

TWIST!
by Andrew Alty
(from the novel by Charles Dickens)

OLIVER WALKS ON. HE MAY BE PLAYED BY A BOY OR A GIRL. HE SAUNTERS TO CENTRE, LOOKING AROUND AT THE AUDIENCE AS HE WALKS. HE STOPS, TAKES THEM ALL IN

OLIVER Morning (afternoon) everybody!

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

OLIVER The name's Twist, Oliver Twist. Heard of me? Know who I am? (AUDIENCE RESPONSE) Ahh! Read the book have you? Seen the musical? Watched the film at Christmas? Well listen-

HE APPROACHES THE STAGE APRON

OLIVER -It's wrong. All of it. The whole thing. They made me seem so sweet, so gentle, so innocent! (SHAKES HIS HEAD) But that's not what it was really like, not at all. The true story is very different. Would you like to hear it?

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

OLIVER Right then, here it is and don't tell a soul-

 The true tale of Oliver Twist!

MOOD MUSIC. THUNDER, LIGHTNING (IF AFFORDABLE)

A GIRL WRAPPED IN A SHAWL WALKS ON, CARRYING A BUNDLE IN HER ARMS, SHE LOOKS AROUND NERVOUSLY

OLIVER It's true- I never knew my mum. Never met her, didn't even know her name. She died on the day I was born. Can you imagine that? No mum or dad or brothers or sisters. I still think about it every single day...

THE GIRL APPROACHES THE WORKHOUSE GATES, LOOKS AROUND, LOOKS DOWN AT THE CHILD IN HER ARMS, SHAKES HER HEAD SADLY, PUTS IT DOWN AT THE GATES. SHE RINGS THE BELL, RUNS OFF

OLIVER ...This is her best friend. I say best friend.- she was no friend to me! She just dumped me there. Left me on the steps of the Workhouse, and ran away. I could've died right there- but thanks to my very quick thinking- I didn't...

THE BABY STARTS SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF ITS VOICE.

OLIVER (PUTS HIS FINGERS IN HIS EARS) Listen to those lungs!

A WOMAN RUNS OUT TO THE GATES, SEES THE BABY, GOES OVER AND PEERS AT IT

MRS CORNEY Mr Bumble! Mr Bumble sir? Lord above, if it's not a little child...

THE BABY CRIES EVEN LOUDER. MR BUMBLE APPEARS AT A WINDOW

BUMBLE Another one? That's three this week!

MRS C As true as I'm stood here sir. Left at the gate just as casual as you please...

SHE PICKS IT UP.

MRS C What d'you think then sir? Must we take it in?

BUMBLE Sadly we must Mrs Corney- for it is our Christian Duty, however ungrateful the little wretches may be for all the kindnesses we lavish upon them.

(SHE SIGHS, WALKS INSIDE WITH IT)

MRS C Another mouth to feed!

BUMBLE Give him gruel like the rest of them. Gruel is good for the soul. (HE TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE) Now then you ugly lot-

OLIVER -I didn't like Mr Bumble, not one bit.

HE GOES DOWN THE FRONT ROW OF SEATS

BUMBLE Let's have a look at you shall we?

OLIVER I was scared of him. We all were.....

BUMBLE (TO FIRST KID) Show me your hands! (KID DOES) Filthy! No gruel for you tonight...

OLIVER -He carried a cane and he wasn't afraid to use it!

BUMBLE (2ND KID) Did you scrub this floor like you were told? Well then, set about it!

OLIVER And he used it a lot...

BUMBLE (LOOKS UNDER 3RD KIDS SEAT) What's this? Bread? Stolen I'll be bound! I shall have you flogged!

KID (WHO IS REALLY AN ACTOR) Please sir no. Don't sir, it's not mine- it's his -
(POINTS AT THE KID NEXT TO HIM) I swear it!

BUMBLE Little liar! Come with me boy... (HE LEADS THE KID OFF BY HIS EAR)

OLIVER ...Ohh what a fearful, desperate place it was. And it was my home for ten long years!

BUMBLE (SHOUTS) As for you lot- get back to work!

HE STRIDES OFF, DRAGGING THE BOY BEHIND HIM, STRUGGLING & SQUEALING

OLIVER Work! That's all we did- I suppose that's why they called it the Workhouse...

WORKHOUSE INMATES MARCH ON IN REGIMENTED LINES.

OLIVER We scrubbed floors, dug holes, washed clothes, shovelled coals

INMATES Scrub floors, dig holes, wash clothes, shovel coals

OLIVER Chopped wood, polished doors, cleaned chimneys, swept floors

INMATES Chop wood, polish doors, clean chimneys, sweep floors

THEY KEEP THESE CHANTS GOING AS THEY WORK. PERHAPS THEY MOVE OFF THE STAGE INTO THE AUDITORIUM?

OLIVER And all that time there was only one thing on our minds. Nothing else mattered. It was all we thought about, cared about, dreamed of.. That's right, you guessed it! Food...

SONG No. 1 FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

*Is it worth the waiting for, if we live till eighty-four?
All we ever get is gru-el!
Every day we say a prayer, will they change the bill of fare?
Still we get the same old gru-el!
There's not a crust, not a crumb we can find,
Can we beg can we borrow or cadge.
But there's nothing to stop us from getting a thrill
When we all close our eyes and imagine...*

Verse 1

Food, glorious food! Hot sausage and mustard.
While we're in the mood, cold jelly and custard.
Pease pudding and saveloys, what next is the question?

Rich gentlemen have it boys – in-di-gestion!

Food glorious food! We're anxious to try it.
Three banquets a day, our favourite diet.
Just picture a great big steak, fried, roasted or stewed,
Oh food, wonderful food, marvellous food,
Glorious food!

Verse 2

Food, glorious food! What is there more handsome?
Gulped, swallowed or chewed, still worth a King's ransom.
What is it we dream about, what brings on a sigh?
Piled peaches and cream about six feet high!

Food, glorious food! Eat right through the menu.
Just loosen your belt two inches, and then you
Work up a new appetite in this interlude, then
Food, once again, food, fabulous food,
Glorious food!

Repeat Verse 2, with the added 'coda'

Food Glorious food!...(continue as above until)...

Work up a new appetite in this interlude, then
Food!
Magical food,
Wonderful food,
Marvellous food,
Fabulous food,
Beautiful food,
GLO-RI-OUS FOOD!

OLIVER Food was all we ever talked about...

A GROUP OR CHILDREN, HARD AT WORK.

1ST Pork sausages!

2ND With gravy...

3RD Egg and chips!

4TH Bacon-

5TH Fried bread!

ALL SIGH IN UNISON

OLIVER (TO AUDIENCE) Have you ever been hungry? So hungry you can't sleep at night? Because that's what we were- all the time...

MRS COVEY STRIDES ON

MRS C In all my born days, I never heard such nonsense! Don't you believe a word of it, ladies and gentlemen. Just look at these dear, darling children! Honestly now- do they seem hungry to you?

OLIVER YES! Look at them!

MRS C Hush your mouth Oliver Twist.

WORKHOUSE MASTER BRINGS ON A HUGE PAN, STIRS IT WITH A WOODEN SPOON.

MRS C Feed 'em well, we do. Every single one gets an onion, a whole onion- once a week. And a piece of bread on Sundays!

THEY ALL RUN AROUND, COLLECT THEIR BOWLS.

MRS C And of course, a delicious bowl of gruel stew twice a day - without fail!

THE MASTER STARTS SERVING SLOP INTO THEIR BOWLS

MRS C Spoilt- that's what they are. And all they ever do is grumble. Listen to 'em. Just listen!

1ST I can't eat this!

2ND -Give it to me then. I'll eat it.

3RD It's horrid

4TH It's rancid

1ST It's revolting

2ND And there's not half enough of it!

