

# The Old Curiosity Shop

Charles Dickens

- 1
  - 1 A young girl and an old man lived at The Old Curiosity Shop. Their relationship was granddaughter and grandfather. The young girl was called Nell, but we were not told the grandfather's name.
  - 2 The old man was worried that Nell had lived a difficult, lonely and unhappy life. He was also worried about money.
  - 3 Kit had just visited Mr Quilp. Nell's grandfather had asked Kit to deliver a letter to Quilp.
  - 4 Nell started to cry because her grandfather was going out. She hated being alone at The Old Curiosity Shop and worried about her grandfather when he was out at night.
  
- 2
  - 1
    - a Fred Trent (Nell's older brother and the old man's grandson) and Richard Swiveller, Fred's friend.
    - b Fred had come to The Old Curiosity Shop to see his sister and because he wanted his grandfather to give him some money. Richard had come because Fred, his friend, had asked him to come.
  - 2 Daniel Quilp had come to The Old Curiosity Shop to bring Nell's grandfather some gold. The old man had asked to borrow this money from Quilp.
  - 3 He hoped that they would soon have more money and that Nell would be rich after he died.
  - 4
    - a Kit
    - b Kit had come to The Old Curiosity Shop because Nell was going to give him a writing lesson.
  
- 3
  - 1
    - a Fred suggested that Richard should marry Nell.
    - b Fred thought it was a good idea because Nell would be rich when her grandfather died, she was young and easy to persuade and she would also be a beautiful wife. Fred wanted to share Nell's money with Richard after they were married.
  - 2 At first Richard was shocked and unsure about the idea.
  - 3 Richard changed his mind because Fred was very persuasive, and because he was poor and very much wanted to be rich.
  
- 4
  - 1 'It' was the gold which Mr Quilp had lent Nell's grandfather the day before.
  - 2
    - a Nell probably thought that her grandfather was saying that he had been generally unlucky in life.
    - b He probably meant that he had been unlucky with the cards he had been given in a recent card game and that was why he had lost a game.
  - 3 Mr Quilp guessed, from what Nell had told him, that the old man had been secretly gambling. Nell's grandfather had borrowed money from Quilp saying that he was investing it and making himself rich. In fact he had lost the gold Quilp had lent him because he had lost it gambling in card games.
  - 4
    - a Quilp lied when he said that it was Kit who had told him that the old man was using the money to gamble.
    - b Quilp was a cruel man who liked to see bad things happen to people. He probably thought it would be fun to see Kit get into trouble.

- 5
- 1 Two of the following emotions with their explanations:
    - a We can infer that Kit was worried about Nell when she was on her own at night in The Old Curiosity Shop because he watched the house every night to make sure Nell was safe.
    - b He was embarrassed because he went red when his mother said that some people might say he had fallen in love with Nell.
    - c He was surprised and shocked when Nell told him that her grandfather was angry with him and did not want to ever see him again.
    - d We can infer that he was anxious for Nell to believe that he had not done anything wrong.
  - 2 Nell started to cry because there was a danger that her grandfather was going to die, and because she had trusted Kit but now thought he had done something bad.
  - 3 Nell suggested that they should run away and live as beggars in the countryside. Her grandfather agreed to her suggestion.
  - 4 It means that Nell was only thinking about all the lovely things that they might see and do. The phrase 'there were no dark corners' means that Nell did not think there would be any bad things about their new life as beggars, such as not having enough money, food and drink, or anywhere to sleep.
- 6
- 1
    - a Tommy Codlin and Mr Harris
    - b They had come to the churchyard to mend the puppets that they used in their travelling puppet show.
  - 2
    - a Nell hid a gold coin.
    - b She hid it by sewing it into the bottom of her dress.
    - c She hid it because she and her grandfather did not have much money left and she wanted to save this valuable coin for a time when they really needed it. She may also have decided to hide it because she did not trust her grandfather to use their money carefully.
  - 3
    - a She had heard Codlin saying that he and Harris needed to keep an eye on Nell and her grandfather, and that they had to keep them close to them in order to find out more about them.
    - b She decided that she and her grandfather should escape while the two puppeteers were busy packing up their puppets.
- 7
- 1
    - a Mr Quilp was not very surprised because he did not really care about Nell and her grandfather and at this point in the story thought that they were poor and therefore not important to him. He was only worried that the old man might have taken some money that he had hidden away.
    - b Richard Swiveller was shocked and upset because he thought his plan to become rich by marrying Nell was in trouble. He would not be able to make friends with Nell as he had hoped to do.
    - c Kit was truly sad because he had no idea where Nell and her grandfather were and was worried about them.
  - 2 Quilp knew that Nell's grandfather was poor, but he told Richard Swiveller that he was a lucky man because he would be very rich when he became Nell's husband. He told this lie because he thought it would be fun to watch Fred and Richard's plan go wrong.
  - 3 The little old gentleman laughed because he thought it was just a sort of joke when he said Kit should come back the following week and he did not believe he really would come back. Kit was serious because he was honest and he had promised to return to earn the rest of the money, so Kit did not think the little old gentleman was joking.

