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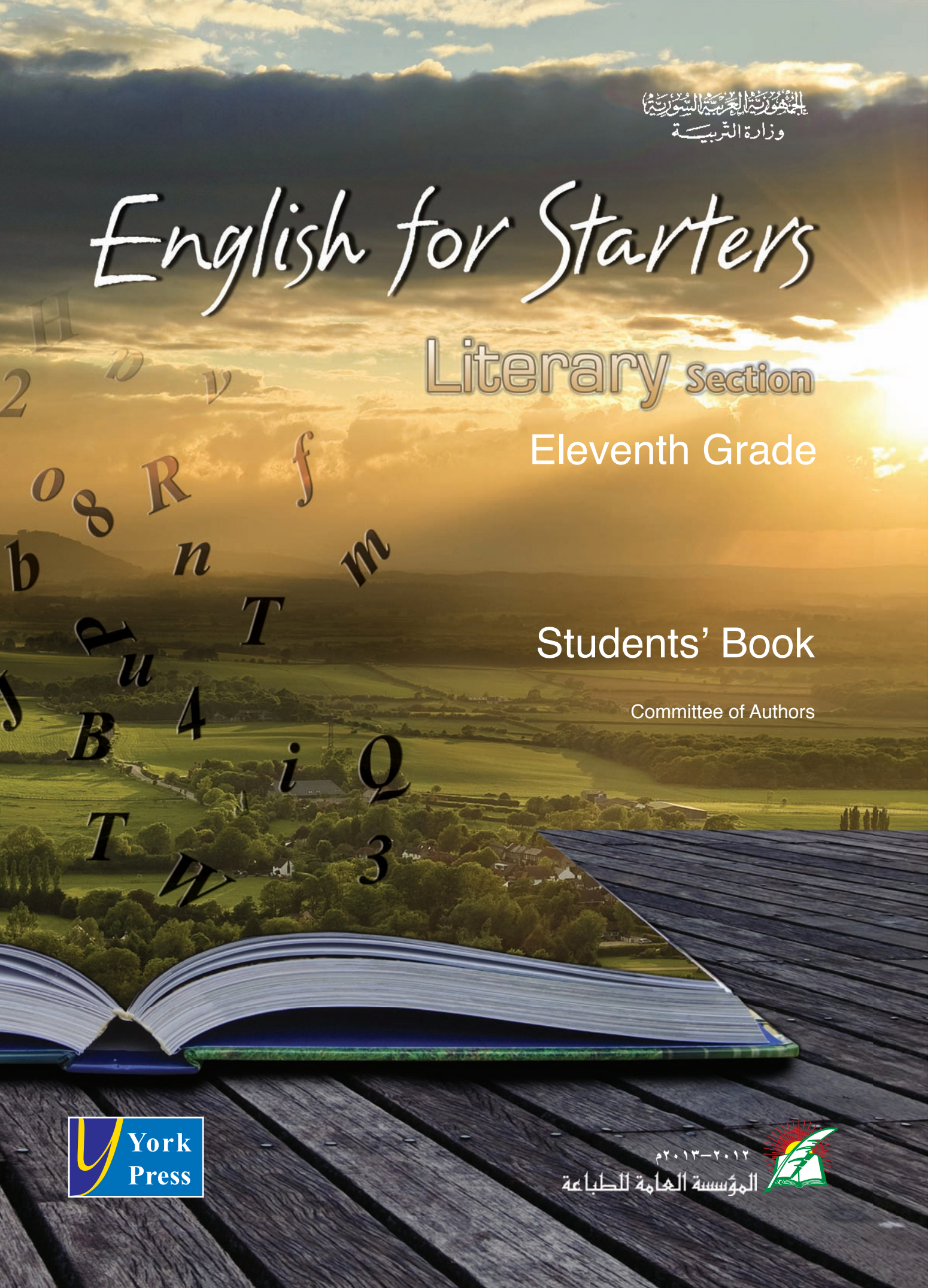
English for Starters

Literary Section

Eleventh Grade

Students' Book

Committee of Authors



York Press

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Literary Section Supplement

Students' Book

Optional Reading p. 35

Introduction

What is literature?

Since the beginning of civilisation[1], many men and women have felt a need to communicate their thoughts and feelings to a wider world outside their circle of family, friends and acquaintances[2]. Thanks to the invention of writing and printing, they have been able to hand down a priceless treasury of manuscripts[3] and books to people after them.

Literature is generally thought to mean those pieces of writing which, even though many years and even centuries have passed, still inspire[4] admiration, reflection and emotion in readers. Poems, plays, novels and short stories in a particular language that have stood the test of time[5] together make up a body of national literature.

Does this mean that only older works can be called **literature**? Today, millions of books are produced every year, but only some of them get into literary magazines or onto the literary pages of newspapers. In these cases, it is the critics[6] and not time that decide what is and what is not literature. Future generations will have to decide if the critics made the right choices.

It is not easy to give an exact definition[7] of what literature is because it is always changing. Throughout history, different writers, genres[8] and styles of writing have been popular. Even today, people argue about whether more popular forms of fiction such as detective stories can be called literature. We can let the critics argue about these things because for readers, literature is simply beautiful, meaningful writing.

Glossary

1 **civilisation:** people living together in a well-organised and developed way
2 **acquaintance:** someone you know, but who is not a close friend
3 **manuscript:** a book which was written by hand, not printed
4 **inspire:** to make someone have a particular feeling
5 **to stand the test of time:** to be popular for a long time
6 **critic:** someone whose job is to write about art, books, films, etc.
7 **definition:** a word or sentence that says exactly what something is
8 **genre:** a type of literature, art, film or music

Introduction

Why read literature?

The most obvious[1] answer to this question is because it is enjoyable. Everybody loves a good story, and many great works of literature tell memorable stories. These stories allow us to escape from our daily lives by taking us to different times and places. We can travel through the African jungle with Joseph Conrad, or we can be sent into the future by science fiction writers like H.G. Wells. Literature is a source[2] of knowledge and information, too. Almost every poem, play or novel we read gives us more information about the world we live in. Perhaps the most important reason for reading literature is because it breaks down the barriers[3] between us.

Literature also invites us to share in many different human experiences that we cannot usually experience. It allows us to leave behind our age, family background and economic condition so that we can see the world from the perspective of people who are different from us. Great writers make us understand how other people think and feel. Literature makes us feel emotion. It comforts, shocks, makes us laugh, frightens and challenges us. It helps us to understand ourselves and others. Literature widens our field of vision.

Why analyse[4] literature?

Literary analysis happens whenever someone tries to understand a literary text. Every time we close a book and think about what we have read, we are doing some form of literary analysis. Taking an analytical approach[5] to literature involves observing carefully and drawing conclusions. It is not simply a question of taking a poem or story apart and naming the pieces; it means discovering patterns of meaning and understanding what the writer wants to say. Literary analysis is a way of learning more about how literary texts are structured. The more we learn about the art of writing, the more we will be able to understand new ideas when we read. The analytical approach also gives us the vocabulary we need to define and communicate our ideas about literary texts. Before we analyse a text we should know its setting (where and when it happens); what the plot is (the main events[6] that make up the story); and who the characters are (the people in the story or poem). Having a clear idea about these things help us to exchange[7] opinions and talk about literature.

Glossary

1 **obvious:** easy to notice or understand
2 **source:** a place from which you can get something
3 **barrier:** something that keeps people apart
4 **analyse (noun: analysis):** to look at something carefully in order to understand it
5 **approach:** way of doing something
6 **event:** a thing that happens
7 **exchange:** to give something to someone and receive something else from them

What is Poetry?

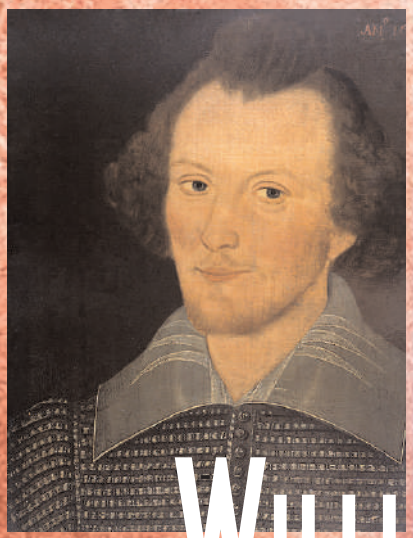
One modern poet, when asked the question "What is poetry?", replied that poetry, unlike prose, is a form of writing in which few lines run to the edge of the page! The poet Robert Frost argued that "poetry is the kind of thing poets write". While these replies, at first, may not seem serious, they inadvertently[1] reveal two important aspects of poetry: the first answer tells us that the arrangement of the words on the pages is an important element of poetry, while the second emphasises that there is a special 'poetic' way of using language. A working definition may be, then, that poetry comes from the interplay[2] between the meaning of words and their arrangement on paper; or – as the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge put it – "poetry is the best words in their best order".

Although poems come in all shapes and sizes, they share certain characteristics. Imagery, metaphors and symbols make poetry dense[3] with meaning. Sound features, such as rhyme, rhythm and repetition, give the language a special musical quality. The usual rules of grammar and syntax are often ignored, so that the language may be used in a striking or original way.

Poetry, like all literature, is the way a writer tries to communicate to others his emotional and intellectual response[4] to his own experiences and to the world around him. The poet puts words together to make the reader feel and experience what he has experienced.

Glossary

1 **inadvertently:** unintentionally
2 **interplay:** interaction
3 **dense:** filled, packed
4 **response:** answer, reaction



William Shakespeare

(1564–1616) William Shakespeare is the most highly regarded poet and playwright in the English language. He was born in the English town of Stratford-upon-Avon and went to London when he was a young man. There, he began writing and acting in plays. Shakespeare wrote at least thirty-seven plays, as well as several long, narrative poems and more than one hundred and fifty shorter poems called sonnets.

Juliet: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."

Romeo and Juliet (Act II, Scene 2)

Shall I Compare Thee ...

by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee [1] to a summer's day?
Thou art [2] more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds [3] of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date [4]:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed [5],
And every fair from fair sometime declines [6],
By chance [7], or nature's changing course, untrimm'd [8].

But thy [9] eternal summer shall not fade [10],
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest [11],
Nor shall death brag [12] thou wander'st [13] in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest.

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Glossary

1 **thee:** you
2 **thou art:** you are
3 **buds:** unopened flowers
4 **lease...date:** does not last long
5 **dimmed:** made less bright
6 **every fair...declines:** beautiful things become less beautiful
7 **by chance:** accidentally
8 **untrimm'd:** had all beauty cut away
9 **thy:** your
10 **fade:** become less strong
11 **owest:** possess
12 **brag:** boast, say
13 **wander'st:** walk around directionless

Comprehension

1. Why is the poet's address better than a summer's day, according to lines 1–4?
2. What is 'the eye of heaven'? When is its 'gold complexion dimmed'?
3. Why won't the friend's 'eternal summer' fade?
4. Do you agree with the last two lines of the poem? Give reasons for your answer.

Paraphrase

Shall I compare you to a summer's day?
You are lovelier and gentler:
Rough winds shake the beautiful buds of May,
And summer is far too short:

Sometimes the sun is too hot
And it often goes behind the clouds,
And everything that is beautiful loses its beauty,
Either by chance or in the course of nature.

But your youth will not fade,
Nor will you lose the beauty that you possess,
Nor will death boast that you are his,
Because you will live forever in my eternal poetry.

For as long as there are people on this earth,
This poem will live on, keeping you alive.

When, in Disgrace with Fortune ...

by William Shakespeare

When, in disgrace[1] with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast[2] state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse[3] my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising[4],
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns[5] at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn[6] to change my state with kings.

Glossary

1 **disgrace:** the loss of other people's respect
2 **outcast:** someone who is not accepted by society
3 **curse:** to say or think bad things about someone or something because they have made you angry
4 **despising:** disliking
5 **hymns:** songs of praise to God
6 **scorn:** to show that you think that something is stupid or unreasonable

Comprehension

1. What are the reasons for the poet being an outcast?
2. Are his prayers being answered?
3. According to lines 9–10, what brings him happiness?

Paraphrase

When I've run out of luck and people are looking down on me,
I cry about my fate as an outcast, all alone,
And pray uselessly to heaven, which does not hear,
And look at myself, cursing my fate,
Wishing I were like someone with more hope in life,
Wishing I looked like him, wishing I were surrounded by friends,
Wanting this man's skills and that man's opportunities,
And I am least happy about what I used to enjoy most;
But as I'm thinking this and almost hating myself,
I think of you and then my state of sadness,
Like the lark at the break of day, rises
From the gloomy earth and I sing hymns to heaven;
For thinking of your love makes me so happy
That I would not want to change places with a king.

John Keats

(1795-1821) John Keats was an English poet. He was born in London on October 31st, 1795 in Finsbury. He is considered one of the greatest English poets. Keats attended school at Enfield, where he became the friend of Charles Cawden Clarke, the headmaster's son, who encouraged his early learning.
In 1810, he started working with a surgeon. In 1816, he gave up surgery to write poetry. His first volume of poems appeared in 1817.

He contracted tuberculosis, probably from nursing his brother Tom, who died in 1818. Keats sailed for Italy shortly after the publication of ***Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St Agnes and Other Poems*** *(1820), which contain most of his important work and is probably the greatest single volume of poetry published in England in the 19th century. He died in Rome on February 23rd 1821, at the age of 25.*

O Solitude!

by John Keats

O Solitude! If I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep [1],—
Nature's observatory [2]— whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span [3]; let me thy vigils [4] keep
'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits [5] flee.

Glossary

1 **steep:** mountainside
2 **nature's observatory:** natural vantage - point from which to view the stars and the distant landscape
3 **span:** handspan, the distance between thumb and little finger tips
4 **vigils:** night-long sessions of prayer and fasting
5 **two kindred spirits:** the poet's companion could have been his friend, George Felton Mathew, one of Keat's brothers or a purely imaginary being

Comprehension

1. What kind of area of the city is the poet living in?
2. Where does he dream of going?

Paraphrase

Oh loneliness! If I must live with you,
May it not be in the untidy pile
Of dark buildings; climb with me up the hill,
To a viewing spot of nature, from which the small valley,
With flowers on its slopes and the sparking stream,
May seem to stretch far; let me sit up
Among the branches that shelter, where a deer's jump
Frightens the bee away from the flower.
But although I'll be happy to see these things with you,
The happy thoughts of an innocent mind,
Whose words are just pleasant pictures,
Are my deepest pleasure; and it must be
Nearly the happiest a human can be,
When two friends run to nature.

On the Sea

by John Keats

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate[1] leaves them their old shadowy sound[2].
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell.
When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.
Oh ye! who have your eyeballs vex'd and tir'd,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody
Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if sea-nymphs quir'd[3]!

Glossary

1 **Hecate:** Greek goddess of the moon, the night and the underworld; as the moon-goddess, she controls the tides
2 **shadowy sound:** usually associated with sight, here describes the sound of the waves, and suggests both faintness and indistinctness as well as the darkness of the caves from which the sound comes
3 **quir'd:** sang in chorus

Comprehension

1. What words does the poet use to evoke the vastness of the sea?
2. Describe how he personifies the sea.

Paraphrase

It keeps everlasting whispers hanging
Over empty shores, and with its mighty noise
Fills 20,000 caves, until the darkness
Of night leaves its shadowy silence.
Often it is in such a gentle mood,
That the smallest shell would be hardly
Moved for days from where it fell.
When strong winds blew it.
You! whose eyes are sore and tired,
Just look at the open sea;
You! whose ears are tired with the noise of the city,
Or with superficial, annoying music,
Sit by the mouth of an old cave and think
Until you feel as refreshed as if sea fairies had sung to you!

Figures of Speech

A **Figure of Speech** is any use of language which is different from the obvious or normal use in order to achieve meaning or effect. We use figures of speech in everyday conversation when we say, for example, 'money talks' (personification), or 'I've got butterflies in my stomach' (metaphor), or 'he's like a bull in a china shop' (simile).
The way a writer uses figures of speech gives their writing its own special character.

There are many different figures of speech. These are the most widely used:

Simile

A **simile** is a figure of speech in which two very different things are compared using the word 'like' or 'as'. A simile is made up of three parts:

- the **tenor** is the subject being discussed.
- the **vehicle** is what the subject is compared to.
- the **ground** is what the poet believes the tenor and the vehicle have in common.

