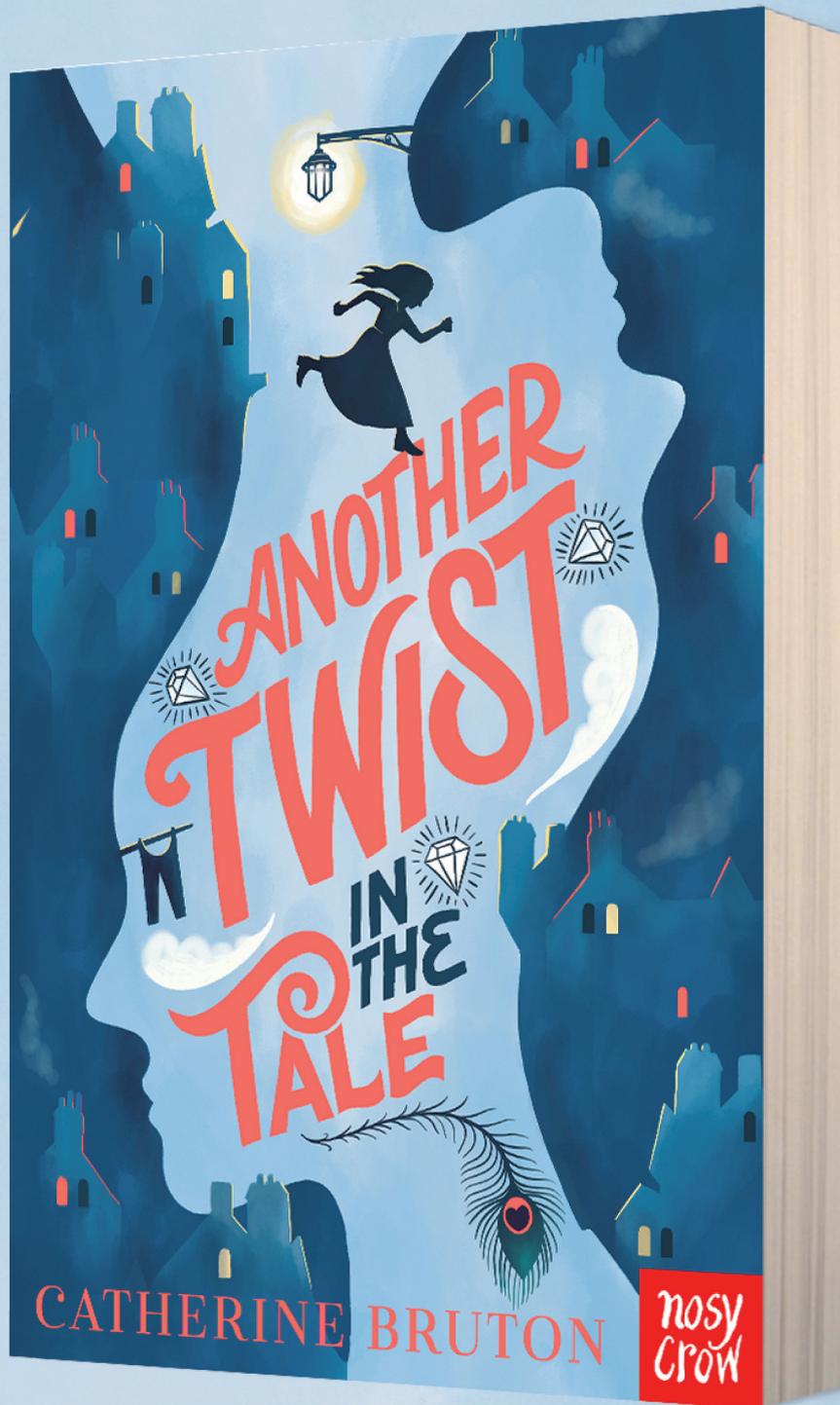


# ANOTHER TWIST IN THE TALE

## TEACHING PACK



CATHERINE BRUTON

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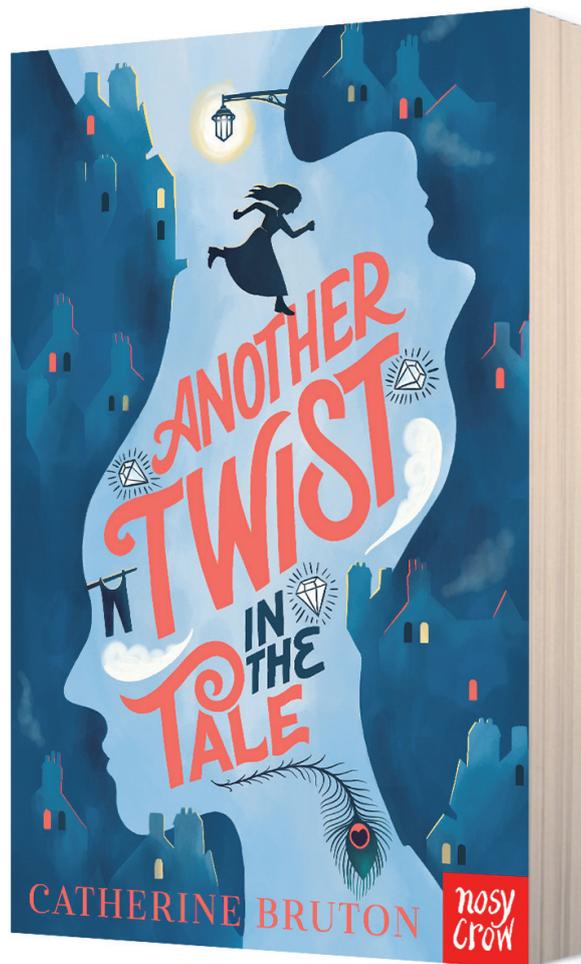
# INTRODUCTION



Rediscover the Artful Dodger, Fagin, and Oliver Twist himself, along with a host of fantastic new heroes and villains, in this brilliantly-imagined, rip-roaring sequel to Dickens' much-loved classic.

You have heard, no doubt, the tale of Master Oliver Twist – that rags-to-riches boy; the parish orphan who became heir to the Brownlow fortune. But what few know is that there was a second Twist – a girl, brought into this world moments ahead of her brother.

This is the story of Twill Twist – and her journey through the gambling dens and workhouses of London, as she attempts to make a life for herself, rescue her friends, and uncover the mystery of her past – while meeting some familiar faces along the way...



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We have put together some activities for you to use with your class alongside *Another Twist in the Tale*, allowing you to explore Victorian London and introduce readers to the world of Dickens.



**Catherine Bruton** studied English at Oxford University and has been juggling life as a teacher, children's author and mum for the past fifteen years. As an English teacher she sees first-hand the impact stories can have on young readers – expanding their horizons, making them ask questions and see the world differently.



#AnotherTwistinTheTale

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CROW**

