

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## At the end of the day

by Rosalyn Hurst

It was the last of the wonderful summer days of 1914 when I and Daisy were driven in the office car to the country house of one of the most notorious villains in England. My editor was reluctant to agree to my interview mindful of our safety. The chauffeur was to carry a gun in case of problems.

In contrast to the bright sunshine, the mansion lay in sombre shadows of surrounding trees. Daisy and I climbed the steps flanked by ornate dragons and serpents to a carved oak door, studded with iron bars. The door was slightly open. Giving a wave to the chauffeur below, we entered a large baronial but ice-cold hall. On every wall, every surface, evidence of wealth

‘Here you are at last,’ a voice from a room on our right, a quavering voice, a malevolent voice,

‘Come along little missy, we wants ter see you’

Another, stronger, ‘Where’s you’re at? Come along, can’t keep the gaffer waiting, not after all these years.’

I walked in. I wasn’t going to be afraid of these two old men, though Daisy hung behind me in the shadows of the enormous oak door. A large fire threw strange lights on two wizened forms seats in large leather chairs, before strangely delicate teacups, Wedgewood I was certain, a silver tea set, probably seventeenth century, reflecting the light from the fire.

‘Some tea my dears?’ A gnarled hand reached forward from under blankets and unsteadily began to pour tea. ‘Not often the gov speaks to anyone, so wots ye want to know?’

I sat down, but Daisy remained by the door.

‘How did you build up your empire? What was it that made you successful?’ Best start with direct questions.

A mimetic voice repeated, ‘How did you build up your empire?’ I was shocked, how did that man who had been silent as we entered do that? It was my voice no doubt.

‘When I was a kid, I was looked after by old Fagan. I was known as Mr T later on.’ he began.

‘Hah,’ replied the other, ‘And you woz just hopeless at lifting watches, nearly got nabbed a hundred times before you saw old Brownlow’ and both cackled with laughter in cruel glee.

‘Best con ever’, he continued, ‘he fell for it, thought you were his long-lost daughter’s boy cos you could talk so posh. Oh, you was a card. I could never do it, me a London boy through and through, yeh me a young Master Bates.’ They both wheezed out a gasp of laughter.

‘Yes but I got Brownlow’s money,’ quavered the other, ‘and you found old Fagan’s real stash of gold. We have the best gang ever in London now, and what with the war coming we thinking of moving legit, going into the arms trade. All respectable ye know, pension funds.’

‘Always planning for the future our Mr T, if ever there was a great man well named,’ said the first animate gargoyle.

At this Daisy moved forward, her black hair, swung back from her face, her eyes flashing with anger. ‘You wicked old men, you left my grandad to hang,’

Standing up I put out a restraining hand as she emerged from the shadows.

‘I know all about you, and your evil side kick, my mum told me all about you two,’ she hissed.

‘God almighty,’ almost a scream of fear, ‘It’s Nancy!’

‘wot yer mean Nancy?’ said Mr T, ‘Nancy’s long dead, what’s yer name gel?’

‘Oliver Twist I know you well. I’m Nancy’s granddaughter, she was raped by Fagan when she was only 14, you knew that didn’t you? And you know what, I seek vengeance. You left with everything and my mum just a baby in an orphanage with nothing!’ she was nearly weeping.

I couldn’t stop her, though perhaps in retrospect I did not try hard enough. She lifted a small pistol and shot them both.