We can therefore analyse the simile 'life is like a rollercoaster' as follows:

tenor	**ground**	**vehicle**
life	has its ups and downs	rollercoaster

Metaphor

A **metaphor** is a comparison that says that the two things being compared are the same. Words such as 'like' or 'as' are not used. Like a simile, a metaphor is made up of three parts:

- the **tenor** is the subject being discussed
- the **vehicle** is what the subject is compared to
- the **ground** is what the poet believes the tenor and the vehicle have in common

We can analyse the metaphor 'he's a live wire' as follows:

tenor	**ground**	**vehicle**
he	is full of energy/ is very lively/ is potentially dangerous	live wire

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech used in literature. It is where an object, such as a chair or the sun, or an abstract idea, such as Winter or happiness, is described as if it were alive. It is often described as having human characteristics. These characteristics may be emotions, such as love, hate or anger; physical gestures, such as running, jumping or sleeping; or expressions, such as smiling, laughing or looking sad. Personification has a very long history as a figure of speech; its Greek name is prosopopoeia. It is still often used, especially in poetry.
"The wind played with the trees, shaking the leaves from the branches". In this sentence, the wind is personified; playing with and shaking the trees.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYSING FIGURES OF SPEECH

- Are comparisons drawn through metaphors or similes? What information, attitudes or associations are revealed through these associations?
- Are animals, objects or ideas personified in the poem? How does personification contribute to our understanding of the poem?

Emily Dickinson

The American poet Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) wrote almost 1800 poems, but most of them were only found after she died. She spent most of her life in her home or with her family, and she often looked at themes such as loneliness and death. Her use of language was very creative; she broke the rules of punctuation and capitalisation, and she explored all the possible definitions of words. This meant that she could fill short lines of poetry with large amounts of meaning.

A Book

by Emily Dickinson

There is no Frigate[1] like a Book
To take us Lands away
Nor any Coursers[2] like a Page
Of prancing[3] Poetry –
This Traverse[4] may the poorest take
Without oppress[5] of Toll[6] –
How frugal[7] is the Chariot[8]
That bears[9] the Human Soul!

Glossary

1 **frigate:** a fast ship
2 **coursers:** fast horses
3 **prancing:** moving with high movements
4 **traverse:** journey; a movement across something
5 **oppress:** treat unfairly
6 **toll:** a payment to use a bridge or road
7 **frugal:** simple; not spending much money
8 **chariot:** a two-wheeled vehicle pulled by horses
9 **bears:** carries

Comprehension

Write a short paragraph explaining how Emily Dickinson feels about literature. Justify your answer by referring to the text.

ANALYSIS - FIGURES OF SPEECH

1 Which metaphor or simile do you find the most effective and why?

2 Through which metaphors or similes does the poet convey the following ideas?

- No form of transport can move a person as much as literature.
- Stories can be enjoyed by people of any status.
- Reading means you can go on adventures without going anywhere.

Personification

William Blake (1757–1827)

Blake was a poet, painter and printmaker who was both unique and visionary. He was not widely appreciated during his lifetime, but his work is considered very important today. His work is most appreciated for its creativity, expressiveness and philosophical view.

Two Sunflowers Move in the Yellow Room

by William Blake

"Ah, William, we're weary [1] of weather,"
Said the sunflowers, shining with dew [2].
"Our Travelling habits have tired us.
Can you give us a room with a view?"

They arranged themselves at the window
And counted the steps of the sun,
And they both took root in the carpet
Where the topaz [3] Tortoises [4] run.

Glossary

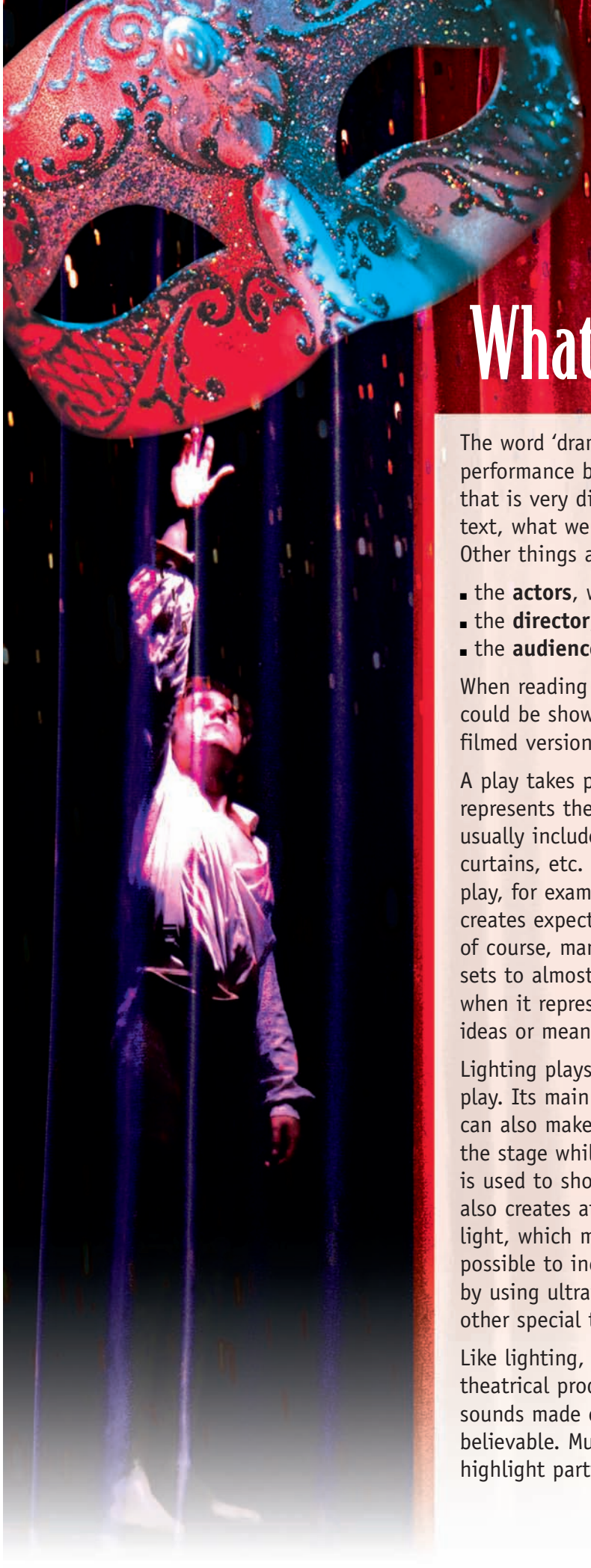
1 **weary:** very tired or bored
2 **dew:** the small drops of water that form on outdoor surfaces during the night
3 **topaz:** a clear yellow stone that is used as a jewel
4 **tortoise:** a slow-moving land animal with a hard shell that covers its body

Comprehension

1. What are the flowers asking for, and why?
2. What human qualities do the flowers have when they speak?
3. Rewrite the second verse in your own words.

ANALYSIS - FIGURES OF SPEECH

1. In your own style, describe the image in the second verse.
2. Personification adds drama to the poem. Which words that are used to show personification do you find particularly dramatic?



What is Drama?

The word 'drama' refers to any work that is intended for performance by actors on a stage. It is a type of writing or genre that is very different from poetry or fiction because the written text, what we call the play, is only one part of the work. Other things are needed to bring a dramatic text to life:

- the **actors**, who become the play's characters
- the **director**, who decides how the play should be performed
- the **audience**, who watch the play

When reading a play, we should always try to imagine how it could be shown on stage. It always helps to see as many live or filmed versions of the play as possible.

A play takes place on a stage. On the stage, a set is built, which represents the place where the action takes place. The set usually includes props, stage furniture, objects, coloured curtains, etc. The set immediately gives us information about the play, for example, which historical period it is set in. It also creates expectations about what we are about to see. There are, of course, many types of set designs, from complex multi-storey sets to almost empty stages. A set is described as naturalistic when it represents real life, and symbolic when it tries to convey ideas or meaning.

Lighting plays an important role in showing the meaning of a play. Its main job is to light up the actors and the stage, but it can also make the audience pay attention to a particular area of the stage while the rest is in darkness or semi-darkness. Lighting is used to show the time of day when the action takes place. It also creates atmosphere. Filters are used to produce coloured light, which may create warm and cold atmospheres. Today, it is possible to include spectacular lighting effects in a performance by using ultraviolet light, strobe lighting, underfloor lighting and other special techniques.

Like lighting, sound effects may also play an important part in theatrical productions. Sounds that come from the stage or sounds made offstage can make the production more realistic and believable. Music is often used to create atmosphere or to highlight particularly important moments in the play.

Dialogue

Dialogue has two major functions in drama:

- it helps to tell the story
- it shows what kind of people the characters are

A playwright has two or three hours of stage time to tell his story. It must be told through the actions and conversations of the characters on stage. Dialogue is the usual technique playwrights use to give the audience information about the setting, the time, the characters and the action in a play. Dialogue is, therefore, an essential storytelling tool in drama.

Dialogue is also important in creating character. In order to make a character believable, a playwright must find the character's 'voice' – his unique style of speech. The audience should be able to draw conclusions about a character's personality and background (social, economic and cultural) by listening carefully to how they speak and what they say.

Pygmalion

by George Bernard Shaw

HIGGINS: Say your alphabet.

ELIZA: I know my alphabet. Do you think I know nothing? I don't need to be taught like a child.

HIGGINS: Say your alphabet.

PICKERING: Say it, Miss Doolittle. You'll understand presently. Do what he tells you; and let him teach you in his own way.

ELIZA: Oh well, if you put it like that- Ahyee, bəyee, cəyee, dəyee-

HIGGINS: Stop. Listen to this, Pickering. This is what we pay for as elementary education. This unfortunate animal has been locked up for nine years in school at our expense to teach her to speak and read the language of Shakespeare and Milton. And the result is Ahyee, Bə-yee, Cə-yee, Də-yee. (To Eliza) Say A, B, C, D.

ELIZA: (almost in tears) But; I'm saying it. Ahyee, Bə-yee, Cə-yee-

HIGGINS: Stop. Say a cup of tea.

ELIZA: A cappətə-ee

HIGGINS: Put your tongue forwards until it squeezes against the top of your lower teeth. Now say 'cup'.

ELIZA: C-c-c I can't. C-cup.

PICKERING: Good. Splendid, Miss Doolittle.

HIGGINS: By Jupiter, she's done it at the first shot.

PICKERING: We shall make a duchess of her. (To Eliza) Now do you think you could possibly say tea? Not tə-yee, mind: if you ever say bə-yee, cə-yee again you shall be dragged round the room three times by the hair of your head.

ELIZA: (weeping) I can't hear no difference except that it sounds more genteel-like when you say it.

HIGGINS: Well, if you can hear that difference, what the devil are you crying for? Pickering: Give her a chocolate.

PICKERING: No, no. Never mind crying a little, Miss Doolittle: you are doing very well; and the lessons won't hurt. I promise you I won't let him drag you round the room by your hair.

HIGGINS: Be off with you to Mrs Pearce and tell her about it. Think about it. Try to do it by yourself, and keep your tongue well forwards in your mouth instead of trying to roll it up and swallow it. Another lesson at half-past four this afternoon. Away with you.

Comprehension

1. Explain who the characters are and what the situation is.
2. Find evidence in the text that shows that Higgins considers Eliza to be his inferior.
3. What strategies does Higgins use to make Eliza do as he says?
   What strategies does Pickering use?
4. Which comic aspect would emerge more forcefully in a performance of the scene than it does in the written text?

Irony

Irony can be defined as saying something while you really mean something else. It is very common in everyday speech (for example, when we say 'that was a clever thing to do' meaning 'that was very foolish'), and it is also widely used in literature. The word 'irony' comes from the Greek word 'eiron', which means 'dissembler'. So the ironic speaker dissembles; he hides his real intention. These are the three types of irony that occur most frequently in drama:

- **verbal irony**, in which there is a contrast between what a character literally says and what he means
- **situational irony**, which occurs when an event or situation turns out to be the reverse of what is expected or appropriate
- **dramatic irony**, which occurs when the audience knows something that one or more of the characters on stage do not know. Dramatic irony is often used to add humour or suspense to a scene

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

This scene is taken from the play *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). Jack Worthing leads a double life. In the countryside, where he is known as Jack, he is the respectable guardian of a young girl, Cecil. In order to escape to the city when he pleases, Jack tells the young girl that he has a brother, Ernest, who leads a wicked life in London and always needs to be checked up on. Under the name of Ernest, Jack enjoys life in London and falls in love with a young woman named Gwendolen Fairfax. Gwendolen has always dreamed of marrying a man named Ernest because the name makes her think of a person who is serious and honest, or 'earnest'. In the following scene, Jack is in a flat in London with Gwendolen and her mother, Lady Bracknell.

JACK: Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN: Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

JACK: I do mean something else.

GWENDOLEN: I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

JACK: And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence ...

GWENDOLEN: I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

JACK: [Nervously] Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you ... I have ever met since ... I met you.

GWENDOLEN: Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate [1], you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. We live, as I hope you know, Mr Worthing, in an age of ideals. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has now reached the provincial pulpits [2], I am told; and my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

JACK: You really love me, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN: Yes!

JACK: Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

GWENDOLEN: Ernest!

JACK: But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN: But your name is Ernest.

JACK: Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

GWENDOLEN: [Glibly [3]] Ah! That is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations, has very little reference at all to actual facts of real life, we know them.

JACK: Personally, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest ... I don't think the name suits me at all.

GWENDOLEN: It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations.

JACK: Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, is a charming name.

GWENDOLEN: Jack? ... No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It produces absolutely no vibrations ... I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception were more than usually plain [4]. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity [5] for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing [6] pleasure of single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest.

JACK: Gwendolen, we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

Glossary

1 **at any rate:** at least
2 **provincial pulpits:** unsophisticated country towns
3 **glibly:** lightly, thoughtlessly
4 **plain:** ordinary
5 **notorious domesticity:** well-known nickname
6 **entrancing:** delightful

Comprehension

1. Why does Gwendolen ask Jack not to talk about the weather?
2. Is Gwendolen surprised by Jack's declaration of love?
3. What has always been Gwendolen's ideal?
4. Jack asks Gwendolen if she could love him even if his name were not Ernest. How does Gwendolen dismiss the questions?
5. What does Gwendolen think of the name Jack?

This scene is an example of dramatic irony. What does the audience know that Gwendolen does not know? How does this add to the humour of the extract?

Verse

Verse drama is drama where the words are divided into lines of poetry. This combination of poetry and drama has been used by writers since the ancient Greeks. At first, it was partly used for the simple reason of making the lines easier to remember. However, it can also be used to create extremely powerful and beautiful language.

Most drama before the late 19th century was written in verse form. Friedrich Schiller, Jean Racine and William Shakespeare, who are some of the greatest European playwrights, all used verse in their plays. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the Norwegian playwright, was one of the first writers to stop using verse drama. Along with other writers of his period, he started using prose, which makes the language of the plays more realistic. Later writers have still used verse because of the different range of effects it can provide. Because it sounds less natural and less like speech than prose, some writers feel it allows them to give their characters a wider range of emotions.

At the Hawk's Well

by W.B Yeats

In *At the Hawk's Well*, W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), who is known as one of the best English-language poets of the 20th century, manages to combine poetry and drama to tell a story based on the Irish hero Cuchulain. The play, written in verse form, has a very clear style, which is influenced by the Japanese Noh style of theatre. It is set on a simple stage with very few props, as Yeats wanted the language of the play to be more important than the action. In the play, Cuchulain goes to a well where he hopes to drink water that will make him live forever. In the following extract, he meets an old man who has been there for fifty years, trying and failing to drink the water from the well. The young man's belief in himself and the old man's negative view of the world can be seen in Yeats's verse.

OLD MAN

O, folly [1] of youth,
Why should that hollow [2] place fill up for you,
That will not fill for me? I have lain in wait
For more than fifty years, to find it empty,
Or but to find the stupid wind of the sea
Drive round the perishable [3] leaves.

YOUNG MAN

So it seems
There is some moment when the water fills it.

OLD MAN

A secret moment that the holy shades [4]
That dance upon the desolate [5] mountain know,
And not a living man, and when it comes
The water has scarce [6] plashed [7] before it is gone.

YOUNG MAN

I will stand here and wait. Why should the luck
Of Sualtim's [8] son desert [9] him now? For ever
Have I had long to wait for anything.

OLD MAN

No! Go from this accursed [10] place! This place
Belongs to me, that girl there, and those others,
Deceivers [11] of men.

YOUNG MAN

And who are you who rail [12]
Upon those dancers that all others bless?

OLD MAN

One whom the dancers cheat. I came like you
When young in body and in mind, and blown
By what had seemed to me a lucky sail.
The well was dry, I sat upon its edge,
I waited the miraculous flood, I waited
While the years passed and withered [13] me away.
I have snared [14] the birds for food and eaten grass
And drunk the rain, and neither in dark nor shine
Wandered too far away to have heard the plash,
And yet the dancers have deceived me. Thrice
I have awakened from a sudden sleep
To find the stones were wet.

YOUNG MAN

My luck is strong,
It will not leave me waiting, nor will they
That dance among the stones put me asleep;
If I grow drowsy [15] I can pierce [16] my foot.

OLD MAN

No, do not pierce it, for the foot is tender,
It feels pain much. But find your sail again
And leave the well to me, for it belongs
To all that's old and withered.

