse, Mr. Bumble, paid a surprise visit to Mrs. Mann.

“Oliver Twist is nine today,” said Mr. Bumble. “We never did figure out who his father or mother were.”

Mrs. Mann raised her hands in astonishment. “How does he have any name at all?”

“I named him,” said Mr. Bumble. “We name the children in alphabetical order. The child before him was Swubble. Then a *T* was due. So, I named him Twist. Oliver is too old to stay

here. It's time he moved back to the house he was born into. I've come to take him."

"I'll fetch him myself," said Mrs. Mann. After a quick cleaning of his outer layer, Oliver was brought before Mr. Bumble.

"Make a bow to the man, Oliver," Mrs. Mann said. Oliver quickly bowed his head.

"Will you come with me, Oliver?" asked Mr. Bumble.

Before he answered, Oliver saw Mrs. Mann shaking her fist as a warning to the young boy. Oliver was used to her threats. "Will she be going with me?" he asked.

"I'm afraid not," said Mr. Bumble. Although Oliver was not sad to be leaving Mrs. Mann, he quickly pretended to be sad at the sight of her shaking fist.

Mrs. Mann shoved him off with a thousand embraces and a piece of bread and butter. She couldn't have Oliver appearing too hungry when he arrived at the workhouse.

As the gate closed behind them, Oliver felt a sudden sadness in leaving behind the only friends he had ever known.

Oliver was immediately brought before a council of ten men at the workhouse. They decided that Oliver should start work the very next day.

Life in the workhouse was hard. Meals were limited to once a day with the rare exception of a holiday here and there.

The boys ate in a large stone hall. A copper stove stood at one end with a master constantly stirring the gruel in it. There was never a need to wash the bowls, as the boys licked them clean.

Oliver and his friends suffered a slow starvation for three months. One day, a new boy came along. He wasn't used to hunger. His father had owned a small cookshop before he had died and left the boy an orphan.

The boy's eyes grew wild with hunger. "If I don't get more food, I shall eat one of you."



This frightened all the other boys. Oliver was picked to get more food for this boy. He took his bowl and presented it at the stove. “Please, sir, I want some more.”

The cook was a fat, nasty man. He couldn’t believe his ears. “What did you say?”

“Please, sir,” repeated Oliver, “I want some more.”

The cook crashed the ladle down on Oliver’s head and called for Mr. Bumble. Bumble was horrified to learn that Oliver had asked for more food. It simply wasn’t done. Bumble took Oliver before the council.

“He shall be hung!” said one of the men.

An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into confinement and a note was hung on the gate outside the next day. It said: “Offering five pounds to anyone who will take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish.”

Poor Oliver, he was about to be shuffled off once more.



## Oliver Becomes an Apprentice



As punishment, Oliver stayed inside his small, dark, cramped room for more than a week. He had committed the crime of asking for more food. A basic need that he often had been denied.

During the day, Oliver cried bitterly. But during the night, he covered his eyes with his small hands to shut out the darkness. He'd crouch against the wall, which is the only thing he felt comforted by. Once a day, he was brought before the boys and flogged as an example.

It was during the second week that Mr. Gamfield, a chimney sweep, saw the reward notice. He was met at the gate by Mr. Bumble.

“I want to take the boy in to teach him to be a chimney sweep,” said Gamfield. “I need an apprentice.”

Mr. Bumble led him into the workhouse and straight to the council.

“It’s a nasty trade,” said one of the men when Gamfield stated his intentions.

“Young boys have been smothered inside of chimneys,” said another.

After much conversation, it was decided that Oliver Twist would not be permitted to go.

Mr. Gamfield was angry. A few of the boys he had taken in had died. Were they holding this against him?

“How about I take him for less? Say, three or four pounds?”

The men shook their heads. “He’s yours for three pounds. He’s just the boy for you. He doesn’t eat much. If he misbehaves, smack him around and he’ll be fine.”

The bargain was made and Oliver Twist was released from his small room. He was ordered

to put on a clean shirt and given gruel and bread. Oliver wept, for he thought they wanted to fatten him up before they killed him.

“No tears, Oliver,” said Bumble. “You should be thankful. You’re going to be an apprentice. You have no parents of your own. Now, you will have a kind and blessed gentleman help turn you into a man.”

Then he smirked at Oliver. “It did cost the workhouse money. Three pounds to be exact. Three pounds for a naughty orphan that no one has ever loved.”

Oliver sobbed. On their way to the council, Bumble warned Oliver to appear happy. “You must say you’re looking forward to being a chimney sweep apprentice.”

Mr. Limbkins was on the council. He stared at the boy. “I suppose he’s keen on the idea of chimney sweeping?”

“Lives for it,” said Bumble giving Oliver a small pinch.



Mr. Limbkins looked at Gamfield. “You’ll feed him and treat him well?”

Gamfield nodded.

“You look like an honest man,” said Limbkins as he moved his glasses about. If his eyesight had been proper, he would have seen into the evil soul of Gamfield.

“Oh I am,” said Gamfield with an ugly leer.

“I have no doubt you are,” said Limbkins. He fixed his glasses more firmly on his nose and looked about him for the inkstand.

This was a critical moment of Oliver's fate. If the inkstand had been where the old man thought it was, he would have dipped his pen into it and signed the papers. Oliver would have been hurried off. But since his inkstand was not in front of him, he searched about. That's when his eyes landed on a pale and frightened face.

"My boy, what's wrong?" Mr. Limbkins asked.

Oliver burst into tears. He fell onto his knees. Claspng his hands together, he begged them to beat him. Kill him. Send him back to the darkness. Anything but send him home with this dreadful man.

Limbkins tore up the piece of parchment. No deal was struck. Gamfield was sent away and Oliver was brought back to his dark room.

The next morning, a sign was once again hung on the gate. It declared that Oliver Twist could be theirs for the sum of five pounds.

Mr. Sowerberry, the undertaker, was the next to inquire about Oliver Twist. Mr. Bumble led

him in front of the board. It was decided that Oliver would be a help to this man.

When called upon, Oliver appeared. He was told that he was to make coffins and wasn't allowed to complain or return to the workhouse.

"If you do so, you will be sent out to sea," Mr. Bumble said. "If that's the case, you could drown or get knocked about on the head."

With a small bag, Oliver was led to his new home and workplace by Bumble. Mr. and Mrs. Sowerberry greeted the boy. Oliver bowed.

"Dear me," said the wife. "He's so small."

"He is small, but he'll grow," said Mr. Bumble.

"We'll have to feed him, which will cost us more than he's worth," said the woman. She opened the cellar door. "Get down there and work, you bag of bones." She pushed Oliver down a steep flight of stairs into a stone coal cellar.

It was the kitchen. A young girl sat at a table darning socks.

“Charlotte,” said the woman, “give this boy the chips we set out for Trip. I suppose the boy will think his food is just fine.”

Oliver devoured the dog’s food without hesitating. The woman was horrified that he had finished so quickly. She thought of all the future meals he would eat. She turned to her husband and asked, “What have you done?”

Mrs. Sowerberry then turned to Oliver and said, “Now that you’re finished, come with me. You don’t mind sleeping among the coffins do you?” She laughed as she pointed to a thin mattress under a counter. “I suppose it don’t matter a bit because you have no choice in the matter.”

Oliver had no choice but to obey the evil woman.



## Oliver Makes a Decision



After a month as an apprentice, an event that seemed small and petty at the time would end up changing Oliver Twist's future.

One day, Oliver and another worker, Noah, had started to eat their evening meal. Noah had been jealous of Oliver's attention from Mr. Sowerberry. Noah started to tease Oliver in his usual ways. But this day, he felt more hateful than ever.

"How's your mother, Oliver?"

"She's dead," replied Oliver. "Don't say anything more about her." Oliver's breathed quickly. His eyes started to tear.

"What did she die of?" asked Noah, smirking.

"A broken heart. That's what some of the nurses told me." Oliver appeared to be talking

to himself. "I think I know what it may mean to die of that." Tears streamed down his face.

"What are you sniffing about?" asked Noah. "Your mother was a bad one, you know. You must know that."

"What did you say?" asked Oliver.

"I said she was a bad one," said Noah. "Good thing she died when she did or she would have probably been hung."

Crimson with fury, Oliver overturned a table and some chairs. He grabbed Noah by the throat and shook him. With a heavy blow to the head, he knocked Noah to the ground.

Just a minute before, Oliver had looked like a quiet, meek, dejected creature. But his spirit was roused at last. His blood was on fire.

"He's going to murder me," screamed Noah. "Oliver's gone mad! Someone help me!"

Charlotte and Mrs. Sowerberry rushed into the room. "You little wretch!" screamed Charlotte as she grabbed Oliver's arm. "You ungrateful, murderous boy!"

Noah was able to regain his footing and, with the help of Mrs. Sowerberry, they subdued Oliver. They dragged a kicking, screaming Oliver into a closet and locked him inside.

Mrs. Sowerberry fell into a chair. “We would have all been murdered. He’s mad! I hope this teaches my husband not to bring any of that kind into our home again.”

She called Noah over to her. “He’ll kick down that door in ten minutes time. Run and get Mr. Bumble. He’ll know how to handle that beast.” She gave him a shove. “Don’t bother to get your hat. Be off with you and get us help at once.”

Noah took off, without his hat, tearing through the streets until he reached the workhouse gate. When Mr. Bumble saw him, he knew something was terribly wrong.

“Has Oliver run away?” he asked.

“No, sir. No. But he has turned vicious. He tried to murder me,” said Noah. “He tried to murder Charlotte and the Misses, too.”

Noah continued to exaggerate the extent of what had happened. “He would have killed the master too but he’s out and about town. Mrs. Sowerberry needs you to come at once.”

