

goodbye to Dr Strong and the Wickfields. I was especially sad to leave Agnes. Over the years she had become one of my dearest friends.

"The house hasn't been the same since you left, Trotwood," she remarked.

"I shall miss you, Agnes," I replied. "Now who will I ask when I need advice?"

Agnes smiled, but I also saw sadness in her eyes. Then she asked, "Tell me, do you think my father has changed recently?"

"Yes," I said, "his hands have begun to tremble and his speech is sometimes unclear. It always seems to happen when he has some important business to attend to."

"Yes, it's all Uriah Heep's fault," Agnes said. "He encourages my father to drink alcohol. So, my father gets drunk and Uriah looks after his business. I'm so worried, Trotwood. Where will it all end?"

I sensed that Agnes wanted to tell me more, but her father entered the room at that moment, so she stopped talking.

From Canterbury I travelled by coach to London, where I planned to stay the night in a hotel before continuing on to Yarmouth. By coincidence, Steerforth, my old schoolfriend, was staying at the same hotel. We were very pleased to see each other, and the following day, instead of going straight to Yarmouth, I spent a few days at Steerforth's house.

Steerforth lived in a big house with his mother, who was a widow. They were very rich. His mother was a pleasant woman, and I enjoyed our conversations together.

Before I left, I thought of asking Steerforth to join me in Yarmouth. "Don't you remember that Mr Peggotty invited you when he met you at Salem House?"

"Yes," replied Steerforth, "I do remember. I'd love to go with you."

We travelled to Yarmouth together and were greeted warmly by my dear friends.

"You couldn't have chosen a better time to visit us," Mr Peggotty declared. "Em'ly's just told us that she's going to get married!"

"Congratulations, Emily," I said. "Who is the lucky man?"

"It's Ham," answered Mr Peggotty, obviously pleased at his niece's choice.

In all the excitement, I had forgotten to introduce Steerforth to Emily. Afterwards, he whispered to me, "She's beautiful! Is Ham a suitable husband for her? Don't you think she should have someone better?"



"You couldn't have chosen a better time to visit us," Mr Peggotty declared. "Em'ly's just told us she's going to get married!"

Steerforth and I spent many happy days in the Peggottys' company. Steerforth even went out to sea with Mr Peggotty and Ham and helped them on their boat.

"He's a quick learner," said Mr Peggotty, proud of his new student.

One day Steerforth surprised us all by announcing that he had bought a boat and that he was going to call it *The Little Em'ly*.

One evening, as we were walking towards Peggotty's house, we saw Ham waiting outside. He told us that Peggotty and Emily were inside talking to a young woman called Martha. Martha had been abandoned by a man after he had made her pregnant. People in the town were not sympathetic to her.

I heard Martha say, "I want to go to London. Here everyone knows me, but no one knows me there. Help me, Em'ly, please."

Emily stood up and put some money into Martha's hand. They both began to cry. After Martha left, we went into the house, and Emily, still crying, said, "I want to be a better girl than I am. I'm not as innocent as you think. Please help me, Ham. David, Aunt, please help me." I didn't know what she meant.

CHAPTER 8

URIAH HEEP'S PLANS

A few days later, I received a letter from my aunt, reminding me that I had come to Yarmouth to make a decision. The truth is that I hadn't been thinking about my future career at all. My aunt, on the other hand, had thought of an idea. She suggested that I become a **proctor**.

"Steerforth! What on earth is a proctor?" I asked. I had never even heard this word before.

"A proctor? It's a kind of church lawyer, who takes care of wills and marriages. It's a very old-fashioned job. Where did your aunt get that idea?"

“When she went to see her proctor in London about making changes to her **will**, she learned that there was a job vacancy in his office.”

“Take the job,” said Steerforth. “The work is easy and it’s very well paid.”

Because both Steerforth and my aunt were in favour, I agreed to take the job. Aunt Betsey and I planned to meet in London. When I arrived, she took me to the offices of Spenlow and Jorkins.

