

# David Copperfield

Charles **Dickens**



AUDIO CD



## Part one

### My Mother, Peggoty and Me

I am David Copperfield. These pages will tell the story of my life. My father died before I was born and my mother lived alone with a servant, Peggoty. One day, before I was born, one of my father's aunts, Miss Betsey Trotwood, arrived at the house. She was a strange lady.

'Mrs Copperfield,' she said, 'when will the baby girl be born?' My mother was surprised. 'Maybe it will be a boy,' she said. 'It *must* be a girl,' said Miss Betsey. Betsey Trotwood hated men because of her previous bad marriage.

My mother was very shocked by the aunt. She went upstairs to rest. Soon, the doctor came and went to see her. Aunt Betsey sat downstairs and waited.



A few minutes after midnight, the doctor came downstairs. 'The baby is born. It's a boy,' he said.

Miss Betsey stood up, took her hat, hit the doctor with it, and disappeared from the house. She never came back. And that is the story of the day that I was born.

When I was a young child, I was very happy. I loved my mother and Peggoty. But one year, a man called Mr Murdstone met my mother at church. He often came to the house and he was very kind and friendly to my pretty mother. He had black hair, black eyes, and black clothes. I didn't like him but my mother did.

One day, Peggoty took me to stay with her family in the town of Yarmouth on the coast. I loved Peggoty and I wanted to see the sea. Mr Barkis, the local carrier, took us in his cart.

Peggoty's family lived in an old boat on the beach – it was a very comfortable house. I met Peggoty's brother, Mr Peggoty, a fisherman, and his nephew Ham, and Ham's cousin, Emily. Emily was a beautiful little girl with red hair and blue eyes. I fell in love with her and we spent a lot of time together.

'Would you like to be a lady?' I asked her.

'Yes, I'm afraid of the sea,' she replied. 'I want all my family to be rich, not fishermen.'

I enjoyed my holiday very much but finally the day to go home arrived.

'Goodbye, Master Davy,' said Mr Peggoty.  
'Come back soon.'

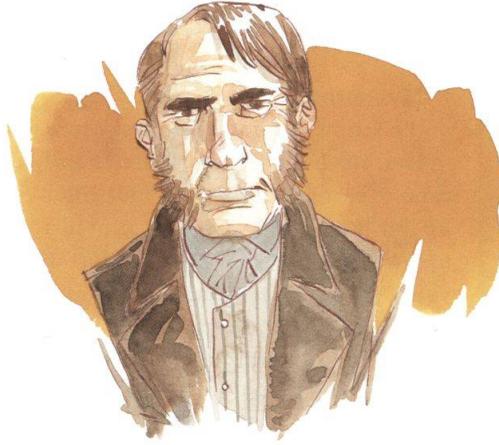
I rode back in Mr Barkis's cart with Peggoty. When we arrived home, she said, 'David, I must tell you something. You've got a new father.'

I ran into the house. My mother wanted to kiss me but a man in black stopped her. He stood in front of me and shook my hand, then sent me upstairs.

My mother was married to Mr Murdstone.

A few weeks later, his sister, Miss Murdstone, came to live with us. She took the keys of the house from my mother and said, 'Don't worry, Clara, I will organise everything.'

The happy days were finished.



## **Part two**

### **Mr Murdstone**

Mr Murdstone hated me. 'What do I do,' he asked me, 'if I have a dog or a horse that doesn't do what I want?'

'I don't know,' I said. 'I hit him,' said Mr Murdstone. I understood.

My mother was gentle and kind. But when she wanted to kiss me, Mr Murdstone and his sister said, 'Clara, don't be silly. Be strong!'

Mr Murdstone gave me lessons. He asked difficult questions. I was very nervous and I couldn't answer. 'If you don't study your lessons, we must punish you,' he said.

My mother began to protest.

'Be strong, Clara,' said Miss Murdstone.

Her brother took me upstairs and began to hit me with a long cane. I turned my head. I bit his hand. He was very angry and hit me very hard. Then he closed the door and locked it. That night, Peggoty came to the door and said, 'Master Davy, I love you. I'll look after you and your mother.'

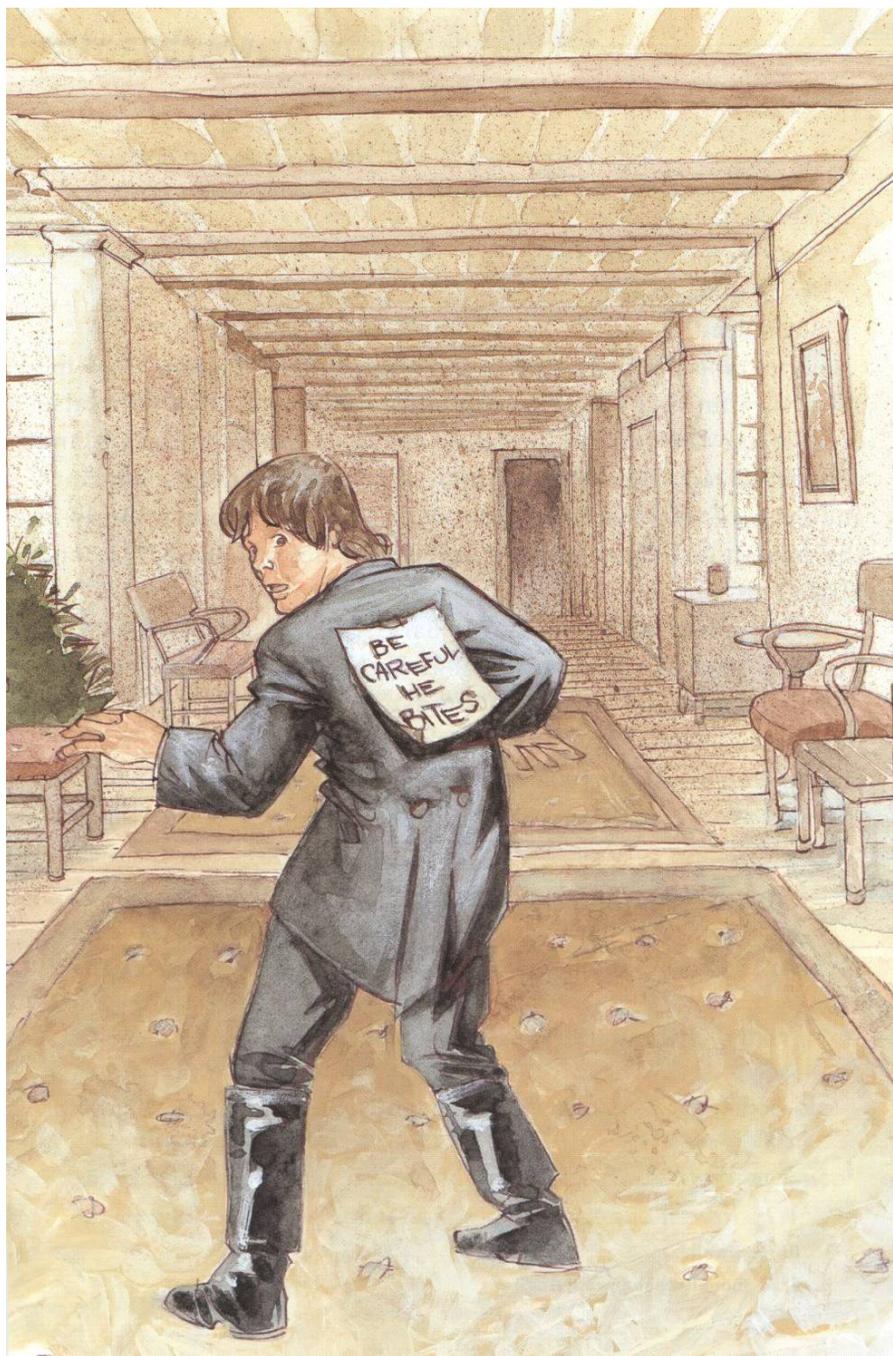
Finally, Mr Murdstone unlocked the door. He sent me to a school near London. When I arrived, the headmaster, Mr Creakle, put a notice on my back. It said: 'Be careful - he bites.'

