

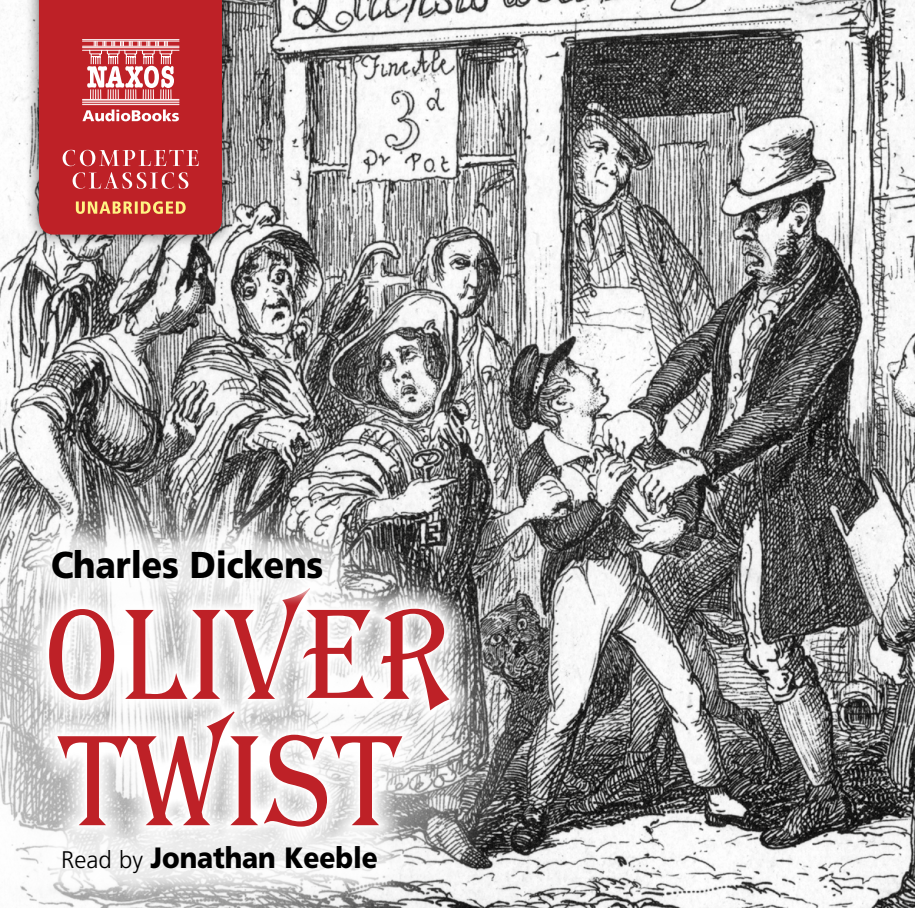
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AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED

Charles Dickens

# OLIVER TWIST

Read by **Jonathan Keeble**



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## CD 1

1	<b>Chapter 1</b>	7:12
2	<b>Chapter 2</b>	4:13
3	It cannot be expected that this system of farming...	5:31
4	'And now about business,' said the beadle...	4:43
5	Oliver had not been within the walls of the workhouse...	5:51
6	For the first six months...	5:39
7	<b>Chapter 3</b>	6:07
8	'Walk in,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.	6:06
9	On their way to the magistrate...	7:42
10	<b>Chapter 4</b>	4:50
11	'By the bye,' said Mr Bumble...	5:39
12	For some time Mr Bumble drew Oliver along...	6:31
13	<b>Chapter 5</b>	8:03

**Total time on CD 1: 78:16**

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## CD 2

1	Oliver had been sojourning at the undertaker's...	6:30
2	He needn't have taken the trouble to shrink...	7:17
3	The next day, (the family having been meanwhile relieved...)	4:02
4	<b>Chapter 6</b>	3:30
5	One day, Oliver and Noah had descended into the kitchen...	7:25
6	<b>Chapter 7</b>	4:22
7	Here the position of affairs had not at all improved.	5:53
8	It was not until he was left alone...	4:52
9	<b>Chapter 8</b>	5:50
10	Early on the seventh morning after he had left...	7:29
11	As John Dawkins objected to their entering London...	6:17
12	<b>Chapter 9</b>	6:52
13	He had scarcely washed himself...	7:44

