***David Copperfield***

### *Chapter 16 – I Am a New Boy in More Senses Than Once*

***Summary:***

* The next morning, David goes to his new school, accompanied by Mr. Wickfield.
* His new principal is named Doctor Strong. He seems somewhat distracted and out of it, but he also welcomes David.
* Doctor Strong gives David his hand, and David is embarrassed because Doctor Strong doesn't shake – David isn't sure what he should do.
* He is saved from further embarrassment by the entry of a young woman, Annie. David can't work out if Annie is Doctor Strong's daughter or wife. (She is, in fact, his wife).
* Doctor Strong asks Mr. Wickfield if he has found any kind of employment for Annie Strong's cousin, Jack Maldon..
* Mr. Wickfield hasn't yet, but he also makes an extremely mysterious comment: Mr. Wickfield says that finding Jack Maldon a job will be tricky because of Doctor Strong's motive.
* Doctor Strong protests that his only motive is to secure some kind of livelihood for his wife's cousin.
* Mr. Wickfield agrees that yes, Doctor Strong wants to find him a job – at home *or abroad*.
* Doctor Strong says yes, this is true, but he also appears confused by Mr. Wickfield's emphasis.
* Mr. Wickfield is surprised that Doctor Strong doesn't have a preference for Jack Maldon being abroad.
* Mr. Wickfield exclaims that, if he had known Doctor Strong's lack of preference, his job would have been much easier.
* Doctor Strong looks confused, but he smiles sweetly, and David feels comforted that Doctor Strong seems like a nice man.
* Doctor Strong leads David and Mr. Wickfield to the schoolroom, where there are about 25 boys sitting at their books.
* Doctor Strong introduces David as Trotwood Copperfield.
* Adams, the head boy (which is a bit like class president, but with more disciplinary duties) gets up and leads David to his seat.
* David feels incredibly shy: it's been so long since he's been around other schoolboys who play normal games and learn ordinary things that he feels awkward and inexperienced.
* He wonders what his schoolmates would think of all of his pawn shop and debtors prison visits for the Micawbers.
* Luckily, Mr. Wickfield's home is so quiet and neat that, when David comes back to his room after school, he begins to relax and feel at ease.
* David goes downstairs to find Agnes, who asks about his first day of school.
* David wonders if Agnes has ever been to school, and Agnes says of course she has, every day.
* But David clarifies that Agnes has been home-schooled.
* Agnes agrees: her father could never let her be educated elsewhere because he needs her at home.
* Agnes's mother died in childbirth when Agnes was born, so it has always been just Agnes and Mr. Wickfield.
* When Mr. Wickfield comes home, Agnes greets him affectionately.
* Mr. Wickfield tells David that he will be very happy with Doctor Strong, who is a gentle and kind man.
* Mr. Wickfield warns David never to take advantage of Doctor Strong's kindness, as some others have.
* David notices that Mr. Wickfield seems to be thinking of something unsatisfactory, but he can't guess what it is.
* Just as they all sit down to dinner, Uriah Heep pops in to tell Mr. Wickfield that Jack Maldon (Mrs. Annie Strong's cousin) has come for a word.
* Uriah Heep continues to freak David out with his staring eyes.
* Jack Maldon comes in and tells Mr. Wickfield it'll be for the best if he heads off to a job abroad as quickly as possible – the Strongs have said they want him to stay close to them, but he doesn't feel this is necessary, and he wants to leave town.
* Mr. Wickfield seems stern: his tone is disapproving as Jack Maldon speaks disrespectfully of Doctor Strong and his wife.
* Jack Maldon appears to feel that Doctor Strong *owes* Maldon help because Doctor Strong has been so lucky as to marry Maldon's cousin Annie – who is, of course, much younger and prettier than Doctor Strong.
* Given how young and pretty Annie is, Maldon is sure that all she has to do is to tell Doctor Strong she wants something and Doctor Strong will do it.