# LESSON ONE: THE VICTORIAN CITY



## EXAMPLE EXTRACT (P. 24):

*The passing of years wrought many changes across the land. A new young queen came to the throne; a group of downtrodden heroes rose up to fight for the vote – and lost; the first railway opened in London; the fashion for greatcoats came – and went; the iniquitous practice of slavery was abolished – throughout the British Empire at least; and a fire – reputedly started by a jealous mistress – destroyed Lloyd’s Coffee House.*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What have you learnt from the book about Victorian London?
- Did anything you read surprise you? Why/why not?
- Discuss how life differed between social classes in Victorian London.

## ACTIVITY: MIND MAP

- Create a mind map about Victorian London.
- Include sections on jobs, housing, people’s hobbies, inventions and different social classes.
- Use books from the school library or the internet to carry out some extra research.
- Dickens wrote many books set in Victorian London. Have you read any of them or do you know any of the stories? Discuss what you know about his books and his life.
- Research Dickens’ own childhood – what befell him when his father was thrown into a debtor’s prison? How might this have affected the stories he told? Add a section to your mind map about Dickens and his life in the city. Think about how this features in *Another Twist in the Tale*.

## ACTIVITY: DIARY ENTRY

- Victorian London was not an easy place to grow up in. *Another Twist in the Tale* features different groups of children navigating their way through the city; such as the Sassy Sisterhood and the boys from the Brownlow Benevolent Home for Unfortunate Boys.
- Choose one of these groups and write a diary entry about a day in their life, thinking about the language they might use, what they might see and how they would spend a normal day.
- How different is your diary entry to a day in your own life? Research the lives of other children in Victorian London. How much did things differ between social classes?



