



## Workhouse Characters Margaret Nevinson

In 1904, Margaret Nevinson, a respectable lady and active suffragette, joined the board of guardians in Hampstead Heath. The guardians had responsibility over the parish workhouse. In the UK, before the 1930s, one could not receive welfare assistance unless he or she entered the workhouse. A house for which one had to work. The conditions were so poor, sometimes even poorer than conditions in prison. The workhouse inspired many novels, the most famous is *Oliver Twist*. This collection of short stories is about the horrors Margaret saw, chiefly about things women had to endure. A married woman collected money and found a house for her and her children, but could not leave the workhouse as she was, by law, "the property of her husband." This particular story was adapted from her one-act play "In The Workhouse" which helped change that law only two years later. In another story, a smart lady who studied at the University Of Cambridge sinks into depression after the death of her husband and finds herself drunk at the workhouse. In 26 tales, Nevinson details the horrors of the system, one after the other, in an engaging and elegant style which appealed to the public. This book is perfect for fans of Charles Dickens, and for all those who love feminism and social history. - Summary by Stav Nisser

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