It was a horrible school. Fortunately, I made two friends. One was a boy called Traddles, the other was Steerforth. He was a good-looking older boy and came from a rich family. He called me 'Daisy' and protected me from the other boys and the teachers. Mr Creakle was also afraid to hit Steerforth.

'Give me your pocket money, Daisy,' said Steerforth, 'and I'll buy food and drink for everyone. The boys will all like you then.'

He was my hero. When Mr Peggoty and Ham visited me, I introduced them to my new friend and protector.

When I returned home for the summer, my mother had a new baby. I wanted to hold my little brother but the Murdstones sent me upstairs. I was



very sad and was happy to return to Mr Creakle's school.

On my birthday, Mr Creakle called me to his room.

'Was your mother well when you left her?' his wife asked.

I didn't answer. I knew there was a problem.

'She's ill,' Mrs Creakle said.

I began to cry.

'She's very ill,' she said.

Now I understood.

'She's dead.'

I cried and cried. I went home immediately. Peggoty told me about my mother's death. And she told me how the baby also died. After the funeral, Peggoty sat with me in my room and comforted me. Miss Murdstone said, 'We don't need a servant,' and Peggoty left. But first, she took me away to see her family in the boat-house. It was good to see Mr Peggoty and Ham and Little Emily.

Peggoty decided to marry Mr Barkis. 'I will always love you, Master Davy,' she promised. 'I'll always be here to help you.'

When I returned home, Mr Murdstone didn't speak to me for a long time. Then, one day, he said, 'Education is expensive, David. You must go to London and learn to be independent in the world!'



### **Part three**

### **Aunt Betsey**

In London, I worked in a factory. I washed and put labels on bottles all day. It was very hard work and the other boys laughed at me and treated me badly. I was ten years old with no father or mother. I was very unhappy.

I lived with Mr and Mrs Micawber and their children. Mr Micawber was a tall man with a bald head like an egg. He always spent more money than he had. He always owed money to shopkeepers.

'Mr Micawber will be a great man, one day,' Mrs Micawber said. 'He is the father of my children and my husband. I will never leave him!'

Mr Micawber went to prison because he owed so much money. Finally, the Micawbers left London to go to Plymouth. Now I had no friends. I decided to run away. I knew that my father's aunt, Betsey Trotwood, lived near Dover, about eighty miles from London. I didn't know her but she was my only relative in all the world.

I had a little money and a suitcase but a young man in the street stole everything from me. I decided to walk to Dover! The journey took a few days. I sold some of my clothes to buy food. There were bad people on the road. I was very afraid. I finally arrived in Dover. I was dirty, penniless, weak and very hungry.

In Dover, I asked where Miss Betsey Trotwood lived. I walked up to the top of a cliff. There I found a small cottage.

When she saw me, Miss Betsey shouted, 'No boys! No boys here!'

'I am David Copperfield.'

She was very surprised. She called Mr Dick, a man who stayed with her; he was simple but very gentle and kind. 'What can we do with the boy, Mr Dick?' she asked.

'Give him some food, wash him and put him to bed,' he replied.

'Excellent advice, Mr Dick,' she said.



I soon discovered that Aunt Betsey was very kind. She wrote to Mr Murdstone and told him where I was. Two days later, he arrived with Miss Murdstone.

'He is a very bad boy, Miss Trotwood. We will take him home and punish him.'

'My brother was very kind to him and found him a job but he ran away,' explained Miss Murdstone. I trembled.

Aunt Betsey asked Mr Dick, 'What can we do with the boy?'

'Buy him some new clothes,' said Mr Dick.

'Leave my house,' said Aunt Betsey to the Murdstones. 'I believe you mistreated this boy!' she shouted. 'I'll look after him.'

I was safe!



## **Part four**

### **Mr Wickfield, Agnes and Uriah**

I enjoyed living with Aunt Betsey in Dover. Mr Dick was like a child and loved flying his kite on top of the cliff. But of course, when I was better, she wanted me to continue my education.

We went to the old cathedral city of Canterbury, near Dover, and she took me to the house of Mr Wickfield. When we arrived, a strange young man came to hold Miss Betsey's horse. His name was Uriah Heep, Mr Wickfield's clerk. He was tall and thin and moved his body like a snake.

Mr Wickfield was Aunt Betsey's lawyer and was responsible for her money.

'Would you like to live with Mr Wickfield and his daughter Agnes and go to school near the cathedral, with Doctor Strong?' asked my aunt.

'Yes,' I replied immediately.

The next few years were very happy. Agnes was always calm and always gave me good advice. She was like a sister to me. She loved her father very much and did everything to help him. His wife was dead and he was very sad without her. My teacher, Doctor Strong, was a generous, intelligent man and I learnt a lot at his school. I fell in love with Canterbury girls many times as I grew older, had fights with local Canterbury boys and did all the things that boys usually do.

