

Mrs Creakle told me he was also very ill and might die as well. Then I thought of my father's grave and of the grave in which my mother would soon be **buried**.

When I arrived home, Peggotty ran out of the house and took me in her arms. She told me that my baby brother had also died, and that he would be buried in the same grave as my mother. I saw many familiar faces at the funeral, but I only remember the terrible sadness that I felt. All I could think of was my mother, who I would never see again.

My future was now uncertain. Apart from Peggotty (and my Aunt Betsey, who I had never seen), I had no one in the world. Miss Murdstone had never liked Peggotty, so it was no surprise that one of the first things she did after Mother's death was to **dismiss** her. Before she left, Peggotty promised that if I ever needed assistance, she would help me. She also invited me to stay with her at Yarmouth for a while. I asked permission to go with Peggotty and was very surprised when the Murdstones agreed.

We travelled to Dan Peggotty's house in Mr Barkis' carriage. It was a pleasure to be among friends again. I looked around me, but the person I was looking for wasn't there.

"Where is Emily?" I asked.

"She's at school, Master Davy. She'll be home soon," Mr Peggotty replied.

The time passed very slowly until the door opened and Emily entered. She had grown, and her eyes seemed bluer and her face even prettier. She **pretended** not to know me, and when I tried to kiss her, she told me that she wasn't a baby any more. In fact, she spent the whole day **teasing me**. Everyone wanted to please her, and I understood why – she was a lovely person.

Mr Peggotty hadn't changed and neither had Ham. They remembered their visit to Salem House and asked about my friend Steerforth. Even though they had only met him once, they too admired him very much. As we talked about Steerforth,

Emily listened attentively, her blue eyes shining. She, too, wanted to meet Steerforth.

I was disappointed that this visit was not like the previous one. Emily was too busy to go for walks on the beach. Even though we spent little time together, I knew that I was in love with Emily, and I even imagined marrying her one day.

During my stay, Mr Barkis appeared at the house, bringing all kinds of small presents for Peggotty. One day, Mr Barkis and Peggotty decided to go out for the day, and they invited Emily and me to join them. The first thing they did was to stop at a small church. They went in, and Emily and I waited outside. After a while, they came out, and they both seemed very happy.

While we were driving, Mr Barkis asked me, "Do you remember the name I wrote on my carriage?"

"Of course. Clara Peggotty."

"What name should I write now?"

"Clara Peggotty?" I asked, not really understanding what I was supposed to say.

"No!" he laughed. "Clara Peggotty BARKIS!"

We were all very happy.

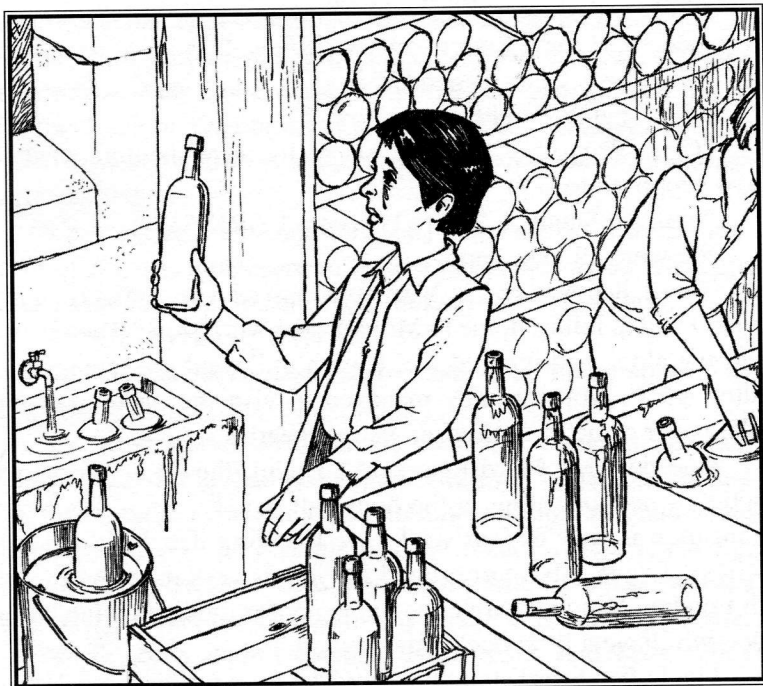
Those happy days at Yarmouth passed very quickly, and soon I had to return home to Mr and Miss Murdstone. They both left me alone and ignored me. I wasn't allowed to see anyone, although Peggotty usually managed to visit me once a week. She never came to the house; we met nearby.