- 8**
- 1 a Mr Marton
  - b He was a schoolteacher.
  - c He helped them by giving them food and drink and letting them stay for three nights at his house.
- 2**
- a She looked friendly and well dressed.
  - b She was travelling in a caravan (pulled by two horses).
  - c She helped them by giving them information about how far away the next town was, giving them food and drink, and taking them to the next town in her caravan.
- 9**
- 1 She was thinking that Nell would be very useful to her because Mrs Jarley could not read or write but Nell could. She also knew that Nell did not have much money or any plans for her future and so she was probably thinking that Nell would like a job.
  - 2 Nell did not accept the job at first because she thought that she would have to leave her grandfather. She did not want to leave him on his own because she did not think he could look after himself.
  - 3 First she had to help Mrs Jarley and George to prepare the exhibition. Next she had to learn the name and history of each of the wax figures, and then she had to explain this information to the crowds that came to see the waxworks.
- 10**
- 1 Nell's grandfather had started talking excitedly, his eyes were wide open, his face was quite red and he was breathing quickly. He became angry, then sad and upset, then happy again. His behaviour changed because he was excited about playing cards and gambling.
  - 2 He wanted to gamble the money in a card game because he believed that he could win a lot more money from the game and make Nell rich.
  - 3 Nell was frightened because a person who she did not recognize came into her room and searched for something. She felt sick when she realized that the person who had come into her room was her grandfather and that he had stolen some money from her.
- 11**
- 1 The phrase 'all these attractive qualities' is funny because it is ironic. The author had just described Sally in a very negative way, and had not mentioned any 'attractive qualities'.
  - 2 Richard got a job working for Mr Sampson Brass as a lawyer's clerk. Mr Quilp helped him to get the job. Quilp probably helped him get the job with his lawyer because he wanted to be able to keep an eye on Richard and help him with his plan to marry Nell. He would then be able to laugh at Richard and Fred when they found out Nell was a beggar.
  - 3 The man gave Richard ten pounds. It was the first payment for the single gentleman to rent an upstairs room in Mr Brass's house.
- 12**
- 1 The single gentleman asked Codlin and Harris whether they had ever met a young girl called Nell and her grandfather. They replied that they had seen them both and that one of their friends had seen them travelling with a waxworks.
  - 2 a Richard Swiveller asked himself this question.
  - b Kit and the single gentleman
  - c The single gentleman had gone to see Kit to ask him if he knew where Nell and her grandfather were.

- 3 a The single gentleman wanted Kit to travel to a village six hours' carriage ride away to find Nell and her grandfather.
- b Kit refused to go too because Nell's grandfather had said that he never wanted to see Kit again and Nell had said that Kit should never go near them again.
- c Kit suggested that his mother should go on the journey instead.
- 13 1 The gamblers wanted Nell's grandfather to steal money from Mrs Jarley while she was sleeping.
- 2 The town was very noisy and full of factories. The streets in the town were ugly and dirty, and the people who lived there were poor, sick, hungry and homeless. Nell could not find a good place for her and her grandfather to sleep.
- 3 Nell was tired and ill, and she was shocked when she realized that the traveller ahead of them was actually Mr Marton, the schoolteacher they had stayed with for a few nights earlier on their journey.
- 4 Mr Marton suggested that Nell and her grandfather should travel with him to the village where he was going to live.
- 14 1 Mrs Jarley had felt worried about them.
- 2 The single gentleman was angry with Daniel Quilp because he had not helped him the last time they had met and had treated Nell's grandfather badly. He was also angry because he thought that Quilp was now following him.
- 3 a Kit
- b Quilp guessed that because the single gentleman was trying hard to find Nell's grandfather, it meant that the grandfather was important. He also guessed that the single gentleman was rich. He was angry that the single gentleman had asked Kit to help him find Nell and her grandfather and therefore did not need Quilp's help any more to find them. This made him angry because he thought Kit might receive a reward (some money) for his help and Quilp would not receive any reward. He wanted to get rid of Kit so that he (Quilp) could be the person who helped the single gentleman.
- c His plan was to ask Mr Brass and Sally to get rid of Kit for him.
- 15 1 Nell thanked Mr Marton because he had found a cottage that she and her grandfather could live in. He had also found Nell a job.
- 2 Nell was given the keys to the church so that she could open and close the church and show it to visitors. It was her job to do these things.
- 3 a They were both worried because Nell was a child and she was very ill. They probably thought it meant Nell believed she was going to die soon because she was spending a lot of time thinking about the dead children.
- b Nell's grandfather tried to stop her from thinking about her own possible death by telling her that she was growing stronger and stronger each day and would soon become a woman.
- 16 1 Mr Brass was referring to the time that he worked with Daniel Quilp and helped him to make The Old Curiosity Shop and everything in it his own. He probably wanted to talk about it then because he needed Kit to trust him and he was worried that Kit thought badly of him after that 'job'.

