



Chapter 16

The Hunt for Sikes

Mr. Brownlow smiled when he saw the coach pull up in front of his door. Two men pulled a third out of it. It was Monks. "How dare you do this to me?" said Monks. "How dare you do this to us?" said Mr. Brownlow. "As they told you, you're free to leave. But if you do, we will come after you and take you to jail. It's either us or them." "By what authority am I kidnapped in the street and brought here by these dogs?" asked Monks. "By my authority," said Mr. Brownlow. "Mine alone." "How could my father's oldest friend do this to me?" asked Monks.

"It is because I was his oldest and dearest friend that I must, Edward Leeford. I shudder when I call you that, for you are not deserving of his name." Monks glared at Mr. Brownlow. "Tell me what you want from me." "You have a brother," said Mr. Brownlow. "I have no brother," replied Monks. "You know I was an only child." "I am not a fool, Edward. I know what an unhappy marriage your father was forced into. You were born into that unhappy marriage. The marriage was so unhappy that your parents separated. You were young. Your mother was happy in her new life. So was your father. Fifteen years ago, when you were barely eleven, he met a new woman who he fell in love with." "What's this to me?" asked Monks. Mr. Brownlow continued. "When your father's relative died, he left him a large sum of money.

He had to travel to Rome to settle properties. When your mother heard the talk of his new riches, she followed him to Rome. She was living in Paris at the time and had spent all of her money." Monks bit his lip and took a deep breath. "One day after your mother met him in Rome, he died. Everyone thought he had no will. But you see, Edward, before he died, he came to see me." Monks gasped. "I didn't know that!" "He brought many of his possessions to my home. He wanted me to sell them and give you and your mother all the money from the sale. He then wanted to start a new life with the woman. He told me she was carrying his child. Although I hadn't met her, he showed me a picture he painted of her. I still have it." "But I couldn't find the woman. She had left for London the week before I visited your father's house to pay my

respects." Monks eyes fell to the floor. "The child was born in a workhouse. He was a sickly child. His mother died in childbirth. But, as fate had it, that child eventually found his way into my care. I knew it was him when he came because he looked exactly like the portrait your father painted. But before I could find out his story, your friends kidnapped him." Monks laughed. "You don't have proof that the baby born in that workhouse was my father's baby." "But I do," said Brownlow. "I do indeed. Not long ago, after Oliver was taken from me, I traveled to the West Indies after hearing you moved there. I poked around. I discovered you came back to London right before my arrival there. I came back to hunt you down. I knew you would have the answers I needed." Mr. Brownlow stood tall. "You went to the place he was

born. You got proof of the birth of your brother. And you threw that proof in the river." Mr. Brownlow struck his hand on the table. "You are evil! You even have the murder of a young woman upon your hands!"

"I know nothing of a murder! How can I be responsible for something I knew nothing about?" said Monks. "It was because the girl told part of your secret. You have brought enough sadness. You must promise to give your poor brother what is rightfully his." Mr. Brownlow pushed an agreement over to him to sign. "Once you have agreed and signed the document, you will be free to leave. I will not be sending the law to chase you. My concern is only for Oliver. I hope to never set my eyes upon you again, Edward." A moment later, Dr. Losberne burst through the door. "The murderer will be caught tonight. Bill

Sikes's dog has been spotted. He must be here in the area. Spies are hovering about searching for him. A reward of a hundred pounds is offered for his capture." "I will give fifty more," said Mr. Brownlow. "What has become of Fagin?"

"He's been caught," said Dr. Losberne. To find Sikes, they only needed to travel to a seedy part of London called Jacob's Island. Jacob's Island was surrounded by a muddy ditch six to eight feet deep and twenty feet wide when the tide is in. On Jacob's Island, the warehouses were roofless and empty. The walls crumbled down and the windows were smashed. The doors fell into the streets. In an upper room of one of the deserted houses sat Toby Crackit and Tom Chitling. They sat in a gloomy silence. They were the lucky ones who escaped from the Three

Cripples that day. "Did you see how they got Fagin? He was kicking and screaming but they got him," said Crackit. "Poor Noah. He climbed into a barrel to hide but his feet stood out." Tom hushed him. "What's that noise?" From far away, they heard a soft bark. "You don't think it's Sikes and his dog?"

"Sikes isn't stinking anywhere near here," said Crackit. "He's long gone by now." But they were wrong. In five minutes time, Sikes and his dog walked through the door. "Murderer!" they shouted. Sikes looked awful. "They're coming for me. They're right behind me. I can't escape them. I can't escape Nancy's eyes. She's looking at me wherever I go! What have I done?" Harry's voice could be heard from outside. "We have him, boys. He can't escape us now." "Give me that rope," said Sikes. "The tide is high. I can

climb onto the roof and lower myself into the ditch." But Sikes was clumsy. As he tied the rope to his waist, he slipped off the roof and fell to his death.