When they arrived back at the undertaker’s home, Oliver was still screaming and kicking at the door.

Bumble walked toward the door and gave it a swift kick himself. “Oliver! Do you know who this is?”

“Yes,” replied Oliver.

“Are you afraid of my voice? Are you trembling?” asked Bumble.

“No!” shouted Oliver.

Bumble took a step back and straightened himself up. It was an answer he had not expected. By the look of the three others in the room, they were just as surprised.

“He must be mad,” said Mrs. Sowerberry. “No boy in his right mind would speak to you that way.”

“It’s not madness,” said Bumble. “It’s meat!” He scowled at her. “You’ve overfed him. You raised a spirit in him, I’m afraid. If you kept him on gruel, this would never have happened.”

Mrs. Sowerberry felt ashamed. “I only fed him what no one else would eat. Even the dog wouldn’t eat what Oliver ate.”

It was at this moment that Mr. Sowerberry returned. Upon hearing the news that Oliver tried to murder everyone, he knew what he must do. He opened the door and pulled Oliver out of the cellar.

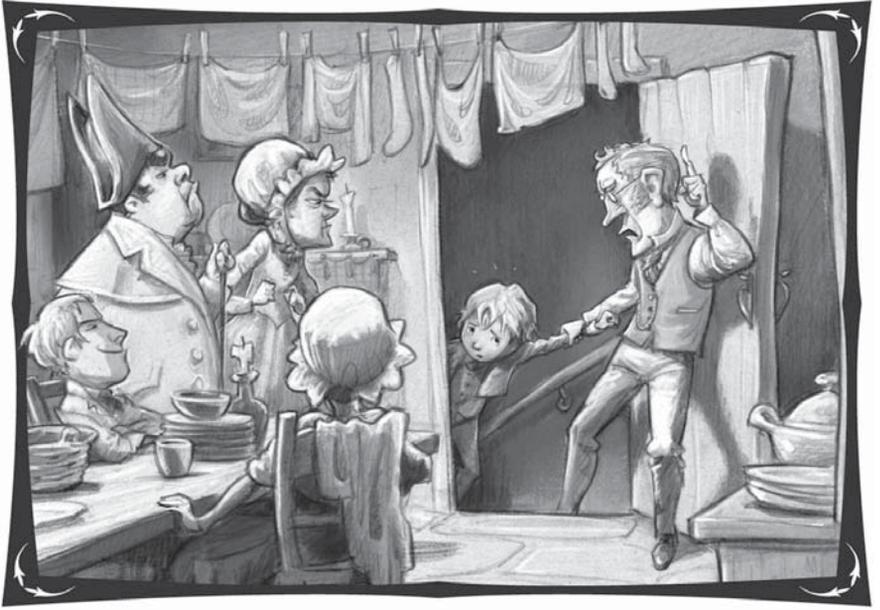
“Now, you’re a nice fellow, ain’t you? Why did you go about threatening everyone?”

Oliver pointed to Noah. His face was still full of rage. “He called my mother names.”

“So what?” said Mrs. Sowerberry. “She deserved what she was called.”

“That’s a lie!” screamed Oliver.

Mrs. Sowerberry burst into tears. Mr. Sowerberry knew that if he didn’t punish Oliver this instant or hesitated in any way,



there would be a price to pay with his wife. He at once gave Oliver a beating that satisfied all.

Oliver was then sent to his drab room. He sat silently for a long time. Finally, he rose to his feet and opened the door. He stood looking out at the vastness of the cold world. He looked up at the stars which seemed so far away.

He closed the door softly. He then gathered up the few belongings he had, tied them up in a handkerchief, and sat down on a bench to wait for the morning light to appear.

Early the next morning, Oliver Twist ran away. He headed back the way he came. He paused at the workhouse when he saw his old friend Dick outside.

“Oliver!” cried Dick.

“Hush, Dick. No one can know I’ve stopped by. You mustn’t tell anyone. I’ve been treated poorly and I’m running away to seek my fortune.” He touched his friend’s cheek. “You look so pale, Dick.”

“I’ll be alright, Oliver. I won’t tell a soul I saw you. You must go now. Be safe.” He kissed Oliver on the cheek. “God bless you, Oliver.”

The blessing was from a young child’s lips, but it was the first that Oliver had ever heard said upon him. During all the struggles and troubles that came from that day forward, he never once forgot the blessings of young Dick.



## Fagin and His Gang



Oliver was on his way to London. He had often heard the workhouse men say that London was where the poor could find ways to live. It was the perfect place for a homeless boy!

It took Oliver six days to land in London. He traveled with a few shirts, some crumbs of bread, and two pairs of socks in his bundle.

He begged for water at cottage doors and slept in meadows in haystacks. He felt cold, tired, and alone. On his journey, signs started to appear that beggars would be put in jail. This frightened Oliver a great deal and made him walk faster.

But luck was with him when a man gave him a meal of bread and cheese. A woman greeted

him with pity and sympathy and offered him what little she had. She had a son who was off wondering about in some part of the world. She hoped someone would treat him as well as she treated Oliver.

On the seventh morning, Oliver made his way to the tiny town of Barnet. It was there that he met the strangest-looking boy. He was about his own age but had the manners and air of a man. He wore a man's coat that reached to his heels. His trousers hung off of him.

"Hello!" said the boy to Oliver. "How are you?"

"Tired," said Oliver. "I've walked a long way. Been walking for seven days straight."

"Seven days!" said the boy. "You must be hungry then. If you want grub, you shall have grub."

He led Oliver to a nearby shop where they feasted on ham and bread.

"Staying in London?" asked the strange boy.

"Yes."

“Got any lodgings?”

“No.”

“Money?”

“No.”

The strange boy whistled and put his arms into his pockets as far as the big coat sleeves would let them go.

“Do you live in London?” asked Oliver.

“I do indeed. When I’m home, that is. I suppose you’d like a place to sleep tonight?”

“Please,” answered Oliver.

“I know a man in London. He will give you free room and board if you’re with me.”

Oliver couldn’t resist the offer of a free room. After that, he learned the boy’s name was Jack Dawkins. “My friends refer to me as the Artful Dodger.”

It wasn’t until eleven o’clock that evening that Oliver and Jack made their way to the man’s house. As they approached the town, a stench invaded the air. It was a dirty and wretched place.

By far, it was the worst that Oliver ever laid eyes on. For a split second, Oliver thought of running away. But in seconds, he was being pulled inside the house.

“Who’s there?” said a faraway voice.

“Plummy and slam!” replied Jack.

This seemed to be a secret password. It must have been the correct password because a man’s face peeped out of a passage. “There’s two of you. Who’s that?”

“A new pal,” replied Jack, pulling Oliver forward. “Is Fagin upstairs?” He didn’t wait for an answer. Jack pulled Oliver up the dark stairway that had several broken steps.

The ease of which Jack traveled up the rickety stairs led Oliver to believe that Jack had walked on them often enough.

Once upstairs, Jack threw open the door to a back room. The walls and ceiling were black with age and dirt. There was a meal upon the fire and a table in front of it. Candles were on

the table. Sausages cooked in the frying pan as a man stood with fork in hand above them.

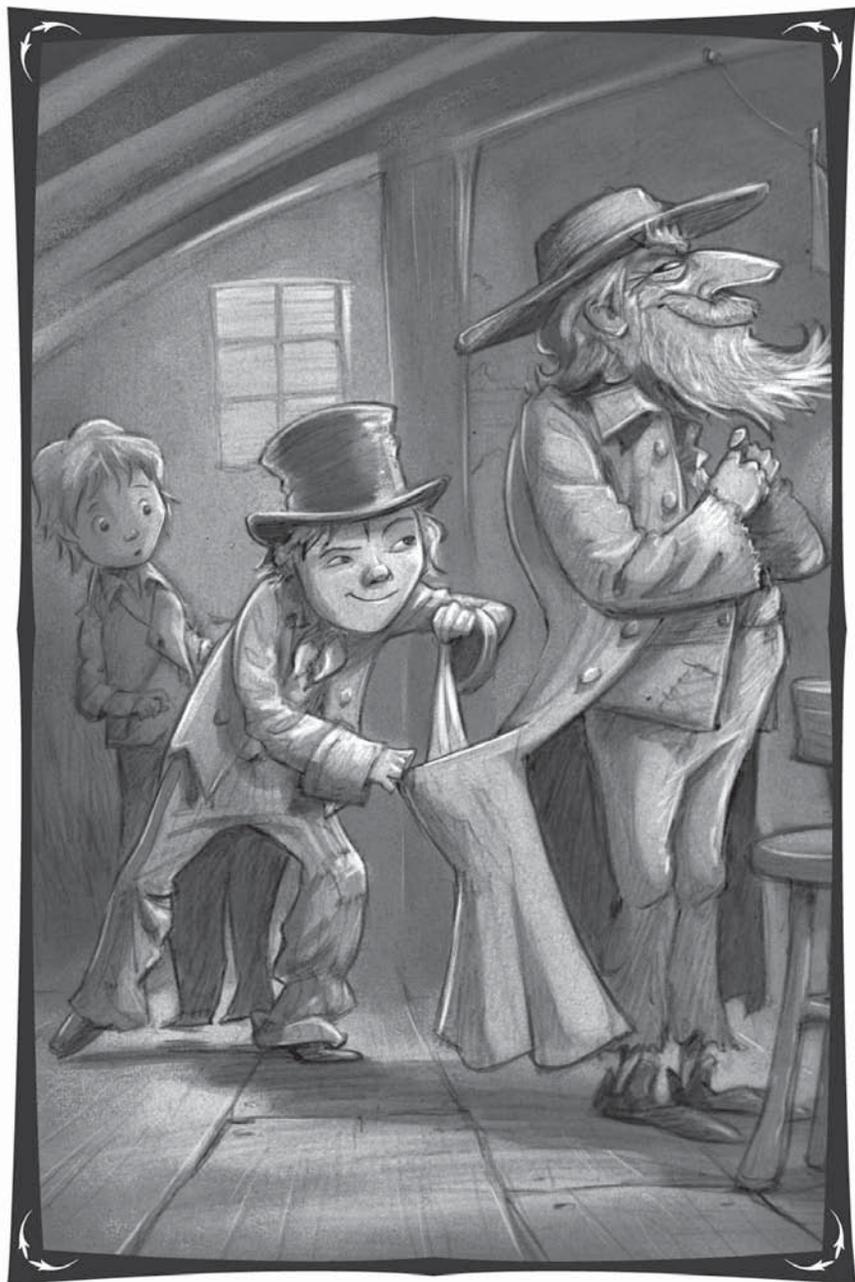
“This is him, Fagin,” said Jack. “My friend, Oliver Twist.”