* Maldon promises he'll do whatever Mr. Wickfield arranges for him, without consulting the Strongs in the matter.
* Maldon departs, announcing his intention to dine with his cousin Annie.
* Mr. Wickfield settles in for his after-dinner drink (of which there is a lot), Agnes plays the piano, and they all hang out happily.
* After Agnes goes off to bed and David is preparing to do the same, Mr. Wickfield asks David if he wants to stay there or move elsewhere?
* David wants to stay: he likes it there.
* Mr. Wickfield wonders if it is too dull.
* David answers that Mr. Wickfield's house is no duller for David than it is for Agnes.
* Mr. Wickfield seems very drunk, and when David mentions Agnes's name, Mr. Wickfield muses that he worries that she will grow tired of his house, because he cannot bear to lose her.
* If Mr. Wickfield is still so unhappy when Agnes is there, he cannot imagine how much worse it will be once Agnes leaves. (We think the unhappiness Mr. Wickfield is talking about here is his pain at missing his wife.)
* Mr. Wickfield asks David to stay: it's a good thing for Mr. Wickfield and it's a good thing for Agnes to have David around.
* David says he would be happy to: he is glad to be there.
* Mr. Wickfield heads to his room.
* David decides to sit up for another half an hour reading.
* He sees a light on in Mr. Wickfield's office and finds Uriah Heep studying.
* Uriah Heep is reading a book on law.
* David assumes that Uriah Heep is a great lawyer.
* Uriah Heep denies this: he is "a very umble person" (16.88) – "umble" meaning humble. This is Uriah Heep's trademark phrase.
* Heep adds that his mother is also humble, that they live in a humble home, and that his father was humble while he was still alive.
* Then he says that he has much to be grateful to Mr. Wickfield for. He's been an apprentice to Mr. Wickfield for four years, since about a year after his father's death.
* David suggests that, once Uriah Heep becomes a full lawyer, maybe he and Mr. Wickfield could be partners.
* Protesting, Heep says that he is too humble to think of being Mr. Wickfield's partner.
* Uriah also compliments David's aunt, Miss Betsey, and then adds that everyone must admire Miss Agnes as well.
* All this praising of people (especially Agnes) gets Heep so excited that he almost falls off his chair.
* Throughout this conversation, David is fascinated by Uriah Heep's ugly, unattractive gestures and movements and by the dampness of his hands. (Ick!)
* Uriah Heep invites David to come take tea with his mother some day.
* He asks if David is going to be living with Mr. Wickfield for some time?
* David agrees that he will probably board there as long as he stays at school.
* Uriah Heep comments that perhaps David will become a partner in Mr. Wickfield's law firm!
* David protests that no one thinks that will happen, but Uriah Heep keeps insisting on it.
* Uriah Heep shakes his hand (and his palm is still cold like a fish) before heading out into the night.
* David is totally unnerved by him.
* After two weeks at school, David has gotten over his shyness at school.
* He decides that practice and hard work are all he needs to get along, both with the other boys and in his studies. So, he works his butt off.
* Doctor Strong's school is so much better than Mr. Creakle's that David can't help but love it: he feels a responsibility for the school and for preserving its reputation (as do all the other students there).
* David also learns from the other kids that Doctor Strong married Annie about a year ago, even though she's poor and has lots of relations trying to sponge off of him.
* Doctor Strong is beloved by the whole school because they all know how kind he is, and how generally interested he is in learning.
* Annie seems to love her husband, and he is always affectionate towards her.
* David spends a fair amount of time with Annie. The two like each other very much. For some reason, though, Annie seems afraid of Mr. Wickfield.
