

CHAPTER 12

OF ALL THE CRIMES COMMITTED IN LONDON THAT NIGHT, Sikes had committed the worst. The sun rose slowly and it shone through Sikes' window onto Nancy's dead body. Sikes realised the dreadful thing he had done. He could not bear to look at Nancy, so he ran away and disappeared.

A day after the murder, a coach pulled up at Mr Brownlow's house. Mr Brownlow got out with a man in a black cloak – Monks – following him.

"How dare you kidnap me off the street!" Monks protested.

"I know that you are partly responsible for the death of a woman called Nancy," Mr Brownlow replied sternly. "If you don't come with me, and tell me everything you know about Oliver Twist, I will give you up to the police! And then you know what will happen." Monks did know – he would be hanged. So he finally agreed. Rose and Oliver were called in to listen.

"My real name is Edward Leeford," Monks said. "I am the son of Edwin Leeford." Edwin of course was Mr Brownlow's old friend. "My father had been forced to marry my mother, and there was no love between them. My parents separated when I was a boy. I went to live with my mother, and my father continued to live alone." Monks spoke angrily. His unhappy childhood had made him a lonely, angry man. He had looked for friends among the criminals in society, which was how he had met Fagin.

Mr Brownlow continued the story. "After separating from his wife, Edwin met a young woman called Agnes. They fell in love, and Edwin planned to go to America with Agnes where nobody knew about his past. There they could start a new life and be happy. But then his rich uncle died in Italy and he had to go there to claim his inheritance. While he was there, he caught a fever and died."

Very pale, Rose looked at Mr Brownlow, then at Oliver. "Did Agnes have a sister?" she asked.

"She did," said Mr Brownlow. "A very young sister. You! When

