ACT ONE

The actors placed variously on stage. As the opening song is sung, we begin to see AGNES as she approaches the workhouse doors.

BALLAD SINGER: In the cold month of December,
Eighteen hundred thirty-five,
All Eng-ga-land awaited,
The birthday of a child.
Green holly and green ivy
In every home was hung,
But in the streets of poverty,
This Christ child’s song
May I sleep, will you keep
A cradle for me warm?
On this day will you pray
To keep me from all harm?

CHORUS: May I sleep, will you keep
A cradle for me warm?
On this day will you pray
To keep me from all harm?

BALLAD SINGER: In the cold month of December,
A woman without wrong
Came to ask for forgiveness
And sang the Christ child’s song.
AGNES    May I sleep, will you keep
         A cradle for me warm?
         On this day will you pray
         To keep me from all harm?

CHORUS   May I sleep, will you keep
         A cradle for me warm?
         On this day will you pray
         To keep me from all harm?

GRANT    To begin with…Among other public buildings in a certain town,
         there is one anciently common to most towns great or small.

   We hear AGNES in labor.

CLAUDIA W.  To wit, a workhouse.

OLD SALLY    And in this workhouse was born…

BUMBLE      An item of mortality whose name is affixed to our story, one Oliver
            Twist.

   We see OLD SALLY ministering to AGNES.

CHARITY    The fact is, that there was considerable difficulty in inducing you
            Oliver to take upon himself the necessary habit of breathing.

GERRY      But he proceeded to advertise to the inmates of the workhouse…

   We hear a child crying .

MARK       …the fact of a new burden having been imposed on the parish.

OLD SALLY  (drinking) There, little one, cry and be done. It’s a lonely world and
            a cold one.

CLAUDIA    As Oliver gave this first proof of his obstinacy, his mother heard
            him.

AGNES      Let me see the child and die.

DOCTOR     No talk of dying yet.
Lord bless your dear heart, no talk of that.

...said Old Sally as she put the child in the mother’s arms.

Little one, little one (Agnes kisses the baby on forehead.)

The young mother took from her neck a small locket, from her finger a ring.

If he lives, the day might come when he is not ashamed to hear his mother’s name spoken...and by this he will know there is a family to help him to fortune...

She gazed wildly around...shuddered...fell back...and died.

What had she hoped to leave her little one, to bring him from here to fortune?

Whatever it was, Old Sally took it and put it in her pocket.

Safe keeping.

It’s all over, Mrs. Thingummy.

Poor dear, so it is.

And she took up again the bundle called...

Oliver Twist.

No use sending for me if the child cries, as very likely it will. Give it thin gruel. Good looking girl, where did she come from?

Nobody knows.

The Doctor looks at Agnes’ hand.

The old story. No wedding ring, I see. Ah! Good night.

(sung)May I sleep, will you keep

A cradle for me warm?

There are ways, even in workhouses, to dispose of the dead and that was quickly done by Mr. Sowerberry, the parish undertaker.
Sowerberry

One coffin...sixty-two inches by...two feet exactly. One already in stock just this size. Nothing on her to identify the body or the child? When there is we provides a nice epitaph and the family...

Old Sally

Nothing.

Sowerberry

Plain coffin, plain stone, no epitaph.

Catherine

Oliver was necklaced and ticketed.

Old Sally puts a necklace with a numbered tag around Oliver’s neck.

Old Sally

The twine sometimes rubs ‘em raw, poor things, but got to be done so we know ‘em.

Scott

Number twenty-three was Oliver.

Jose

And he fell into place at once.

Robyn

A parish child. *(The child is passed through the process.)*

Richard

The orphan of the workhouse.

Limbkins

And the parish knew exactly what should be done with just such a boy.

Bumble, Limbkins

Oliver should be “farmed.” *(Bumble checks his tag, writes his number in his log, passes him on.)*

Bumble

Twenty-three.

Carl

He was dispatched to Widow Corney’s branch workhouse some three miles off where twenty-two other infant offenders of the poor law rolled about on the floor without the inconvenience of too much clothing.

Chris Moore

Or too much food, though the parish provided seven pence ha’penny worth to do the job of the feeding.

Corney

Too much by half.

Richard

A great deal may be got for seven pence ha’penny

Corney

A deal too much. Long naps, full stomachs, and lassitude.

Clyde

So she kept five pence worth in her pocket.
DAVID F.  
To feed herself and her cat. (*Meow*)

CORNEY  
As any Christian should do for they are such defenseless creatures  
(*Meow*)

JEAN  
It cannot be expected that this system of farming would produce any very luxuriant or extraordinary crop.

GERRY  
And Oliver Twist’s ninth birthday found him a pale and very thin child.

*The actor playing Oliver is revealed.*

KAY  
And decidedly small in circumference.

LIMBKNIS  
By this be it known. It is the ninth birthday of number twenty-three, and he has grown quite fat enough in Widow Corney’s care.

CLYDE  
Oliver was summarily summoned.

*Bumble is given the summons and moves to Corney’s house.*

CORNEY  
Goodness gracious! Is that you, Mr. Bumble?

MR. BUMBLE  
Yes, Mum. (*She turns to her assistant.*)

CORNEY  
Susan, take the brat twenty-three and dress him proper. (*Oliver is taken off stage. Corney addresses other assistant.*) My heart alive, Mr. Bumble, how glad I am to see you.

BUMBLE  
I am come with a summons…

DAVID F.  
And he stepped into her farm…and onto her cat.

*We hear the screech of a cat.*

BUMBLE  
I trust you have a boy, Mrs. Corney, as well as feline livestock.

CORNEY  
Bless you, sir, a stray what slipped in. And give you such a fright. Let me take your stick. A drop for your nerves, Mr. Bumble.

BUMBLE  
I come on parochial business, ma’am, and never indulge on that.

CORNEY  
Oh, I think you will. Just a leettle drop, sir? With cold water? A small lump of sugar?

BUMBLE  
What is it?
CORNEY It’s gin, Mr. Bumble. I’ll not deceive you. It’s gin.

DAVID F. A discovery she’d made which would quiet most beasts.

BUMBLE And tame parish beadles.

DAVID F. And render—all children obedient who drank down Mrs. Corney’s medicinal cordial.

BUMBLE Humane, Mrs. Corney, ingenious. I shall mention it to the Board at the first opportunity.

CORNEY You’re such a kind man, Mr. Bumble

BUMBLE Perhaps I may be Widow Corney. Perhaps. Have you not trained him to do what is right?

CORNEY Make a bow to the beadle, Oliver Twist.

_He does._

BUMBLE Left hand, coat tails.

OLIVER Where am I going, sir?

BUMBLE To meet the Board and begin your career!

_Oliver exits with Bumble._

DAVID F. And Oliver was led away from the wretched home where one kind word or look had never lighted the gloom of his infant years.

_Oliver and Bumble arrive at workhouse._

LIMBkins What is your name, boy?

Oliver is unable to reply. The hard-of-hearing Board Member speaks.

BOARD MEMBER What did he say?

LIMBkins Nothing.

BOARD MEMBER The boy is a fool.

LIMBkins You know you’ve no mother or father and were brought up free by the parish? You are an orphan.

BOARD MEMBER Is he crying?
LIMBKINS I hope you pray each night for the good Christian souls who feed you.

OLIVER Yes, sir.

LIMBKINS You have come here to be educated and taught a good trade.

OLIVER What trade will it be, sir?

LIMBKINS Hard work.

