

## CHAPTER 5

**M**EANWHILE, MR BROWNLOW WAITED FOR OLIVER TO return. As the time passed however, he realised that Oliver was not coming home. He finally got up, and went to look at the painting that he had put away after Oliver had fainted. Lost in thought, he looked into the woman's eyes. Long ago in his youth he had a close friend, Edwin Leeford. Edwin had fallen in love with a young woman, and the couple planned to marry. Then one of Edwin's relatives in Italy had died suddenly, leaving him a lot of money and he had to go there for his inheritance. Before he left, he brought the painting of his fiancée to Mr Brownlow, asking him to take good care of it while he was away. Sadly, however, Edwin never returned. He caught a fever in Italy and died. What happened to his young fiancée was a mystery. Mr Brownlow had tried to find her, but she had disappeared.

It was this woman who looked so much like Oliver. Was Oliver the key to the mystery? Mr Brownlow decided to do his best to find out. So he made a poster, offering a reward to anyone who could tell him anything about Oliver Twist. He put this poster up around London and in nearby towns, too. Then one day, a woman came to the door, saying she had information about Oliver.

Unfortunately, the woman was Mrs Corney from the workhouse, who disliked Oliver so much that she made him sound very bad. She ended by saying how rude and ungrateful he had been to her by running away.

Mr Brownlow was disappointed. He put five pounds on the table. "Thank you for your information," he said, "but I would have given twice as much to hear something good about the boy!" If Mrs Corney had known this before, she might have told a different story. But it was too late for that now. Mr Brownlow was very upset, and he wondered if Oliver was a bad person after all, and not worth his attention.

Oliver, meanwhile, was taking a journey with Bill Sikes. Sikes had taken the boy along to help with the burglary he had planned.

