

David Copperfield

David Copperfield's parents are both dead. His step father sent him to work in a factory in London, a very hard life. When his landlord is sent to a debtor's prison, David decides to find his aunt, Betsy Trotwood, who lives in Dover. David walks the 70 miles (110km) to Dover, which takes days. He arrives and sees a lady come out of the house with gardening gloves on. He knows this is his aunt, because she is just like his mother had described her. She sees him....

1 'Go away!' said Miss Betsey, shaking her head, and making a distant chop in the air with
2 her knife. 'Go along! No boys here!'

3 I watched her, with my heart at my lips, as she marched to a corner of her garden, and
4 stooped to dig up some little root there. Then, without a scrap of courage, but with a great
5 deal of desperation, I went softly in and stood beside her, touching her with my finger.

6 'If you please, ma'am,' I began.

7 She started and looked up.

8 'If you please, aunt.'

9 'EH?' exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.

10 'If you please, aunt, I am your nephew.'

11 'Oh, Lord!' said my aunt. And sat flat down in the garden-path.

12 'I am David Copperfield, of Blunderstone, in Suffolk – where you came, on the night when
13 I was born, and saw my dear mama. I have been very unhappy since she died. I have been
14 slighted, and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me. It made
15 me run away to you. I was robbed at first setting out, and have walked all the way, and have
16 never slept in a bed since I began the journey.' Here my self-support gave way all at once;
17 and with a movement of my hands, intended to show her my ragged state, and call it to
18 witness that I had suffered something, I broke into a passion of crying, which I suppose had
19 been pent up within me all the week.

Betsey takes David inside the house. She gives him a terrible mixture of medicines to drink, and then she calls to Mr Dick, who lives upstairs. He's a bit simple, a bit dreamy, a bit hopeless. But Aunt Betsey knows how to talk to him, how to make him think. And when she needs advice she can always turn to Mr Dick. So now, with David Copperfield lying sick on her sofa that is what she does:

20 'Mr Dick,' said my aunt, 'you have heard me mention David Copperfield? Now don't
21 pretend not to have a memory, because you and I know better.'

22 'David Copperfield?' said Mr Dick, who did not appear to remember much about it. 'David
23 Copperfield? Oh yes, to be sure. David, certainly.'

24 'Well,' said my aunt, 'this is his boy – his son. He would be as like his father as it's
25 possible to be, if he was not so like his mother, too.'

26 'His son?' said Mr Dick. 'David's son? Indeed!'

27 'Well then,' returned my aunt, softened by the reply, 'how can you pretend to be wool-
28 gathering, Dick, when you are as sharp as a surgeon's lancet? Now, here you see young
29 David Copperfield, and the question I put to you is, what shall I do with him?'

30 'What shall you do with him?' said Mr Dick, feebly, scratching his head. Oh! Do with
31 him?'

32 'Yes,' said my aunt, with a grave look, and her forefinger held up. 'Come! I want some
33 very sound advice.'

34 'Why, if I was you,' said Mr Dick, considering, and looking vacantly at me, 'I should –'
35 The contemplation of me seemed to inspire him with a sudden idea, and he added, briskly,
36