

Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens



Audio CD



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Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens



Illustrated by Fabio Visintin
Retold by Gina D. B. Clemen

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The text is recorded in full.




These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages linked to the listening activities.



Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens

 Charles Dickens, one of the world's greatest authors, was born in Portsmouth, England, on 7 February 1812. He was the second of eight children. He had a happy childhood and loved reading all kinds of books. When Dickens was only twelve years old his father went to prison because he had serious money problems. Young Dickens had to leave school and went to work in a factory. He worked long hours in very bad conditions and he never forgot this terrible experience.

When Dickens was nineteen years old he became a newspaper reporter for *The Mirror of Parliament*. Soon he began writing short stories for magazines. In Dickens's times novels were usually published in parts



CHAPTER ONE

Young Oliver

A long time ago every town in England had a workhouse. This was a house for very poor people and a very sad place to live. Oliver Twist was born in a workhouse. His mother, who was a young woman, was very ill when she came to the workhouse.

A doctor and an old woman were with her. After Oliver was born his mother said, 'I want to see my baby and then die.'

The old woman and the doctor looked at each other.

'You're too young to die,' said the old woman.

The doctor put the little baby in his mother's arms and she kissed the baby; then she died.

'Goodness!' ¹ said the doctor, 'she's dead.'

'The poor dear!' said the old woman. 'She came here late last night.'

'Where's she from?' asked the doctor.

'No one knows where she's from,' replied the old woman.

1. **Goodness** : an expression of surprise.



The doctor looked at the young woman's left hand and said, 'There's no wedding ring; she wasn't married. Good night.' He put on his hat, coat and gloves and left.

The old woman began to dress the baby with some old clothes. Little Oliver was alone in the world; he was an orphan and no one loved him.

When Oliver was small his home was an orphanage, where he lived with other young orphans. The children of the orphanage were given very little food and very little love. Many of the orphans died because they were cold and hungry. The orphanage was a unhappy place. Oliver survived, although he was pale, small and thin.

At the age of nine Oliver had to leave the orphanage and the only friends he had. This made him very sad because now he was really alone in the world. He was taken to a workhouse, a miserable place where he had to work long hours. He was given only one small bowl of porridge three times a day and an onion twice a week. Because Sunday was a special day he was given a small piece of bread.

Oliver and the other people at the workhouse were always cold, hungry and unhappy. They never asked for a second bowl of porridge because they were afraid. However, after three months of hunger and unhappiness Oliver and the others decided to do something. They discussed the matter and decided that Oliver had to ask the master for more porridge. So that evening he took his small empty bowl to the master of the workhouse, who was a big man with a white apron.

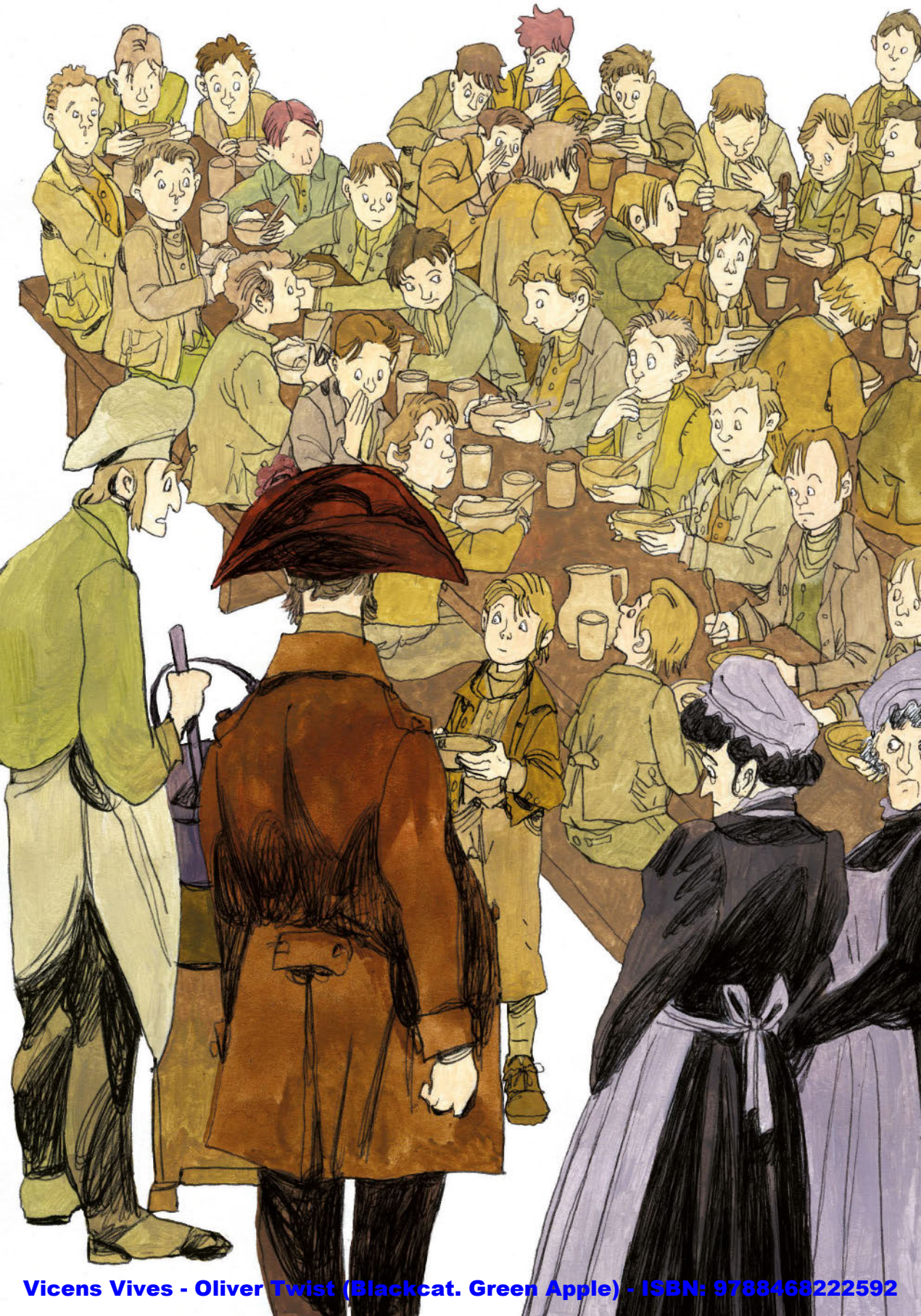
'Please, sir,' said Oliver looking at the master, 'I want some more.'

