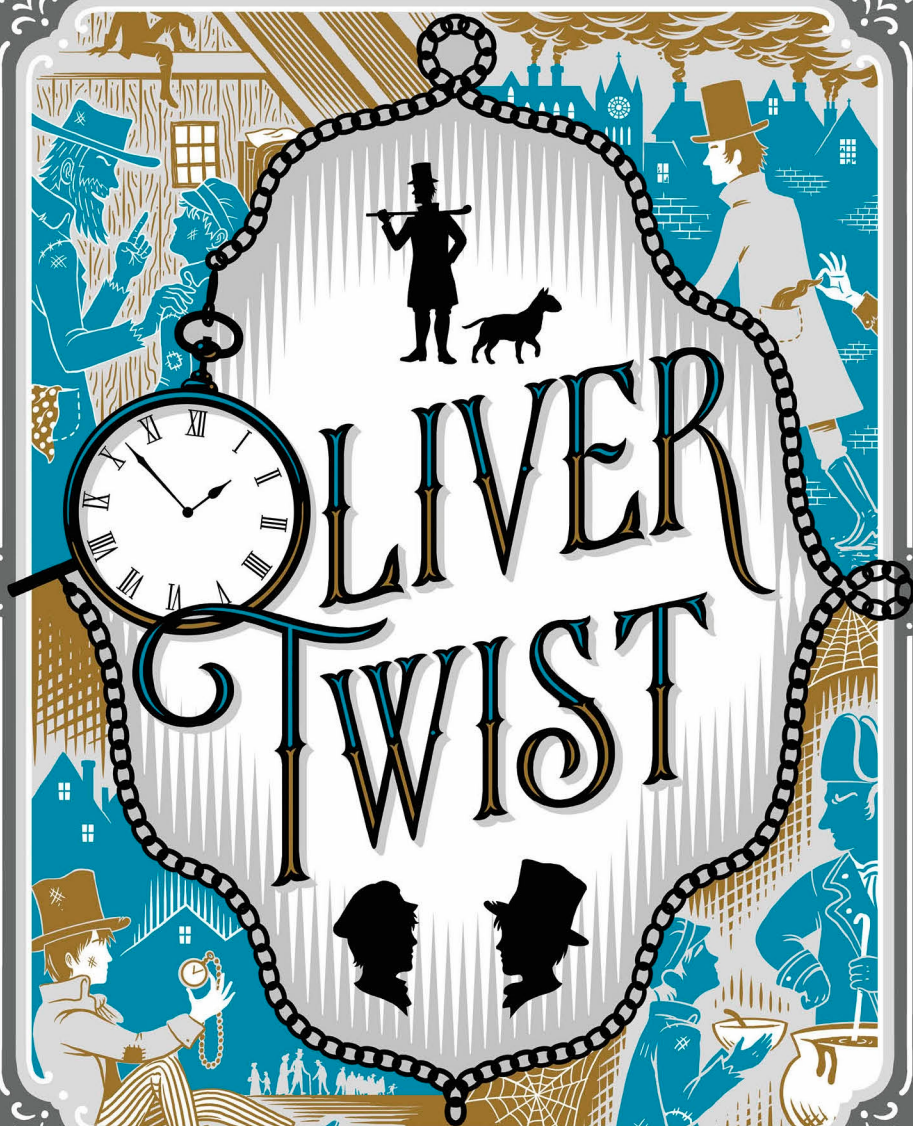


Penguin Readers



CHARLES DICKENS



Contents

Note about the story	4
Before-reading questions	5
Chapter One – Oliver grows up in the workhouse	7
Chapter Two – Oliver gets a job and runs away	12
Chapter Three – Oliver finds a new home in London	19
Chapter Four – Oliver begins a new life with Mr Brownlow	26
Chapter Five – Oliver is returned to Fagin	34
Chapter Six – Oliver goes to a robbery	40
Chapter Seven – Oliver is missing	45
Chapter Eight – Oliver finds another home	52
Chapter Nine – Oliver meets Harry Maylie	59
Chapter Ten – Monks meets Mr and Mrs Bumble	63
Chapter Eleven – Nancy goes out at night	69
Chapter Twelve – Mr Brownlow and Noah Claypole return	74
Chapter Thirteen – Nancy on London Bridge	79
Chapter Fourteen – Two men are caught	87
Chapter Fifteen – Oliver's history is explained	95
During-reading questions	101
After-reading questions	104
Exercises	104
Project work	108
Essay questions	109
Glossary	109

CHAPTER ONE

Oliver grows up in the workhouse

On a cold winter's night, in a grey and **miserable workhouse**, a baby was born. At first it was uncertain whether he was going to live or die. For some minutes he **struggled** to breathe, but at last, having won the fight, he began to cry loudly.