The offices were old-fashioned and dusty. Mr Spenlow described the job. There was no salary – in fact, my aunt had to pay £1,000 for my training period. I was asked to work for a trial period of one month, starting immediately. The following day, Mr Spenlow took me to a court session, which I found extremely boring. Meanwhile, my aunt arranged my **lodgings** – a small flat on the top floor of a large house. It only had a small sitting-room, a bedroom and a tiny kitchen, but I was very pleased with it.

Soon after, Mr Wickfield and Agnes came to London on business and invited me to lunch. It was a formal lunch with several **guests**, including Uriah Heep, but I managed to speak to Agnes for a few moments alone.

“I’m afraid we’re here on unpleasant business,” Agnes whispered. “It’s Uriah Heep – Father is about to make him his partner.”

“His partner?” I repeated. “How terrible. Why is he doing that?”

“Uriah has forced Father to do it. He has no choice. Uriah has taken advantage of my father’s weakness for alcohol and Father is afraid of him.”

During lunch, I couldn’t look at Heep when I thought about how he was treating poor Mr Wickfield. Agnes, however, had asked me to be nice to him, because he was about to become her father’s partner. Whenever I spoke to Agnes, Heep was never far

away – he was trying to listen to our conversation! Suddenly, I noticed a familiar face among the guests – Tommy Traddles, my friend from Salem House.

“Tommy Traddles! Is it you?” I asked.

“David Copperfield! What are you doing here?” Traddles asked in surprise.

“Working in London. And you?”

“Me, too,” he answered.

Traddles was also starting a career as a lawyer. Now that we were both living in London, we decided to keep in touch. Before leaving, I remembered my promise to Agnes to be nice to Uriah Heep, so I invited him to my lodgings.

When we were there, Heep said, “Mr Wickfield drinks too much for a man in his position. Now he can’t work without me. I help him with his business, and I do everything when he is drunk. He’s lucky to have me. If it weren’t for me, his situation would be much worse.”

I wondered how the situation could possibly be worse than it was.

“Didn’t you think that Agnes was especially beautiful today?” he continued.

“Yes, she was,” I agreed.

“Oh, thank you! Thank you!” said Heep.

“Why are you thanking me?” I asked.

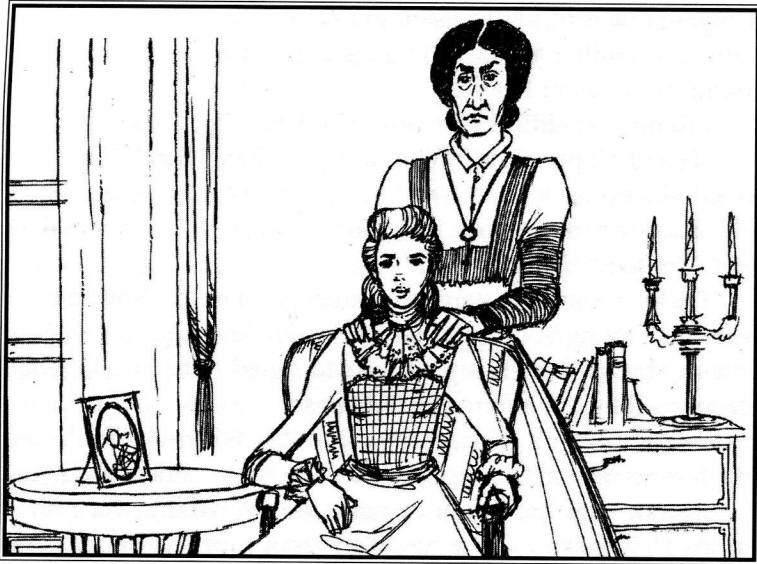
“Because I shall ask her to marry me one day,” he declared.

I couldn’t believe my ears! Was there no end to Heep’s plans? I did not like what was happening, but there was very little I could do.

