

CHAPTER 8

ONE 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



to play a song for them. To their surprise, she played a very sad tune.

"Rose, are you alright?" Mrs Maylie asked.

"Oh yes!" Rose said, trying to laugh. "I will play something happy now." Then suddenly she burst into tears. "I am sorry!" she said. "I tried not to show it, but I am afraid I feel very ill."

Mrs Maylie told Rose to go to bed immediately, and Oliver hoped she would feel better in the morning. But the next morning Rose was much worse. She had a very bad fever and Mrs Maylie was very worried.

"I must stay with her," she said. "Oliver, you must go to town without delay and bring the doctor. And please post this letter to my son, Harry, in London. He must come at once!"

Oliver ran as fast as he could. When he reached the town, he gave the doctor the address, and felt a little better when he saw him start for the house at once. Then he went to the post office to send the letter. After that, as he was running back home, he accidentally ran into a man in a long black cloak. "There you are, you little monster!" the man shouted.

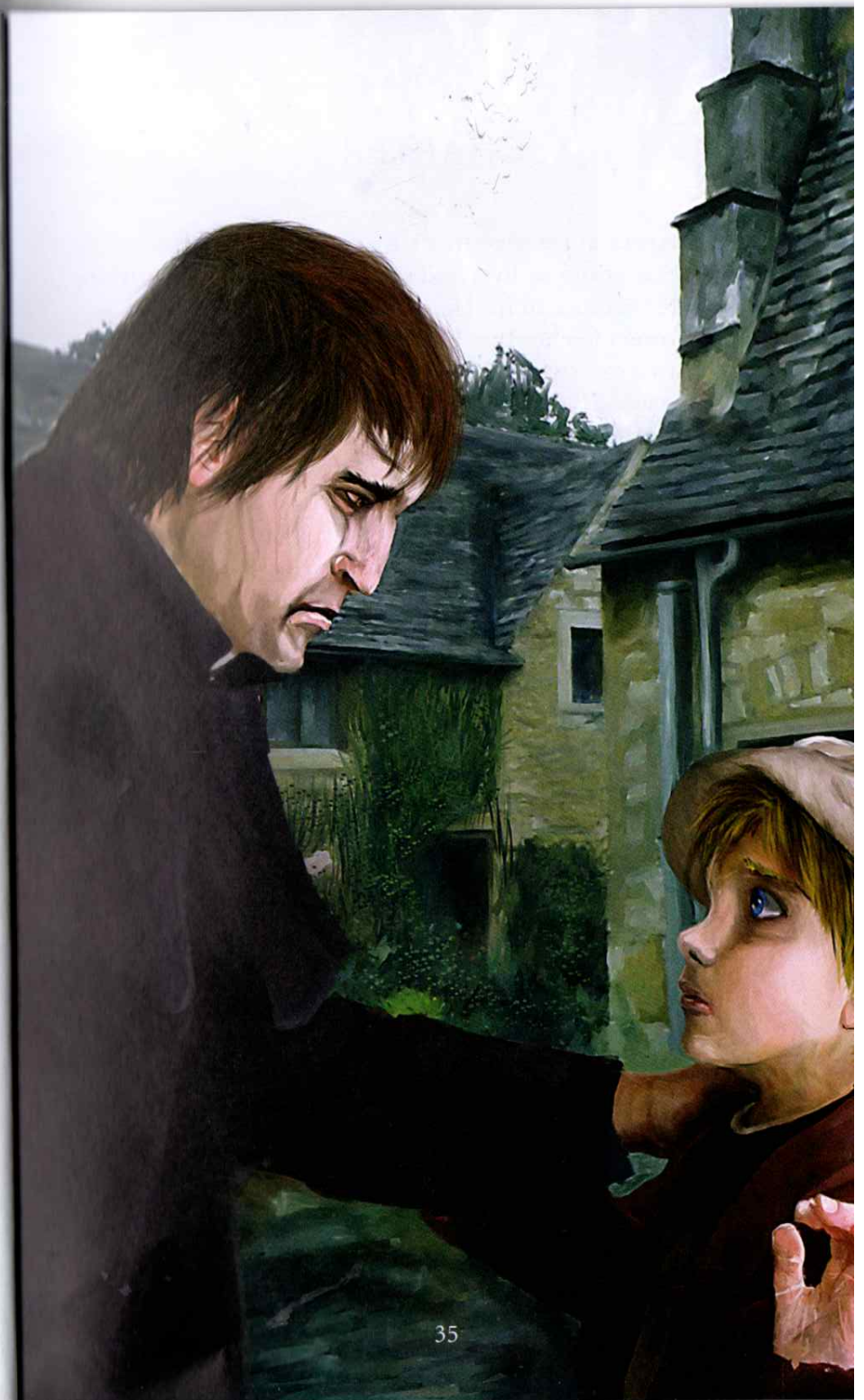
"Sorry, sir," Oliver said quickly. "I am in a hurry." But the man still seemed very angry.

