

Oliver Twister

Characters

Oliver -- New Micromet PhD -- Alex Doyle
Fagin -- Sue Grimmond -- Beth Saunders
Nancy -- Clare Watt -- Meg Stretton
Charles Dickens -- Simon Lee
Brian Hoskins -- Kris Boykin
Artful Dodger -- Humphrey Lean -- Sally
Gang #1 and #2 / PhD students #1 and #2 - Bethan and Kaja
Maarten Ambaum -- Michael
Mr. Brownlow -- Anthony Illingworth -- Jonathan "Barry" Beverley
Mr. Bumble -- Wendy Neale -- Alec
Tristan Quaife -- Andrea
Neil Blanchonnet-- Jonathan
Javier -- Dom
Steve Woolnough -- Dan
Campus Job Worker - Rachael
Mat Owens -- Carl Haines
The Doctor -- Jake Bland

Scene 1

- **Charles** *right*
- **Brian** *left*
- **Oliver** *left*
- **PhD student #1** *left*
- **PhD student #2** *left*
- **Neil** *left*
- **Tristan** *left*
- **Wendy** *left*

On stage is Charles Dickens, standing Stage Right.

Charles: Welcome to this year's Met Department Panto. I'm Charles Dickens - I'm just waiting for my oldest friend Professor Sir Brian Hoskins - have you seen him?

Enter Brian Stage Left. Audience: He's behind you.

Charles: *(Looks over wrong shoulder, then sees Brian)* There you are, old chum! Now, we have for you this cold winter's evening my finest work of Christmas fiction -

A Christmas Carol Met panto poster on slide.

Brian: Oliver Twister!

Charles: Oh no it isn't *(repeat ad infinitum)*

Brian: Oh yes it is!

Charles: *(Hurriedly changing papers around)* Fine, we'll go with that one then.

Change to actual Oliver panto slide.

Charles: *(Trying to hide obvious irritation)* Brian, do you mind going off and fixing the flux capacitor?

Brian backs off stage gingerly. Stage Right.

Charles: So we find new PhD student, Oliver Twister, struggling to log into the Met Cluster.

Enter Oliver, Phd 1&2 Stage Left, Oliver is typing away, in a room of other PhD students. Background Office.

Oliver: Oh bother! I'm having no luck at all with this Met Cluster nonsense! I'm going to have to submit an IT ticket.

PhD student #1: Oh the Met Cluster is always breaking, I never get any work done. It's why we have so many coffee breaks.

Charles: We never had problems with centralised cluster computing in my day...

Oliver: Who will help me?

PhD #2: Do this dance *(dances)* and this noise *(makes a noise)* and someone from IT will appear!

Oliver does the dance and noise. Neil Blanchonnet jumps in, accompanied by IT email, from Stage Left.

Neil: Apologies again for the interruptions to service. Engineers in America are continuing to work on the issues - updates to follow.

PhD #1: *(sarcastic)* Thank you Neil Blanchonnet!

PhD #2: Oh Oliver, you'd better get used to this...

SONG - 500 Miles

Neil, PhD 1&2, Oliver, Charles

*When I'm coding, well it won't be very long
Before I'm stopped because my M drive's disappeared
Need to back-up, all my files before they're gone
Or I won't see them for another hundred years
I might get drunk, because I need to forget
That I re-wrote a Python script a dozen times
I filed a ticket, but IT marked it resolved
They said my files were there and everything was fine*

*And I will lose 500 files
And I will lose 500 more
When the IT breaks we're in the dark
The communication's very poor*

Network issues, eduroam has gone offline
Now I can't even use my keyboard or my mouse
I stab the keys but, can't press Control Alt Delete, I'd
Better head down to the coffee room to grouse
When I log in (when I log in), well I open NoMachine
But nxnode needs to be reset once again
And I will grow old (I will grow old) waiting for it to be fixed
I may as well just go and play croquet till then

And I will wait 500 hours
And I will wait 500 more
Croquet hoops don't need to be plugged in
The IT can't break if you're outdoors

Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
There's only so many games of croquet you can play

Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Better hope that you don't face Steve Woolnough today

Neil Blanchonnet, well we know he's gonna be
He's gonna be the man who's working hard for us
He's got to fix it, before everyone gets mad

If he's too slow then Roger Brugge will make a fuss
On the website (on the website) there's an IT status page
Where you can find out all the things that have gone wrong
But when I load it (when I load it) it says the server is not found
I'd better call the Service Desk and sing this song
I'd better call the Service Desk and sing this song
And I will call 500 times
And I will call 500 more
Just to find out what is going on
They won't give us what we're asking for

Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Oh I wanted to get some work done just this once

Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
When the met cluster breaks better head to the SCR

Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Might get decent attendance at the seminar

Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Where's my M Drive? (Where's my M Drive?)
Da da dun diddle un diddle un diddle un da da

*And I would walk 500 miles
And I would walk 500 more
Just to find a PC that still works
The IT was better in 1984. . .*

Neil exits Stage Left. PhD 1 and PhD 2 go back to typing. (back left side of stage)

Oliver: Well, until they fix that - what can I do?

