



Chapter 9

A Strange Turn of Events

The day after the robbery, Oliver awoke in a ditch. His arm was bloodied and of no use to him. He struggled to his feet and made his way to the nearest house. It was the same house that Fagin's gang had tried to rob. Oliver quietly knocked on the door. Two servants, Giles and Brittles, opened the door. They gasped at the poor boy in front of them covered in blood. "It's him, Brittles!" declared Giles. "One of the robbers!" Brittles grabbed the boy and threw him on the floor. "This is the one you shot, Giles." "Don't let him die," said Giles. "For I want him to hang for his crime."

"Giles," whispered a voice from the top of the steps, "you're frightening my aunt as much as the thieves." A young woman rushed down the stairs. "Why, it's only a boy. Is he badly hurt?" She examined the boy. "Just a boy, I say. One who hasn't been given a chance in life." She stood and spoke sternly to the servants. "Take him upstairs to Giles's room. Let him rest. Then run off and call on the doctor." She looked at Oliver once again. "We must treat him kindly, Giles. Treat him kindly for me." Miss Rose was seventeen. She was mild and gentle, pure and beautiful. She had noble deep blue eyes and a good humor and nature to match. Her aunt, Mrs. Maylie, came into the room to look over Oliver. Brittles returned with Dr. Losberne an hour later. "The boy is ill," said the doctor. He turned to Giles. "This was your doing?" "It was my honor," Giles replied.

"Your honor? But was it fair?" asked the doctor. "A knock on the head, perhaps." Giles felt ashamed. Dr. Losberne called the women in to see Oliver. "He is quiet and resting comfortably now. I think you both need to see how young he is." Rose walked in and sat in a chair next to his bed. She pushed his hair aside and wept. The old woman gasped. "This poor child could not have been a pupil of the robbers! He is too young." The doctor spoke. "The youngest and fairest are too often its chosen victims. He knew no other way." Rose continued to weep. "He may never have known a mother's love or the comfort of a home." She turned to her aunt. "Please think of that, Aunt, before you allow them to haul him off to prison. If I didn't have you, I could be where he is now." The woman pulled Rose close to her. "I won't let harm come to him. My days are drawing to an end. May

mercy be shown to me as I show it to others." Oliver didn't wake up until much later that night. When he did, he told the sorry details of his life. His tale was filled with such suffering, misery, and cruelty that Rose and the aunt wept. "We must do something for him," said Rose. "Perhaps we can convince the servants," said Dr. Losberne, "that Oliver was not one of the robber's gang." Aunt Maylie called for Giles and Brittles. "Can you swear that this is the same boy you saw last night in the darkness of the house?" Brittles and Giles could not be certain. The police did not need to come and see Oliver. He would remain a free boy! Oliver grew stronger with each passing week. He felt the kindness that Mrs. Maylie, Rose, and the good doctor had to give. He wanted to repay their kindness. "You have repaid us a thousand times simply by being here, Oliver," Rose said.



Nicer words had the small boy ever heard. He truly felt as if he were a part of their family. When spring came, they took a trip.

Dr. Losberne accompanied them. One morning he took Oliver out for a ride in the carriage. Suddenly, Oliver turned pale and pointed. "That house!" Oliver exclaimed. "That's where Fagin's gang took me in. That means that Mr. Brownlow doesn't live too far from here." "Let's go see them!" said Dr. Losberne. "They will be overjoyed to see you." When Oliver saw the large white house, he jumped out of the carriage and ran to the door. A servant answered. Oliver beamed. "Mr. Brownlow, please. Tell him Oliver is here. Back at last!" "I'm sorry," said the servant. "He's gone off with Mrs. Bedwin and Mr. Grimwig to the West Indies. They left just six weeks ago." Naturally, Oliver was disappointed, but he knew there was nothing he could do. He was thankful for his new family. It was the happiest three months young Oliver had ever known.