OLIVER THROWS DOWN HIS BOWL

OLIVER This isn't fair! We have to do something about it!

THEY ALL LOOK AT HIM IN SURPRISE

4th -Like what?

1st Nothing we can...

OLIVER There is. Of course there is. We can ask for more!

THEY ALL STARE AT HIM, SHOCKED

ALL (IN UNISON) More?

OLIVER Why not? If we did it together- they'd have to listen then. What do you say? Come on, complaining won't change anything will it? How about it- who's with me?

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER APPREHENSIVELY, GET NERVOUSLY TO THEIR FEET.

OLIVER -What do we want?

ALL (TIMIDLY) More?

OLIVER Come on! Louder! (SHOUTS) We want more!

ALL We want more.

OLIVER We want more!

HE GETS THE AUDIENCE TO JOIN IN

AUDIENCE We want more! Etc etc

BUMBLE (RUSHES ON, STICK IN HAND) What's this, what's this? Silence! (HE BRANDISHES HIS STICK) Silence this instant or you'll have this to answer to! (THEY QUIETEN DOWN. HE TURNS TO OLIVER AND THE OTHERS, COWERING BEHIND HIM) Now then boy, what's all this noise about?

OLIVER TURNS TO THE OTHERS. THEY GIVE LITTLE NODS OF ENCOURAGEMENT. HE STEPS FORWARD.

OLIVER Mr Bumble sir, we- we all want some more!

A HUGE PIANO CHORD. BUMBLE LOOKS LIKE HE'S ABOUT TO EXPLODE.

BUMBLE What? ALL of you?

OLIVER TURNS TO THE OTHERS, THEY'RE SKULKING OFF AS FAST AS THEY DARE

BUMBLE Ah! ...As I suspected. It's you that wants more is it, Twist?

OLIVER LOOKS AT HIM, THEN TO THE OTHERS, THEN OUT AT US

OLIVER ...This isn't turning out quite how I expected..

HE MAKES A RUN FOR IT. BUMBLE GIVES CHASE. JUST FOR FUN, THIS MIGHT BE THRU THE AUDITORIUM. A GROUP OF OLD MEN HOBBLE ON STAGE, ALL TALKING AT ONCE

MRS C This boy is a trouble-maker, gentlemen. No respect for his betters, that's what it is. Something must be done!

VARIOUSLY "Something must be done!" "Make an example!" "Show him the error of his ways" "Flog him!" "Beat him!" "Starve him!" etc

BUMBLE ENTERS OUT OF BREATH DRAGGING OLIVER AFTER HIM, THROWS HIM ONTO THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF THE BOARD. THEY ALL LOOK AT HIM, SHAKE HEADS MAKE TUTTING NOISES.

CHAIRMAN Oliver Twist- the Parish Board has discussed your case and decided- unamin- unaminous- together- that you are to be offered as an Apprentice, forthwith.

OLIVER As a- a what?

BUMBLE (UNROLLS A PAPER) Let it be known to all, that the Workhouse Board hereby offers a reward of five pounds to any man- or woman- offering young Oliver Twist a trade, business or calling! (TURNS TO OLIVER) In short and without further ado- you're to be given away, young man! And may God have mercy on your soul...

OLIVER Given away? To who?

ENTER SOWERBERY. HE'S THIN, PALE AND DRESSED IN BLACK

BUMBLE Mr Sowerbery – how delightful to see you again sir.

SOWERBERY Mr Bumble- a pleasure as always.

THEY SHAKE HANDS

BUMBLE This is him sir. This is the boy I told you about.

SOWERBERRY MEASURES HIM UP.

BUMBLE A good boy too. A little willful perhaps? In need of a hard word and a firm hand but- put him to work and he'll soon come to heel.

SOWERBERY Five pounds you say?

BUMBLE PULLS THE BANKNOTE FROM HIS POCKET.

SOWERBERY (SMILES) Well then– I'll take him!

BUMBLE GIVES HIM THE MONEY, TURNS TO OLIVER

BUMBLE Young man, meet your new employer- Mr Sowerbery the Undertaker... Off you go, behave yourself and do as you are told! (HE SHAKES SOWERBERY'S HAND) He's all yours sir...

OLIVER IS LEFT ALONE WITH SOWERBERY

OLIVER (TO US) Sold? (SIGHS) Not even sold- given away!

SOWERBERY Come along boy! There's work to be done...

HE STARTS WALKING OFF- FREEZES.

OLIVER So that was that- I was leaving the Workhouse for good! (SIGHS) The only family I'd ever known...

OLIVER'S WORKHOUSE FRIENDS GATHER AROUND HIM, HAND HIM HIS CAP AND JACKET, SHAKE HIS HAND, EMBRACE HIM. HE PUTS THEM ON. THEY WAVE AS HE WALKS OFF WITH SOWERBERY

SOWERBERY Hurry along now!

SOWERBERY LEADS HIM DOWN INTO THE AUDITORIUM

OLIVER I wish I knew where I was going! And what's an undertaker? Does anyone know? (HE FOLLOWS SOWERBERY) What- no-one? Ask your teachers then! Come on- quick! (THEY SHOUT OUT ANSWERS) (HE STOPS) They do what? You mean, he's a-

SOWERBERY (GESTURES) Welcome to your new home, Oliver Twist!

THE STAGE IS NOW SET UP AS THE COFFIN SHOP. IT'S GLOOMY, DINGY AND DARK. COFFINS STAND AROUND WITH ONE CENTRE, ON A TABLE. OLIVER FOLLOWS SOWERBERY UP THE STEPS

SOWERBERY (SHOUTS) ...My dear? We're back!

MRS SOWERBERY WALKS ON, LOOKS OLIVER UP AND DOWN.

MRS S (TO SOWERBERY) Wipe yer feet! (LOOKS AT OLIVER) -And who's this little urchin?

OLIVER (STANDS TALL AND PROUD) Oliver Twist ma'am-

SOWERBERY Our new Undertakers Apprentice!

MRS S (EXAMINES HIS HAND) Filthy! And isn't he small? Skin and bones, he is.

SOWERBERY He'll fatten up my love!

MRS S I dare say he will- and on our victuals and drink! I see no possible saving in Parish children – they always cost more than they're worth! (TO OLIVER) Well now, are you hungry, boy?

OLIVER I am ma'am! Exceedingly!

MRS S (TO SOWERBERY) Told you so! Eat us out of house and home, he will. (SHOUTS) Charlotte! (CHARLOTTE RUNS IN) Give this boy some of the cold bits from the dog's dinner. I dare say he'll eat 'em. Won't you?

OLIVER NODS ENTHUSIASTICALLY. CHARLOTTE HOLDS OUT THE DISH. OLIVER SETS ABOUT EATING IT. CHARLOTTE WATCHES IN HORROR AS HE WOLFS IT DOWN

MRS S Noah!

ENTER NOAH, A COCKY BOY OF ABOUT FIFTEEN.

MRS S Noah- he'll be under you. (TO OLIVER) Noah here runs the shop. Whatever he tells you to do- you do it. Understand me?

NOAH (BRANDISHES HIS FIST) Or you'll get this!
OLIVER (STILL CHEWING) But ma'am- what will I do?

MRS S, CHARLOTTE AND NOAH ALL LAUGH

NOAH Haha! He doesn't know!

CHARLOTTE (LAUGHS) "What will you do?"

MRS S Why you'll dust down the coffins, wash the corpses and prepare them for their eternal rest, that's what!

OLIVERS DROPS HIS EMPTY PLATE

MRS S You made quick work of that! Now then Noah, show young Oliver here to his sleeping quarters, will you?

CHARLOTTE GIGGLES. MRS SOWERBERY HANDS HIM A LAMP

MRS S Goodnight Oliver. Pleasant dreams!

