

rubbed her hands and the Dodger gave her a drink from the bottle he carried. Gradually, Nancy recovered her senses.

Sikes then turned to Fagin. 'What are you here for?' he asked roughly. 'You haven't been here for weeks – all the time I was ill. I haven't two coins to rub together. Why didn't you help me? You treat me worse than a dog!'

'Don't be bad-tempered, my dear,' said Fagin calmly. 'I haven't forgotten you, Bill.'

'Well, what about some money, then? I've done enough work for you recently – what about some money?'

'I haven't a single coin with me, my dear,' said Fagin.

'Then go and get some – you've got lots at home. No, I don't trust you. Nancy can go back with you to your house and fetch some money. I'll stay here and sleep.'

After a good deal of arguing, Fagin managed to reduce the amount Sikes was demanding from five pounds to three pounds. He went back to his house with Nancy and the boys.

When they were inside, Fagin told the girl, 'I'll just go upstairs and fetch the cash for Bill, my dear. There's little money in this business, Nancy, little money and no thanks – but I'm fond of seeing the young people around me.'

Suddenly there was a man's voice at the front door. As soon as Nancy heard it, she sat up in her chair.

'That's the man I was expecting earlier,' said Fagin. 'Don't worry. He'll only be ten minutes.'

The man entered the room. It was Monks. When he saw Nancy, he moved back, as if he had expected no one but Fagin.

'It's all right, only one of my young people,' Fagin said to him. 'Did you see him?'

'Yes,' answered Monks.

'Any news?'

'Good news,' said Monks with a smile. 'Let me have a word with you.' He and Fagin went upstairs to talk privately.

As soon as they had left the room, Nancy took off her shoes and crept silently up the stairs to listen in the passage – as she had done once before. She was gone for a quarter of an hour, then, like a ghost, she reappeared in the downstairs room and sat down. Immediately afterwards, the two men descended the stairs.

'How pale you are, Nancy!' said Fagin, once Monks had left the house. 'What have you been doing to yourself?'

'Nothing – except waiting here for you too long,' she answered, turning her face away from him. 'Now, where's the money for Bill?' With a sigh for every piece of money, Fagin put the agreed amount into her hand.

When Nancy was out in the street again, she sat down on a doorstep, and for a few minutes seemed unable to move. Then she started running wildly through the streets, and when she was exhausted she stopped and burst into tears. This strange mood seemed to leave her then, and she turned and hurried back to Sikes' house.

At first when she returned, Sikes noticed nothing unusual about her. Fagin, with his sharp, suspicious eyes, would have noticed something at once. But as night came, the girl's nervous excitement increased and even Sikes was alarmed by the paleness in her cheeks and the fire in her eye.

He lay in bed, drinking hot gin-and-water, and staring at her. 'You look like a corpse that's come back to life again. What's the matter with you tonight?'

'Nothing. Why are you staring at me so hard?'

'Either you've caught the fever yourself, or – no, you're not going to . . . you wouldn't do that!'

'Do what?' asked the girl.

'There's not a girl alive as loyal as you. If you weren't, I'd have cut your throat months ago. No, you must have the fever coming on, that's it. Now, give me some of my medicine.'

Nancy quickly poured out his medicine with her back to him. He took it, and after turning restlessly for some time, he eventually fell into a deep, heavy sleep.

'The drug's taken effect at last,' Nancy said to herself as she rose from her position beside the bed. 'I hope I'm not too late.'

Quickly, she put on her coat and hat, looking round fearfully as if she expected at any moment to feel Sikes' heavy hand on her shoulder. She kissed the robber's lips softly, then ran from the house without a sound.

She hurried in the direction of west London, pushing past people on the pavement, and running across crowded streets without looking.

'The woman is mad!' said the people, turning to look at her as she rushed past them.

She came to a wealthier part of the town where the streets were quieter, and before long she had reached her destination. It was a family hotel in a quiet street near Hyde Park. The clock struck eleven as she entered.

The man at the desk looked at her and asked, 'What do you want here?'

'I want to see Miss Maylie.'

The man looked at the young woman with strong disapproval.

'She won't want to see someone like you. Come on, get out.'

'Let me see her – or two of you will have to throw me out!' said Nancy violently.