_We see the workhouse functioning. We hear the thumping of the beadle’s staff as he keeps them in rhythm. The members of the board look on._

BOARD MEMBER The members of this board were very sage, deep, philosophical men…

LIMBKINS And when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse…

BOARD MEMBER They found at once what ordinary folks might never have discovered.

LIMBKINS, BOARD MEMBER (UNISON) The poor people liked it!

BOARD MEMBER, LIMBKINS, CHRIS M. It was all play and no work.

CORNEY enters

LIMBKINS Your great economies in the area of orphan nutrition have been brought to the board’s attention…(BUMBLE tips his hat to CORNEY)…and we hereby award you the position of matron of workhouse.

BUMBLE Which paid two shillings more per week.

LIMBKINS Grace, mum.

CORNEY Hard work, gracious labor,

Bring us to our Lord and Savior.

BUMBLE threatens ORPHANS and all respond.

BOYS Amen.

LIMBKINS (to CORNEY) You know Beadle Bumble?
BUMBLE  We are acquainted.

LIMBKINS  Rules are quite clear here and all has to abide. Game pie, Widow Corney? The infant offenders of the workhouse are fed three meals of gruel every week day...Yorkshire pudding, mum?...an onion twice a week...You will have some port?...and half a hard roll on Sundays.

BOARD MEMBER  What did he say?

BUMBLE  Hard work on Mondays.

MATT L & CATHERINE C.  They ate like deliberate wolves.

KAY  While the boys ate their gruel and hungered.

JOSE  And wanted more. So short straws were drawn.

OLIVER  And Oliver won. (The other ORPHANS encourage OLIVER who takes a deep breath then approaches COOK) Please, sir, I want more.

COOK  What?

OLIVER  Please, sir, I want more.

BOARD MEMBER  What did he say?

CORNEY  That he wants the food from our plates.

BOARD MEMBER  That boy will be hung!

A skirmish, OLIVER captured.

BUMBLE  I await your instructions, sir.

LIMBKINS  Whip him!

BUMBLE whips OLIVER as the BALLAD SINGER sings.

BALLAD SINGER  The golden rule, like all old laws
Is writ for all to know-o
Do unto me, do unto you
Or friends will be your foes.

BUMBLE  The rules were quite clear.
BALLAD SINGER  
*(LIMBKINS, BOARD MEMBER, & CORNEY join in next two lines of song)*

Pass the bread and pass the jam

Pass the roasted ha-am.

For I am but a growing child,

Feed me or I’ll be wild.

BUMBLE  
Insurrection means banishment. Oliver was apprenticed. *(They leave the workhouse.)* A bill was next morning posted offering a reward of five pounds for anybody who would take the miscreant off the hands of the parish.

BOARD MEMBER  
That boy will come to be hung. Never more convinced of anything. Hung.

SOWERBERRY  
I took the measure of the two women what died last night, Mr. Bumble.

BUMBLE  
You’ll make your fortune, Mr. Sowerberry.

SOWERBERRY  
Said the beadle, as he thrust his thumb and forefinger into the proffered snuff-box shaped delightfully in the model of a miniature coffin. A meager fortune, Mr. Bumble, for the prices allowed by the Board are too small by a hair.

BUMBLE  
So are your coffins. *(Slight hesitation)*

SOWERBERRY  
Such as witty man, Mr. Bumble.

BUMBLE  
Not at all, sir, never accuse me of it.

SOWERBERRY  
But we must have some profit Mr. Bumble.

BUMBLE  
I heard coffins is looking up.

SOWERBERRY  
What says this paper?

BUMBLE  
An apprentice is offered, sir, five pounds for the taking.

SOWERBERRY  
This is the parcel?

BUMBLE  
The same, sir. One Oliver Twist.

SOWERBERRY  
The five pounds comes with him does it?
**Bumble**

They are a package, sir.

**Sowerberry**

He might not want to prentice to undertaking, Mr. Bumble.

**Bumble**

His favoritest trade, sir. If we was to find him to any other, he’d run away simultaneous.

**Sowerberry**

I’ll take him. On liking, Mr. Bumble. For if we won’t work, I won’t like him and you can have him back again.

**Bumble**

And the five pounds with him.

**Sowerberry**

I’ll enquire my wife, sir. Bring him tomorrow and place him outside. If she agrees, he’s mine. *(Sowerberry exits)*

**Bumble**

Let us see what we’re selling, sir. Pull that cap off your eyes, hold up your head. Well. Of all the ungratefustest boys...You don’t want to undertake?

**Oliver**

It’s not that, sir.

**Bumble**

Then what?

**Oliver**

Only...I’ll know no one there...and will be so lonely...

**Clyde**

But tears were not the things to find their way to Mr. Bumble’s soul; his heart was waterproof.

**Bumble**

Don’t make me cross! Lonely don’t measure. None asks me that—if I’m lonely—and to none would I answer. I works, sir, and never thinks lonely. It’s what we do in this world till we’re out of it. Stay there till you’re come for.

**Oliver**

Would you tell the boys...?

**Bumble**

I’ll tell them nothing or they’ll want what you’ve got. Family, Oliver Twist, you’ve come to family. *(He exits)*

*Inside are the Sowerberry family, Noah and Charlotte.*

**Sowerberry**

I’ve got us a boy from the workhouse, my dear.

**Noah**

What you need a boy for? Ain’t I good enough?

**Sowerberry**

He’s only a small boy...
MRS. SOWERBERRY Then much good he’ll do.

SOWERBERRY But will grow, Mrs. Sowerberry.

MRS. SOWERBERRY Yes—on our victual and drink! I see no savings in parish children. They always come hungry and dressed out in rags. But men know best, of course, always think they know the best.

SOWERBERRY If you think, my dear…

MRS. SOWERBERRY What?!

SOWERBERRY Nothing my dear, not a thing.

MRS. SOWERBERRY Brute. (Hit Mr. S on head with spoon.)

SOWERBERRY I was only thinking of saying…

MRS. SOWERBERRY Oh, don’t tell me what you might perhaps, possibly have said. I am nobody, don’t consult nobody, pray. I don’t want to intrude on your secrets.

SOWERBERRY But, my dear, it was for your advice I was hoping.

MRS. SOWERBERRY Not nobody, don’t ask her, who is she?

SOWERBERRY Come, dear, and look. Just out through the window? (They peer at OLIVER who is outside.) Wouldn’t you call that interesting, my dear, that sweet look of melancholy. He might possibly make, if you thought it fit, a delightful small mute, my dear.

NOAH I could do that…

SOWERBERRY Not a full-sized mute, luv, but for the funerals of children. A striking effect, dear, accompanying small coffins, a mute in proportion.

MRS. SOWERBERRY And I’m to furnish him out in black, I suppose?

SOWERBERRY Only if you believe it worth doing.

MRS. SOWERBERRY Why didn’t you think of it sooner. Well, bring him in then. Valuable property there and left on his own; he’s like to run off. (to NOAH) Get to work.
Sowerberry: My boy. You’re to live here, Oliver.

Oliver: Yes, sir.

Sowerberry: And work like us all—to earn what we feed you.

Oliver: Thank you, sir.

Sowerberry: Your work will be, Oliver, to walk as the mute.

Oliver: What is a mute, sir?

Sowerberry: A mute is our sorrow, Oliver dear, a symbol of that what walks affront of the coffin at funerals. We look at him and feel all the terrible things what we’re supposed to do.

Oliver: How do I do it?