CHAPTER 9

HAPPINESS AND SORROW

One day my employer, Mr Spenlow, invited me to his house, which was in a village not far from London. I was introduced to his daughter, Dora, and I fell in love with her at once. I was



Dora's companion was Miss Murdstone!

shocked, however, to see a familiar face at the Spenlows' house. Dora, like most young women from wealthy families, had a companion. Companions were often older women who were present when girls were in the company of men. Dora's companion was Miss Murdstone! I wondered why she was now working in this position, but I didn't ask because I didn't want to speak to her after the way she had treated me in my childhood. Miss Murdstone spoke to me quietly, and we agreed not to mention our past to the Spenlows. Still, even this unpleasant surprise didn't ruin the day. After returning home, I could only think about when I would see Dora again.

A few days later, I visited Traddles at his lodgings. We chatted about our schooldays, and he told me that he was engaged to be married. Traddles mentioned he had become friendly with another family in the house, and he wanted me to meet them. Imagine my surprise when their door opened and I

saw Mr and Mrs Micawber!

"I thought you were in Canterbury, Mr Micawber," I said.

"Indeed I was, but it seems that they didn't need true talent there," Mr Micawber replied.

"Mr Micawber has a variety of qualifications and great talent," Mrs Micawber explained. "I can't understand why no one offers him a job in which he can use them."

Mr Micawber smiled, clearly enjoying his wife's praise, although I was sure he was used to it.

I guessed that the Micawbers' financial situation wasn't good, and when I spoke privately to Traddles he mentioned that he had lent them money. I advised him that this was not a good idea because Mr Micawber often borrowed money but was never able to pay it back.

One evening, Steerforth appeared at my lodgings with a letter for me from Peggotty.

"I'm afraid it's bad news. Barkis is dying," said Steerforth.

"That's terrible," I replied. "I must go and be with Peggotty."

"Copperfield, before you go, I want to say something. We've been friends for a long time. If anything should ever come between us, or if you hear bad things about me, always think of me as you once knew me."

I didn't understand him at that moment. If only I had known then what I know now . . .

I arrived at Peggotty's house, and Mr Peggotty, Ham and Emily were all there. Mr Barkis was lying in bed and he was very ill. He looked at me with a pleasant smile and said, "Barkis is willing." Then a few minutes later, he closed his eyes and died peacefully.

After the funeral, I invited Peggotty to return to London with me. She told me that Ham and Emily were planning to get married quietly within a fortnight. I went to Mr Peggotty's house to say goodbye. When I arrived, Ham opened the door. He

was very pale and had tears in his eyes.

“Oh, Mr Copperfield, it’s Em’ly!” he cried. “She’s run away! What will I tell my Uncle Dan when he comes home?”

He took a letter out of his pocket and gave it to me to read. It was in Emily’s handwriting.

I am going away and will not return unless he marries me. I don’t want you to suffer because of me. Please try to pretend I am dead and buried somewhere. Ham, find yourself a good girl and marry her. Tell Uncle that I have always loved him and I always will. God bless you all. I will pray for you.

At that moment Mr Peggotty arrived. He sensed immediately that something was wrong. He took the letter from Ham and read it slowly. Then he let out a cry.



Mr Peggotty took the letter from Ham and read it slowly.

"Who is the man?" he shouted. "Who is it?" He was trembling with pain and anger.

"Please go away, David. You shouldn't hear this," Ham urged.

"I want to know his name," growled Mr Peggotty.

Ham continued, "There's a gentleman who was here recently. Please leave, Mr David."

I couldn't move. I already knew what he was going to say.

"His name is Steerforth," Ham said at last.

Mr Peggotty put on his coat. "I'm going to look for her and bring her back," he declared, and he went out into the night.