SHE WALKS OFF. NOAH TAKES OLIVER OVER TO THE TABLE, CENTRE, GESTURES UNDER IT

NOAH -In you go then!

OLIVER (LOOKS AROUND) You don't mean- in here? With the coffins?

NOAH Ohh they won't bother you- after all, they're dead!

HE THROWS HIM A BLANKET, WALKS OFF LAUGHING.

OLIVER (TO US) It was a very very long night...

LIGHTS CHANGE. A CHURCH CLOCK CHIMES – IT'S TWO IN THE MORNING.

OLIVER (GETS UP) It's no good- I can't sleep, not in this place! I have to get away from here. But where? Back to plates of gruel in the workhouse? Never!

HE SHAKES HIS HEAD, SITS DOWN

OLIVER (SIGHS) I don't know what to do. I have nobody now. No family, no friends- no-one I can turn to. No-one to help me. I'm all alone in the world...

HE SIGHS. THINKS. STANDS UP AGAIN

OLIVER (DETERMINED) -In that case I'll just have to help myself! After all, I can't stay here and I'm not going back to Mr Bumble- so what other choice is there? I mean, it's not so bad-

HE PICKS UP THE BLANKET

OLIVER -At least now I've a blanket to keep me warm. (PICKS UP THE LAMP) And a lantern to light the way at night... So here goes. Shhh...

HE CREEPS ACROSS TO THE DOOR, TURNS THE HANDLE, OPENS IT. IT CREAKS.

OLIVER Hush!

WE HEAR FOOTSTEPS. HE WAITS, LISTENS.

OLIVER They've gone. Now then- run!

HE RUNS. PERCUSSION ACCOMPANIMENT? HE IS LIFTED UP IN THE AIR, MIMES RUNNING.

1ST Run Oliver, run!

2ND Faster Oliver!

3RD Don't look back!

4th Get out-

5th Get away!

ALL Ruuuuuun!

AS HE RUNS, A SIGN FLIES PAST HIM, "LONDON 70 MILES"

OLIVER London?

1st VOICE London!

2nd That great place-

3rd No-one would ever find him there!

THEY DROP HIM TO THE GROUND. MUSIC? IT'S EARLY MORNING THE STREET FILLS WITH PEOPLE. SHOPKEEPERS OPENING UP AND SETTING OUT THEIR WARES. HAWKERS AND LABOURERS AND PORTERS WITH CRATES ON THEIR HEADS. IMPORTANT-LOOKING PEOPLE STRUT ABOUT.

OLIVER London! I made it. I'm here!

HE WONDERS AROUND, TAKING IT ALL IN. NO-ONE PAYS HIM ANY HEED.

HE SITS DOWN MISERABLY ON THE SL STEPS. ANOTHER BOY IS SITTING ON THE STEPS SR. STARING AT HIM. OLIVER TURNS, LOOKS AT HIM. DODGER LOOKS AWAY. OLIVER DOES THE SAME, WHISTLES TO HIMSELF. DODGER WHISTLES TOO. OLIVER TURNS TO WALK AWAY, SO DOES DODGER. BOTH STOP, TURN BACK.

OLIVER What are you looking at?

DODGER What are you looking at?

OLIVER WALKS CENTRE, DODGER DOES THE SAME. THEY STARE EACH OTHER OUT.

DODGER You're ugly...

OLIVER Not as ugly as you!

DODGER KNOCKS OLIVERS CAP OFF. OLIVER KNOCKS DODGERS HAT OFF HIS HEAD. DODGER PUTS HIS FISTS UP. OLIVER DOES THE SAME. BOTH SUDDENLY BURST OUT LAUGHING

OLIVER -Oliver

DODGER -Dodger.

OLIVER HOLDS HIS HAND OUT. DODGER SHOWS HIM HIS FIST. THEY BUMP

DODGER (LOOKS HIM UP AND DOWN) ...Not from round here are ya?

OLIVER SHAKES HIS HEAD.

DODGER ...I can tell. You're what we call green. Come far?

OLIVER More than 70 miles!

DODGER Ohh now I get it. Come to London seeking your fortune, I bet.

OLIVER No, no. Not my fortune- my family...

DODGER Ain't you got one then?

OLIVER SHAKES HIS HEAD.

DODGER Ahhh that's so sad! Well now p'raps old Dodger can help you out, like a good mate should. (SLAPS HIM ON THE BACK) Want to meet mine? Proper big family it is too. Loads of little brothers and sisters... wanna meet 'em?

OLIVER You mean- now?

DODGER No time like the present, is there? A right friendly bunch they are too! Especially dear old Fagin!

OLIVER Fagin?

DODGE Yes! You'll love Fagin, I'm sure of that. She's the nicest of the lot! She'll make you feel very welcome, very welcome indeed!

SONG No. 2 CONSIDER YOURSELF

Chorus 1

*Consider yourself at home,
Consider yourself one of the family.
We've taken to you so strong.
It's clear we're going to get along.*

*Consider yourself well in.
Consider yourself part of the furniture.
There isn't a lot to spare.
Who cares?
What - ever we've got we share.*

Verse 1

If it should chance to be we should see some harder days,
Empty larder days, why grouse?
Always a chance we'll meet somebody to foot the bill,
Then the drinks are on the house!

Consider yourself our mate.
We don't want to make no fuss!
For after some consideration we can state
Consider yourself one of us!

Chorus 2 (as above)

Verse 2

Nobody tries to be lah-di-dah and uppity,
There's a cup of tea for all.
Only it's wise to be handy with a rolling pin
When the landlord come to call!
Consider yourself our mate.
We don't want to make no fuss!
For after some consideration we can state
Consider yourself one of us!

THIEVES DEN. EVERYBODY CHEERS AND INTRODUCES THEMSELVES. ENTER FAGIN. SHE'S LOUD, SMART, STREET-WISE AND SASSY. SHE CAN BE GENEROUS AND SHE CAN BE NASTY DEPENDING ON WHERE SHE IS AND WHO SHE IS WITH. EVERYONE GREETES HER.

DODGE This is Oliver, Fagin. He's come to London in search of a family.

FAGIN (SHAKES OLIVERS HAND) A family is it? Well now, he's at home here.
(SHOUTS) `Ain't he boys and girls?

DODGER (PUNCHES OLIVERS ARM) See? Told you, didn't I?

OLIVER LOOKS AROUND AT THEM ALL

OLIVER These can't all be your children?

SHE THROWS BACK HER HEAD AND ROARS WITH LAUGHTER.

FAGIN Hah! Mine? No no my darling I just – (SHRUGS) collected 'em all somehow.
They do seem to keep on turning up at my doorstep- don't they Dodge?

DODGE Oh they do Mistress Fagin, they surely do...

FAGIN And they like it so much they stay on! Isn't that right my cherubs?

ALL NOD ENTHUSIASTICALLY

FAGIN Of course- they all have to earn their keep, don't you my dears?

ALL NOD ENTHUSIASTICALLY

OLIVER What do you do...?

FAGIN We're in the err- (CLEARS HIS THROAT) the recycling business. (LAUGHS)
But there's plenty of time for that! First things first. Who's hungry?

ALL SHOUT AND CHEER ENTHUSIASTICALLY

CHARLIE -What's for breakfast ma?

FAGIN PULLS OUT A TRAY OF COOKED FOOD.

FAGIN Sausages!

THEY ALL CHEER, GATHER ROUND. SHE SHOOS THEM OFF, HANDS OLIVER THE PLUMPEST JUICIEST SAUSAGE. OLIVER TAKES IT, WALKS FORWARD.

OLIVER Aren't they friendly? (HE BITES INTO THE SAUSAGE. GROANS) Ohh that tastes SO delicious. (HE EATS IT HUNGRILY, WIPES HIS MOUTH)

DODGER Well now Oliver what d'you reckon bro?

