



Oliver

A Christmas twist of a pantomime
by Rob Fearn and Leo Appleton

The story of young boy who finds a new home and couldn't ask for more!

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Welcome to our twelfth pantomime. As usual, we have tried to come up with something a little bit different, but something that still has the sense of the pantomime tradition and season about it. **Oliver – A Christmas ‘twist’ of a pantomime**, hopefully does this.

Being adapted from the original Dickens novel it has the feeling of a yesteryear Victorian Christmas whilst also producing a story that lends itself to a pantomime still having the gloriously colourful characters of Mr Bumble, Fagin, the Artful Dodger and of course Oliver, amongst others. Obviously, it is a story that young and old will immediately recognise but with the addition of other characters it truly gives it that pantomime feel. Needless to say, it is not at all gruesome as in the original telling and through some artistic licence with the story we have created the ‘twist’ in the tale giving it that feel-good ending so that they all do live, happily ever after.

Whilst there is direction and suggestions for song breaks to help with interpretation, we realise, as always, that companies and other directors like the freedom to add and take out elements that may or may not suit their company. Feel free.

In our writing we have also envisaged a production on a smaller stage with simple sets but could well see this performed on a bigger stage with a bigger budget and lavish scenery. Whatever you do with it, as always our motto is, ‘make it fun’.

Best of luck

Rob and Leo

PS: If you do perform one of our pantos and let us know when it's on we'd love to try and come and see it. You can message us via our Facebook site, Robleo Productions. Thanks. L & R.

Others in our series:

Cinderella; A Christmas Carol – the panto; Puss in Boots; Snow White; Jack and the Beanstalk; Robin Hood; Rumpelstiltskin; Sleeping Beauty; Aladdin; Dick Whittington; Ali Baba.

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Characters – in order of appearance. (*Twenty four parts, of varying size*).

Mamie F The narrator and ghost in the show. It is a large part. She helps Oliver (*generally*) escape his perils and keeps the show moving with her dialogue and interaction with the audience. Must be able to hold an audience, ad lib a little and be able to sing.

Oliver M/F Can see this part played by either a boy or girl. It is a big part and requires a confident, talented youngster to put over the dialogue convincingly. It is not a weak part, as Oliver is fairly feisty. Must be able to act, move and sing and probably ad lib a little.

Man one M Can be any age. A few lines in Act 1 but they are comedic so must be able to act and deliver the lines.

Woman one F As for Man One.

Dick M He is Oliver's friend and appears in Act 1. He is earnest and although suitable for a young person must be able to deliver a line.

Mr Bumble M He is full of his own self-importance although he does have a soft spot for Oliver. His speech is affectatious and he has the habit (*but not too often*) of inserting 'h's' and 'a's' where there aren't any (*h'Oliver, I'm a'tellin*). This part will require good comedy timing and the ability to act and sing.

Widow Corney F She is Mr Bumble's sidekick. She is quite acerbic but has a soft spot for Bumble. It is quite a large part and will require good acting and comedy timing and the ability to hold an audience and at least put over a song.

Mr Limbkins M/F A small part only appearing in Act 1 and one scene so could suitably double with other parts. Supposed to be an older gentleman who is deaf with comedic moments, so needs good timing and acting. This could also be played as Miss Limbkins.

Mr Gamfield M A small part. Appears in one scene in Act 1 with some comedic lines. Will require good timing. Could double with other parts if necessary.

Mr Sowerberry M This is a large part appearing only in Act 1. Comedic lines and interactions so needs the ability to act and sing.

Mrs Sowerberry F A large part appearing only in Act 1. Comedic lines so needs the ability to act and sing.

Charlotte F A relatively large part. Works with Noah Claypole and Oliver and has comedic dialogue. She will require good timing and the ability to deliver a line, act and sing. Only in Act 1.

Noah Claypole M A relatively large part. Works with Charlotte and Oliver and has comedic dialogue. He will require good timing and the ability to deliver a line, act and sing. Only in Act 1.

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Artful Dodger M/F Introduced as Jack Dawkins but if played as a female (*could be Janet / Jane / Judy etc.*) the dialogue should be suitable, if not, amendable. Dodger is streetwise and forms a large part of the show first appearing towards the end of Act1 and then onwards. Suitable for a youth but they must be able to move, act, sing and have great timing.

Juvi 1 M/F Part of Fagin's gang. Has four lines.

Fagin's Gang M & F This show will need a number of youths for Fagin's gang, probably four or five should be sufficient.

Fagin M How this part will be played is very much open to interpretation. We would, however, avoid any obvious stereotypes. The part has not been written to reflect any. Over the top is our advice and very 'pantomime'. As a comic device his appearance should become less 'Fagin' and more 'chef' as he goes through the show. Plays a big part in the show and will need the ability to act, sing and deliver comedic lines.

Bill Sikes M The villain of the piece and should have a presence. Is mean and moody but there is no 'violence' in the part. He has some comedic lines and should be able to act and sing.

Nancy F This is a relatively nice part and she appears with Bill. There is no edge between them (*and she does not die*). Must be able to act, move and sing.

Chorus One M/F A minor part with a few lines, mostly comedic, so needs to be clear and able to deliver them.