Sowerberry: First lesson. *(Sowerberry puts on a tall hat)* Long face. *(Sowerberry walks with great solemnity and sadness. Oliver giggles.)* It ain’t funny, it’s a funeral. *(Sowerberry and Oliver ‘practice’ the walk until Mrs. S is seen.)*

Mrs. Sowerberry: You know you look like a fool, husband.

Sowerberry: I thought to show him by acting...

Mrs. Sowerberry: Acting don’t enter into it. I paints the symbol with what I puts on him and that’s all that they’ll see: a leetle boy dressed in black. *(Mrs. S plops a hat on Oliver’s head.)* Your hands at your side, teeth shut tight, eyes never blinkin’ and think how you’re about to vomit your breakfast.

Oliver does as directed

Sowerberry: He makes my heart break, Mrs. Sowerberry. Like a boy what lost his dog. Isn’t he perfect?

Mrs. Sowerberry: If he wasn’t. I wouldn’t have him in the house. Charlotte, fetch the cold bits we put back for Towser. He ain’t come home since this morning, so tonight he goes hungry. I dare say you ain’t too dainty to eat ‘em, are ya?

Oliver: No ma’am.

Charlotte brings him a bowl of scraps.
I wish some well-fed philosopher, whose blood is ice, whose heart is iron could have seen Oliver Twist with all the ferocity of famine clutching at the scraps that the dog had neglected.

Scones, ma’am?

One thing I should like better, would be to see said philosopher making the same sort of meal himself with the same relish.

Your bed’s the bench. You don’t mind sleeping with coffins, do you? Doesn’t matter if you do, for that’s where you’ll sleep. Here, keep your hands off of that. (She takes the hat from him, Mr. S gives OLIVER candle) And blow out that candle! You’ll not burn yourself out of this apprenticeship! (All but OLIVER exit. He looks around at his new home.)

Empty coffins.

Coffin plates.

Black wreaths and ribbons.

A small boy alone.

In the shop there was an odor unfamiliar to him and then, when he thought of it, and of what transpires in an undertakers shop, he knew what it was.

Poverty.

Hunger.

Death.

(from off) The Candle!

OLIVER blows it out and is alone in the darkened room.

Within the bosom of his new family, Oliver Twist cried himself into a fitful sleep.

Some hot tea?

We hear CORNEY’s shout.
CORNEY  Blast and damn!

BUMBLE knocks.

CORNEY  Come in with you then! Scalded half to death I am!

BUMBLE  Put honey on it, mum.

CORNEY  Oh, Mr. B!

DAVID F.  And something approaching a giggle emerged from her face.

CORNEY  Hard weather Mr. Bumble.

BUMBLE  Hard indeed ma’am—antiparochial. We have given away, Widow Corney, we have given away a cheese and a half this very blessed afternoon and yet them paupers are not contented.

CORNEY  When would they be Mr. Bumble. I think relief a very bad thing. I say: give the paupers exactly what they don’t want and they’ll stop coming back for more.

BUMBLE  Oh! That’s very good Mrs. Corney. That’s very good.

CORNEY (SUNG)  Tea Mr. Bumble?

BUMBLE (SUNG)  Yes indeed mum.

CORNEY (SUNG)  Sweet.

BUMBLE (SUNG)  Very sweet indeed.

CORNEY  Oh, Mr. B. (Mrs. C. exit)

DAVID F.  Mr. Bumble used the occasion, as he hummed a love ballad, to recount the…

BUMBLE (SUNG)  Teaspoons

DAVID F.  To reweigh the…

BUMBLE (SUNG)  Sugar tongs.

DAVID F.  And make closer inspection of the milk-pot in the area in which was stamped its degree of hard silver.

BUMBLE (SUNG)  Silver milk-pot.
DAVID F. And ascertained to a nicety the exact condition of the furniture

down to...

DAVID F., BUMBLE (SUNG) The very horse-hari cushions of the parlor pouf.

DAVID F. And then rediscovered the cat.

*We hear a cat screech and then kitten meows.*

BUMBLE Ah, the cat, Mrs. Corney. And now kitten come with it.

CORNEY Such good girls, Mr. Bumble.

BUMBLE And so very domestics.

CORNEY I hope they are, sir.

BUMBLE I mean to say, ma’am, that any cat or kitten that could live here

with you and not be fond of its home must be an ass, ma’am.

CORNEY Oh, Mr. Bumble!

BUMBLE It’s no use disguising facts, mum. If you had such and animal as

that, I would drown it myself with great pleasure.

CORNEY Then you are a cruel man, Mr. Bumble, and awful hard-hearted

man.

BUMBLE Hard-hearted, mum, hard. *(He touches her hand, she tries to blush.)*

And would you want, ma’am, such a man round the house?

CORNEY I fear I would scream, sir. *(He squeezes her hand, she squeals.)*

BUMBLE But even men such as that, Mrs. Corney, crave for domestics.

CORNEY Mine, Mr. Bumble? *(He slides closer to her.)* Mr. B, I shall scream

again. *(He puts his arm around her waist.)* It’s almost upon me... *(BUMBLE kisses CORNEY’S cheek)* Hmmph. *(She kisses him firmly on the lips.)*

BUMBLE It is a pity, Widow Corney, that two parochial officers such as we

are, and who exist on two very small parochial stipends, cannot

find a way to unite and profit.

CORNEY I can’t think of what you mean, sir.

BUMBLE Marriage, Mrs. Corney
Corney I shall faint.

Bumble In my arms, ma’am. I hope in my arms. (They cuddle.)

Ballad Singer (Sung) Do you like my cozy?
Do you like my tea?
Do you like my crumpets?
Married we will be,
And happily,
Live happily,
Punch and Judy wed.
And happily,
Live happily,

Corney Oh, Mr. Bumble you are an irresistible duck.

Ballad Singer (Sung) ‘Til one of us is dead.

Noah kicks on the shop door, Oliver opens it.

Oliver I beg your pardon, sir, did you knock?

Noah I kicked.

Oliver Do you want a coffin, sir?

Noah Yer don’t know who I am, I suppose?

Oliver No, sir.

Charlotte Come near the fire, Noah Claypole. I saved a nice bit of bacon for you from the masters breakfast. (He seats himself, Charlotte feeds him a large piece of bacon.)

Noah Yer hear that, Work’us? Noah Claypole’s who you’re talkin’ to but Mr. Claypole to you, boy. Yer hear me?

Oliver Yes.
Noah

Oh. Only, yes, he says, and never a mister. Like he’s a
gentleman and I’m not, eh?

Charlotte

Here’s your tea. Scrub the floor with it.

Noah

Well, gentlemen’s what you’ll never be.

Oliver

I’ll be who I am.

Noah

What’s your mother then? Dead—just hear that. Died of
what, Work’us?

Oliver

Of a broken heart. I think I know what it must be to die of
that.

Noah

An’ he’s a philosopher! Orphan’s what you are, Twist, and
that can never change. What’s set you a-snavellin’ now?

Oliver

Not you.

Noah

Not me, eh?

Oliver

No, not you—don’t think it! And you don’t say anything
more of my mother. You’d better not.

Noah

Better not! Well! Better not! Yer mother was a regular right-
down bad ‘un.

Oliver

What did you say?

Noah

A regular right-down bad ‘un and it’s a great deal better that
she died when she did or else she’s have been hard labori’ in
Bridgewater or transported or hung... (Oliver launches into
him and knocks him to the floor.) He’ll murder me! Charlotte!
Missus! Help!

