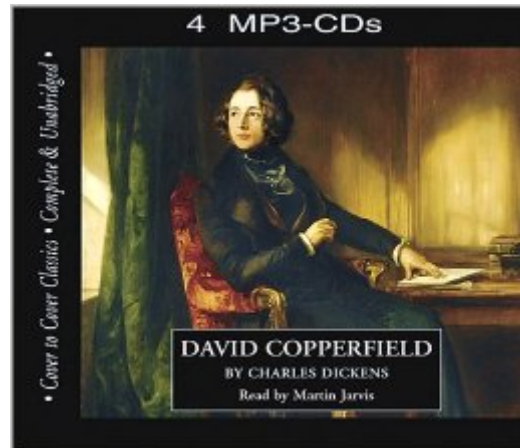


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# David Copperfield



## Synopsis

'Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show' Dickens's epic, exuberant novel is one of the greatest coming-of-age stories in literature. It chronicles David Copperfield's extraordinary journey through life, as he encounters villains, saviours, eccentrics and grotesques, including the wicked Mr Murdstone, stout-hearted Peggotty, formidable Betsey Trotwood, impecunious Micawber and odious Uriah Heep. Dickens's great Bildungsroman (based, in part, on his own boyhood, and which he described as a 'favourite child') is a work filled with life, both comic and tragic. The Penguin English Library - 100 editions of the best fiction in English, from the eighteenth century and the very first novels to the beginning of the First World War. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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## Customer Reviews

Somehow, I'd graduated from college - with a degree in English, no less - and had never had to read a single thing ever written by Charles Dickens. I read quite a bit on my own, but still found David Copperfield to be the height of ambition - my copy was 1001 pages long, and I hadn't ventured into a book over a thousand pages since I'd read *The Stand* at age 12. I cannot imagine that I am alone in completing my education and sidestepping Dickens altogether, so I think it's important I share my experience. In truth, the only reason I chose David Copperfield over, say, *Great Expectations* or *Hard Times* was the passing comment made by Jeff Daniels in *The Squid And The Whale* - dismissing a *Tale of Two Cities* as "minor Dickens," saying David Copperfield was

"much richer." It is rich. I tend towards modern fiction nowadays, fiction that, unexpectedly, takes you deep inside the heart of its characters sometimes bewildering behavior and humanity. What strikes me about the complex nature of the characters in *Copperfield* is the way it seems that no effort at all has been used to distinguish each of them, yet there is no doubt as to how vivid they are. Each character speaks in a tone that is a perfect elucidation of who they are - you can hear, just in the dialogue, the calm wisdom of Agnes, the parasitic obsequiousness of Uriah Heep, the punctilious rambling of Micawber, the pleasantries that barely mask the aggression of Miss Dartle, the rigid boredom of the Murdstones, the spoiled impishness when Dora speaks (so precise I heard her voice in cloying and nasal babytalk in my head). It's a delicate balancing act to keep this level of detail so hidden in his work, and it makes the plot machinations speedy and exciting.

*David Copperfield* uses the story of Copperfield's life from birth through middle life to introduce and explore some wonderful personalities. Look more for deep and penetrating character studies than a fast moving plot line. It is not character study alone, however. Again and again, through many characters and many instances, he seems to really explore "the first mistaken impulse of an undisciplined heart", and that "there can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose". Look for these themes to come in from the very beginning and continue until they are actually spelled out by one character and contemplated by another. When David is born, his father is already buried in the churchyard nearby. He, his mother, and their servant Pegotty live happily enough as a family until his mother remarries. The new husband does not like frivolity or friendly association with servants but more than that, he does not like David. David is sent off to boarding school and then sent out to work. Barred from his mother's affections by his stepfather, Pegotty becomes a full mother figure and his ties to her and her family only deepen with time. Through her, he meets her brother, Mr. Pegotty; her nephew?, Ham, the widow Mrs. Gummidge and Mr. Pegotty's niece, Emily. At school, he makes fast friends with many boys but most especially with the privileged James Steerforth and the not so privileged Tommy Traddles, both of whom show up again in David's adulthood. In the bottling warehouse where he is sent to work as a child, he lodges with Mr. And Mrs. Micawber who are always in debt. They also show up again in his adulthood.

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