



David Copperfield

Charles Dickens (1812 - 1870)

Read by:	Tadhg Hynes	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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David Copperfield was Dickens' eighth novel, published in 1850, having been serialized two years prior. It is one of the most popular novels ever written, with over two hundred million copies sold worldwide. Every writer draws upon his experience to fashion and write works of fiction. To the degree a writer adheres to the strict line of events remembered, felt, internalized, processed, resolved, or not, is the same degree that a work is termed "autobiographical." To some degree all works are autobiographical, but in each writer's oeuvre there exists one book which is the deepest, most precious expression of the writer's heart and soul. *David Copperfield* was that book for Dickens. The structure is more open-ended than a three or five part structure might dictate, because it is one of those rare works bold enough to present life as it is and as it was. Yes, it is a novel, a great novel, with David and a host of characters,

including the despicable, Ur-master of office politics Uriah Heap; but it is also more than a novel because it is Dickens' most fervent statement of self, his ultimate declaration of what life is, his life, anybody's life, of what it means and why it matters. (Summary by Michael Hogan)

Charles John Huffam Dickens (February 7, 1812 – June 9, 1870) was an English novelist in the mid-19th Century who was one of the most prolific, popular and politically radical in the English language. He worked as a journalist as a young man before turning to fiction. His first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, was a great success and was followed by one blockbuster after another. He wrote at a torrid pace; most of his books first appeared as serialized chapters in weekly and monthly periodicals before being published as novels. He had a genius for uncanny caricatures of "personality types", which he tagged with catchy names and mannerisms that are still part of the cultural lexicon to this day.

He was born into a family of moderate means that went bankrupt during his early childhood, forcing Dickens to go to work at age twelve pasting labels on jars of bootblack for six shillings a week. His exposure to the lives of those oppressed by the cruelty and injustice of the industrializing world drove him to depict aspects of society that had been shunted aside with an unprecedented level of detail and candor. His insight into human nature was well-rounded, however, and his tales are equally beloved for their qualities of generosity, faith, compassion, and triumph of good over evil.

Dickens married Catherine Thompson Hogarth in 1838, who bore him ten children. He separated from her in 1858 but did not divorce, maintaining her in a separate residence until her death. He narrowly escaped death in a railroad crash in 1865 when all the first class carriages save Dickens' plunged off a bridge under repair. After the incident his writing trailed off, and he went on tour giving readings of his bestsellers, which were immensely popular and notable for their passion and for his ability to portray the characters in unique voices.