"I should kill you! What are you doing here?" he shouted, and walked towards Oliver.

Oliver was frightened. He had never seen this strange man before. Why did he want to kill him? But before he could do anything, the man fell down in a fit. Oliver ran away as fast as he could. When he got home, he forgot what had happened, because he was very concerned about Rose. The doctor told Oliver and Mrs Maylie that the girl might not survive the night.

What a terrible night that was! Nobody did anything, they just sat and waited. Oliver was so afraid that he could not speak.

In the early morning the doctor came in. "It is alright," he said gently. "The fever has gone down and Rose will be alright." It was the best news Oliver had ever heard.



CHAPTER 8

Comprehension

1 Read the sentences and find the words. Then write them in the spaces provided. The word in the blue boxes is an item connected with Monks' secret.

- The city where Harry, Mrs Maylie's son, lived. 1
- Oliver had just taken a letter there, when he bumped into Monks. 2
- Monks and Mrs Corney had an appointment in this old building. 3
- Monks was wearing this long black item of clothing when Oliver met him. 4
- Rose caught this and fell very ill. 5
- Monks threw something in the river through this. 6

2 Complete Monks' diary with a word or a short phrase.

Dear Diary,

Yesterday, I spent all day looking for that cursed (1) _____. Of course, since the day (2) _____ gave me the gold (3) _____ in the old (4) _____, my secret is safe, but still, I must find the boy. And I had found him!

I was near the (5) _____ of a town near London, where Fagin said the boy was last seen. (6) _____, the little monster (7) _____ me! I walked towards him, threatening to (8) _____ him. He looked (9) _____. Unfortunately though, I (10) _____ a fit and he managed to (11) _____.

Vocabulary

3 Choose a, b or c to complete the following sentences.

- I am really _____ about my son's behaviour. He has been acting very strangely lately!
a. delighted b. concerned c. frightened

- Joanna is a new girl in our _____.
a. paradise b. thunder c. neighbourhood
- She _____ the letter from Tim's hand and started reading it immediately.
a. hid b. reached c. seized
- The students were _____ by their teacher for doing so well in the exam.
a. confessed b. praised c. survived
- Don't forget your _____ with the dentist tomorrow!
a. address b. trapdoor c. appointment
- Peter _____ an old friend of his yesterday.
a. ran into b. went down c. pulled out
- The boy jumped into the river _____ to rescue his drowning friend.
a. without delay b. accidentally c. instead

4 Complete the following sentences using the prepositions in the box.

for to in off on

- We've got a lot to do, so let's get down _____ business immediately.
- Could we talk about this later? I am _____ a hurry.
- Kathy knocked _____ the door but there was no answer.
- They always go _____ a walk after lunch.
- We set _____ early in the morning to avoid traffic.
- Whenever Mark gets really angry, he falls down _____ a fit.
- There is a cinema complex close _____ my house.

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

- What do you think the relationship between Oliver and Monks is? What is Monks' secret?
- Why do you think Monks dropped the gold locket into the water?
- Who do you think the strange man that Oliver ran into was? Why did he threaten Oliver?
- In your opinion, is Oliver still in danger? Why? / Why not?

6 Imagine that you are Mrs Maylie. Write a letter to your son Harry in London, giving him the latest news on Rose's illness and asking him to come visit you at once. (80-100 words)