YOUNG MAN

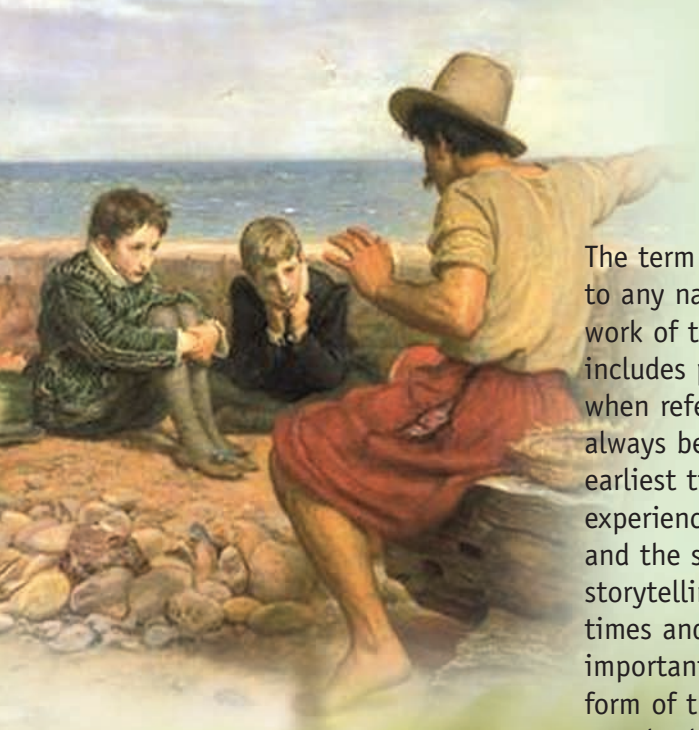
No, I stay.

Glossary

1 **folly:** stupidity
2 **hollow:** empty inside
3 **perishable:** can rot or die
4 **shades:** ghosts
5 **desolate:** has no life on it
6 **scarce:** only just
7 **plashed:** splashed
8 **Sualtim:** Cuchulain's father
9 **desert:** leave
10 **accursed:** shows you hate something
11 **deceivers:** people who lie
12 **rail:** complain strongly
13 **withered:** (made) thin and weak
14 **snared:** caught
15 **drowsy:** tired
16 **pierce:** cut into

Comprehension

1. What do the Old Man and the Young Man feel about the well?
2. Why has the Old Man not been able to drink the water?
3. How do you think the use of verse changes the atmosphere of the text?



What is Fiction?

The term 'fiction' comes from the Latin word *fingere* and refers to any narrative in prose or verse that is entirely or partly the work of the imagination. Although in a wider sense fiction includes plays and narrative poems, it is most commonly used when referring to the short story and the novel. Storytelling has always been an essential part of man's existence. From the earliest times, man has exchanged stories based on both his experience and imagination. Fiction, in the form of the novel and the short story, is the best tool for satisfying the need for storytelling that we are born with. It takes us to imaginary times and places, introduces us to new people and tells us about important events in their lives. Fiction, since its arrival in the form of the novel in the 18th century, has been the most popular literary genre in Western culture.

Setting:

Where does the story take place? What kind of world do the characters live in? The term we use to refer to the general location and the historical period that a story happens in is the **setting**. The term is also used to refer to the actual location that an episode or scene within the story takes place in. The general setting of a novel may be, for example, a large city like London, while the setting of the opening scene may be the main character's kitchen.

Some settings are not as important as others. They are simply a background to help the reader visualise the action and add realism to the story. Other settings are closely linked to the meaning of work: the author may concentrate on elements of setting to create atmosphere or mood, or the setting may play a major role in shaping the characters' identity and destiny. Generally, the attention given to the setting and its importance in the total work are the same. If the setting is sketched briefly, we can assume that it is of little importance, or that the writer wishes us to think that the action could take place anywhere and at any time. If, on the other hand, the passages describing the setting are long and highly detailed, or are written in poetic language, we can assume that the setting is being used for more meaningful or symbolic purposes.

E.M. Forster

(1879-1970) Edward Morgan Forster was an English novelist whose surroundings were very important to his fiction. He attended school in the southeast of England before going to Cambridge University. He loved the city and the university, where he felt inspired by the houses and atmosphere around him. After finishing there, he travelled around the world. The influences of the places he grew up in and travelled to can clearly be seen in his writing.

Forster's great novels *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924) are set in Italy, England and India respectively. The settings that he had seen in real life are beautifully recreated in his fiction. It was important to him that the reader could see and understand the feelings, colours and even the weather of the countries. When writing about *A Passage to India*, he said that the three sections were related to the three Indian seasons: winter, summer and the rains.

A Passage to India

by E. M. Forster

Except for the Marabar Caves – and they are twenty miles off – the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged[1] rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable[2] from the rubbish it deposits[3] so freely. There are no bathing-steps on the river front[4], as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and bazaars[5] shut out the wide and shifting panorama[6] of the stream. The streets are mean[7], the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters[8] all but the invited guest. Chandrapore was never large or beautiful, but two hundred years ago it lay on the road between Upper India, then imperial[9], and the sea, and the fine houses date from that period.

Glossary

1 **edged:** bordered
2 **scarcely distinguishable:** hard to tell one thing from another
3 **deposits:** puts down
4 **river front:** the area and buildings along a river
5 **bazaars:** markets
6 **panorama:** view of a wide area
7 **mean:** poor in terms of money and appearance
8 **deters:** puts off, discourages
9 **imperial:** relating to an empire; here it is the British Empire

Comprehension

1. What image is Forster trying to create for the city of Chandrapore?
2. Forster made up the city of Chandrapore, but he based it on a real Indian city. Why do you think he decided not to use the real cities that he had visited?
3. How do you think the description of the city might be important for the rest of the story?

D.H. LAWRENCE (1885-1930)

David Herbert Richards Lawrence was born in Eastwood in 1885. As a child, he was impressed by his father's stories of the mines. He became a pupil-teacher in 1902, and after two years (1906-1908) at Nottingham University , he became a school-master in Croydon.

By 1914, the year of his first volume of short stories, ***The Prussian Officer and Other Stories****. Lawrence had given up teaching because of illness and become a professional writer. His many famous novels include* ***Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow*** *and* ***Women in Love****. He died of tuberculosis in France in 1930.*

Short Story

A short story is a form of short fictional narrative prose. Short stories are usually more concise and to the point than longer works of fiction, such as novels.
Because they are so short, successful short stories rely on literary devices such as character/plot and theme language more than longer forms of fiction.

'THE ROCKING-HORSE WINNER' by D.H. Lawrence

Paul, aged about twelve, has always felt that his mother does not love him enough because she is worried about money. His mother grew up in a rich upper class family where she was used to luxury. She married a man of her own social background for love, although the love did not last, but he does not have a good enough income [1] to support their lifestyle. Paul and his sisters can always hear their house whispering, 'There must be more money! There must be more money!' Nobody ever says the words out loud, but the whisper is everywhere.

Paul asks his mother why they do not have their own car and have to always use Uncle Oscar's or a taxi. She says his father has no luck. Luck is what causes you to have money. She used to be lucky, before she married. Paul declares that he is a lucky person. God has told him so. His mother is not impressed, and this annoys him; he wants to win her attention.

He takes to riding his big wooden rocking-horse, because 'he knew the horse could take him to where there was luck'. He rides hard and his big blue eyes shine with determination. Uncle Oscar asks what the horse is called. The name changes, says Paul. Last week he was called Sansovino. Oscar is interested in that, because Sansovino won at Ascot [2]. Paul's mother tells her brother Oscar that Paul discusses horseracing with Bassett, the gardener. Oscar takes Paul for a ride in the car and questions him. Paul says he and Bassett are partners; he had started winning on races when he bet ten shillings that his uncle had given him. Paul wants to bet three hundred pounds on Daffodil to win the Lincoln, but this is a secret. Bassett looks after the money; he is more cautious and keeps more of it left over. Oscar takes his nephew to the Lincoln races. Daffodil wins at odds of four to one. Bassett convinces Oscar that Paul is telling the truth. Paul now has fifteen hundred pounds. Sometimes, Paul says, he is sure which horse will win.

Oscar joins the partnership. Paul wins ten thousand pounds on Lively Spark, an outsider he is sure about, in the Leger [3]. Uncle Oscar wins two thousand, but feels nervous about betting this amount of money. Paul does not want his mother to know, because she would stop him, but he wants her to have the money. Oscar arranges this through a lawyer. Paul's mother begins to spend too much money and the house whispers even more, terrifying Paul who grows 'wild-eyed and strange'. He is not sure who the winner of the Grand National [4] will be. He must be sure about the Derby [5]. Paul's secret is the rocking-horse. He rides himself into a frenzy [6] where he 'learns' the name of the winner. One night his mother goes to his room and finds him riding frantically. He falls from the horse, calling out 'Malabar', before falling into a coma for three days. Oscar passes the tip to Bassett. Paul wakes up when Bassett is allowed into the bedroom with news about the Derby. Malabar has won him over seventy thousand pounds. Paul boasts to his mother that he is lucky; but he dies that night. Oscar thinks the boy is 'best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner'.

Glossary

1 **income**: the money that you earn from your work
2 **Ascot:** Royal Ascot, a four-day meeting in June. The Gold Cup is the principal long-distance race of the English flat-racing season
3 **Leger**: the St Leger, run at Doncaster in September
4 **Grand National**: the principal steeple-chasing event in England, held at Aintree in late March
5 **Derby**: the Derby Stakes is run at Epsom on the first Wednesday in June
6 **frenzy**: a state of extreme happiness

Comprehension

1 What does the horse symbolise in the story?

2 What is the symbol of death at the end of the story?

Novels

Novels are long pieces of narrative prose fiction in the form of a book. Novels often concentrate on character development and usually tell a story. The novel is quite a new genre; it only started to become widely popular at the start of the 18th century in Europe. At first, novels were not thought of as being serious literature. Nowadays, however, novelists from that period are thought of as some of the best writers of English literature. One of the most famous novels is Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë.

Emily Brontë (1818-1848)

Emily Brontë was born in Thornton, Yorkshire, in the north of England. Her family were extremely talented writers. The Brontë sisters – Emily, Charlotte and Anne – are some of the most important novelists in history. Their first work was Poems by Currer, Ellis and Action Bell, a volume of verse that they published together using false names that were neither male nor female. Only two copies of the book were sold, but they continued to write. Emily's only novel was **Wuthering Heights** (1847), a story within a story about doomed love and revenge. It did not gain success straight away like Charlotte's **Jane Eyre**, but it was later called one of the most intense novels written in the English language. She died of tuberculosis in late 1848, after catching a cold at her brother Branwell's funeral in September.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

by Emily Brontë

In 1801, Mr Lockwood rents Thrushcross Grange, an elegant country house near Gimmerton in Yorkshire; his landlord, Heathcliff, a rude man, lives at Wuthering Heights, a farm on a hill. Lockwood is trapped by snow on a visit to the Heights and has to stay the night. He dreams that he sees a child knocking at his window, saying that her name is Catherine Linton and she has been a waif[1] for twenty years. After he gets home, his housekeeper - Ellen Dean - tells him the story of the Earnshaw family at the Heights where she was brought up. The Earnshaws had two children, Hindley and Catherine, and after a visit to Liverpool Mr Earnshaw brought home a homeless child, about the same age as Catherine, whom they called Heathcliff. He and Catherine became close friends, but Hindley was jealous of his father's love for Heathcliff.

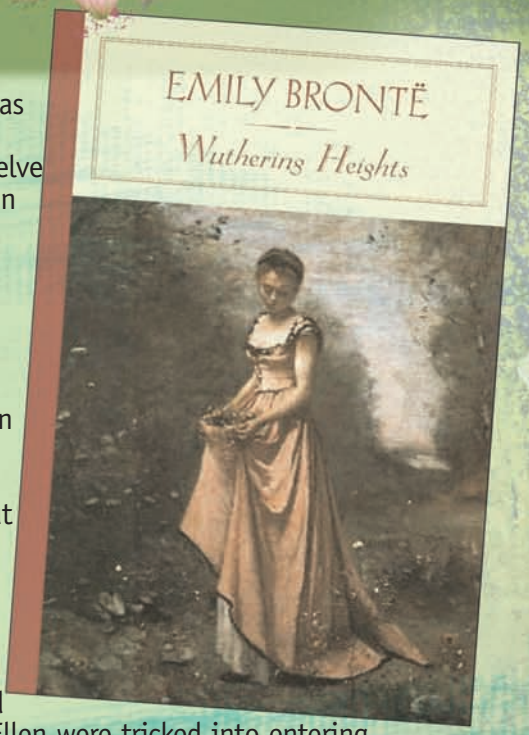
When Mr Earnshaw died, and Hindley - married by then - became master of Wuthering Heights, he made Heathcliff a servant and encouraged Catherine's friendship with the effete[2] Edgar Linton, the son of the family at Thrushcross Grange. Hindley's wife died soon after giving birth to their son, Hareton, and Hindley became extremely sad. Edgar Linton asked Catherine to marry him; Heathcliff overheard her discussing it with Ellen, saying that although she loved Heathcliff, it would demean[3] her to marry him, and he quietly left and disappeared. Catherine went out in the rain to search for him and became seriously ill as a result of getting wet; three years after her recovery she married Edgar, whose parents were dead by then, and went with Ellen to live at the Grange.

She and Edgar were happy until Heathcliff reappeared, transformed into a wealthy and educated man. Edgar was jealous of Catherine's love for him, and Ellen wondered why he was living at the Heights. Isabella, Edgar's sister, became infatuated[4] with Heathcliff who encouraged this love. After an angry scene between Edgar and Heathcliff, Catherine became hysterical[5] and locked herself in her room. She remained there for three days, and when Ellen was allowed in, she was confused and imagining herself at the Heights. Though she was very sick, she pointed her head out of the window into the icy wind, saying that the only way she could get back to the Heights and see Heathcliff was through death. She fell desperately ill and Edgar was very concerned about her.

Catherine recovered but remained weak, partly because she was pregnant. After two months, Heathcliff and Isabella returned to the Heights. Isabella, now married to Heathcliff, wrote to Ellen saying what a lonely place it was; Ellen visited her there and saw that Heathcliff hated Isabella and loved only Catherine. She arranged a meeting between Heathcliff and Catherine, and they wept and embraced each other. They were interrupted by Edgar, and Catherine fainted. She died after she had given birth to a daughter, Cathy. Heathcliff was violent in his sadness. Isabella appeared at the Grange on the night after Catherine's funeral, untidy and bleeding from a wound in her neck. She told Ellen how Heathcliff and Hindley had had a big fight, and how she had made Heathcliff so angry that he had thrown a knife at her. She threw it back and escaped, before leaving the Grange to live near London where she had a son, Linton.

Glossary

1. **waif:** someone, especially a child, who is pale, thin and looks like they do not have a home
2. **effete:** weak and powerless in a way that you dislike
3. **demean:** to do something that makes people lose respect for someone or something
4. **infatuated:** having strong feelings of love for someone or a strong interest in something that makes you unable to think in a sensible way
5. **hysterical:** unable to control your behaviour or emotions because you are very upset, afraid or excited etc.
6. **effeminate:** a man who is effeminate looks or behaves like a woman
7. **inherit:** to receive money, property etc. from someone after they have died
8. **reluctantly:** slowly and unwillingly
9. **moors:** wild open areas of high land
10. **scornful:** feeling or showing that something is stupid or does not deserve respect
11. **graves:** places in the ground where dead bodies are buried



Six months after Catherine's death, Hindley died; there was some mystery about his death as his servant Joseph suggested that Heathcliff killed him. In the following twelve years, Cathy Linton grew up being cared for by Ellen. Then Isabella died, and Linton Heathcliff was brought to the Grange. Heathcliff claimed him the same night and took him to the Heights the next day. He was a sickly, effeminate [6] boy. Cathy was not allowed to go to the Heights but tricked Ellen into taking her when she was sixteen. Heathcliff told Ellen he wanted the cousins to marry, because he wished to inherit [7] the Grange as Linton was clearly weak; Linton would inherit the Grange after Edgar, but after his death the property would pass to Cathy. Edgar forbade Cathy to go to the Heights again but she began secretly exchanging love letters with Linton. Ellen put a stop to that, but eventually Heathcliff asked Cathy to visit Linton at the Heights, though she did so reluctantly [8] as her father had become very ill. During an illness of Ellen's, Cathy often visited the Heights in secret. In response to a letter from Linton, Edgar allowed Cathy to meet Linton twice on the moors [9], but she and Ellen were tricked into entering the Heights the second time.