Charles: Oh, well, why don't you talk to your supervisor?

Tristan enters, Stage Left.

Oliver: Oh hey Tristan! What's wrong with the IT around here? *(Unaccompanied singing.)* "I can't do anything, on IT anything...I can't do anything at all! I know that...."

Charles: *(Cutting Oliver off)* Not now Oliver!

Tristan: You won't have to do anything Oliver, I'm afraid we've run out of funding for your PhD.

Oliver: What?! Please Sir, may I have some more?

Tristan: MORE?! NO! No one is interested in solar induced fluorescence, sadly. Anyway, I'm off on strike, so I can't supervise you, unfortunately. Bye, Oliver!

Tristan exits Stage Left. Oliver whistles 'Cheerio But Be Back Soon' - Charles and PhD students give him placards and tea and scarf.

Oliver: Oh no! Whatever will I do now?

In swoops Wendy Neale - segway slide, Stage Left.

Wendy: I've just got back from my recent ski holiday to Nigeria - what's up, little Oliver?

Oliver: Nigeria...are you sure? Oh, Wendy "Bumble" Neale! It's terrible! I've been orphaned! We've lost all our funding for my project - who will take me in?

Wendy: Why not take a wander round the coffee room and see who picks you up?

Oliver: *(With a sense of trepidation)* Well... that sounds like a good idea...

Wendy: And as an added bonus - there's lots of food left over from a meeting. Go and fill your boots, you'll need it, as we aren't paying you another bean till you find another supervisor.

Hilary's very abrupt food email slide.

Oliver: Oh good, because the only thing around was an unobtainable dairy milk caramel in the vending machine that was taunting me.

Dairy milk email slide.

Wendy leaves stage left.

PhD 1: Oh don't get too excited Oliver, they serve us the exact same food every single day in this place. Over and over... and over.

PhD 2: And it's the most boring tasteless food you could possibly imagine.

Oliver: Oh no! Is it gruel? I can't go back to that...

PhD 2: Oh no - I'd kill for some gruel!

PhD 1: No it's University Catering's 'Bronze Vegetarian Sandwich Platter.'

PhD 2: You know what PhD 1, it has improved since I started. But watch out for that Cheese and Pickle, it's got a real kick!

Exit Stage Left.

Charles: And so Oliver finds his way to the Met Coffee Room - will he enjoy his Bronze Vegetarian Sandwich Platter and will he find someone to take care of him and give him a research project?

Black out.

Scene 2

- **Charles** *right*
- **Brian** *right*
- **Dodger** *left*
- **Maarten** *left*
- **Oliver** *left*
- **Fagin** *right*
- **Gang #1** *left*
- **Gang #2** *left*

Just Charles at lectern, Stage Right.

Charles: Right well... Scene 2 (*ruffles papers*)...I seem to have misplaced my papers...

Enter Brian, Stage Right.

Brian: My time to Keith Shine, Charles! (*Ba-dum tsch*)

Charles: Who's Keith Shine?

Brian: Well he's a young pup compared to us, Charles. (*Turning to Charles. Hushed tone*) You'd better go and write the rest of the play.

Charles: You're probably right, old bean! Just keep the songs coming till I get back.

Brian: Cheerio, but be back soon.

Charles exits, Stage Right.

Brian: And so we join Oliver in the Met Coffee Room with the lovely new refurbished kitchen. Maarten Ambaum and Humphrey “Dodger” Lean are enjoying their coffee break.

Enter Oliver (looking lost) and Dodger and Maarten Ambaum. Stage Left

Dodger: (*Brash and confident*) Yer alright, gov? Isn't it good that we've got the new kitchen, better than having to boil the kettles. And a new cold tap that finally works! It's like Christmas came early!

Maarten: I'd just learnt to find my way around the map of the kitchen!

Put up slide of map.

Maarten: (*Turns to look at map. Deviously*) Oh, I didn't know we had a secret dungeon...finally, somewhere I can put those pesky first years...

Dodger: What's your opinion on the new urn? That fancy 'eco mode' business...

Put up slide of the eco-mode emails.

Maarten: Hmm... What even is eco mode? Is the urn half empty, half full? Maybe this is a problem for my Atmospheric Physics class? I hope they've got their copy of my book – only £49 (*Smiles at audience*).

Slide of Maarten's book.

Maarten: Ooh, that reminds me, I have a class of first years to terrorise...

Maarten Exits Stage Left.

Dodger: Well, who do we 'av 'ere then? A young little first year PhD.... (*Cockney arm wagging and umm-ing at will*)

Oliver: (*Nervously*) Oh hello, I've been abandoned. Tristan can't look after me, please sir, can I have some more supervisors?