The man looked at her again, and decided it would be easier to do as she asked. He led her upstairs to Rose's room.

Nancy entered with a brave face but with fear in her heart.

'Please sit down and tell me why you wish to see me,' said Rose Maylie, looking with some surprise at this poor, rough girl from the streets. Rose's manner was so kind and sincere, and so unexpected, that Nancy burst into tears.

When she had recovered a little, she asked, 'Is the door shut?'

'Yes,' answered Rose, a little nervously. 'But why?'

'Because I am about to put my life, and the lives of others, in your hands. I am the girl that kidnapped little Oliver and took him back to old Fagin's house on the night Oliver was going to the bookseller.'

'You!' said Rose.

'Yes, it was me. I am that wicked creature you have heard about. I've no friends except thieves and robbers. I've lived on the streets since I was a child, cold, hungry, among people who are always drunk and fighting. And that's where I'll die, too.'

'I pity you!' said Rose in a broken voice.

'But I'll tell you why I'm here. Do you know a man called Monks?'

'No,' answered Rose.

'He knows you. I heard him tell Fagin that you were at this hotel. Maybe he's changed his name. Soon after Oliver was put into your house on the night of the robbery, I listened in secret to a conversation between Monks and Fagin in the dark. And I heard Monks say that he'd seen Oliver in the street, and that he knew at once Oliver was the child he was looking for, although I couldn't hear why. Monks then agreed to pay Fagin some money if he could find Oliver again, and more money if he could turn the poor boy into a thief.'

'Why?' asked Rose.

'He saw my shadow on the wall as I listened, and I had to escape. I didn't see him again until last night.'

'And what happened then?'

'I listened at the door again. And I heard Monks say this: "So the only proof of the boy's identity is at the bottom of the river, and the old woman who received it is dead." He and Fagin laughed. Then Monks said that he had all Oliver's money safely now, but how funny it would be if the boy went to prison for stealing, after his father's unfair will.'

'What is all this?' asked Rose.

'It's the truth, lady. Then Monks said he couldn't have Oliver killed because suspicion would point to himself. But he'd try for the rest of his life to harm the boy if he could. Then Monks laughed again about the money Oliver should have got from his father's will. "My young brother Oliver will never see that money!" he said.'

'His brother!' exclaimed Rose.

'Those were his words,' said Nancy, looking round uneasily, as if she still expected to see Sikes. 'And then he talked about how amazed *you* would be if you knew who Oliver really was.'

'And this man was serious?'

'His voice was full of anger and hatred. I know many people who do worse things, but I'd rather listen to all of them than to this man Monks. But I must get back now, or people will wonder where I've been.'

'Back! How can you go back to such a life?' asked Rose. 'You've told me all this. Now I can help you by letting you stay somewhere safe.'

'No. Perhaps it's hard for you to believe, but there's one man, the most dangerous of them all, that I can never leave. You're the first

person who's ever spoken to me so kindly – but it's too late.'

'It's never too late!'

'It is!' cried the girl. 'I can't leave him now. And if I tell anyone about this man, he'll die.'

'But how can I find you again, when we want to investigate this mystery further?'

'I'll meet you secretly, if you promise not to watch or follow me,' said Nancy. 'And if you promise just one more thing – not to do anything to hurt the man I can never leave.'

'I promise.'

'Every Sunday night, between eleven and twelve, I will walk on London Bridge if I am alive. Meet me there if you want more information.'

As Nancy said these words, she left the room and ran down the stairs and out into the street once more. Rose was left alone, her thoughts in great confusion, as she wondered desperately what to do and who to ask for advice.

The next morning, Oliver, who had been out walking, ran into Rose's room at the hotel. He was breathless with excitement.

'I can't believe what I've seen! Now you'll all know that I've told you the truth!' he shouted.

'I know you've always told us the truth – but what are you talking about?' asked Rose.

'I've seen Mr Brownlow, the kind man who was so good to me.'

'Where?'

'Going into a house,' said Oliver, crying with joy. 'I've got the address here.'

'Quick,' said Rose. 'Call a coach. I'll take you there immediately.' The idea came to Rose that perhaps Mr Brownlow would advise

her. She had been afraid to tell Nancy's story to Dr Losberne, since the good doctor was very excitable and often acted with more enthusiasm than wisdom.