CHARLIE -Want to join our gang?

DODGER (NUDGES HIM) Our family!

CHARLIE LAUGHS

CHARLIE What he said...

OLIVER (TO US) Well, what do you think everybody? Should I stay?

HE LISTENS TO THEIR RESPONSES.

OLIVER So- I've made up my mind... (TO DODGER) Yes, I'd like that very much!

CHARLIE Hear that, everyone? Oliver's joining the ga- (DODGER SLAPS HIM) family!

THEY GATHER ROUND, SLAP HIM ON THE BACK, BUMP FISTS HI-FIVE ETC.

WE HEAR; A DOG BARKING, GETTING LOUDER. EVERYONE BACKS AWAY FROM THE DOOR. A WHISPER GOES AROUND- BILL, IT'S BILL, IT'S HIM, IT'S SIKES ETC.. OLIVER LOOKS AT DODGE

DODGER Bill SIKES. He's a proper villain is Bill!

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN. BILL SIKES STANDS FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY. HE HAS A VICIOUS BULLDOG AT HIS HEEL. EVERYONE FREEZES AS THE DOG SNIFFS EVERYONE AND GROWLS. ONLY DODGER GETS A LICK AND A TAIL WAG. SIKES NOTICES THE AFFECTION

SIKES Heel!

THE DOG OBEDIENTLY RUNS BACK TO HIM. AS BILL WALKS INTO THE ROOM EVERYONE STEPS BACK AS HE GOES PAST.

FAGIN Bill! What a unexpected treat this is- and so early in the morning too. To what do we owe the-

SIKES -How much for these? (HE THRUSTS A BAG INTO FAGINS HANDS)

FAGIN Well now Bill, that very much depends on- (HE LOOKS INSIDE) Ooh! S(HE PULLS OUT SOMETHING SHINY, PUTS IT QUICKLY BACK IN) How interesting! Where did you find these?

SIKES -Never you mind where I found 'em. It's what they're worth, that's what I want to know.

FAGIN (HASTILY) Not now, Bill, not now, what with all of these eager eyes and ears listening in- and some of them- (SHE GLANCES ACROSS AT OLIVER) very new to the game, if you understand me...

SIKES ISSUES A COMMAND, THE DOG APPROACHES OLIVER, SNIFFS & GROWLS AT HIM MENACINGLY.

SIKES ...What's your name lad?

OLIVER (AS FIRMLY AS HE CAN) My name's Twist. Oliver Twist.

SIKES (STARES AT HIM MENACINGLY) My dog Bullseye here- he don't like you, Oliver Twist. So watch your step- understand me?

FAGIN (STEPS IN HASTILY) Of course he does, Bill of course. (SHE STARTS TO ESCORT HIM OUT, THE DOG GROWLS) You've made yourself very clear my dear, crystal clear. So! Why don't you leave these err- items- with me?

SIKES (ROARS) Leave 'em with you?

FAGIN Yes, Bill of course! Give them a proper once-over. Make sure you get the best possible price. Nancy here'll keep her eye on them, won't you my lovely? (NANCY NODS) Surely you trust your own girlfriend?

SIKES - I don't trust nobody!

FAGIN Listen Bill, we'll meet you tonight in The Three Cripples. Eleven o'clock.

SIKES -And you'll bring the money?

FAGIN ...Every last penny, Bill.

SIKES GRUNTS, WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR.

SIKES (TO THE DOG) Get here!

THE DOG GIVES OLIVER ONE LAST GROWL AND GOES TO HIS MASTER.

SIKES (TO OLIVER) He don't like you Oliver Twist- and neither do I!

HE EXITS. BOOS?? A MOMENTS PAUSE. OLIVER LOOKS WORRIED. FAGIN PATS HIS SHOULDER

FAGIN Ohh never you mind old Bill. His barks far worse than his bite. (LOOKS AROUND) -Now then my beauties, let's get down to business, shall we? On your feet you lazy lot! Time for work! Line up now, line up!

MUSIC; INTRODUCTION- BE BACK SOON.

ALL OF THEM START GETTING INTO LINE, BUTTONING UP JACKETS ETC.

FAGIN You know the rules! Number One?

ALL Stay together.

FAGIN Two?

ALL ...Work as a team.

FAGIN And if the rozzers arrive?

ALL it's everyone for themselves!

FAGIN You got it! Oliver, you're with Dodger and Charlie.

OLIVER But – what do I do?

FAGIN Oh don't fret- you'll get the hang of it soon enough. They'll show you the ropes- won't you lads? Give you some training. I've a feeling you'll work well together! (TO THEM ALL) Off you go then- and don't come back empty-handed!

SONG No.3 BE BACK SOON

Verse 1

You can go but be back soon.
You can go but while you're working
This place I'm pacing round
Until you're home, safe and sound.
Fare thee well but be back soon.
Who can tell where danger's lurking?
Do not forget this tune,
Be back soon.

*How could we forget?
How could we let our dear old Fagin worry?
We love **him / her** so, we'll come back home
In, oh, such a great big hurry.
It's **him / her** that pays the piper, it's us that pipes the tune.
So long, fare-thee-well, pip-pip, cheerio,
We'll be back soon.*

Verse 2

You can go but be back soon.
You can go but bring back plenty
Of pocket handkerchiefs
And you should be clever thieves!
Whip it quick and be back soon,
There's a sixpence here for twenty.
Ain't that a lovely tune,
Be back soon.

*Our pockets hold a watch of gold
That chimes upon the hour,
A wallet fat, an old man's hat,
The crown jewels from the tower.
We know the Bow Street Runners, but they don't know this tune.
So long, fare- thee-well, pip-pip, cheerio,
We'll be back soon.*

Then put the two sections of Verse 1 together and sing simultaneously in two groups.

PLAY OFF AS THEY ALL MARCH OUT. FAGIN IS LEFT WITH BILL'S BAG, LOOKS INSIDE IT, DOES A LITTLE JIG AS SHE WALKS OFF.

STREET. MORNING. PEOPLE MINDING THEIR BUSINESS, HEADING TO WORK. DODGER AND OLIVER WALK ON, CHARLIE CLOSELY WATCHING THE PASSERS BY.

DODGER ...See Oliver, people these days- they're just plain careless. They don't look after things! (CHARLIE WHISTLES, DODGER LOOKS AROUND, NODS) I mean- see this feller here? In a dreadful rush, he is...

WE SEE A RICH GENTLEMAN RUNNING FOR A CAB. ONE OF THE GANG TRIPS HIM UP, ANOTHER HELPS HIM TO HIS FEET, DUSTS HIM DOWN, RELIEVES HIM OF HIS POCKET WATCH. THEY FLASH THE WATCH AT DODGE, HE NODS APPROVAL.

DODGER (OLIVER) Understand now?

OLIVER (TO US) You take things that don't belong to you!

DODGER (TUTS) Oliver mate, you gotta stop thinking that way. You're part of the family now- remember? And family always comes first, right?

OLIVER LOOKS AT HIM, THEN OUT AT US.

DODGER (THREATENING) Right?

OLIVER (UNHAPPILY) ...Right

DODGER So- now it's your turn...

OLIVER LOOKS OUT AT US, AGHAST. MR BROWNLOW COMES WANDERING ON. HE'S IN HIS 60'S, AVUNCULAR AND KINDLY. HE'S CARRYING A PILE OF BOOKS UNDER HIS ARM. HE LOOKS A BIT LOST...

DODGER This one's perfect. Bet he don't even know what day it is...

BROWNLOW STOPS AT A BOOKSTALL

DODGER So here's the game- you bump into the old feller, the books go flying, you help pick 'em up and relieve him of that pretty silk scarf he's wearing...