Ellen was kept prisoner there for five days while Cathy was forced to marry Linton. Soon after Ellen's return to the Grange, Cathy escaped and followed her, in time to be with her father when he died. Heathcliff said that he was the new owner of the Grange and all Edgar's property; he rented the Grange to Lockwood and took Cathy to live at the Heights. She was left alone to care for Linton, who died soon after she arrived. Hareton tried to make friends with her, but she became bitter and scornful [10] of him. Ellen Dean's story ends here, and Lockwood visits the Heights again to say that he is leaving the neighbourhood; he sees Cathy teasing Hareton about his inability to read. He returns to the Grange in the autumn of 1802 and again visits the Heights, where he sees Cathy and Hareton, who have now become lovers. Ellen Dean is there and Heathcliff is dead, so Lockwood asks her for an explanation. She tells him that Heathcliff transferred her to the Grange soon after Lockwood's departure and describes how Cathy and Hareton fell in love. At the same time, Heathcliff's desire for revenge on Hindley and Edgar and their families seemed to weaken; he told Ellen that he saw Catherine everywhere, and began to go without food. Ellen found him dead one morning beside the window where Lockwood had had his dream. Ellen mentions that villagers say they have seen the ghosts of Heathcliff and Catherine in and around the Heights. Lockwood goes home, passing the graves [11] of Edgar and Heathcliff with Catherine's between them.

Comprehension

'Wuthering Heights' is a stormy tale of about the troubles of two families: the Earnshaws and the Lintons. Discuss this using the text.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

You have already been introduced to William Shakespeare. Shakespeare is widely thought of as the greatest dramatist[1] in the English language, and modern English is heavily influenced by his work, which remains as popular today as it has ever been. This section will tell you more about Shakespeare and the background to what he wrote.

Early life: He was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, probably on April 23rd. His father, a glover by trade[2], was a well-known man who held important positions in the town's government. His mother came from a rich local family. It is thought that William Shakespeare attended Stratford Grammar School, but he did not go on to study at university. When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than him. A few months later, Susanna was born, his first child. Three years after that, his twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born.

Success: He went to London where he did a series of jobs, including holding theatre-goer's[3] horses outside playhouses, before he eventually became an actor. In 1595, Shakespeare joined an important company of actors called The Lord Chamberlain's Men (later changed to The King's Men) and performed at court. His success as a dramatist grew. He mixed in high social circles, and the Earl of Southampton, whom he dedicated his sonnets to, became his patron and friend. Shakespeare's improved financial standing allowed him to invest[4] in the building of the Globe Theatre, and in 1597, he bought New Place, the finest house in Stratford.

Retirement and death: He retired[5] to his hometown in 1611, where he died on April 23rd, 1616.

Glossary

1 **dramatist:** someone who writes drama
2 **glover by trade:** makes gloves for a living
3 **theatre-goer:** a person who goes to the theatre
4 **invest:** to spend money or time on something because it will become useful to you
5 **retired:** having stopped working, usually because of your age

Comprehension

1. When and where was Shakespeare born?
2. Who did he marry and how old was he?
3. Who were The Lord Chamberlain's Men?
4. What was The Globe?
5. How did he spend the last years of his life?

Shakespeare's Works

Shakespeare never released the texts of his plays. But some of his works were put together from notes taken in the theatres or from the memories of the actors; the 'Bad Quartos'. A quarto is a size of page or book, and they are 'Bad' because they are full of holes and mistakes.

In 1623, two former[1] actors and friends of Shakespeare's, Heminge and Condell, decided to publish the first collection of his plays. This 'First Folio' included 35 plays, which were divided into comedies, histories and tragedies.

Glossary

1 **former:** having a particular position in the past
2 **estimate:** a guess that is based on fact
3 **plot:** the events that form the main story of a book, film or play
4 **contemporary:** people or events that happened at the same time
5 **experimentation:** trying new things
6 **optimistic:** hopeful; believing that something will have a good result

We can also divide Shakespeare's plays into four time periods. The plays were not dated. However, we can estimate[2] when they were written based on the style, plot[3], characterisation and metre used in the play. We can also date references in the plays to contemporary[4] events and the works of other writers.

First Period The first period went from 1591 to 1596, and it was a period of learning and experimentation[5]. In these years, Shakespeare wrote very different types of plays. He wrote plays about the history of England, such as *Richard III*; comedies, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and the tragedies *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

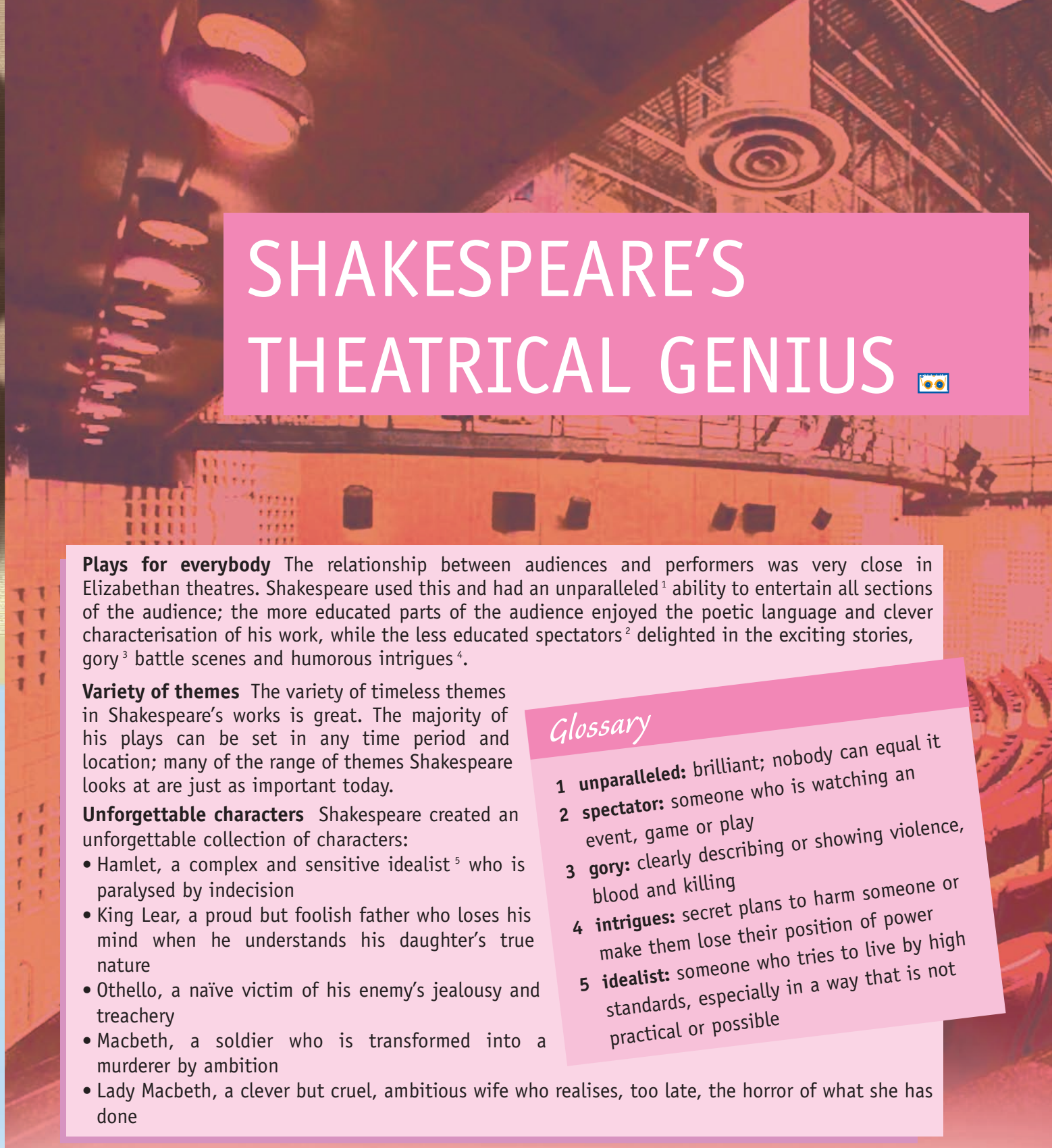
Second Period From 1596 to the turn of the century, Shakespeare focused on histories and comedies, and it is generally agreed that this was when he wrote his best comedies. These included *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*; which base their comedy on different themes, such as the pain and pleasure of friendship, mistaken identity and making fun of people who take themselves too seriously.

Third Period During the third period, from 1601 to 1608, Shakespeare wrote his great tragedies. These plays have given us unforgettable characters such as *Hamlet, King Lear, Othello* and *Macbeth*. His comedies from this period have lost the bright, optimistic[6] appeal of earlier works. The darker elements found in works such as *Measure for Measure* suggest that Shakespeare had difficulties in his personal life.

Fourth Period A return to a happier state of mind is reflected in the plays of the final period from 1608 to 1613. *The Tempest*, for example, is set in the ideal world of an island where there is a magical, musical and romantic atmosphere.

Comprehension

1 What are the Bad Quartos and the First Folio?
2 Makes notes on the four periods of Shakespeare's plays. Use them to write a short essay.



SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRICAL GENIUS

Plays for everybody The relationship between audiences and performers was very close in Elizabethan theatres. Shakespeare used this and had an unparalleled[1] ability to entertain all sections of the audience; the more educated parts of the audience enjoyed the poetic language and clever characterisation of his work, while the less educated spectators[2] delighted in the exciting stories, gory[3] battle scenes and humorous intrigues[4].

Variety of themes The variety of timeless themes in Shakespeare's works is great. The majority of his plays can be set in any time period and location; many of the range of themes Shakespeare looks at are just as important today.

Unforgettable characters Shakespeare created an unforgettable collection of characters:

- Hamlet, a complex and sensitive idealist[5] who is paralysed by indecision
- King Lear, a proud but foolish father who loses his mind when he understands his daughter's true nature
- Othello, a naïve victim of his enemy's jealousy and treachery
- Macbeth, a soldier who is transformed into a murderer by ambition
- Lady Macbeth, a clever but cruel, ambitious wife who realises, too late, the horror of what she has done

Glossary

1 **unparalleled:** brilliant; nobody can equal it
2 **spectator:** someone who is watching an event, game or play
3 **gory:** clearly describing or showing violence, blood and killing
4 **intrigues:** secret plans to harm someone or make them lose their position of power
5 **idealist:** someone who tries to live by high standards, especially in a way that is not practical or possible

Comprehension

Write a paragraph explaining the reasons for Shakespeare's greatness.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

In the same way that Shakespeare is viewed as the greatest English-language dramatist, Charles Dickens is often called the greatest English-language novelist. He lived in London during the Victorian era[1]. The excitement of his novels and the way that they were published[2] meant that he was extremely famous while he was still alive, and he is still popular now. This is shown by the fact that his fifteen novels have never stopped being published. There is even a theme park[3] based on his life – Dickens World.

Early life Charles Dickens was very happy as a small child. However, when he was ten, his family had to move to London because they were poor. Young Charles had to work in a shoe-polish factory, sticking labels onto the shoe-polish bottles. His father was then arrested, so Charles had to live with a family friend. Feeling like an orphan[4] and working under difficult conditions as a boy had a huge effect on the stories he wrote as a man.

Career When he was fourteen, he became a law clerk[5]. However, he wasn't interested in the law, so he decided to become a journalist. He worked incredibly hard to learn shorthand[6] and became a court reporter. His skill was obvious, and from 1833 to 1836, he released a group of short pieces. These short pieces were called *Sketches by Boz*, because of the pen name[7] Dickens used. Over the next three years, he published three novels serially[8], and by then he was well–known as a wonderful novelist.

Later life After a terrifying train crash, where he was in the only carriage to stay on a bridge, Dickens wrote very little. He completed *A Mutual Friend* and started the unfinished novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Instead, he did very popular tours of Britain and America, reading his novels aloud. He died exactly five years after the crash.

Comprehension

1. How is Dickens similar to Shakespeare?
2. What evidence is there for his popularity?
3. Which events in his life changed him as a person?
4. Who was Boz?
5. What did Dickens do in the last years of his life?

Glossary

1 **Victorian era:** when Victoria was queen of the United Kingdom; from 1837–1901
2 **published:** made available for sale
3 **theme park:** a park with fun things to do that is based around a certain topic
4 **orphan:** a child with no parents
5 **clerk:** person who keeps records and accounts
6 **shorthand:** a way to write down quickly what people say
7 **pen name:** a false name a writer uses
8 **serially:** in parts

Life and fiction...

Writers' lives can be extremely important to their work. It is sometimes difficult to separate an author's personal life or the time they lived in from the texts they write. This is why we often study authors' lives alongside their texts. Knowing that a text was written in ancient Rome rather than in Victorian London changes how we view a text.

Dickens's childhood and early career can be seen in his novels. The novel *David Copperfield*, his favourite, has many elements that are similar to Dickens's life. For example, David works in a factory and a law firm before becoming a successful author. Dickens is skillful enough to use stories from his own life as the basis for a great piece of fiction.

David Copperfield

by Charles Dickens

I know enough of the world now, to have almost lost the capacity[1] of being much surprised by anything; but it is matter of some surprise to me, even now, that I can have been so easily thrown away at such an age. A child of excellent abilities, and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager[2], delicate[3], and soon hurt bodily or mentally, it seems wonderful[4] to me that nobody should have made any sign in my behalf. But none was made; and I became, at ten years old, a little labouring hind[5] in the service of Murdstone and Grinby.

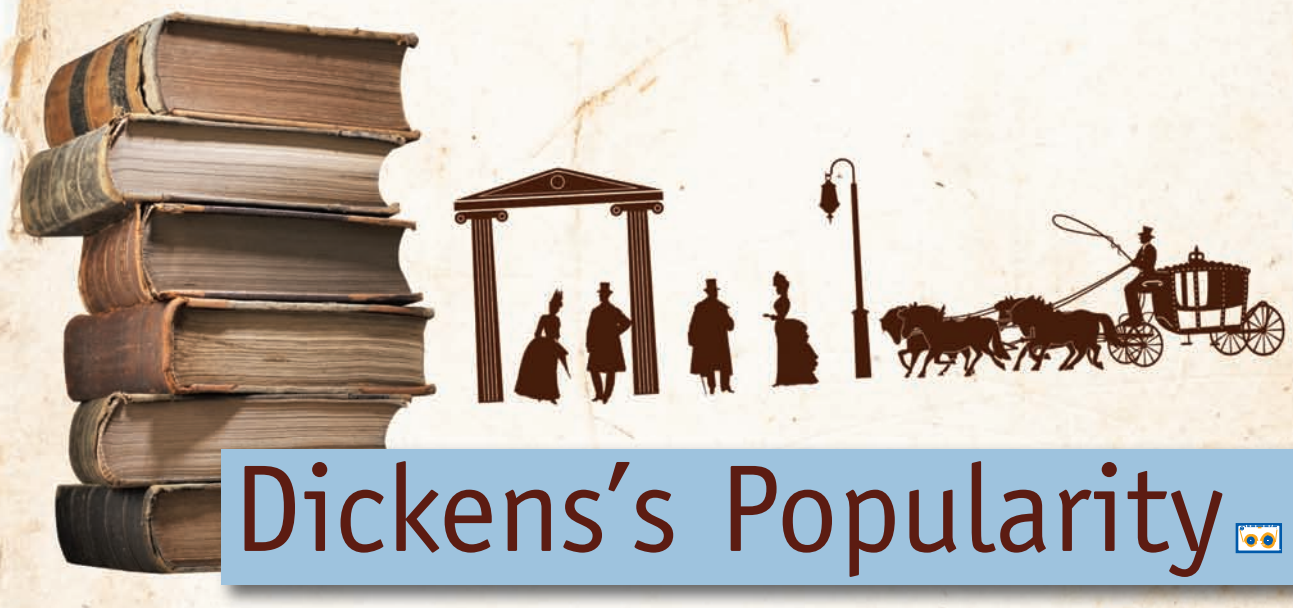
Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse was at the water side. Its panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years, I dare say; its decaying[6] floors and staircase; the squeaking and scuffling[7] of the old grey rats down in the cellars; and the dirt and rottenness[8] of the place; are things, not of many years ago, in my mind, but of the present instant. They are all before me, just as they were in the evil hour when I went among them for the first time, with my trembling hand in Mr. Quinion's.

Glossary

1. **capacity:** ability
2. **eager:** wanting to do something
3. **delicate:** easy to break; needs to be treated carefully
4. **wonderful:** strange; creates a feeling of wonder
5. **hind:** farm worker
6. **decaying:** getting worse over time
7. **scuffling:** moving quickly and without direction
8. **rottenness:** how bad and diseased something is

Comprehension

1. What is similar between David Copperfield's memory of his childhood and Charles Dickens's childhood?
2. How do you think David's surprise that a child can be 'thrown away' is similar to how Dickens felt about how children were treated in his time?



Dickens's Popularity

The extraordinary and enduring[1] popularity of Dickens is because of the wonderful cast of characters he created – during his career he wrote 989 named characters – and the exciting stories that he told with them. However, his popularity during his own time was also partly due to serialisation.

Serialisation Serial publishing involves breaking a story up into smaller sections and then releasing them each week or month. They can be published in newspapers and magazines, or as small individual books. *The One Thousand and One Nights* is an example of serial publication where the individual tales[2] were collected over centuries. This type of publishing means that the reader can be left with a cliffhanger, when the story breaks off[3] in the middle of the action, meaning they are excited about what is going to happen in the next issue[4].