In less than five minutes they were in the coach on their way to the address. Rose went in first to talk to Mr Brownlow alone. She was taken into his study, and polite greetings were exchanged. When they were seated again, Rose said,

'This will surprise you very much, but you were once very kind to a dear friend of mine, and I'm sure you will be interested to hear news of him.'

'Really? May I ask you his name?'

'Oliver Twist.'

Mr Brownlow said nothing for a few seconds, but simply stared at Rose. Finally he moved his chair nearer to her and said with great feelings, 'I once thought that he was a liar and a thief. If you have evidence to show me I was wrong, please tell me at once.'

'I know him to be a child with a warm heart,' said Rose. 'And despite the hardships of his life, he's a better person than almost anyone I know.'

'I looked for him everywhere,' said Mr Brownlow, 'but I could never find him. I could never quite believe that he really did intend to rob me.'

Rose told him everything that had happened to Oliver since then. She finished by saying, 'And his only sorrow, for some months, has been that he could not find you, his former friend.'

'Thank God!' said Mr Brownlow. 'This is great happiness to me, great happiness. But why haven't you brought him with you, Miss Maylie?'

'He's waiting in a coach at the door,' replied Rose.

Mr Brownlow hurried out of the room, down the stairs and into

the coach without another word. In a minute he had returned with Oliver. 'How well he looks!' he said. 'New clothes, the same sweet face, but not so pale; the same eyes, but not so sad.'

They talked with great joy for some time. Then Mr Brownlow sent for Mrs Bedwin, the old housekeeper. She came in quietly and waited for her orders.

'You get blinder every day,' said Mr Brownlow impatiently.

'People's eyes, at my time of life, don't improve with age,' replied the old lady.

'Then put on your glasses.'

As she searched for them in her pocket, Oliver could not wait any longer and ran into her arms.

'Dear God!' she said. 'It's my innocent boy!'

'My dear old nurse!' cried Oliver.

'I knew he would come back,' said the old lady, holding him in her arms. 'How well he's dressed – how well he looks again!' She laughed and cried at the same time, and could not let Oliver go.

While Oliver talked to Mrs Bedwin, Rose asked Mr Brownlow if she could speak to him privately. He led her into another room, and there listened, with a good deal of amazement, to Rose's account of her extraordinary conversation with Nancy. Between them, they decided that Mrs Maylie and Dr Losberne should be told, and that Mr Brownlow would come to the hotel that evening for a discussion. For the moment, nothing would be said to Oliver himself.

That evening at the hotel Oliver's four friends met as arranged. Dr Losberne, of course, was full of immediate plans to rush round London arresting all the gang and hanging them at once. Mr Brownlow, fortunately, was able to persuade him to abandon this wild idea.

'Then what's to be done?' cried the doctor impatiently.

'First,' said Mr Brownlow calmly, 'we must discover who Oliver's parents were. Then – if this girl's story is true – we must regain the inheritance that should have been his.'

'Yes, yes,' said the doctor, nodding in agreement. 'But how shall we achieve these aims?'

'We must find this man Monks,' said Mr Brownlow. 'Nancy will not betray the man who is special to her, but she will surely agree to tell us how or where to find Monks. Then we must find a way to force Monks to talk. We must be both cautious and clever. After all, we have no proof against him, and if we cannot make him talk, this mystery will never be solved. But we'll have to wait five days until Sunday before we can meet Nancy on London Bridge. Until then, we can do nothing.'

12

Nancy keeps an appointment

On exactly the same night as Nancy had met Rose Maylie, two people from Oliver's home town were making their way towards London. Their progress was slow, since they travelled on foot, and in addition, the girl was carrying a heavy bag on her back. The young man carried nothing. From time to time he turned to shout at the girl behind him. 'Hurry up! What a lazy creature you are, Charlotte! I'll come and give you a kick if you don't move faster!' The young man was Noah Claypole, who had made Oliver's life so miserable at Mr Sowerberry's house. He was now taller and uglier but otherwise little changed. He and Charlotte had grown

tired of the undertaking business and had set off to London to start a new life – with all the money from Mr Sowerberry's shop in their pockets.

Eventually, they entered London, and Noah began to look for a quiet, cheap pub where they could spend the night. Charlotte followed obediently at his heels as they walked through a district of narrow, dirty streets.