Dodger: MORE?! Well yes, of course, because Met is such a friendly place. I'm sure we'll find someone to look after you.

Enter left song people - Gang #2, Maarten

SONG - Consider Yourself in Met

Dodger, Oliver, Maarten, Brian, PhD 1&2

*Consider yourself in Met,
Consider yourself part of the coffee room,
There's plenty of work, to spare,
And if you're sad, there's, lots of cake to share.*

*Consider yourself our peer,
Consider yourself part of the troposphere,
The coffee in here's, so strong,
And keeps you going, through, days that are long.*

*Everyone tries to be helpful and lov-er-ly,
There's a cup o' tea, for all.*

*And it's wise to have lecturers on your side,
When the MC comes to call.*

*Consider yourself in Met,
You may even meet Keith Shine,
And with or without a firm solution we can state,
Consider yourself... One of us!*

*Consider yourself ... in Met,
Consider yourself ... a meteorologist,
Have you heard of a wea-ther bomb,
Who cares, we're, going to get along.*

*Consider yourself our peer,
Consider yourself part of the atmosphere,
There isn't much room, to spare,
Who cares, there's plenty of space in Lyle.*

La-la-la-la Lyle.

(Band instrumental to tune of "Everyone tries to be..." etc.)

*Consider yourself in Met,
We hope the met clust-er works,
For after just a few citations we can state,
Consider yourself!! ...One of us!!*

Exit left song people - Gang #2, Maarten

Oliver: Oh! Everyone here seems so friendly.

Dodger: Oh we all are! Nothing sinister goes on here!

Oliver: Do you have anyone in mind to be my supervisor?

Dodger: I have just the person, it's who all lost PhDs end up with, Professor S. G. Fagin.

Slide of Sue as Fagin.

Enter Fagin right.

Fagin: Alright me lovelies. I see you have a new PhD for me, Dodge! Any – er – research you've got for me, my dear?

Dodger: *(Passing paper over to Fagin.)* This here is Oliver, a fresh new young PhD ready to join your team, Sir.

Fagin: Oh, marvellous! Come here, my boy! I'll show you how to research good and proper.

Oliver: *(Shakes hand)* Pleasure to meet you Professor Fagin, Sir.

Fagin: Come and join us in the Urban Met Group. Where only the very best scientists work! Follow me, my dears!

All the characters prance off stage right.

Brian: So Oliver goes with Fagin and Dodger to room 1U14, to meet the other PhDs in Professor Fagin's London network gang.

Enter Fagin, Dodger and Oliver and gang.

Fagin: So here we have the HQ of my London Network, Oliver, my boy. Make yourself at home, my lovely.

Gang #1: Who's this then, Fagin? You brought new blood in to the team? Can we trust him? Is he even a good researcher?...

Fagin: *(Loudly)* Shut up and drink yer gin!

All cast take a shot.

Oliver: Pleased to meet you. Who are you?

Gang #1: I'm not telling you!

Oliver: *(Innocently)* Oh, hello "not telling you"! I'm Oliver. I've been abandoned by my supervisor. I just want to be the best PhD student I can. Professor Fagin says she's going to help me.

Gang #2: Oh yes, Professor Fagin does "original" research here...

Gang #1: Haha yeah, good one, *(quotation marks with fingers)* "original"...

Disclaimer slide - this is all purely for entertainment purposes, and of course the research groups in question publish research that is all their own.

Fagin: That's enough of that my dears, you don't want to scare off the poor lad... Now see here Oliver, my boy – what's the most important thing you need to do research?

Oliver: Wine? Cake? Uhm... Money?

Fagin: Yeeeeees, lots and lots of money.

Oliver: And...data?

Fagin: Yesssss, lots and lots of data. You need to learn to steal my hard drives, my boy! Try to steal them from my cardigan pockets... *(Oliver slowly takes out an actual hard drive, looking confused. Fagin just keeps talking.)* I always like to keep my most important data on my person. Dropbox just won't do. You know I actually have a room full of them... Somewhere over near the greenhouses...

Song rearranging. PhD 1 & 2 grapple over hard drive. PhD 2 takes it and runs off stage.

SONG - You've got to plagiarise a paper or two

Oliver, PhD 1&2, Brian, Dodger?, "Crowd"

*With research, one thing counts,
Data and money, large amounts.
These things do not grow on trees,
You've got to steal-a-datum or two,
You've got to steal-a-datum or two dears,
(All) You've got to steal-a-datum or two.*

*These things do not grow on trees,
You've got to steal-a-datum or two*

*Why should we break our backs
Hurriedly finding facts?
Copy what you can, that is our plan.
Plagiarise a paper or two,
Please plagiarise a paper or two dears,
(All) Plagiarise a paper or two*

*Copy what you can, that is our plan.
Plagiarise a paper or two*

*Top research passing by,
Something cool gets our eye,
Publish soon, make your MC swoon,
Publish a paper or two.
Please publish a paper or two dears,
(All) Publish a paper or two*

*Publish soon, make your MC swoon,
Publish a paper or two.*

Everyone in song stays on stage momentarily.