Charles Dickens serialised his novels differently. Instead of completing a novel before releasing parts of it every month, he wrote them as they were being published. At the start of his career he would be writing and publishing more than one book at once. He kept the excitement caused by the cliffhangers, but he had the added ability to change the texts according to what was popular and exciting.

Characters An example of how Dickens used serialisation happened during the publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, his first novel. The readers of the time were not particularly interested in this novel until chapter ten was published, featuring Sam Weller. Weller was loved because of his wit[5], and Dickens became famous.

He also created wonderful characters based on his life, such as David Copperfield and the orphan Pip from *Great Expectations*, as well as fascinating, scary villains[6], like *David Copperfield's* Uriah Heep, and Daniel Quilp from *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

Glossary

1 **enduring:** long-lasting
2 **tales:** imaginative stories
3 **breaks off:** stops
4 **issue:** an individual part of a series
5 **wit:** intelligence and humour
6 **villains:** evil characters who are important to the excitement of a plot

Comprehension

Write a paragraph explaining the reasons for Dickens's popularity.

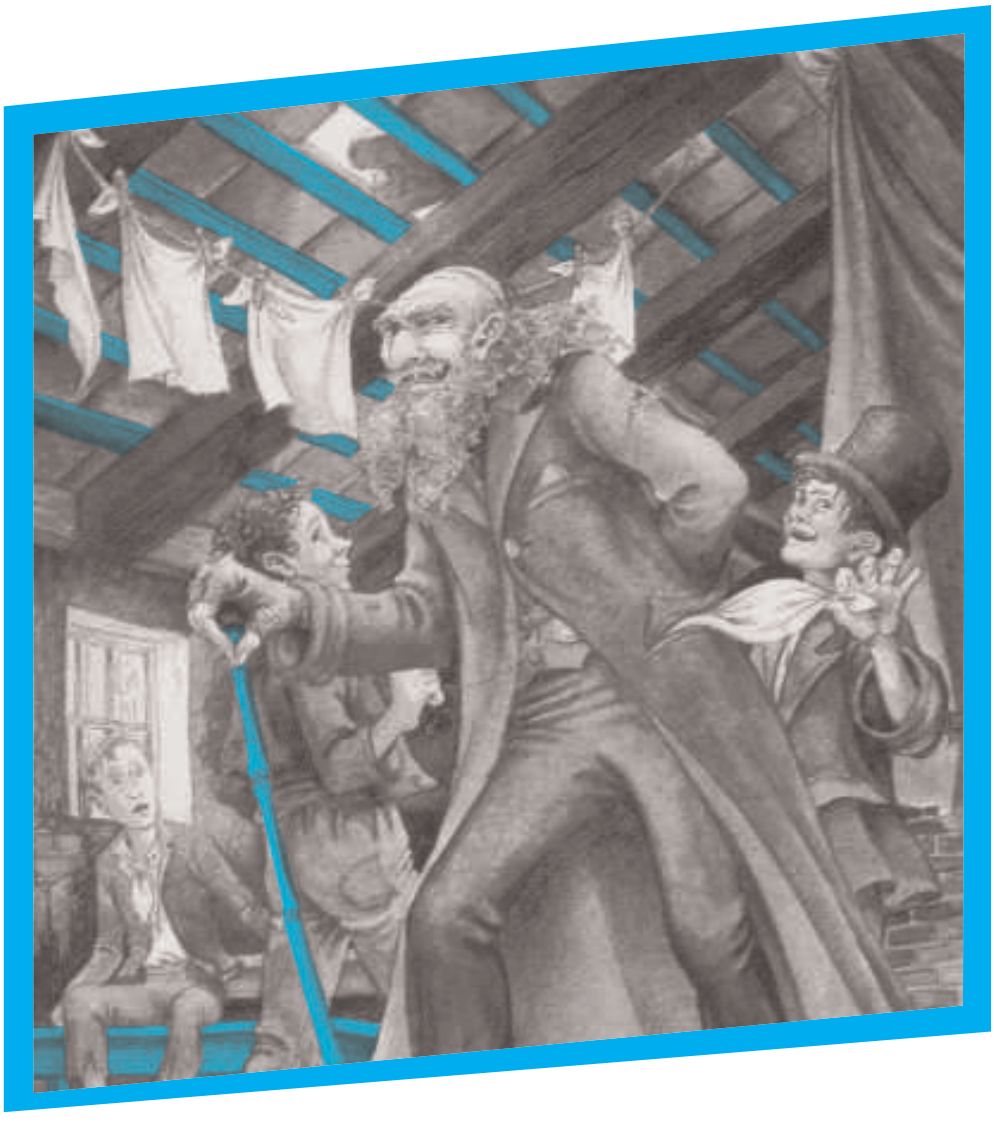
Optional Reading

Contents

Oliver Twist

by Charles Dickens

ELT Abridgement by Alan C.McLean



Our story begins in the year of 1820. A pale, sick young woman lay on a bed in a workhouse near London. She was ill and poor. But she was beautiful. 'She looks like a lady,' the old nurse said. 'I wonder who she is.' But nobody knew her.

The young woman gave birth to a baby boy that evening. The nurse lay her baby in the young mother's arms. She smiled. Then she fell back on the bed and died. The nurse called the baby Oliver, Oliver Twist.

And so Oliver began his life as an orphan, with no mother or father. He lived with thirty other orphan boys in a workhouse. They were always hungry. The boys had a foster mother – a woman called Mrs Mann. But she was cruel and she beat them.

For nine years Oliver lived under Mrs Mann's care. He celebrated his ninth birthday locked in a cellar with two other boys. Mrs Mann had beaten them because they said they were hungry.

'How dare you say you are hungry!' Mrs Mann shouted. 'You will stay in this cellar with no food at all. Then you'll be hungry, you ungrateful boys!'

So Oliver had an unhappy birthday. But on that day something happened which changed his life. Mrs Mann had a visit from Mr Bumble, who was an official from a workhouse for older boys. He was a beadle – a very important man. He was very fat and he had an equally fat, oily voice.

When Mrs Mann saw him, she told a servant to get the boys from the cellar and wash their hands and faces well. Mr Bumble had come to see Oliver.

'You are nine years old now, Oliver,' said Mr Bumble, 'and it is time you started work. You are going to come to live in my workhouse. What do you think about that, eh?'

Oliver looked at the cruel face of Mrs Mann. 'Will she be going with me?' he asked.

Mr Bumble laughed. It was a fat, oily laugh.

'No, Oliver,' he said. 'Mrs Mann will stay here. But she will come and visit you sometimes.'

Mrs Mann cut Oliver a thick slice of bread, buttered it well and handed it over to Oliver.

'We feed our boys well here, Mr Bumble,' she said.

'I'm sure you do, madam,' said the beadle. 'Come along now, Oliver.'

And he took the little boy by the hand.

Life in Mr Bumble's workhouse was hard. The boys worked long hours and the work was boring. There was never enough to eat. The boys were given three bowls of soup a day. They sat at long wooden tables. A man stood at the end of the room and poured out the thin soup from a big pot. The boys had an onion twice a week and a piece of bread on Sundays. They were always hungry. At last they decided to do something.

'We should ask for more food,' said one of the boys. Another boy laughed. 'Who is going to ask for more?' The first boy looked at Oliver. 'Oliver Twist!' he said.

When the boys had finished their soup next evening, they whispered to Oliver. 'Go and ask for more.'

So Oliver picked up his empty soup bowl and walked up to the man with the big pot.

'Please, sir,' he said, 'I want some more.'

The man was very angry.

'More?' he shouted. 'More?' I'll give you more!' And he hit Oliver with his big wooden spoon. Then he grabbed Oliver's arms and called out for Mr Bumble.

Mr Bumble was angry with Oliver too. He told the managers of the workhouse and they discussed what to do about Oliver.

'He is very ungrateful,' said one of the managers. 'He is very lazy,' said another. 'We must send him away.'

'Let him become an apprentice,' said one of the managers.

'At least he will learn to do something useful.'

So Mr Bumble put a notice on the gate of the workhouse. It said:

£5 FOR BOY. HARD-WORKING.
SUITABLE FOR APPRENTICE.

They locked Oliver in a dark and lonely room. There he cried all day and slept at night.

One day Mr Sowerberry, an undertaker, came to the workhouse and saw the notice. He found Mr Bumble.

'I'll take the boy, Mr Bumble,' he said. 'I need a new apprentice.'

The managers of the workhouse agreed. That evening Mr Bumble took Oliver to Mr Sowerberry's. As they walked through the town, Oliver held on to Mr Bumble's hand. The beadle saw that Oliver was crying.

'You ungrateful boy!' Mr Bumble said.

'No, sir, I'm not ungrateful and I will be good. But I'm a very little boy and it is so… so…'

'So what?'

'So lonely, sir. So very lonely!' Oliver cried.

Mr Bumble was surprised, but he said nothing more and soon they arrived at Mr Sowerberry's shop.

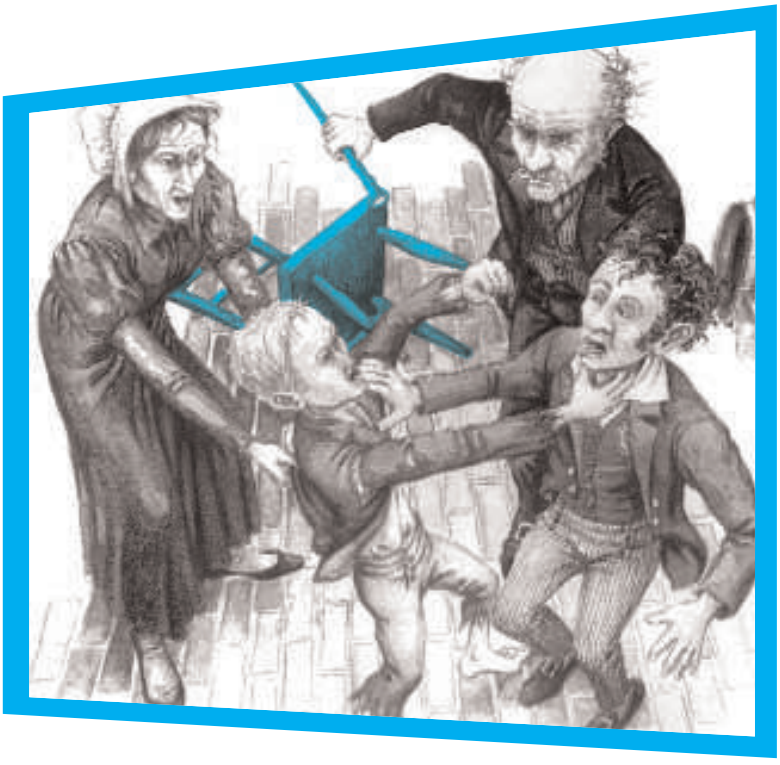
'Here's your boy, Sowerberry,' said Mr Bumble.

'Ah,' said Mr Sowerberry. 'Come here, my dear. Mr Bumble has brought the boy from the workhouse.'

Mrs Sowerberry was a short thin woman with a sharp face. She looked at Oliver closely. 'Dear me,' she said. 'He's a very little boy. Get downstairs, you little bag of bones.' And she pushed Oliver into the kitchen.

There he ate some scraps of food from the dog's plate. Then Mrs Sowerberry pointed to a bed under the counter of the undertaker's shop. A row of empty coffins stood against the wall.

'You don't mind sleeping among the coffins, do you, boy?' she asked.
Oliver did not sleep much that night. Fear, loneliness and cold kept him awake until dawn.
Next morning someone began to bang on the door. 'Open the door!' someone shouted.
Oliver opened the door to Noah Claypole, the senior apprentice. Noah looked down at Oliver.
'You're from the workhouse, aren't you?' he asked.
'Yes, sir,' replied Oliver.
'Take the shutters down, Workhouse,' said Noah. 'You're under me and you'll do what I say.' And he punched Oliver and kicked him.
Noah's kicks and punches and insults continued during the weeks that followed. He tried to get Oliver to cry, but Oliver wouldn't.
One day, as Noah pulled Oliver's hair, he said, 'Workhouse, how's your mother?'
'She's dead,' replied Oliver.
'What did she die of, Workhouse?'
'She died of a broken heart,' said Oliver sadly.
'If she died in the workhouse, she must have been a bad woman. She was lucky not to be hanged.'
Oliver's sorrow turned to anger. He jumped up and with one blow of his fist knocked Noah to the ground.
'Murder!' cried Noah. 'He's killing me!'
Mr and Mrs Sowerberry rushed in. After a struggle, they dragged Oliver into the cellar and locked the door.
'Let me out!' he cried.
'Send for Mr Bumble!' said Mrs Sowerberry
When Mr Bumble arrived, he spoke to Oliver through the keyhole.
'Do you know this voice, Oliver?' he asked.
'Yes,' said Oliver.
'And aren't you afraid of this voice, Oliver?'
'No,' cried Oliver. 'Let me out!'
Mr Bumble was very surprised by Oliver's answer. He told Mr Sowerberry to give Oliver only bread and water.
'You have given him too much meat, Mrs Sowerberry,' said Mr Bumble. 'You have overfed him.'
That night Oliver slept among the coffins again but he decided to escape from Mr Sowerberry's. When dawn broke, he quietly opened the door of the shop and stepped into the street. Soon he found the main road and saw a



milestone. On it were the words:
LONDON-70 MILES
'That's where I'll go,' said Oliver. 'To London!'
Oliver walked for six days. He begged for food and water. He reached a small town just outside London. He sat down to rest when he heard a cheerful voice. 'Hello! What's wrong?'
Oliver saw a boy his own age dressed in a hat and a man's coat. Oliver said that he was going to London. 'I've got a friend in London,' said the boy. 'He'll give you food and a place to stay. And he'll get you a job.'

'What's your name?' Oliver asked.
'My name's Jack Dawkins,' said the boy. 'But my friends call me "the Artful Dodger".'
When it was dark, Jack took Oliver into London. They passed through dirty streets full of ugly houses. Oliver was frightened. But the Artful Dodger gripped his arm and led him through the streets. At last they came to an old house. It looked empty, but the Artful Dodger pushed open the door and led Oliver into the house.
A candle flickered at the end of a passage. A man's face peered out.
'There's two of you ,' the man said. 'Who's your friend, Dodger?'
'A new boy.' said Dodger. 'Is Fagin upstairs?'
'Yes, he's sorting handkerchiefs. He wants to see you.'
The Dodger led Oliver up the stairs and into a room with walls and ceiling black with dirt and age. A large number of handkerchiefs were hanging up. In front of the fire was a table with bread, butter and a plate on it. Five or six boys were sitting around the table, drinking and smoking. An old man with dirty red hair and a ragged beard was cooking some sausages over the fire. The Dodger went up to him and whispered a few words in his ear. Then he turned round and grinned at Oliver.
'This is him, Fagin,' said the Dodger. 'My friend, Oliver Twist.'
The old man smiled and bowed. 'My dear Oliver,' he said. 'I am very pleased to make your acquaintance.'
Then he shook Oliver's hand and welcomed him. The other boys did the same, laughing and bowing and shaking Oliver's hand. They ate the sausages, then Fagin gave Oliver something hot

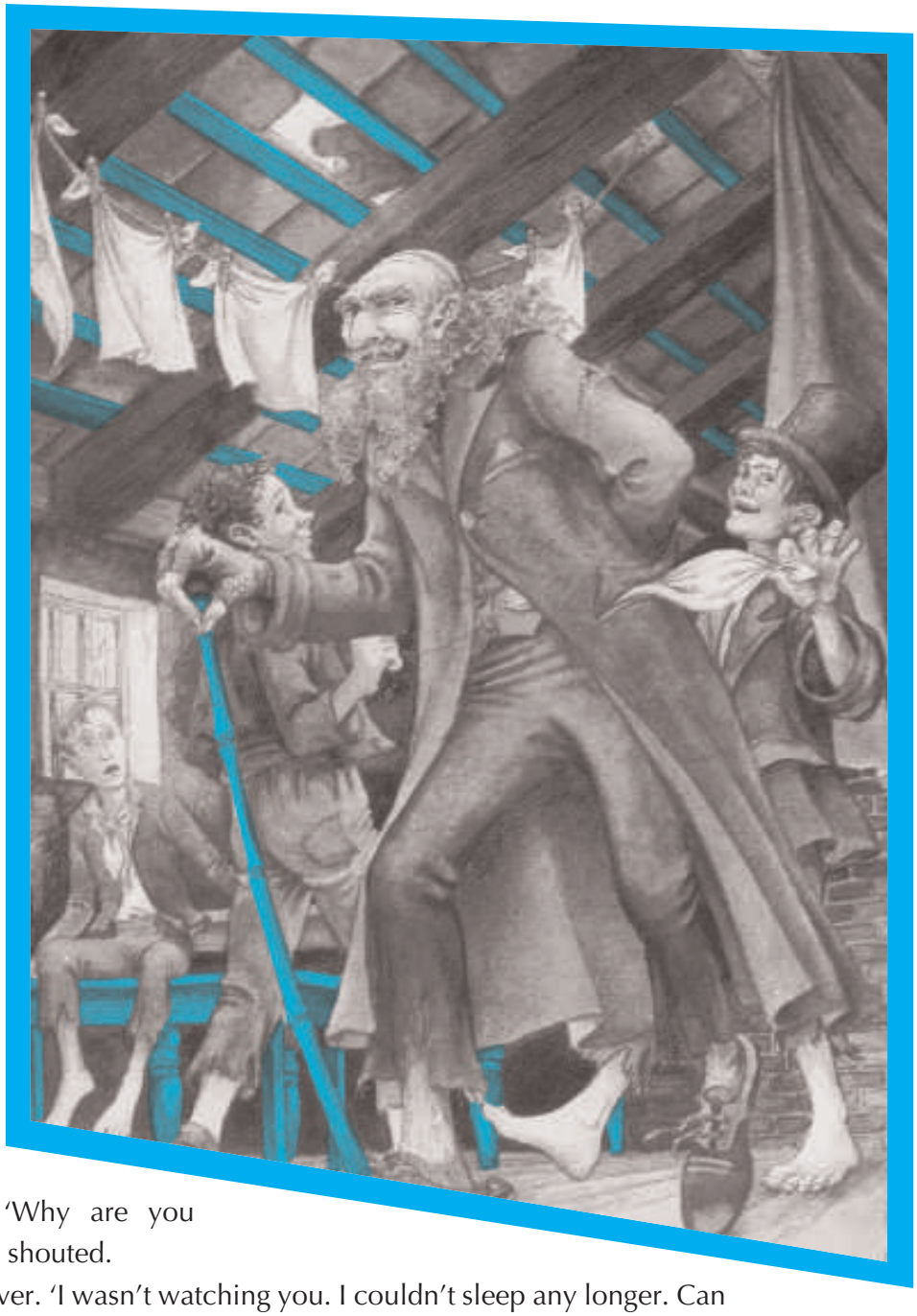
to drink.