The man grinned. He took Oliver by the hands and called for everyone to gather around him. Five boys scurried over. One was anxious to hang Oliver’s cap on a peg for him. Another offered to put his hands in Oliver’s pockets so he wouldn’t have the trouble of emptying them himself.

“We’re very glad to have you, Oliver,” said Fagin. “Dodger, take off the sausages and fix Oliver a plate.”

Oliver’s mouth watered when he saw his plate filled high with sausages. As he ate, he couldn’t help but notice all the handkerchiefs hanging about the place.

“Don’t you be thinking about those right now,” said Fagin as he handed Oliver a drink. Oliver took a sip and soon felt tired. It wasn’t long before he fell into a deep sleep.



Fagin and the boys tricked Oliver into thinking that they earned money by cleaning handkerchiefs and making pocketbooks.

“Maybe you can teach me to make such beautiful things,” said Oliver.

All of them roared with laughter. This puzzled Oliver. The odd games they played puzzled him, too. Fagin would dress up and pretend to shop around the room. Then the boys would try to reach into his pockets without him seeing or feeling them. They even convinced Oliver to play this silly game.

It wasn't until a week later that Oliver understood that it was not a silly game at all. They were practicing their pickpocket skills! All the handkerchiefs and trinkets in Fagin's room were stolen!



## A Robbery Takes Place



Oliver learned of their evil ways when he was out strolling about one day.

“See that man over there looking at the books?” asked the Dodger. “Watch us steal from him!”

The Dodger and Bates ran toward the man. He was reading and didn’t notice the boys. But he felt something strange. When he turned around, he saw Oliver screaming and running away. The man thought Oliver was the pickpocket.

“Stop thief!” yelled the man.

Oliver ran faster. The Dodger and Bates started to run in a different direction. The townspeople started to chase Oliver. “Stop thief!” they shouted.

A hand from the crowd reached out and grabbed Oliver's shoulder. The hand had sores all over it. The man had purple lips. He knocked Oliver to the ground.

The police were called at once. They took Oliver to see a judge. When they were in front of the judge, Oliver fainted. He was frightened.

"This boy is ill," said Mr. Brownlow. "He tried to steal from me but I don't want to press charges. He's a young, sick, boy."

Just then, the bookseller came in to see the judge. He knew Oliver was innocent. He had witnessed everything. Oliver was set free.

Mr. Brownlow took Oliver home with him. He and his housekeeper, Mrs. Bedwin, nursed Oliver back to health. In the room where he slept, there was a large portrait of a beautiful woman on the wall.

"Mrs. Bedwin, do you think Oliver resembles the woman in that portrait?" Mr. Brownlow asked.

“Shockingly so, Mr. Brownlow,” said Mrs. Bedwin. She couldn’t stop marveling at how much they looked like each other. But they never spoke of it again since Mr. Brownlow had the portrait removed.

Oliver woke up the next day. He had never seen such a fancy place! He was pleased when Mr. Brownlow asked him to stay with him.

“You are a good boy put in a bad situation,” said Mr. Brownlow. “I am interested in your future. I’m also curious about your past.”

This pleased Oliver. “You won’t send me away?” he asked.

“Never,” said Mr. Brownlow. “But I do hope to learn more about you. Where were you born? How did you end up in this town?”

Just then, a friend of Mr. Brownlow’s arrived. It was Mr. Grimwig, a sour man. He always had a scowl on his face and bad thoughts in his heart.

“You will tell me your story shortly,” said Mr. Brownlow. “But today, I have an errand that I’d

like you to do.” He picked up some books. “I need these returned to the bookseller and new books brought to me.” He gave Oliver a five pound note.

“He won’t return,” said Grimwig. “His kind never does. He’s going to run off with your money.”

Brownlow laughed. “Nonsense. Oliver is a good boy.” He smiled as Oliver made his way out the door and down the path, clutching the five pound note.

While Oliver was happy with his new arrangements, Fagin was not.

“Where did he get to?” Fagin screamed at the Dodger and Bates. Fagin had beaten both boys for allowing Oliver to be taken in front of the judge.

One of Fagin’s brutal men, Bill Sikes, was angry. “Oliver is going to turn all of us in. He must be found before it’s too late for us.”

Sikes had a plan. He forced Nancy, another member of Fagin’s gang, to go to the police

station and ask about Oliver. She pretended she was his sister.

“He was taken to a house in Pettonville,” said an officer.

When Nancy told Fagin, he exploded. “He must be found! We must kidnap him!” He thought up an evil plan.

Nancy and Sikes watched Brownlow’s house. They hid in the bushes and followed Oliver to the bookseller. Right before he went inside, Nancy pounced on him.

“Oliver! My long lost brother! There you are!” She grabbed Oliver as he kicked and screamed. People gathered to see what all the fuss was about.

“He joined a band of robbers and broke my mother’s heart!” shouted Nancy. “Come, Oliver. Time to come home!”

Oliver still kicked and screamed. Then Sikes came upon the scene with his dog. “Oliver! I don’t believe it! Go home with your sister now!”

Oliver was confused. “I don’t know these people. Help me!”

No one helped Oliver. Nancy and Sikes managed to carry him away and brought him to Fagin.

“Let me go,” begged Oliver. “These belong to a man who has been kind to me. He’ll think I ran away with his money.”

“It’s my money now,” shouted Fagin as he struck Oliver with a cane.

Nancy stepped between the two. “He’s suffered enough, Fagin. Leave him alone. You got the boy back. You made him a thief. Surely that’s enough! I was younger than Oliver when I started robbing and I’m still doing it. Leave the boy alone.”

Fagin was enraged. “That’s enough of you, Nancy. Put that kid to bed and make sure he never wears those fancy clothes again.”

As Nancy took Oliver’s clothes away, Fagin couldn’t help but wonder why Nancy was defending a wretched boy like Oliver Twist.



## Shots Ring Out



One day Mr. Bumble had to travel to London on business. As he entered a tavern, he came upon a sign that promised a reward for a missing boy. The boy's name was Oliver Twist!

The note said that anyone with information about Oliver's past or his present whereabouts would be rewarded with five gold coins.

*What luck*, thought Bumble. He copied Mr. Brownlow's address and went to see him at once. When he arrived, Mr. Brownlow and Mr. Grimwig were in the study drinking tea.

"What do you know of Oliver Twist?" asked Mr. Brownlow.

"He was born to low and vicious parents," said Bumble. "Since his birth, he has displayed nothing but treachery, ingratitude, and malice.

He attacked a boy and tried to murder others. He's nothing but a menace, I'm afraid."

Mr. Grimwig looked at Brownlow with a smug smile. "Just as I suspected."

Brownlow rang for Mrs. Bedwin. "That boy is an imposter. Never let me hear his name again."

"I don't believe it! He's a gentle soul. A dear," said Mrs. Bedwin. "It can't be true."

Mr. Brownlow dismissed Mrs. Bedwin, paid Mr. Bumble, and bid Grimwig a good evening. He went to bed that night with a heavy heart.

Oliver's heart sank that night as well. He missed his kind friends. It was well for him that he didn't know what they had heard about him or it might have broken his heart outright.



Fagin was afraid Oliver would run away again, so he threatened him daily with beatings. It wasn't until Fagin went to see Nancy and Sikes about robbing a house that he allowed Oliver out of his tiny room.

“That house has all types of things for the taking. It’s going to be ours,” said Fagin.

“The house is too hard to get into,” said Sikes. “The windows are too small for Nancy to get through.”

“Then take Oliver,” said Fagin. “He’s small and should fit through fine.”

Nancy arrived to see Oliver the next night. “Sikes wants to see you.”

“What does he want me for?” asked Oliver.

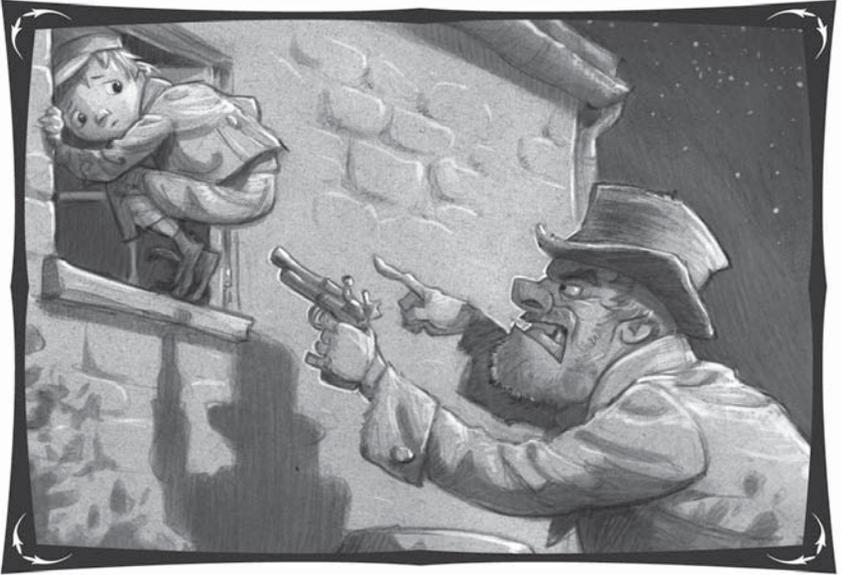
Nancy sighed. “I’m afraid he’s up to no good. But you have no choice, Oliver. Neither do I.”