Oliver: Oh – well now I know what to do, I can be the best PhD student you've ever had, Fagin!

Fagin: *(From drums)* That's it, my dear! Now off you all run, my pretties! Off to London to do research - greatness awaits!

Brian: And so Oliver goes off to London with the gang. What adventures will await him there?

Black out.

Scene 3

- **Brian** *right*
- **Charles** *right*
- **Dodger** *left*
- **Javier** *left*
- **Oliver** *left*
- **Crowd**

Charles and Brian on stage.

Brian: *(Annoyed)* Oh, you're back...Great. Not like I was just starting to enjoy myself.

Charles: *(Pretending to ignore. Positive)* Yes, I've managed to cobble something together, hopefully it includes enough current events and plot that it passes all the usual rigorous panto script-writing criteria.

Brian: Right, well, I guess I'll see you in a bit then...I'll just go and hang with the young 'uns back stage then. Bye everyone... *(Aww from the audience.)*

Charles: *(Facial expression stiffens)* Yes, clear off. That's enough limelight for you, Professor Sir. *(Gathers papers)* So Oliver finds himself at Reading train station with the gang. What adventures will they have in the capital?

Enter Oliver, Dodger, Javier stage left.

Dodger: Oh I hope these trains run on time to London! Thank God we're not getting Southern Rail. And with all those timetable changes, who knows what might happen.

Javier: Oliver, are you excited for your first train to London, young boy?

Oliver: I'm ecstatic, Javier, Post-doctoral research assistant at the Data Assimilation Research Centre!

Javier: Oh super!

Oliver: Let's go! Gee whizz, what fun!

Train montage.

Dodger: I like trains.

All dodge train as it tries to knock them off the stage.

Oliver: Wow – is this the Big Smoke?!

Javier: Why yes it is, young one! Reading is the Little Smoke.

Oliver: There's so many people here, it's so busy!

Dodger: Yeah, way more than normal though, me lad.

Suddenly people pile onto the stage with placards and a Trump balloon. Slide of Trump protests and the baby balloon.

Charles: Oh no! The gang seem to have stumbled on the protest against Trump's visit to the UK. This could get messy, in their quest to make research great again. *(Trump-esque)* They are just the best at research, no one researches better than Fagin's gang, they met Einstein who told them so, he just thought they were so fantastic. ...there's no collusion... it's fake news, fake news....

BAND - AMERICAN IDIOT RIFF

Crowd exit left

Javier is panicking, and trying to take off any props and costume that might alert Trump to him being Mexican.

Javier: Uh oh! Not Trump – he hates Mexicans! He tries to build walls around us...

Oliver: But how could anyone hate you, Javier?

Javier: Weeeell... I do work in data assimilation. No one likes DA. I help Fagin to assimilate her data. *(Winks at crowd)*

Oliver: That's terrific! Let's run away from the crowd.

Dodger: This way!

The gang leg it across the stage - stage right

Charles: The gang arrive at the Barbican Cromwell Tower, to measure the urban fluxes in the Big Smoke.

Gang re-enter stage right

Dodger: So Oliver, that's enough chit-chat! Let's get down to research!

Song slides

Enter song people

SONG - Make a Man Out of You - Mulan

Dodger, Charles, Oliver, Javier, "Crowd"

*Let's get down to research, and stealing da-ata!
We'll become the greatest, publish more... papers!
We have insufficient security,
On our da-ta storage machines.
Somehow I'll, make a scientist, out of you.*

*Calm before the stor-m, before Fagin... arrives!
We must put the data, on everyone's, hard drives.
We will plagiarise their every move,
With BGH and IMU.
Somehow I'll, make a researcher, out of you!!*

*Ain't ever gonna run my model,
Say goodbye to my social life,
Boy was I a fool for saving on the C drive.
IT issues got me scared to death!
King Wong sending all these emails,
Now I really wish that I knew how to code!*

*To be in met!
You must be in all the research groups.
To be in met!
With faith in all your - supervisors.
To be in met!
With tools to ma-nipulate your data.
Mysterious as the fahrenheit temperature scale!*

(band perform belter of a half step key change)

*Time is racing t'ward us, till the viva... arrives
Must we write a thesis, how can we, survive
Re-search is much much easier,
Without ori-ginal parts too.
How could I, make a scientist, out of you!!*

*To be in met!
You must be in all the research groups.
To be in met!*

*With faith in all your supervisors.
To be in met!
With tools to ma-nipulate your data.
Mysterious as... Jon Gre-gory's emails.*

Someone puts box on centre stage.