OLIVER LOOKS HORRIFIED, SHAKES HIS HEAD.

CHARLIE He ain't got the bottle, Dodge.

DODGE Yes he do. Haven't you? He's my bro, my mate, he'll shape up won't you Ollie?

BROWNLOW PAYS FOR SOMETHING. DODGER NUDGES OLIVER

DODGER Hurry it up chum, or you'll lose your mark!

OLIVER TAKES A DEEP BREATH, WALKS OVER TO BROWNLOW, KNOCKS INTO HIM, THE BOOKS GO FLYING;
OLIVER AND BROWNLOW LOOK INTO EACH OTHERS EYES- BOTH STOP AND STARE AT ONE ANOTHER, TRANSFIXED. MAYBE A LIGHTING CHANGE? A BEAT; DODGER STEPS IN AND QUICKLY STEALS THE SCARF, SLIPS AWAY. BROWNLOW REALISES IT'S GONE, LOOKS BEHIND HIM, THEN BACK AT OLIVER.

BROWNLOW THIEF! THIEF!

OLIVER PANICS, TURNS AND RUNS. CHASE SEQUENCE; A HUE AND CRY; A CROWD GIVES CHASE. OLIVER LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER. A POLICEMAN APPEARS, TRUNCHEON IN HAND. HE PUSHES THROUGH TO THE FRONT OF THE CROWD, RAISES HIS TRUNCHEON AND BRINGS IT DOWN WITH A;

CYMBAL CRASH. BLACKOUT. FAGIN ENTERS IN A FURY

FAGIN -Where's Oliver? Where's the boy?

SHE GRABS DODGER BY THE THROAT

FAGIN -What have you done with him? Quickly now!

DODGER Let go o' me will you?

FAGIN Not until you tell me-

SHE SHAKES HIM. CHARLIE RUNS IN, OUT OF BREATH

CHARLIE ...The coppers Fagin! The coppers have him!

FAGIN DROPS DODGER, GROANS, PACES UP AND DOWN

FAGIN Then we need to get him back- and quick about it!

THEY LOOK PUZZLED.

FAGIN He knows who we are! What we do. Where we live... (TO DODGER) Get yerself down there!

DODGER What? To the copshop? Not me.

CHARLIE Or me! (HE LAUGHS)

FAGIN LOOKS AT THEM, SIGHS, MUTTERS UNDER HER BREATH. NANCY WALKS ON DOWNSTAGE.

FAGIN (SMILES) Nancy, my dear-

SHE LOOKS ACROSS AT FAGIN SUSPICIOUSLY

NANCY -I know that look. What d'you want now?

FAGIN (SHRUGS) Just a – little errand, that's all...

JUDGE Order, order! Silence in court.

JUDGE (IN SL BOX?) IN WIG, SEATED. OLIVER STANDS UNSTEADILY, HAND ON HIS BRUISED FOREHEAD.

JUDGE Sergeant- what's the charge?

SERGEANT -Theft, sir.

JUDGE How do you plead- (LOOKS AT HIS PAPERS) Oliver Twist?

BROWNLOW STEPS IN

BROWNLOW -Not guilty your honour!

ALL IN COURT LOOK SURPRISED, CHATTER AMONG THEMSELVES. NANCY SLIPS IN BEHIND THE CROWD, LISTENS. BROWNLOW COMES AND STANDS BESIDE OLIVER

BROWNLOW Your honour, this whole incident is a complete misunderstanding. This is not the boy who stole my scarf! It was another boy. A different boy. Not this boy!

JUDGE Hmmn. You're sure of that?

BROWNLOW Certain sir. Beyond a shadow of doubt!

JUDGE ...Very well then! Case is dismissed!

HE BANGS HIS HAMMER. OLIVER TURNS TO BROWNLOW, SUDDENLY COLLAPSES. BROWNLOW CATCHES HIM. HE LOOKS AROUND FOR HELP. NANCY RUNS BACK TO FAGIN. BROWNLOW AND CAST CARRY OLIVER OFF.

FAGIN ...And the boy didn't speak?

NANCY (SHAKES HER HEAD) Not a word of it, ma'am. He was spark out from the blow he took on his 'ead. Looked like death, he did too...

FAGIN (GRUNTS) I suppose that's too much to hope for...

NANCY -You're rotten you are...

FAGIN To the core! -Where is he now?

NANCY The gentleman- Brownlow- he took him away in a horse and carriage.

FAGIN Ohh did he now? La-di-dah! Where to?

DODGER -Bloomsbury somewhere, I heard him tell the cabbie.

FAGIN SNIFFS, RUBS HER CHIN

DODGER So, now what guv'nor?

FAGIN Well- it seems as how our poor little Oliver has been kidnapped. We must save him before its too late...

HE GRINS AT THEM.

BROWNLOW'S HOUSE. OLIVER IS IN BED, ASLEEP. HE STIRS, SITS UP, GROANS.

OLIVER My head! (LOOKS AROUND) Where am I? (PUZZLED) I don't know this place!

TWO SERVANTS ENTER, ONE CARRYING A TRAY WITH SOUP AND BREAD, A NAPKIN AND SHINY CUTLERY. THEY FUSS OVER HIM. ONE OF THEM, MRS BEDWIN TUCKS HIS SHEETS IN. THE OTHER SITS BY THE BED, STARTS SERVING HIM SOUP FROM A SILVER SPOON.

OLIVER ...Am I dead? Is that it? Have I died and gone to Heaven?

HE EATS. THE MAID WIPES HIS MOUTH WITH THE NAPKIN. MR BROWNLOW WALKS IN

BROWNLOW Awake at last I see! And with an appetite too. Good, good...

OLIVER (SITS UP) You were the man who-

BROWNLOW ...Now now Oliver, don't upset yourself. Eat, eat!

OLIVER (STARTS GETTING OUT OF BED) -I swear sir, I didn't steal anything, I didn't- they tried to make me bu-

BROWNLOW Shhh! I know, I know. Rest now. It's alright. (PATS HIS HAND) You're among friends here...

THE SERVANTS HELP HIM BACK INTO BED. HE NOTICES A PAINTING BESIDE THE BED, PICKS IT UP.

OLIVER -Who's this?

BROWNLOW My grand daughter, Agnes.

OLIVER ...She's very pretty.

BROWNLOW She was... (NODS SORROWFULLY) I miss her still...

HE WALKS OUT. OLIVER LOOKS AT THE PICTURE.

IN THE AUDITORIUM BILLS DOG, BULLSEYE PATROLS DOWN THE CENTRAL AISLE, BARKS AT SOME PEOPLE, GROWLS AT OTHERS. PERHAPS HE COCKS HIS LEG UP AGAINST THE SEATS?

FAGIN STANDS AT STAGE FRONT, PEERS OUT.

FAGIN (HUSHED WHISPER) That you, Bill?

SIKES ...Who wants to know it?

FAGIN ...Now Bill don't be like that. We're friends ain't we? And we got a very tricky situation here...

SIKES Bullseye- Stay! ((THE DOG SITS. SIKES TURNS TO AUDIENCE) Anyone who feeds him- I feed TO him! Understand?

HE CLIMBS THE STAIRS

SIKES ...What is it?

FAGIN -Young Mr Twist... We err- (SCRATCHES HER HEAD) we've misplaced him! And we need to get him back...

SIKES -What's that to me?

FAGIN (SMILES BROADLY) Let me buy you a drink Bill....

THEY WALK INTO THE PUB TOGETHER. IT'S CROWDED WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE ALL IN FINE SPIRITS. NANCY WALKS THROUGH THE CROWD, TAKES CENTRE STAGE

NANCY (SHOUTS OUT) Well now everyone- how are we doing then? Having a good time? (NO RESPONSE?) I said- are we having a good time??