Charlotte

Don’t you hurt my precious...!

Mrs. Sowerberry rushes in.

Mrs. Sowerberry

Christian folk are still... Ungrateful, murderous, horrid
villain...! You broke the black hat! (Oliver falls into an open
coffin. She sits on the lid and Oliver can be heard pounding on it.)
Fetch Mr. Bumble! (Noah exits running.) Mute! Mute he
would make him! Fool!
Mr. Bumble! Mr. Bumble! We’ve all been murdered in our beds!

What is this tumult?

Murdered, sir, in our sleep, at our prayers—Oliver Twist!

Susan! ...Where was your master?

Out, sir, or would have been murdered there with us.

This we will mend! (Bumble and Noah return to the Sowerberry’s) Do you know this voice, Oliver?

Yes!

Ain’t you afraid of it, sir? Ain’t you a-trembling to hear it?

No!

It’s the beadle!

He called my mother names.

She deserved it and worse.

She didn’t.

She did. –

She didn’t.

He must be mad, Mr. Bumble. No boy in his right mind would speak in that way.

It’s not madness, ma’am. It’s meat.

It’s what?

Meat, ma’am, meat. You overfed him. If you had kept the boy on gruel, this would never have happened.
MRS. SOWERBERRY: Just see what comes of bein' too liberal. Charlotte, set water for tea. We'll take it in the parlor. Mr. Bumble. *(She leads them all into her parlor/kitchen)*

CHRIS M.: It was not until he was left alone in the silence and dark of his prison that Oliver gave way.

BILL L.: He had listened to their taunts with a look of contempt.

MARY JO R.: He had borne the lash without a cry.

CHARITY: Not because he possessed too little feeling, but rather he possessed too much.

MATT L.: But now, when there was none to see him or hear him,

BILL L.: He wept.

ALL: And then he planned.

GRANT: And with the first light of dawn, he unbarred the door...

ALL: And set off for London.

BALLAD SINGER (SUNG): Where are you going, little one? Where are you going this day? Are you going to sea? Or to the town fair? Where are you going today?

DANNY: He walked twenty miles on the first day.

KAY: Tasted nothing but a crust of dry bread and a few draughts of water.

CHARITY: He saw signs put up in villages:

GRANT: All who beg within our village will be jailed!

BALLAD SINGER & JULIE: Where will it lead you, little one? Where will it lead you this day? To the gallows high
Or parliament?
Where are you going today?

ENSEMBLE
To find a home, I am going.
To find a home on this day.
Not to a gallows, nor parliament,
A home I will find on this day.

MARY JO R.
He had dogs set upon him!

CHRIS M.
Was shouted at by tradesmen!

CATHERINE C.
Was driven off by poor boys like himself.

DODGER
Hey! You boys get outta here!

DAVID F.
Until...finally...on the seventh day...

DODGER
Hello, my covey, what’s the row?

OLIVER
I have walked a long way, sir, for seven days.

DODGER
Beak’s order, eh? I suppose you don’t know what a beak is, my flash companion.

OLIVER
I believe it’s a bird’s mouth, sir.

DODGER
My eyes, how green. A beak’s a madgs’trate and when you’re walkin’ on beak’s orders, you’re fleein’ the law. But come. I’m at a low-watermark myself, only a bob and a magpie, but as far as it goes, I’ll fork out and stump. Up on your pins. Where are you going?

OLIVER
London, sir.

DODGER
Then I guess you’ll be needin’ some lodgings. I know a ‘spectable ol’ gentleman wot’ll give you lodgin’s for nothing and never ask change—that is, if any gentleman he knows introduces you. And don’t he know me? Not in the least. Certainly not.
Oliver

All of ‘em and some I wouldn’t half laugh to hear in your mouth, but my given’s Jack Dawkins, though my friends never say it.

Oliver

What do your friends say?

Dodger

They say Artful Dodger. Follow me, Mate. (He leads Oliver off.)

Ensemble (Sung)

How will you know, my little one?

How will you know on this day?

Will you know by the clock

Will you in your heart

When you are home to stay?

They will call it London.

There will be a queen.

There will be a city

Where all the world is seen

London!

David F.

And streams of people pressing in one direction—

David S.

London

David F.

—elbowing each other, laughing, passing bottles of ale, singing songs, together, a vast, human flood of Londoners all bound for one place/

Everyone

Tyburn Hill

Danny J.

The place of hangings

Mary Jo

Public executions

David F.

And all in that dark, dirty, lovely smelling sea of humanity—

Everyone

Hushed.
A scaffold.

Five boys.

Five ropes.

And a hangman

He moved with deliberate dignity—down! (CHEER)
Pulled the knot on each neck—down!—(CHEER)
And with each—down! (CHEER) —the crown cheered!
And as each of the five danced—down! (CHEER)
The animal of London roared—down! (CHEER)

Silence and then a roar from all and then silence and all begin to disperse.

Crime has been rewarded.

London had had its fill.

C’mon, mate. Let’s go home.

How will you know, my little one?

How will you know on this day?

Will you know by the clock,

Will you know in your heart,

When you are home to stay?

Plumy and slam.

Cook’s kip. (DODGER and OLIVER enter FAGIN’s—DODGER makes the introductions) This is him. Mr. Fagin—Oliver Twist.

We are so glad to see you, Oliver, very. Have waited all this time to make your acquaintance.

Did you know I was coming, sir?

Hoped that you would, my boy, hoped that Dodger could find such a fine boy as you. Charlie, take off the sausages!
Dodger, a seat for the boy! Ah! You’re starin at the pocket handkerchiefs, eh, my dear? We’ve just looked ‘em out, ready for the wash, that’s all, Oliver, that’s why they’re there.

**Oliver**

They’re very pretty.

**Fagin**

Not so nearly as you, Oliver Twist, nor worth half as much. Into that, Ollie, more where they came from. *(Oliver devours the food daintily.*) Trouble, my Dodger?

**Dodger**

Only in getting’ here, eyes everywhere.

**Fagin**

But none saw you enter poor Fagin’s house, did they?

**Dodger**

Nary a one.

**Fagin**

You seem sleepy, my dear.

**Oliver**

Only a little.

**Fagin**

Such a sweet lie. Tired to the hair top and time you’re in bed. You’re home with the family, Oliver Twist, home to your bed.

**Oliver**

And thank you very much, sir.

**Fagin**

Not at all, dear, my pleasure. Just put your head down. Dodger, good work.

**Dodger**

Easy pickin’s.

**Fagin**

And picked us a fortune. Bless the sweet face. Tuck yourself up, boys.

**Dodger**

I’m no little pumpkin to be put down to bed...

**Fagin**

Into your beds now! Tomorrow’s another. And you must be ready, your soft fingers rested. Fruit to pick, Dodger; soft apples, Charley. *(We hear a clock striking.) Now!(He gathers up a bag and hurries to meet Sikes. He is surprised by Sikes sudden appearance. Sikes comes to him and begins to transfer stolen articles into Fagin’s bag.) Such a fright, Bill, such a fright—and so dark a night. O—for me, Bill. Tasteful, Mr. Sikes, high class. Oh, how glad I am to have this. Like to the Duchess of*
York’s, Bill—elegant. O, such a clever boy, such massy plate. No more? Savin’ for yourself, Bill? Ah! Best for the last! All tucked in. (He turns to leave, Sikes stops him.) What? Bill, would I carry money? In the morning, Bill, like always. Send Nancy round for it. A gentleman’s word, Bill. Adieu. (We see Limkins in the workhouse. He suddenly becomes aware that Monks is watching and that unnerves him.)