After Nancy brought Oliver to Sikes, they walked all day long. It wasn’t until midnight that they landed in front of a house. One of Fagin’s gang members, Toby, was waiting for them.

“Lift him up to that window,” said Toby.

Oliver’s eyes grew wide, for he realized that he was to rob a house! “Have mercy on me. Let me go and I won’t tell anyone.”

They ignored Oliver’s pleas. Sikes pushed him up to the window and threatened him



with a pistol. “When you get inside, go to the front door and unlock it.”

With a gun at his back, Oliver did what he was told. But when he let the two men in, he panicked and started to shout.

At once, two half-dressed men appeared. There was a struggle and shots rang out. Oliver was wounded! He was bleeding badly as Sikes and Toby carried him out of the house. When they couldn’t carry Oliver any farther, they threw him into a ditch to die.



## Nurse Sally's Secret



It was a cold, bitter evening. At the same workhouse where Oliver was born, Mr. Bumble was sipping tea with Mrs. Corney, the woman in charge. They chatted about the paupers in disgust while they had their fill of cheese and tea.

“We already take care of these paupers and here they are always complaining they need more,” said Mrs. Corney.

“A selfish bunch,” replied Mr. Bumble as he slid his chair closer to Mrs. Corney.

Mrs. Corney blushed. She was widowed for twenty-five years and looked forward to these chats with Mr. Bumble.

Mr. Bumble finished his tea. Then, he leaned over and kissed Mrs. Corney.

“How dare you,” she said. “I’ll scream if you do that again.”

Before she had the chance, the door opened. “Old Sally is dying. She said she must tell you something at once, Mrs. Corney.”

Mrs. Corney was annoyed at this interruption. She secretly had hoped to be kissed again. But, she hurried off to see Sally.

When Mrs. Corney entered the dark attic, Sally mustered all her strength and sat up.

“Lie down,” commanded Mrs. Corney. “God will be coming for you soon enough.”

Sally refused to lie down. “I will never put my head on that pillow again until I’m dead,” said Sally. “Come closer. I must whisper in your ear.”

Mrs. Corney leaned over and tilted her ear to Sally’s mouth.

“Make the nurses go away,” said Sally.

At once, Corney dismissed both of them.

“Now listen to me,” said the dying woman aloud. “In this very room, in this very bed, I

once nursed a pretty woman who was brought here full of dirt and dust. She gave birth to a boy and died.” Sally started to sob. “She wasn’t even cold before I stole it from her. Took it right from her.”

“Stole what?” demanded Mrs. Coney.

“It,” replied Sally sobbing louder. “It was the only thing she had. It was gold I tell you. Rich gold that might have saved her life.”

“Gold?” asked Corney, moving closer. “Tell me more.”

“She asked me to keep it for the child. If only I had, he may have been treated better. If only they had known. His life could have been better. So much better.”

“What was the boy’s name?” asked Mrs. Corney.

“They called him Oliver. The gold I stole was . . .”

But she never finished the sentence. Sally fell back onto her pillow never to take another breath.

Mrs. Corney spied a piece of paper in Sally's hand. She slipped it out of Sally's hand and shoved it into her pocket before the nurses rushed back in.

"She's gone," said Mrs. Corney. "Stone dead. And nothing to tell after all." She left the room, leaving the two women to hover over the body.

While Corney attended to Sally, Mr. Bumble inspected the room he was in. He counted the silver teaspoons and sugar tongs, inspected the fine furniture, and peeked inside Mrs. Corney's chest of drawers.

He saw a small box in the last drawer. When he shook it, he heard the clinking of a coin. He smiled. "I'll do it," he said to himself as if he came to a sudden decision.

Mrs. Corney burst through the door and held her hand over her heart. "I've been so dreadfully put out, Mr. Bumble."

Mr. Bumble tried to coax information out of her but she was too excited. "Have a drink of spiced peppermint," said Mr. Bumble.

Mrs. Corney slowly sipped the drink as he stood staring at her.

“Have you heard,” said Mr. Bumble, “that Mr. Stout is expected to die this week? He is the master of the workhouse now. They’ll need a replacement and I am such the one.” He glanced at the drawer with the coin. “If you would marry me, we could live there rent-free.”

Mrs. Corney threw her arms around Mr. Bumble and promised her love and willingness to marry him.



“Now tell me, dear, what upset you so?” asked Bumble.

She hushed him. “After we’re married, I shall tell you. Now, let’s celebrate.”

At the same time, Fagin, Charley Bates, and the Dodger waited for news of the robbery.

Finally, Toby Crackit arrived. He ran in flustered with bright red cheeks. “The robbery failed. They drew their guns and shot Oliver. He was bleeding. Bill Sikes carried Oliver until he couldn’t carry him anymore. They chased us all over the countryside. When they sent dogs after us, we had to leave him in a ditch to die.”

Fagin flew into a rage. “Where’s Sikes?”

But he didn’t wait for an answer. He was already out the door.



## Fagin and Monks Strike a Deal



Fagin made his way to the Three Cripples. “Is Sikes here?” Fagin asked the landlord.

“Nah. He won’t be back until things settle a bit,” replied the landlord.

“Will *he* be here tonight?” asked Fagin.

“You must mean Monks,” said the landlord, hesitating. He glanced quickly around the room.

“Hush,” said Fagin. “Keep your voice down.” Then he nodded.

“He’ll be here in ten minutes.”

Fagin exploded once again. “I can’t wait ten minutes. Tell him to come see me tomorrow.”

Fagin quickly left and found himself walking to Sikes’s house. Although Sikes wasn’t there, Nancy was.

“The robbery went bad,” said Fagin. “Oliver was left in a ditch. Could be dead. If Sikes comes back and doesn’t bring me Oliver, I’m going to kill him,” said Fagin.

Nancy started to beat Fagin with her fists. “Bill has done a lot of crimes for you. Made you lots of money. As for Oliver, I hope he is dead. His life would be better for it. He has no hope with you, Fagin. Look what you did to me. Living with you is worse than death.”

Fagin pushed Nancy down on the floor. “I must have Oliver alive. He’s worth hundreds of pounds to me.”

He left Nancy and returned to his own home. As he approached the door, a shadowy figure stepped out from the hedge.

“Monks!” said Fagin as he looked quickly around. “Come in.”

“I’ve been waiting for two hours,” said Monks. “Where the devil have you been?”

“On your business all night,” replied Fagin.

“Of course,” said Monks. “What’s come of it?”

“Nothing good,” said Fagin. He led Monk upstairs and told him about the failed robbery.

“I’ll tell you again,” said Monks. “It was badly planned. Why didn’t you keep Oliver here and make a pickpocket out of him? If you had the patience, he would have been caught and sent away for good. I could have been done with him if he went to prison.”

“And who would benefit from that?” asked Fagin.

Monks lowered his eyes. “Me. Only me.”

“That is true, Monks. But I have a great interest in him. It has been difficult to train him in this business. Nothing frightens him. He’s used to beatings. If I withhold food, he doesn’t care because he’s known hunger.

“Look what happened when I sent him out with the Dodger and Charley Bates. Did he get caught? No! He ended up living with the man he robbed.”

“That was not my fault,” said Monks.

“True, but it’s how you found him. You happened upon him at the booksellers that day and struck him down to the ground. But Nancy now feels sorry for Oliver.”

Monks bit down on his purple, swollen lips and rubbed his hands full of sores together. “Then kill her! Let me do it! We can have no one looking out for Oliver Twist.”

“I won’t kill Nancy,” said Fagin. “But I will turn Oliver into a criminal if he’s still alive. I can promise you that.”

“If he’s dead,” said Monks, “I had nothing to do with it. My name cannot be mentioned.” Suddenly, Monks stopped talking. “I saw the shadow of a woman in a cloak and bonnet pass.”

Fagin rushed out into the hall. “No one is there. It’s your mind playing tricks on you.”

“I swear I saw it,” replied Monks. “It was leaning over but when I spoke, it darted away.”

If Fagin and Monks would have looked behind the shrubs outside, they would have found their lurking shadow.



## A Strange Turn of Events



The day after the robbery, Oliver awoke in a ditch. His arm was bloodied and of no use to him. He struggled to his feet and made his way to the nearest house. It was the same house that Fagin's gang had tried to rob.

Oliver quietly knocked on the door. Two servants, Giles and Brittles, opened the door. They gasped at the poor boy in front of them covered in blood.

"It's him, Brittles!" declared Giles. "One of the robbers!"

Brittles grabbed the boy and threw him on the floor. "This is the one you shot, Giles."

"Don't let him die," said Giles. "For I want him to hang for his crime."

“Giles,” whispered a voice from the top of the steps, “you’re frightening my aunt as much as the thieves.” A young woman rushed down the stairs. “Why, it’s only a boy. Is he badly hurt?”

She examined the boy. “Just a boy, I say. One who hasn’t been given a chance in life.” She stood and spoke sternly to the servants. “Take him upstairs to Giles’s room. Let him rest. Then run off and call on the doctor.”

She looked at Oliver once again. “We must treat him kindly, Giles. Treat him kindly for me.”

Miss Rose was seventeen. She was mild and gentle, pure and beautiful. She had noble deep blue eyes and a good humor and nature to match. Her aunt, Mrs. Maylie, came into the room to look over Oliver.