Dodger: So, my lad, we go inside this magic box. In you go, Oliver.

Oliver crawls inside enormous box.

Dodger: Now I need you to take this memory stick.

Oliver: OK and where do I put it?

Dodger: In the side of the shiny glowing box. And then press the red button on the right. It will steal all the data. And no one will know, we just say things have broken, and the Department always believe us.

Oliver: OK, I'll press the button.

Dodger: The big red one.

Oliver: Done it!

Missile alert for Hawaii slide.

Oliver: I don't think that was the right button, Dodger!

Javier: Is the flux capacitor plugged in?

Oliver: What does that look like?

Javier: A p...hmmm, no I can't say that...it looks like a mooli!

Slide of a mooli.

Oliver: Oh I have it! Where do I put it?

Javier: Oh shove it in the hole underneath, good and proper!

Dodger: Is it working now?

Oliver: *(Mild innuendo)* Oh, it's gone in! That feels right, I think. It's working!

Dodger: That's it Oliver! Push the red button on the left this time. Do you need help finding it? I know this is your first time.

Javier: We could draw you a map.

Oliver: I think I've found it. It took some fumbling, but I've got there.

A light pings on.

Javier: Yes that is it, you've hit the spot!

Oliver: Can I pull it out now?

Dodger: The memory stick?

Oliver: Obviously!

Dodger: Yes, pull it out.

Oliver climbs out the box.

Javier: Well done, Oliver! We've successfully stolen the data and replaced it with pictures of John Methven doing extreme sports.

Slide of John paddle-boarding, segway etc.

Oliver: Well, thanks for showing me the ropes, guys!

Charles: And so the gang leave to head back to the Little Smoke – will Oliver get found out?

Oliver, Dodger, Javier exit left.

Brian enters stage right.

Brian: Well, I suppose we won't know unless you've finished the script for the second half, Charles. Perhaps you should give it another look over during the interval?

Charles: Yes, quite right! I'll do that now then, shall I?

Charles exits stage right.

Brian: Join us after the interval for the continuation of Oliver Twister!

Brian stops at podium to pick up croquet mallet and rope, then follows Charles out.

Black out and a thud is heard off stage.

INTERVAL

Scene 4

- **Brian**
- **Maarten**
- **Oliver**
- **Anthony**
- **Charles**

Brian on stage right already.

Brian: Welcome back to the Met Department Christmas panto - Oliver Twister! Do excuse Charles' absence... He's writing the rest of this half... He totally hasn't been tied up somewhere, literally...

Screams from offstage.

Brian: So we rejoin Oliver, at the end of his first term, at his first Monitoring Committee meeting. With Maarten Ambaum and Anthony 'Brownlow' Illingworth.

Oliver, Maarten and Anthony enter from Stage Left.

Maarten: Welcome to your first Monitoring Committee Meeting, Oliver Twister.

Oliver: (*Breathing heavily*) I'm a bit nervous.

Anthony: Don't be nervous!

Maarten: With me as your chair there's only a 40% chance of failing!

Oliver: Only 40%! Wow! Are you sure it's not 49%?

Maarten: Actually, it might be nearer 50 now.

Slide about Maarten's birthday/age. IF he ages at the same rate as the rest of us.

Anthony: Don't worry, there's a very fair grading system. You're either Diabolical, Atrocious or Pitiful.

Oliver: Is there not a better one than Pitiful?

Maarten: There was Mediocre, but the PhDs got too competitive. So we got rid of it.

Slide explaining the actual MC form and rating.

Anthony: So don't worry Oliver! I'm sure you'll be Pitiful!

Oliver: (*Confused/unenthusiastic*) Oh goody...?

Maarten: And now to get down to the bones of your report. I have to say I'm a bit disappointed in your research so far, Oliver. You haven't even published one paper yet!

Oliver: But Sir, I had to change supervisor, I was abandoned, and Professor Fagin said she would make the best PhD student out of me!

Anthony: Yes, but I'm afraid Oliver your topic just isn't unique at all is it? And it doesn't have anything about Chilbolton in it. Did you know it's the world's largest and least pitiful fully steerable meteorological radar.

Slide about Chilbolton. Everyone gazes in amazement at it. PHWOOARRR.

Oliver: But I was told by Professor Fagin that the best way to do science was to steal the data from the Barbican Cromwell Tower. And all the other sites in the London Network. We're all doing it.

Maarten: Good grief! But Oliver, we all know the best way to do science is to get the public to do it for you! That's why we have so many Citizen Science projects. Ed Hawkins is particularly good at getting other people to do his work for him!

Slide advertising Ben Nevis project/Solar Stormwatch etc.

Oliver: How about if I visualise the stolen data using stripes or a spiral?

Anthony: Ideally, you wouldn't be using stolen data at all, Oliver! You pesky little ruffian.