Mr Brownlow M A large part which will require good acting, the ability to deliver a line and be able to at least put over a song, if necessary. He must be convincing.

Policeman M A smallish comedy part so must be able to act and deliver the lines with good timing.

Mrs Bedwin F Mr Brownlow's housekeeper. Fond and defensive of Oliver and occasionally bursts into broad cockney when she gets agitated. Has comedic lines so needs good timing and the ability to act and if necessary, sing.

Mr Grimwig M Mr Brownlow's friend who is fond of 'eating his hat'. A smaller comedic part but must be able to act and deliver their lines.

Chorus Two M/F Has a few lines but still must be able to deliver them as they are comedic.

ACT 1**Scene 1**

Opening scene. Full stage, wintry scene.

Scene 2

Workhouse

Scene 3

Mr Limbkins office

Scene 4

Front of tabs leading to Mr Sowerberry's funeral parlour.

Scene 5

Still Sowerberry's funeral parlour

Scene 6

London Town scene into Fagin's den

Scene 7

London Town night-time

Scene 8

Front of tabs

Scene 9

Fagin's den

ACT 2**Scene 1**

Brownlow's drawing room

Scene 2

Widow Corney's parlour

Scene 3

Tabbed scene – Brownlow sends Oliver out with the books

Scene 4

Tabbed scene – Brownlow meets Bumble

Scene 5

Fagin's den leading into a tabbed scene

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Scene 6

Front of tabs opening up to a full stage

Scene 7

Front of tabs

Scene 8

Full stage – Brownlow's drawing room for the finale.

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Scene 1

(The opening is a full scene, not necessarily a London scene. It should be wintry, colourful and the chorus should perform a seasonal song. As the song finishes Mary Dickens or 'Mamie' as she is known steps forward dressed in white (all the others are very colourful in reds and greens and golds).

(End song, close tabs).

Mamie *(To audience).* Hello boys and girls *(she encourages them to respond)*, and welcome to early Victorian England. My name is Mary, or as my friends call me, Mamie. Say, hello Mamie. *(Again, encourages the audience to respond)*. I'm the daughter of Charles Dickens who wrote the original tale of Oliver a long time ago. That was a dark tale of thieves and vagabonds and is a bit scary even for me and I'm a ghost. Oh, sorry, did I not tell you that? Yes, I am a ghost and though the tale you are about to see is still about thieves and vagabonds, if you watch closely you will see it has a little twist in the tale.

(Oliver enters. He is dressed a little ragged and is carrying a wicker basket full of twigs).

Talking of twists, here is Oliver now. He can't see me until I let him. Should I let him? *(Audience should respond)*. Perhaps I should, but I don't want to scare him, so I'll do it gently.

(Oliver is collecting twigs and Mamie moves behind him and blows in his ear).

Oliver Who did that? *(He turns around but obviously doesn't see Mamie).*

(Oliver sees the audience and he speaks to them).

Oliver Hello boys and girls. I'm Oliver, did you see who did that? *(The audience should respond)*. Good, who was it? *(The audience should shout out)*. A ghost? Don't be daft. I know this is Victorian England and a time of all things spiritual and strange, but a ghost? This is not Christmas Carol you know. What? It's still behind me? Where? *(He turns and looks one way and then the other – a behind you moment)*. I can't see anything at all. Hah!

(Mamie taps him on his shoulder and speaks).

Mamie Hello Oliver. Don't be scared.

Oliver *(Again not seeing Mamie speaks out to the ether)*. I'm not scared. I'm petrified!

Mamie *(To audience)*. Perhaps I should let him see me now.

(A magical tinkle and Oliver sees Mamie).

Oliver *(Sees Mamie)*. There you are. What are you and even, who are you?

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Mamie Tell him boys and girls. (*She encourages the audience to say her name*). My name is Mamie and I'm a ghost.

Oliver Mamie, a ghost? (*To audience*). I don't know which is stranger, the fact that I'm talking to a ghost or that I'm not scared out of my skin? (*To Mamie*). Do I know you?

Mamie No. But I'm here to help you.

Oliver Really? Why?

Mamie Let's just say, I think you might need it at some point. (*To audience*). Yes, I know we could just skip to the ending but that would be a waste of a ticket now wouldn't it? Might as well see how the story unfolds. Even I'm not sure how it will all end. (*To Oliver*). Oliver, if you are ever in trouble just call out 'Mamie help me' three times and I'll come. Can you do that?

Oliver I don't know. Let me see. (*He shouts out*). Mamie where are you? No, that's not it. Mamie help please. No, that's not it either.

Mamie Perhaps the boys and girls can help. (*To audience*). After three, boys and girls shout it out, one, two, three, *Mamie help me!* (*The audience should shout out*). That's right. So, remember Oliver, if you ever get into trouble just shout out and if you can't remember, get the boys and girls to help.

(*Mamie exits in ghostly music*).

Oliver That was all a bit strange. Why would I ever need to call on a ghost to help me? She would be no use trying to pick up wood and that's why I'm here. I came out to get some for our meagre fire. Being an orphan, I live in the workhouse which is looked after by Mr Bumble and Widow Corney. They are quite mean and we have to collect our own firewood so we can keep warm. One of these days, I'll show them, I'll run away to London.

