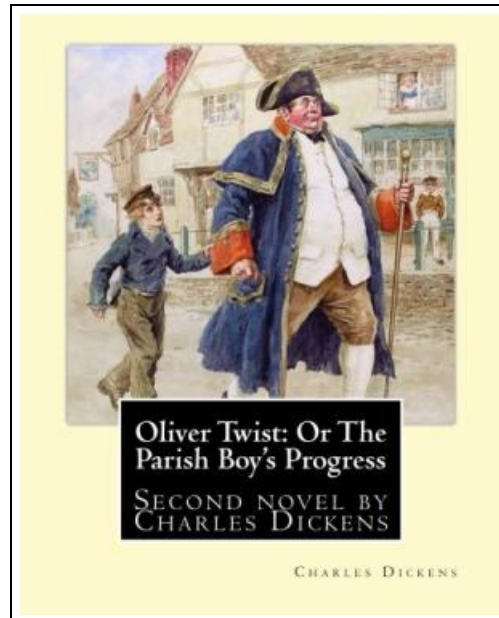


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Oliver Twist, or The Parish Boy s Progress, is the second novel by English author Charles Dickens and was first published as a serial 1837-39. The story is of the orphan Oliver Twist, who starts his life in a workhouse and is then sold into apprenticeship with an undertaker. He escapes from there and travels to London, where he meets the Artful Dodger, a member of a gang of juvenile pickpockets led by the elderly criminal, Fagin. Oliver Twist is notable for its unromantic portrayal by Dickens of criminals and their sordid lives, as well as for exposing the cruel treatment of the many orphans in London in the mid-19th century. The alternate title, The Parish Boy s Progress, alludes to Bunyan s The Pilgrim s Progress, as well as the 18th-century caricature series by William Hogarth, A Rake s Progress and A Harlot s Progress. In this early example of the social novel, Dickens satirizes the hypocrisies of his time, including child labour, the recruitment of children as criminals, and the presence of street children. The novel may have been inspired by the story of Robert Blincoe, an orphan whose account of working as a child labourer in a cotton mill was widely read in the 1830s. It is likely that Dickens s own youthful experiences contributed as well. Oliver Twist has been the subject of numerous adaptations for various media, including a highly successful musical play, Oliver!, and the multiple Academy Award-winning 1968 motion picture. Disney also put its spin on the novel with the movie called Oliver Company in 1988. PLOT: Oliver Twist was born into a life of poverty and misfortune in a workhouse in an unnamed town...



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