

## “Oliver Twist” by Charles Dickens (1812-1870)



### Chapter 1 - “The workhouse”

Oliver Twist was born in a workhouse, a house for poor people. His mother was young and she was very ill. “I want to see my baby”, she said. She kissed the baby and died.

Oliver grew up in an orphanage. He had very little food and very little love. Many children died there but Oliver survived. On his ninth birthday Oliver went to live in a workhouse. He worked long hours and they gave him only one bowl of porridge and an onion.



One day Oliver took his empty bowl to the master and he said, “Please, sir, I want some more porridge”. The master hit Oliver with his big spoon. Then he called the officer Mr Bumble, “He must leave the workhouse!”. They put Oliver in a cold, dark room for one week. Every morning Mr Bumble beat Oliver with a stick in front of his friends.

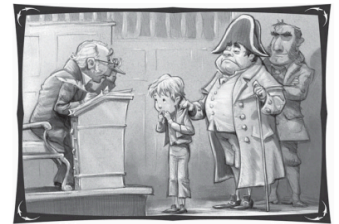
Mr Bumble visited Mr Sowerberry, who made coffins for dead bodies, and asked him, “Do you want a boy to work in your shop? You will pay him nothing and I will give five pounds”. Then Sowerberry took Oliver to his shop and the boy cried all the way.



### Chapter 2 – “Mr Sowerberry’s Shop”

Mrs Sowerberry was very angry, “Children cost a lot of money. Oliver, tonight you can eat the dog’s food. And you will sleep in one of the coffins”.

The next morning there was a knock on the door. Oliver opened and saw a big boy. “I’m Mr Noah Claypole and you work under me”, and he pulled Oliver’s hair and ears.



There were a lot of funerals and Oliver became a mourner. One day Noah offended Oliver’s mother and he hit Noah. Mrs Sowerberry beat Oliver and locked him in a dark room. Noah called Mr Bumble, “Oliver tried to kill me and Mrs Sowerberry”. And Mr Bumble replied, “It’s the meat! You gave him too much meat to eat”. When Mr Sowerberry arrived he forgot to lock the door and he beat Oliver too. Oliver cried all night and early the next morning, he left Mr Sowerberry’s shop.

### Chapter 3 – “On the road to London”

Oliver didn’t know where to go. He sat down on a milestone to rest and saw a sign: “LONDON – 70 miles (=12 km)”. He walked for seven days. He arrived in a little town, when a strange boy his own age told him, “My name’s Jack Dawkins, but they call me Dodger. I can help you”, and took Oliver to an inn where he had bread, ham and something to drink. Then he offered a place to sleep in London.

Oliver didn’t like London: the ground was wet, everything was ugly and there was an awful smell. They entered a dark room. There were a lot of young boys and an ugly old man near the fire. “I’m Fagin”, he said. There were a lot of handkerchiefs hanging in the room. The next morning Dodger and his friend Charley Bates arrived and they gave Fagin some wallets and some handkerchiefs.

### Chapter 4 – “Fagin’s game”

The children and Fagin played a strange game: the man put a wallet, a watch, some money and a handkerchief in his pocket and the boy followed him trying to take the



things from his pockets. Then they invited Oliver to play. Later two young ladies, Bet and Nancy, came to visit Dodger and Charley.

Oliver went to work with Dodger and Chaley. They stole something from an old man's pocket and he cried out, "Stop, thief!" Everyone run after poor Oliver. A policeman caught him, but he coundn't find the stolen objects. So Oliver was set free. The old man's name was Mr Brownlow, he apologized and took Oliver to his house.

Meanwhile Dodger and Charley returned to Fagin's place. Fangin was there with his friend Bill Sikes. The children told him the whole story. "We must find Oliver. He can tell the police about us".

### Chapter 5 – "Mr Brownlow"

Oliver was very weak and very ill. Mrs Bedwin, the housekeeper, took care of him. There was a picture of a lady near Oliver's bed. When Mr Brownlow came to see Oliver, he noticed the resemblance between Agnes, the lady in the portrait and this boy. The old man invited Oliver to stay with him. He will send the boy to a good school. Oliver was very happy for the first time in his life.

One sunny day, Mr Brownlow asked Oliver, "Can you take these books to the book shop and give the owner £5?" He left the house and, when he was reaching the place, Nancy saw him, grabbed him and took him to Fagin's place again. They took his clothes, the £5 and the books, and they locked Oliver in a dark room.

