

CHAPTER 4

“WELCOME BACK, DEAR OLIVER,” FAGIN SAID MOCKINGLY. “Thank you for bringing him home again, Nancy,” he added to the young woman who had kidnapped Oliver. Nancy was about twenty and very pretty. Like the Artful Dodger, she had been one of Fagin’s pupils. She was very good at lying and deceiving people.

Oliver knew he was in trouble, but spoke up bravely. “Please let me return these books! I owe this to Mr Brownlow. He took me in, and fed me, and was so good to me. Keep me here with you forever, but let me take them back! He will think I have stolen them!”

“No, it took a lot of effort to find you and bring you back, and I shall keep the books as payment,” Fagin said.

Before Oliver could reply, there was a call of “Plummy and slam!” “Open the door, Nancy, dear,” Fagin said. “And Oliver, you sit in the corner and don’t make any trouble. Or Bill Sikes will deal with you!” He laughed nastily, pointing at the door.

Bill Sikes was thirty-five, a big, strong man. His trousers were muddy, and he wore a dirty handkerchief around his neck. A white dog, with his face scratched and torn in twenty places, was following him. “Hurry up!” Sikes said to the dog, and gave him a kick.

“Good day, Bill dear,” said Fagin in a friendly tone to this unpleasant man. “Very cold day, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Sikes unpleasantly, “as cold as your heart.”

“Hush now, Mr Sikes,” Fagin said gently. Mr Sikes was in a very bad temper. He was a professional burglar who often worked with Fagin, so they began to discuss a house burglary that Sikes had been planning.

“There’s a big problem,” said Sikes. “We’ve got nobody to help us from the inside. The servants are all very loyal to their mistress.”

“That is unfortunate,” said Fagin. “But isn’t there another way



to break in? Remember, the precious gold plate is in there!”

“There is a way,” Sikes said, “but I will need a boy. A small boy will be able to crawl through a window and unlock the door for us.”

“That is no problem at all dear,” Fagin said, looking at Oliver. “I have the perfect boy for the job!”

Oliver realised that Fagin meant him. Terrified, he jumped up and ran to the door, banging on it and screaming for help. Bill Sikes’ dog got to his feet, growling.

“Keep the dog back, Bill!” Nancy said suddenly, taking Bill Sikes’ arm. “He’ll tear the boy to pieces!”

“That would serve him right!” Sikes shouted. “Let go of my arm or you’ll be very sorry!”

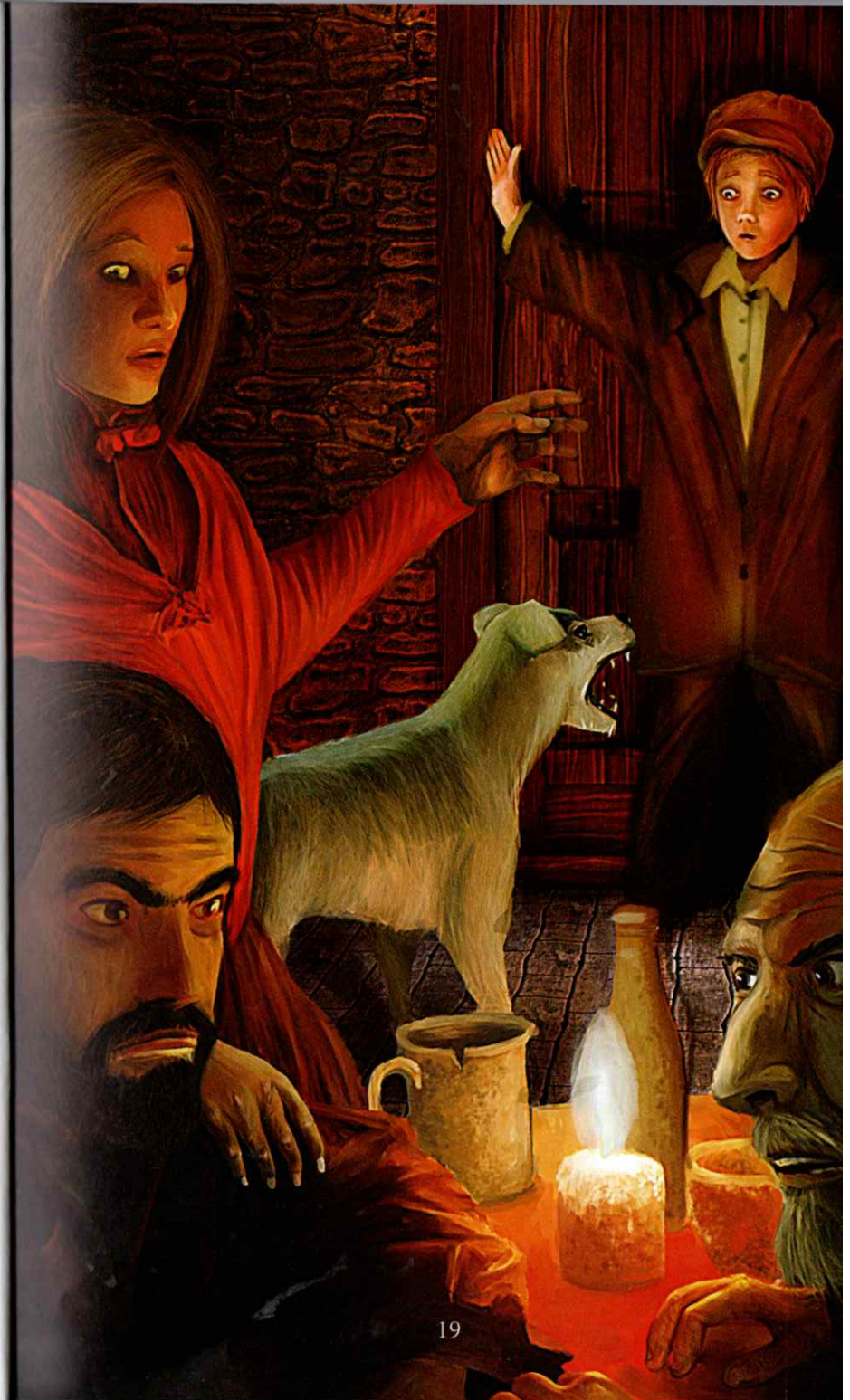
Nancy usually obeyed Sikes, but not now. With Oliver, she felt something she had not felt for a long time: pity for someone who was weak. She shouted at Sikes. “No! You’ll have to kill me first!”