I didn't like Uriah Heep. As the years passed, he began to have a strange power over Mr Wickfield.

'Maybe, one day, you will be Mr Wickfield's partner,' I said to Uriah. He moved his body like a snake.

'No, no. You're very kind, Mr Copperfield. I am much too umble\*. But please come to visit me and my mother in our umble home.'

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\*umble: Uriah pronounces the word 'humble' without the sound 'h'; humble = not proud, modest, low in status.

I met Mrs Heep. She was exactly like her son.

'We are very umble, Mr Copperfield,' she said.

At this time, the Micawbers came to Canterbury. They were very surprised to hear my story. They met Uriah but soon left Canterbury again because they owed money.

Finally it was time to leave school. Aunt Betsey asked me to decide on a profession. 'Visit Peggoty in Yarmouth,' she suggested. 'While you are there, think carefully about your future. Then we will decide.'

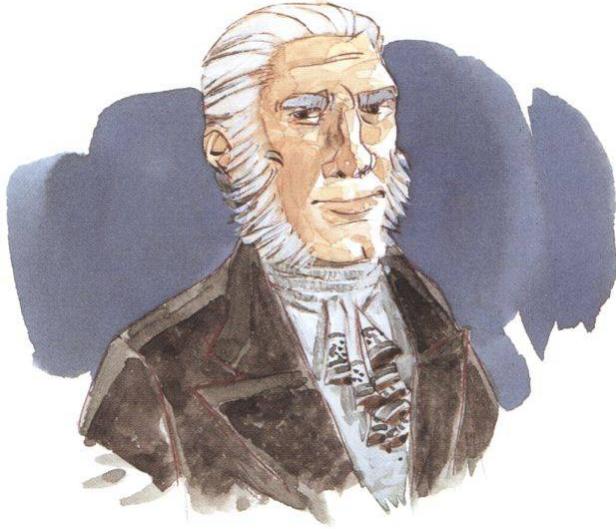
I was a young man now. I travelled to London alone and stayed there before I continued to Yarmouth. At the inn, I was surprised to meet Steerforth. At first he didn't know me.

'Ah, it's Daisy,' he said.

I was very happy to see him. I invited him to come to Yarmouth with me.

'I'm studying at Oxford but I have a few free days,' he said. 'I'd like to meet these fishermen.'

I met Steerforth's mother, a very arrogant lady, and her companion, Rosa Dartle. Then we left for Yarmouth.



## **Part five**

### **Doctors' Commons**

At Yarmouth, I introduced Steerforth to Mr Peggoty, Ham and Little Emily in the boat-house. Little Emily was now a beautiful young woman and Ham was a strong handsome fisherman. 'Welcome, gentlemen,' said Mr Peggoty. 'This is a special day. Ham and Little Emily are engaged.'

Steerforth and I congratulated them. We spent a very nice evening with them.

Afterwards, I said to Steerforth, 'They are a very good-looking couple.'

'Yes, Daisy. But Ham is too stupid to be a husband for that beautiful girl,' he said.

'You're not serious, Steerforth. I know that you liked them all very much.'

We were in Yarmouth for two weeks. While I stayed with Peggoty and Mr Barkis, Steerforth explored the area. He went out to sea with Mr Peggoty and the other fishermen, bought them drinks and often disappeared alone. He bought a boat and renamed it *The Little Emily*. He gave it to Mr Peggoty. When we left, the fishermen all said goodbye.

In London, my aunt asked me to come to Doctors' Commons. It was an area where lawyers had their offices. She introduced me to Mr Spenlow, an important lawyer. 'I will give Mr Spenlow a thousand pounds,' she said. 'You will work with him and learn about the law. Then one day, you will become a lawyer in Doctors' Commons yourself. Do you like this idea?'

'Thank you, aunt. You are very generous.'

I moved to London and began my new life. One day, I invited Steerforth and his Oxford friends to dinner. We drank a lot of wine. Then we went to see a play at the theatre. I was surprised to see Agnes in the audience. I was very drunk but next day she sent me a kind letter, asking me to visit her while she was in London.

'Steerforth is a bad friend for you,' she told me. 'But I need your help. My father has serious problems. He is afraid of Uriah Heep. He is making him his partner in the law office. I don't understand. My father is very unhappy.'

Uriah and Mr Wickfield were also in London. I invited Uriah to dinner because I wanted more information.

'I am a very umble person,' he said. 'Mr Wickfield has some financial problems. I want to help him. I am his partner now.'

'Yes, Agnes told me.'



'Ah, Agnes. I love her, Mr Copperfield. I am too umble to hope to marry her. But I adore her.'

I hated him when he talked about Agnes like that but I could do nothing. Uriah had the power now.

Agnes returned to Canterbury and I continued working in Doctors' Commons. Then something happened and I forgot everything. Mr Spenlow invited me to dinner at his house. He introduced me to his daughter, Dora. She was small and very pretty.

I fell in love.



## **Part six**

### **Little Emily**

There was someone behind Dora.

'This is my daughter's special friend,' said Mr Spenlow.

It was Miss Murdstone. We shook hands coldly.

After dinner, Dora played the guitar and sang in French. She had a little dog, Jip, that she loved very much. Later, I walked with her in the garden.

'I hate Miss Murdstone,' she told me. 'Papa pays her to look after me but she is very strict. I was in Paris for a year. It was lovely. You must visit Paris, Mr Copperfield.'

'I will never leave England now that you are here,' I said.

She laughed and kissed her dog. 'Darling Jip!'

During the next weeks, I thought of Dora all the time. I also visited Traddles, my old friend from school, and discovered that he knew Mr and Mrs Micawber. They were back in London. I invited them all to dinner.

After they left, I found a letter from Mr Micawber. 'I have no money,' he wrote. 'My life is a tragedy.'

'Poor Traddles,' I thought. 'Mr Micawber will borrow money from him.' At this moment, Steerforth arrived at my rooms.

'I was in Yarmouth,' he told me. 'Mr Barkis is very ill.'

'Poor Peggoty. I must go to them.'

'Yes, but first come home with me and meet my mother again. It could be the last time we meet, Daisy.'

'What do you mean?'

'Nothing. I am very depressed sometimes. But promise me, Daisy, that you will always remember me as I am now.'

I promised him, but I didn't understand.