Brittles returned with Dr. Losberne an hour later. “The boy is ill,” said the doctor. He turned to Giles. “This was your doing?”

“It was my honor,” Giles replied.

“Your honor? But was it fair?” asked the doctor. “A knock on the head, perhaps.”

Giles felt ashamed.

Dr. Losberne called the women in to see Oliver. “He is quiet and resting comfortably now. I think you both need to see how young he is.”

Rose walked in and sat in a chair next to his bed. She pushed his hair aside and wept.

The old woman gasped. “This poor child could not have been a pupil of the robbers! He is too young.”

The doctor spoke. “The youngest and fairest are too often its chosen victims. He knew no other way.”

Rose continued to weep. “He may never have known a mother’s love or the comfort of a home.” She turned to her aunt. “Please think of that, Aunt, before you allow them to haul him off to prison. If I didn’t have you, I could be where he is now.”

The woman pulled Rose close to her. “I won’t let harm come to him. My days are



drawing to an end. May mercy be shown to me as I show it to others.”

Oliver didn't wake up until much later that night. When he did, he told the sorry details of his life. His tale was filled with such suffering, misery, and cruelty that Rose and the aunt wept.

“We must do something for him,” said Rose.

“Perhaps we can convince the servants,” said Dr. Losberne, “that Oliver was not one of the robber's gang.”

Aunt Maylie called for Giles and Brittles. “Can you swear that this is the same boy you saw last night in the darkness of the house?”

Brittles and Giles could not be certain. The police did not need to come and see Oliver. He would remain a free boy!

Oliver grew stronger with each passing week. He felt the kindness that Mrs. Maylie, Rose, and the good doctor had to give. He wanted to repay their kindness.

“You have repaid us a thousand times simply by being here, Oliver,” Rose said.

Nicer words had the small boy ever heard. He truly felt as if he were a part of their family.

When spring came, they took a trip. Dr. Losberne accompanied them. One morning he took Oliver out for a ride in the carriage. Suddenly, Oliver turned pale and pointed.

“That house!” Oliver exclaimed. “That’s where Fagin’s gang took me in. That means that Mr. Brownlow doesn’t live too far from here.”

“Let’s go see them!” said Dr. Losberne. “They will be overjoyed to see you.” When Oliver saw the large white house, he jumped out of the carriage and ran to the door. A servant answered.

Oliver beamed. “Mr. Brownlow, please. Tell him Oliver is here. Back at last!”

“I’m sorry,” said the servant. “He’s gone off with Mrs. Bedwin and Mr. Grimwig to the West Indies. They left just six weeks ago.”

Naturally, Oliver was disappointed, but he knew there was nothing he could do. He was thankful for his new family. It was the happiest three months young Oliver had ever known.



## Rose Becomes Ill



The happy days quickly came to an end. Rose became ill. So ill that her aunt thought she was going to die.

“Don’t say that,” said Oliver. “She makes everyone so happy. Heaven will never let her die so young.”

“She has a fever. I’ve heard of this fever. It will get worse,” said Mrs. Maylie. “Go at once and fetch Dr. Losberne. He’ll know what to do.” She gave him a letter. “You must travel four miles to deliver it to the station. Once there, they’ll take it from there on horseback to Chertsey.”

At the last moment, she gave him another letter. It was addressed to a Henry Maylie, Esquire.

Oliver was off at once. He ran across fields and down little lanes. Finally, he came to the station. He paused and looked about the inn next door. He hurried up the path and knocked into a man coming out of the inn.

“Curses to you,” raged the man. “What are you doing here? You haunt me and will continue to do so. Death upon your heart!”

Oliver was shaken by the man’s appearance. He had purple lips and sores covered his hands. He tried to grab Oliver but Oliver was too fast, for the man had been drinking. As Oliver ran, he turned to see the man fall to the ground with a foaming mouth.

Oliver quickly forgot about the strange man. He ventured forward, delivered the letter, and rushed home to be by Rose’s side. She had grown worse. A local doctor was standing over her.

“It would be a miracle if she makes it,” he said.

Oliver didn't sleep a wink that night. He prayed to God to save the woman's life who had saved his own.

Dr. Losberne arrived late the next evening. "So loved. So young. But I am afraid there is very little hope," he declared.

That day, Oliver crept away to a churchyard and spent the day in prayer. When he returned, Mrs. Maylie was sitting alone in the parlor



crying. Oliver's heart sank. She hadn't left Rose's side at all. What did this mean?

Dr. Losberne walked into the room. He took his hat off.

"Tell me," cried Mrs. Maylie. "Is she dead?"

"No!" cried the good doctor. "She is not dead nor will she die. She will live to see many more days!"

They all fell upon their knees and gave thanks through their tears of joy.

The next day, Oliver went out to the fields to gather flowers for Rose's room. When he returned, he saw a young man getting out of a carriage. Mrs. Maylie was looking at him through the open door.

"Mother! I just heard the news. Rose will live! Why didn't you call for me sooner? If she had . . . I can't even bring myself to say the word." He kissed his mother on the cheek. "I would never have known happiness again if anything had happened."

“There is a stain on her name. If you marry her, that stain becomes yours. It’s of no fault of hers. But if you had children, they would feel the shame.”

“Mother! There is no shame. I love her. I would protect her always and never leave her.”

“You think so now, Harry. But the world is cruel,” Mrs. Maylie said.

“It would be crueler to never love her. I have suffered greatly without her. My heart is set on Rose. If you oppose me, you strip away all of my happiness.”

“It is because I love both of you so much that I want to spare your future broken hearts. But come,” she grabbed his hands and kissed them. “We can talk of this later.”

“Will you tell her I am here?” asked Harry.

Harry had to wait until the fever was gone before he could see Rose. When she saw him, her eyes filled with tears. “You shouldn’t have

come. Your future is bright and must not include me.”

“My future is you!” exclaimed Harry. “Without you, I am nothing.” He took her chin in his hand. “Do you love me as I love you?”

Rose blushed. “Yes, but there are too many people who would mock you. My background is not worthy. You must go.”

“If you want me to go, you first must promise me one thing. In a year’s time, I will come back to you and you must once again talk of our love.”

Rose agreed as Harry fled the room. He was too pained to turn to get one last look of the woman he loved.

Outside, resting from his sleepless nights filled with prayers for Rose, Oliver saw Fagin’s face flash before him. He shuddered. Was it a dream? He then heard a rustle in the bushes. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Fagin and the man with the purple lips.

Oliver screamed for help. Harry rushed outside to him. He helped Giles and Brittles look about the property but didn't see any signs of the men.

"You've had many troubles, Oliver," said Harry. "Perhaps you are dreaming about them now."

But Oliver knew the truth. It was Fagin and his helper coming to take him away from his new family.



## Monks Destroys Evidence



So it came to be that Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney married. Bumble was promoted to master of the workhouse. It had only been two months since the marriage, but it was two months too much. Bumble missed his old life.

“I sold myself for six teaspoons, two pair of silver sugar tongs, fine furniture, and a coin,” he said as he sat across from Mrs. Bumble.

Mrs. Bumble growled. “You were cheap then. Lord knows I paid for you!”

The two had another fight that ended with Mr. Bumble finding his way to the town pub. He seated himself at the bar. There was a stranger sitting next to him. Mr. Bumble couldn’t help staring at the sores that covered his hands.

“I know you, don’t I?” said the man. “Aren’t you the master of the workhouse?”

“I am, I am,” Mr. Bumble replied.

“What luck,” said the man. “I came to town today to find you. But you found me first.” He slid a few coins over to Bumble. “Think back quite a few years ago. Twelve to be exact. To a time when a woman gave birth in your workhouse and died.”

“We had lots of those women,” said Bumble. “All the same to me.”

“The baby was a boy. He was later sent to live with a coffin maker.”

“You mean Oliver Twist,” said Bumble. “I knew of him. A rascal. A menace.”

“I know enough about him,” said the man. “I want to know about the nurse who helped deliver that baby. Where is she? I must find her.”

“Out of work,” laughed Bumble. “She’s dead. Died last spring.”

Bumble wasn't sure if the man looked disappointed or relieved at the news.

The stranger stood up to leave. But Bumble was cunning. He remembered the night of Sally's death. Mrs. Corney knew something and had promised to tell him when they married.

"I know someone who knew her," said Bumble. "She was with her the day she died. She could help you . . . for a price."

The stranger smiled. "Meet me tomorrow evening at nine o'clock." He took out a piece of paper and scribbled an address on it. "Tell no one."

The man started to go out the door as Bumble looked at the address. It was by the waterside. He noticed the man had forgotten to write down his name.

"Sir," said Bumble, "what is your name?"

The man stared at him.

"I need to know who to ask for tomorrow."

"Monks," said the man. "Ask for Monks."

The next evening was dry and humid. Mr. and Mrs. Bumble disguised themselves in long cloaks and made their way to a rickety house on the water.

“Hello there,” said a voice from above. “Come inside. Don’t keep me waiting.”

The two made their way inside to the cramped, dirty house.

“Is this the woman?” demanded Monks.

“This is the woman,” replied Bumble. “As promised.”

Monks smiled. “The sooner we do our business the better.”

“You want information about the nurse who helped bring Oliver Twist into this world?” asked Mrs. Bumble. “What’s it worth to you?”

“Maybe nothing or maybe twenty pounds,” said Monks. “Depends on what you tell me.”

“It’s worth more than that,” said the woman. “I want twenty-five pounds. In gold.”

“Twenty-five pounds in gold!” exclaimed Monks.

“I assure you it’s a small sum for such a large secret,” said Mr. Bumble.

Monks hesitated before shoving his hand in his pocket. He took out a canvas bag. He handed Mrs. Bumble twenty-five pounds in gold.