(*Perhaps a song of yearning, wishing for a better life*).

(*End song, end scene, blackout*).

Scene 2

(*Lights up on the workhouse scene. There should be some indication that Christmas is coming, a lonely twig with one bauble on it is to one side. There are adults and children on making baskets and / or sacks. Opportunity here for a song.*)

(*End song if there is one*).

Man one (*He walks over to a twig with one bauble on that is standing in a pot and Oliver enters with some twigs as he speaks*). Glad to see Mr Bumble has made an effort with the Christmas tree this year.

Oliver Has he? Really? *(He looks at the tree and puts his twigs down)*. What did it look like last year?

Man one It was just a twig.

Woman one Oh yes, so much better this year. *(Slight pause)*. It's nearly time for supper.

Oliver How can you tell? There's no clock and you don't have a watch.

Woman one My stomach has just grumbled five o'clock.

(Dick, another boy moves next to Oliver and they strike up conversation).

Dick Where are your parents Oliver? Mine were sent to Australia.

Oliver Mine are dead, I think.

Dick Do you think you will stay here?

Oliver Not if I can help it. Don't tell anyone but I'm going to run away to London to seek my fortune the first chance I get.

Dick But it will soon be Christmas and London is such a dangerous place I've heard.

Oliver Let me think Christmas in a bustling place full of cutthroats and vagabonds? *(Looks around him)*. So, no change there then. London's got to be better than this.

(A bell is rung and Mr Bumble and Widow Corney enter with a cauldron containing 'supper')

Mr B Come on now, bring your dishes and a fork, its supper time.

Man one *(Getting excited speaks to others)*. Fork? Must be something solid, like meat.

(They all expectantly queue up with their dishes and a fork and Widow Corney ladles out a thin gruel).

Man one *(Being first in the queue he looks in the pot)*. I thought you said we needed a fork?

Mr B It'll make your gruel last longer. There is potato as well.

Man one *(Again to the others)*. There's potatoes!

Mr B That's plural. I said potato. But there are some surprises in there for you.

Dick *(Wistfully)*. A yule tide surprise, how wonderful.

Man one I suppose the surprise is you are actually feeding us.

Dick *(Deflated)*. Oh yes. We haven't had anything proper to eat for days.

Mr B You thankless lot. You had meat, as I recall, a week last Tuesday.

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Widow Quite right Mr Bumble, I recollect the same thing. Sometimes they are so ungrateful. *(To the ensemble)*. Shut up and eat your bugs, I mean gruel.

(Mr Bumble and Widow Corney stand by the cauldron / pot as the others eat ravenously. As each finish they look at Oliver who is just eating his last spoonful).

Dick *(To Oliver)*. Are you still hungry? We're starving. Even after eating that insect infested gruel.

Man one I actually thought the little white grubs were very nice. Crunchy. Tasted a bit like chicken.

Woman one Chicken? I can't remember the last time I had chicken. It certainly wasn't in that lot. *(Turns to Oliver)*. Come on Oliver, you know you want to.

Oliver Want to what?

All *(Man, Woman and Dick plus others)*. Ask for more!

Oliver Always with the more. When will you just get over it?

Dick Go on Oliver.

Oliver *(Thinks)*. Alright. I'll do it. Just this once, but then, that's it.

(Oliver stands and picks up his bowl and sets his face in his best hang dog expression and moves to Mr Bumble and Widow Corney. They spot him and a look of horror comes over their faces).

Widow Yes boy, what is it you want?

(Oliver doesn't answer but looks round at the others who have their bowls and forks at the ready).

Mr B Didn't you a'hear her boy? She asked you, what do you want?

Oliver Please sir, we'd like some more.

(The ensemble all look on expectantly with their bowls at the ready).

Mr B *(In ascending voice)*. Moooooore!

Oliver Yes please sir.

Widow That my boy will be....

Mr Banother bowl full, of course h'Oliver. Here you are.

Widow What?

Mr B *(To Widow Corney)*. Look at those big brown eyes, how can we refuse the boy another bowl of gruel?

(Mr Bumble doles out more food and the others subsequently line up looking expectantly at Mr Bumble. Widow Corney tells him off as they dish the food out).

Widow Mr Bumble sir, you're going quite soft in the head. He should be thoroughly chastised not fed, *(to the others on stage)* and the others made to clean the floors again, with their tongues! We shall speak more upon this later.

Mr B *(To Oliver in a stage whisper)*. I hope you appreciate this h'Oliver. I will now have to contend with the sharp end of Widow Corney's tongue. Believe me that is not a'lashin' I want.

(They all return to their seats and again start to eat).

Man one That was very brave Oliver. I thought you were in for a beating there.

Oliver Nothing brave about it. It was asking for more or probably getting eaten by you lot. No choice really.

Woman one True. *(To audience)*. He was beginning to look like a very large chicken.

Dick Thank you Oliver. I wouldn't have eaten you. *(Thinks)*. Perhaps just a bit of a nibble.

Oliver *(To audience)*. I think the sooner I'm out of here the better. *(To everybody)*. Just to be clear, I'm sleeping with one eye open tonight.

(Music strikes up and there is a closing song from Oliver of yearning for better times/new beginnings).

(End song, end scene, blackout).

