



# OLIVER TWIST

by

CHARLES DICKENS

*Edited and Abridged by*

LATIF DOSS

*Ministry of Education, Cairo*



Longman

# OLIVER TW

*by*

CHARLES DICKENS

*Edited and Abridged by*

LATIF DOSS

*Ministry of Education, Cairo*



LONGMAN

LONGMAN GROUP LIMITED  
London

*Associated companies, branches and representatives  
throughout the world*

© Longman Group Ltd 1962

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Copyright owner.

*First published in this edition 1962*

*New impressions \*1962 (twice); \*1963; \*1964 (twice);*

*\*1965; \*1966 (thrice); \*1967; \*1969;*

*\*1970; \*1971; \*1972 (twice);*

*\*1973; \*1974 (twice); \*1975;*

*\*1976 (twice); \*1977; \*1978;*

*\*1979 (twice)*

ISBN 0 582 53014 8

*Printed in Hong Kong by  
Sheck Wah Tong Printing Press Ltd*

## **The Bridge Series**

The *Bridge Series* is intended for students of English as a second or foreign language who have progressed beyond the elementary graded readers and the *Longman Simplified English Series* but are not yet sufficiently advanced to read works of literature in their original form.

The books in the *Bridge Series* are moderately simplified in vocabulary and often slightly reduced in length, but with little change in syntax. The purpose of the texts is to give practice in understanding fairly advanced sentence patterns and to help in the appreciation of English style. We hope that they will prove enjoyable to read for their own sake and that they will at the same time help students to reach the final objective of reading original works of literature in English with full understanding and appreciation.

### *Technical Note*

The vocabulary of the *Simplified English Series* is the 2,000 words of the *General Service List (Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection)* and there is a degree of structure control. In the *Bridge Series* words outside the commonest 7,000 (in Thorndike and Lorge: *A Teacher's Handbook of 30,000 Words*, Columbia University, 1944) have usually been replaced by commoner and more generally useful words. Words used which are outside the first 3,000 of the list are explained in a glossary and are so distributed throughout the book that they do not occur at a greater density than 25 per running 1,000 words.

## INTRODUCTION

Charles Dickens was born near Portsmouth in 1812, one of a family of six. His parents were very poor. His father ran heavily into debt and when Charles was twelve, he had to go and work in a factory for making boot polish. These were the kind of conditions in which Charles Dickens grew up and, as a result, the only formal education he received was two years at a very poor school. In fact, he had to teach himself all he knew. He worked for a time as a junior clerk in a lawyer's office, and was then employed by a newspaper as a parliamentary reporter in the House of Commons.

It was at the age of twenty-four that Dickens began to write the novels for which he is now famous. He was a great observer of people and places and, in particular, he was attracted by life and conditions in mid-nineteenth century London. He writes at his best when he is describing the characters of people, particularly those of the lower-middle class, or those of little education. Many of his novels like *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *David Copperfield* drew attention to the unsatisfactory social conditions that existed in England over a hundred years ago, and in a few cases they helped to have them improved.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I Oliver Twist is born	1
II Early years	2
III A chimney-sweep offers to take Oliver	5
IV Oliver is apprenticed to an undertaker	8
V Noah Claypole	10
VI The Artful Dodger	17
VII Fagin the Jew and his band	22
VIII Oliver is arrested	27
IX Oliver is released	30
X Oliver stays at Mr Brownlow's	33
XI In Fagin's hands once more	40
XII Oliver is to take part in a robbery	48
XIII The attempt	51
XIV Mr Giles catches a thief!	58
XV A mysterious character appears upon the scene	64
XVI The kind-hearted Dr Losberne	68
XVII Oliver's life with the Maylies	74
XVIII The mysterious character reappears	75
XIX A meeting at night	79
XX Bill Sikes is ill	83
XXI Nancy pays a secret visit	86
XXII Mr Grimwig's peculiar behaviour	92
XXIII The Artful Dodger gets into trouble	95
XXIV Nancy keeps her promise	98
XXV Fatal consequences	103
XXVI The flight of Sikes	107
XXVII Monks and Mr Brownlow meet at last	112
XXVIII The end of Sikes	118
XXIX Fagin's last hours	123
XXX Conclusion	125
Glossary	127

## CHAPTER I

### *Oliver Twist is born*

Oliver Twist was born in a workhouse, and for a long time after his birth there was considerable doubt whether the child would live. He lay breathless for some time, rather unequally balanced between this world and the next. After a few struggles, however, he breathed, sneezed and uttered a loud cry.

The pale face of a young woman lying on the bed was raised weakly from the pillow and in a faint voice she said, "Let me see the child and die."