**Total time on CD 2: 78:11**

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## CD 3

1	<b>Chapter 10</b>	5:30
2	This was all done in a minute's space...	5:29
3	<b>Chapter 11</b>	4:36
4	The office was a front parlour, with a panelled wall.	6:24
5	At this point of the inquiry, Oliver raised his head...	5:35
6	<b>Chapter 12</b>	7:25
7	It had been bright day for hours...	7:21
8	Oliver knew not the cause of this sudden exclamation...	6:40
9	<b>Chapter 13</b>	6:01
10	After swallowing two or three glasses of spirits...	6:33
11	While these, and many other encomiums...	5:11
12	<b>Chapter 14</b>	4:54
13	Thus encouraged, Oliver tapped at the study door.	5:50

**Total time on CD 3: 77:36**

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## CD 4

1	At this moment, there walked into the room...	5:54
2	Now, the fact was, that in the inmost recesses...	7:26
3	<b>Chapter 15</b>	4:44
4	'Well, well, my dear,' said the Jew...	4:48
5	Meanwhile, Oliver Twist, little dreaming...	5:20
6	<b>Chapter 16</b>	6:23
7	The young gentleman did not stop to bestow...	6:31
8	'What's the matter here!' said Fagin...	4:03
9	The girl laughed again...	4:30
10	<b>Chapter 17</b>	6:34
11	There was so much determination and depth of purpose...	5:43
12	At six o'clock next morning...	5:05
13	It would be tedious if given in the beadle's words...	3:31
14	<b>Chapter 18</b>	5:48

**Total time on CD 4: 76:27**

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## CD 5

1	One afternoon, the Dodger and Master Bates...	6:58
2	Master Bates backed this advice with sundry moral...	5:27
3	<b>Chapter 19</b>	4:29
4	The Jew glanced round the room...	5:02
5	'Then,' said Sykes, thrusting aside the Jew's hand...	7:13
6	'When is it to be done?' asked Nancy...	4:23
7	<b>Chapter 20</b>	6:09
8	He had concluded his prayer...	5:16
9	'This way,' said the girl, releasing her hold...	6:29
10	<b>Chapter 21</b>	5:58
11	Sykes dismounted with great precipitation...	7:09
12	<b>Chapter 22</b>	7:28
13	It was now intensely dark.	7:23

**Total time on CD 5: 79:32**

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## CD 6

1	<b>Chapter 23</b>	6:03
2	The matron expressed her entire concurrence...	6:56
3	It was a round table.	5:30
4	<b>Chapter 24</b>	6:55
5	She was bouncing away, when a cry from the two women...	5:35
6	<b>Chapter 25</b>	4:11
7	Mr Dawkins received these handsome compliments...	4:26
8	'Hark!' cried the Dodger at this moment...	5:15
9	<b>Chapter 26</b>	4:40
10	The Three Cripples, or rather the Cripples...	6:21
11	She was in her room, the woman said.	7:16
12	It was within an hour of midnight.	3:33
13	They conversed for some time in whispers.	5:58
14	<b>Chapter 27</b>	6:48

**Total time on CD 6: 79:36**

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## CD 7

1	Nothing was said on either side for a minute or two...	5:43
2	Now, Mr and Mrs Sowerberry...	4:27
3	<b>Chapter 28</b>	7:10
4	The air grew colder, as day came slowly on...	4:52
5	It happened that about this time...	4:23
6	'It was a knock,' said Mr Giles...	5:03
7	<b>Chapter 29</b>	3:33
8	Mr Giles was apparently considering the propriety...	5:01
9	<b>Chapter 30</b>	4:22
10	Mr Losberne thrust his hands into his pockets...	5:05
11	There were assembled, in that lower house...	5:06
12	<b>Chapter 31</b>	5:29
13	Meanwhile, the doctor walked up and down...	5:50
14	'Ah!' said Mr Blathers...	6:19
15	Oliver had been dozing...	6:16

**Total time on CD 7: 78:48**



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## CD 8

1	<b>Chapter 32</b>	6:14
2	The man followed to the chariot door...	5:49
3	Who can describe the pleasure and delight...	7:25
4	<b>Chapter 33</b>	7:51
5	An anxious night ensued.	5:42
6	How often did Oliver start from his bed that night...	6:36
7	<b>Chapter 34</b>	5:03
8	Mrs Maylie was anxiously waiting to receive her son...	6:22
9	Mr Losberne and Oliver had remained...	4:53
10	It is worthy of remark...	6:10
11	<b>Chapter 35</b>	5:50
12	At length, one morning, when Rose was alone...	5:23
13	There was a pause...	6:06