Fagin and the Dodger dragged Oliver back to his chair. “So you thought you would get away, didn’t you,” Fagin said to him, picking up a club.

Nancy let go of Sikes and grabbed the club. “No! I brought the boy here, but I won’t let you hurt him!” she cried. “You’ll make him a thief and a liar, just like you made me. Isn’t that bad enough?” And saying this, Nancy burst into tears.

Sikes seized Nancy roughly and she fainted.

Now, Oliver didn’t have any chance to escape. They kept him locked in the house. He kept thinking of Mr Brownlow. If only he could find him again!



CHAPTER 4

Comprehension

1 Complete the sentences with the correct name.

Fagin Oliver Sikes Nancy

- _____ was very good at telling lies to people.
- _____ wanted to take the books back to Mr Brownlow.
- _____ tried to be friendly towards _____.
- _____ was in a very bad mood.
- _____ felt bad about _____'s troubles and wanted to protect him.
- _____ and _____ planned to steal a gold plate from a house.
- _____ suggested they should use _____ to break into the house.

2 Complete the summary of Chapter 4 with words or short phrases.

Nancy _____ Oliver and brought him back to Fagin. Oliver was upset because he realised he was _____ and wouldn't be able to _____ for Mr Brownlow. Then, Bill Sikes with his _____ entered the house. He was a _____ and started discussing a _____ with Fagin. When Oliver realised that he was going to be used for the job, he _____ and ran to the door but he was stopped by Sikes' dog. Nancy tried to _____ Oliver from Sikes. She _____ his club and didn't let Sikes _____ Oliver. Oliver now knew that he didn't have _____ to escape.

Vocabulary

3 Complete the sentences using the prepositions in the box.

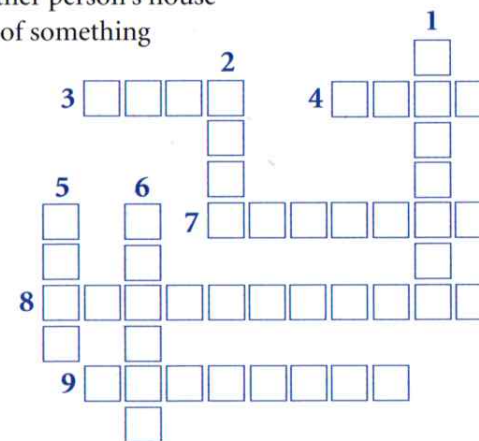
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- Let go _____ my arm! You are hurting me.
- The burglars used a trained dog to break _____ the house.
- Helen is really good _____ painting. I think she's going to be a painter when she grows up.

- If your mum finds the house in such a mess, you'll be _____ trouble.
- There are still some problems I have to deal _____ in my new neighbourhood.
- What are you pointing _____? I can't see very clearly.
- When I heard the big bang I got _____ my feet and ran out of the house to see what it was.
- When she heard the shocking news, she burst _____ tears.
- Will you pick that pencil _____, please?
- I really feel sorry _____ homeless people.

4 Complete the crossword.

- A person working in another person's house
- Seize, violently take hold of something
- Hit something very hard so that it makes a noise
- To do what you are told
- A heavy stick with one end thicker than the other
- A try, an attempt
- A person entering a house illegally
- Unlucky
- Valuable



Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

- Why do you think Nancy's attitude towards Oliver changed?
- What can be done to prevent crime?
- Do you think that Oliver will be able to escape and meet Mr Brownlow again?

6 Imagine that you are Oliver, kept prisoner in Fagin's house. Write a letter to Mr Brownlow, explaining the situation and asking for his help. (60-80 words)