

## CHAPTER 2

**O**NE COLD MORNING OLIVER GOT UP VERY EARLY AND LEFT the workhouse. Looking back from time to time, he walked quickly and did not stop for five miles. He had only a penny and a piece of bread, but he didn't care. In London a boy could earn his own living. London was seventy miles away, but Oliver kept walking. When night came, he went into a meadow and slept under a hay-stack.

The next few days were the same. Oliver's penny bought him one small loaf, but soon he was hungry again. The only food he had eaten in days was some bread and cheese a kind old woman had given him. On the seventh day, Oliver came to a little town. His feet were bleeding and they were covered in dust. Exhausted, he sat down on a step. Hours later, when he looked up, he saw a rather strange boy standing in front of him. He was about thirteen, short for his age, and very dirty. He wore a man's hat and coat, and although he was young, he looked like he knew how to take care of himself.

He spoke to Oliver. "Hello my covey! What's the row?" Oliver didn't understand, but he guessed the boy was asking how he was.

"I am very hungry and tired," said Oliver. "I have been walking for seven days." Tears came into his eyes as he spoke.

"Walking for seven days!" exclaimed the boy. "Well, you need to eat. I haven't got much money, but it's enough for some food, my friend. As for my name, they call me the Artful Dodger."

After the Artful Dodger had bought some ham and bread, he asked Oliver where he was going. When he said he was going to London, he asked if he had anywhere to stay there. Oliver said no.

"I know a respectable old gentleman there who will give you a place to live, and food to eat, and not ask for any money at all," the Dodger said.

Oliver had not slept under a roof for a week, so this offer sounded good to him. When they got to London, the Dodger led Oliver along a narrow, muddy street with old and dirty houses.