'Drink this, Oliver', he said. 'It will make you sleep.'

Oliver drank.

Immediately, he felt sleepy. He lay down on some old sacks on the floor and fell asleep.

When Oliver awoke the next morning, Fagin was sitting at the table. There was no one else in the room. He took a gold watch from a small box. Next, he took rings and jewels from the box and put them on the table. He took these things in his hands and looked at them closely. At that moment Oliver moved slightly.



Fagin grabbed a knife from the table and jumped to his feet. 'Why are you watching me, boy?' he shouted.

'I'm sorry, sir,' said Oliver. 'I wasn't watching you. I couldn't sleep any longer. Can I get up now?'

Fagin's expression changed. 'Of course, my dear,' he said with a smile. He put the knife back on the table.

Oliver got up and washed. Then the Dodger and another boy called Charley came back.

'Have you been working hard this morning, my dears?' asked Fagin. 'What have you got, boys?'

The two boys pulled out four or five handkerchiefs. Fagin seemed pleased with them.

'Good boys', he said. 'Come, let's have breakfast.'

After breakfast, the boys and Fagin played a game.

Fagin walked up and down the room, with a wallet, a handkerchief and a watch placed in different pockets. He pretented to be an old man looking into a shop window. Then the boys crowded

round him and within a few seconds took the handkerchief, the wallet and the watch from his pocket.

'Come, my dear Oliver, join in the game,' said Fagin. When Oliver took a handkerchief from his pocket, as the Dodger had done, Fagin patted him on the head.

'You're a clever boy, Oliver,' he said. 'Here's a shilling for you. You're going to be a great man. You can work with Charley and Dodger soon.'

For many days Oliver played the game with the other boys.

Then one day Fagin said he was ready to work with Dodger and Charley. The three boys walked into a busy street and looked around.

'Look at that old gentleman,' said Dodger. 'He'll do.'

Before Oliver could say anything, Dodger had gone up to an old gentleman and taken a silk handkerchief from his pocket. Then he and Charley ran away.

Oliver didn't know what to do. Frightened, he started to run too. He heard a shout behind him: 'Stop thief!'

A crowd of people ran after Oliver and caught up with him. A big man knocked him down and an angry crowd stood over him.

'Is this the boy, sir?' asked the policeman.

'Yes,' said the old gentleman, 'I am afraid it is.'

'It wasn't me, sir,' said Oliver. 'It was two other boys.'

'Come,' said the policeman. 'Get up, you young devil.'

They took Oliver to the nearest police station. The old gentleman, whose name was Mr Brownlow, told the magistrate that he hadn't seen Oliver steal his handkerchief. He had only seen him running away. The magistrate was going to send Oliver to prison, when a man rushed into the police station.

'Stop!' he cried. 'Don't send the boy to prison! I saw it all. That boy is not the thief!'

The man told the magistrate that he had seen two other boys steal Mr Brownlow's handkerchief and run away. The magistate ordered that Oliver should be set free. When he heard this, Oliver fainted and fell to the floor.

'Poor boy, poor boy!' said Mr Brownlow, who was a very kind old gentleman. 'I must take him

home. Call a carriage immediately.'

When the carriage arrived, Mr Brownlow lifted Oliver into it. The carriage drove off to Mr Brownlow's house.

For some days Oliver had a fever. At last he opened his eyes and looked around him. A motherly old lady was looking down at him.

'Where am I?' asked Oliver.

'Hush, my dear,' said the old lady, whose name was Mrs Bedwin. 'You must rest and get better.'

Mrs Bedwin fed him with tea and soup and soon Oliver was able to sit up in bed. He looked at the paintings that hung on the walls of the bedroom. One painting was of a beautiful young woman with sad eyes.

'She is very beautiful,' said Oliver. 'Who is she?'

As soon as Mr Brownhow heard that Oliver was better, he came to see him. But when Mr Brownlow entered the bedroom, he pointed to the painting of the young woman.

'Look there,' he said. 'And now look here,' pointing to Oliver. Oliver's face and the face of the young woman looked the same – as if they were mother and son.

Some days later Mr Brownlow called Oliver into his study. With Mr Brownlow was an old friend, a red-faced, angry-looking man called Mr Grimwig. Mr Grimwig looked angry, but he was really very kind-hearted.

'You are looking well, Oliver,' said Mr Brownlow kindly.

'Oh yes, thank you, sir,' said Oliver. 'You have been very kind to me.'

'Now Mr Grimwig and I would like to hear your story, Oliver. Tell us about yourself.'

Oliver began to tell the story of his life. As he spoke Mr Grimwig looked angrier and angrier. He obviously did not believe Oliver's story.

Just then Mrs Bedwin entered with a parcel of new books for Mr Brownlow.

'But I must send some books back,' said Mr Brownlow.

'And I haven't paid the bookseller.'

'Let me take the books, sir,' said Oliver. 'I'll run all the way.'

'Good boy,' said Mr Brownlow. 'Take these books back. And here is a five-pound note for the new books. The bookseller will give you ten shillings change. Hurry now.'

When Oliver was gone, Mr Grimwig smiled.

'Do you really think he will come back?' he asked. 'He has valuable books and a five–pound note in his pocket.'

'Oliver is an honest boy. He will be back in twenty minutes,' said Mr Brownlow.

And the two gentlemen sat and waited for Oliver to come back.

When Fagin heard that the police had taken Oliver away, he was angry with Charley and Artful Dodger.

'Oliver will tell the police about us, you fools!' Fagin shouted. 'There will be trouble for all of us.'

The two boys argued and said it was not their fault.

'Hold your tongue, you old thief!' a deep voice called. It belonged to a strong-looking man with black hair and cruel face. He stood at the door of the room. At his feet was a little white dog that always followed him around.

'Ah, Bill, Bill Sikes,' said Fagin. 'Is it you, my dear?'

'What's going on?' Bill Sikes asked.

Fagin told Sikes what had happened. 'We must find the boy and bring him back,' he said. 'But how?'

'Someone must go to the police station and find out what happened to Oliver,' said Fagin. 'But who shall we send?'

At that moment two young women members of the gang came in. Their names were Bet and Nancy. Nancy was Bill Sikes's friend.

'Send Nancy to the police station,' said Sikes. 'She can find out what happened to the boy.'

'I won't go,' said Nancy.

'Yes, you will,' said Sikes, lifting his fist as if he meant to hit her.

Nancy tried to argue with Sikes but at last she agreed to go to the police station and find out what had happened to Oliver.

When Nancy got to the police station, she called Oliver's name.

'Oh, Oliver, my brother, where are you?'

One of the police officers took pity on her.

'The gentleman's got him,' he said. And he told Nancy how Mr Brownlow had taken the boy home with him.

Nancy went back to Fagin's house and told him what she had discovered. Fagin was very excited. 'We must find Oliver,' he cried. 'Search the streets for him!'

Meanwhile, Oliver was walking as fast as he could to the bookshop with Mr Brownlow's books and money in his pocket. As he turned into a side-street, a young woman screamed at him.

'There he is! Oliver, my brother, come home now.'

It was Nancy. Oliver protested that he wasn't her brother. But the people in the street didn't believe him.

Then Bill Sikes arrived with his dog.

'Whose books are these?' he asked in a rough voice. 'Have you been stealing them, you young rascal?' And he hit Oliver on the head. Oliver dropped the books and Nancy and Bill hurried him away.

When Oliver was dragged into Fagin's dirty shop, the boys laughed at his fine clothes.

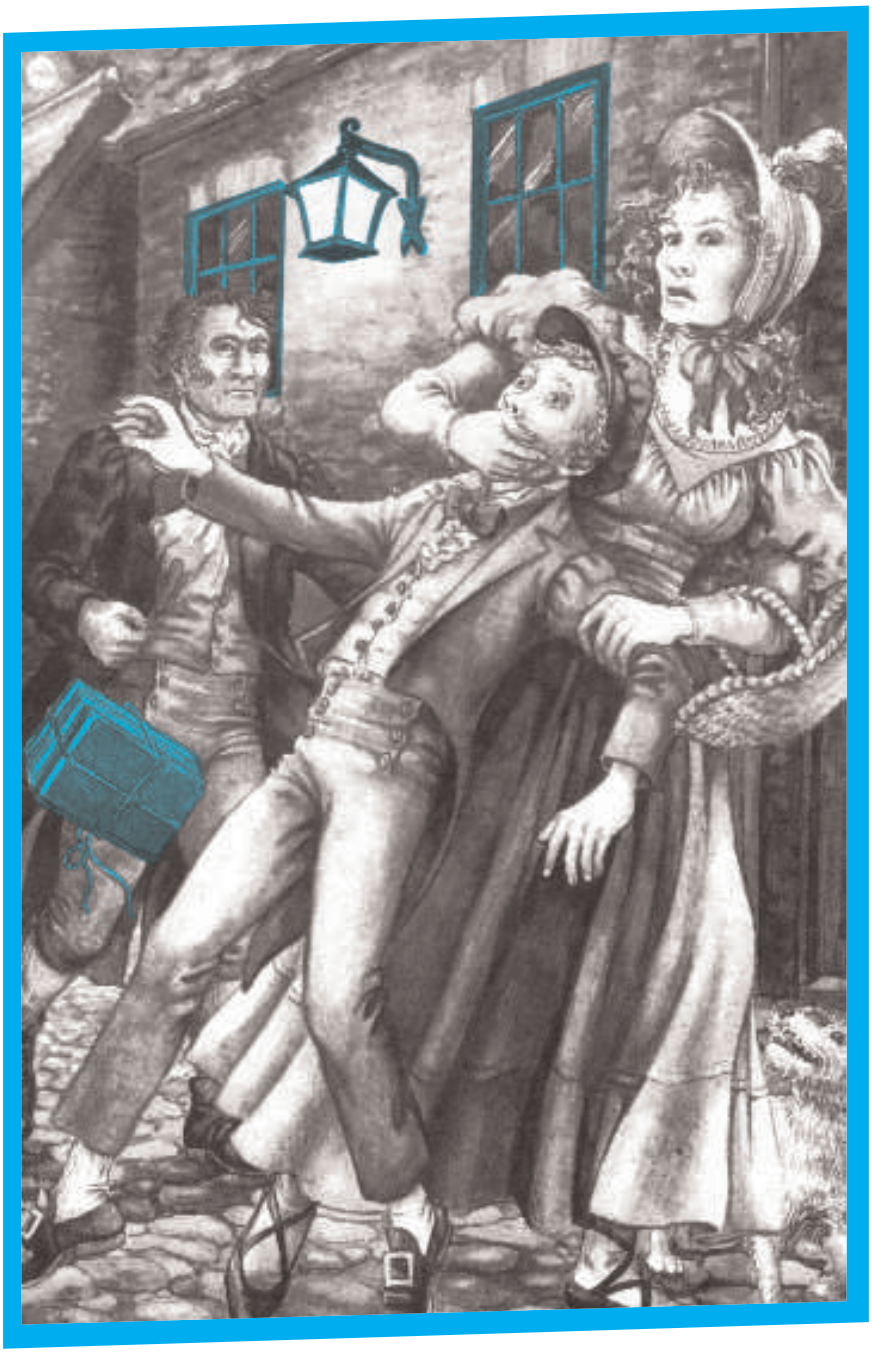
They searched his pockets and found the five pound note, which Sikes took. Fagin took the books.

'Oh, please, sir,' said Oliver. 'Keep me here if you like, but send back the books and the money. They belong to an old gentleman who has been very kind to me. He will think I have stolen them.'

But Fagin just laughed. 'You're right, Oliver my dear. He will think you have stolen them. So now you must do what we say or we'll hand you over to the police.'

When Oliver heard these words, he jumped to his feet and tried to escape. But Sikes knocked him down and the little dog seized his coat.

'So you wanted to escape, Oliver my dear?' said Fagin. And he picked up a stick and hit Oliver across the shoulders with it.



'And you wanted to call the police, did you?' said Fagin, and lifted the stick to hit the boy again. Suddenly Nancy rushed across the room and grabbed Fagin by the shoulders.

'That's enough,' she cried angrily. 'You've got the boy and his money. You've made him a thief like me. What more do you want?'

And Nancy rushed at Fagin as if she wanted to scratch his eyes out. Sikes seized her wrists to stop her and the poor girl fell to the floor and fainted.

For some days after this, Oliver was locked in a room in Fagin's house. He saw no one and grew thinner and paler than ever.

Fagin and Sikes and a robber called Toby Crackit were planning a robbery of a large house in the country. The house belonged to a rich man and was full of silver and gold. They had offered to pay the house servants money to let them in, but they had refused.

'How can we get into the house?' asked Fagin.

'We need a boy to get in the upstairs window,' said Sikes.

'Take Oliver,' said Nancy. 'He's small enough.'

'But is he safe?' asked Sikes.

Fagin smiled. 'He's safe now that he has felt the weight of my stick. Take him, Bill', he said.

Sikes laughed. 'If he tries to run away, I'll kill him,' he said.

Nancy agreed to bring Oliver to Sikes's place.

On the day of the robbery, Nancy came to Fagin's shop. She looked pale and tired. She threw herself into a chair.

'Are you all right, Nancy?' asked Oliver.

'Yes,' the girl replied. 'Are you ready to come to Bill's?'

'What for?'

'For no harm.'

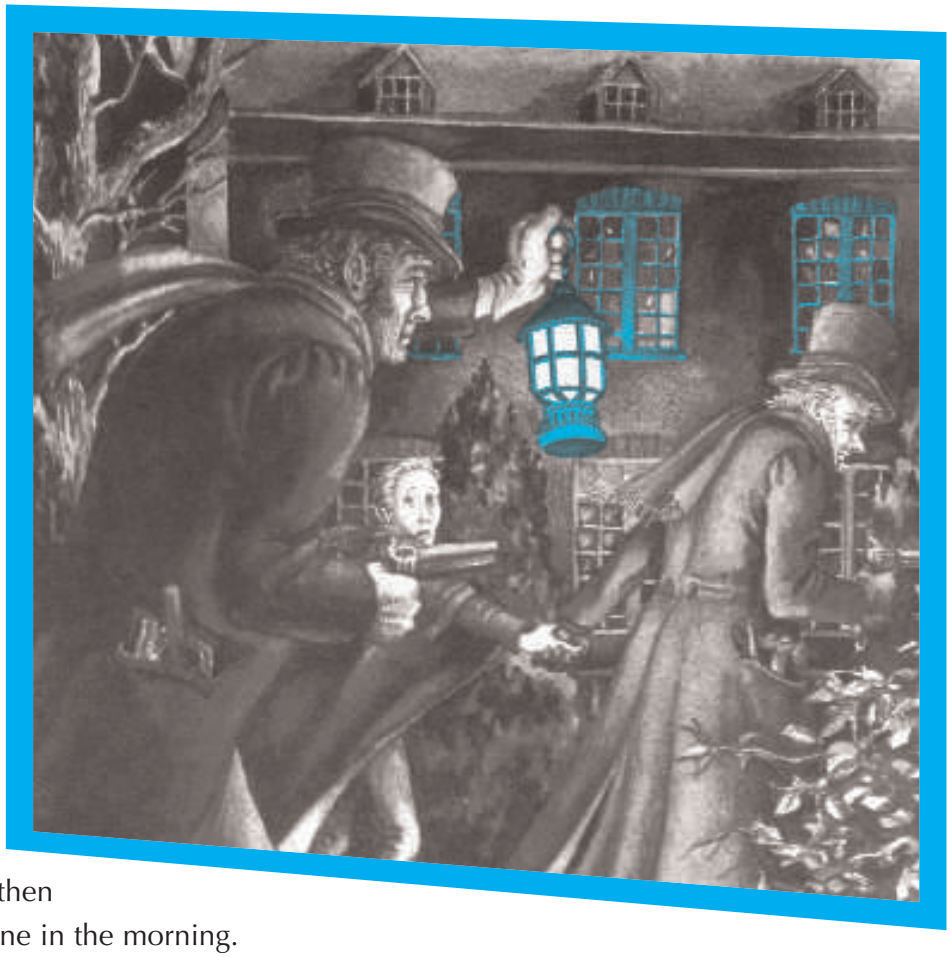
Oliver looked at her pale, worried face. 'I don't believe you,' he said.