"Oh, you must not talk about dying yet," said the doctor, as he rose from where he was sitting near the fire and advanced towards the bed.

"God bless her, no!" added the poor old pauper who was acting as nurse.

The doctor placed the child in its mother's arms; she pressed her cold white lips on its forehead; passed her hands over her face; gazed wildly around, fell back—and died.

"It's all over," said the doctor at last.

"Ah, poor dear, so it is!" said the old nurse.

"She was a good-looking girl, too," added the doctor; "where did she come from?"

"She was brought here last night," replied the old woman. "She was found lying in the street. She had walked some distance, for her shoes were torn to pieces; but where she came from, or where she was going, nobody knows."

"The old story," said the doctor, shaking his head, as he leaned over the body, and raised the left hand; "no wedding ring, I see. Ah! Good night!"

## CHAPTER II

### *Early years*

For the next eight or ten months Oliver was brought up by hand. Then he was sent to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other young parentless children rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing. They were under the charge of an elderly woman called Mrs Mann who received from the government sevenpence halfpenny weekly for each child. Being a woman of wisdom and experience she knew what was good for the children and what was good for herself. So she kept the greater part of the weekly money for her own use, and gave the children in her charge hardly enough to keep them alive.

It cannot be expected that this system of bringing up children would produce any very extraordinary or strong ones. Oliver Twist's ninth birthday found him a pale, weak child, very thin and rather below average height. But the child was full of spirit.

He was keeping his ninth birthday in the coal-cellar with two other children; they had, all three, been beaten by Mrs Mann and then locked up for daring to say they were hungry.

Suddenly, Mrs Mann was startled by the appearance of Mr Bumble, a workhouse official; a fat man, full of a sense of his own importance. The purpose of his visit was to take Oliver back to the workhouse, for he was now too old to remain with Mrs Mann.

Oliver, whose face and hands had by this time been washed in a hurry, was led into the room by his kind-hearted protectress.

"Make a bow to the gentleman, Oliver," said Mrs Mann.



Oliver obeyed.

"Will you go along with me, Oliver?" said Mr Bumble in a majestic voice.

Oliver was about to say that he would readily go along with anybody, when, looking upward, he caught sight of Mrs Mann, who had got behind Mr. Bumble's chair, and was shaking her fist at him. He understood what she meant at once.

"Will *she* go with me?" asked poor Oliver.

"No, she can't," replied Mr. Bumble. "But she'll come and see you sometimes."

Oliver pretended to be very sad at going away; it was easy for him to call tears into his eyes. Hunger and recent bad treatment are great helpers if you want to cry; and Oliver cried very naturally indeed. Mrs Mann gave him a thousand kisses, and, what Oliver wanted a great deal more, a piece of bread and butter, lest he should seem too hungry when he got to the workhouse. Oliver was led away by Mr Bumble from the miserable home where one kind word or look had never lighted the darkness of his early years.

Life in the workhouse was very severe indeed. The members of the board which managed it had made a rule that the children should work to earn their living, and that they should be given three meals of thin soup a day, with an onion twice a week and half a cake on Sundays.

The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall, with a huge pot at one end: out of which the master, assisted by one or two women, served out the soup at meal-times. Each boy had one small bowl, and no more—except on feast days, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never needed washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again, and when they had performed this operation they would sit staring at the huge pot, with such eager eyes, as if they could have eaten it up.

Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the pangs of slow starvation for three months; at last they got so wild with hunger that one boy, who was tall for his age, told his companions that unless he had another bowl of soup every day, he was afraid he might some night eat the boy who slept next to him. He had a wild hungry eye, and they fully believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stood beside the huge pot, with his two assistants behind him; the soup was served out. It quickly disappeared; the boys whispered to each other and made signs to Oliver. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, bowl in hand, said, "Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed with horror and astonishment on the small boy for some seconds.

"What!" he said at length in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with his big spoon; held him tight in his arms; and cried aloud for Mr Bumble.

Mr Bumble, hearing the cry, and learning the cause for it, rushed into the room where the board were sitting in a solemn meeting, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said,

"Mr Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir. Oliver Twist has asked for more."

There was a general alarm. Horror was on every face.

"For *more*!" said Mr Limbkins. "Be calm, Bumble, and answer me clearly. Do you mean to say that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper given by the board?"

"He did, sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will be hanged," said one of the gentlemen on the board. "I know that boy will be hanged."

Oliver was locked up at once; and next morning a notice was put up on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the workhouse. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade or business.