Scene 3

(It is an office scene. Widow Corney and Mr Bumble are on and they are discussing Oliver. As the lights come up they are standing in front of Mr Limbkins (seated) who is the master of the workhouse and is old, doddering and a little deaf).

Widowthen the little urchin had the affrontery to come and ask for more.

Mr Limbkins Ask for what? The door? Strange little boy.

Mr B Not the door sir, but for more. *(Raises his voice)*. More I say.

Mr Limbkins You want more? What for?

Mr B *(Getting cross and raising his voice again)*. Not me, Mr Limbkin, the boy asked for more.

Mr Limbkins For more? And there's no need to shout Bumble. I'm old, not deaf.

Widow Could have fooled me.

Mr Limbkins Am I to understand that he asked for more after he had eaten the supper we allotted? Why, even you would put on weight eating the chicken, roast potatoes and spotted dick pudding we allow them. Didn't they like it Mr Bumble?

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Mr B We love it, I mean, they love it Mr Limbkins sir.

Mr Limbkins The nerve though. Perhaps I should come and supervise the next mealtime and see for myself.

Mr B (*Quickly*). No need sir. We have it all under control.

Widow All under control sir. (*To audience*). We'll just keep feeding them the gruel and save us the good stuff.

Mr Limbkins What was that?

Widow I said we'll just keep feeding the fools and giving 'em the good stuff.

Mr Limbkins Quite, quite. Now then Mr Bumble, what are we going to do about this Oliver? If he keeps asking for more and we feed him, they will all end up eating us out of house and home I say. He needs to be put out to work.

Mr B I couldn't h'agree more sir. I will see to it directly.

Mr Limbkins Good. See that you do. Take five pounds from the petty cash as an incentive for the prospective employer.

(Mr Limbkins rises from his seat and dodders off).

(Mr Bumble shouts for Oliver)

Mr B Oliver, come 'ere boy.

(Oliver runs on).

Mr B There you are. Next time don't keep me and Widow Corney a'waitin'.

Oliver Seriously? I came straight in.

Widow Enough of your back chat. Mr Bumble has something to say to you, you ungrateful wretch.

Mr B You are to be taken from this place.....

Widow (*A pronouncement*). ...and hung.

Mr B Nothing of the kind Widow Corney. (*To Oliver*). You are to be taken from this place and put to work. I am to find you an h'apprenticeship.

(Mr Bumble goes to the side of the stage and puts up a notice offering five pounds to anyone who will take on Oliver as their apprentice).

(Tabs in. In front of tabs. Oliver and Mr Bumble enter now in their hats and coats though Oliver should still look threadbare).

Oliver Where are you taking me sir?

Mr B I'm a'takin' you to see Mr Gamfield. He is a chimney sweep. See if he fancies shoving you up a chimney or two. (*Mr Gamfield enters. He is carrying a chimney brush*). Talk of the devil, here he comes now.

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Mr B *(To Mr Gamfield)*. I was just saying to young h'Oliver here that I was a'coming to see you.

Mr G Were you indeed? And why would that be?

Mr B Well, with you bein' a chimney sweep I thought you might need a good little 'prentice to shin up yer chimneys.

Mr G Did yer now? How much you offerin' for me to take him off yer 'ands?

Mr B I was thinking, three pounds?

Oliver How much? Mr Limbkins gave you a fiver.

Mr B Quiet boy.

Mr G Make it three pounds ten shillings and it's a deal.

Mr B Ten shillings too much if you ask me. I'm sorry the boy's not for sale at that price.

Mr G I didn't need him really anyway. Just got meself a new brush. *(Waggles his brush)*. Works a treat and you don't have to keep setting fire to the chimneys to get the little blighters out.

(Mr Gamfield exits).

Mr B If you were to ask me Oliver, I think that was a lucky escape.

Oliver *(To audience)*. If you were to ask me, then I would say he was right. Phew!

Mr B *(Looking at Oliver)*. Did you speak boy?

Oliver What me? Never!

Mr B Good. Now, get yerself off back to the workhouse. I've some errands to run so, mind you go straight back. Lord knows I don't want you a'kidnapped or anything before I get the chance to sell you off, er' get you into a decent place of employment.

Oliver Straight back sir, yes sir.

(Oliver exits at a trot).

Mr B *(To audience)*. I wonder if there are any ships need a cabin boy? Perhaps I should just stop at ye olde *(name of a local pub)* on the way home? A rat infested den if I ever saw it, but no doubt I should be able to find a place for the boy through there.

(Mr Sowerberry enters and as he sees Mr Bumble he approaches and shakes his hand).

Mr S How good to see you Mr Bumble. *(He looks him up and down, perhaps takes out a tape measure and starts measuring him up)*. Are you feeling well, in good health?

Mr B In rude health Mr Sowerberry, thank you for asking and you can keep your undertaker's eye to yourself.

Mr S Sorry Bumble, I'm afraid it is a force of habit.

Mr B And how are you this day? Overworked I dare say?

Mr S As you say. Only today I have visited your establishment twice.

Mr B You'll make your fortune Mr Sowerberry. Just in time for Christmas.

Mr S Think so? The prices allowed by the board are very small Mr Bumble.

Mr B So are the coffins.