The master was very surprised and stared at him. Then he hit Oliver with his big wooden spoon.

'Mr Bumble,' cried the master. 'Please come here!'

Mr Bumble, who was an important officer in the town, rushed into the room and said, 'What's this nonsense?'

A small red rectangular button with the word 'END' in white capital letters.





‘This young boy asked for *more porridge!*’ exclaimed the master, whose face was red.

‘What?’ asked Mr Bumble. ‘Did I hear you correctly? *More porridge?*’

‘Yes sir, *more porridge?*’ replied the master, holding up the big wooden spoon.

Mr Bumble took Oliver to the office of the directors of the workhouse and said, ‘Oliver Twist asked for more porridge!’

‘For more porridge?’ they cried, looking at each other. ‘This boy must leave the workhouse immediately!’

Mr Bumble put Oliver in a cold, dark room for one whole week. Every morning Mr Bumble opened the door of the dark room and hit Oliver with a stick in front of his friends. Poor Oliver did nothing but cry all day long and he couldn’t sleep at night because he was terribly cold, hungry and sad.

One day Mr Bumble met his friend Mr Sowerberry, who was a tall, thin man. He made coffins² for dead bodies, and many of the dead bodies came from the workhouse.

‘Do you need a boy to work in your shop?’ asked Mr Bumble. ‘We’ll give you five pounds if you take him.’

‘Hmm,’ said Mr Sowerberry, ‘yes, I need a boy and I need the five pounds. I’ll take him!’

That evening Mr Bumble took Oliver to Mr Sowerberry’s shop. When they got near the shop Oliver looked at Mr Bumble and started crying.

‘Oh, sir, I want to be a good boy. I am a very little boy, sir. And it is so... lonely. So very lonely!’ Oliver couldn’t stop crying and his thin, pale face was covered with tears.

2. coffin :



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

Match the phrases 1-8 to the phrases A-L to make complete sentences about Chapter One. There are four phrases you do not need to use.

- 1 Oliver Twist's mother died
2 The old woman did not know
3 The orphanage was a very sad place
4 Oliver and the other people at the workhouse
5 No one at the workhouse asked for more porridge
6 Oliver had to leave the workhouse
7 Mr Sowerberry
8 Mr Bumble asked Mr Sowerberry
- A because the children were always hungry and no one loved them.
B made coffins for dead bodies.
C because they were afraid.
D was the director of the workhouse.
E immediately after Oliver was born.
F if he needed a boy to work for him.
G a month after Oliver was born.
H were always hungry, cold and unhappy.
I because he was very lonely.
J where Oliver's mother came from.
K because he asked for more porridge.
L because he didn't like Mr Sowerberry.

2 VOCABULARY

A Circle the odd words out and explain why.

- 1 porridge meat fish poultry
2 bowl cup dish box
3 doctor teacher parent engineer
4 onion orange carrot spinach
5 Turkey England Irish Italy
6 hat coat gloves ring

B Now complete the sentences with the odd words.

- A Is Patrick an name?
- B They put all the books in a big
- C Oliver was tired of eating every day.
- D He ate an at breakfast.
- E Oliver did not have a to look after him.
- F Oliver's mother did not have a wedding on her finger.

3 WRITING

Read the information about workhouses and fill in the gaps with the correct past tense of the verb in the box. The first is done for you.

have to (x2) know work mean go do
wear start be (x2) can want

In Great Britain after 1834 poor people who had no job or home (0) ~~went~~..... to live in a workhouse, where they (1) work for their food. They (2) hard and (3) unpleasant jobs.

Women, children and men (4) stay in different living and working areas and they (5) not speak to one another. These people (6) uniforms and this (7) that everyone looked the same and everyone outside (8) they were poor and lived in a workhouse. The day at the workhouse (9) at six o'clock in the morning and everyone was in bed by eight o'clock at night.

There (10) very little food and it didn't taste good. Only porridge, soup, potatoes, cheese, bread and little cooked meat (11) on the menu. No one (12) to live in such a terrible place!

T : GRADE 4

4 SPEAKING - FOOD

Oliver never had enough good food at the workhouse. Talk to your partner about your favourite food and use these questions to help you.

- 1 What's your favourite food and why?
- 2 Do you know how to make it?
- 3 Who does the cooking at your house?
- 4 What's your favourite restaurant or fast-food place?