

## OLIVER TWIST

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Charles Dickens has always been champion of poor. He had himself faced abuse in his early life hence his stories not only portrays misfortune but also discrimination and inequality. Oliver twist is not essentially about how he faces all horrid of Victorian London. Be it child labour or criminal activities like pickpocketing; he endured all and came out. No the story is about manipulation of an innocent mind by society. The horrific truth is that today also our society is an evil incarnation. It also portrays how due to development, essentially industrial revolution, we are losing individualism. The more we are drifting towards material comforts our humanity is being shredded to pieces. But this doesn't mean development should be stopped but as it is said that we should be masters of machines/technology and not vice versa. The shift in our priorities is what we should evaluate and change.

The plot of the story is not only realistic and contemporary in nature but also universal. It not only appeases children but also people of all ages. Oliver twist is a child who doesn't know either of his parentage and thus to survive becomes a workhouse brat. But he had to flee the workhouse due to a fight with a fellow workhouse apprentice. During his fleet to London he meets Artful Dodger who empathises with him but with an ulterior motive which is unknown to Oliver. Artful Dodger takes him to Fagin, the villain of the story. The first time Oliver goes out with Fagin's boys, he is arrested for a theft he did not commit. He is only released on the testimony of the Bookstall Keeper Mr. Brownlow, the old gentleman whose pocket had been picked, takes him home with him and has him cared for. But Fagin has not completed his business with Oliver and with Monk as his ally, plots to destroy Oliver.

The triad of the story is Oliver, Fagin and Monk. These three are not only the most important characters of the story but they also have contemporary relevance. Oliver denotes us. We as people have childish innocence and believe that world will not only help us but also be just to us. Fagin denotes reality of society. He not only manipulates Oliver to believe what they are doing is correct but also convinces him to join them in the crime. Society does not exist to give us rational advices but exists so that we become a part of the gossip mongers, which is what

Fagin wanted for Oliver. Monk is not different from Fagin but the only difference is that he had an ulterior motive for turning Oliver into a criminal. Monk is symbolic of our inner most demons. As a ying has a yang and black has white, similarly everybody has an inner most demon which we don't want others to see or even notice, just like Monk. He is very much present, but unseen, much like his role in novel's plot. He is character which has a mysterious vibe around him because nowhere till the end of the novel it was revealed why he hated Oliver. The most important aspect to be noted in the story is how childhood is being portrayed, not as a happy phase but as a painful experience. The theme of child labour which has been highlighted recently has been depicted by Charles Dickens way before in 1839. The sad truth is that India ignored its future generation blatantly. It is harsh reality that in compelling circumstances and having no shelter for his protection a child gets associated with crimes and criminals. This is a simple understanding of Oliver Twist as well as our current predicament. India is still not free from child labour. This is not only a social problem which has to be tackled by government. This can only be solved if we retaliate with vigour. Even after the apex court has given a strong precedent like Unni Krishnan case(1993) which said that child labour is definitely a matter of public concern and significance. Our constitution has provided children with not only legal rights but also fundamental rights which should be taken seriously. Even if India has laws to protect children such as juvenile justice(care and protection of children) act, 2000; child labour act, 1986; prohibition of child marriage act, 2006; protection of children from sexual offences, 2012, the real question arises is how far have these laws reached to fulfil their objective. Today we still see children on streets selling products and if we ask where their parents are they either run away or their parents say that we should mind our own business. But that should not mean that we ignore them. It should be the propeller which should make the society to come out of Fagin's character and help these children as at the end of the day they are children and every child has the right to have 'some more' of everything.

The Victorian period was a great time of England and all the world, enormous changes occurred in Literature, political and social life, a significant change was the domination of the novel over the other forms of literature moreover, it was a principal form of entertainment. But the most important narration in this book review is not only to highlight Oliver twist but also to show how the situation of children and society has not changed. Children still are being oppressed and society is still manipulative like Fagin hence the question is what has change? The only change is that people who care have increased such as Rose Mailley. United Nations

are the biggest example of this change hence we cant say that nothing has changed but as the famous line of some more by Oliver portrays not only that he wants some more of food but also of compassion, love and happiness. These are the traits that should be associated with childhood and not of hatred, sadness or indifference. Hence this duty not only rests with parents but also with society.

