

## CHAPTER 3

**A**S SOON AS THE PEOPLE NEARBY HEARD THE CRY "Stop thief!" they started chasing poor Oliver. Oliver ran as fast as he could and the people ran after him. Finally, someone knocked him down, and he fell to the ground bleeding.

"The boy is hurt!" said the old gentleman, bending over Oliver.

"Hurt or not, I will take him to the police magistrate," said a policeman who had just arrived at the scene. "You must come with us, sir," he told the old gentleman. The Artful Dodger was nowhere to be seen.

"So this is the young thief," the police magistrate said.

"It was not me, sir," Oliver said desperately, "It was someone else."

But the magistrate ignored him. "Are you the person who was robbed?" he asked the old gentleman.

The old gentleman looked at Oliver. The boy was pale and scared, but he did not look guilty. "Yes, I am," he said, "but I am not sure that this is the boy who took the purse." He kept wondering, "Where have I seen this face before? There is something very familiar about it!"

Then suddenly, the owner of the bookstall rushed in. "You have the wrong boy!" he shouted, out of breath from running. "I saw the thief!"

"Then this child did not commit the crime!" the old gentleman said, relieved. But at that moment Oliver fainted. "He is ill!" the old gentleman cried. "He needs a doctor!" The police magistrate allowed the old gentleman, whose name was Mr Brownlow, to take Oliver to his house to take care of him.

Mr Brownlow was a retired lawyer. He had never married and he lived alone, enjoying the company of books and old friends. Every room in his house contained paintings and other things that he had collected through a long and interesting life.

Oliver was carried into one of these rooms, and a doctor came to examine him.

"You are safe now," said Mr Brownlow. "Rest until you feel