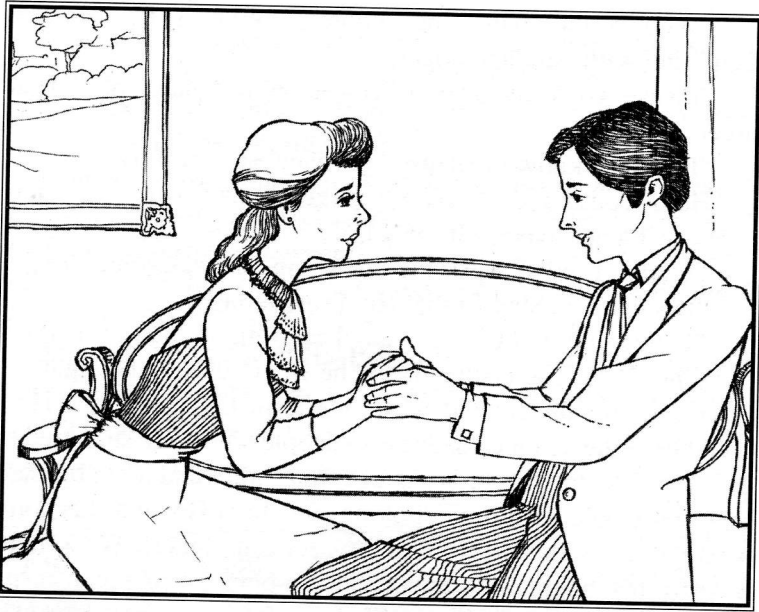
I couldn't understand why Steerforth had done this. How could he bring so much sadness to people who were supposed to be his friends? Mr Peggotty didn't find Emily that night but said that he would continue looking for her. He and Peggotty returned to London with me to look for Emily there. We went to Steerforth's house, but Steerforth's mother, who received us coldly, didn't know where her son and Emily were. She was very angry that her son had run away with Emily, because she believed Emily was from a lower class.

CHAPTER 10

MISS MURDSTONE'S REVENGE

All this time, I couldn't stop thinking about Dora. When Mr Spenlow invited me to a picnic for her birthday, I was delighted and counted the days until the day of the picnic arrived. On that day, I brought Dora flowers.

Miss Murdstone wasn't with Dora that day; she had a new companion, Miss Mills, who encouraged our friendship. At the end of the day, Miss Mills said to me, "Dora is coming to stay with me in London the day after tomorrow. If you like, you are welcome to visit her." Two days later I called on Dora at the home of Miss Mills. We spent time together alone. Somehow, I found the courage to tell Dora how much I loved her, and she



I found the courage to tell Dora how much I loved her, and she told me that she felt the same way about me.

told me that she felt the same way about me. I was **overjoyed**. We **became engaged** that very evening. We decided, however, to wait a while before we told Dora's father.

I wrote to Agnes to tell her the splendid news about Dora and myself as well as the sad news from Yarmouth.

A few days later, my aunt and Mr Dick appeared unexpectedly at my lodgings.

"Aunt! Mr Dick! What a pleasant surprise!" I exclaimed.

"I'm afraid it's not so pleasant," my aunt replied. We had tea and she told me the whole story.

"I'm sorry, Trotwood, but I am ruined. Apart from my house, which I have rented out, I have nothing in the world. You see, I realised that Mr Wickfield is not the man he once was. He stopped giving me good advice, and now I have lost all my

money. I have nowhere to live, so Mr Dick and I have come to stay with you.”

I didn't know what to do. I told Aunt Betsey about my engagement, but I realised that my circumstances had now changed. I wondered how I could help my aunt. Perhaps if I left my job, Mr Spenlow would agree to return the £1,000 that my aunt had paid him. Unfortunately, when I asked him the next day, he refused. Now what was I going to do? I was certain he wouldn't permit his daughter to marry a man with no money . . .

When I arrived at my lodgings that evening, I saw a familiar figure. It was Agnes. Her father and Uriah Heep had told her about my aunt's financial difficulties, and she had come to comfort my aunt.