* David also enjoys the company of Annie's mother, Mrs. Markleham, who spends much of her time thinking of new ways to use Doctor Strong to improve the poor status of her own family members.
* One night, David attends a farewell party at the Doctor's house to celebrate Jack Maldon's departure for India (which Mr. Wickfield has arranged). It's also Doctor Strong's birthday.
* When all of the guests (David, Agnes, Mr. Wickfield, Mrs. Markleham, Jack Maldon, Annie, and Doctor Strong) have sat down, Mrs. Markleham wishes Doctor Strong a happy birthday.
* She wishes him many happy returns, not only for his own sake, but also for Annie's and for the sake of Annie's whole family.
* Mrs. Markleham remembers the old days when Jack Maldon used to flirt with Annie. (This embarrasses Annie.)
* Annie's mother instructs Jack never to forget how much he owes Doctor Strong, and how lucky he is that his cousin married so well.
* The lady tells Doctor Strong that he has been like a gift to her family.
* Mrs. Markleham then insists, over the protests of Doctor Strong, on recounting how his marriage came about: Doctor Strong had been a family friend of Annie's father, and he asked for Annie's hand in marriage suddenly, out of the blue.
* Annie answered only that she was a little young, when Mrs. Markleham asked her if she was free to marry him,
* Mrs. Markleham persuaded Annie to accept his proposal: Doctor Strong could be both Annie's husband and the head of their family now that Annie's father had died.
* Annie is looking down unhappily throughout this speech by her mother; at this point, she asks Mrs. Markleham if she is quite finished.
* No! Mrs. Markleham wants to ask Doctor Strong for another favor for her family.
* At this point, the talk around the table becomes more general, and people start chatting about Jack Maldon's future.
* Annie tries to sing for the party several times that evening, but she can't keep up a note. David thinks she must be nervous.
* The whole party begins to play cards, with the exception of Annie and Jack Maldon, who both chat together for a time on the sofa.
* Finally, the time comes for them all to part, and an awkwardness seems to fall over everyone.
* Mrs. Markleham keeps needling Doctor Strong to support Jack Maldon, Annie seems very sad, and all in all, this isn't going well – though Doctor Strong is so unworldly that he doesn't notice.
* After he departs, David sees Jack Maldon driving away in his carriage looking pale and carrying something red in his hand.
* The party reconvenes without Jack Maldon.
* Suddenly, everyone notices that Annie has disappeared.
* She has, in fact, fainted on the hall floor.
* Doctor Strong puts Annie's head in his lap and exclaims that Annie is so soft-hearted that she has fainted because her old friend and favorite cousin has left.
* Annie comes back to herself and goes into the living room with the rest of the party.
* Mrs. Markleham notices that a cherry-red ribbon from Annie's dress has gone missing, but no one can find it.
* Mr. Wickfield, Agnes, and David walk home.
* When they arrive back at Mr. Wickfield's house, Agnes realizes that she has lost her reticule (which is like a little cloth purse).
* David volunteers to run back to Doctor Strong's house to get it.
* As David walks through Doctor Strong's house trying to find a candle to search the dining room, he strolls past Doctor Strong's study.
* There, Doctor Strong is sitting and reading to Annie from his work (he's writing a dictionary).
* Annie's face is filled with sorrow, humiliation, pride, love, and shame.
* The sound of David moving about disturbs them, and as David walks past the study once more, he sees Doctor Strong patting Annie on the head and apologizing for droning on like this.
* Annie says she's happy to listen: she wants to sit by him this evening and feel his confidence in her.
* So, Doctor Strong picks up his reading once more, and Annie looks up at him with the same confusing series of emotions.
* David remembers this moment for a long time afterwards.

