

Classic Readers

Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens

retold by Jenny Dooley



Express Publishing

Life with Mr Sowerberry

For a week Oliver stayed alone in the cold dark cellar, and it was the worst week of his life so far. Every morning, Mr Bumble unlocked the door, took Oliver into the room where the boys were eating and beat him while the boys watched. Then he locked Oliver in the room again. Poor Oliver cried all day and, at night, he couldn't sleep because he was cold, unhappy ... and hungry.

One morning, at the end of that week, Mr Bumble saw Mr Sowerberry, the coffin-maker, outside the workhouse. Mr Sowerberry was a tall thin man who always wore black clothes because of his job. He often came to the workhouse because so many poor people died there and so he knew Mr Bumble well. The two men began to chat, and then Mr Bumble pointed to the notice on the workhouse door.

"Mr Sowerberry, do you know anyone who wants a boy—and five pounds?"

Mr Sowerberry thought for a few moments.

"I think I'll take him, Mr Bumble. I need a boy to work in my shop."

They went inside to make the arrangements.

That evening, Mr Bumble unlocked the cellar door and told Oliver the news. Oliver said nothing. He just pulled the cap down over his eyes to hide his tears and followed Mr Bumble through the streets to the coffin-maker's shop.

Mr Sowerberry was waiting for them. There was only the light from one small candle so the room was dark and gloomy. A finished

coffin lay on a table in the middle of the room and pieces of wood stood against the walls. Mr Sowerberry smiled at Oliver and then called his wife.

"Mrs Sowerberry, will you come here for a moment, my dear?"

Mrs Sowerberry was a small thin woman with an angry face. Oliver thought she looked like a fox. She looked at him and Oliver bowed politely.

"Hmm ... he's very small," she said, at last.

"Yes, he **is** small," agreed Mr Bumble, "but he'll grow, ma'am." "Oh yes, he'll grow all right ... on our food and drink! Get downstairs, you little bag of bones!"

She pushed Oliver down some stairs into a dark little kitchen where a servant girl was working.

"Charlotte, give this boy those bits of meat the dog didn't eat."

For the first time in his life, Oliver tasted meat. He ate the dog's food hungrily, and then Mrs Sowerberry said, "Your bed's under the shop counter. There's nowhere else, so enjoy sleeping in there—with the coffins!"

She laughed and left Oliver alone. He was very frightened and hardly slept all night.

Early in the morning, Oliver heard someone kicking the door and shouting, "Open the door!"

Oliver opened the door and a big boy walked into the shop.

"I am Mister Noah Claypole, and you must do what I tell you," said the boy. "Now take the shutters down and hurry up!"

He kicked Oliver as he walked past.





Kidnapped

Comprehension

Read or listen to Chapter 5, then complete these sentences.

- 1 When the boys went home without Oliver, Fagin was very
- 2 Fagin was afraid that Oliver might go to the
- 3 Nancy put on a clean and pretended to cry.
- 4 Nancy threw Fagin's into the fire.
- 5 Bill loaded his and put it on the table.

What do you think?

- 1 Why do you think the boys stayed with Fagin?
- 2 What do you think Fagin thought of Bill Sikes?
- 3 What is the most frightening story you have read or heard?

Language Practice

I Use the words/phrases in the box to describe these characters.

tall	old	thin	long curly hair	well-built
about 35	young	greasy hair	rosy cheeks	



II Fill in the gaps with the correct expression from the box.

cheered up ashamed going on too much no use

- 1 What's in here?
- 2 When I failed the test, it was for me and I cried.
- 3 We all when we heard the good news.
- 4 That was a terrible thing to do. Aren't you ?
- 5 We tried to get over the wall, but it was It was too high.

What happens next?

Read the three ideas below and guess which **one** happens next. Choose one and write notes to continue the story in the space below.

Oliver runs
away from Bill.

Nancy tells the
police about
Oliver.

Oliver gets
hurt during the
robbery.

Family Trees

I Look at Oliver's family tree. Put the names of the people in the right place to find out what Oliver's real family name was.

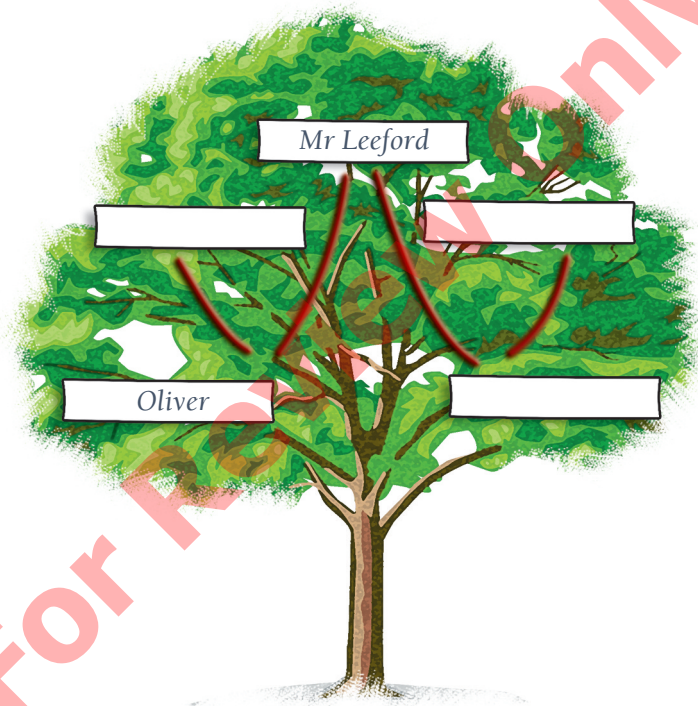
Mr Leeford

Oliver

Monks

Agnes

Monk's mother



Oliver's real name is not 'Twist'. It is Oliver

II Now draw you own family tree. Write the names of your parents and your grandparents. You may need to ask your parents for information. If you have brothers or sisters, add their names in the boxes next to yours. You may add more boxes if you need to.

Oliver Twist

Life in the workhouse is hard and Oliver escapes to London where he joins Fagin's gang of young thieves. Will Oliver become like the others in the gang or will somebody save him from a life of crime?



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