Maarten: I really think we need to put a stop to Fagin's scheming. This isn't good for the department at all!

Oliver: Oh no! What have I done?!

Anthony: It's not your fault, little Oliver! Come over to Lyle and I'll look after you. You poor unfortunate PhD student.

Maarten: I am going to have to mark you down as Diabolical though... soz. Right, I'm off to terrorise some first years...

Maarten disappears mysteriously off stage left.

Brian: So Anthony "Brownlow" Illingworth takes Oliver off through the Wilderness to Lyle, to his new life and new research.

Anthony takes Oliver's hand and leads him through the Wilderness. Enter more singers, dressed as Christmas trees.

Anthony: We're going to Lyle, Oliver! Where dreams really do come true.

Oliver: Who or what is Lyle? Where is Lyle? *(Unaccompanied singing)* "Whee-ere is Lyle... it's the building with no style! ..."

Brian: *(Abruptly)* Oh pipe down Oliver! It's love.. Not Lyle.. love! *(Aside, pondering)* Lyle and love have never been said in the same sentence before...

SONG - Tragedy

Oliver, Anthony, Maarten, Brian, Clare

*Here I walk
In the lost and lonely wil-der-ness
Held in time
In an email flood I slowly drown
Here in met
I just can't make it all alone
IT should be helping me, helping me
Fixing me, fixing me*

*Oliver!
The new PhD, and he's so friendly
It's Oliver!
When the cluster dies and you don't know why
It's coffee room time
Yeah no-one does Matlab
But you will be fine*

*Tragedy
When the funding's gone, data's stolen
It's tragedy
When the error appears and you don't know why
Stack o-ver-flow
With no real research*

And nowhere to go

*Tristan left,
Stealing's not the moral thing... (ohhhh)
Fagin's gang were really good and took me in
Off I go
It's nearly time for my MC
I really should be coding now, coding now
Writing now, writing now*

*Anthony
Radar's his thing he'll take you in
It's Anthony
When the doppler dies, don't know drop size
There's Köhler curves
With a new supervisor
You're going somewhere*

*Lyle 3
With its concrete walls it'll never fall
It's Lyle 3
When the Lyle lift dies and you don't know why
You'll take the stairs
There's someone beside you
You're going up there*

Anthony: Welcome to your new home on Lyle 3. We'll look after you here. Fagin can't get to you.

Oliver: I'm so glad to be safe. Thank you! Time to be the best PhD student ever.

Anthony and Oliver exit stage left.

Brian: So Oliver is now safe, but what about Fagin over in Met? Will she plot to get Oliver back?

Enter Charles stage right, removing rope from his face and hands.

Brian: Welcome back, Charles! Where on Earth have you been?

Charles: Sorry I got tied up. Literally. I always like to put in plot twisters. (*Ba-dum tsch*).

Brian: Now that you're back, I'll go finish fixing the flux capacitor.

Brian exits stage right.

Charles: And so, there's inevitably going to be a drawn out tug of war over young Oliver.

Black out.

Scene 5

- **Charles**

- **Fagin**
- **Dodger**
- **Mat**
- **Steve**
- **CJW**

Charles on stage right.

Charles: We find Fagin in 1U14 plotting fiendishly about getting little Oliver back.

Enter Fagin stage right, looking scheming.

Fagin: I must get my dear Oliver back, he knows too much. He took my dongle, my memory stick and he knows where all my hard drives live.

Dodger rushes in stage left.

Dodger: I've got an idea Fagin, why don't we disguise ourselves as Russian tourists and go sightseeing around Campus and blag our way into Lyle?

Fagin: What a marvellous idea, my dear! No one could possibly see through that plan!

Both exit stage left suspiciously and creeping.

Charles: So Professor Fagin and Dodger arrive at Lyle, with their totally believable story. *(Aside)* I'm not sure how much they've actually thought this plan through...

Fagin and Dodger enter stage left. Slide of Lyle front.

Fagin: So what are we actually going to do when we get inside?

Dodger: Well, I've heard of this poison that might be useful...I found some lying around.

Fagin: Novichok?! We don't want to kill our PhDs, Dodge!

Dodger: You're probably right.

Slide about Jonathan Gregory's socks.

Fagin: I remember getting an email recently, about Jonathan Gregory's second-hand walking socks. The smell from those will surely knock little Oliver out cold!

Dodger: You know, I think they might be worse than the poison...

Fagin and Dodger creep about the stage. Slide changes to Lyle 3 door – photo-shopped bin bags piled up.

Charles: They both sneak into Lyle with their magnificent disguises and story, and climb the 47 flights of stairs, to get to the door to Lyle 3. However, there's a slight problem...

Fagin: Oh damn it, Dodge! Look at all those bin bags!

Dodger: This must be from the cleaners no longer emptying the bins! I wonder how long all that rubbish has been there?