### CHAPTER III

#### *A chimney-sweep offers to take Oliver*

For weeks after committing the crime of asking for more, Oliver remained a prisoner in the dark and lonely room to which he had been sent as punishment by the board. But let it not be supposed by the enemies of "the system" that Oliver, while a prisoner, was denied the benefit of exercise, or the pleasure of society. As for exercise, it was nice cold weather, and he was allowed to wash himself every morning under the pump, in a stone yard, in the presence of Mr Bumble, who prevented his catching cold, and caused a warm feeling to go through his body, by a repeated use of the stick. As for society, he was carried every other day into the hall where the boys dined, and there publicly beaten as a warning and example.

It chanced one morning that Mr Gamfield, a chimney-sweep, went his way down the High Street, deeply thinking of how to pay certain rents he owed to his landlord. Passing the workhouse, his eyes fell on the notice on the gate. He walked up to the gate to read it.

One of the gentlemen on the board was standing at the

gate. The chimney sweep, observing him, told him that he wanted an apprentice and was ready to take the boy offered. The gentleman ordered him to walk in and he took him to Mr Limbkins.

The bargain was made. Mr Bumble was at once instructed that Oliver Twist and papers of his apprenticeship were to be taken before the magistrate, for approval, that very afternoon.

On his way to the magistrate, Mr Bumble instructed Oliver that all he would have to do would be to look very happy, and say, when the gentleman asked him if he wanted to be apprenticed, that he should like it very much indeed.

Presently they arrived at the office and appeared before the magistrate, an old gentleman with a pair of eye-glasses.

"This is the boy, your worship," said Mr Bumble. "Bow to the magistrate, my dear."

Oliver made his best bow.

"Well," said the old gentleman. "I suppose he's fond of chimney-sweeping?"

"He's very fond of it, your worship," replied Bumble, giving Oliver a pinch.

"And he *will* be a sweep, will he?" inquired the old gentleman.

"If he was to be apprenticed to any other trade tomorrow, he'd run away, your worship," replied Bumble.

"And this man that's to be his master—you, sir—you'll treat him well, and feed him, and do all that sort of thing, will you?" said the old gentleman.

"When I say I will, I mean I will," replied Mr Gamfield roughly.

"You're a rough speaker, my friend, but you look an honest, open-hearted man," said the old gentleman, turning his eye-glasses in the direction of Gamfield, on whose face cruelty was clearly stamped. But the magistrate was half

blind, so he couldn't reasonably be expected to see what other people saw.

The magistrate fixed his eye-glasses more firmly on his nose, and began to look about him for the inkpot.

It was the critical moment of Oliver's fate. If the inkpot had been where the old gentleman thought it was, he would have been led away at once. But as it chanced to be immediately under his nose, he looked all over his desk for it, without finding it; and happening in the course of his search to look straight before him, his gaze met the pale and frightened face of Oliver Twist, who was regarding the fearful face of his future master with a mixture of horror and fear.

The old gentleman stopped, laid down his pen, and looked from Oliver to Mr Bumble.

"My boy!" said the old gentleman, leaning over the desk, "you look pale and alarmed. What is the matter? Stand a little way from him, Mr Bumble. Now, boy, tell us what's the matter: don't be afraid."

Oliver fell on his knees, and joining his hands together, prayed the magistrate that he would order him back to the dark room—starve him—beat him—kill him if he liked—rather than send him away with that dreadful man.

"Well!" said Mr Bumble, raising his hands and eyes in a very solemn manner. "Well! Of all the cunning orphans that I have ever seen, you are one of the most shameless."

"Hold your tongue," said the magistrate. "I refuse to sign these papers," pushing them aside as he spoke. "Take the boy back to the workhouse, and treat him kindly. He seems to need it."

The next morning the public were once more informed that Oliver Twist was again to let, and that five pounds would be paid to anybody who would take possession of him.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Oliver is apprenticed to an undertaker*

Mr Bumble was returning one day to the workhouse when he met at the gate Mr Sowerberry, the undertaker, a tall, bony man dressed in a worn-out black suit. As he advanced to Mr Bumble he shook him by the hand and said :

"I have taken the measure of the two women that died last night, Mr Bumble."

"You'll make your fortune, Mr Sowerberry," said Mr Bumble.

"Think so?" said the undertaker. "The prices allowed by the board are very small, Mr Bumble."

"So are the coffins," replied the latter.

Mr Sowerberry laughed a long time at this joke. "Well, well, Mr Bumble," he said at length, "I don't deny that, since the new system of feeding has come in, the coffins are somewhat narrower and more shallow than they used to be; but we must have some profit, Mr Bumble. Wood is expensive, sir."

"Well, well," said Mr Bumble, "every trade has its disadvantages. By the way, you don't know anybody who wants a boy, do you?"

"Ah!" exclaimed the undertaker, "that's the very thing I wanted to speak to you about. You know, Mr Bumble, I think I'll take the boy myself."

