

English

Lesson 2: Oliver Heads to London

## **Oliver Meets Fagin**

Mr Johnston



He threw open the door of a back-room, and drew Oliver in after him.

The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger-beer bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. In a frying-pan, which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string, some sausages were cooking; and standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair. He was dressed in a greasy flannel gown, with his throat bare; and seemed to be dividing his attention between the frying-pan and the clothes-horse, over which a great number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging. Several rough beds made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with the air of middle-aged men. These all crowded about their associate as he whispered a few words to the Jew; and then turned round and grinned at Oliver. So did the Jew himself, toasting-fork in hand.



'This is him, Fagin,' said Jack Dawkins;' my friend Oliver Twist.'

The Jew grinned; and, making a low obeisance to Oliver, took him by the hand, and hoped he should have the honour of his intimate acquaintance. Upon this, the young gentleman with the pipes came round him, and shook both his hands very hard—especially the one in which he held his little bundle. One young gentleman was very anxious to hang up his cap for him; and another was so obliging as to put his hands in his pockets, in order that, as he was very tired, he might not have the trouble of emptying them, himself, when he went to bed.

These civilities would probably be extended much farther, but for a liberal exercise of the Jew's toasting-fork on the heads and shoulders of the affectionate youths who offered them.

Credit: *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens 1838 (Project Gutenberg)



‘We are very glad to see you, Oliver, very,’ said the Jew. ‘Dodger, take off the sausages; and draw a tub near the fire for Oliver. Ah, you’re a-staring at the pocket-handkerchiefs! eh, my dear. There are a good many of ‘em, ain’t there? We’ve just looked ‘em out, ready for the wash; that’s all, Oliver; that’s all. Ha! ha! Ha!’

The latter part of this speech, was hailed by a boisterous shout from all the hopeful pupils of the merry old gentleman. In the midst of which they went to supper.

Oliver ate his share, and the Jew then mixed him a glass of hot gin-and-water: telling him he must drink it off directly, because another gentleman wanted the tumbler. Oliver did as he was desired. Immediately afterwards he felt himself gently lifted on to one of the sacks; and then he sunk into a deep sleep.

Credit: *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens 1838 (Project Gutenberg)



## Complete the sentences:

1. The reader is likely to think that Fagin is an untrustworthy character **because...**
2. It is significant that Fagin is described as holding a 'toasting-fork' **because...**
3. Even though Fagin seems to be pleased to meet Oliver,...
4. Fagin seems to fawn over Oliver **through...**
5. Fagins seems to Fawn over Oliver **in order to...**



## Extension Task

**‘How does Dickens present Fagin as untrustworthy in this extract?’**

Write a paragraph/essay on the question above.