**LiMBKiNS**

If you’ve come here on business, these aren’t business hours. (Monks says nothing.) I don’t think you know me. (Monks says nothing.) There are workhouse officers just outside the door and can be here in a minute if I call for them. (Monks says nothing.) Do I know your name?

**Monks**

And don’t need to know it. I’ve come for one thing. A boy was born here near ten years ago.

**LiMBKiNS**

Boys are born here nearly every day…

*Monks moves towards him and Limkins falls silent.*

**Monks**

Ten years ago, of an unmarried woman, his name might have been leeford, she came in the night, died I think…

**LiMBKiNS**

Twist! You mean Oliver Twist!

**Monks**

Not here. Left his apprenticeship. Run off to London… (Monks crashes the table with is hand and then turns and strides into the darkness… into Fagin’s) Where upon the unknown man himself set off for London.

**Monks**

He was a man unknown even to himself, a man who would not see himself for what he had become.

**LiMBKiNS**

We are as different as night and day, all of us, but this man who named himself…

**FAGiN**

...Monks…

**LiMBKiNS**

...hid his dark self beneath the clothes of a gentleman.

**Monks**

I will not be known. What I want in this world none are deserving to know and what I need others will do for me. Gold will buy all.
LIMBKINS

His search for young Oliver—which will be explained later—led him to London where an acquaintance of old, one Fagin, specialized in boys and gold. (FAGIN makes sure that OLIVER is still asleep and then takes out his treasure.)

FAGIN

Oliver? No, no, ah! My life, my little ones, my family. And none to cry me down. Clever dogs, staunch to the last. Never told the old parson where they had been. Never peached on old Fagin! Like heaven’s fires! And why would they? Would it have loosened the knot from their necks? No, no, fine fellows, all five and gone. What a fine thing is capital punishment. Dead men tell no tales! Pretty little gold! Five strong boys in a row and none left to play booty...What’s that? What do you want watching me, Oliver? Are you awake? What have you seen? Quick—quick! For your life, boy!

OLIVER

I wasn’t able to sleep any longer, sir.

FAGIN

You weren’t awake five minutes ago?

OLIVER

Indeed, sir, I wasn’t.

FAGIN

Are you sure?

OLIVER

Yes, sir.

FAGIN

Tush, tush, dear, I knew that. Only tried to frighten you. You’re a brave little boy. Ha-ha. What a brave lad, Oliver. Did you see any of those pretty things?

OLIVER

Yes, sir.

FAGIN

Ah! They...are mine, Oliver, my little property. All I have to live on in my old age, Oliver. People call me a miser, my dear, only a miser, that’s all.

OLIVER

May I get up now?

FAGIN

Cert’ainly, my dear, at once, day is here! There’s pitcher of water in the corner for wash-up. (Oliver goes to wash and Fagin quickly hides his treasure in his secret place.) Do you like it here, Oliver?
Oliver: Very much, sir.

Fagin: We’re sort of a family, Oliver, where all look out for their brothers. Shall we do that?

Oliver: Yes, sir.

Fagin: Would you like a lesson? Some say number three is the magic number, and some say number seven. It’s neither, my friend, neither.

Oliver: What is it?

Fagin: It’s number one.

Oliver: All right, sir.

Fagin: And you can’t take consider yourself, number one, without considering me, number one.

Oliver: I think that I understand.

Fagin: A good boy, promising boy. (Nancy, Betsy, Bates and Dodger enter. They begin to empty their pockets of edibles—fruit, oysters, rolls, potatoes, etc.—and to make their breakfast.) And here is our family back to break bread with us. Oliver, Dodger you know, Charley, Miss Betsy and Nancy. Your brother and sisters.

Betsy: Hear the old thief’s sweet talk. Close up your ears, luv, they’ll get stuffed with nonsense.

Fagin: Hush now. Young Oliver Twist is our new one and might not perceive your odd way of joking.

Betsy: Jokes, is it…?

Fagin silences her with a gesture.

Nancy: Where did you come from with a face such as that?

Fagin: Miss Nancy, your friend in all things.

Nancy: Hello, Oliver Twist. (Oliver bows)

Oliver: Hello, Miss Nancy.
NANCY  Ain’t he just a picture. Nancy, Oliver, if we’re to be friends. Are we?

OLIVER  Yes, please.

DODGER  Ollie.

NANCY  Too good for you, Fagin.

FAGIN  Our fortune, Nancy…

NANCY  Bill’s sent me to fetch it.

FAGIN  In the midst of my breakfast?

NANCY  Don’t play larky, Fagin. What’s comin’ to him.

FAGIN  Miss Nancy and I have a mutual friend, together in business you might say, Oliver, and she comes for his salary. Not here. *(He leads her to one side.)*

OLIVER  Are you in business together?

DODGER  A small corporation

CHARLEY  Wif officers and payrolls.

BETSY  You’ve no idea, have ya?

OLIVER  Of what, Miss Betsy?

BETSY  You will soon enough.

NANCY  If it’s not enough, I’m back Fagin—with Bill. Till the next time, Oliver. Chin up. Comin’ Bets?

*NANCY and BETSY exit. FAGIN quickly secures the door, turns to the two boys who are eating whatever it is that is left on the table. He slaps the food from their hands.*

FAGIN  Enough of that! Does having grease up your nose help the work? What have you got, Dodger?

DODGER  Pocketbook.

*FAGIN opens the pocketbook, quickly absorbs a large bank note, and then shows the wallet to OLIVER.*
FAGIN Not so heavy as it might be...but well lines. Ingenwnious workmen, isn’t he, Oliver?

OLIVER Yes, sir.

*BATES laughs and FAGIN turns to him.*

FAGIN Now you!

BATES Wipes. *(He gives the handkerchiefs to FAGIN.)*

FAGIN Well...they’re good ones, very...but why the monograms, Charley? Would a man buy one what’s already marked? Picked out, my boy, and cleanly done. We’ll teach Oliver to do that, shall us, Oliver, eh?

OLIVER If you please, sir.

FAGIN You’d like to be able to make pocket handkerchiefs as easy as Charley Bates, wouldn’t you, my dear?

OLIVER Very much so, sir.

FAGIN Get the coat.

BATES He’s from Greenland.

FAGIN No more than a boy I remember, Mr. Bates.

BATES I was never like that.

FAGIN Yes he was, Oliver, all thumbs and needles. Would you like another lesson, Oliver? Do you want to go to school?

OLIVER Very much, sir.

FAGIN Then we will. *(He, DODGER, and BATES plant things in his coat for the boys to steal.) This we’ll put here...a small box for...snuff, Charley’s new handkerchief...small pocket watch...and we walk. Watch Oliver, every start, every stop, where every hand goes, every gesture...*(Everything is hid and the ‘lesson’ is ready to begin)*And we walk. *(FAGIN plays the part and the boys pick his pockets. OLIVER laughs at FAGIN’s antics. When all items are gone, lines continue)*Lesson two.

OLIVER What did I learn?
DODGER and CHARLEY show OLIVER all the items they have ‘stolen’ from FAGIN

FAGIN    Artistry, Oliver, craftsmanship. All from the old one’s shop are professionals. Can you do it?

OLIVER  I think I can, sir.

FAGIN    Remember now, Oliver, cleanly, with confidence. (Although OLIVER’s attempts are a bit amateurish, FAGIN allows him to succeed.) Is it gone? Did he take it?