But Nancy shook her head. 'You must do what Bill says. And don't say anything. If you run away, I shall pay for it.' She laughed bitterly. 'Bill is a dangerous man. I have tried to help you already and paid for it. Look.'

And she turned her neck and showed Oliver the cuts and bruises Bill Sikes had put there.

Nancy took Oliver down to the street where a carriage was waiting. Soon they were at Bill Sikes' place.

'So you've got the boy,' said Sikes when Nancy brought Oliver in. 'Did he come quietly?'



'Like a lamb, Bill,' said Nancy.
Sikes pulled off Oliver's cap and threw it in the corner.
Then he pushed the boy roughly down into a chair and picked up a pistol.
'Now do you know what this is?' he asked.
'Yes, sir,' Oliver replied.
Sikes put a bullet in the pistol.
'Now it's loaded,' he said.
Then he grabbed Oliver's wrist and put the pistol to the boy's head. 'Now if you don't do exactly as I say, I'll put this bullet into your head. I'll kill you. Understand?'
Oliver was very frightened. He couldn't speak but he nodded his head.
'Now let's have some supper and then some sleep. There's work to be done in the morning. We start at five o'clock, before it is light.'
Next morning Sikes took Oliver through the streets of London. All day they walked through the dark streets of the great city until they came to the village of Sunbury. There, they waited at an inn until Toby Crackit arrived.
'Hello, Bill', he said. 'Who's this with you?'
'One of Fagin's boys,' replied Sikes. 'Come, let's eat before we start.'
They ate and drank then lay down on the floor to sleep. At half past one in the morning they woke and got ready to go out. Sikes and Crackit took pistols with them. Sikes held a lantern, as the night was dark. It was cold and the mist rose from the river.
The two thieves walked with Oliver between them. They walked through the dark and silent streets. Soon they reached a large house with a high wall in front of it. Sikes and Crackit climbed the wall and pulled Oliver up after them. They walked quietly towards the house.
And now at last Oliver understood for the first time that he was going to take part in a robbery. He fell to his knees and clasped his hands together.
'Oh, please, sir, let me go!' he cried. 'Don't make me steal. I don't want to be a thief. I won't tell anyone about the robbery. I won't say anything. I promise.'
Sikes was furious. He took the pistol from his pocket and placed it at Oliver's head. 'Get up or I'll blow your brains out!'
'Hush, Bill', said Crackit. 'Come, break open this window and push the boy through it.'
The window was just above Oliver's head. Sikes broke it open. He put a lantern into Oliver's hand.

‘Now listen,’ he said. ‘Take this lantern. Go along the corridor and up the stairs to the street door. Open the door and let us in.’

Crackit knelt down on the ground. Sikes stepped on Crackit’s back, pulled Oliver up by his collar, and pushed him through the little window.

‘Now do your work,’ said Sikes. He pointed his pistol at Oliver. ‘Don’t forget this.’

Oliver walked slowly forward to the stairs. He had already decided what he was going to do. He was going to warn the family in the house, even if Bill Sikes shot him in the back.

When Oliver was halfway along the corridor, he heard a noise. Sikes heard it too.

‘Come back,’ he cried. ‘Back, back!’

Frightened by Sikes’s voice, Oliver dropped the lantern. Oliver walked forward carefully. Sikes called out again. In the dark, Oliver could just see two men coming down the stairs. There was a shout and then a flash. There was a bang, a crash, smoke. Oliver felt a pain in his arm. He had been hit! Oliver staggered back towards the window, holding his arm. He felt Sikes’s hand on his collar. Sikes leaned through the little window and fired his pistol after the men. There was another bang. Then Sikes pulled Oliver back through the window.

Oliver heard Sikes’s voice voice call out. ‘They’ve hit the boy. Quick, help me. Damn, how the boy bleeds.’ Sikes picked Oliver up and carried him away. Then Oliver’s eyes closed and he saw and heard no more.

Sikes carried him away. Then Oliver’s eyes closed and he saw and heard no more.

Sikes carried Oliver in his arms as he and Toby Crackit ran across the fields. Three men from the house ran after them, shouting and firing pistols. A bell rang. Dogs barked and ran after the robbers.

Sikes stopped and rested Oliver’s body on his knee. The shouts of the men and the barking of the dogs were getting closer.

‘Stop, you coward!’ he shouted after Toby Crackit, who was well ahead of him. ‘Come back and help me with the boy!’

‘It’s no good, Bill,’ Crackit called back. ‘They’re going to catch us. Leave the boy here and run for it.’

Sikes took one look behind him. The men from the house were even nearer. He threw a cloak over Oliver, who was still unconscious, and pushed him into a ditch.

Then Sikes jumped over a high hedge and ran away as fast as he could across the fields, away from the house, leaving Oliver in the ditch. There were three men from the house, but they did not follow Sikes or Crackit. They called off the dogs and discussed whether they should go back to the house.

‘I think we should go back to the house,’ the fattest of the three men said.

‘I agree with you, Mr Giles,’ said a smaller man. His teeth chattered as he spoke.

‘Are you frightened, Mr Brittles?’ the first man asked.

‘I am not, Mr Giles,’ said the second man.

‘You are, Brittles,’ said Giles.

‘I think we’re all afraid,’ said the third man.

They argued a little longer then they all returned to the house.

It was many hours before Oliver awoke, groaning with pain. When he tried to stand up, he fell

back into the ditch. At last, he forced himself to stand. He felt sick. He tried to remember what had happened after the robbery, but he couldn't. He looked around him. There was a house not very far away. He walked slowly towards it. His arm was very painful. But at last he reached the house and knocked on the front door.

At that moment, the three men who had chased the robbers were enjoying a cup of tea in the kitchen. Mr Giles was telling the other servants about their adventures when they heard the knock at the front door.

Nervously, Mr Giles went to the door and opened it.

'A boy!' he cried and dragged poor Oliver into the house. 'Here he is, Miss!' he called up the stairs. 'Here's one of the robbers!'

A pretty young lady of seventeen or so appeared at the top of the stairs. 'Hush, please, Giles,' she said. 'You will frighten my aunt. Is he much hurt?'

'Yes, Miss Rose. I shot him,' said Giles.

'Then take him up to your room and send for a doctor. Treat him kindly, poor thing.'

Back in Fagin's shop, the old man waited for the return of the robbers. When only Toby Crackit appeared, Fagin was worried. But at first Crackit refused to say anything. When he had finished eating, he spoke.

'Now, Fagin,' he said. 'How's Bill?'

'What?' shouted Fagin. 'Where are they – Sikes and the boy? What happened?'

'They fired and hit the boy. Bill and I parted company and I haven't seen him since. Bill left the boy in a ditch, alive or dead, I don't know.'

Fagin did not wait to hear any more, but with a loud cry rushed out of the house.

He ran through the dirty streets until he came to an inn called The Three Cripples. There, Fagin looked for the owner of the inn.

'Is he here?' he whispered.

'Do you mean Monks?'the owner asked.

'Hush!' whispered Fagin. Tell him I came to see him. He must call on me tonight.'

Fagin rushed back home. When he turned the corner into his own street again, a man appeared from the shadows and laid a hand on his arm.

'Fagin,' he whispered.

'Ah, Monks,' said the old man. 'Is that you?'

They went inside and sat facing each other in the dark room. They talked together

in whispers for a long time.

'It was badly planned,' said Monks. 'Why didn't you keep the boy with you here and make him a thief like the rest of them? Then he would have been caught and convicted and sent out of the country for ever. Don't forget I'm paying you a lot of money to do this for me.'

'But it's not so easy,' replied Fagin. 'He is not like the other boys, you know. When I sent him out with Charley and the Dodger, it was almost the end for all of us.

The police took him. But then Nancy got him back for us.' The old man shrugged his shoulders. 'And now she's gone soft on him and takes pity on the boy.'

'Kill her then,' snarled Monks.

'No, no, we can't do that,' replied Fagin. 'Not yet. In any case, the boy may be dead already.'

'I don't want the boy dead,' said Monks. 'I only want people to think he is a thief. If they've killed the boy, it's not my fault. I don't want blood on my hands.'

So the two men argued about Oliver. They spoke cruelly, but there was fear in their eyes too.

Meanwhile, the doctor had arrived at the house where Oliver was staying. Dr Losberne went to Giles's bedroom to examine the injured robber. When he had examined Oliver, he closed the door of the room, then stood, shaking his head. He went to speak to Mrs Maylie, the owner of the house, and Rose, her niece.

'Have you seen him?' he asked.

'No,' said Mrs Maylie. 'Rose wanted to see him but I didn't think it was wise.'

'Well, he isn't dangerous,' said Dr Losberne. 'I think you should see him now. Come with me, Mrs Maylie, and you too, Miss Rose.'

Mrs Maylie and Rose had expected to see a rough, evil-looking criminal. Instead, they saw a beautiful child with a pale face and blond hair. He was asleep, his injured arm tied up in a sling. As Rose looked at him, her heart filled with pity and a tear fell from her eyes onto the boy's forehead. Oliver smiled in his sleep.

'Can this child really be a robber?' asked Rose. 'Surely not. He has probably never had a mother's love, and he is so young! Have pity on him, aunt!'

'My dear,' said Mrs Maylie. 'I would not harm him for anything in the world. But what can we do?'

'Let me speak to Giles and Brittles,' Dr Losberne said. 'I have an idea that we may be able to help the boy.'

Oliver slept for a long time, because he was tired and ill, but at last he awoke. He answered Dr Losberne's questions and told the two ladies about his past life. He spoke slowly and with difficulty, for he was tired and ill. But it was clear that he spoke the truth and Mrs Maylie, Rose

and Dr Losberne all believed his story.

When Dr Losberne entered the kitchen, Giles asked how his patient was.

'He is well enough,' replied the doctor, 'but I am afraid that you are in trouble.'

'Is the boy going to die, sir?' asked Giles.

'No, Giles, but are you sure he is the boy who was in the house last night? Can you swear that he was one of the robbers? It is a terrible thing to swear to a lie, you know.'

Giles and Brittles stared at each other, their eyes wide with fear. They said they could not be sure and told the police the same when they arrived. So Oliver was allowed to stay. Rose and her aunt looked after him. Slowly, Oliver began to get better. The wound in his arm healed. Soon he was able to thank Rose and her aunt for their kindness. Rose smiled.

We are going to take you to the country for a holiday,' said Rose. 'The fresh air will make you well again.'

Oliver loved the peace and quiet of the countryside. He had lessons from an old gentleman who lived in the village and began to learn about the world from him.

Now we return to the town where Oliver was born and meet our old friend Mr Bumble. One night he was sitting in an inn when a stranger sat down beside him.

'You are Mr Bumble, the master of the workhouse, are you not?' the stranger asked.

'I am, sir,' Mr Bumble replied.

'I want some information and I am willing to pay for it.'

And the stranger put two gold coins on the table.

'Think back twelve years,' the stranger continued, 'when a thin, pale-faced boy was born, a boy who later became apprentice to an undertaker.'

'You mean Oliver Twist,' said Mr Bumble. 'A difficult boy, always in trouble.'

'I'm not interested in the boy. I want to meet the woman who nursed the boy's mother.'

'She died last winter. But you can speak to my wife who nursed her before she died.'

'Can you bring her to this address in London at nine o'clock tomorrow night?' the stranger asked.

And he wrote an address on a piece of paper and pushed it across the table to Mr Bumble.

'I can,' said Mr Bumble. 'What name shall I ask for?'

'Monks,' said the stranger.

Next evening, Mr and Mrs Bumble met Monks at an old wooden building on the river. In the past

it had been a factory but it was not used now. Monks led Mr and Mrs Bumble up the broken stairs to a dark room that looked over the river.
The three of them sat down around an old, broken table.
'Now to business,' said Monks. 'The old nurse told you something on her deathbed.'
'Yes,' said Mrs Bumble. 'It was about the boy's mother. What's the information worth to you?'
'I'll pay twenty-five pounds.' And Monks laid down twenty-five gold coins and pushed them across the table to Mrs Bumble. 'Now pick up the money and tell me what she said.'
'She told me she had stolen something from the boy's mother. She took it
from her after she had given birth.'
'What was it? What happened to it?' cried Monks.
'Here it is,' said Mrs Bumble and she threw a small leather bag on the table. Monks tore the bag open.
He took out a gold locket with two locks of hair inside and a gold ring with the name AGNES on it.
'Is this all?' asked Monks in a low voice.
'Yes, that is all.'
Suddenly Monks stood up and pushed the table aside. He pulled up a trapdoor in the floor and told Mr and Mrs Bumble to look down. Below their feet, the dark river rushed and roared. The Bumbles stepped back, terrified.
'If you threw a man's body down there, where would it be tomorrow morning?' Monks asked.
'Twelve miles down the river, all cut to pieces,' Mr Bumble replied, his face white with fear.
Monks took the bag and threw it into the water.
'There!' cried Monks. 'If you ever breathe a word of what has been said or done in this room, you will follow that into the river. Now take your money and leave me.'
And Mr and Mrs Bumble hurried away from that terrible place as fast as their legs could carry them.
For some weeks after the robbery, Bill Sikes had been ill. Nancy had nursed him and now he was feeling better. He needed money and he sent Nancy to Fagin's to get it.
'Of course, my dear,' said the old man. 'I'll help my old friend Bill.'
But as he went to fetch the money, there was a knock at the door. It was Monks. When he saw Nancy, he stepped back as if he was afraid.
'Don't worry,' said Fagin. 'Nancy is one of my people. Stay there, Nancy.'
Fagin took his visitor upstairs. But when they had gone, Nancy took off her shoes and softly followed them upstairs. She stood at the door of the room and listened to their conversation.
After a while, Nancy came back downstairs again and sat at the table as before. But now, her face was pale and there were tears in her eyes.
Fagin and Monks came back downstairs and Monks left. Fagin gave Nancy the money for Sikes. As he did so, he looked at her sharply.
'Why Nancy, how pale you are! What's wrong with you?'
Nancy laughed nervously. 'Nothing, Fagin. I'm just tired of waiting in this place. Give me Bill's money, or else he'll be angry with me.' And she took the money from him and left the house.

Next day, Sikes spent all the money from Fagin on himself and by the evening, he fell into a deep sleep. Nancy quickly dressed and slipped out of the house. She walked as fast as she could through the dark and dirty streets until she came to the West end of the city. At last, she came to a quiet street near Hyde Park and stood in front of a small hotel. She told one of the hotel servants that she wanted to speak to Miss Maylie alone. After much argument, the servant gave Rose the message and Nancy went up to her room.

'Thank you for seeing me, Miss,' said Nancy. 'I am going to put my life in your hands. I am the girl who dragged little Oliver back to Fagin's after his escape.'

'You!' And Rose stepped back in fear.

'Yes, miss. I have lived among thieves all my life. Thank God that you have had friends and family to love you and care for you.'

'I pity you,' said Rose quietly.

'Do you know a man called Monks?'

'No.'

'He knows you and knows you are here. I overhead him talking about you at Fagin's.'

'What does he want?' asked Rose.

'He wants to hurt Oliver,' replied Nancy. 'He told Fagin that the only proof of who Oliver's mother was lies at the bottom of the river. And then he said, "I'd kill that young brother of mine if I could".'

'His brother!'

'These were his words. It is growing late, miss. I must get back before they miss me.'

'Back?' asked Rose. 'Surely you do not wish to return to that gang of thieves? Stay here with me and you will be safe.'

'I cannot stay. I must go back because – because there is one man who is cruel and hard to me. He is a thief and a murderer, yet I cannot leave him. It would be the death of him.'

'Is it possible that you would give up your own chance of happiness for the sake of such a man?'

Nancy shook her head. 'You do not understand,' she said. 'Why should you understand? You and I are very different. Now I must go back, miss.'

'But where can I find you again, if I need to?'

'Every Sunday night from eleven until twelve, I will walk on London Bridge,' said Nancy. 'If I am alive. Bring a friend with you, but come. Oliver's life depends on it – and my life too.'