Fagin: We'll never get to him at this rate!

They both slump dejectedly. On stage runs Mat Owens, Stage left.

Charles: Who should stumble upon the devious pair, but Professor of Space Physics, Mat Owens, who was most put out by the cancellation of the Reading Half-Marathon, so has been using the stairs in Lyle to keep fit instead.

Show slides of Mat's tweets.

Mat: Hey, don't I know you?

Fagin: *(Terrible Russian accent)* Who us? Nooo...

Dodger: *(Terrible Russian accent)* We are here on a sightseeing tour of Reading! And have come to marvel at the wonder of the modern architectural world that is the Lyle building.

Fagin: It is most bea-u-tiful!

Mat: Well, you're either blind or you're lying...

Fagin: We are totally unsuspecting Russian tourists...

Fagin and Dodge: *MOTHER RUSSIA*

Mat: There's clearly something dodgy going on here...No! I know who you are! You're the Salisbury assassins! I'm calling campus security, who are expertly trained to deal with Russian special forces agents.

Dodger: *(real voice)* No, no! We're not from Russia! We're from the department!

Mat: I don't know. That English accent is very unconvincing.

Fagin: How can we prove it to you?

Mat: Errrm... oh look, here comes Steve Woolnough! *(Steve enters stage left)* I know how we can test if you really belong to the department. Steve - ask them a question about croquet! All members of the department are well versed in the rules of croquet.

Steve Woolnough: OK then - how many hoops are there on a croquet lawn?

Dodger: Oh I know this one! Six!

Steve: Yes, very good. Next question: What name is given to the final hoop?

Fagin: I think that's the "rover"?

Steve: *(Getting annoyed)* Correct again! Next question: what is the name of the grip in which both the upper and lower hands grip the handle with the palms either behind or to the side?

Dodger: Oooh that's a tough one...perhaps... the Irish grip?

Steve: (*Annoyed*) Correct again! And your final question - who is the greatest croquet player in the department?

Fagin: Oh that's easy, it's definitely Ed Hawkins!

Mat starts calling Campus Jobs.

Steve: NO! IT'S ME! I'VE WON THE PRESTIGIOUS GOLDEN MALLET 6 TIMES NOW! Mat, clearly these fools know nothing about croquet, so they definitely can't be from the department!

Mat: It's OK Steve, I've called campus security and they're on their way. And let me tell you, those guys are way more efficient than Campus Jobs.

Steve exits Stage Left, Campus jobs worker marches on stage left.

Mat: Here they are now! Have you got your handcuffs?

Campus Jobs Worker: Why... why would I have handcuffs? Campus Jobs isn't a prison system.

Dodger: That's debatable.

Mat: Wait, you're from Campus Jobs? I must have misdialed! Can you arrest these men anyway?

CJW: I'm afraid that's not in my Core Duties. I'm actually here because we need two people to work as IT Service Desk and AV Operators.

Screenshot of CJ assignment.

Fagin and Dodger: Noooooooooo! Anything but the IT desk!

Mat: It serves you right for skulking around here causing mischief.

CJW: I hope you've got a helpful, diplomatic manner to deal with anxious and stressed customers. You can start right away. We've got your first assignment ready - the projector in GU01 needs a new bulb....

All exit Stage Left (Fagin exit Stage Right), apart from Charles.

Charles: So Fagin and Dodger head off to work in the bowels of the IT department. I shouldn't think we'll be seeing them again. They'll be up to their eyeballs in tickets within five minutes. Our young Oliver should be safe now.

Black out

Scene 6

- Charles
- Clare
- Oliver
- Anthony
- Brian
- The Doctor

Charles on stage right.

Charles: Oliver is settling into his new home in Lyle, with Anthony looking after him. We join them as Clare 'Nancy' Watt is checking up on his progress.

Enter Clare, Oliver and Anthony stage left.

Clare: So how are you getting along, Oliver?

Oliver: Oh, it's marvellous over here. There's this "new coffee space", which I've been reliably assured isn't just a large vacated office.

Clare: Yes, the coffee room is a good space for networking.

Oliver: And getting tipsy apparently...

Anthony: You're not supposed to tell anyone about Prosecco Friday, Oliver!!!

Clare: Sounds wonderful! I might have to join you one week. And that explains Tom Frame's "unique" WCD presentation style! So, you're happy, Oliver?

Oliver: *(Nods)* Oh yes! At least, I am on Fridays...

Clare: And you're totally doing science that is all your own work now? And uses non-stolen data?

Oliver: *(Averts gaze)* Oh definitely..

Anthony: Yes, I'm keeping a close eye on little....errrrm....ummm....

Oliver: *(Looking annoyed)* Oliver...

Anthony: Ah yes, Oscar. I think we'll get along wonderfully. We have plans to visit Chilbolton.