### Captar 6 – "The crime"

Fagin and Bill Sikes were planning to rob a big house outside London, but they needed a small boy to enter through a small window. Sikes was a very cruel man and put a pistol to Oliver's head, "Do what I say!". Oliver didn't want to steal and he decided that he would enter the house and warn the family. When he was inside he saw two men at the top of the stairs. He ran away. Sikes put his arm through the window and there was a shot. Oliver was hurt and Sikes left him at the garden wall. The servants didn't see the boy's body, he stayed on the cold wet ground all night.

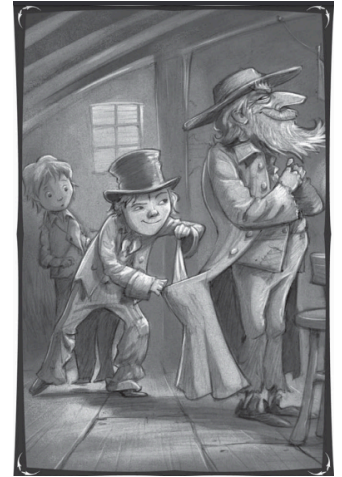
### Chapter 7 – "A new home"

The next morning it was raining. Oliver's left arm was covered with blood. He knocked at the door and fell to the ground. Mr Giles and Mr Brittles opened the door and found the boy. They told the ladies of the house: Rose Maylie and her aunt Mrs Maylie. Rose was was seventeen and she was adopted by this familiy. They called Doctor Losberne who helped the boy. In the evening Oliver was feeling better and he told the ladies the story of his sad life.

He stayed there for six months until one afternoon he saw through the window Fagin with a strange man called Monks. Oliver cried out but the servants couldn't find them in the garden.

### Chapter 8 – "Nancy's secret"

Mr Bumble was the master of the workhouse where Oliver was born. One evening Monks went to talk to him. "Twelve years ago a boy was born here. I think your wife took something from his mother". Mrs Bumble asked for twenty-five pounds in gold to give Monks Oliver's mother wedding ring. It had a name carved inside: AGNES. The man paid for the ring and threw it into the river.



Bill Sikes was ill and Nancy took care of him because she loved him. He asked her to go to Fagin's place and borrow some money. When she was there Monks arrived and told them Oliver's true story. Nancy decided to talk to Rose Maylie. In a hotel in Hyde Park she met Rose, Mrs Maylie, Doctor Losberne and Oliver. Nancy said, "Monks is a bad man. He and Fagin want to kidnap Oliver because he is Monk's half brother. That's all I know but I will keep on searching". They asked her not to return to those thieves, but she said she had no future.

### Chapter 9 – "Old friends meet"

Oliver asked Rose Maylie, "Can we visit Mr Brownlow?". And so they did. Rose told the old man about Nancy's visit and she said that they must find Monks.

On Sunday night Nancy went to London Bridge and she met Rose and Mr Brownlow. One of Fagin's boys was following her. Nancy said that Monks had a red mark on his neck and Mr Brownlow was surprised because he knew that man. She said that they could find him at the Red Lion Hotel.

### Chapter 10 – "Monks"

Fagin's boy ran to tell him and Sikes everything he heard. Sikes hated Nancy because she was helping Oliver, "I want to kill her!". He ran to his house. Nancy was sleeping and he hit her on the face again and again! She was dead! Sikes ran out and his dog followed him. He went to hide in the country.

Mr Brownlow and Doctor Losborne went to the Red Lion Hotel and kidnapped Monks. They took him to Rose Maylie's house. They made him confess, "You were my father's friend. I am Oliver's half brother. My mother was a bad woman and she left my father. He met another woman, her name was Agnes, they married and she became pregnant. My father was a rich man and he made a new will in favour of Agnes and Oliver. My father went to Rome for work and there he became ill and died. My mother followed him to Rome, found the will and burnt it. In this way Agnes and her baby became homeless". Rose Maylie was crying in despair: she knew that Agnes was her lost sister.