Mr S Indeed they are, helped by you, in no small measure, with your new system of feeding.

Mr B (*He looks round hastily*). Just bye the bye on the subject of undernourished individuals, you don't know anybody who wants a boy, do you? A parochial 'prentice who is at present a dead weight, a millstone, as I may say, around the parochial throat. Liberal terms Mr Sowerberry, liberal terms. (*He indicates the poster showing five pounds*).

Mr S A dead weight you say? That's right up my street.

Mr B Droll Mr Sowerberry, very droll. Jestng apart, are you interested?

Mr S For five pounds stated Mr Bumble sir, I should say so. I will take the boy meself.

Mr B In that case lets away to the parochial board to seal the deal.

(*A potential here for a suitable song. End song. Mr Bumble and Mr Sowerberry exit. As they exit Mamie enters*).

Mamie It seems Oliver's fate is sealed then. The board are agreeing to it as I speak. (*She puts her hand to her ear as if listening in*). What's that they are saying? It seems old Sourpuss, I mean Sowerberry will take Oliver upon liking. In other words if he doesn't work hard and keep his bedroom, or in Oliver's case, his shelf tidy they will throw him out on the street. I wonder how all this is going to work out.

(*End scene, Blackout*).

Scene 4

(*Lights up front of tabs. Oliver and Mr Bumble enter. They are on their way to Mr Sowerberrys*).

Mr B Right then h'Oliver you know what you have to do don't you?

Oliver I'm sure I don't sir.

Mr B You have to be grateful boy.

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Oliver For being shipped off and sold to a stingy undertaker.

Mr B Yes, I mean no, not at all. You are being most ill-disposed, Oliver

Oliver Yes sir, Mr Bumble sir. *(He starts to cough in exaggerated manner).*

Mr B And you can stop that as well. *(Mr Bumble looks down at Oliver).* Right m'boy we are nearly there so, take that cap from your eyes and hold up your head. I want you to look the picture of health.

Oliver *(To audience).* I think it will take just a bit more than the position of my cap to do that. *(He puts his cap on the back of his head).*

(They exit and the curtain opens on Sowerberry's undertakers. There should be some semblance of coffins and a counter and it should be suitably lit. A door isn't necessary but perhaps the sound of an entrance bell would be effective. Perhaps a suitable song for Mr and Mrs Sowerberry to sing with maybe some chorus as customers. As Mr Bumble and Oliver enter, Mr and Mrs Sowerberry are on and any chorus exit).

Mr S Oh Mr Bumble how cordial of you to visit. *(To Mrs Sowerberry).* Isn't it cordial to see Mr Bumble, my sweet?

Mr B *(Aside to Mr Sowerberry).* You haven't told her have you?

Mr S No.

Mrs S Told me what?

Mr S Actually, Mr Bumble has come with a proposition.

Mrs S A proposition?

Oliver That would be me. *(Oliver bows).*

Mr S Mr Bumble has need of getting rid of a boy, that boy and I said we would take him.

Mrs S Did you now? And what do you propose we feed him on. *(Looks at Oliver).* Though he is rather small.

Mr B Why, he is rather small isn't he. *(Then as though it is Oliver's fault).* He is small. But he'll grow Mrs Sowerberry, he'll grow.

Mrs S No doubt he will, on our food and drink.

Mr S Oh I'm sure he can work his keep. Can't you boy? *(To Mrs Sowerberry).* I can just see him now walking in front of the coffins as a mourner. *(He places a big top hat on Oliver's head).* Look my dear, he plays quite the part with that melancholy expression on his face.

Mr B And let's not forget the money.

(Mr Sowerberry gives Bumble a 'look' as if to say don't tell her anything).

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Mrs S What money? We're not paying anything for him. You can take him away.

Mr B (*Laughing*). No, no, Mrs Sowerberry. (*Mr Sowerberry tries to stop Mr Bumble saying anything*). We'll be paying you. Three pounds Ten shillings I think we agreed. (*He looks at Mr Sowerberry*).

Mr S Why, you cheating beadle, we agreed five pounds!

Mrs S Five pounds! (*Looks to Mr Sowerberry*). When were you going to tell me about that then? (*To Mr Bumble*). The money Mr Bumble, if you please. If that was agreed then we shall shake on that. If not, the boy can go back to the workhouse.

Oliver (*To Mr Bumble*). Nice try.

Mr S Shall we conclude our business in the parlour over a glass of something?

Mr B How cordial.

Mrs S (*To Oliver*). Boy. You stay here. There are some meat scraps left over on the plate there. (*She points to a plate on the floor*). It's a shame, they were for the dog, but I suppose you can have it.

(*Oliver approaches it greedily. He waits until the others have exited and falls on the meat to eat it. As he does so, Charlotte and Noah enter*).

Charl Oh look Noah, we have a new boy.

Noah It's that boy from the workhouse. Hello Work'us.

Oliver (*Mouth full*). Hello yourself.

Noah Is that all you've got to say for yourself?

Oliver Actually no. (*Looks up from plate*). Have you any brown sauce?

Charl Oooh Noah, he's giving you a bit of sauce.

Noah Really? And him a poor orphan boy. He 'as no right. How's yer mother Work'us?