## LESSON TWO: DICKENSIAN CHARACTERS



### EXAMPLE EXTRACT (P. 7):

*A scrawny scrap of a creature with a round flat face, rather crumpled and pale. She had been born with a harelip, and one eyelid drooped a little, the result of an overenthusiastic beating with a wooden spoon. So overall, she bore a squashed appearance, as of clothing, hastily scrumpled. But in the middle of this rather odd face was a pair of large grey eyes, the colour of dirty dishwater but with a glow of love about them.*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How easy is it for you to visualise Baggage Jones from this description?
- What language techniques are used to make this a powerful description? Look for examples of adjectives, verbs, similes, contrasts, colours and physical details.
- How does Baggage Jones fit into your picture of Victorian London? How has her upbringing and living situation affected her appearance?
- Dickens also created very memorable characters. Do you know any of them? What do you think makes them so distinct and memorable? *Here you could share descriptions or images of famous characters such as Scrooge, Fagin and Miss Havisham.*

### ACTIVITY: DRAWING A CHARACTER

- Many of Dickens' stories have become films or TV series, bringing the characters to life. Have you seen any of these adaptations?
- Use either the description of Baggage Jones or a description of a different character from the book and draw how you think they would look if they were brought to life.

### ACTIVITY: CREATING A DICKENSIAN CHARACTER

- Create your own Dickensian character.
- Begin by thinking about their age, profession and social class.
- Brainstorm some key words and phrases to describe them. What are they wearing? Do they have any distinguishing features?
- Write a paragraph describing your character. Use some of the language techniques you identified from the description of Baggage Jones to make your character memorable.
- Share your descriptions with the group. Are people able to visualise your character?



## LESSON THREE: ENTERTAINMENT



### EXAMPLE EXTRACT (P. 60):

*Twill felt several emotions at once. The first was an instantaneous instinct to give chase. Had she not been brought up hunting down the ragamuffins of Peckham Rye? She could run this top-hat boy down in minutes! The second feeling was an instinct to warn the young lady – to help her reclaim her possessions. Not just out of a sense of right and wrong that Baggage had instilled in her, but also from a third emotion: hope. Might there not be a reward for retrieving the young lady’s possessions? Might she not look kindly on Twill’s application for the post of kitchen maid?*

*“M’lady,” she cried – tugging on the young lady’s arm to attract her attention. “Your purse!” Then she set off in pursuit of the top-hatted pocket-picker, shouting, “Stop, thief!” And therein lay her downfall.*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What different choices does Twill have in this moment? Discuss what you think you would have done in this situation.
- This is where the chapter ends. How does this make the reader feel? Is the author successful in building tension? What other scenes in the book are tense?
- Why do you think scenes like this make a book more exciting?

### ACTIVITY: TWISTS AND TURNS

- *Another Twist in the Tale* is full of twists and turns. In groups, choose a key moment in the book such as when Twill pretends to be the ghost of Oliver or the chase scene when Twill is running after Dodger.
- Create an alternative ‘twist’ and act this out to the rest of your class. Were people surprised by your new twist?

### ACTIVITY: WRITING A SPIN-OFF

*Another Twist in the Tale* is a sequel to Charles Dicken’s *Oliver Twist*, featuring Oliver’s long-lost twin sister. Write your own spin-off with a twist and have a go at building tension.

- Choose a character from a book you love. It could be the main character, a minor character, or you could dream up a character who never actually appears, like Dracula’s mum, Harry Potter’s long-lost twin sister, Lyra Belacqua’s brother, Sherlock Holmes’ son... It’s up to you!
- You are going to write from that character’s point of view – but DON’T tell the reader who you are right away! Instead, drop in clues as you go along – leaving your reader to puzzle it out for themselves. Keep them guessing till the very last line, the final twist and the big reveal! Use the plan on the next page to structure your writing.