'I will meet you there on Sunday. Please take some money from me until then.'
'Not a penny, miss,' said Nancy. 'God bless you.' And with a sob, the poor girl left the room and walked back through the streets of London.
Rose was too upset to sleep that night. What should she do? Should she tell Dr Losberne? Should she tell the family lawyer?
Next morning something surprising happened. Oliver rushed into the hotel looking very excited.
'I've seen him!' he cried. 'I've seen Mr Brownlow! And Giles has got his address.' We must call on him at once and tell him I didn't steal his books or take his money!'

Rose called a carriage immediately and they set off to call on Mr Brownlow.
He and his friend Mr Grimwig were delighted to see Oliver again and to find that he was not a thief, as they had feared. Then they sent for Mrs Bedwin, who had nursed Oliver through his illness.
When Oliver saw Mrs Bedwin, he ran to her and threw his arms around her.
'God bless me,' she cried. 'It is my innocent boy!'
Rose then asked to speak to Mr Brownlow alone, because she did not want Oliver to hear what Nancy had told her. Rose told Mr Brownlow all that had happened to Oliver since his disappearance. She told him how Nancy had overheard Fagin and the mysterious Monks planning to harm Oliver. She told him of her promise to meet Nancy on London Bridge on Sunday.
'Come with me, Mr Brownlow,' said Rose. 'We must somehow get hold of this terrible man Monks. Why does he want to harm Oliver, his own brother?'
'I do not know,' said Mr Brownlow. 'But I will come with you on Sunday. Now let us go and see Oliver again. Come, my dear.'
Next Sunday, Bill Sikes and Fagin were eating together when Nancy said she was going out.
'Where are you going?' asked Sikes.
'Not far', said Nancy.
'Not far is right. You're staying here,' said Sikes and he got up and locked the door. Nancy protested but Sikes kept the door locked and would not let her out.

So Nancy did not meet Rose and Mr Brownlow that Sunday. But the next Sunday, Nancy gave Sikes a strong drink and when he was asleep, she went out of the house and made her way to London Bridge. She saw Rose and Mr Brownlow on the bridge, but she did not see a man standing in the shadows – a spy of Fagin's. Nancy, Rose and Mr Brownlow talked together in whispers, but Fagin's spy could hear them.

'We must find Monks,' said Mr Brownlow. 'We must discover his secret. If not, you must give us Fagin.'

'I will not do it!' cried Nancy. 'Fagin is evil, but no more evil than I am myself. I will not give him to you.'

'Then put Monks into my hands,' said Mr Brownlow. 'No one will ever know that you helped us to find him. I promise you.'

Then Nancy told them that they could find Monks at The Three Cripples inn. 'He's a tall, strong-looking man, with dark hair and deep-set eyes.'

'Has he got a large red mark like a burn on his throat?' asked Mr Brownlow.

'Do you know him?' Nancy asked in surprise.

'I think I do', said Mr Brownlow.

'You have helped us, Nancy,' said Rose. 'How can we help you?'

'You can't help me. It's too late for me'.

'Nonsense,' cried Mr Brownlow. 'We can find you a safe place, either in England or in another country. You can live there safely, free from Fagin and his friends.'

'I cannot, sir. I am chained to my old life and I cannot leave it. I am frightened, but I must go home.'

'Home?' asked Rose.

‘Yes, miss, home. The home I have made for myself. Now good night and God bless you both.’
And Nancy hurried away in the darkness. Behind her, the spy who had watched and listened followed her close behind. Then he rushed off to tell Fagin.
When Fagin heard what Nancy had done, he was frightened. He realised that he and all his gang of thieves were in great danger. As soon as he could, he found Bill Sikes. At first, Sikes did not believe him, but when he did, he rushed to the door in a terrible rage.
‘Hear me speak a word, Bill,’ cried Fagin.
‘Well?’ growled Sikes.
‘You won’t be too violent, will you? Be careful, Bill.’
Sikes said nothing but pulled open the door and rushed out into the street.
Sikes entered his house and walked over to the bed where Nancy lay.
‘Get up.’ He said.
‘It is you, Bill,’ said the girl with a smile.
A candle was burning, but Sikes threw it on the floor. ‘There’s light enough for what I’ve got to do,’ he said, staring at the girl.
‘Bill, why are you looking at me like that?’
Sikes grabbed her by the hair and dragged her into the middle of the room.
‘You know, you she-devil,’ he cried. ‘You were watched last night on London Bridge.’
‘Don’t kill me Bill,’ the girl cried. ‘I have not betrayed you. Come away with me and let’s go to a safe place, and leave this life behind.’
Sikes grabbed his pistol to shoot her, but thought better of it. Instead, he smashed the pistol into Nancy’s face and knocked her to the floor. There was blood everywhere. When Nancy tried to get up, Sikes hit her with a heavy stick and knocked her down. This time she did not get up.

For a long time, Sikes did not move. Then he cleaned the blood from his clothes and left the house.
He walked out of London towards the north, his little dog following close behind him. For many days Sikes walked. Always he saw before him Nancy’s face. Then he had an idea. He would go back to London and get money from Fagin to leave England and escape to France.
He could not take the dog with him. So he decided to kill him. He took the dog to a quiet pond, picked up a heavy stone, and wrapped his handkerchief around it. But when Sikes tried to tie

the stone around the little dog's neck, he growled and stepped back.
'Come here, you devil,' said Sikes.
But the dog turned from his master and ran away. Sikes whistled after him, but the dog did not return.
While Sikes was trying to escape, Mr Brownlow had found Monks. Now, two men had brought him to Mr Brownlow's house.
You must tell me everything,' said Mr Brownlow, when they were alone. 'If you refuse, I will hand you over to the police. These are your choices.'
'This is a nice way to treat the son of your oldest friend,' said Monks with a sneer.
'It is because I was your father's oldest friend that I am being merciful to you, young man.'
'Well, what do you want of me?' asked Monks.
'You have a brother,' said Mr Brownlow, 'and I wish to speak about him. Would you like to hear his story? I think you will find it interesting.'
'If you wish,' said Monks, with a sneer.
'Very well then. Your mother and father had an unhappy marriage and they separated. When you were eleven years old and your father was thirty-one, he met a beautiful girl. Her name was Agnes. She was nineteen years old and the daughter of a friend of his, Captain Fleming, an officer in the navy. Your father fell in love with her and your brother – whom you now know as Oliver Twist – was born as the result of their love.'

'Your story is a long one,' said Monks. 'But you have no proof of what you say.'
'Your father had to go to Italy on business.' Mr Brownlow continued quietly, as if Monks had not spoken. 'There he fell ill and died. But before he left England, he told me the whole story of his love for Agnes. He left me a painting of her, which hangs in his house. He made a new will, by which he left most of his property to Agnes and her son. But the new will was never found.'
'I believe that your mother destroyed your father's will,' said Mr Brownlow. He looked hard at Monks, but there was no response from the young man.
'The result was that Agnes was left without money,' Mr Brownlow continued. 'She was too

ashamed to ask for help from her family. And so she gave birth to her son – your half-brother Oliver – in a workhouse.'

Again Mr Brownlow looked hard at Monks but again there was no response.

'By chance – or perhaps it was fate – I came across your brother years later and tried to save him from a life of crime. When he was recovering in my house, I noticed how much he looked like the painting of Agnes that hangs on my wall. Like mother and son.'

'You have no proof of this,' cried Monks. 'You do not even know that a child was born to my father and this woman.'

'I did not know this, but now I have discovered everything. I know how you planned with Fagin to make the boy a thief. I also know how you destroyed the proof of his birth, how you found a gold locket and a ring and threw them into the river…'

Monks jumped up from his chair, his face was white with fear.

'And I know that a young woman has been murdered, because of your evil activities.'

'No, no,' cried Monks. 'I know nothing of that. You cannot accuse me of murder!'

'The police will catch the real murderer tonight,' said Mr Brownlow thoughtfully. 'His dog has been found and he cannot be far away. They will surely take Fagin too.'

'I am not part of Fagin's gang. I had nothing to do with Nancy's death!' cried Monks.

'Will you now make a full statement of the facts and sign it in front of witnesses?' asked Mr Brownlow.

'Yes, I will.'

'And give Oliver what is due to him from his father's will?'

'I promise,' said Monks. 'And there is more to tell.'

'More? You must now tell the truth about everything,' said Mr Brownlow.

'Rose Maylie is the sister of Agnes. When Agnes's father, Captain Fleming, died, Rose lived with a family in Wales. Years later she was adopted by Mrs Maylie. There are some papers which tell all this. Fagin has them.'

Mr Brownlow was astonished. 'So Rose is Oliver's aunt,' he whispered. At first he did not know what to say. Then he soon recovered and took Monks to a lawyer's office to sign a full statements of the facts.

The police had captured Fagin. Now three members of his gang were hiding in a dirty wooden room in a dirty house with broken windows on an island in the river called Jacob's Island.

One of the three men, Toby Crackit, had seen Fagin's capture and was telling the others about it.

'They dragged him through the streets, all muddy and dirty. And all the people were pointing at him,

shouting, spitting at him and cursing him! They were laughing at him and calling him names!'
Just then they heard a noise on the stairs. Crackit opened the door of the room and in ran Sikes's dog. He was covered in mud and he had a cut on his leg. One of the men gave him some water to drink.
'You know what this means, don't you?' asked Crackit. 'If Sikes's dog is here, Sikes will soon be here too.'
They sat and waited. It grew dark. There was a knock at the door. The men in the room knew who it was.
'We must let him in,' said Crackit.
'Must we?' asked one of the others.
There was another knock, louder this time. Crackit took the candle to the door and opened it. Bill Sikes stood there, his eyes sunk deep in his white face. He had a thick black beard.
He said nothing but came in and sat down. Then he looked up at the others.
'They say that Fagin's been taken. Is it true?'
Crackit nodded. 'True,' he said.
'Well,' asked Sikes, raising his head, 'can I stay here or are you going to sell me to the police?'
Before anyone could answer Sikes, there was another knock at the door and Charley Bates ran in.
'Quick, Bill!' he cried. 'They're after us!'
Sikes and the others ran to the window and looked down.
They saw lights in the streets below and heard the noise of footsteps and the roar of an angry crowd. The noise got louder and louder as the crowd drew nearer. When the crowd saw Sikes's face at the window, they pointed up at him and shouted angrily.
'There he is, the murderer! ... Get a ladder! ... Break down the door! … Get him!'
Sikes shook his fist and shouted back down at the crowd.
'Damn you!' he cried. 'Do your worst! I'll cheat you yet!'
He turned to the others. 'Quick,' he said. 'Get me a rope. I'll lower myself down from the roof.'
Sikes pushed himself through the window and walked out onto the roof of the old building high above the crowd below.
The little dog followed him.
Sikes tied one end of the rope around a chimney and made a loop in the other end. He threw this

over his shoulders. Just then the crowd saw him on the roof and let out a furious howl of rage. He threw up his arms in surprise and lost his footing on the roof. He slipped and fell backward. As he fell, the loop he had made slipped and caught around his neck. The rope ran out until one end of it caught on the chimney of the house. The loop Sikes had made tightened around his throat. There was a sudden jerk, as Sikes's neck broke, then the murderer's dead body swung from side to side high above the crowd.

When he saw his master hanging there, the little dog tried to jump onto his shoulders. He leapt, but missed, and fell to his death on the street below.

The courtroom was full. The judge was speaking to the jury. But everyone was watching Fagin, the prisoner in the dock.

Fagin leant forward. He put his hand over his ear to hear better. But it was difficult to understand what the judge was saying. Fagin looked at the judge's wig and gown and wondered how much they cost. Then there was a noise and people stood up. The jury was leaving the courtroom to consider its verdict.

Soon the jury returned with its verdict: guilty. There was a great shout of joy from the people in the court as they repeated the word: 'Guilty!'

The judge asked Fagin if he had anything to say. Fagin did not seem to understand. The judge asked him again.

'I am an old man,' Fagin whispered, 'an old man.'

The judge gave the sentence: death. And Fagin was taken back to the prison to wait in the condemned cell. He sat on the cold bench and tried to remember what the judge had said.

'To be hanged,' he whispered. 'To be hanged by the neck. To be hanged by the neck until I am dead.'

Suddenly he stood up and beat the heavy wooden door of the cell with his hands. But there was no reply.

On the night before he was due to be hanged, Fagin had a visitor, Mr Brownlow. The jailer showed him into Fagin's cell. He was talking to himself.

'Good boy, Charley,' he said. 'Well done, Dodger! Ah, and Oliver too? You're quite the little gentleman now.'

Mr Brownlow stood in front of the condemned man. 'You have some papers which Monks gave you.'

'It's a lie!' cried Fagin. 'I haven't got any papers.'

'Fagin', said Mr Brownlow. 'You know that Sikes is dead and that Monks has confessed. Don't lie now.'

'Is Oliver here?' asked Fagin.

'I could not bring him here,' answered Mr Brownlow.

But Fagin seemed not to hear him.

'Come here, Oliver my dear,' he said, 'and I will tell you. The papers,' he whispered, 'are in

a bag in a hole a little way up the chimney in my front room.'

Mr Brownlow left the prison and went quickly to his house where he found the letter from Oliver's father exactly where Fagin had said it was.

Next day, he was able to tell Oliver, Rose and Mrs Maylie the whole story. Oliver and Rose cried tears of joy when they learnt that they were related to each other. How happy they were!

The good Mr Brownlow adopted Oliver as his son and heir. He moved house, with Oliver and the faithful Mrs Bedwin, to within a mile of the Maylies' house. Mr Brownlow took on Oliver's education himself and taught him everything he knew. They were soon joined by Dr Losberne and the friends visited each other every day. And so Oliver Twist grew to be a man, surrounded by friends and companions who loved him as much he loved them.

Glossary

apprentice	young person who is learning a trade
beadle	parish official
carriage	horse-drawn vehicle
coffin	wooden box used for burying dead bodies
confess	admit to doing something
convicted	found guilty
cursing	shouting insults
ditch	deep channel at the side of a road or field used to take away water
foster mother	woman who looks after children who have no mother
furious	very angry
handkerchief	cloth kept in the pocket and used for blowing the nose
heal	get better
lantern	light covered in glass case
lock (of hair)	small piece
locket	gold or silver ornament worn around the neck containing a picture or a lock of hair
magistrate	judge
merciful	willing to forgive
niece	daughter of a brother or sister
part company	leave each other
pistol	handgun
seize	grab hold on
shutter	wooden cover for a window
sling	cloth which supports a broken arm or hand
sneer	contemptuous smile
spy	someone who tries to find out secret information
take pity on	be sorry for
unconscious	not awake
undertaker	man who arranges funerals
upset	very worried
violent	very fierce
will	document which sets out how someone wishes their money and property to be distributed after their death
workhouse	home for poor people, often run by the parish

Comprehension Questions

1 Match the names with the descriptions.

1) Oliver Twist	a) foster mother
2) Mrs Mann	b) apprentice
3) Mr Bumble	c) orphan
4) Mr Sowerberry	d) beadle
5) Noah Claypole	e) undertaker

2 Why did Oliver fight Noah?

3 Complete the sentences with the words in the box:

stealing looked watching house sorry think frightened

a) The Artful Dodger takes Oliver to Fagin's ..... .
b) Fagin was angry because he thought that Oliver was ..... him.
c) The boys practised ..... handkerchiefs.
d) Oliver started to run because he was ..... .
e) Mr Brownlow was ..... for Oliver.
f) The woman in the painting ..... a lot like Oliver.
g) Mr Grimwig didn't ..... Oliver would come back.

4 Put these events in the right order.

a) Bill and Nancy take Oliver back to Fagin's.
b) Bill Sikes takes the money from Oliver.
c) Nancy goes to the police station.
d) Nancy attacks Fagin.
e) Bill Sikes hits Oliver.

5 Bill and Toby take Oliver on the robbery because

a) he's young.
b) he's small.
c) he's a good thief.

6 Oliver enters the house through

a) the door.
b) the garden.
c) the window.

7 Oliver drops the lantern because

a) he's frightened of Sikes.
b) he hears a noise.
c) he wants to run away.

8 Bill leaves Oliver

a) on the road.
b) in the house.
c) in the ditch.

9 What did Monks want Fagin to do with Oliver?

10 What did the old nurse steal from Oliver's mother?

11 How does Monks frighten Mr and Mrs Bumble?

12 What does Nancy tell Rose about Monks?

13 Why does Nancy refuse to stay with Rose?

14 Why does Sikes kill Nancy?

15 Describe the part Sikes's dog plays in the story.

16 Match the people with the descriptive words.

1) Nancy	a) kind
2) Mr Brownlow	b) violent
3) Bill Sikes	c) mad
4) Fagin	d) loyal
5) Oliver	e) angry
6) The crowd	f) happy

17 In what way is Bill Sikes's death appropriate?

18 What do you think will happen to Fagin's boys now?

19 What do you think would happen to Fagin today?

20 What do you think Oliver will do when he is a man?

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