



Chapter 8

Fagin and Monks Strike a Deal

Fagin made his way to the Three Cripples. "Is Sikes here?" Fagin asked the landlord. "Nah. He won't be back until things settle a bit," replied the landlord. "Will he be here tonight?" asked Fagin. "You must mean Monks," said the landlord, hesitating. He glanced quickly around the room. "Hush," said Fagin. "Keep your voice down." Then he nodded. "He'll be here in ten minutes." Fagin exploded once again. "I can't wait ten minutes. Tell him to come see me tomorrow." Fagin quickly left and found himself walking to Sikes's house. Although Sikes wasn't there, Nancy was. "The robbery went bad," said Fagin. "Oliver was left in a ditch. Could be dead.

If Sikes comes back and doesn't bring me Oliver, I'm going to kill him," said Fagin. Nancy started to beat Fagin with her fists. "Bill has done a lot of crimes for you. Made you lots of money. As for Oliver, I hope he is dead. His life would be better for it. He has no hope with you, Fagin. Look what you did to me. Living with you is worse than death." Fagin pushed Nancy down on the floor. "I must have Oliver alive. He's worth hundreds of pounds to me." He left Nancy and returned to his own home. As he approached the door, a shadowy figure stepped out from the hedge. "Monks!" said Fagin as he looked quickly around. "Come in." "I've been waiting for two hours," said Monks. "Where the devil have you been?" "On your business all night," replied Fagin. "Of course," said Monks. "What's come of it?" "Nothing good," said Fagin. He led Monks upstairs and told him about the

failed robbery. "I'll tell you again," said Monks. "It was badly planned. Why didn't you keep Oliver here and make a pickpocket out of him? If you had the patience, he would have been caught and sent away for good. I could have been done with him if he went to prison." "And who would benefit from that?" asked Fagin. Monks lowered his eyes. "Me. Only me." "That is true, Monks. But I have a great interest in him. It has been difficult to train him in this business. Nothing frightens him. He's used to beatings. If I withhold food, he doesn't care because he's known hunger. "Look what happened when I sent him out with the Dodger and Charley Bates. Did he get caught? No! He ended up living with the man he robbed." "That was not my fault," said Monks. "True, but it's how you found him. You happened upon him at the booksellers that day and struck him down to the

ground. But Nancy now feels sorry for Oliver." Monks bit down on his purple, swollen lips and rubbed his hands full of sores together. "Then kill her! Let me do it! We can have no one looking out for Oliver Twist." "I won't kill Nancy," said Fagin. "But I will turn Oliver into a criminal if he's still alive. I can promise you that." "If he's dead," said Monks, "I had nothing to do with it. My name cannot be mentioned." Suddenly, Monks stopped talking. "I saw the shadow of a woman in a cloak and bonnet pass." Fagin rushed out into the hall. "No one is there. It's your mind playing tricks on you." "I swear I saw it," replied Monks. "It was leaning over but when I spoke, it darted away." If Fagin and Monks would have looked behind the shrubs outside, they would have found their lurking shadow.