One day, Mr Murdstone said, "David, this is a world for action – not for sitting in the house all day. I am not rich, and education is very expensive. I have therefore decided that you will start work. I have **arranged** for you to work in my business in London. You will earn enough money for food and drink, and you will have a little pocket money left."

I had often heard about the Murdstones' wine business. Now I was going to find out exactly what it was like . . .

At the age of ten, I began to work for Murdstone and Grinby. My job was to wash bottles, put labels on them and pack them in boxes. Three other boys also did this job in some old, dark buildings near the river Thames. I tried to work hard, but when I thought about the happy moments from my childhood, tears fell down my cheeks while I was washing the bottles.

At the end of the first day, I was introduced to my **landlord**, Mr Micawber. My stepfather had arranged for me to rent a room from this gentleman, and a very unusual gentleman he was. When I arrived at his house, he introduced me to his wife and



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their family – a young boy, aged four, a young girl of three and twin babies. Mr and Mrs Micawber were not young, and judging by their house, they were not rich either. My first conversation with Mrs Micawber was about how unlucky they had been and how little money they had. As time went on, they became good friends, and I helped them whenever I could; however, I never had very much money myself.

While I was living with the Micawbers, many people used to come to the house looking for Mr Micawber. Mr Micawber tried to avoid seeing these people. He **owed** them money. One day, I learned that Mr Micawber had been unable to pay his debts and had been put into a debtors' prison. Mrs Micawber was now alone with the children and didn't know what to do. I helped her to sell most of her furniture, but she still didn't have enough money. **Eventually** Mrs Micawber left and moved into the prison with Mr Micawber to save money. Then I had to find a small room in another house.

After a short time, Mr Micawber was **released** from prison as a result of a new law that helped people in debt. I visited the Micawbers and found Mr Micawber in an optimistic mood.

“Copperfield, my friend, I know that something **will turn up**,” he told me cheerfully.

“I hope so, Mr Micawber,” I answered, although I found it difficult to understand his optimistic belief that something would always “turn up”.

“My family is wealthy,” added Mrs Micawber, “but I will never leave my husband **in spite of** our circumstances. I have spoken to a relative, and he says he will find Mr Micawber a job in Plymouth.”

It was interesting to listen to Mr and Mrs Micawber. Mr Micawber seemed to know everything, and his devoted wife admired him and listened attentively to every word he said. Although I didn't always believe what he said, Mr Micawber was a good man and I was sorry to see him and his family leave.

Now that my friends had gone, I was even more unhappy at Murdstone and Grinby, and I decided to run away from London and to look for my Aunt Betsey. Although I didn't know her, she was my only **relation**, and somehow I felt certain she would help me. I also didn't know her exact address, but Peggotty had once told me she lived in a village near Dover. Before leaving, I paid a young man to carry my heavy **trunk**. Unfortunately, he ran away not only with my trunk but also with all my money. I was now alone without any money, and the only things that I owned were the clothes that I was wearing.

I continued on the road to Dover on foot. I sold my jacket to buy food, and I slept wherever I could find somewhere dry. Eventually I reached my aunt's village. I asked someone where Miss Trotwood lived, and he directed me to her cottage. I was very tired and very dirty, and I wasn't sure how she would react when she saw me.

I arrived at the door and knocked uncertainly. Aunt Betsey's maid appeared.

"What do you want?" she asked, staring at my unwashed face.