Mr Bumble grasped the undertaker by the arm and led him into the building, where it was quickly arranged that Oliver should go to him that evening.

Oliver heard this news in perfect silence, and carrying a brown paper parcel in his hand, which was all the luggage he had, he was led away by Mr Bumble to a new scene of suffering.

For some time they walked on in silence. As they drew near to Mr Sowerberry's shop Mr Bumble looked down to make sure that the boy was in good order to be seen by his new master.

"Oliver!" said Mr Bumble. "Pull that cap off your eyes, and hold up your head."

Oliver did as he was told at once, but when he looked up at Mr Bumble there were tears in his eyes. Mr Bumble gazed sternly upon him. The child made a strong effort to stop weeping, but the tears rolled down his cheeks and he covered his face with both his hands.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr Bumble, stopping short and looking at him angrily, "of all the most ungrateful and ill-natured boys I have ever seen, Oliver, you are the——"

"No, no, sir," cried Oliver, clinging to the hand which held the stick; "no, no, sir; I will be good indeed; indeed I will, sir! I am a very little boy, sir; and it is so—so——"

"So what?" inquired Mr Bumble in amazement.

"So lonely, sir! So very lonely!" cried the child.

The undertaker had just closed his shop and was writing the details of the day's business by the light of the candle when Mr Bumble entered.

"Here, Mr Sowerberry, I've brought the boy."

"Oh! that's the boy, is it?" said the undertaker, raising the candle above his head, to get a better view of Oliver. "Mrs Sowerberry, will you have the goodness to come here a moment, my dear?"

Mrs Sowerberry, a short, thin, quarrelsome woman, came from a little room behind the shop.

"My dear," said Mr Sowerberry, respectfully, "this is the boy from the workhouse that I told you of."

"Dear me!" she said. "He's very small."

"Why, he is rather small," replied Mr Bumble, "but he'll grow, Mrs Sowerberry—he'll grow."

"Ah! I dare say he will," replied the lady angrily, "on

our food and drink. I see no saving in workhouse children, not I; for they always cost more to keep than they are worth. However, men always think they know best. There! Get downstairs, little bag of bones."

The undertaker's wife opened a side door and pushed Oliver down some stairs into a damp and dark room which was used as a kitchen. In it sat an untidy girl in worn-out shoes and torn blue stockings.

"Here, Charlotte," said Mrs Sowerberry, who had followed Oliver down, "give this boy some of the cold bits that were put up for the dog. He hasn't come home since the morning, so he may go without them."

Oliver's eyes shone at the mention of meat; a plateful of coarse broken pieces was set before him; and he ate greedily, Mrs Sowerberry regarding him with silent horror. When he had finished she said:

"Come with me," and, taking a dim and dirty lamp, she led the way upstairs. "Your bed is under the counter. You don't mind sleeping among the coffins, I suppose? But it doesn't matter whether you do or don't, for you can't sleep anywhere else."

Oliver obediently followed his new mistress.

## CHAPTER V

### *Noah Claypole*

Oliver, being left to himself in the undertaker's shop, set the lamp down on a bench, and gazed fearfully about him. An unfinished coffin which stood in the middle of the shop looked so gloomy and death-like that a cold tremble came over him, every time his eyes wandered in its direc-



tion, and he almost expected to see some frightful form raise its head out of it, to drive him mad with terror.

He was awakened in the morning by a loud kicking at the outside of the shop door. When he began to unfasten the chain an angry voice began:

"Open the door, will you?"

"I will, directly, sir," replied Oliver, unfastening the chain and turning the key.

"I suppose you're the new boy, ain't you?" said the voice through the key-hole.

"Yes, sir," replied Oliver.

"How old are you?" inquired the voice.

"Ten, sir," replied Oliver.

"Then I'll whip you when I get in," said the voice, and having made this kind promise, the speaker began to whistle.

Oliver drew back the bolts with a trembling hand, and opened the door. He looked up the street and down the street: he saw nobody but a big charity-boy, sitting on a post in front of the house, eating a slice of bread and butter.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Oliver at length, seeing that no other visitor made his appearance, "did you knock?"

"I kicked," replied the charity-boy.

"Did you want a coffin, sir?" inquired Oliver, innocently.

At this the charity-boy looked fierce and said that Oliver would want one before long, if he made jokes with his superiors in that way.

"You don't know who I am, I suppose, Workhouse?" said the charity-boy, descending from the top of the post.

"No, sir," replied Oliver.

"I'm Mister Noah Claypole," said the charity-boy. "And you're under me. Take down the shutters, you idle young ruffian." With this, Mr Claypole gave Oliver a kick and entered the shop.