- 2 The reader is told that the servant-girl was thin and she ate very fast, so she must have been very hungry. She did not know how old she was or what her name was, which shows she was not looked after kindly. She also said that Sally Brass 'would kill' her if she went upstairs; Sally would probably not really kill her, but it means that Sally would be very angry with her
- 3 The following things had disappeared: a silver pencil-case, four half-crown coins and a five-pound bank note.
- 4 a Richard Swiveller had been sent to deliver a letter and was not in the office.  
b Sally was in the kitchen.  
c The single gentleman was upstairs in his rented room.
- 5 Daniel Quilp had asked Mr Brass and Sally to get rid of Kit. Their plan was to get Kit into trouble by making it look like he was a thief. Mr Brass gave him some coins and he hid a five-pound note in Kit's hat. He then said that he had not given Kit these things and that Kit had stolen them. He knew that Kit would be punished; common punishments for stealing at this time were being sent to prison or being transported to another country.
- 17** 1 Quilp now thought that Nell's grandfather was rich, so he did not want Richard to marry Nell and become rich too. He had only wanted to help Richard when he thought that Nell and her grandfather were poor, because he thought that it would be fun to see Richard marry Nell but not get any money from the marriage.
- 2 Kit's mother was very upset because Kit's trial had not gone well and he had been found guilty of theft.
- 3 Richard was shocked and angry because Mr Brass told him that he no longer had a job as a lawyer's clerk.
- 4 The Marchioness cried with joy because Richard had just woken up after his illness. She had been very worried about him while he was seriously ill, so she was very happy and relieved when he was better.
- 5 The new information was from the Marchioness. She told Richard that she had heard Mr Brass and Sally talking about how Daniel Quilp had asked them to get rid of Kit. She had heard them planning to hide the five-pound note in Kit's hat.
- 18** 1 Mr Garland, Mr Abel and the single gentleman had invited Sally Brass to the coffee-house because they wanted to get her to admit what she had done and to talk about Daniel Quilp's part in the plan. The men hoped that she would give them enough proof to put Quilp in prison.
- 2 a The first letter was written by a lawyer. The second letter was written by Sally Brass.  
b The first letter was sent to Richard Swiveller. The second letter was sent to Daniel Quilp.  
c In the first letter, the lawyer told Richard that his rich aunt had died and had left him an inheritance of one hundred and fifty pounds a year. In the second letter, Sally told Quilp that Sampson Brass had told several people about their plan to get rid of Kit. In the letter Sally also told Quilp that she had run away and that he should run away too.
- 3 At the end of the chapter Quilp decided to run away, but as he was leaving the boatyard he fell into the river, went under the water and died.
- 19** 1 Mr Garland and Mr Marton were very good friends who wrote letters to each other. Their friendship is important for the story because in one of his letters Mr Marton talked about meeting a young girl and her grandfather. Mr Garland realized that these people were Nell and her grandfather and that was how they were found.

- 2 The single gentleman was the old man's younger brother – he was Nell's great-uncle. He had been abroad for many years and had lost contact with his older brother. But he had thought more and more about his older brother and about how this brother had looked after him when they were children. He had come back to England because he had made a lot of money and he wanted to look after his brother.
  - 3 We learnt that Nell's grandfather and his younger brother (the single gentleman) had fallen in love with the same woman. Nell's grandfather had married this woman, but she had died when she was quite young. They had had a daughter, who also died when she was quite young. Nell reminded her grandfather of his wife and his daughter (her grandmother and mother), and he was sad because he was worried that Nell would also die young.
- 20**
- 1 They cried because Nell had been very ill and was now dead.
  - 2 He did not respond well. He said that he had no friend or relative other than Nell and that the single gentleman was trying to make him forget Nell by saying those things.
  - 3 The other people present were Kit, Mr Garland, the single gentleman (Nell's great-uncle) and Mr Marton.
  - 4 Nell's grandfather was so upset and confused that he did not believe that Nell was dead. He went first to her room and then to Mr Marton's house to look for her.
- 21**
- 1 Their son Abel left because he got married and had a family. Kit left because a stranger offered him a very good job. Barbara then left because she married Kit.
  - 2 As he had promised, Richard Swiveller used the money he inherited to look after the Marchioness. He bought her some new clothes and paid for her to go to school.
  - 3 Kit often took his children to the street where Nell had lived. He took them there because he used to tell them the story of little Nell and because he wanted to show them the place where The Old Curiosity Shop had once stood.
  - 4 Dickens probably meant that just as The Old Curiosity Shop had gone, so bit by bit people forgot about Nell, the shop and everything that had happened there. All these things had been very important to Kit, but as the years passed he started to forget the details, and after many years all the people in the story were no longer alive and so they were forgotten. When Dickens said that 'Things pass away ... just like a story that has been told' he was also referring to the story of The Old Curiosity Shop, and so he meant that the story was now finished.