I told Agnes that I must find an extra job. Agnes mentioned that Dr Strong, my former headmaster, had retired from teaching and moved to London. He wanted to publish a dictionary and was looking for an assistant. I decided to speak to him as soon as possible.

I asked Agnes about Uriah Heep.

“Uriah and my father are here in London with me,” Agnes said. “Uriah has moved into our house with his mother, and he has a very strong influence over my father. In fact, I think that he is trying to come between my father and me.”

Just then there was a knock at the door, and Mr Wickfield entered, accompanied by Uriah Heep. Mr Wickfield was different; his eyes were red and his hands trembled noticeably. It was obvious that Heep had considerable power over him.

“I'm sorry to hear of your unfortunate situation,” said Heep. “However, **as the saying goes**, ‘money is not the only thing in life.’” Clearly, Heep was enjoying the situation very much.

The following day I went to see Dr Strong and explained that I needed extra work in addition to my job as a proctor. Dr Strong was very pleased and offered me £70 a year to work for

him mornings and evenings. I knew it would be hard, but I had to earn enough money to marry Dora!

At this time, Mr Micawber told me he was leaving London and going to Canterbury to work as Uriah Heep's personal assistant. I was surprised, but Mr Micawber and his wife were both very pleased.

Life had become crowded in my lodgings since my aunt and Mr Dick had moved in, but my aunt looked after me devotedly, as if she were my mother. I knew I must eventually tell Dora the truth about my financial situation, and one day I visited her.

"Dora, I've got something to tell you," I said. "I haven't got any money."

"Don't be so silly, David," she laughed.

"No, it's true. I am ruined," I confessed.

When she realised I was telling the truth, she began to cry.

"Do you still love me?" I asked her.

"Of course I do!"

"And shall we still get married?"

"Yes, we shall," Dora declared.

One day, Mr Spenlow called me into his office. To my surprise, Miss Murdstone was with him. Mr Spenlow had a bundle of letters tied with a blue ribbon in his hand.

"Is this your writing, Mr Copperfield?" he asked. He showed me a letter I had written to Dora.

"Yes, it is," I answered.

"And did you write these?" he asked, pointing at some other letters.

"Yes, sir, I did."

These were letters which I had secretly sent to Miss Mills for Dora, and I wondered how Miss Murdstone had found them.

"I have suspected for a long time that something has been going on between Mr Copperfield and Miss Dora," Miss Murdstone said. "I had hoped that I was wrong. However, one day I found Miss Dora's dog with these letters in his mouth. I

felt it was my duty to read them and to inform Mr Spenlow of what was written in them. I only did this for Dora – she is very young and needs protection from people like Mr Copperfield.”

Of course, Miss Murdstone was not trying to protect Dora, she was trying to harm me. It was obvious that she was enjoying this moment very much.

“You did very well, Miss Murdstone,” answered Mr Spenlow. “Mr Copperfield, I am shocked!”

“It’s all my fault, sir,” I said, trying to protect Dora. “Your daughter did not want to hide anything from you.”

“All contact between you and my daughter must end immediately,” Mr Spenlow insisted. “You know that I am a rich man and that my daughter will inherit everything I own. I am also aware of your financial situation, which might explain your interest in my daughter. You must not see my daughter again. If you do not agree, I will send her to study abroad.”

The next morning I was very **upset** but went to work as usual. As soon as I entered the offices, I knew that something was wrong.

“What’s happened?” I asked.

“Haven’t you heard?” replied a **clerk**. “Mr Spenlow is dead.”

“Dead? Mr Spenlow? How did that happen?” I gasped.

“He fell from his carriage on his way home last night.”

I was shocked. I immediately thought about my poor Dora. How terrible she must feel!

CHAPTER 11

UNION AND REUNIONS

I accompanied my aunt on a visit to her house near Dover. On the way back, I stopped in Canterbury to see Agnes. When I arrived at Mr Wickfield’s office, I saw my old friend, Mr Micawber.

“Are you enjoying your work here?” I asked.