Chapter 17

Oliver Learns the Truth

Two days after the death of Sikes, Oliver was headed back to the town in which he was born. In the coach with him were Mrs. Maylie, Rose, Mrs. Bedwin, and Dr. Losberne. Following behind was Monks and Mr. Brownlow. "See there!" cried Oliver. "That's the hedge I crept under. See that house! That's where Dick lives! You'll love him, Rose. We'll take him away from here. He'll grow strong with someone who loves him. Maybe he'll live in the country. Maybe he'll live with us!" Rose nodded her head. She was overcome with happiness to see such joy in Oliver. As they approached the town, Oliver saw

many other familiar sights such as Sowerberry's and the dreary workhouse.

The coach let them off at a fancy hotel for an evening feast. At nine o'clock, Mr. Losberne and Mr. Grimwig joined them followed by Mr. Brownlow and the strange man whom Oliver had seen many times. It was the man with purple lips and sores on his hands. Monks sneered at the boy. "This is a painful task but one that must be done," said Mr. Brownlow. He pushed Monks forward to Oliver. "This here is your half - brother, Monks. He told me a tale that he will now tell to you, Oliver." Oliver could barely breathe. He held on to Rose's hand and squeezed it tight. Monks started to talk. "Listen up! Oliver is my half- brother. My father became ill and died in Rome. When he died, my mother whom he long divorced, found two papers

that were meant for Mr. Brownlow. One paper was a letter to Agnes. Agnes was your mother, Oliver. The letter was to remind Agnes that he had given her a locket with her name inscribed. No last name was engraved so his name would go on it once she accepted his marriage proposal. There was a ring of gold inside the locket." "What was the second letter?" asked Mr. Brownlow. "It was a will," said Monks. "A will that my mother told everyone did not exist. It left my mother and me each 800 pounds. His property was to be divided between my mother and Agnes. If the child Agnes carried was a boy, he would get an inheritance only if he remained good and pure. No evil could befall his heart. If he broke the law or brought dishonor to the family name, he would get nothing." "That is why," said Brownlow, "Monks here wanted to

turn Oliver into a criminal. He used Fagin for this. If Oliver was sent to jail, he'd have the inheritance all to himself." Monks continued, "In his letter to Agnes, he said he wanted to marry her since she was with child. It would hide her shame.



He reminded her of the gifts of love he had given her. He begged her to wear the locket close to her heart and prayed it would one day have his last name next to her first." As Oliver listened, tears ran down his face. "My mother," said Monks, "burned the will and the letter never reached Agnes. But Agnes told her father the truth about the unborn child. Because of his shame, he fled with her and his other daughter to Wales. But, Agnes felt so much shame, that she abandoned her young sister and father. She ran away and had the baby in the workhouse. Her father thought she had died and never knew if she had the baby." Mr. Brownlow continued the story. "When Monks was eighteen, he stole from his mother. He fled to France. When his mother was near death, she came to see me. She wanted to find Monks and forgive him.

She wanted to bring him home." "She finally found me in France," said Monks. "I came home and she shared all of these secrets with me. She believed a boy had been born to Agnes. As she lay on her deathbed, I promised her I would find this child, hunt him down, and bring evil to him. If I found him, I'd drag him to the gallows myself!" Everyone gasped. "Now what happened to the locket and the ring?" asked Brownlow. "You know I got them from a man and women," said Monks. "The woman found the pawn ticket on Agnes's nurse's dead body. They are now at the bottom of a river where I put them." At that moment, Grimwig, a changed man, brought in Mr. and Mrs. Bumble. At first, they denied the story. Then, two old nurses were led into the room. They were the nurses tending to Sally before she died. The first one

spoke to Mrs. Bumbles. "We heard Sally speaking to you. We saw you take something from her hand. We followed you to the pawn shop. We saw you get the gold locket and ring." Mrs. Bumble put her hands up to shush the ladies. "We confess! But if that coward didn't confess—" She pointed to Monks. "No one would have known." Mr. Grimwig ushered the Bumbles out of the room. "You two shall never work in the workhouse or have a position of power again." Mr. Brownlow put his arm around Rose. "You are about to hear something that is shocking. Do not be afraid." He turned to Monks. "Do you know who this woman is?" Monks nodded. "Of course." Rose shook her head. "But I do not know you. I've never seen you before." He laughed a mocking laugh. "Do you remember when I said that Agnes's father

had two daughters? They both went to Wales with him. The father died of a broken heart after Agnes left. The second daughter was very young. The little girl was cared for by two country people. When they died, an older woman took pity on her and adopted her." "Where is she now?" asked Mr. Brownlow. Monks sighed. "Right in this room. It is Rose." Mrs. Maylie hugged Rose as Rose wept. Oliver squeezed Rose's hand once again. "You are my Aunt! Rose! You are my Aunt." Just then Harry rushed into the room. "Rose, you made me a promise not too long ago. Will you marry me? I love you!" "Now that I know of my entire past," said Rose, "I am even more unworthy of your love!" "No," said Harry. "If my world cannot be yours, I will make your world mine."

I want nothing of those who look down on me. I only want your love." Their two worlds would soon become one.



HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THEM?

**MATCH THE CHARACTERS IN COLUMN A
WITH THE ADJECTIVES IN COLUMN B.**

COLUMN A

Mr. Bumble

Mr. Brownlow

Rose

Dr. Losberne

Monks

Oliver Twist

Nancy

COLUMN B

regretful

kind hearted

cruel

generous

trusting

greedy

brave