

You've got to Pick a Pocket or Two!

Inspired by Charles Dickens's second novel, *Oliver Twist*, published in 1837, the musical drama film *Oliver!* was released in 1968 to great acclaim. It won six Academy Awards and two Golden Globes. Directed by Carol Reed and filmed in Surrey's Shepperton Film Studio, *Oliver!* regularly features in polls compiling the top 100 British films of all time.



This classic story focuses on the life of an orphaned nine-year-old boy called Oliver Twist (Mark Lester) who resides in a workhouse in mid-Victorian London. After being encouraged to ask for 'seconds' at meal time, angry workhouse bosses chuck the young lad out and sell him to an undertaker, where life doesn't get any better. After making an escape, Oliver finds himself roaming the streets of London, where he's befriended by urchin Artful Dodger (Jack Wild), who introduces him to a group of boys and an elderly man called Fagin (Ron Moody) who live in a hideout. It soon becomes apparent that they're a pickpocket gang, and Fagin is the mentor teaching the young lads to steal to survive without paying tax. He reinforces his motto, 'You've got to pick a pocket or two' to get by.

This famous scene is played out in Fagin's den, where the ditty instructs the young boys how to steal the handkerchiefs and possessions from the pockets of gentlemen. As the first song in Act I Scene VI, the boys dance nimbly and perform gymnastics while waving hankies around, to prove to Oliver just how easily pickpocketing can be done without getting caught.

Fagin provides shelter for the boys in return for imparting his criminal teachings, but despite his wealth and his fondness for addressing people as 'my dear', he's miserly, insincere and not interested in improving the lives of the youngsters who he takes under his wing. Fagin also collaborates with a serial burglar called Sikes (Oliver Reed) and his girlfriend Nancy (Shani Wallis).

After Oliver is wrongly accused of stealing the wallet of a man called Mr Brownlow (Joseph O'Connor), the kindly gentleman offers to take the young lad in, much to the annoyance of Fagin and Sikes, who worry he'll grass them up. Sikes kidnaps Oliver and returns him to Fagin's lair, but after a kerfuffle which sees Fagin murdering Nancy and Sikes being fatally shot, Oliver is returned to the safe confines of Mr Brownlow, while Fagin and the Artful Dodger continue with a life of crime.

As well as the standout scene, 'You've got to pick a pocket or two', other notable scenes from the film include 'Food glorious food', when Oliver asks for more to eat; 'Where is love?', when Oliver is sold to the undertaker; 'Consider

yourself', where Oliver meets the Artful Dodger; and 'Reviewing the situation', where Fagin ponders giving up crime... but quickly dismisses the idea!



If you're the type who likes to collect items, preferably not in the manner of Fagin and his crew, you'll need somewhere safe and secure to store them. [Solent Plastics](#) offers a wide range of plastic storage solutions to cater for every collector's needs.