# WRITING A SPIN-OFF



## WRITING PLAN

- **Lines 1 and 2** – You are looking out of the window. What can you see? (Remember: drop in some clues but don't give it away too easily! E.g. Don't say 'I am looking out over Hogwarts and the Forbidden Forest' – do say 'I can see the turrets of the ancient building where I reside, and the dark forest where strange creatures loom.')
- **Lines 3 and 4** – You turn back into the room. What can you see around you? (Again – drop in clues without giving away too much at this stage!)
- **Lines 5 and 6** – Somebody comes into the room. What relationship are they to you? Describe what they look like and what they are wearing. (Pick out surprising or unusual details of clothing and appearance – but DON'T say any names!)
- **Lines 7 and 8** – The person who just entered the room says or does something. What do they say/do and how do you react? (Again – no names but DO try to drop in quite a big clue at this point!)
- **Lines 9 and 10** – You see something that triggers a memory from the past. What does it make you think of? (Go back in time and describe a key memory from your past. Was it a happier time? Was it when you first came to this place? Met this person? Was it before something terrible or wonderful happened to you?)
- **Lines 11 and 12** – Tell us how you have changed since then. (Have you risen in power, fallen into poverty, have you committed heinous crimes, found friends, found love, found treasure...?)
- **Lines 13 and 14** – You come back to the present and you react to the person who entered the room. (Perhaps you respond to what they said to you. Perhaps you try to kiss them, or kill them? Thank them for saving your life, accuse them of ruining your life, ask them to spare your life?)
- **Lines 15 and 16** – If you had one wish now, what would it be? (This should be the final clue before the big reveal!)
- **End by telling us who you are!**

Once you have written your first draft, read it through. Perhaps read it out to a teacher, family member or friend – see if (and when!) they figure out who you are! If they guess too early, go back and remove some give-away clues. If they can't guess at all, then perhaps add a few more clues in as you go along!

Happy Writing!



## LESSON FOUR: A WALK THROUGH THE CITY



### EXAMPLE EXTRACT (P. 53):

*Such an array of traffic was there on the road that day – flower sellers and fruit stalls, a man with a monkey, an organ grinder, a troop of May Day dancers, and a rag-and-bone man shouting out for “any old iron”. The sun was shining as they approached the bridge and the light danced on the river and over all the little boats bobbing up and down in a way that made Twill think of pirates and perilous journeys to foreign lands and Robinson Crusoe on his island. And with such pleasant imaginings in her head it was difficult to remain completely unhappy.*

*They stopped at a coaching house, where Bob had errands to run. Twill climbed down off the cart and perched herself on a barrel in the mews where she watched the ostlers who ran to greet the great men’s carriages and unharness their tired teams, racing to provide them with new horses for the next leg of their journey. All this was done with such speed and dexterity that Twill marvelled as she watched. Sometimes the owners of the carriages stayed in their equipages, ordering coffee and ale and mutton and bread to be brought to them from within the inn. Others stepped into the coaching house for a small meal before emerging contented to continue the next leg of the journey.*

*Bob was gone some time and so Twill entertained herself by watching the rich folk, trying to predict who would alight and who would remain in their carriages. A lady in a plumed hat and a gentleman in a greatcoat with so many capes it might have clothed a whole family of Peckham railway children chose to alight; but a pair of elderly ladies in powdered wigs and fur mufflers sat stiffly in their carriage, pooh-poohing the time it took to fix the horses.*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you think Twill felt during her first journey across London?
- What different professions does Twill encounter in this scene? E.g. rag-and-bone man, ostlers and flower sellers. Do you know what they are?
- Think about how this scene provides a good window into Victorian life. How are the classes interacting with each other?

### ACTIVITY: VICTORIAN JOBS

- Choose a Victorian job, either one written about here, or one you have read about elsewhere such as an ostler, a chimney sweep or a housemaid. Carry out some research on this job.
- Create a poster advertising the job. Who are you targeting? What are the key responsibilities? What skills do you need to apply? What are the benefits of the job?

### ACTIVITY: TAKING A WALK

- During the writing of the book, the author took a walking tour through London to discover the sights of the city. How do you think this has impacted their writing?
- Take a walk through your own town or school, taking note of everything around you. Think about the different smells you encounter, the noises and the sights.
- Write a creative piece of writing about your walk. Use descriptive language and focus in on scenes you notice to create a dynamic scene.