Mrs. Bumble smiled. “When Nurse Sally died, we were alone. She spoke of a young boy that she brought into the world. In fact, she brought him into the world in the very room she slept in. The nurse robbed his mother.”

“In life?” asked Monks.

“In death,” replied the woman. “She stole from the corpse. She had given Sally something meant for the son, but Sally kept it herself. Then she sold it for money.”

“Who did she sell it to? What was it?” asked Monks.

Before she could explain more,” said Mrs. Bumble, “she fell back onto her pillow and died.”

“Without saying more?” asked Monks. “It’s a lie! You’re lying to me! I will not be played by you or your husband.”

“It’s the truth,” said Mrs. Bumble. “But she clutched my hand and slid something into it as she died. It was a pawn ticket. The ticket was about to expire in two days. So, I went and retrieved the object.”

“Where is it now?” asked Monks.

She threw a bag on the table. “Right here.” She pulled out a small gold locket. “Inside were two locks of hair and a plain gold wedding ring.”

She held the locket out for Monks to inspect.

“It has the name Agnes on it,” said Mr. Bumble. “The date is the year before the child was born.”

“Anything else?” asked Monks.

“That’s all I know,” said Mrs. Bumble. Mr. Bumble prayed it was enough. He didn’t want Monks to take the twenty-five pounds back.

“Is that the information you wanted?” asked Mrs. Bumble.

“It’s exactly what I needed,” said Monks. “But now I must do this.” He jumped up and slid the table aside. He grabbed an iron ring on



one of the floorboards and threw it back. The Bumbles quickly gathered around the trapdoor.

“Look down,” said Monks.

The water was below them racing rapidly.

Monks took the contents of the bag, wrapped them back up, and threw the bag into the water below. He closed the door. “Our business is done. Leave at once. You will do well to forget my name.”

The Bumbles rushed out of the dank house happy to travel far away from this crazy man.



## A Warning for Rose



The next evening, Bill Sikes woke up from a nap.

“How do you feel tonight?” asked Nancy.

“As weak as water. Lend me a hand and help me off this bed.” His mood was foul and didn’t improve when Fagin dropped by for a visit.

“I’ve brought something for you, Sikes.” Fagin had the Dodger open a bag and hand the food and drink to a sickly looking Bill.

“This is good but I need money,” said Sikes. “If I don’t get some, I could die.”

Sikes sent Nancy home with Fagin to get some money. While she was there, a knock came at the door. It was Monks.

Nancy stared at him.

“It’s only Monks. One of my people,” said Fagin. He turned toward Monks. “When did you return to town?”

“Two hours ago,” said Monks.

“Did you see him?” asked Fagin.

Monks looked at Nancy and back at Fagin. “Yes.” He hesitated. “Why don’t we talk in private?”

As soon as the men disappeared up the steps, Nancy slipped off her shoes. She drew her gown over her face so her shape wouldn’t betray her. She glided silently up the stairs to listen to Monks and Fagin.

When she had heard all she needed to, she quickly and quietly returned downstairs. Fagin and Monks followed shortly.

“I’ve been waiting for Bill’s money, Fagin. I want to be getting home now,” Nancy said. Once Fagin dropped the coins into her hands, she was off with one last look at Monks.

By the time Nancy reached Sikes, she felt pale and weak. She tried to hide her mood from

Sikes. It turns out he wouldn't have noticed her mood or feelings. All he cared about was Fagin's money.

The next night, Nancy waited for Sikes to drift off to sleep before she dared leave the room. She dressed quickly and slipped out the door. She walked to a fancy hotel in the West End of London. She prayed she wasn't too late. When she reached the fanciest hotel near Hyde Park, she stood at the door.

A woman poked her head out. "Who do wish to see here?" She frowned as she looked Nancy over.

"Miss Rose Maylie," said Nancy. "I must see her."

The woman turned up her nose. "She will never see someone like you."

"Please tell her it's important," begged Nancy. "Won't someone help a poor girl like me? I mean no harm!"

Finally, a sweet cook stepped forward. "I'll give her your message."

Five minutes later, Nancy stood in front of Rose. “I beg of you,” said Nancy with tears streaming down her eyes. “I beg your forgiveness.”

Rose was confused and took Nancy’s hands in hers. “Don’t be so sad. Tell me what’s troubling you.”

“I am the one who kidnapped Oliver from Mr. Brownlow and brought him back to Fagin’s place.”

“You!” said Rose. “Why?”

“There’s so much to tell and I am sure I will be killed if they find out I’m here. We don’t have much time. I must know something. Do you know a man named Monks?”

“No,” said Rose.

“He knows you,” said Nancy. “He knows you’re here and that’s how I found out about you.”

Rose sat down upon hearing this news.

“After Oliver was put into your house on the night of the robbery, I listened in on a

conversation between him and Fagin. Monks had seen him accidentally with two of our boys. It was on the first day we lost him. He knew about the boy but I couldn't figure out why.

“A bargain was struck between him and Fagin that if Oliver came back, Monks would pay Fagin. If Fagin could make him a thief, he'd get even more money.”

Rose was confused. “Why would he want Oliver to be a thief?”

“I could never find out. Last night, they almost caught me listening. But I did hear one more thing. Monks said that the only proof of the boy's identity was at the bottom of the river and the nurse that had the proof was rotting in a coffin.”

“This is all so strange,” said Rose.

“He said he rather have Oliver dead and if he had the chance to do it himself, he would. Then he said he was Oliver's brother!”

Rose gasped. “His brother?”

Nancy nodded. "He was planning on getting you to pay hundreds of pounds for him once you discovered who Oliver really was."

Nancy started to walk toward the door. "I must leave. If they know I've come, then I won't have many breaths left."

Rose rushed over to her. "You are a brave woman to help Oliver. Please take this money. Use it to escape that way of life."

Nancy refused the money. "It is the only life I know." As she was leaving, she cautioned Rose. "Have someone you can trust help you with Oliver. I am afraid what Monks will do. If you need me for anything else, I go for a walk on the London Bridge every Sunday night. You can find me there at midnight."

Nancy rushed home and prayed the entire way that Bill Sikes had not noticed her missing.



## The Return of Mr. Brownlow



Not long after, Rose was playing the piano when Oliver raced into the room. “I’ve seen him! It was him! I’ve prayed that I’d see him again.”

“Who, Oliver?” asked Rose.

“Mr. Brownlow! The gentleman who was so good to me. He was getting out of a coach. I was too shocked to say anything but I wrote down his address.” He held a scrap of paper in his hand.

Rose took the paper. “Craven Street isn’t too far from here,” said Rose. “Let’s go at once.”

In no time, they were in front of Mr. Brownlow’s house.

“Wait until I call for you, Oliver. You will soon talk to your beloved angel,” said Rose.

Once Rose was permitted to enter, she met Mr. Brownlow and Mr. Grimwig.

“Gentleman, I have come to tell you that I know of someone who you showed great kindness to. I believe you’d very much like to see him again.”

Mr. Brownlow was curious. “Who?”

“Oliver Twist,” said Rose.

Mr. Grimwig grunted and looked disappointed.

Mr. Brownlow gasped. “How I’ve wondered about that boy! I’ve tried to find him. Please tell me that you know something that will change my unfavorable opinion of him.”

“He is a bad one,” said Mr. Grimwig. “A bad one indeed.”

Rose ignored Grimwig. “He’s a boy of a noble nature and a warm heart.” Then Rose told Mr. Brownlow what had happened to Oliver. She kept certain information to herself, for Grimwig was in range.

“Where is he now?” cried Mr. Brownlow.

“He is waiting in the coach at the door,” said Rose.

Before she finished her sentence, Mr. Brownlow was out the door. When Rose peeked out the window, she saw a joyous reunion.

The two came back in the house with smiles and hearty laughers. Mr. Brownlow hugged Oliver and said, “I know someone else that is going to be just as happy to see you. Mrs. Bedwin, could you come in here please?”

Mrs. Bedwin curtsied at the door. “What can I do for you?”

“Put on your glasses. There is someone here to see you.”

After Mrs. Bedwin put her glasses on, she rushed over to Oliver. “I knew my good, fair boy would be back. Look at you! In fancy clothes!”

It was a joyous reunion indeed.

When Rose had a chance, she spoke to Mr. Brownlow privately about her visit from Nancy.



“We must get this Monks alone,” said Brownlow. “We must have justice for Oliver and give him back his good name.” Then he scratched his head. “How do we know what this Monks looks like?”

“Nancy walks on the London Bridge each Sunday around midnight. She’ll help us.”

“Sunday is still five days away,” sighed Mr. Brownlow. “But I suppose waiting for a few more days won’t hurt. We don’t want to betray Nancy’s trust in you.”

It was agreed that Dr. Losberne, Mr. Grimwig, Mrs. Bedwin, and, at Dr. Losberne’s request, Harry, would be involved in bringing back to Oliver what he had lost so many years ago—his good name.



## Fagin's Gang Grows



On the same night Nancy met with Rose, Noah Claypole, Mr. Sowerberry's helper, and Charlotte, Mr. Sowerberry's maid, were walking toward London.

"I'm so tired of walking," said Charlotte. "I have such a heavy load."

"Don't whine," said Noah. "Carrying Sowerberry's money is worth it, ain't it?" He pointed to the London lights in the distance. "Sowerberry will never find us there. Serves him right taking his money. No more making coffins for me."

"This money is heavy, Noah. "Can't you carry it?"

"You took it, didn't you? You should have the honor of carrying it."

The truth was, Noah didn't want to carry the heavy load. If Sowerberry did find them, Charlotte would be the one to go to jail.

"But I took it for you," whined Charlotte.