After I stayed with his arrogant mother and Rosa Dartle, I travelled to Yarmouth. Mr Barkis was in bed, with his hand on a large box. Later that night Mr Barkis died. In the box, we found his will. He left a lot of money to Peggoty and her family.

After the funeral, I went to see Mr Peggoty. Ham called me outside the door. He looked terrible.

'Master Davy, read this letter. It's from Little Emily.'

*When you read this, I will be far away. Perhaps he will make me a lady. I am very sorry.'*

At first I did not understand.

'Little Emily is with Steerforth! They disappeared together. They are in France.'

Poor Ham! We told Mr Peggoty. He loved his niece very much and was not angry with her. But he went immediately to the beach and destroyed the boat, *The Little Emily*.

I took Mr Peggoty to see Steerforth's mother.

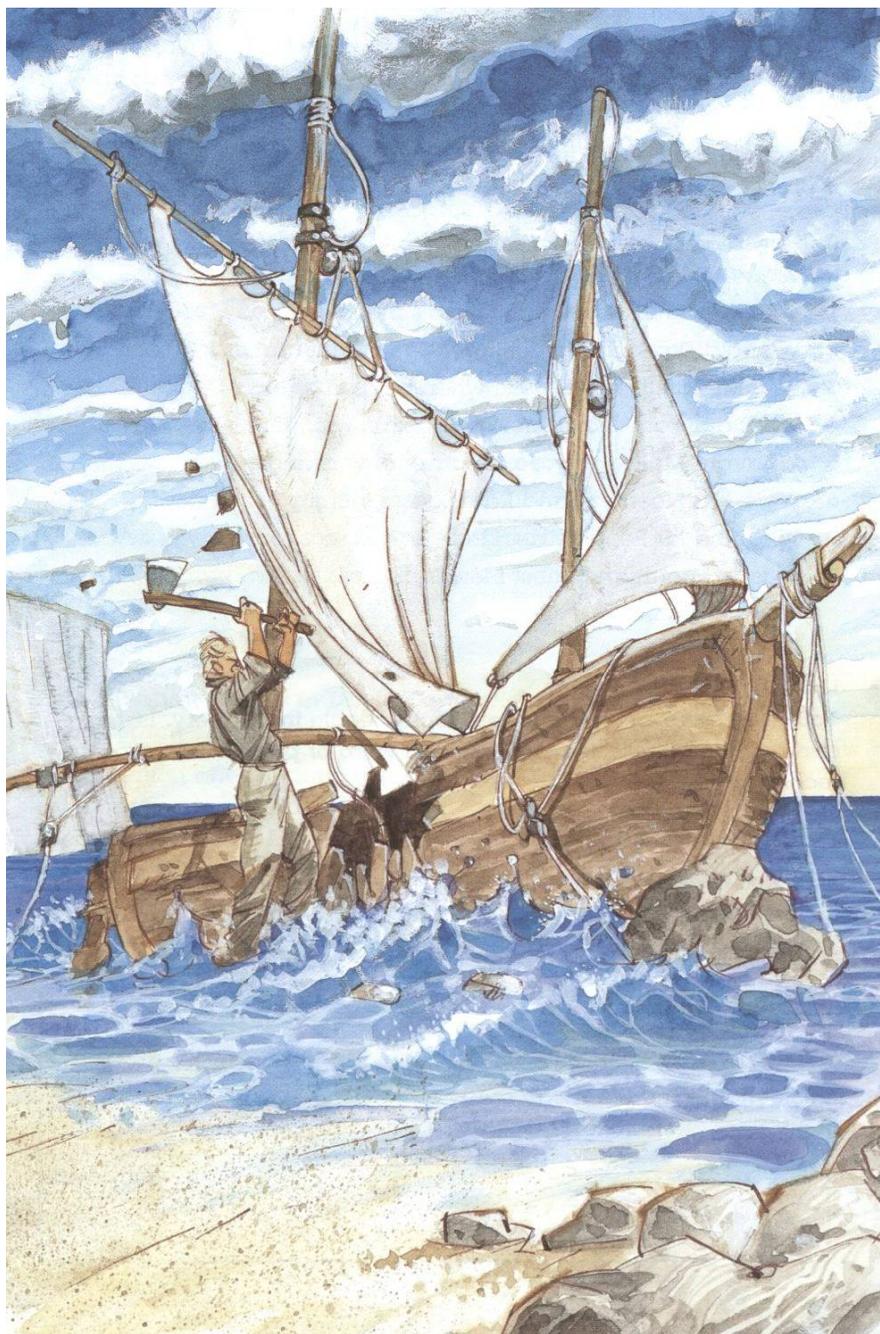
'Can you help us? Your son must marry my Emily or she will lose her reputation.'

'My son is superior to your niece,' she said. 'They can never marry.'

'She is a very bad girl,' said Rosa Dartle.

It was useless. We left the house.

'Master Davy, I will look for my Emily in all the countries of Europe. It will be a long journey but I must find her. She is my precious child and I love her.'





## **Part seven**

### **Dora**

I did not hate Steerforth. But I was very sad. However, I soon had a reason to be happy. Mr Spenlow invited me to a picnic to celebrate Dora's birthday. I bought flowers for Dora in Covent Garden market. I wore a new cravat and new boots. I ordered a box of food. Then I travelled to the picnic place in the country. The sun shone. Dora wore a sky-blue dress. She was not a human being. She was a goddess!

Jip barked at me. He was jealous.

'That horrible Miss Murdstone is not here,' she told me. 'She is at her brother's wedding. He is marrying a rich young woman.'



'Poor girl,' I thought. 'She will suffer like my mother.'

I was unhappy because other young men flirted with Dora at the picnic. But her best friend, Julia, spoke to me privately. 'Dora will stay with me next week. Please, visit her there.'

Dora wanted to see me! Of course I visited her. Soon I held her in my arms and told her I loved her. We became secretly engaged. I visited her at Julia's home and at other times sent her secret love letters. She called me 'Darling Doady' in her letters to me.

At that time, my aunt came to see me with Mr Dick. 'I have bad news,' she said. 'I have no more money. I didn't invest it well. I must live with you here.'

I was very sorry for my aunt and decided to work hard to make more money. I became a secretary for Doctor Strong, my old teacher, who now lived in London. I wrote reports for the newspapers about Parliament. Agnes and Traddles helped me to find these jobs. I continued to study with Mr Spenlow and took the first opportunity to see Dora alone.

'I am poor, Dora. Do you still want to marry me?'

'Of course, Doady. We will be very happy.'