Clare: Oh! That's one of the world's largest fully steerable meteorological radars, isn't it?

Anthony: Excuse me Clare, it IS THE world's largest fully steerable meteorological radar!

Everyone gazes in amazement at slide of Chilbolton radar.

Oliver: I'm excited! Anthony said that I can even have a go at steering it!

All exit stage left, apart from Charles. Slide change to front of Met.

Charles: So Oliver seems to be getting on well with his new project and I'm sure everything will go smoothly from here.

Enter Brian stage right, wiggling mooli

Charles: Ah Brian, have you fixed the flux capacitor yet?

Brian: Yes, I think it's working at last! I was just missing a semicolon.

Charles: Oh Brian, you really are the brian behind this operation (*Ba-dum tsch*). That's great news, this means that we can skip forwards to Oliver's graduation to finish our story off!

Charles and Brian faff about with the flux capacitor, lights flash. They land in the coffee room which looks exactly the same as it does today.

Brian: Wonderful, we've made it! I see they still haven't changed the curtains by the year 2022.

Charles picks up a copy of Weather magazine

Charles: Errm...I don't wish to alarm you Brian but this copy of Weather magazine claims to be from the year 3000!

Brian: What?! And they still haven't changed the curtains??

Charles: You must have put too many semicolons in the flux capacitor! We were aiming for Oliver's graduation!

Brian: Excuse me, I never make mistakes! Something must have delayed Oliver's graduation - perhaps he had some problems with his model?

Charles: Perhaps they never got the met-cluster working.

Brian: I'll prove it to you - let's go down to London Road to see if he's graduating.

Change to London Road background, Enter Oliver and Anthony stage left.

Anthony: Owen, you're up next. I'm so proud of you, you're finally graduating. You know, I've never had a student take almost a millennium to graduate before!

Oliver: It's Oliver. But, yes, it is a pity we couldn't get the model working for the first 564 years; monitoring committee 1000 was particularly trying!

Anthony: It's a good thing they discount the first 978 years as spin-up time - that's what they did with this whole Brexit malarkey.

Slide: Theresa May says we'll be leaving the EU next May.

Oliver: Right! It's my turn on the stage.

Anthony: Take your time, it's already been 982 years, what's a few more minutes to ensure you don't trip? *(Starts going off on a tangent)* Did I ever tell you about that time in 2531? It was just after they got the 'Home Directories' working again - I had a student looking at palaeo doppler weather radar networks and....

Anthony trails off and wanders off stage left.

Oliver walks past Brian and Charles on way offstage/aka onto the graduation stage

Oliver: Oh hello there! Are you here for my graduation? What an honour to have a Professor Sir and this other old man at my graduation. Thank you so much for coming! I can't believe I'm a doctor now!

Enter The Doctor stage right.

The Doctor: Did someone say something about a doctor?

Oliver: *(Fanboy)* It's Doctor Who!

Brian: Doctor what?

Enter Clare stage left.

Clare: No, I'm Doctor Watt!

The Doctor: *(Eating a carrot)* What's up Doc.

Brian: See Charles, I told you I hit the right date!

Charles: I hate it when you're right, but how do we get back?

Brian: I haven't reaaaaaally worked that part out just yet...We'd better get used to the year 3000, we might be stuck here for a while.

The Doctor: *(Exits to band)* Hit it band!

SONG - Year 3000

*One day, when I came in, at lunchtime,
I heard we were out of cash.
Went to see Dodger,
He hooked me up to a data stash.
Turns out it was stolen,
And Fagin, was a badd'un.*

*Sent me to London with Javier,
Stole data and ran away.*

Yeah, yeah!

*And now we live in the year 3000,
Where climate change means we're all underwater.
And Fagin? Well Maarten caught her.
Now Oliver's fine. (He's pretty fine).*

*His MC, was diabolical,
His science, wasn't ethical.
Anthony... Took him on... Treated him,
Like a grandson.
Swimming, round Lyle,
With Prosecco, totally plastered.*

*His science is on top form,
And Fagin has been reformed.
Yeah, yeah!*

*And now we live in the year 3000,
Where climate change means we're all underwater.
And Fagin? Well Maarten caught her.
Now Oliver's fine. (He's pretty fine).*

*This is a song 'bout Fagin the robot,
She likes data on her Dropbox.
Weekly meeting you must bring a plot,
Best wishes sent to my inbox.*

*We all live in the Year 3000,
This song is the end of the panto.
DJ Shonk got your after party choons, yo.
Please all go home. Go home. Go home.*

*We found out Fagin's a ro-obot.
So somebody turn her off!
Yeah, yeah!*

*And now we live in the year 3000,
Where climate change means we're all underwater.
And Fagin? Well Maarten caught her.
Now Oliver's fine. (He's pretty fine)!*

(Repeat last chorus 2 more times. Audience participation.)

Black out.

END