Oliver The names Oliver and you can just leave my mother out of this, alright? (*To audience*). Y'know if he keeps on I'll not be able to contain myself.

Noah (*Mockingly*). Poor little Oliver Work'us, all alone in the world. Boo hoo, boo hoo.

Oliver (*To audience*). That's it. (*To Noah*). Right, you're for it.

(*Oliver gets up wipes his mouth and slowly advances on Noah who starts backing away from him. They then have a chase around the stage and Oliver eventually catches him and wrestles him to the floor and he starts to pummel him. In between thumps he speaks to the children. Charlotte meanwhile is shouting to Oliver to stop*).

Oliver (*Thump*). Boys and girls (*thump*), this is not something you should do, (*thump*).....

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Charl (*Agitated*). Stop that at once

Oliver....but he's been asking for it from the moment I saw his face (*thump*)...

Charl Stop that, you beastly boy.

(*Charlotte grabs hold of Oliver roughly and between Noah and Charlotte they bundle Oliver off stage supposedly locking him in a small room. She exits running to get Mr Bumble*).

Noah (*Shouting off*). Now you're for it! We're getting Mr Bumble.

Oliver (*Bangs on the 'door'*). Don't think that beadle will save you either.

(*Mr Bumble, Mr Sowerberry, Mrs Sowerberry and Charlotte enter. There is a sound like someone is kicking at a door. Mr Bumble makes as if to open the door but is held back by Mrs Sowerberry*).

Mrs S I wouldn't open the door Mr Bumble. It sounds like his blood is up. Who knows what he might do?

Mr B (*Relieved*). Quite right Mrs Sowerberry. I was waiting for someone to spot that. (*He shouts off*). Oliver!

(*Mr Bumble bends down as if he might be looking / speaking through a keyhole*).

Oliver (*Off*). Let me out!

Mr B Do you know this here voice h'Oliver?

Oliver Why? Don't you?

Mr B (*A little flustered*). Yes of course I do, it's me. But ain't you afraid, ain't you a'tremblin' while I speak sir?

Oliver (*Off, slight pause*). No!

(*At this 'No' Mr Bumble steps back as if by the sheer force of it and stands up*).

Mrs S The boy must be mad. No boy in half his senses would speak to you so.

Mr B It's not madness ma'am. (*As if thinking for a moment and then a pronouncement*). It's meat!

Mr and Mrs S Meat?

Mr B Yes meat! You've overfed him. You've raised an artificial spirit in the boy. If you had just fed him gruel ma'am this never would have happened.

Mrs S (*Looking quite pious*). Dear, dear, so this is what comes of being so liberal.

(*Blackout, end scene*).

Scene 5

(Lights back up, same location. It is night-time and the lighting should reflect this. Oliver is sitting, tied to a chair, centre stage. Chance for a song).

(End song).

Oliver *(To audience)*. That's me then, tied to a chair. Oh what is to become of me held captive by the stingy undertaker and his wife and that horrible Noah Claypole. I really shouldn't have thumped him but he was asking for it. I actually need to get out of here but what am I to do? Have you any ideas? *(They should suggest calling for Mamie)*. What was that? Shout for Mamie? You know I'd forgotten all about her. What was it I had to shout? *(He shouts out)*. Mamie where are you? No, that's not right. Mamie, it's me! No, that's not right either. *(As if he hears it from the audience)*. What's that, oh yes, **Mamie help me, Mamie help me, Mamie help me.**

(Mamie enters in a cloud of haze and mystical music).

Mamie Oliver, you called for me.

Oliver I was helped by the boys and girls. They reminded me what I had to shout.

Mamie You'd forgotten again? Oh dear. But now I'm here, how can I help you?

Oliver *(Being sarcastic)*. Erm, I can't tie my shoes.

Mamie Really? I would have thought that would have been the least of your problems. As I see it, you are secured to that chair.

Oliver Correct! Mamie, I need to get out of here, I've had enough. Can you help me?

(Just at that moment Noah Claypole and Charlotte enter).

Noah What's all the racket about Work'us? Talking to yerself? *(To Charlotte)*. See! I told you 'e was barmy.

Oliver As it happens I'm not talking to myself. I am actually talking to the dead.

Noah Very funny, unlike you. You're just off yer head that's what it is.

Charl *(Looking a bit frightened)*. Oooh Noah, I'm a bit scared. All this talk of ghosts and the dead.

Noah Seriously Charlotte, you work for an undertaker, how can you be scared?

(Mamie speaks but of course only Oliver can hear her for the moment).

Mamie Oliver, what do you want me to do?

Oliver *(Speaking to Mamie)*. Shall we have a bit of fun?

Charl *(Charlotte thinks Oliver is speaking to her)*. That's better. I like the sound of that.

Mamie Alright.

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Oliver (*Again to Mamie*). Maybe play a game, like you did with me when you blew in my ear?

Noah (*Looks at Charlotte confused*). Why have you been blowing in his ear? If you're going to blow in anybody's ear it's going to be mine.

Charl I haven't blown in anybody's ear, honestly Noah.

Oliver Any time you like.

Charl Thanks for the offer but I think I'd better give it a pass.

(Noah is standing to one side and behind Charlotte. Mamie comes between them and blows in Charlotte's ear).

Charl (*She thinks it is Noah*). Noah stop that. Now is not the time.