'But you must learn to cook and look after a house.'

'Don't say that, Doady. I cannot do that!'

Then Mr Spenlow asked to see me. He was with Miss Murdstone.

She opened her handbag. I saw my love letters to Dora.

'I found these and showed them to Mr Spenlow,' she said with an unfriendly smile.

'Mr Copperfield, it was very bad to write to Dora when I did not know. You must never see my daughter again. Do you understand?' said Mr Spenlow.

'But we are engaged...'

'Nonsense. Dora will marry a rich gentleman, not a poor student like you. Go away.'

It was terrible. But that evening, Mr Spenlow had a heart attack and died. We discovered that he owed a lot of money. Dora went to live with two aunts. She and I were both poor and we could not see each other any more!



## **Part eight**

### **Uriah Heep**

Agnes came to see my aunt when she knew about her problems. 'How did you lose your money?' she asked.

'I lost it. Your father was not responsible.'  
'Good. Poor papa is so weak these days. He is not a good man of business like he was before. Our home is different. Uriah and his mother live with us. I do not often see my father without them. This is terrible.'

Mr Wickfield and Uriah were also in London and they came to collect Agnes. Mr Wickfield looked old and unhappy. Uriah followed him everywhere.

'Mr Wickfield is very kind to my umble mother and her umble son,' said Uriah. 'And the beautiful Miss Agnes is kind to us also.'

Fortunately, Uriah left on business, so my aunt, Agnes, her father and I had dinner together. We talked about my childhood in Canterbury. Mr Wickfield was happy and smiled. I told Agnes about Dora and she gave me good advice. 'Do nothing secret. Write to the two aunts. Ask permission to visit Dora. I am glad that you are happy, David.' She spoke very calmly and lovingly.

I went to Canterbury to stay with them. When I arrived at the old house, there was a new clerk in the office. It was Mr Micawber!

'My friend Heep offered me work here,' he said. But he looked embarrassed and did not talk to me about his job.

While I was there, Mrs Heep watched Agnes all the time. I was angry and mentioned this to Uriah.

'All is fair in love, Mister Copperfield. My umble mother is taking care of Miss Agnes for me. You are my rival.'

'Agnes is a dear sister to me,' I said, 'but I am engaged to another woman.'

'I am glad.' He squeezed my hand in his damp hand.

'But you will never marry Agnes. She is too good for you, Uriah Heep.'

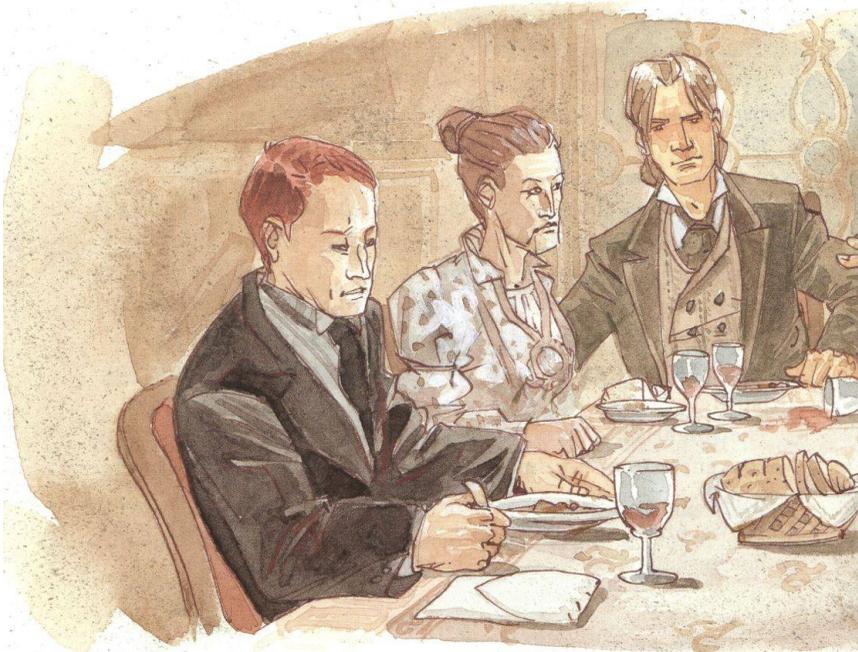
That night at dinner, Uriah raised his glass. 'I am drinking to Miss Agnes. I am an umble person but I adore her. To be her husband...'

Mr Wickfield suddenly stood up and shouted. 'You will never be her husband!'

'What's the matter? Be careful!' said Heep.

'Look at my daughter and look at this monster,' said Mr Wickfield. 'I am under his control but I will not give him my darling child.'

I tried to calm him. Finally he sat down and cried quietly.

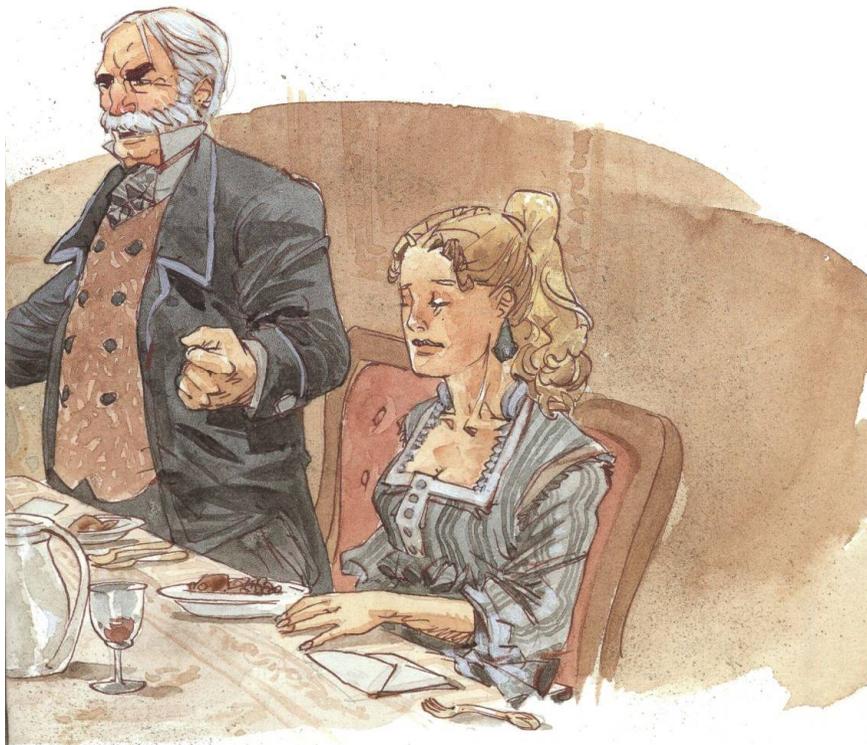


Uriah also sat down and the dinner continued. Later, I said goodbye to Agnes before I left to return to London.