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

NANCY That's better! Getting a bit scary now, isn't it? A bit dark! I know, I know. Tell you what- how's about a bit of a sing-song to cheer us all up? It's an easy one so you'd all better join in- or there'll be trouble! Are you ready? (AUDIENCE RESPONSE) It goes a bit like this. Mr Conductor- if you please?

SONG NO. 4 OOM PAH PAH

Chorus 1

Oom-pah-pah! Oom-pah-pah! that's how it goes.

Oom-pah-pah! Oom-pah-pah!, everyone knows.

They all suppose what they want to suppose,

When they hear Oom-pah-pah!

Verse 1

There's a little ditty they're singing in the city,
Especially when they've been on the gin or the beer.

If you've got the patience, your own imaginations

Will tell you just exactly what you want to hear!

Chorus 2 (as above)

Verse 2

Mister Percy Snodgrass would often have the odd glass,
But never when he thought anybody could see.
Secretly he'd buy it and drink it on the quiet,
And dream he was an Earl with his drinks all for free!

Chorus 3 (as above)

Verse 3

Mrs Mary Porter got drunker than she oughta,
And stumbled her way home, fell asleep on the bed.
Early in the morning, just as the day was dawning
She found she had slept under the table instead!

Chorus 4 (as above)

Verse 4

Pretty Tammy Taylor got married to a sailor.
She swore that she would wait when he sailed off to sea.
Every day she'd miss him and dream of how she'd kiss him,
But how could she have known she was wife number 3!

Chorus 5 (as above)

SONG ENDS. APPLAUSE. CAST CROWD AROUND HER, CONGRATULATE HER. FAGIN CLAPS ENTHUSIASTICALLY. BILL SITS SCOWLING. FAGIN CALLS ACROSS TO HER.

FAGIN Nancy? A word in your ear?

SIKES Fagin here's got a little job for you...

NANCY Well, I won't do it!

SIKES -And I say you will!

SHE LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MOMENT. HE WAGS HIS FINGER AT HER. SHE TURNS TO FAGIN

NANCY (RESIGNED) What is it now...?

SIKES -Better. Much better...

FAGIN So, here's the plan... (SHE LOOKS AROUND THE PUB, DRAWS THEM CLOSER) The moment the lad reappears, we must make ourselves ready...

SHE CARRIES ON TALKING AS THEY WALK OFF. AS THEY LEAVE, OLIVER WALKS ON. HE IS DRESSED FROM HEAD TO FOOT IN NEW CLOTHES. HE WALKS STAGE FRONT.

OLIVER Well now look at me, all dressed up! Do you like it? (HE SHOWS OFF HIS OUTFIT) Never in my life have I felt so clean! And the food! Ohh! Food! Glorious food! And Mr Brownlow- what a gent. Never have I known such kindness! (TURNS TO BROWNLOW) ...Thank you sir, truly.

BROWNLOW Not at all, not at all. It's a big house. Too big for an old man on his own...

OLIVER (TO US) And it was. It was huge! With a great garden you can get lost in and lots of places to hide. I spent every afternoon out there- running round in the sunshine. It felt- (SIGHS) like home...

HE CHASES AROUND. TWO FACES APPEAR FROM BEHIND A WALL

CHARLIE ...Well now, just look at that!

DODGER Shh!

CHARLIE Get a load of them togs! What a toff eh?

DODGER (TUGS AT HIS SLEEVE) We got what we needed. Let's tell Fagin...

THEY DISAPPEAR

OLIVER (TO US) If only I'd seen them up there- how different things might've turned out...

BROWNLOW Well Oliver, now you're feeling better- it's time we had a talk. The plain fact is, my friends tell me I'm wrong. Wrong to waste my time on a boy like you- an orphan from a workhouse.

OLIVER LOOKS AT THE FLOOR

BROWNLOW Oliver, this world is full of bad people- but I don't believe you to be one of them. Am I right?

OLIVER -I don't know sir, I hope I am and I'll do anything to prove it.

BROWNLOW Well then, I have a little chore for you... These books- (PICKS UP A PILE OF BOOKS TIED WITH STRING) -were sent to me by mistake. I need you to take them back to the shop.

OLIVER (TAKES THEM) Gladly sir.

BROWNLOW When you get there, tell him you've brought them back and you have come to pay the four pounds ten shillings I owe him. Here-

HE HANDS HIM A BANKNOTE. OLIVER TAKES IT, PUTS IT IN HIS POCKET

BROWNLOW Come straight back now. No dawdling!

OLIVER RUNS OFF. BROWNLOW WATCHES HIM. ANOTHER MAN JOINS HIM AS HE RUNS OFF INTO THE AUDITORIUM.

GRIMWIG -That's the last you'll ever see of him...

BROWNLOW He'll be back... I have faith in the boy.

GRIMWIG Then you're a fool, sir! A fool...

BROWNLOW TAKES OUT HIS POCKET WATCH. THEY WAIT...

OLIVER RUNS THROUGH THE BUSY STREET. CHARLIE SPOTS HIM, TURNS, WHISTLES TO DODGER, WHO ALERTS FAGIN DOWN IN THE AUDITORIUM. FAGIN SHOUTS OVER TO SIKES, WHO STRIDES UP, BULLSEYE AT HIS SIDE.

FAGIN The game's afoot, Bill!

SIKES Leave it to me. (TO THE AUDIENCE) Keep your mouths shut, you lot! Bullseye here ain't had any breakfast this morning!

OLIVER (ON STAGE APRON) Ohh which way is it? I went wrong somewhere... (TO AUDIENCE) Is it left? (POINTS SL) Or straight on? (POINTS DOWN INTO THE AUDITORIUM) Which way? This way? (POINTS) Or that?

AUDIENCE SHOULD NOW BE SCREAMING FOR HIM NOT TO GO DOWNSTAGE. BILL AND FAGIN TRY TO QUIETEN THEM DOWN (WHICH WILL ONLY MAKE IT LOUDER).

OLIVER Yes! (NODS) You're right. It's this way!

HE WALKS DOWN THE STEPS. NANCY APPEARS, GRABS HOLD OF HIS ARM

NANCY Why- there you are!

OLIVER TRIES TO PULL FREE, BUT SHE HOLDS ON

OLIVER Get off!

NANCY -Where have you been? (THROWS HER ARMS ROUND HIM) Our dearest Mama has been so upset, you naughty naughty boy.

THEY STRUGGLE TOGETHER

PASSER-BY -What's going on here?

NANCY Oh sir! Ran away from home he did, the little rascal...

OLIVER (RECOGNISES HER) Nancy! What are y-

NANCY See? He knows me. Come along now, come along.

OLIVER No, no I have to get back to-

SIKES STRIDES UP, THE DOG BARKING AND GROWLING BEDSIDE HIM

OLIVER Sikes!

SIKES Yes, me!

OLIVER (DEFIANT) I'm not scared of you Bill!

SIKES You soon will be! (LAUGHS) Bullseye!

THE DOG SETS ABOUT OLIVERS LEG. HE SCREAMS AS THEY BUNDLE HIM OUT THROUGH THE SL AUDITORIUM DOORS. A MOMENTS SILENCE AS THE AUDIENCE SETTLES DOWN AGAIN.

ONSTAGE, MR BROWNLOW LOOKS AT HIS WATCH, SIGHS. GRIMWIG PATS HIS SHOULDER.

GRIMWIG ...Told you so!

BROWNLOW (SHAKES HIS HEAD) I don't believe it. I will not believe it...

GRIMWIG Then you're a fool, sir!

BROWNLOW ...Perhaps I am Grimwig. (SIGHS) Perhaps I am... (THEY WALK OUT)

THIEVES DEN. SIKES DRAGS OLIVER INTO THE ROOM, THROWS HIM DOWN

FAGIN -Oliver my dear, home at last? But why didn't you write and tell us you were coming? We'd have got something tasty for your supper...