**Total time on CD 8: 79:34**

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## CD 9

1	<b>Chapter 36</b>	6:08
2	<b>Chapter 37</b>	5:55
3	But, tears were not the things to find their way...	7:10
4	He walked up one street, and down another...	5:00
5	As he spoke he pushed a couple of sovereigns across...	4:57
6	<b>Chapter 38</b>	6:08
7	Bestowing something half-way between a smile and a frown...	6:16
8	The thunder, which seemed in fact much nearer...	4:19
9	Mr Bumble drew a long breath...	4:53
10	<b>Chapter 39</b>	6:20
11	'Why, what evil wind has blowed you here?' he asked Fagin.	6:43
12	In due course they arrived at Fagin's abode...	6:22
13	Before the sound of their footsteps had ceased...	3:47
14	As that day closed in...	4:58

**Total time on CD 9: 79:05**

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## CD 10

1	It was a family hotel in a quiet, but handsome...	3:46
2	<b>Chapter 40</b>	5:56
3	'I'll tell you lady. Last night he came again.'	4:30
4	'Nothing could save him,' cried the girl.	4:41
5	<b>Chapter 41</b>	6:10
6	Mr Brownlow inclined his head.	4:57
7	In fact, as he threw himself at one dexterous dive...	5:16
8	'How?' inquired the doctor.	4:36
9	<b>Chapter 42</b>	5:42
10	Through these streets Noah Claypole walked...	5:59
11	After expressing this opinion...	4:35
12	'Now, what do you think?' said Fagin.	5:39
13	<b>Chapter 43</b>	6:34
14	Fagin was about to translate these mysterious expressions...	4:54
15	'We must know how he gets on today...'	3:28

**Total time on CD 10: 76:52**

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## CD 11

1	Noah Claypole, or Morris Bolter as the reader pleases...	4:30
2	'Now then, where are the witnesses?' said the clerk.	3:32
3	<b>Chapter 44</b>	7:21
4	'Whew!' said the housebreaker, wiping the perspiration...	7:12
5	<b>Chapter 45</b>	7:09
6	<b>Chapter 46</b>	5:45
7	He drew himself straight upright against the wall...	6:48
8	After receiving an assurance from both...	4:29
9	'She will be persuaded now,' cried the young lady.	3:56
10	<b>Chapter 47</b>	6:39
11	Fagin looked hard at the robber...	4:15
12	Without one pause, or moment's consideration...	4:11

**Total time on CD 11: 65:55**

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## CD 12

<b>1</b>	<b>Chapter 48</b>	6:35
<b>2</b>	This was an antic fellow, half pedlar and half mountebank...	6:44
<b>3</b>	Let no man talk of murderers escaping justice...	7:32
<b>4</b>	<b>Chapter 49</b>	5:56
<b>5</b>	'You have a brother,' said Mr Brownlow, rousing himself...	5:57
<b>6</b>	'Before he went abroad, and as he passed through London...'	3:28
<b>7</b>	'Denial to me is vain,' replied Mr Brownlow...	7:34
<b>8</b>	<b>Chapter 50</b>	6:06
<b>9</b>	There was a short silence...	5:42
<b>10</b>	He laid his hand upon a chair...	5:34
<b>11</b>	Of all the terrific yells that ever fell on mortal ears...	7:17

**Total time on CD 12: 68:32**

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## CD 13

<b>1</b>	<b>Chapter 51</b>	6:06
<b>2</b>	At length, when nine o'clock had come...	6:20
<b>3</b>	There was a short silence here...	7:31
<b>4</b>	'Young lady,' said Mr Brownlow, turning to Rose...	4:14
<b>5</b>	They were a long, long time alone.	5:25
<b>6</b>	<b>Chapter 52</b>	7:00
<b>7</b>	He sat down on a stone bench opposite the door...	6:05
<b>8</b>	The space before the prison was cleared...	7:16
<b>9</b>	<b>Chapter 53</b>	6:52
<b>10</b>	And now, the hand that traces these words...	3:21

**Total time on CD 13: 60:16**

**Total time on CDs 1–13: 16:18:40**

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**Charles Dickens**

**(1812–1870)**

# OLIVER TWIST

*Dickens attacks the modern workhouse with a sort of inspired simplicity as a boy in a fairy tale who had wandered about, sword in hand, looking for ogres and who had found an indisputable ogre. All the other people of his time are attacking things because they are bad economics or because they are bad politics, or because they are bad science; he alone is attacking things because they are bad – G.K. Chesterton*

In *Oliver Twist*'s simple request for more, we find an embodiment of the suffering caused by the particular ogre that Dickens had decided to target; but at the same time, Oliver is in many ways not really a character at all. Other than when he runs away from the Sowerberrys, he has almost no active part in his own fate throughout the novel. He is a symbol of innocence and goodness in a tainted world. The opening chapters suggest that the whole book might have ended up as a broad sketch attacking the Poor Laws, until Dickens realised he had a chance to make something more substantial and

set about doing that. If that sounds as though he was making the book up as he went along, it is because largely he was doing just that.