At the sound of his crying, a young woman weakly raised her pale face from the bed. "Let me see my baby, and die," she whispered to the doctor. She held her baby close and kissed his head. Soon afterwards, she was dead.

"Who is she?" the doctor asked the old woman with him.

"No one knows," replied the old nurse. "She was found lying in the street and was brought to the workhouse last night. She had walked a long way, for there were holes in her shoes. But where she came from, or where she was going, no one knows."

One day, nine years later, there was a knock at the workhouse door. Mr Bumble, the **beadle**, was waiting impatiently outside. He was a fat man with a bad **temper** who considered himself very important. Mrs Corney, the **matron** of the workhouse, opened the door.

"I have come for that boy, Oliver Twist," said Mr Bumble. "I gave him that name myself, because we didn't know who his

parents were. He's nine years old today, and it's time for him to start work. Let me see him at once."

"Of course," said the matron, and she went to get Oliver from the workhouse **cellar**. She had locked him inside earlier, with two other small boys, because they had **dared** to tell her that they were hungry. She quickly cleaned Oliver's face as best she could and took him to Mr Bumble.

"Oliver, you must come with me," said Mr Bumble.

Oliver cried as Mr Bumble took him by the hand and led him away, for this workhouse was the only home he had known. They walked what seemed to Oliver a very long way until they reached a bigger workhouse. Mr Bumble took Oliver to a large room, where several important-looking men were sitting around a table.

"Boy," said the gentleman at the top of the table. "You know you're an **orphan**, I suppose?"

"What's that, sir?" asked Oliver.

"The boy is a **fool**!" said the gentleman to the others. "You know you have no mother or father," he said to Oliver.

"Yes, sir," Oliver replied, and he began to cry.

"Why are you crying?" asked the gentleman. "Haven't you always been cared for? Now you have come here to be educated and taught a useful skill."

But Oliver was taught nothing except how to work hard on an empty stomach. The months went by, and with every day that passed the children in the workhouse got hungrier. At meal

times the **master** of the workhouse stood at the end of a large hall and gave out the **gruel**. Each boy was given one shallow bowlful and no more, and their tin bowls never needed washing. The boys cleaned them with their spoons until the bowls shone, to get out all the gruel, and then they **licked** the spoons and their fingers. But boys need a lot of feeding, and at last they became so wild with hunger that they could **bear** it no more.

A tall boy said to Oliver, "This evening you must ask the master for more gruel."

At supper, after the gruel was given out and the boys' bowls were licked clean, Oliver took his bowl and walked up to the master.



“Please, sir, I want some more,” he said.

The master’s face went pale. He stared in amazement at the small boy in front of him. “What?” he said, in a weak voice.

“Please, sir,” replied Oliver. “I want some more.”

The master hit Oliver on the head with a big metal spoon, caught hold of his arm and called for Mr Bumble.

“Oliver Twist has asked for more!” shouted Mr Bumble. “He cannot stay in the workhouse any longer!” He locked Oliver in a dark, empty room, and the next morning a sign appeared outside the workhouse: “FIVE POUNDS’ REWARD TO ANYONE WHO WILL TAKE A BOY APPRENTICE.”

At the end of the week, Mr Bumble unlocked the door and let Oliver out.

“You must come with me,” Mr Bumble said to Oliver. “The **undertaker** wants an apprentice.”

He took Oliver by the hand, and they walked to the town. As they came near the undertaker’s shop, Mr Bumble looked down at Oliver.

“Oliver!” he said. “Pull that cap off your eyes, and hold up your head.”

Oliver did what he was told at once and brushed away a **tear**. Another tear, and then another, fell down his cheek.

“Well!” said Mr Bumble. “You are a very **ungrateful**, badly behaved boy!”

“No, sir!” cried Oliver. “I will be good. I’m a very little boy, sir, and I’m so very alone. Oh, sir, please don’t be cross

with me!” Mr Bumble looked at Oliver in amazement, and then, taking Oliver’s hand once more, he walked on with him in **silence**.

It was getting dark, and the undertaker, Mr Sowerberry, was closing his shop when Mr Bumble and Oliver arrived.

“So this is the boy, is it?” said Mr Sowerberry, lifting a **candle** to get a better view of Oliver. He called for his wife. Oliver **bowed** to them both.

“Dear me!” said Mrs Sowerberry. “He’s very small.”

“He is certainly small,” replied Mr Bumble, “but he will grow.”

“I’m sure he will,” said Mrs Sowerberry, crossly. “He’ll grow on our food! Get down the stairs,” she said to Oliver. “You can have some of the cold bits of meat that were kept for the dog. And you can sleep in the shop between the **coffins**. You don’t mind sleeping among the coffins, I suppose? But it doesn’t much matter whether you do mind, for it’s the only place you can sleep.”