



# READING GUIDE

September, 2025

## The Scent Of Oranges

Kathy George

### In short

The stunning literary retelling of the beloved classic *Oliver Twist* from a brilliant Australian author.

### Synopsis

A retelling of *Oliver Twist* from the viewpoint of one of the most sympathetic and maligned of Dickens's characters.

Nancy has spent her whole life on the vibrant and gritty streets of Victorian London, first as one of Fagin's child pickpockets, and now on the arm of the violent and mercurial Bill Sikes. She does what she must to get by. She's attuned to the harsh realities of life, but also knows how to find moments of beauty amid the grime, even if it is only the scent and taste of an orange, its miraculous colour and form. Embarking on a relationship with enigmatic gentleman Mr Rufus awakens emotions Nancy has never felt before, and makes a better life feel possible for the first time. But when she takes cherubic orphan Oliver Twist under her wing, something even more elusive and appealing seems to be within reach: redemption.

### Discussion points

1. How does Nancy's character evolve throughout the novel? What are her strengths and weaknesses, and how do they impact her decisions?
2. What are the central themes of the novel? How does the book explore issues such as poverty, redemption, and the search for a better life?
3. How do Nancy's relationships with Bill Sikes, Mr. Rufus, and Oliver Twist evolve? What do these relationships reveal about her character and her desires?
4. How are the conflicts in the novel resolved? Were you satisfied with the ending, or did you feel there were any unresolved issues?