They came upon the Three Cripples. "I've heard this is a fine place," said Noah. "Let's have a feast tonight. We have the money to pay for it!"

The two walked into an empty pub. They sat at the bar and recalled how they stole a large sum of money from their master.

In the next room, Fagin sat reading a paper. He took immediate notice of the two strangers through a hole in the wall. He pressed his ear to the wall. He listened to their tales of cunning ways.

*We could use them in our gang,* thought Fagin.

Fagin went out to meet the two strangers. "I heard you talking of stealing from your master of the house."

Noah and Charlotte became frightened.

“Your secrets are safe with me,” said Fagin. “That’s what we do here. We pickpocket, steal from old ladies, kids, and even banks. It’s our way of doing business. You can work here. You’ll be safe.”

“Would we need to hand over our money?” asked Noah.

“That’s the only way,” said Fagin. “But you would be paid. You would live here and get your food and drink here.”

Noah thought for a moment. “I don’t want to do anything that’s too high-risk. I like to be sneaky but don’t want to get caught.”

“How about snatching old ladies’ purses? You grab them and run around the corner.”

“They holler too much,” said Noah. “Besides, they scratch something awful.”

“How about the children?” asked Fagin. “Their moms send them on errands. You knock them down and steal their money. It’s quite simple.”

Charlotte clapped her hands together. “A perfect job for you, Noah!”

Noah and Charlotte couldn’t believe their luck. They were anxious to meet Fagin the next day and have their new adventures begin.

But the next day when Noah and Charlotte met Fagin, he wasn’t quite so happy.

“Bad news for us. One of our best boys is in jail. Jack Dawkins. Yes, the Artful Dodger got caught stealing a silver snuff box.”

Charley Banks walked in the door. “It’s all over, Fagin. They found the gentleman who owns the box. He identified the Dodger. It hurts to think he’s going to jail for stealing something so small. If only it had been a gold watch! Much more honor and glory in that!”

“He was the best of us,” said Fagin. “He’ll manage to get out of jail.”

But Charley wasn’t too sure.

“We must find out how he does today. But we can’t go. They’ll lock us away with him,”

said Fagin. He looked over at Noah. "But you! No one knows you! You could help us."

Noah hesitated. This made Fagin angry. "You want to eat and drink without earning your keep?"

Finally, Charlotte convinced Noah to go.

The first thing Noah noticed at the courthouse was the awful, damp, dank smell. The walls were blackened. A thick greasy scum covered every surface.

Noah saw the Dodger shuffle into the courtroom. He was yelling and shouting that he was innocent.

"Hold your tongue," said the jailer.

"I'm an Englishman, ain't I?" said the Dodger. "Where are my privileges? I want to see the Secretary of State for the Home Affairs. I've got places to go and I must go now."

"Silence," yelled the jailer.

"Who is this before me?" asked the judge.

"It's a pick-pocketing case, your worship," said the jailer.

“Has he ever been here before?”

He ought to have been. I know him well. Everyone knows him.”

The Artful Dodger bowed. “I’m popular, eh?”

Everyone laughed except the jailer and judge.

“Take him away,” said the Judge. “Off to jail.”

They led the Dodger away kicking and screaming.

Noah backed out of the courthouse and made his way back to Fagin’s to report on all he had seen.

He prepared himself for Fagin’s wrath.



CHAPTER  
15

## A Secret Meeting



Nancy was anxious to go to London Bridge on Sunday evening. Right before she left, Fagin and Sikes came in the door. Sikes was surprised to see Nancy wearing a coat and bonnet.

“Where are you going?” Sikes demanded.

“To get some fresh air,” said Nancy.

He pushed her down on the floor. “You ain’t going nowhere. Cook us a meal.”

Nancy had no choice. She prepared a meal as she watched the clock. Once midnight passed, she knew that there wasn’t any point traveling to the bridge.

Fagin kept his eye on Nancy. He thought that she had been acting strange the last few weeks. He wondered where she was really going that

evening. Did she have another boyfriend? He decided to send Noah out to spy on her.

“I have another job for you,” said Fagin to Noah. “Don’t worry, it’s nothing dangerous. I’ll pay you a pound to follow a girl,” said Fagin. “One of my girls. It’s Nancy. I don’t trust her anymore. I want to know where she goes. Who she sees.”

Noah did what he was paid to do. He followed Nancy all week long. She never went far and never saw anyone but Fagin’s boys. On Sunday, Noah saw the door to her house open. She stepped outside and quickly walked down the street. Noah followed her to London Bridge.

Noah saw two people approach Nancy right before she stepped onto the bridge. One was a young girl and the other was an older gentleman.

Noah hid behind some bushes and listened to their conversation.

“Why didn’t you come last week?” asked Rose. “We looked for you.”



“I was held captive in my own house. Sikes wouldn’t let me leave,” said Nancy. “I tried.”

Mr. Brownlow took his hat off. “Rose told me your story, Nancy. You have my word that you will be safe. We need to find Monks to find out the rest of his story. If we can’t find him, we’ll need you to hand Fagin over to us.”

Nancy gasped. “Never! I will not do it. Ever! He’s the devil to me but I still won’t do it. You see, I have led a bad life. But I have led

it with him. I will not turn any of them in, as bad as they are.”

“Then you must put Monks into our hands, dear Nancy,” said Rose.

“But Monks could turn against them!” cried Nancy.

“You have our promise,” said Mr. Brownlow. “We only want Oliver’s story. We won’t harm your friends in any way.”

Nancy trusted them. “Monks is a young man. Younger than thirty. But he looks old and haggard. His lips are swollen and a deep purple. His hands are covered with sores. His throat has a red mark on it. It looks like a burn of some sort. You can often find him at the Three Cripples.”

Mr. Brownlow raised his eyes. “I think I know this man!”

Rose took Nancy’s hands. “Please come with us. We’ll keep you safe. We have money. You’ll have food and clothes. You’ll want for nothing.”

“My place is here,” sighed Nancy. “I am one of them and I must go now.” She turned and made her way down the dark road as she wept.

After everyone had gone, Noah crept from his hiding spot and ran as fast as he could to Fagin’s house.

Fagin wasn’t happy with the news. He sent for Bill Sikes and told him what Nancy had done. But he did not tell Bill about the part where Nancy professed her loyalty to them.

Sikes flew into a rage. “How dare she turn on us! She will pay for this.”

He rushed home and pulled Nancy out of bed by her hair.

“Bill! What are you doing? What have I done?” Nancy had never seen such hatred in anyone’s eyes.

“As if you don’t know!” he yelled. “Fagin had you followed. We know about your meeting at the London Bridge. You betrayed us!” He struck her face with the hand.

She gasped for breath. “If you know it all, then you know I didn’t betray you or Fagin. They offered me money to turn Fagin in. I refused.”

Sikes slapped her again and she flew onto the floor. “Bill!” she begged. “They have money. We can escape here. Start a new life together.”

“I would sooner die than live with you any longer,” said Sikes. He took out his pistol and aimed it at her head.

Nancy cowered on the floor. Sikes raised his gun and slammed the barrel down on Nancy’s head over and over again.

Nancy took her last breath and died. In the end, no one could protect poor Nancy.



CHAPTER  
16

## The Hunt for Sikes



Mr. Brownlow smiled when he saw the coach pull up in front of his door. Two men pulled a third out of it. It was Monks.

“How dare you do this to me?” said Monks.

“How dare you do this to us?” said Mr. Brownlow. “As they told you, you’re free to leave. But if you do, we will come after you and take you to jail. It’s either us or them.”

“By what authority am I kidnapped in the street and brought here by these dogs?” asked Monks.

“By my authority,” said Mr. Brownlow. “Mine alone.”

“How could my father’s oldest friend do this to me?” asked Monks.

“It is because I was his oldest and dearest friend that I must, Edward Leeford. I shudder when I call you that, for you are not deserving of his name.”

Monks glared at Mr. Brownlow. “Tell me what you want from me.”

“You have a brother,” said Mr. Brownlow.

“I have no brother,” replied Monks. “You know I was an only child.”

“I am not a fool, Edward. I know what an unhappy marriage your father was forced into. You were born into that unhappy marriage. The marriage was so unhappy that your parents separated. You were young. Your mother was happy in her new life. So was your father. Fifteen years ago, when you were barely eleven, he met a new woman who he fell in love with.”

“What’s this to me?” asked Monks.

Mr. Brownlow continued. “When your father’s relative died, he left him a large sum of money. He had to travel to Rome to settle properties. When your mother heard the talk

of his new riches, she followed him to Rome. She was living in Paris at the time and had spent all of her money.”

Monks bit his lip and took a deep breath.

“One day after your mother met him in Rome, he died. Everyone thought he had no will. But you see, Edward, before he died, he came to see me.”

Monks gasped. “I didn’t know that!”

“He brought many of his possessions to my home. He wanted me to sell them and give you and your mother all the money from the sale. He then wanted to start a new life with the woman. He told me she was carrying his child. Although I hadn’t met her, he showed me a picture he painted of her. I still have it.”

“But I couldn’t find the woman. She had left for London the week before I visited your father’s house to pay my respects.”

Monks eyes fell to the floor.

“The child was born in a workhouse. He was a sickly child. His mother died in childbirth.

But, as fate had it, that child eventually found his way into my care. I knew it was him when he came because he looked exactly like the portrait your father painted. But before I could find out his story, your friends kidnapped him.”

Monks laughed. “You don’t have proof that the baby born in that workhouse was my father’s baby.”

“But I do,” said Brownlow. “I do indeed. Not long ago, after Oliver was taken from me, I traveled to the West Indies after hearing you moved there. I poked around. I discovered you came back to London right before my arrival there. I came back to hunt you down. I knew you would have the answers I needed.”

Mr. Brownlow stood tall. “You went to the place he was born. You got proof of the birth of your brother. And you threw that proof in the river.”

