

behind them. "Is there anyone else here?" asked Monks.

"No one but ourselves. That must have been the wind," said Fagin, returning with a candle.

"Then tell me," hissed Monks. "Is it true that Oliver Twist escaped?"

Fagin looked worried. "It was an accident. Sikes had no idea how important he was."

"I pay you hundreds of pounds," shouted Monks, "and still you let that cursed boy get away! I told you, he must not be seen or recognised by anyone! Why couldn't you keep him locked up in here?"

"He is not like the other boys," Fagin replied. "He thinks stealing is wrong, and so he keeps trying to run away from us. I had to force him to do one very bad thing, to make him one of us. Then he would not try to run away anymore, because he would be afraid of the police."

"You must find him immediately and bring him back," said Monks firmly. "Where was he last seen?"

"At a house owned by a family called Maylie," said Fagin. "Sikes left him in a field close by. He cannot have gone very far."

"I will go there myself, and look for him," said Monks. "I will find everyone who knows anything about him, and—" Suddenly he jumped to his feet. "What's that? You said there was no one else here!"

"There isn't," Fagin said, getting up. "What did you see?"

"A shadow on the wall," said Monks, trembling with fear. "A woman in a bonnet and shawl!"

"Impossible," said Fagin, "but we can search the house." So they did, but they found no one. Monks was puzzled. "I must have imagined it," he finally said and left.