***Synopsis:***

David goes to his new school for the first time and meets the headmaster, Dr. Strong. At first David is confused about Dr. Strong's relationship with Annie, a much younger woman, but soon discovers that Annie is Dr. Strong's wife. Dr. Strong and Mr. Wickfield have a long discussion about one of Mrs. Strong's relatives, Jack Maldon. David is very anxious about his return to school, feeling that his experiences working in London and being homeless will be found out and used to ridicule him.

On returning from school, David feels at home in his new lodgings. David and the Wickfields agree that he will continue to live with them for the remainder of his schooldays. David also has another uncomfortable conversation with Uriah Heep, who confesses that he wishes to partner with Mr. Wickfield some day.

A few days later, there is a going away party for Jack Maldon, who is leaving to work in India through connections of Dr. Strong and Mr. Wickfield. Mrs. Strong's mother makes a very emotional scene about Dr. Strong's generosity to her relatives, which embarrasses her daughter. Mrs. Strong is noticeably upset by Maldon's departure. Mr. Wickfield, in particular, notices her reaction, but tries to ignore Mrs. Strong's emotions.

David is learning a lot about the people in his new life; however, because of his own innocence he does not see the whole picture. The issue of Jack Maldon and the relationship between Dr. and Mrs. Strong will continue to develop as suspicions deepen surrounding Mrs. Strong's feelings for Maldon. The emotional scenes of Mrs. Strong's mother will continue to put Mrs. Strong in a compromising situation.

The combination of Mr. Wickfield's drinking problem and Uriah Heep's ambitions also complicates David's pleasant new surroundings. Nothing is directly said, but it is clear that something bad is going to develop from this issue.

***Critical Analysis(Ch15-16):***

It is decided that David will attend school in Canterbury, and the next day Miss Trotwood escorts David on his journey. In Canterbury they stop at the office of Mr. Wickfield, a lawyer, and are welcomed at the door by a Mr. Uriah Heep, a red-haired clerk about fifteen years old. Miss Trotwood has come for advice on which school to enroll David in. Mr. Wickfield takes Miss Trotwood to visit "the best we have," while David observes Uriah Heep, whose eyes look "like two red suns."

Miss Trotwood likes the school, but none of the available boarding houses suit her, so it is decided that David will board with Mr. Wickfield. David meets Mr. Wickfield's daughter, Agnes, a girl of David's age, and he is then shown his room. David's aunt tells him to "be a credit to yourself, to me, and Mr. Dick," embraces him, and then departs.

After supper that evening, David notices that Mr. Wickfield drinks a great deal of wine. Just before bedtime, David sees Uriah Heep closing up the office, and after a brief conversation, David says goodnight and shakes Uriah's hand. "But oh, what a clammy hand his was! as ghostly to the touch as to the sight. I rubbed mine afterwards, to warm it, and to rub his off."

David begins school the next day and is introduced to his new schoolmaster, Doctor Strong, a carelessly dressed man with a "lustreless eye," whose life's project is the writing of an immense never-to-be-completed dictionary. With Dr. Strong is his pretty wife, Annie, who is much younger than her husband. In a conversation between Wickfield and Strong, David hears about one of Annie's cousins, a Mr. Jack Maldon, apparently a loafer, for whom Mr. Wickfield is trying to find some suitable provision.

Although school is very pleasant, it has been so long since David has mingled with boys his own age that he is apprehensive about how he will get on with his classmates. He has such an initial fear of his new situation that he hurries back to Mr. Wickfield's at the close of the first day of classes to avoid meeting any of the students.

After dinner that evening, Mr. Wickfield has his usual large portion of wine. David enjoys Agnes' company; however, he reassures himself that he loves Em'ly — but yet he feels "there are goodness, peace, and truth, wherever Agnes is."

When it is time for bed, David notices Uriah Heep is still in the office, poring over a huge book. Heep is studying law, but he contends that he is far too "umble" ever to become Mr. Wickfleld's partner. Instead, Uriah suggests that David might "come into the business," but David protests that he has "no views of that sort."

David learns more about Doctor Strong from some of the boys that board at his house. The old Doctor has been married to the pretty young Annie for less than a year, and during that time he has had to support a host of her relatives. Among them is Mrs. Markleham (known to the boys as the Old Soldier), who is Annie Strong's mother.

One night, a small party is held for Jack Maldon, who is leaving for India "as a cadet, or something of that kind, Mr. Wickfleld having at length arranged the business." It is also Doctor Strong's birthday. Mrs. Markleham, in wishing him "many, many, many happy returns," thanks him for what he has done for her family, but she does it in such a way that her self-centeredness is dearly revealed. She also mentions that she remembers when Jack Maldon was "a little creature, a head shorter than Master Copperfield, making baby love to Annie . . ."