OLIVER  Here it is, sir?

FAGIN    Clever boy. Clever boy, I never saw a sharper one. Here’s a shilling for you… (DODGER BATES are quickly attentive)…which I will put into the bank for safe keeping. If you go on in this way, you’ll be the greatest man of the time, Oliver. Make ‘em your models, my dear. Especially the Dodger. He’ll be a great man himself and make you his equal, won’t you, Jack Dawkins?

DODGER  Shall us test it, Fagin?

FAGIN    What is that? Test? Test my Oliver?

DODGER  Maybe he hasn’t the talent to work along side me.

FAGIN    (Slight hesitation) Oliver, would you care to go out?

OLIVER  If you please, yes, sir.

FAGIN    But only for lessons—do you hear me, Dodger. Observation. I’ll not have him bloodied too soon and will not have his face known down at the office.

DODGER  How do they teach sparras to fly, Fagin? Out of the nest.

DODGER takes OLIVER’s arm and the three boys exit with FAGIN looking after them. They arrive at the marketplace: Peddlers crying wares, patters shout-talking their melodramatic verses, balladeers singing, sound drifting from taverns, etc.

CHRIS M.  Cucumbers—fresh! Cucumbers!

NANCY, BETSY (SUNG)  Jackson Swain is the man,

                    The Judge did strike his gavel.
Condemned to die upon a rope.

Jackson Swain did govel.

He once did love a sweetheart
He once did love her true,
And to her neck he took an axe.

Die upon the gallows!

**DAVID F.**

The three boys sailed out as on a jolly walk. Dodger with his coat sleeves turned up, Master Bates with some very loose notions concerning the rights of property, Oliver all a-gaze.

**CATHERINE G., OLIVER**

He wondered what branch of manufacture he would be instructed in first.

**DODGER**

Oliver *(Whistle)*

**CROWD (SUNG)**

He once did love a sweetheart
He once did love her true,
And to her neck he took an axe.

Die upon the gallows!

*We hear a snatch of a light opera being sung in Italian from offstage.*

**DAVID F.**

They were just emerging from a narrow court not far from the open square in Clerkenwell, when...

**DODGER**

Hsst.

**OLIVER**

What?

**DODGER**

Do you see that old cove by the bookstall?

**OLIVER**

The old gentlemen?

**DODGER**

The very one. Here and say nothing.

**BOOK SELLER**

I’ll be right back.
**DODGER and Bates** work their way across to BROWNLOW and, working as a team, manage to distract him and lift his wallet. Just at the moment the wallet is lifted, OLIVER reacts to it and the BOOK SELLER sees it.

DODGER  What was Oliver’s horror to see the Dodger plunge his hand into the old gentlemen’s pocket.

BOOK SELLER  Sir—your wallet…!

DODGER and CHARLEY indicate OLIVER is the thief and slip away. BROWNLOW turns and sees the terrified OLIVER looking at him. OLIVER turns and runs.

BROWNLOW  Stop thief!

Others, including Bates and DODGER, pick up the cry and chase OLIVER.

CROWD  That boy—stop that boy! He stole a wallet! Catch him! Down that way! Officer! Stop thief!

A man steps in front of OLIVER and fells him with his fist.

DAVID F.  Although raised by philosophers Oliver forgot the beautiful maxim that self-preservation was the first law of nature.

JEAN  Stand aside.

CATHERINE G.  Give him air.

CHRIS M.  Doesn’t deserve it.

KAY  Where’s the old gentlemen?

JOSE F.  A pickpocket boy!

JEAN  Coming down the street.

CHRIS M.  Is this the thief, sir?

BROWNLOW  I’m afraid that it is.

JANEY  Afraid, that’s a good ‘un.

BROWNLOW  He’s hurt himself!

CHRIS M.  I’m the one what hurt him—an’ cut my hand doin’ it. Sharp little teeth.
BROWNLOW  Only a boy.

KAY  Aren’t they all, sir?

OFFICER  All right, all right, make way…! This is the one, is it? Onto your feet. Where is the wallet?

OLIVER  It wasn’t me, sir. I swear it…

OFFICER  Never is them, always another. No sign of it on him, sir. Sorry.

OLIVER  Please, sir, believe me…

OFFICER  He’ll believe you all right—

BROWNLOW  Don’t hurt him…!

OFFICER  Oh, no, I won’t hurt him. Quick time!(He hauls him to his feet and leads him off with all following. We see FAGIN’S rooms.)

FAGIN  Gone?! Oliver gone?! What have you doing with him?!

DODGER  The traps have got him is all…

FAGIN  Only to watch I told you!

DODGER  An’ it’s what he was doin’! Let go o’ me, will you?!(DODGER swings at and misses FAGIN who picks up a mug and throws it at DODGER; missing him but SIKES appears and catches it.)

SIKES  Who pitched that ‘ere at me? Lucky it was the beer and not the pot that hit me or I’d have settled someone.

FAGIN  Bill…

SIKES  I might have knowed it, as nobody but an infernal, rich, plundering old one like you could afford to throw away any drink but water. Wot’s it all about Fagin?

FAGIN  He let Oliver go!

SIKES  Don’t tell me no Oliver.

FAGIN  I’m telling you…!
Sikes

And I ain’t listening. Give me what’s owed me.

Fagin

But, Bill…

Sikes

Money paid for value given. Now.

Fagin

I put it into Nancy’s hand, Bill, and if it didn’t get to you…

*Sikes catches hold of Fagin’s hand, hurts him, then releases him and Fagin gets additional for Sikes.*

Sikes

None of that now Fagin.

Fagin

If you knew what I’d lost…

Sikes

What you lost for him, Dodger?

Dodger

A boy I found.

Sikes

This for a boy?

Fagin

Not for a boy—for Oliver.

Sikes

Why’s Oliver different than other street kids.

Fagin

Because he’s seen all…and might tell it to others.

Sikes

*(GRINS) Well, it looks like your blewed on, old man.*

Fagin

Funny Bill. I’m afraid, you see, that if the game’s up with me, it might be up with a good many others…and that would come out rather worse for you than it would for me, my dear…*(Sikes catches Fagin around the throat.)* They’ll believe him, Bill, this one they will.

Sikes

Where is he?

*Fagin is unable to answer due to choking by Sikes.*

Dodger

Drug off to Fang’s court.

Sikes

Then get someone there to hear what is said.* *(Sikes releases Fagin)*

Fagin

My very thought indeed.

Sikes

Dodger.
FAGIN  Not Artful. His face is too known there. (BETSY

BETSY  Look to your purse, Fagin is smilin’.

FAGIN  Only an errand, my girl.

BETSY  An errand to where?

FAGIN  Just to the law court…

BETSY  An’ you think I’ll do that? Not on your life, Fagin. I’ve been there too often, don’t waste your breath.

*FAGIN turns to NANCY, smiling.*

NANCY  It won’t do, so there’s no use in asking.

SIKES  What do you mean by that?

NANCY  Just what I say.

SIKES  You’re a fine one for it, nobody there knows you.

NANCY  As I don’t want them to neither, it’s rather more no than yes with me, Bill.

SIKES  She’ll go, Fagin.

NANCY  She won’t, Fagin.

*SIKES strikes her.*

SIKES  Yes, she will. (SIKES throws ‘disguise’ at NANCY) Yes, she will.

*BETSY goes to NANCY, the others look away. The focus moves to FANG’s court.*

FANG  What is this anarchy?