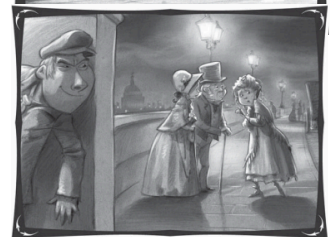
Mr Brownlow threatened Monks, "Now, this paper tells the truth about Oliver and his father's will. And you are going to sign your name on it. Or we are going to tell the police about Fagin, the thieves and the death of Nancy".

Monks read the paper and signed it. Mr Brownlow let him go free.

### Chapter 11 – "The end of our story"

The police found Fagin and put him in prison. Sikes hid in Jacob's Island in the Thames but people with torches followed him, "Murderer!", they shouted. He tried to run away through the roofs, he fell to the street and broke his neck. Charley and Dodger began a new and honest life. Monks went to America and died in prison there. Mr and Mrs Bumble became very poor and went to live in a workhouse.

Mr Brownlow adopted Oliver as he had adopted Agnes in the past. They went to live in the country, near the Maylie's house. Rose visited her nephew Oliver every day. Soon Doctor Lorberne bought a house in the same place. Oliver finally found a loving family!



THE END

ACTIVITIES



1) Answer these questions:

Chapter 1. What happened when Oliver asked for more porridge?

Chapter 2. Why did Oliver leave Mr Sowerberry's shop?

Chapter 3. How did Oliver meet Fagin?

Chapter 4. What "game" did Fagin teach the children?

Chapter 5. What did Mr Brownlow do for Oliver?

Chapter 6. What was Oliver forced to do? What were the consequences?

Chapter 7. Who was watching Oliver at the Maylie's?

Chapter 8. Why did Monks visit Mrs Bumble? And why did Nancy talk to Rose Maylie?

Chapter 9. What happened to Nancy and Monks?

Chapter 10. What did Monks have to do? What secrets were revealed?

Chapter 11. Why did this story end happily?

2) **Characters.** Who is who? Complete the chart explaining who are these characters:

|                          |  |             |  |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|--|
| Oliver Twist             |  | Fagin       |  |
| Agnes                    |  | Monks       |  |
| Mr Bumble                |  | Nancy       |  |
| Mr Sowerberry            |  | Bill Sikes  |  |
| Noah Claypole            |  | Mr Brownlow |  |
| Dodger and Charley Bates |  | Rose Maylie |  |

3) **The Industrial Revolution.** Read this text and write THREE questions. Underline the answers.

**What?** It's a sentimental novel where Dickens shows the social problems of the time: poverty of the masses, the horrors of the slums, the bad school and medical assistance. It's a story of an orphan and his adventures in the industrial London on the second half of the 18th Century.

**Who?** Oliver grows up in a workhouse and runs away to London. There he is adopted by a gang of criminals, who force him to help them in their crimes. One of the gang, Nancy, saves him and a kind gentlement gives him a new opportunity in life. Oliver Twist becomes the symbol of the weak and the poor people, all victims of industrialization.

**Where?** The setting is the London suburbs in a scenary of great poorness. In the novel we can see the ironical description of the lawmakers and their action, the children's exploitation, a world of hungry and desperate people.



4) **Charles Dickens.** His life. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?

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| <p>Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 in Portsmouth, in England. His father, John Dickens, was a naval clerk who dreamed of becoming rich. But he used to spend money dangerously and he was sent to prison for debt in 1824, when Charles was just 12 years old.</p> <p>Charles Dickens left school to work in a factory. Despite his lack of formal education, he wrote <i>The Pickwick Papers</i> (1836), <i>A Christmas Carol</i> (1843), <i>Oliver Twist</i>, <i>Great Expectations</i>, and <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> (1859). Dickens's creative genius has been praised by Leo Tolstoi, George Orwell and G. K. Chesterton—for its realism, comedy, prose style, unique characterizations, and social criticism.</p> <p>Charles Dickens died on June 9, 1870 of a stroke. He was buried in Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dicken's family was rich.<br/>a. <input type="radio"/> True      b. <input type="radio"/> False</li><li>His father was sent to prison for homicide.<br/>a. <input type="radio"/> True      b. <input type="radio"/> False</li><li>He left school at an early age.<br/>a. <input type="radio"/> True      b. <input type="radio"/> False</li><li>His novels were characterized by realism.<br/>a. <input type="radio"/> True      b. <input type="radio"/> False</li><li>He died due to a stroke.<br/>a. <input type="radio"/> True      b. <input type="radio"/> False.</li></ol> |
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