'Please don't protect your father by marrying Uriah. Your heart and your love are too precious.'

'Don't be afraid, David,' she said and smiled affectionately.

When I left the house, Uriah spoke to me. 'I am friends again with Mr Wickfield. I spoke too early. Do you understand, Mr Copperfield? But I can wait.'





## **Part nine**

### **Doctor Strong and Annie**

I did what Agnes suggested and wrote to Dora's aunts.

They agreed to let me visit Dora regularly. I was happy – we were engaged again.

I continued working at the house of Doctor Strong. I was his secretary. The doctor was over 60 years old but he had a young wife, Annie, a good friend of Agnes. There was a lot of gossip. People said that Annie married him because he was rich. They believed that she really loved her cousin, Jack, a lazy young man. Doctor Strong did not know about this gossip.

Agnes and Mr Wickfield came to stay with Annie Strong. Agnes visited Dora with me; they liked each other.

Of course, Uriah and Mrs Heep came to London too. They wanted to watch Agnes carefully. When Annie lived in Canterbury, she did not like Uriah. He decided to break their friendship. He went to Doctor Strong's study with Mr Wickfield and told the doctor about the gossip.

'Your wife is in love with her cousin. Everyone knows.'

At that moment I came into the room. He turned to me. 'Mr Copperfield, it's true, isn't it?'

I hesitated. I knew the gossip and almost believed it.

'What do you think, partner?' asked Uriah.

'I hope I am wrong,' said Mr Wickfield, 'but sometimes I think that Annie and Jack...'

Doctor Strong said, 'I am responsible, gentlemen. I am an old man and I fell in love with a young woman. It is not fair. She is beautiful and loyal but it is not good for her to have an old husband. I had a dream that we were happy. But you are helping me to wake up and to see the truth.' He left the room sadly.

'Why did you tell him?' I asked Uriah.

'Because I want to separate Agnes and Mrs Strong. She is dangerous to my plans.'

I was very angry and I hit Uriah Heep on his cheek.

He caught my hand. 'You are always against me, Copperfield. But I am still your umble friend.'

The mark of my hand was on his face.

Next day, Mr Wickfield and Agnes returned to Canterbury.

Doctor Strong was unwell and very sad. His wife did not know why and became very unhappy. But Mr Dick knew how to solve the problem. He brought Annie to Doctor Strong and they talked.

'Dear husband, why do you stay away from me?'

'I love you, Annie, but I don't want you to have a boring life with an old husband. It is better for you to be with your cousin Jack.'

'But I love you. You are so intelligent, so kind and so generous. My cousin Jack is selfish and lazy. I know that people gossip about us but it isn't true. You are all I want.'

'My dear Annie,' said the Doctor. From that day, he and his wife were happy again.

'Mr Dick is a genius,' said my aunt.



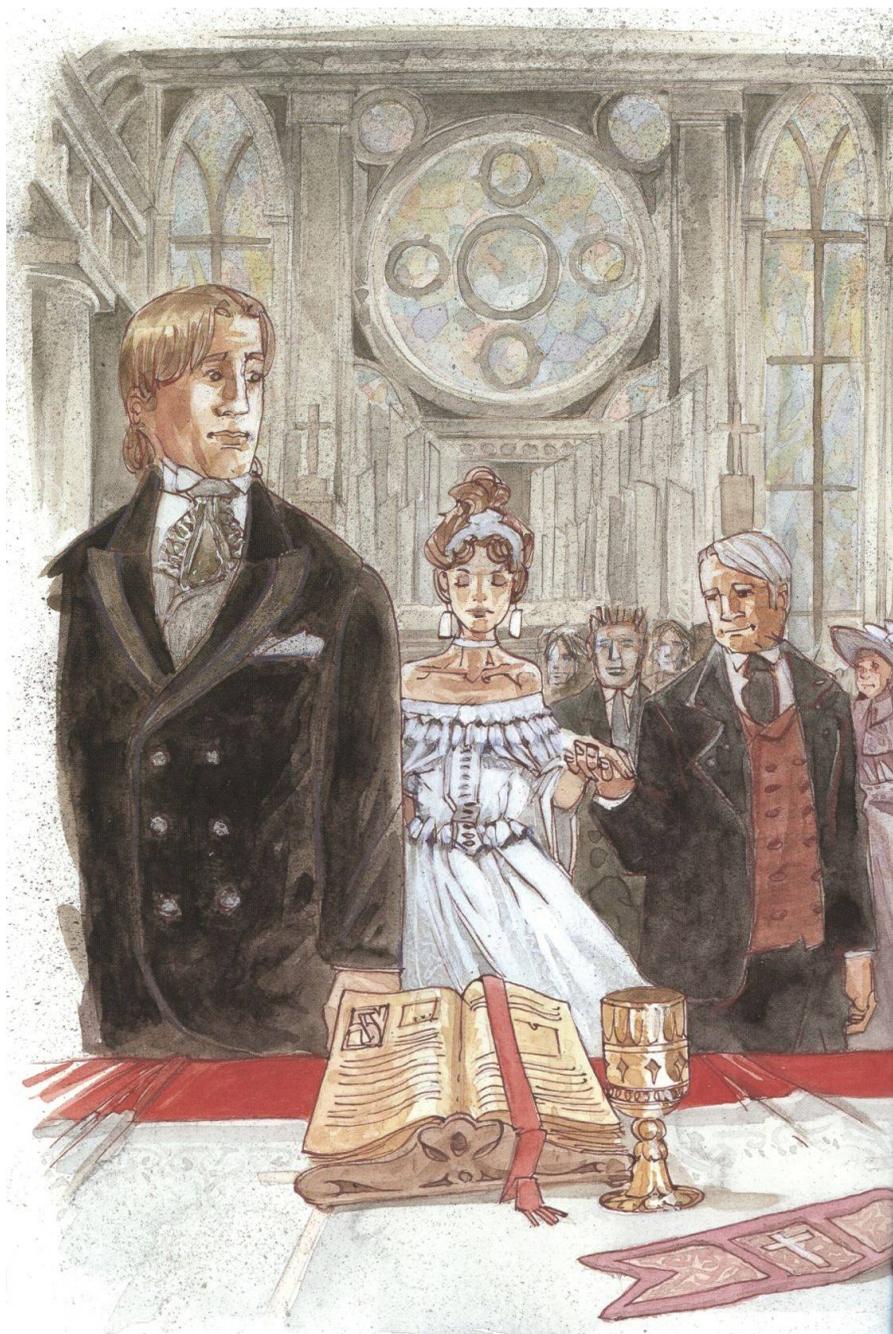


## **Part ten**

### **Mr Peggoty**

Dora and I married. Agnes, Aunt Betsey, Peggoty, Traddles and many other friends were at the wedding. We moved to our small house. I helped Doctor Strong and wrote stories. We were not rich but I had sufficient money to live. But Dora was not good at looking after the house. The servants stole from us or were lazy.