At last Noah found a pub that he thought was suitable. It was dark and dirty, with a few rough-looking men in the bar. They entered and asked for a room for the night and a meal of cold meat and beer, which they ate in the bar. The beer made Noah talkative and he began to boast. 'So it's no more coffins for us, my girl. We can do better than just robbing Mr Sowerberry. In London there are pockets, houses, coaches – even banks!'

'I like the sound of it, Noah, but how are we going to do all this?' asked Charlotte.

'We can meet people who know about these things. I'd like to be the leader of some gang, if there's a good profit to be made in that kind of work.' Noah felt very pleased with himself, and looked forward to an easy life of crime in the capital.

They talked about their plans for a few minutes. Then a stranger, who had been sitting unseen round the corner, came up to them. The stranger was Fagin. He greeted them in a very friendly and cheerful way, sat down with them, and immediately ordered more beer for Noah.

'That's good beer,' said Noah, already a little drunk. He thanked the stranger for the drink.

'Expensive, too,' said Fagin. 'If you drink that every day, my dear, you'll need to empty pockets, houses, coaches, even banks.' When he heard his own words repeated, Noah went pale with

terror. The stranger must have heard everything, even how they had robbed Mr Sowerberry!

'Don't worry,' laughed Fagin, pulling his chair closer. 'You're lucky it was only me who heard you.'

'I didn't take it,' said Noah quickly. 'It was the woman who did it!'

'It doesn't matter who did it, my dear,' replied Fagin, looking quickly at Charlotte. 'Because I'm in that business myself. And the people in my house as well. I can introduce you to the right people, if you're interested. You both look like good workers.'

Charlotte and Noah felt a mixture of fear and pleasure. 'What would you want me to do?' asked Noah. 'Something light, if possible,' he added.

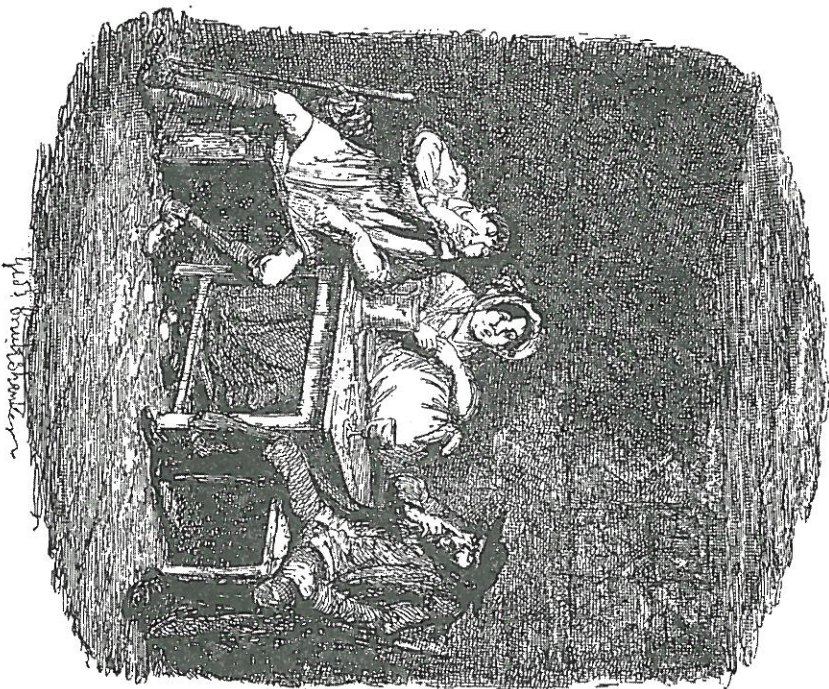
'What about spying on people?' asked Fagin. 'Or robbing young children who are going shopping for their mothers? That's light work, and easy.'

Noah laughed. 'That sounds like just the thing for me! And what will I earn for this work?'

'You can live free in my house, and give me half of what you earn.'

After further discussion, and the transfer of Mr Sowerberry's money from Noah's pocket to Fagin's, agreement was reached. The next day Noah and Charlotte went to live in Fagin's house and began to be instructed in their new profession.

