

## CHAPTER 8

**O**NE CLOUDY SUMMER DAY, MRS CORNEY SET OFF TO AN appointment. The neighbourhood she went to was one of the worst in London. It was close to the river, and the houses were filthy. Nobody went there except the worst criminals who needed a place to hide. Mrs Corney stopped in front of an old factory built over the river. As she knocked on the door, thunder roared and it began to rain.

Monks opened the door. "Let us get straight down to business," he said. "You know something about the nurse who was with Oliver Twist's mother the day she died. What is it? Here, take twenty-five pounds."

The thunder shook the old building. When the noise stopped, Mrs Corney began. "Some weeks ago, the nurse died. On her deathbed, she confessed that she had stolen something from Oliver's mother." Monks listened eagerly. "A gold locket. The mother asked the nurse to give it to her son, but the nurse decided to sell it instead. Before she died, she told me her secret because she felt guilty. I found the locket and got it back. Here it is!" Mrs Corney pulled out the little gold locket and put it on the table.

Monks seized it. "Don't move," he told Mrs Corney. Then he suddenly reached down to the floor and opened a trapdoor onto the river below. Monks dropped the locket through the trapdoor into the black, fast-moving water.

"There," Monks said. "The sea will keep this secret safe. We do not need to worry about it anymore."

Back at Mrs Maylie's house, the happy days continued. The weather was warm, and the hills and woods were green. Oliver went out early every morning and collected pretty flowers for Rose. She was always delighted when she saw them and Oliver loved her praise. After all, nobody had ever praised him for anything before. For those three months, Oliver felt like he lived in paradise.

One beautiful summer evening, Rose, Oliver and Mrs Maylie went for a long walk. When they returned, Rose went to the piano

