One chilly winter’s morning, an elderly man in a red-velvet suit was walking down the cobbled streets of London enjoying an apple. His name was Mr. Brownlow. He was on his way to see the bookseller for a splendid story. His grandmother had wanted a copy for years and now was his chance.

“Oh, dear Grammy will be so pleased!” he exclaimed.

Meanwhile, several boys were on the back of a cart that bumped along the busy streets. Their names were Jack, Charlie and Oliver. They argued over what to steal and who to steal from.

“It ‘ad better be priceless if we want some food.”

The smell of strawberry tarts and hot-cross buns filled their nostrils.

‘Grrrrrrrr…’ “Sorry guys! I think that’s my stomach,” said Charlie, as if in reply.

Jack hit Charlie on the arm and pointed towards the bookshop.

“Eh! What did ya do that for? I know my stomach’s loud but-“Charlie complained.

“Look!” shouted Jack dragging the other two boys off the cart.

Jack and Charlie’s eyes fell upon Mr. Brownlow.

“He’ll be an easy one, lads,” Jack said.

He told Oliver to stay put and just watch. Jack and Charlie hurried towards the bookshop. Jack skilfully hid behind Mr. Brownlow and five seconds later was underneath it. Jack discreetly snuck his hand into Mr. Brownlow’s breast pocket and pulled out a single shiny golden pocket watch. Jack passed it to Charlie Bates and they both sped off immediately.

Oliver stared blankly at Mr. Brownlow as he slowly turned around and called out STOP THEIF! There is something magical about the words *stop thief,* which startles everyone.

It took a while for Oliver’s instinct to kick in but when it did Oliver ran like the wind down the twisting alleyways and bustling markets.

Meanwhile, on the less busy streets of London,

“Arrrgh! We’ve lost Oliver! What are we gonna tell Fagin? Eh? Charlie Bates, I thought you had ‘im.” Moaned Jack Dawkins.

“I thought you had ‘im” argued Charlie.

“Well I didn’t. And now we’ve lost ‘im!”

Charlie kept quiet. The two boys regretfully stumbled into the den…

Oliver ran as fast as his little legs would carry him but, after working in the workhouse day after day, he wasn’t very fast. Unfortunately, the Bobbies caught up with Oliver and beat him up. The Bobbies dragged Oliver to court and held him before the judge. Stumbling behind was Mr. Brownlow muttering how uncomfortable he was for this trial to go on.

Unfortunately the magistrate had been drinking all night and was not in the state to make justice.

“Who’s this ‘n’ wassee done?” demanded the magistrate: Fang.

“Um, pardon me sir but I’m not sure I wish for this trial to go on. I th-“protested Mr. Brownlow.

“The gentleman was the one robbed, sir,” one of the Bobbies corrected, noticing the mistake.

“The boys clearly not well! There must be a mista-“

“He’s sentenced to nine years in prison!” proclaimed Fang as if he hadn’t even heard Mr. Brownlow.

*BANG!*

The bookseller rushed in panting.

“I saw everything*…pant…pant…* It wasn’t him! I’m a witness” panted the bookseller.

“Fine! Le’ ‘im go” replied Fang.

The Bobbies threw Oliver out on to the street. The cold air enveloped Oliver like a damp cloth. Oliver lay there unconsciously.

“Dear boy! I am so dearly sorry. My most sincere apologies! You look as white as a sheet!”

A week later Oliver woke up on the softest bed he’d ever felt in his life with a warm mug of hot chocolate beside him.

“Thank heavens you’re awake dear child!” Oliver heard a woman’s voice crying.

On the other side of town,

“*Clang!* Fagin punched his fist down hard on the table.

“Don’t worry boys we will get ‘im. He’ll get what he deserves,” he reassured Bill Sikes.

“He won’t get away with this,” agreed Bill Sikes…