Throughout the evening, Mrs. Strong seems ill at ease. Although she is "a very pretty singer," she is unable to begin a duet with her cousin, Jack Maldon, and when she tries to sing by herself, her voice dies away and she is left "with her head hanging down over the keys."

As Maldon departs, David notices that he is carrying "something cherry-coloured in his hand." Shortly afterward, Annie is found in a swoon, and her mother notices that her bow, a "cherrycoloured ribbon," is missing. Annie says that she thinks she had it safe, a little while ago.

In Chapter 15, we first meet one of the notable villains of all of English literature — Uriah Heep. His future activities will play an important part in the lives of several of the characters. As yet he is only a boy, and it is doubtful that his ambitions are formed, although they are perhaps already in the making. Dickens has managed to make Uriah Heep so unpleasant physically that he is repulsive to David.

Although Mr. Wickfield is obviously a good man, we should already detect a weakness in his character — if only in the fact that he feels that he has to drink a great quantity of wine each night before going to bed. He is devoted to his daughter, whom he calls his "little housekeeper," and she is equally devoted to him.

We see in Chapter 16 that after an initial period of adjustment, David is happy in Doctor Strong's school, and he has every reason to be. It is "an excellent school, as different from Mr. Creakle's as good is from evil." There is "an appeal, in everything, to the honour and good faith of the boys," and the boys feel that they have "a part in the management of the place, and in sustaining its character and dignity." Such a school was virtually unknown in Dickens' day, indicating that he had educational views that were far ahead of their time.

***Critical Study:***

[David Copperfield](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/David-Copperfield/character-analysis/#David_Copperfield) meets Doctor Strong, head of his new school, and his pretty, young wife, Annie Strong. In addition to running his school, Doctor Strong is immersed in writing a dictionary. David sees Doctor Strong's generosity in helping Annie's relatives, often at the behest of Annie's manipulative mother, Mrs. Markleham. Dr. Strong and Mr. Wickfield discuss the problem of finding a position "at home or abroad" for Annie's cousin and childhood companion, Jack Maldon. Mr. Wickfield seems to dislike and distrust Jack Maldon, but he promises to find a situation for him.

The level of scholarship at Doctor Strong's is very different from that of Salem House, and David realizes he must work hard to catch up to where he should be. Because of his rough lifestyle while working in the warehouse, David feels self-conscious around the other boys and finds it difficult, at first, to relate to them. Living at the Wickfield home soon bolsters his hope of achieving academic success. He enjoys spending time with Agnes, whose calm presence impresses him. On the night of Doctor Strong's birthday party, Jack Maldon leaves for his post in India, and David notices that Jack is holding a red ribbon from Annie's dress as Jack's carriage drives away.

***Summary and analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Mr. Wickfield](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield) takes [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) to school the next morning and introduces him to his new schoolmaster, who is named [Doctor Strong](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong). Doctor Strong is a "stiff" elderly man dressed in old-fashioned clothing, so David is surprised to learn that the pretty young woman accompanying him, [Annie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/annie-strong), is his wife. Before Mr. Wickfield leaves, Doctor Strong asks him whether he has been able to find a position for his wife's cousin, [Jack Maldon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/jack-maldon), whom he says will get into trouble if he is left "idle." Mr. Wickfield remarks that many busy people also "achieve their full share of mischief," but seems to agree that it would be better for Jack to be employed. In fact, he even suggests that Doctor Strong might wish to see Jack se

***Analysis Part 1:***

At first glance, the Strongs' marriage appears to be another example of an ill-advised relationship. As it turns out, this isn't the case, but the age difference alone leaves Annie Strong vulnerable to rumors that she married for money and (even more seriously) that she's having an affair with her cousin. Jack's overall character lends further credence to this rumor, because his laziness and carelessness, by the standards of time, are signs of more general moral laxness.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Doctor Strong](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong) leads [Mr. Wickfield](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield) and [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) to the schoolroom, which looks out on a garden. The other students are welcoming, but David feels awkward and resists their attempts at friendship: he is self-conscious both of what he has missed out on recently (formal education and the company of boys his age) and of what he has been doing instead (living with the Micawbers and traveling around the country on foot). In particular, he worries that the things he learned while working at the counting-house are somehow obvious to his peers. However, when he returns to the Wickfield's that evening, he finds that these memories begin to dissipate in the house's comforting atmosphere.