Not only was he having to invent it almost as he wrote it, he was inventing something else at the same time: his first book, *The Pickwick Papers*. Dickens had become a writer of observational pieces and sketches as well as a first-rate parliamentary reporter, and the publisher Chapman and Hall approached him to provide the text for the sporting plates of the successful comic illustrator Robert Seymour. Dickens was no sportsman, so

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could not oblige; but rather than letting the matter go at that, he essentially turned the idea on its head and said that he would provide text to which Seymour could add illustrations. This is extraordinary. He was almost unknown as a writer outside the profession; it was not much more than a month before the deadline; and he was not the first choice of the publisher or the illustrator. He was only 22.

It did not begin propitiously. Seymour committed suicide before the publication of the second edition, so the whole project could have foundered. However, after another artist's work was found to be lacking, Dickens chose Hablot Knight Browne, known as Phiz. Phiz was to become the illustrator most closely associated with Dickens's work for the rest of his life (although it was another well-known one, George Cruikshank, who was to illustrate *Oliver Twist*). Whatever view the publishers might have had of Dickens's determination to take the lead in the creative process of the venture, he was definitely in charge

of it by this point. The next few editions were hardly successful, but the numbers began to creep steadily up until, by the end of the run, *The Pickwick Papers* had become a fully fledged phenomenon. Dickens had arrived. The novel itself was quite a significant step in literary publication (a new, full-length novel in serial form was unusual) and the reality and immediacy of the characters, their evident contemporaneity and Dickens's joyous sympathy for them was very striking. It meant that when he started *Oliver Twist*, he knew people were paying attention.

Dickens had always wanted some kind of attention. In his early childhood he had dreamt of a life on stage, an idea he never really gave up. His imagination – always powerful, observant, sympathetic and retentive – allowed him to disappear into adventure stories and essentially live in them. His precocity allowed him to think he would be able to make something of himself, to turn his abilities into a living that was more than just living. His father worked as a clerk in the Navy, but when



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he was transferred to London, his change of circumstance allied to his poor handling of money had him sent to the Marshalsea debtors' prison. The shame, the disgrace and the humiliation of such a fall struck all the family hard, but it shook Dickens to an extent that was to change almost everything he did thereafter.

He was obliged to live on his own at the age of 12 in a dreary and unpleasant part of London. He saw his parents once a week. He had to pay his own rent and buy his own food with whatever remained of his minor wage. He had to walk alone to work, which was a toilsome, menial job in a filthy factory that made blacking polish for fireplaces and boots. He was surrounded by rats and (possibly worse) by the kind of people he did not feel he belonged with – the kind of people whose lives had no greater horizon. He felt desolate, abandoned and as though every hope he had quietly cherished for himself had been forcibly removed. The effect on him is incalculable, but it is displayed throughout his fiction, from the significance of food and its association

with security and love, to the familiarity and ease with which he describes the low-life of his novels, to the blistering attacks on the institutional cruelty that he saw pervading every street outside the wealthiest areas. It even has more specific referents. The character of Fagin takes his name from one of Dickens's fellow young colleagues in the blacking factory.

When he started writing *Oliver Twist* Dickens was ready for the fight against the amended Poor Laws. In essence these amendments were supposed to centralise and make more efficient the provision of relief for the most indigent; but they also deliberately made the relief as uncomfortable as possible in order to stop the poor from relying on it at the expense of the parish. To Dickens, the laws were oppressive and deliberately cruel, and they actively destroyed families, hope and health among the people who most needed help. The public was looking for another comic delight. He brought them his genius for sharp observation and recognisable characters; he showed again his astonishing command of, and joy in,

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language. But he also presented a story of Swiftian indignation, punctuated with dark realism and leavened by a sense of both the absurd and the humane. The Poor Laws were in the news when he began the book, and he was always an unapologetic populist; but all his work carries a more complex personal stamp that adds another layer of meaning to his fiction.