Mr. Brownlow struck his hand on the table. “You are evil! You even have the murder of a young woman upon your hands!”

“I know nothing of a murder! How can I be responsible for something I knew nothing about?” said Monks.

“It was because the girl told part of your secret. You have brought enough sadness. You must promise to give your poor brother what is rightfully his.” Mr. Brownlow pushed an agreement over to him to sign.

“Once you have agreed and signed the document, you will be free to leave. I will not be sending the law to chase you. My concern is only for Oliver. I hope to never set my eyes upon you again, Edward.”

A moment later, Dr. Losberne burst through the door. “The murderer will be caught tonight. Bill Sikes’s dog has been spotted. He must be here in the area. Spies are hovering about searching for him. A reward of a hundred pounds is offered for his capture.”

“I will give fifty more,” said Mr. Brownlow. “What has become of Fagin?”

“He’s been caught,” said Dr. Losberne.

To find Sikes, they only needed to travel to a seedy part of London called Jacob’s Island. Jacob’s Island was surrounded by a muddy ditch six to eight feet deep and twenty feet wide when the tide is in.

On Jacob’s Island, the warehouses were roofless and empty. The walls crumbled down and the windows were smashed. The doors fell into the streets.

In an upper room of one of the deserted houses sat Toby Crackit and Tom Chitling. They sat in a gloomy silence. They were the lucky ones who escaped from the Three Cripples that day.

“Did you see how they got Fagin? He was kicking and screaming but they got him,” said Crackit. “Poor Noah. He climbed into a barrel to hide but his feet stood out.”

Tom hushed him. “What’s that noise?” From far away, they heard a soft bark. “You don’t think it’s Sikes and his dog?”

“Sikes isn’t stinking anywhere near here,” said Crackit. “He’s long gone by now.”

But they were wrong. In five minutes time, Sikes and his dog walked through the door.

“Murderer!” they shouted.

Sikes looked awful. “They’re coming for me. They’re right behind me. I can’t escape them. I can’t escape Nancy’s eyes. She’s looking at me wherever I go! What have I done?”

Harry’s voice could be heard from outside. “We have him, boys. He can’t escape us now.”

“Give me that rope,” said Sikes. “The tide is high. I can climb onto the roof and lower myself into the ditch.”

But Sikes was clumsy. As he tied the rope to his waist, he slipped off the roof and fell to his death.



## Oliver Learns the Truth



Two days after the death of Sikes, Oliver was headed back to the town in which he was born. In the coach with him were Mrs. Maylie, Rose, Mrs. Bedwin, and Dr. Losberne. Following behind was Monks and Mr. Brownlow.

“See there!” cried Oliver. “That’s the hedge I crept under. See that house! That’s where Dick lives! You’ll love him, Rose. We’ll take him away from here. He’ll grow strong with someone who loves him. Maybe he’ll live in the country. Maybe he’ll live with us!”

Rose nodded her head. She was overcome with happiness to see such joy in Oliver. As they approached the town, Oliver saw many other familiar sights such as Sowerberry’s and the dreary workhouse.

The coach let them off at a fancy hotel for an evening feast. At nine o'clock, Mr. Losberne and Mr. Grimwig joined them followed by Mr. Brownlow and the strange man whom Oliver had seen many times. It was the man with purple lips and sores on his hands.

Monks sneered at the boy.

“This is a painful task but one that must be done,” said Mr. Brownlow. He pushed Monks forward to Oliver. “This here is your half brother, Monks. He told me a tale that he will now tell to you, Oliver.”

Oliver could barely breathe. He held on to Rose's hand and squeezed it tight.

Monks started to talk. “Listen up! Oliver is my half brother. My father became ill and died in Rome. When he died, my mother whom he long divorced, found two papers that were meant for Mr. Brownlow. One paper was a letter to Agnes. Agnes was your mother, Oliver. The letter was to remind Agnes that he had given her a locket with her name inscribed. No



last name was engraved so his name would go on it once she accepted his marriage proposal. There was a ring of gold inside the locket.”

“What was the second letter?” asked Mr. Brownlow.

“It was a will,” said Monks. “A will that my mother told everyone did not exist.

It left my mother and me each 800 pounds. His property was to be divided between my mother and Agnes. If the child Agnes carried was a boy, he would get an inheritance only if he remained good and pure. No evil could befall his heart. If he broke the law or brought dishonor to the family name, he would get nothing.”

“That is why,” said Brownlow, “Monks here wanted to turn Oliver into a criminal. He used Fagin for this. If Oliver was sent to jail, he’d have the inheritance all to himself.”

Monks continued, “In his letter to Agnes, he said he wanted to marry her since she was with child. It would hide her shame. He reminded

her of the gifts of love he had given her. He begged her to wear the locket close to her heart and prayed it would one day have his last name next to her first.”

As Oliver listened, tears ran down his face.

“My mother,” said Monks, “burned the will and the letter never reached Agnes. But Agnes told her father the truth about the unborn child. Because of his shame, he fled with her and his other daughter to Wales. But, Agnes felt so much shame, that she abandoned her young sister and father. She ran away and had the baby in the workhouse. Her father thought she had died and never knew if she had the baby.”

Mr. Brownlow continued the story. “When Monks was eighteen, he stole from his mother. He fled to France. When his mother was near death, she came to see me. She wanted to find Monks and forgive him. She wanted to bring him home.”

“She finally found me in France,” said Monks. “I came home and she shared all of these secrets with me. She believed a boy had been born to Agnes. As she lay on her deathbed, I promised her I would find this child, hunt him down, and bring evil to him. If I found him, I’d drag him to the gallows myself!”

Everyone gasped.

“Now what happened to the locket and the ring?” asked Brownlow.

“You know I got them from a man and women,” said Monks. “The woman found the pawn ticket on Agnes’s nurse’s dead body. They are now at the bottom of a river where I put them.”

At that moment, Grimwig, a changed man, brought in Mr. and Mrs. Bumble. At first, they denied the story. Then, two old nurses were led into the room. They were the nurses tending to Sally before she died.

The first one spoke to Mrs. Bumbles. “We heard Sally speaking to you. We saw you take

something from her hand. We followed you to the pawn shop. We saw you get the gold locket and ring.”

Mrs. Bumble put her hands up to shush the ladies. “We confess! But if that coward didn’t confess—” She pointed to Monks. “No one would have known.”

Mr. Grimwig ushered the Bumbles out of the room. “You two shall never work in the workhouse or have a position of power again.”

Mr. Brownlow put his arm around Rose. “You are about to hear something that is shocking. Do not be afraid.” He turned to Monks. “Do you know who this woman is?”

Monks nodded. “Of course.”

Rose shook her head. “But I do not know you. I’ve never seen you before.”

He laughed a mocking laugh. “Do you remember when I said that Agnes’s father had two daughters? They both went to Wales with him. The father died of a broken heart after Agnes left. The second daughter was

very young. The little girl was cared for by two country people. When they died, an older woman took pity on her and adopted her.”

“Where is she now?” asked Mr. Brownlow.

Monks sighed. “Right in this room. It is Rose.”

Mrs. Maylie hugged Rose as Rose wept. Oliver squeezed Rose’s hand once again. “You are my Aunt! Rose! You are my Aunt.”

Just then Harry rushed into the room. “Rose, you made me a promise not too long ago. Will you marry me? I love you!”

“Now that I know of my entire past,” said Rose, “I am even more unworthy of your love!”

“No,” said Harry. “If my world can not be yours, I will make your world mine. I want nothing of those who look down on me. I only want your love.”

Their two worlds would soon become one.



## A Final Note



The courtroom was packed with townspeople awaiting Fagin's verdict. Fagin stood in front of the jury. Not a sound could be heard. He studied the faces of the jury. He couldn't see an ounce of sympathy in any of them.

"Guilty!" shouted the judge.

The building rang out with tremendous shouts and groans. He was sentenced to die on Monday. He would go to the gallows!

Upon hearing the verdict, Oliver said a prayer for Fagin. Mr. Brownlow went to see him.

"You have proof as to Oliver's identity," said Mr. Brownlow. "We must have those papers."

"I have no proof," said Fagin.

Mr. Brownlow sighed. "It's over. Sikes is

dead. Nancy is dead. Monks has confessed to everything. You are to die. Give back the boy's good name to him."

Fagin showed some remorse as he told Mr. Brownlow where to find the papers.

As to the rest of the characters, their story is coming to a close. Within three months, Rose and Harry married in the village church and that's where they lived their lives. Harry took over the duties of the church. They made it a happy home.

Mrs. Maylie lived with them and stayed there for the remainder of her days.

Monks and Oliver split the property that was left to them. It was worth more than 3,000 pounds each. Although Oliver had the rights to all of it, Mr. Brownlow wanted Monks to have the opportunity to turn his life into an honest one. Oliver agreed to the terms. Monks, never giving up his new name, lost all his money, and quickly fell back to his criminal ways. He died in prison.

The rest of Fagin's gang went to prison with the exception of Charley Bates. Appalled by the crime Sikes committed, he decided that an honest life was the best life. He struggled but in the end, succeeded and made a favorable impression to all he came to know.

The Bumbles never regained any status and had to live like paupers in the same workhouse they ruled over. Once the tormentors of the poor, now they were the poor.

Mr. Brownlow adopted Oliver. Mrs. Bedwin, Mr. Grimwig, and Dr. Losberne were always in Oliver's life. Everyone moved onto the land that Harry and Rose built their house upon.

Within the grounds of the village church, near Oliver's home, stands a white marble tablet. It bears just one word: Agnes. It was built to honor a mother who loved her child, if even for a few brief moments. That child, Oliver Twist, visited the tablet each day to honor the mother he never knew but loved with all his heart.