THEY ROAR WITH LAUGHTER. OLIVER TRIES TO GET UP, FALLS OVER.

OLIVER -When Mr Brownlow finds out, he-

FAGIN He'll do what? You won't see him again, not in this world anyway...

NANCY GOES TO OLIVER, STARTS BANDAGING HIS LEG WITH A PIECE OF DIRTY RAG

SIKES -What now?

FAGIN ...Leave him to me, I'll change his mind. And if I can't- he's all yours.

THEY WALK OUT, LAUGHING. NANCY FINISHES BANDAGING OLIVERS LEG, HELPS HIM UP

NANCY -Better?

OLIVER (TESTS IT) Much. Thank you...

SIKES (OFF) Nancy!

NANCY (SHOUT) Coming! (SHE TURNS TO GO)

OLIVER -Why are you with him?

NANCY (SHRUGS) People are scared of him. He makes me feel safe.

OLIVER -Safe? (HE TAKES HER HAND) We could get away, both of us...

NANCY (PULLS AWAY) Don't talk soft-

OLIVER But we could! Just get a message to Mr Br-

SIKES (OFF) NANCY!

NANCY (SHOUTS) Coming! (TO OLIVER) I'm sorry I- I can't.

OLIVER But why not?

NANCY Shh! Don't talk that way Ollie- you'll get us both killed!

SHE GOES OUT. OLIVER STAMPS HIS LEG IN FRUSTRATION, YELPS IN PAIN

FAGIN (AS ENTERS) So Oliver. Time you made your mind up...

DODGER (AS ENTERS) What's it to be then bro?

OLIVER Can't you just- let me go?

FAGIN AND DODGER LAUGH. CHARLIE WALKS IN

FAGIN -Hear that Charlie?

CHARLIE Let him go! (GUFFAWS) -He don't get it, do he?

DODGER -You're family now Ollie.

FAGIN Honour among thieves my lad...

OLIVER But I don't want to be a thief!

THE REST OF THE GANG ENTER. THEY CIRCLE AROUND OLIVER

FAGIN But why not my dear? I am!

DODGER Me too-

CHARLIE And me-

1ST GANG And Nancy-

2ND GANG And Bill-

CHARLIE And his dog! (HE LAUGHS)

DODGER -What makes you so special?

OLIVER (DEFIANT) I won't do it, that's all. You can't make me! Whatever you do to me, however long you keep me here I- (SHAKES HIS HEAD) I won't do it!

FAGIN (SIGHS) Well, you've got spirit, I'll give you that... (TO THE GANG) What do you think, boys and girls? What do we do with him? Keep him here? (SOME OF THE GANG, DODGER INCLUDED, SHOUT OUT.) -Or let Bill have him? (MORE OF THEM SHOUT OUT) Then it's decided... (CALLS) Nancy? (LOOKS AT OLIVER) Fetch Bill Sikes...

NANCY No Fagin, please- give the boy another chance, he-

FAGIN (SNAPS) I said- fetch him!

NANCY STANDS FOR A MOMENT, LOOKS AT OLIVER PINNED TO THE FLOOR. SHE GOES OUT.

FAGIN Dodger- stay here and watch him until Nancy gets back with Bill..

DODGER NODS.

FAGIN As for you lot- back to work! Those pockets won't pick themselves!

ALL EXIT. FAGIN GOES OFF WHISTLING "BE BACK SOON". DODGER LOOKS AT OLIVER

DODGER ...Know what I think? You've been brought up bad you have.

OLIVER (LAUGHS) Me? What about you?

DODGER Doing very nicely with old Fagin, I am- and one day I shall retire, a proper Gentleman.

OLIVER (SCOFFS) ...I'll visit you in jail...

DODGER (SCOFFS) ...Sorry bro, but you ain't going to live that long...

WE HEAR KNOCKING ON A FRONT DOOR. HOUSEKEEPER RUNS ON, APPEARS AT WINDOW.

NANCY Please ma'am, can I – can I speak to the gentleman?

BEDWIN Be off with you girl! Whatever you're selling, we don't want any...

SHE GOES TO CLOSE THE WINDOW.

NANCY But ma'am, it's about Oliver!

BROWNLOW APPEARS INDOORS

BROWNLOW Who is it Mrs Bedwin?

BEDWIN -Beggar-woman sir. Says it's about young Oliver.

BROWNLOW (EAGERLY) Well then -let her in. Quickly now...

DODGER AND OLIVER ARE SITTING TOGETHER

DODGER (SIGHS) You know, we could've been such good mates...

OLIVER -We still can, can't we?

DODGER (SHAKES HIS HEAD) No Oliver. Not unless you change your mind!

OLIVER ...Or you change yours?

THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT. DODGER TURNS AWAY IN DISGUST. NANCY IS WITH BROWNLOW, HURRIEDLY PUTTING ON HIS COAT.

BROWNLOW -Where is he?

NANCY Oh sir, I can't tell you that. If Bill found out, he'd-

BROWNLOW (SIGHS) Well then, what?

NANCY -I can fetch him and meet you? Somewhere quiet where we won't be seen

BROWNLOW (THINKS) Very well then- London Bridge, at dusk.

NANCY (NODS) I'll bring him to you. (TURNS TO GO) I have to go before Bill gets back there...

BROWNLOW -Nancy? (SHE TURNS BACK) Thank you!

NANCY (SHAKES HER HEAD SADLY) -It's wrong what they're doing, sir. He's just a kid...

BROWNLOW SMILES, SHE RUNS OUT SR. BROWNLOW TURNS AND EXITS SL

BROWNLOW (SHOUTS) Bedwin! Call a hansom cab. We have work to do!

OLIVER PACES UP AND DOWN. DODGER SITS PLAYING WITH HIS HAT

OLIVER (SWALLOWS) -What will he do with me?

DODGER Who- Bill? (CONSIDERS) Take you out of town somewhere, most likely. Make you disappear. (SNAPS HIS FINGERS) Just like that.

OLIVER SHIVERS.

DODGER Sorry Ollie but there it is. Pity though. We could've been brothers you and me...

OLIVER We still could! Dodger, just- just let me go now and I promise you I'll-

DODGER You promise me? Hah! You can't live on promises Ollie, not in this game...

FRONT DOOR SLAMS. OLIVER STARTS, DODGER SIGHS.

DODGER Oh well. Nice knowing you bro...

THEY LOOK ACROSS AT THE DOORWAY. NANCY WALKS IN, SEES DODGER- STOPS.

DODGER ...Where's Bill?

NANCY Downstairs...

DODGER (SUSPICIOUSLY) -What about Bullseye? He don't go nowhere without that mutt...

NANCY (LOOKS AROUND NERVOUSLY) Oliver we- we have to go. Now...

OLIVER REALISES WHAT SHE MEANS. HE STANDS, SO DOES DODGER

DODGER Go? If you're taking him somewhere- I need to know where!

OLIVER -Maybe this time you don't, Dodge.

DODGER (PUZZLED) What you talking ab- (SUCKS IN HIS BREATH) Nancy- what you up to?

NANCY -Turn your back for five minutes Dodger, that's all I need you to do.

DODGER You're not serious? You're not going to spring him?

OLIVER Turn your back Dodge. Just this once? For me- bro...

DODGER LOOKS AT HIM, SHAKES HIS HEAD.

DODGER ...I'll regret this, I know I will...

HE SITS, TURNS HIS BACK. OLIVER AND NANCY RUN OUT. A DOG BARKS DOWN IN THE AUDITORIUM, GROWING LOUDER. DODGE STANDS. SIKES COMES BARRELLING DOWN THE CENTRAL AISLE, BULLSEYE RIGHT BEHIND HIM.