'I cannot learn to cook or do all the other things,' said Dora. 'Dear Doady, I am your child-wife. Think of me like that and love me.'



My aunt gave me advice. 'Don't ask her to change. Remember Mr Murdstone and your mother. You must love her and be kind.'

Mr Peggoty was back in London. He was grey-haired and tanned after his long journey.

'I looked for Emily and Steerforth in France and Germany and Holland. I cannot find them, Master Davy. But I will continue to look.'

Mrs Steerforth sent for me. Rosa Dartle brought Littimer, Steerforth's personal servant, to talk to me.

'My master and the fisherman's girl were in Italy,' he said coldly. 'He was bored with her and left her. Now he is in Spain. The girl disappeared. That is all I know.'

'You must find the girl,' said Rosa. 'Mrs Steerforth does not want her to trap her son again. Now you can go.'

I told Mr Peggoty this news. Perhaps Emily was in England again.

'There is an old friend of hers in London; Martha. She will tell me if she sees Emily,' he said.

Some months later, Martha contacted me and told me to follow her to a poor area of London. Emily was back in England and was in Martha's room! I sent a message to Mr Peggoty and then went with Martha. When we arrived, we saw a lady

go into the room in front of us. It was Miss Dartle. We waited and listened.

'You are a bad girl,' she said cruelly to Emily. 'You stole James Steerforth from his family. He bought you and then rejected you. You must promise not to see him again.'

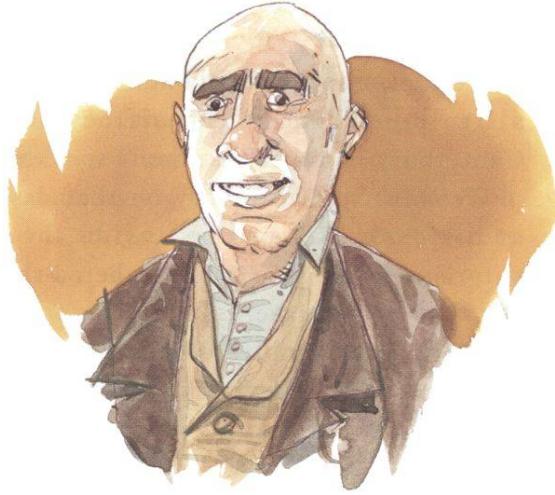
'Please be kind to me,' said Emily. 'I will go mad. I loved him and trusted him.'

'You! You loved him!' Rosa Dartle laughed in her face. At that moment, Mr Peggoty arrived. Miss Dartle left. He held Emily.

'Uncle!' she cried and fainted.

'Master Davy,' he said, 'God helped me to find my darling.' He picked her up in his strong arms and carried her downstairs. Little Emily and Mr Peggoty were together again.

Next day, Mr Peggoty told me his plans. 'I will emigrate to Australia with Emily. We will begin a new life away from the gossip in England. Ham knows that she is safe and he forgives her for everything. She is writing to him but she doesn't want to see him. The future will be better for all of us, Master Davy.'



## **Part eleven**

### **Mr Micawber**

Mr Micawber wrote a mysterious letter to me from Canterbury where he still worked as a clerk for Uriah Heep. He organised a meeting in London with me and Traddles.

'Gentlemen,' said Mr Micawber when we met, 'I am in a tragic situation. My employer Heep is a devil. In the beginning I enjoyed working for him but now that I know his true plans, I can't continue to serve him. He is a hypocrite, a serpent, a dishonest man and a liar.'

We took him to see my aunt and Mr Dick. Micawber asked us all to meet him at the offices of

Wickfield and Heep in Canterbury in a week's time. 'I will expose Heep!' he promised.

We went to Canterbury on that day and found Mr Micawber at his desk. He took us inside the house. Uriah Heep was surprised to see us. He remembered the last time he met me and the slap on his face.

'Well, I am umbly pleased to see you,' he said. 'Micawber, please return to your desk.'

Mr Micawber did not move. Agnes entered the room at this moment.

'Micawber, leave us!' shouted Uriah. 'Or you will lose your job.'