Noah (*Confused*). Stop what?

Charl You know what.

Noah I've not been up to any, you know what. You slapped me last time I did.

Charl Do it again and you'll get slapped again. (*She turns to face Oliver*). What are you up to? (*As she speaks Mamie again blows in her ear. As Mamie gets out of the way Charlotte turns and slaps Noah. This must be quite slapstick and not too real*). That's for doing it again.

Noah Owww! Doing what again? I haven't done anything.

Charl What? Are you saying you have not just blown in my ear twice?

Noah (*Still holding his face*). No.

Charl (*To Noah*). And stop holding your face like that. You look like a big baby.

Noah You're going to slap me again aren't you?

Charl No. (*Noah takes his hand down and Charlotte slaps him again*). I lied.

Noah (*Getting a bit angry moves to Oliver*). Right, what is going on in here. You're up to something and I want to know what it is?

Oliver How can I be up to something? I'm tied to a chair and you two big lumps are standing over me.

(Mamie moves behind Charlotte, who is standing behind Noah and taps her on the shoulder. Charlotte turns around and now sees Mamie).

Mamie Boo!

Charl (*Screams*). Aaaaagh! (*She exits running*).

Noah (*Looking around in surprise and a little shocked. Then back to Oliver*). What just happened then? What are you doing?

Oliver Nothing. Still tied up remember.

(Mamie now moves behind Noah and taps him on the shoulder. He turns and now sees her).

Mamie Boo!

Noah *(Screams)* Aaaaaagh! *(He exits running).*

Oliver Very funny Mamie. You should be on the stage. *(Looks to audience)*. Right can you untie me? It's about time I got out of here and set off on my way to London.

(Mamie magically unties him and perhaps there is a short song here then Oliver and Mamie exit).

(End song, end scene, blackout).

Scene 6

(Lights up on a London Town scene. It should look cold and Christmassy with street sellers and lots of red, green and gold. Chorus are on and there is a festive song and dance. Oliver enters part way through and perhaps could be involved involuntarily).

(End song, chorus exit. Oliver collapses to the ground to one side of the stage).

Oliver *(To audience)*. Phew! That was all a little energetic. *(Looks around him)*. So, this is London Town. I wonder if they always break into a song and dance?

(Another group of chorus enter and start to sing and dance again only to be interrupted by Jack Dawkins AKA Artful Dodger as he enters).

AD Oi, you lot. Pack it in!

(The chorus all stop mid song / dance and the music clatters to a halt. They look at him as he speaks).

AD *(To audience)*. Blimey, get to London Town and they can't 'elp themselves. With all the um did didlin, considerin' and feedin' pidgeons. Next you'll be Oompahing and walking all the way to flamin' Lambeth! *(To chorus)*. Give it a break will ya! *(Chorus start to slink off mumbling to themselves as Artful Dodger turns to Oliver)*. Sorry about that me ol' china.

(Oliver and Artful Dodger step forward and tabs come in to set Fagin's den).

Oliver Ol' china?

AD China plate, mate.

Oliver Ah yes I get it, wooden brush, friend.

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AD Mmm, not quite. Never mind about that for now. Let me introduce myself. I am the honourable Jack Dawkins at your service (*bows*), or Artful Dodger to you, but you can call me Dodger. (*Looks him up and down*). So, who are you and what are you doing in this neck of the woods?

Oliver My name is Oliver, Oliver Twist and I've run away to make my fortune in London Town.

AD Oh my eye, well you've come to the right place.

Oliver Have I? Why?

AD 'Cause first of all, this is London Town, or as we affectionately call it, the smoke and secondly 'cause you have found me and I can take you to a bloke wot can 'elp you make your fortune.

Oliver I don't suppose there'll be any food going will there? I'm starving.

AD There might be. There's generally a sausage or two in the pan. I suppose you'll also be wantin' a bed to sleep in?

Oliver I do indeed. I've not slept in a bed since I left the country.

AD Don't fret yer eyelids on that score. I've got that sorted

(Chance of a song here of friendship, new beginnings etc.)

(End song if there is one and Oliver and Artful Dodger exit, blackout).

(Lights up. The curtains open to reveal Fagin's den. There should be a large fireplace and have the feel of an old attic. There are a few boys / girls on stage. They are roughly dressed and are lounging about on chairs / floor / tables playing cards or other such games. Fagin should be on but should be in shadow as Oliver and Artful Dodger enter).

(There is a whistle off stage and one of the boys on stage, as look out, leaps to his feet).

Juvi 1 Now then!

AD *(Off)*. Plummy and Slam.

Juvi 1 Who?

AD *(Off and more insistent)*. Plummy and Slam.

Juvi 1 Who?

AD *(Enters with Oliver)*. It's me, Dodger, you nitwit

(Others on stage sit and take notice some come and see who it is).

Juvi 1 Ohh! Who's he then?

AD A new pal, that's who.

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(Fagin steps out of the shadows).

Fagin Dodger! My dear boy. How pleasant to see you again and how lovely to meet your new pal. Aren't you going to introduce us?

AD Sorry. Mr Fagin, I would like to h'introduce to you the honourable Oliver Twist. H'Oliver this is the dishonourable Mr Fagin or Fagin to you and me.