***Analysis Part 2:***

David's sense of alienation stems partly from knowing that his time at the counting-house has taught him things a middle-class boy shouldn't know, and has perhaps even left a permanent mark on his character. On the one hand, this suggests that behaviors seen as lower-class are learned rather than innate. It also suggests, however, that the stain of lower-class status is almost impossible to get rid of. David understandably finds the thought of this upsetting, so it's a testament to the comfort and tranquility of the Wickfields' home (and Agnes's skill as a housekeeper) that David is able to set his worries aside.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Agnes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield) greets [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) that evening, and the two discuss school; Agnes receives lessons at home so that she can act as [Mr. Wickfield](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield)'s "housekeeper." David remarks that Agnes's father seems to care deeply for her, and she responds that her mother, whom she strongly resembles, died shortly after giving birth to her.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The similarities between Agnes and her mother, combined with the work Agnes now does in the Wickfield household, strongly suggest that Agnes is functioning as a replacement for the late Mrs. Wickfield. This again underscores the unhealthy relationship that has developed between Mr. Wickfield and Agnes.

***Summary Part 4:***

At that moment, [Mr. Wickfield](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield) returns home. He praises [Doctor Strong](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong) to [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield), saying he is an extremely kind man and warning David not to be "one of those" who take advantage of his generosity. Mr. Wickfield, David, and [Agnes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield) then prepare to sit down for dinner, but they are interrupted by [Uriah Heep](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/uriah-heep), who says that [Jack Maldon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/jack-maldon) wants to speak with Mr. Wickfield. Meanwhile, David notices Uriah looking around the room and at Agnes.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Uriah's behavior in this scene is an early hint that he hopes to supplant Wickfield at the firm; the look he casts around the room seems to be covetous. It's also significant that Uriah includes Agnes in this appraisal, since it suggests he sees her largely as another possession he hopes to own one day.

***Summary part 5:***

[Jack Maldon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/jack-maldon) pokes his head into the room and announces that while [Annie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/annie-strong) and "the old Doctor" would prefer him to stay close by, he wants to leave as soon as possible if he must in fact leave. Dryly, Mr. Wickfield says that there will be "as little lingering as possible," while also objecting to the way Maldon continues to refer to [Doctor Strong](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong). Maldon goes on to say that Annie could easily find a position for him by using her influence with Doctor Strong, since she is a "charming young girl" who is owed "some compensation" for marrying an aging man. He then leaves quickly to dine with Annie, leaving [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) with the impression that he is a handsome but "rather shallow" man.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Although Maldon does not explicitly say Annie married Doctor Strong for money, he does frame their marriage in transactional terms, arguing that her husband owes her something for agreeing to marry him. This threatens Annie's reputation on two levels, implying that she's self-interested (a bad quality for a Victorian woman) and doing little to quell the rumors that she's having an affair. His remark that Annie ought to use her youth and looks to extract favors from her husband is also questionable, since it frames the marriage as something closer to prostitution. Again, however, this is in keeping with Maldon's generally lax morals.

***Summary Part 6:***

[**Mr. Wickfield**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield), [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield), and [**Agnes**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield) repeat their previous after-dinner routine, although this time Agnes also looks through David's schoolbooks with him and offers advice. He remains infatuated with [**Emily**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily), but also has a powerful sense of Agnes's "goodness, peace, and truth."

***Analysis Part 6:***

The help Agnes offers David in this scene encapsulates the role she will play throughout his life—namely, supporting and encouraging his intellectual and moral growth. David, however, hasn't realized yet that these are the qualities he "ought" to be looking for in a wife.