BAILIFF  A young pick pocket what’s been caught in the act.

*FANG looks at BROWNLOW.*

FANG  And this is the one, is it? A notorious fellow, foul-looking and greasy.

BROWNLOW  I beg your pardon, sir.
FANG
Read out the charge against him.

BAILIFF
This man’s not charged, sir. The boy is and this gentleman appears against him.

FANG
And you’ll take his word?!

BROWNLOW
This is outrageous…!

FANG
Swear him!

BROWNLOW
Before I am sworn, I will have this said.

FANG
Swear him! I’ll not hear another word till you do!

BROWNLOW
I am Samuel Brownlow…

FANG
Where’s the boy he stands against? He’s too small, I can’t see him. *(The OFFICER pulls OLIVER upright)* You wanted to talk.

BROWNLOW
I was saying…

FANG
What’s the charge?

BROWNLOW
I was standing by the book stall…

FANG
Hold your tongue! Where is the officer? He’ll know the truth of it. Officer?

OFFICER
Here, sir. I came in a the end, sir. They had got the boy down and were holdin’ him ther, so I searched him for the article in question but found nothing like it on his person.

FANG
Maybe he ate it.

OFFICER
Sir?

FANG
It’s been done. Now I will have the evidence. *(BROWNLOW again tries to interrupt—again fails)* You’ve been sworn and if you’ll not tell me now all that you saw, I’ll have you run up for disrespect to the truth. I will, by god!

BROWNLOW
I saw him take nothing…

FANG
Withholding of evidence! *(OLIVER faints.* I knew he was shamming. Let him lie there, he’ll soon tire of that. He stands
convicted of theft and is committed for three months—hard labor, of course…

**BROWNLOW**

How convicted? And why?

**FANG**

Why? Because he was brought to a law court…!

*The Book Seller rushes into court.*

**BOOK SELLER**

Stop! Stop! Don’t take him away. For heaven’s sake, stop…

**FANG**

Turn this man out—clear the court!

**BOOK SELLER**

I will not be turned out! I will speak what I know! I saw it all. I keep the bookstall. Mr. Fang, you must hear me. The boy did not do it.

**FANG**

You’ve come too late.

**BOOK SELLER**

I hadn’t a soul to mind the shop, everyone had joined the pursuit, and I couldn’t get free till five minutes ago. He took nothing, I swear.

**FANG**

This man had a book of yours

**BOOK SELLER**

The very book in his hand.

**FANG**

Is it paid for?

**BOOK SELLER**

No. it is not, but…

**FANG**

Charge him!

**BROWNLOW**

Forgive me, I forgot all about it…

**FANG**

Do you bring charges?

**BOOK SELLER**

No, sir, I don’t.

**FANG**

Clear the court! Clear the court, or, by god, I’ll charge all of you!

*The court clears, BROWNLOW, rushes to OLIVER.*

**BOOK SELLER**

Poor boy…
**BROWNLOW**

He had a high fever, should be home in a bed...Will you accompany me?

**BOOK SELLER**

I will, sir, at once.

*BROWNLOW carried OLIVER out, we hear the BOOK SELLER calling for a cab.*

**BOOK SELLER**

Driver! Here, Driver...!

*NANCY, her costume slightly altered, enters.*

**NANCY**

Is there a little boy here?

**BAILIFF**

Not a minute ago, miss.

**NANCY**

O, where have they taken him, my little brother—not to prison?

**BAILIFF**

An old gentlemen took him off to his home.

**NANCY**

What gentleman was he?

**BAILIFF**

The name he gave was Brownlow.

**NANCY**

Why did you let them?

**BAILIFF**

The boy was ill, they meant to save him.

**NANCY**

Ill unto dying?

**BAILIFF**

Ill enough to faint dead away.

**NANCY**

Oh, little brother...*(She exits. MONKS appears and watches her. The focus shifts to BROWNLOW’s and we see ROSE as she gently cools OLIVER’s brow.)*

**BALLAD SINGER**

The sheep’s in the meadow,

The cows in the corn,

The sun shines so bright

For my lad in the morn.

**ROSE**

*(BALLAD SINGER hums along)*The sheep’s in the meadow,

The cows in the corn,
The sun shines so bright
For my lad in the morn.

*Oliver awakens suddenly and is startled by the image of Rose above him. She soothes him.*

**Rose**
Hush now, hush now, no one to hurt you. Don’t be afraid.

**Oliver**
Who am I?

**Mrs. Bedwin**
Such a question. You must be very quiet, my dear, or you’ll be ill again. Lie down. There’s a dear.

**Rose**
He looks so at me.

**Mrs. Bedwin**
The fever I think. I’ll heat up the vinegar. (*She exits.*)

**Oliver**
Who are you?

**Rose**
No one you know, but a friend. Don’t be afraid.

**Oliver**
I thought I dreamed you.

**Rose**
Did you?

**Oliver**
You were looking for me.

**Rose**
Did I find you?

**Oliver**
I found you.

**Rose**
Yes. Close your eyes now.

**Oliver**
Will you stay here beside me.

**Rose**
As long as you want.

**Oliver**
Is this a family?

**Rose**
Yes.

**Brownlow**
Poor boy. I don’t even know his name.

**Oliver**
Twist, sir. Number twenty-three. Oliver Twist.

**Brownlow**
Odd name.

**Oliver**
I hope you are not angry with me.
BROWNLOW  No, no. I hope you’re feeling better.
ROSE  I think he must be tired, sir.
BROWNLOW  Yes. *(She bends over him to tuck him in, he sees the cameo.)*
OLIVER  What is that, please?
ROSE  A cameo.
OLIVER  What is a cameo?
ROSE  A likeness.
OLIVER  It’s a likeness of you, miss.
ROSE  But it’s not of me. Of my poor sister.
OLIVER  Why is she poor?
ROSE  In truth, it is I who am poor, without her, Oliver.
BROWNLOW  Now, now.
ROSE  I know, I know. Close up your eyes now.
BALLAD SINGER  The sheep’s in the meadow,
               The cows in the corn,
               The sun shines so bright
               For my lad in the morn.

*The light shifts to the workhouse where CORNEY is bending over OLD SALLY slapping her cheeks to bring her around.*

CORNEY  Sally? Old Sally? Has she not said any more?
KAY  Only she wanted you.
CORNEY  Sally.
KAY  She’s got to sleep…
CORNEY  Then why am I here? Sally!
OLD SALLY  I can’t…I can’t wait…!
Corney

You asked to see me.

Old Sally

(SLIGHT PAUSE) Not with her here. Not with her here!

Corney nods and Old Emily retreats.

Old Sally

Now you listen to me. In this very room—in this very bed, I once nursed a young woman who gave birth and then died...What was the year?

Corney

No minding the year. What about her?

Old Sally

Aye, what about her...? What about...I know! I robbed her. I did. She wasn’t cold yet and I stole it...Pity on me!

Corney

Stole what from her?

Old Sally

Gold. Gold that might have saved her and the child...

Corney

What was her name?

Old Sally

A locket. She put it into my hand, charged me to keep it...Pity!(Old Sally dies. Corney pries loose the hand that has grasped her, discovers the slip of paper in it, sees Old Emily looking at her, hides it.)Dead. And nothing to tell after all. Call Sowerberry.

The focus cross fades to Fagin’s rooms.

Nancy

I won’t go back there again for Bill or the devil himself!

Fagin

You’re sure the boy didn’t peach on us, Nance?