Fagin Delighted to meet you Oliver. Sit down. Take a load off your plates of meat *(Oliver looks at him)*. Feet young man.

Oliver Ahh yes I get it, Tin of spam, shoes.

AD *(To Oliver shaking his head)*. Now you're getting the hang of it.

Fagin Would you like something to eat Oliver. I have some sausages just done to a turn in a little red wine and sage.

AD *(To Oliver as he takes a sausage from Fagin)*. He fancies himself as a bit of chef. Says he wants to open a restaurant.

Fagin Indeed that is my dream and these young, erm, people are here to help me achieve that dream and in fact are helping me finance the whole thing. *(To the whole stage)*. Aren't you boys!

(They all cheer and gather round Fagin).

Fagin Now then my dears as this is the time for giving and receiving shall we show dear Oliver exactly how we receive from people's giving.

(They all laugh).

(Now we have a pickpocket scene which needs to be choreographed. One of the gang walks swankily across the stage with a hanky hanging out of his pocket as another bumps into him swipes his hanky then hands it off neatly to another going in the opposite direction).

Fagin *(Clapping)*. Oh neatly done boys. Did you see that Oliver? Do you think you could do that, earn your keep for me?

Oliver Thank you very much for the offer, but I don't want to be a thief. Perhaps I could do a spot of cleaning for you?

(Again all on stage laugh but Fagin gets a bit annoyed).

Fagin Be quiet and drink yer Tizer!

(Bill Sikes enters with Nancy).

Bill What's all the racket about?

Fagin *(To Bill)* We have a new guest. Oliver, this is our good friend Mr William Sikes esquire or as he likes to be known, Bill and I mustn't forget to introduce to you the lovely Nancy. *(She curtsies)*.

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Oliver Pleased to meet you Mr Sikes, Nancy.

Bill Likewise I'm sure.

Nancy Charmed. *(To Fagin)*. Oh he's such a little gentleman.

Bill Enough of the formalities. Now then Oliver, are you going to be able to help us earn a living?

Oliver I'll certainly do as much as I can.

Bill Dodger, we need to try and help the young thief er, man here. Take him out, Nancy you go with them and make sure they give him some practice while I talk to my good friend, Fagin.

(Oliver, Artful Dodger, Nancy and the others exit).

Fagin Now then Bill, can I interest you in a sausage?

Bill No thanks.

Fagin Some Christmas cake then?

Bill Go on, just a small slice.

(Gives Bill a piece of cake).

Fagin It's so moist and going to be a firm favourite. I got the recipe off the high street. One of the boys stole it from the baker's pocket.

Bill What about this boy Oliver then? Is he going to be up to it? 'Cause, if he is no good to us we might have to let him go, you know, splash, *(indicates he's dropping something)* into the Thames!

Fagin Harsh Bill, very harsh indeed. More cake?

(Perhaps a song here. End song, end scene, blackout).

Scene 7

(It's a full stage lit for nighttime in London Town. There are some chorus on stage engaged in shopping / talking / promenading – if no song at the end of the last scene one here may be apt. If the production is prior to Christmas, then a festive song would be appropriate. (As the song ends) Oliver, Artful Dodger and others enter. They start sizing up their 'marks'. The following pickpocket 'moves' need to be choreographed and made slick. The boys are positioned to one side of the stage looking very furtive).

AD *(To Oliver)*. Right then Oliver. Tell me what do you see?

Oliver People spending lots of money at Christmas time on food and all sorts of nice things.

AD That's right. So, their purses will be full and so will their baskets and that means what?

Oliver Their baskets will be quite heavy?

AD My eyes, how green you are.

Oliver *(To audience)*. That must be the dodgy sausage I ate earlier.

AD It means they are all ripe for the pinchin', by you, you little tea leaf.

Oliver Pardon?

AD Tea leaf, thief.

Oliver Right, I get it, brown sauce, burglar.

AD What? Oh never mind. Now, I want you to watch what we do, then you do it. Alright?

Oliver Alright then. But I must warn you I'm not very good at it.

(What happens next is a routine where the chorus moves around the stage and the boys move amongst them stealing purses and handkerchiefs, perhaps two or three iterations. They either hand them off to Oliver who returns them to their owner or Oliver then steals them back from the boys showing he is actually quite skillful and returns them to the owners, obviously without their knowledge. After this routine Artful Dodger gathers everybody together again at the side of the stage).

AD Very good. How did we get on then? Show me.

(They all go to retrieve items stolen but of course their pockets are empty).

AD Nothin'? Oliver how about you?

Oliver *(Innocently)*. Nothing as well, I'm afraid.

AD Blimey, I could have sworn, *(to audience)*, but of course I don't, *(to gang)*, that we had a good haul there.

(As Artful Dodger speaks Mr Brownlow enters and starts looking at a stall that has books. The boys crowd round him and jostle him a bit and then one of them pinches his book. At this point Mr Brownlow does not realise he has had anything stolen. They all run off except Oliver who has been handed the item and instead of running away with the others creeps back behind Mr Brownlow to put the book back in his pocket. As he is about to put the item back in Brownlow's pocket a member of the chorus spots him and thinks he is stealing something).

Chorus one Hi you! Thief!

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