***Summary Part 7:***

Before [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) goes to bed, [**Mr. Wickfield**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield)—his eyes "bloodshot" from drinking—asks David whether he wants to continue living in the house despite its "dullness." David replies that he would, and that it isn't any duller for him than it is for [**Agnes**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield). Mr. Wickfield broods on this for a while, wondering whether Agnes would like to leave but insisting that he cannot spare her. Finally, however, he perks up and says that he is happy David is staying with them, and hopeful that he will provide a "wholesome" presence.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Although David considers the Wickfields' house an ideal home, Mr. Wickfield realizes guiltily that it is not, at least for Agnes. Wickfield's reliance on his daughter in many ways limits her life (for instance, by preventing her from going to school), and this will only become more obvious as Agnes grows older and begins to think about establishing her own family.

***Summary Part 8:***

Later that evening, [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) goes to read in [**Mr. Wickfield**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield)'s study, but decides at the last minute to visit [**Uriah Heep**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/uriah-heep), whom he finds hard at work. Uriah explains that he is studying law, but insists—when David says he must be a "great lawyer"—that he is a "very umble person." As David chats with him, he learns more about Uriah's family: he lives with his mother, and his father (now dead) was a sexton. Uriah then explains that he is apprenticed to Mr. Wickfield, expressing profuse gratitude for this. He also lavishes praise on [**Miss Betsey**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) and [**Agnes**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield), which David finds unnerving: Uriah "writhes" every time he pays someone a compliment—particularly Agnes, whom he says David must "admire."

***Analysis Part 8:***

On the surface, Uriah's storyline corresponds perfectly with the nineteenth-century ideal of upward mobility: although born into poverty, he has since managed to enter a prestigious field (the law) and is working diligently to advance in his career. Ultimately, this turns out to be an elaborate charade, with Uriah rising more through trickery than hard work. The novel condemns him for this, but it also associates his villainy with his class status. One of Uriah's most frequent lies is that he is "[h]umble," when in fact he desperately wants to advance in the world. Given the respect expected of the lower class, this backhanded boast is the only means Uriah has of asserting himself; he is in some sense forced into a position of dishonesty in order to have a chance of succeeding in the world.

***Summary Part 9:***

Finally, [**Uriah**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/uriah-heep) says he needs to return home so as not to worry his mother, and asks whether [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) will be staying with the Wickfields long. David explains his situation, and Uriah repeatedly says that it will be David—rather than Uriah himself—who will eventually become a partner of [**Mr. Wickfield**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield)'s. Uriah then leaves, but David dreams that night that Uriah is a pirate who has used [**Mr. Peggotty**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty)'s house to kidnap and drown both David and [**little Em'ly**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily).

***Analysis Part 9:***

Uriah's closeness to his widowed mother is one of the ways in which he serves as a double to David. Ultimately, however, these resemblances underscore the class difference that separates the two characters; although David does not in fact become Mr. Wickfield's partner, Uriah is correct in saying that, in the normal course of things, David would be much more likely to gain that kind of position.

***Summary Part 10:***

[**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) also comes to know [**Annie**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/annie-strong)'s mother, [**Mrs. Markleham**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mrs-markleham), who is known as the "Old Soldier" because of the way she "marshals great forces of relations against the [**Doctor**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong)"—that is, she uses Annie's position to advance her own family. Mrs. Markleham is present at the Strongs' farewell party for [**Jack Maldon**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/jack-maldon), which David, [**Mr. Wickfield**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield), and [**Agnes**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield) also attend. Although she thanks Doctor Strong profusely for finding Maldon a post in India, she then alludes to several subjects that make Annie visibly uneasy: most notably, a childhood romance between Maldon and Annie, and how surprised both she and her daughter were when Doctor Strong—a friend of Annie's father—proposed to Annie. She also scolds Annie for refusing to speak up more on her family's behalf, which Doctor Strong agrees is wrong, because it "robbed [him] of the pleasure" of doing someone a favor.