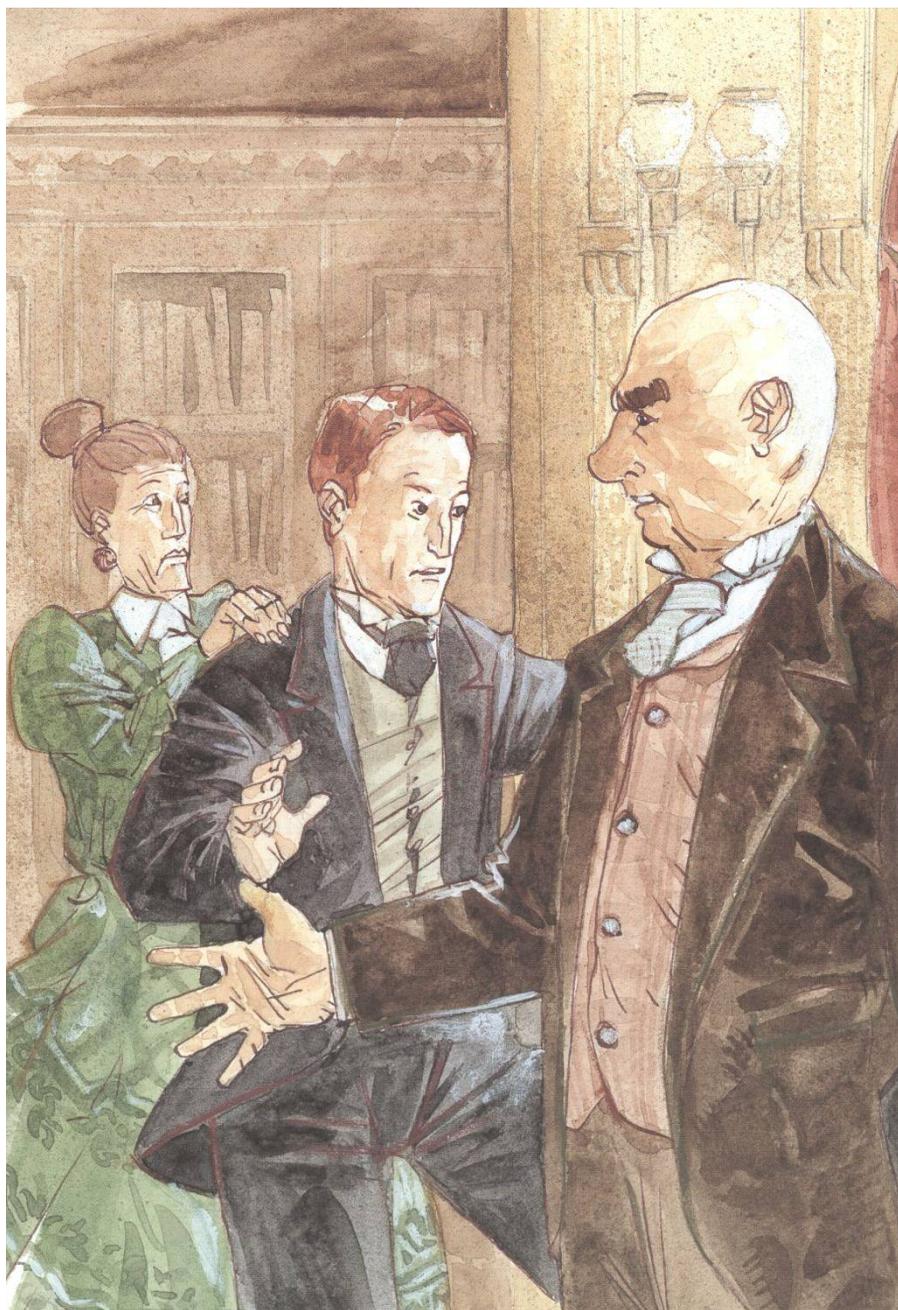
'There is a hypocrite in the room, sir,' said Mr Micawber, 'and his name is Heep.'

'Go away, all of you,' said Uriah.

'I am working as a lawyer for Mr Wickfield,' said Traddles. 'I am staying. But first I will go and get Mrs Heep.'

He left and returned with Uriah's mother. 'Be umble, Uriah,' she said.

'No. I am the master here. You must all go.' Mr Micawber made a long speech. 'I know all your secrets, Heep,' he ended. 'Mr Wickfield is afraid of you because you stole money from the business and then persuaded him that he was guilty, not you. You lied and robbed Mr Wickfield's



clients. You took Miss Betsey Trotwood's money and said that Mr Wickfield was responsible. You are a thief.'

'Prove it, Copperfield and Micawber,' said Uriah.

Mr Micawber produced a notebook. 'This is the evidence. You tried to burn it but I found it in the fireplace. All your secrets are in this little book!'

Traddles took control of the meeting. 'You must give back all the money, Heep. You must tell Mr Wickfield the truth. You must give us your papers.'

'I won't do it!'

'Be umble, Uriah,' said Mrs Heep.

'Do you prefer prison?' asked Traddles.

When he heard this, Uriah agreed to everything. Traddles examined all Uriah's false papers. My aunt received her money and Mr Wickfield was not afraid any more.

'You are wonderful, Mr Micawber,' said my aunt. 'I will give you some money to start a new life in Australia with your family.'

'Mr Micawber will be a great man in Australia,' said his wife.

It was the end of Uriah Heep's power. Agnes and her father were happy together again.



## **Part twelve**

### **Agnes**

Dora was ill. She grew weaker every day. I carried her up the stairs every evening but soon she was in bed all the time.

'Darling Doady. Please send Agnes to me.'  
Agnes went upstairs while I waited with Jip. Jip was an old dog now. I heard the calm voice of Agnes from Dora's bedroom. Then there was no sound. Finally Agnes came down the stairs and looked silently upwards. I understood. Dora was dead.

I decided to go to Yarmouth to see Peggoty and to give Ham a letter from Emily. She asked him to forgive her. As I travelled, a terrible storm began. There was a great wind all day and all night.

At Yarmouth, a group of people watched the sea. There was a ship from Spain near the coast. It couldn't enter the harbour and the enormous waves continued to hit it until it began to sink. The lifeboat saved some of the people but there was a man on the ship. He was waving his hands. Nobody could help him.

Suddenly, Ham ran through the crowd. He tied a rope round his body.



'Stop,' said his friends. 'It's too dangerous.'

But Ham was very sad. He didn't care if he lived or died. His friends held the rope and Ham swam towards the ship. He couldn't reach it and came back to the beach. Then he tried again. He disappeared under a huge wave. There was a loud noise and the ship disintegrated, and the man on it disappeared into the sea too.

Later, after the storm, there were two drowned men on the beach. One was Ham. The other was the passenger from the ship. It was Steerforth!

It was a sad time but we continued to make plans. Mr Peggotty, Emily, Mr and Mrs Micawber and their children emigrated to Australia. They went to start a new life and were very successful. My aunt was rich again.

'Why did you say that you lost the money yourself?' I asked. 'Mr Wickfield lost it.'

'I wanted to protect my old friend,' replied my kind aunt.

Mr Wickfield was poor now but happy. Agnes gave lessons in the old house. She was a very good teacher and the children loved her.

I was very unhappy and I travelled abroad for two years. I remembered my child-wife, my dead school-friend and poor Ham. Most of all, I thought

about Agnes. I understood clearly: I loved her. At last I returned to Aunt Betsey.

'How is Agnes?' I asked.

'She is well,' said my aunt. 'I believe there is a special person in her heart.'

I went to Canterbury to visit her. 'Dear Agnes,' I said, 'my aunt tells me that you are in love. Tell me about the special man.'

Agnes looked away. 'There is no-one. Aunt Betsey is wrong.'

'I love you, Agnes. You are the calm, loving person at the centre of my life. Marry me.'

Agnes smiled. 'Before she died, Dora asked me to take her place. Now you are back and yes, David, I will be your wife.'

'My angel!'

And this is where my story ends.