Although training and experience had made Nancy an expert liar, she could not completely hide the fear in her mind. She knew she had taken an enormous risk in going to see Rose Maylie. If Fagin or Sikes ever found out . . . But she pushed these fears away. She was determined to keep her promise to Rose Maylie, and meet her as



After further discussion between Noah Claypole and Fagin, agreement was reached.

arranged.

On the first Sunday night after her meeting with Rose, she was in Sikes' room when the clock struck eleven. Fagin was there, too, discussing some business with Sikes. Nancy stood up and put on her coat. Sikes watched her, surprised.

'Nancy! Where are you going at this time of night?'

'Not far.'

'What kind of answer is that? Where are you going?'

'I don't know,' replied the girl.

'Then I do. Nowhere. Sir down.'

'I'm not well. I want a breath of air.'

Sikes got up and locked the door.

'Let me go!' said the girl with great force. 'Just for one hour – let me go!'

Sikes seized her arms roughly. 'The girl's gone mad!'

Nancy fought wildly, and Sikes had to hold her down in a chair. She continued to scream and fight until midnight, when, exhausted and tearful, she stopped struggling. She went into another room and threw herself on a bed.

'She's a strange girl,' Sikes said to Fagin, shaking his head. 'Why did she suddenly decide to go out tonight? I thought that after all these years I'd finally tamed her. She must be ill – perhaps she's still got a bit of fever.'

'That must be it,' said Fagin, nodding thoughtfully.

As he walked home, Fagin's eyes were sharp with suspicion. He had suspected for a while that Nancy had become tired of Bill Sikes' brutality and violence, and that she had found a new friend to take his place. Her manner was different; she often left home alone, and she seemed less interested in the gang. And tonight, her desperate impatience to go out at a particular hour . . . He was certain he was right. He began to make plans.

First, he wanted to know who Nancy's new friend was. He could make him a valuable new member of the gang, with Nancy as his assistant. But there was another, darker reason. Fagin, too, had become tired of Sikes. Sikes knew too much – too many dangerous

secrets about Fagin himself. Fagin distrusted everybody, but he hated and distrusted Sikes most of all. It would be very convenient if Sikes could be . . . removed.

'With a little persuasion,' Fagin thought, 'perhaps the girl would poison Sikes.' Suddenly, his eyes narrowed in delight. 'Yes! First, I must have her watched, and find out who her new man is. Then I shall threaten to tell Sikes everything. She knows that neither she nor her new man will ever be safe from Sikes' violent jealousy. She will have no choice except to do as I ask her – and then, once the murder is done, she will be in my power for ever!'

Early next morning Fagin called the newest member of his gang. Noah was doing very well. He had already brought home quite a lot of money. He had found that robbing small children was indeed light, easy work, and he was proud of his success.

'I have another job for you now,' Fagin told him. 'It needs great care and secrecy. I want you to follow a woman. I want to know where she goes, who she sees, and if possible, what she says. I will pay you a pound for this information.'

Noah's eyes were wide with greed. 'I'm the right man for this job.'

Who is she?'

'One of us.'

'What? You don't trust her, then?'

'Exactly so, my dear. Exactly so,' smiled Fagin.

The following Sunday, soon after eleven o'clock, a woman walked quickly through the dark streets towards London Bridge. A mist hung over the river, and the buildings on the far bank could hardly be seen. A man followed some distance behind her, keeping to the darkest shadows. It was a cold, damp night, and there were very few people on the streets at this late hour.

When the woman reached the centre of the bridge, she stopped and looked around anxiously. The man following her stopped too. The heavy bell of St Paul's cathedral rang out, announcing the death of another day. Just as it finished, a grey-haired man and a young woman got out of a coach and walked across the bridge. They met the woman, who took them down some steps leading to the river bank. They stood in deep shadow by the wall of the bridge. The man hurried down some other steps, crept up to the corner of the wall, and listened.

Nancy spoke first. 'I'm so frightened tonight I can hardly breathe.'

'Frightened of what?' asked Mr Brownlow. He seemed to pity her.

'I wish I knew. Horrible thoughts of death, and blood, have been with me all day. I don't know why.'

'Speak to her kindly,' said Rose to Mr Brownlow. 'Poor girl! She seems to need it.'