"I want to speak to Miss Trotwood, please," I answered.

"To beg from her, I think!" replied the maid, and she closed the door in my face.

Not knowing what to do, I turned to leave. Suddenly I saw my aunt in the garden. Using all the courage and strength I had left, I walked up to her and touched her arm.

"Please, ma'am. Please, Aunt. I am your nephew. I am David Copperfield. You were in our house on the day I was born. You met my mother. She is dead now and I am very unhappy. My stepfather sent me to work in London. I ran away to look for you and I was robbed on the way. I have walked all the way from London."

I began to cry. Luckily, Aunt Betsey took me inside. Then she called her **lodger**, Mr Dick, and told him my story.

“Mr Dick,” explained my aunt, “this is my nephew, David Copperfield. I’ve told you about him in the past. He has been badly treated and has run away. He has come to me for help. What should I do?”

Mr Dick looked at me with great interest. He was an elderly gentleman with a round face. He looked a little strange to me, but he always had a smile on his face. Afterwards I learned that most people believed he was mad, but my aunt didn’t listen to them. Whenever she had to make an important decision, she always asked Mr Dick for advice.

After thinking for a moment, Mr Dick replied, “Well, I think the first thing you should do is give the boy a bath!”

“Mr Dick, you’re right once again!” Aunt Betsey remarked. “Don’t let anybody tell me that you’re a fool.”

Mr Dick seemed very pleased that he had given the correct advice.

My aunt sent me with Janet, the maid, who bathed me, fed me and took me to my bedroom. That night I **prayed** that this would be the start of a new and better life.

The following morning after breakfast, my aunt told me something that made me very anxious.

“I have sent a letter to Mr Murdstone informing him that you are here,” she announced.

“Are you going to send me back to him?” I asked.

“That’s for him to decide,” my aunt replied.

I waited anxiously until one day a letter arrived from Mr Murdstone. The letter said that he would arrive the following day to take me back. The next day, he and Miss Murdstone arrived, and we went into the sitting-room. Aunt Betsey disliked the Murdstones from the moment she saw them.

“So, you married David’s poor mother,” she said to Mr Murdstone.

“Yes, and I have come to take her son,” he answered.

He then told Aunt Betsey how much trouble I had caused

him, and that I was violent, aggressive, rebellious and rude.

“Of all the boys in the world, I believe he is the worst,” added Miss Murdstone.

“I shall take him now, and you will not interfere, Miss Trotwood,” Mr Murdstone insisted. “The boy is mine and I will do whatever I want with him.”

“Is that so?” answered my aunt. “And what do you say, David?”

Everyone looked at me.

“Please, Aunt. Don’t send me away with that cruel man. Please let me stay here with you.”

My aunt thought for a moment and said to Mr Murdstone, “If half of what you say is true – though I do not believe it is – it will be better if the boy stays with me. You may go now. Goodbye.”

The Murdstones were angry and insulted, but my aunt left them no choice. I watched them leave with great joy in my heart. Then my aunt looked at me. “Now we have to decide what is best for you, my boy,” she said. “First of all, I shall call you Trotwood. Trotwood Copperfield.”

And so I started my new life with a new name.

CHAPTER 6

IN CANTERBURY

Aunt Betsey decided that I must complete my education and go to school in the nearby city of Canterbury. We went to Canterbury the next day, and when we arrived, Aunt Betsey took me to the office of her lawyer, Mr Wickfield.

As we entered, we saw a young boy sitting at a desk. He was about 15 years old and had bright red hair.

“Ah, Uriah Heep!” my aunt said. “Is Mr Wickfield here?”

“Yes, Miss Trotwood,” the red-haired boy replied.

The boy studied me very carefully as we went into Mr Wickfield’s office. Mr Wickfield was a grey-haired gentleman

with black eyebrows. In spite of his grey hair, he was not particularly old. His desk was covered with papers and books.

“Miss Trotwood,” he said, rising from his chair to greet my aunt. “What a pleasure to see you again. How can I help you?”