SIKES (ROARS) How long ago? How long?

DODGER (SCARED) I dunno! Five minutes, maybe ten?

SIKES GROWLS WITH RAGE. FAGIN COMES RUNNING ON, FOLLOWED BY THE POSSE

FAGIN -And you let them GO?

DODGER She said she was taking him to Bill. How did I know she was-

FAGIN You should have followed them! How are we going to get him back now?

SIKES Ohh never fear, I'll get them back, both of them! (SHOUTS TO THE DOG) BULLSEYE! NANCY! FETCH!

THE DOG STARTS SNIFFING THE GROUND, GROWLS, RUNS OFF. SIKES PULLS OUT A PISTOL FROM HIS JACKET.

SIKES ...I'll kill him! I'll kill them both! (HE HEADS OFF IN FURIOUS PURSUIT)

FAGIN Bill, let's not be hasty, we- (BILLS GONE. SHE TURNS TO DODGER) Well don't just stand there. Get after him!

DODGER RUNS OFF. THE REST OF THE GANG START TALKING AMONGST THEMSELVES.

FAGIN (HUSHES THEM) I think it might be best boys and girls, if we all kept out of harm's way for a little while. This could get messy. (STROKES HER CHIN THOUGHTFULLY) Very messy indeed...

ALL CREEP OFF. ENTER BROWNLOW WITH GRIMWIG AND MRS BEDWIN, IN COATS.

GRIMWIG Who is this girl?

BROWNLOW ...Her name's Nancy. She's a beggar-woman. And I suspect, a thief.

GRIMWIG (INCREDULOUS) -And you trust her?

BROWNLOW LOOKS AT HIM, NODS

GRIMWIG -Then you're a fool, sir! A fool!

BROWNLOW (SIGHS) Yes old chap, so you keep saying...

NANCY AND OLIVER RUN IN THROUGH THE SL AUDITORIUM DOORS.

BROWNLOW There they are! (CALLS OUT) Oliver?

OLIVER SEES THEM, STARTS RUNNING TOWARD HIM. STOPS, RUNS BACK TO NANCY

OLIVER I won't forget you Nancy, I swear, as long as I live... (HE HUGS HER)

BROWNLOW Hurry now Oliver. Time to go...

OLIVER STEPS AWAY FROM NANCY, TURNS. AT THAT MOMENT BILL BURSTS IN THROUGH THE DOORS BEHIND THEM, PISTOL IN HAND, SEES OLIVER WITH NANCY

SIKES (SHOUTS) - Oliver Twist! (RAISES HIS PISTOL)

NANCY (SEES HIM) -Bill! Bill, NO!

SHE THROWS HERSELF TOWARD HIM JUST AS HE FIRES. SHE CLUTCHES HER CHEST, FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

OLIVER (RUNS OVER TO HER) Nancy! Nancy, what have you- Nancy!

HE CROUCHES DOWN BESIDE HER. BILL LOOKS ON IN HORROR

SIKES (TO HIMSELF) I didn't mean- I wasn't- she shouldn't've-

BROWNLOW The police, Grimwig! Call the police! Quickly!

SIKES -Not so fast! (HE GRABS OLIVER, PISTOL UP TO HIS HEAD. LOOKS AT BROWNLOW) Don't move, none of you- or the kid catches it too...

HE BACKS OFFSTAGE, GUN AT OLIVERS HEAD.

BROWNLOW Oliver! (SHOUTS) Help! Help! Murder! MURDER!

LIGHTING CHANGES. POLICE WHISTLES. CROWD SWARMS ON, ALL TALKING AT ONCE. FAGIN RUNS THROUGH THE CROWD, CARRYING A LARGE SUITCASE. CHARLIE SEES HER.

CHARLIE ...What's this then, Fagin?

FAGIN Ohh, just a few old bits and pieces my dear. I'm taking them to be sold.

CHARLIE Yeah? Let's have a look then shall we? (HE GRABS FOR THE CASE)

FAGIN (STRUGGLES WITH HIM) What are y- are you mad boy? Get off- get-
THE SUITCASE BURSTS OPEN. JEWELLERY AND WADS OF MONEY SPILL OUT EVERYWHERE.
PEOPLE IN THE CROWD SEE IT, START GRABBING THINGS.

FAGIN (TRIES TO STOP THEM) Get off it! Get off! It's mine- all of it. MINE!

FAGIN SCREAMS WITH RAGE AS MORE PEOPLE JOIN IN. A HUSH DESCENDS ON THE
CROWD.

CROWD 1 There! Up there! (SHE POINTS)

CROWD 2 Where?

CROWD 3 On the rooftop!

CROWD 4 LOOK!

EVERYONE LOOKS UP. SIKES APPEARS IN THE SL BOX, GUN TO OLIVERS HEAD.

SIKES See that? (HE POINTS) Down there? Long drop eh? And that's where
you're headed, Oliver Twist! (HE GESTURES WITH HIS GUN) Go on. Off you
go boy! Jump! Jump for your life!

OLIVER LOOKS DOWN, LOOKS AT BILL, GRABS FOR THE GUN. THE CROWD OOH AND AHH AS
THEY STRUGGLE TOGETHER. BILL IS WINNING HANDS DOWN UNTIL WE HEAR A DOG
BARKING.

SIKES (LOOKS DOWN) Not now boy! No Bullseye, down boy, get-

THE GUN GOES OFF. THE CROWD GASPS AS BOTH DISAPPEAR FROM SIGHT. A BEAT THEN;
OLIVER APPEARS. THE CROWD CHEERS.

OLIVER (SHOUTS) He's dead! Bill Sikes is dead!

ALL CHEER, START TALKING ANIMATEDLY. MEANWHILE FAGIN HAS COLLECTED UP THE
REMAINS OF HIS MONEY, SIDLES OFFSTAGE. A POLICEMAN SPOTS HIM. FAGIN RUNS.
POLICEMAN BLOWS HIS WHISTLE, GIVES CHASE. THEY RUN ROUND THE STAGE AND OFF.

OLIVER RUNS ONSTAGE. BROWNLOW, GRIMWIG AND MRS BEDWIN ARE WAITING. THEY
HUG HIM ETC.

BROWNLOW Well now Oliver I think it's time we went home, don't you?

OLIVER (CANT QUITE BELIEVE IT) Home, sir?

BROWNLOW Yes yes. My home. Our home. It's been empty for far too long. Would you like that?

OLIVER (WITH FEELING) Ohh sir- more than anything...

HE THROWS HIS ARMS AROUND BROWNLOW.

BROWNLOW (PATS HIS HEAD AFFECTIONATELY) Let's go home then, shall we?

HE STARTS WALKING OFF. GRIMWIG FOLLOWS, SHAKES HIS HEAD

GRIMWIG You're a fool sir, a fool!

BROWNLOW Yes, sir. I am sir- (SMILES) but a very happy one...

THEY WALK OFF. OLIVER FOLLOWS BEHIND, TURNS BACK TO THE AUDITORIUM. WALKS FRONT, LOOKS OUT AT US

OLIVER ...I know it's you...

PAUSE. DODGER APPEARS FROM UNDER THE RISERS. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

OLIVER GESTURES – COME ON THEN! HE STARTS WALKING OFF.

DODGER THINKS FOR A MOMENT, WHISTLES.

BULLSEYE COMES TROTting UP THE STEPS AFTER HIM. DODGER PATS HIS HEAD.

DODGER Well Bullseye- looks like we found ourselves a new family...

THEY CATCH UP WITH OLIVER. THE THREE OF THEM WALK OFF TOGETHER

BLACKOUT

MUSIC; BE BACK SOON. REPRISE AND WALK DOWN

THE END