'I couldn't come last Sunday,' continued the girl. 'I was kept in by force. But tonight he'll be out all night until daylight. Now, before I tell you anything else, I must tell you that I don't want Fagin, or any of the other members of the gang, to be handed to the police.'

'Why not?'

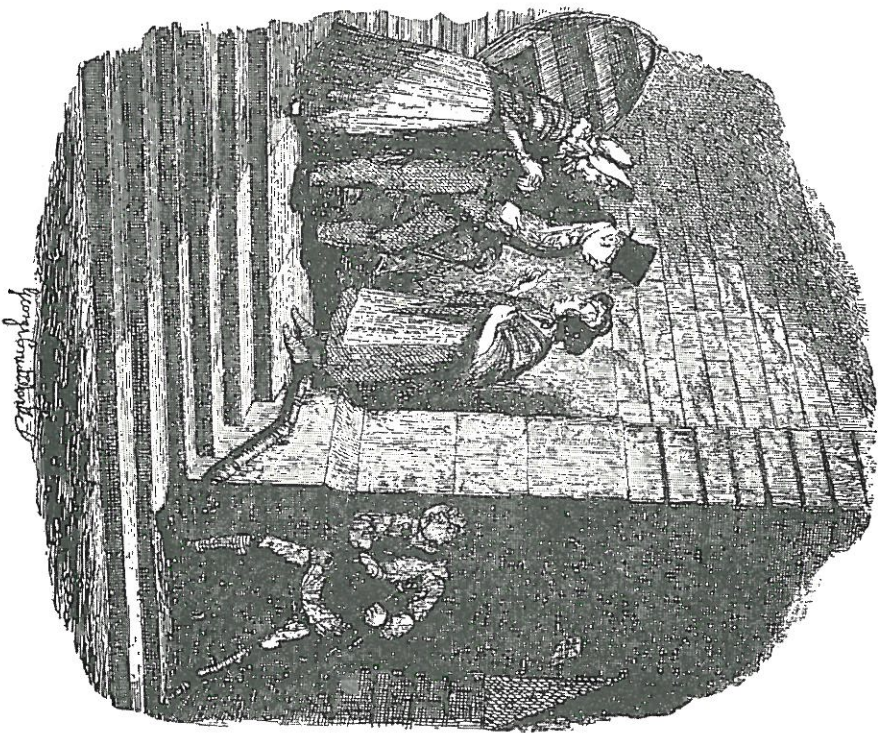
'Because I couldn't betray them. They've been loyal to me, and I'll stay loyal to them.'

'Then just tell us how we can get Monks, and I promise none of your friends will be harmed,' said Mr Brownlow.

'And Monks will never know how you found out about him?' she asked.

'We promise,' said Rose gently.

Nancy then told them, in so low a voice that the listener round



The man crept up to the corner of the wall, and listened.

the corner could hardly hear her, where Monks often went for a drink, and what he looked like. She finished by saying, 'On his throat, high up, there is—'

'A bright red mark?' asked Mr Brownlow.

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

'I think I do.' Mr Brownlow murmured to himself, 'It must be him!' Then more loudly, he said to Nancy, 'Thank you for everything you've told us. But now – how can you go back to these people? Come with us now, tonight. We can arrange for you to be hidden from them all forever, if you want us to.'

The girl shook her head. 'I'm chained to them, bad as they are. I've gone too far to change my life now.' She looked nervously over her shoulder. 'I can feel those dreadful terrors again – visions of blood and death. I must go home.'

Mr Brownlow and Rose could not persuade her to change her mind. Sadly, they turned to leave, and when they had gone, Nancy fell to the ground in a storm of tears. Meanwhile, Noah Claypole, amazed by all that he had heard, crept up the steps and ran for Fagin's house as fast as his legs could carry him.

Some hours later, nearly two hours before dawn, Noah lay asleep in Fagin's house. But Fagin sat silently by a dead fire, staring at the flame of a candle on the table beside him. With his pale, wrinkled face and his red, staring eyes, he looked like a devil out of hell. Harred ran like poison through his every thought. Harred for the girl who had dared to talk to strangers, who had ruined his plan to get rid of Sikes. He did not believe her promise not to betray him, and he feared that he would now be caught, and hanged.

Just before dawn Sikes entered the room, carrying a bundle which contained the results of his night's work. Fagin took what Sikes gave him, then stared at the robber for a long time without speaking.