“I don’t need a lawyer today, Mr Wickfield,” Aunt Betsey explained. “I’ve come about a different matter. This is Trotwood, my nephew. I have adopted him, and I need to find a school for him here in Canterbury.”

They decided that Dr Strong’s school was best for me and that I would stay at Mr Wickfield’s house, because it was too far for me to travel from my aunt’s house each day. Just then, Mr. Wickfield’s daughter, Agnes, entered the room. She had been looking after her father and the house since her mother’s death a few years before. Mr Wickfield explained that I was going to stay with them and asked Agnes to take me to my room. Before she left, Aunt Betsey gave me some advice, which I remember to this day: “Never be **mean**, never be false and never be cruel.”

My first evening with Mr Wickfield and Agnes was very pleasant. After dinner, Agnes played the piano for us. I then



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went to bed, thinking about the following day – my first day at my new school.

The next morning, Mr Wickfield and I arrived at Dr Strong's school. It was perhaps the best school in Canterbury and I knew that I would be happy there. Dr Strong was a very gentle and intelligent man, and I liked him immediately.

That evening at dinner, I told Agnes all about my new school. Later, on my way up to my room, I noticed that Uriah Heep was still working. I asked him why he was working so late and he replied, "I must improve my legal knowledge, Mr Copperfield."

"Are you a great lawyer?" I asked.

"Me? Oh no, Mr Copperfield. I'm a very **humble** person."

"Perhaps one day you'll become Mr Wickfield's **partner** in the firm," I said.

"Oh no, I'm much too humble for that," he replied.

There was something about Uriah Heep that I did not like, but I couldn't say what. One day he invited me to have tea with him and his mother, and I politely accepted. As we entered the house, his mother said, "Please excuse us, Mr Copperfield. We are humble people. We have always been humble, and we will always be humble."

During our tea, Uriah Heep and his mother asked me many questions about myself, Mr Wickfield and Agnes. I felt uncomfortable, and I tried to avoid answering all their questions, but it was very difficult. I didn't know Uriah Heep well enough then to know that he always tried to discover as much as he could about people so that one day he could use that information for his own good. It was a hot afternoon and the front door was open. Suddenly I heard a familiar voice. "Copperfield! Is it possible? Is it really you?"

I looked towards the doorway and saw Mr Micawber standing there. He had been walking along the street and had heard my voice. Uriah Heep realised he was a friend of mine and

invited him in. Now I felt even more uncomfortable – Mr Micawber usually talked a lot, and I didn't want him to tell Uriah Heep about my past.

“Are you still in the wine business, Copperfield?” asked Mr Micawber.

I turned to Uriah Heep and said, “Uriah, it has been a pleasant afternoon, and I'm happy to have met your mother, but I must go now. I haven't seen Mr Micawber for a very long time and we have many things to talk about.”

I felt relieved to go and happy to see my old friend. “I thought you were in Plymouth,” I said to him.

“They didn't need talent in Plymouth, so I came here,” Mr Micawber replied.

Mr Micawber invited me to his house, and Mrs Micawber was very surprised to see me. The three of us talked together for a while. The following evening, as I was returning from school, I saw Mr Micawber walking arm in arm along the street with Uriah Heep. The next day, I saw them together again. They seemed to be very friendly, and I hoped that Mr Micawber hadn't told Uriah Heep too much about me.

CHAPTER 7

A HOLIDAY IN YARMOUTH

My years at Dr Strong's school and with the Wickfields passed quickly, and soon the time came for me to leave my happy home in Canterbury and choose a career.

I went to my aunt's house to think about my future. “Trotwood, you must take your time to make this decision,” my aunt advised me. “Why don't you go to Yarmouth for a few days? Peggotty and Mr Barkis are living there now, and I'm sure they'd be happy to see you. It may be easier for you to make your decision there.”

“I'd love to do that, Aunt,” I answered.

On my way to Yarmouth, I stopped in Canterbury to say