***Analysis Part 10:***

Mrs. Markleham's words and behavior deepen the suspicions surrounding Annie and Doctor Strong's relationship. Unlike her daughter, Mrs. Markleham is perfectly happy to use Doctor strong to rise in the world. Worse still, she urged Annie to consider the family's "means" when considering Doctor Strong's proposal of marriage, effectively asking her to prostitute herself for her family's benefit. Her other main argument (that Doctor Strong would fill a vacancy left by the death of Annie's father) is similarly troubling: although there is a parent-child dynamic at play in Annie and Doctor Strong's relationship, tying it specifically to Annie's father borders on incestuous.

***Summary Part 11:***

The evening continues with talk of **[Maldon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/jack-maldon)**'s impending voyage, followed by games and entertainment. [**Annie**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/annie-strong), however, seems anxious and unhappy, and does not end up taking part in either the singing or the card game. The supper that follows is awkward for everyone but [**Doctor Strong**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong), who doesn't seem to notice Annie and Maldon's moodiness, or the inappropriateness of [**Mrs. Markleham**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mrs-markleham)'s stories. Finally, the Doctor makes a formal toast to Maldon, wishing him a successful career and advising him to "imitate [Annie's] virtues." The party then breaks up, and as the students accompany Maldon to the door and watch him drive away in a chaise, [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) thinks he sees something "cherry-colored" in Maldon's hand.

***Analysis Part 11:***

Despite his generally forgiving nature, even Doctor Strong appears to have noticed Maldon's laziness. Although the Doctor doesn't specify which of Annie's "virtues," Maldon should copy, he presumably means qualities like patience and self-discipline, since these are the kinds of traits that might help him succeed in his new position. However, the fact that Maldon leaves having stolen a ribbon from Annie's dress suggests that he has little intention of reforming in any way.

***Summary Part 12:***

Returning inside, [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) learns that [**Annie**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/annie-strong) is missing. [**Doctor Strong**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong) and the guests eventually find her lying in the hall in a swoon. She quickly recovers, and Doctor Strong attributes her faintness to her affection for her "old playfellow." As Doctor Strong leads her away to sit down, however, [**Mrs. Markleham**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mrs-markleham) notices that Annie has lost one of the red ribbons decorating the bodice of her dress.

***Analysis Part 13:***

At the time, Annie's missing ribbon seems to confirm that she's having an affair with Maldon—the fact that the missing bow was one she "had worn at her bosom" is especially suggestive. Much later in the novel, however, Annie explains that Maldon grabbed the ribbon without her permission. The fact that she describes this incident as attempted seduction rather than as sexual assault illustrates just how strict the norms surrounding female sexual behavior were in the nineteenth century.

***Summary Part 14:***

[**Mr. Wickfield**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-wickfield), [**Agnes**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/agnes-wickfield), and [**David**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) leave soon afterwards, but David then turns back to fetch a purse Agnes accidentally left behind. As he enters the study, he sees [**Doctor Strong**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/doctor-strong) sitting in a chair reading aloud to [**Annie**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/annie-strong), who is seated at his feet and looking up at him with a "wild, sleep-walking, dreamy horror." David's arrival breaks the mood, and Doctor Strong suggests that Annie go to bed. Annie, however, begs to stay, and as David leaves, he sees the couple settling back into their earlier position.

***Analysis Part 14:***

Annie is visibly ashamed of the evening's events—not just Maldon's behavior, but also her mother's transparent use of Doctor Strong's wealth and influence. Again, the strict rules Victorian women were expected to live by mean that Annie feels responsible for dishonoring her husband, even though she is as much a victim as he is. Meanwhile, the fact that Doctor Strong is reading to Annie hints at the nature of their relationship and Annie's real reasons for accepting his proposal: as Annie will eventually explain, she views Doctor Strong as a guide and mentor who has taught her to be the person she now is.