'Why are you looking at me like that?' asked Sikes, uneasy at the old man's strange expression.

Fagin raised his hand, but his passion was so great that he could not speak.

'Say something, will you!' shouted Sikes, placing his huge hand on Fagin's collar and shaking him in his anger and fear. 'Open your mouth and say what you've got to say!'

Eventually Fagin found his voice. 'Bill, what would you do if one of the gang went out at night and told someone all about us, and what we'd done? What would you do to him?'

'I'd smash his head into little pieces,' said the robber, swearing violently.

'And what if it was me, who knows so much about all of us, and could put us all in prison and get us all hanged?' whispered Fagin, his eyes flashing with hate.

'I'd beat your brains out in public. Even in the law-court, I'd run over and kill you with my bare hands,' said Sikes, showing his teeth in his anger. 'I don't care who it was, that's what I'd do.'

Fagin woke Noah. 'Tell Bill what you told me, what you saw, what she did. Tell him!'

Noah rubbed the sleep from his eyes and told Sikes everything. His face white with passion, Sikes listened to the end, then, swearing furiously, he rushed from the room and down the stairs.

'Bill! Fagin called after him. 'You won't be . . . too violent?'

Sikes made no reply, but, pulling open the door, ran out into the silent streets. He did not turn his head to right or left, but looked straight in front of him with wild determination. He ran at great speed, his eyes on fire, his teeth tight together, and did not pause until he reached his own door. He ran up to his room, entered and locked the door, put a table against it, then woke Nancy.

'Bill!' she said, pleased to see him. But when she saw his

expression, the colour went out of her face. 'What's the matter?' she said in alarm.

'You know what.' Sikes took out his gun, but realizing, even in his madness, that a shot might be heard, he beat her twice across the face with it as hard as he could. She fell, with a low cry of pain and terror, almost blinded by the blood that flowed from the cut on her forehead. The murderer staggered to a corner, seized a heavy stick and struck her down.

13

The end of the gang

The sun burst upon the crowded city in all its brightness. It lit up every corner of London, the great houses of the rich, and the miserable homes of the poor. It shone everywhere, even into the room where the murdered woman lay. The horror of that scene was even more dreadful in the clear morning light.

Sikes sat there, unable to move, looking at the body. He had thrown the blood-covered stick into the fire, then washed himself and his clothes. He had cut out the bits of his clothes that were stained and burnt them too, but there were still bloodstains all over the floor. Even the dog's feet were bloody.

Finally, he forced himself to leave the room, pulling the dog out with him and locking the door behind him. He walked rapidly north, towards Highgate, then on to Hampstead. On the open land of Hampstead Heath, away from people and houses, he found a place in a field where he could sleep without being disturbed.

But before long he was up again and running. This time he ran

back towards London for a while. Then he turned and went north again, sometimes walking, sometimes running, with no clear purpose in his mind. Eventually, he felt hungry, and changed direction towards Hendon, a quiet place away from the crowds, where he could buy food. But even the children and chickens there seemed to look at him with suspicion. So he turned back towards Hampstead Heath again, without having eaten, uncertain where to go.

At last he turned north again, his dog still running at his heels, and set off to a village just outside London. He stopped at a small, quiet pub and bought a meal, then went on again. It was now dark and as he continued walking, he felt as if Nancy were following him, her shadow on the road, her last low cry in the wind. If he stopped, the ghostly figure did the same. If he ran, it ran too, moving stiffly, like a corpse. Sometimes he turned, determined to drive the ghost away, but his blood ran cold with terror. Every time he turned, the ghost turned too, and was still behind him.

Finally, he found another field where he could hide. He lay down, unable to sleep, his mind filled with visions of the dead girl. Her wide, dead eyes stared at him, watching him through a curtain of blood.

Suddenly he heard shouting in the distance. He jumped to his feet and saw that the sky seemed on fire. Sheets of flame shot into the air, driving clouds of smoke in his direction. He heard an alarm bell, and more shouts of 'Fire!' Running with his dog across the fields, he joined the crowds of men and women fighting the fire. He could forget his own terror in this new danger, and he worked all night with the crowd, shouting, running and working together to stop the flames destroying more buildings.

In the morning the mad excitement was over, and the dreadful