**Notes by Roy McMillan**



**Jonathan Keeble** combines a busy career in theatre with his audio work. He has featured in over 350 radio plays for the BBC, from Shakespeare to Sherlock Holmes. He also played the evil Gareth Taylor in *The Archers*. For Naxos AudioBooks, he has read *Black Beauty* and featured in *The History of English Literature*, *Stories from Shakespeare: The Plantagenets* and *Twelfth Night*.

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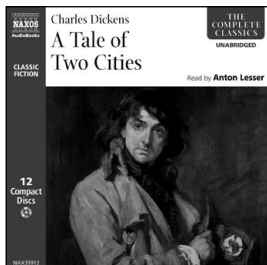
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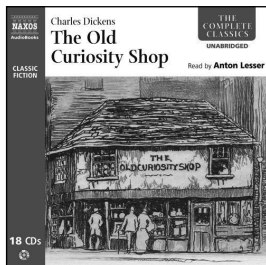
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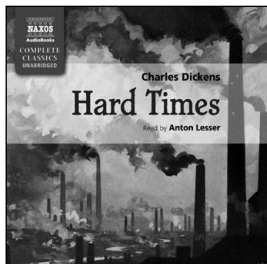
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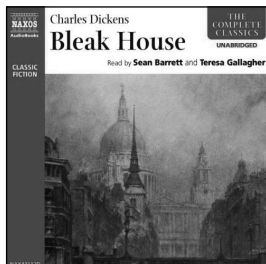
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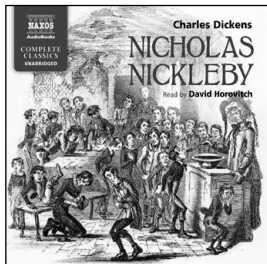


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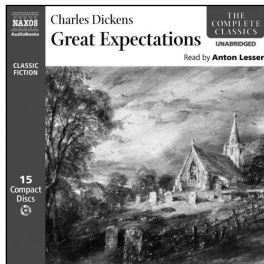
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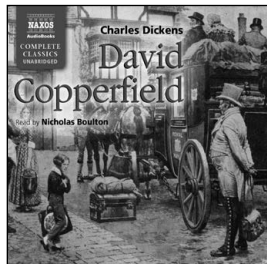
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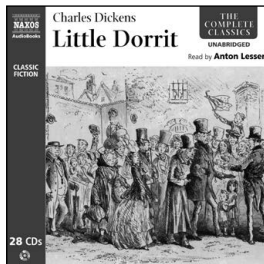
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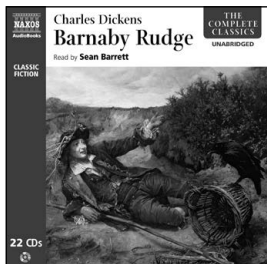


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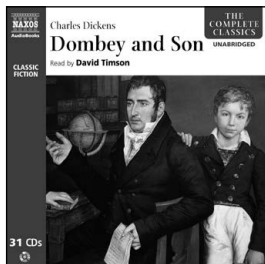
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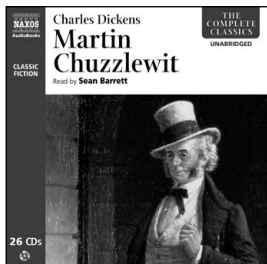
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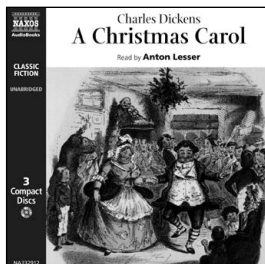
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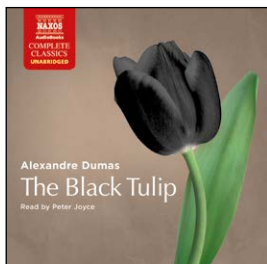
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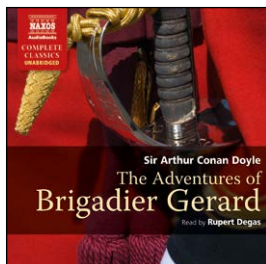
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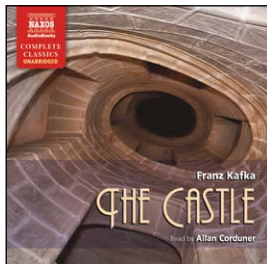
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