Nancy

Ill unto dying, they said! Not likely to have said one way or t’other like that is he?!

Fagin

We must find this Brownlow...

Nancy

Leave him for god’s sake!

Fagin

Bets.(Betsy takes Nancy to one side to quiet her)Charley, into your alleys to hear what you can. Near Pentonville, they said. Dodger, back to the book stall. A place where books are sold is a place where talk is easy. Use this to make it come easier.(He gives Dodger a few coins.)
DODGER  I’m to go back where they might have seen me?

FAGIN  I’ll throw you to Sikes, Dodger, if Oliver’s not found. Away, both of you! (DODGER and CHARLEY exit.) Bets! Your Bill won’t be happy, Nance, and we likes to keep him that, don’t we—jolly and carefree? Bill wants him found, my girl, found and brought home, and you can do that. Crying. What good does it ever do? Does the world stop for tears? Dry ‘em, my girl, an’ be like yourself.

The focus cross fades to the BROWNLOW house.

BROWNLOW  I tell you, Mr. Grimwig, that Oliver Twist has had a miracle recovery.

GRIMWIG  I don’t believe in miracles.

BROWNLOW  Scarcely two days in bed and completely recovered.

GRIMWIG  He might not be ill.

BROWNLOW  He was ill and is better and is possessed of the sweetest nature any father could want.

GRIMWIG  Not being a father but your lawyer…

BROWNLOW  And my friend. Mr. Grimwig, you cross me. The boy is better than any I know and resembles, you’ll soon see, my own ward, Miss Fleming. (He rings the bell for MRS. BEDWIN)

GRIMWIG  Does eye color make a hero? Does brown hair or pretty eyes make our characters moral? A fool in your old age.

OLIVER and ROSE appear at the doorway.

BROWNLOW  Ah, Rose.

ROSE  Good morning, Mr. Grimwig.

GRIMWIG  Is it good? I wouldn’t know.

BROWNLOW  Look at them, sir. Could they not be sister and brother?

GRIMWIG  One is a boy, the other is a girl, but as to resemblances…Rose, is it? Am I right in that much?
ROSE  (SMILES) I think you know me well, sir, and helped to insure my fortune.

GRIMWIG  As a friend I did that?

BROWNLOW  (SIGHS, SMILES) As my lawyer and it’s Oliver you’re to help now.

GRIMWIG  This is the boy you said had a fever?

BROWNLOW  Of course he is.

GRIMWIG  Fevers are not peculiar to good people, are they? Bad people have ‘em sometimes. I know a man who was hung in Janacia for murdering his master. He had a fever six times. At any rate, the boy has no fever, the girl either. If they have, I’ll eat my head—and his, too!

ROSE and BROWNLOW laugh, we hear door chimes.

ROSE  I’ll see to it, sir. (She exits.)

GRIMWIG  How are you, boy?

OLIVER  A great deal better, sir.

BROWNLOW  He is a nice looking boy, is he not?

GRIMWIG  Don’t know.

BROWNLOW  How can you not know?

GRIMWIG  I never see any difference in boys. I only know two sorts, mealy boys and beef-faced ones.

BROWNLOW  And which is Oliver?

GRIMWIG  Mealy.

ROSE  (ENTERING) A boy brought these books from the seller, sir.

BROWNLOW  Oh, good, thank you. (She puts them down, turns to exit.) Rose, there are books to go back. Try to catch them boy, will you? (ROSE exits.)

GRIMWIG  Do you play nine pins, Oliver?
OLIVER

I don’t think so, sir.

GRIMWIG

There!

ROSE

(ENTERING) He was already gone. Shall I take them back?

BROWNLOW

No. I’ll take them back tomorrow.

GRIMWIG

Send Oliver with them. He will be sure to deliver them, safely, you know. With his brown hair.

OLIVER

Yes, do let me take them. I’ll run all the way.

BROWNLOW

You’ll do no such thing. You’ve only just got over your illness.

GRIMWIG

But is completely recovered, you told me as much.

BROWNLOW

Why do you test me, Grimwig?

GRIMWIG

Shouldn’t friends do that?

BROWNLOW hesitates, gets the books, gives them to OLIVER.

BROWNLOW

You are to say that you have brought these back and that you have come to pay him the four pounds ten that I owe him. This is a five-pound not, bring back the ten shillings.

OLIVER

I won’t be ten minutes, sir. (OLIVER exits)

BROWNLOW

Mrs. Bedwin! I am not a fool, Mr. Grimwig, nor will be made one. I know human nature. (MRS. BEDWIN enters.) Point the way to the bookseller’s for Oliver, and then see to our tea, will you? (She exits after OLIVER) Let me see now…ten minutes is too soon…we’ll call it twenty.

GRIMWIG

And I call it five pounds lost or I’ll eat my head.

BROWNLOW

And I will salt and pepper it for you!

They pull up chairs to wait. The focus fades. We see OLIVER on the street, people everywhere.

DAVID F.

When Oliver left Mr. Brownlow’s, he accidently turned down a bye street which was not exactly on his way.

We hear dialogue from the puppets.
PUPPETEER  Who tells me I cannot? Who tells me I cannot?

DAVID F.  And he came upon a Punch and Judy!

PUPPETEER  I tell you can’t. Judy?! Lay a hand upon the child...

NANCY  Oh, my dear brother!

OLIVER  Miss?

NANCY  I’ve found you! Oh, Oliver, you naughty boy. To make me suffer such distress on your account. Come home, dear, come home.

OLIVER  I don’t know you.

MARK C.  What’s the matter miss?

NANCY  Oh, sir, he run away from our family—joined a set of thieves—

OLIVER  Nancy!

NANCY  See? He does know me.

PUPPETEER  Then the child goes...out the window!

NANCY  Make him come home, dear people, he’ll kill his mother and father with worry.

CHRIS M.  Home to your family, young dog!

A.J. DEWEY  That’s right.

MATT  Go away wif your sister.

CATHERINE G.  You young wretch.

CHRIS M.  Go home you young brute.

OLIVER  Why are you here? How did you find me?

NANCY  Looking every day, Oliver dear, every hour. Thank you.

As they are talking, the crowd turns back to the Punch and Judy, and NANCY moves OLIVER towards a dark corner where SIKES and DODGER are waiting.

PUPPETEER  Our baby out the winder!
Where he deserved.
You killed our little pickle!
Look out now, look out now…

**OLIVER**
A gentleman took me in.

**PUPPETEER**
You can’t do that and…

**NANCY**
Then we must go and tell him thank you.

**PUPPETEER**
Don’t tell me cannot
...and get away with it!

**OLIVER**
I’ve got these books to return

**PUPPETEER**
Out the window!

*Sikes wraps Oliver in a large cloak and he and Dodger carry him off away from the crowd. Nancy checks to see that they haven’t been seen and follows them. In a split focus we see Brownlow and Grimwig waiting. Rose is outside the house looking for Oliver. Mrs. Bedwin inside weeping into her apron.*

**BALLAD SINGER**
Where are you going, little one?
Where are you going this day?

**CARL BECK**
The gas-lamps are lighted.

**CLYDE LUND**
Mrs. Bedwin was sick with worry.

**ROSE**
Rose had been up the street twenty times hoping for Oliver.

**BEDWIN**
And in the parlor, the two old gentlemen sat, the watch between them.

**ENSEMBLE**
To the gallows high
Or parliament?

Where are you going today?

London…

*Oliver, wrapped in a blanket, is unrolled before Fagin.*