

The Black Punther The grove of tall elm trees swayed and bent over a little. eath the pressure of the strong

Some of the lower branches grasp the bonnet of the strange, chet-faced woman who was rapidly making her way through them and determinedly heading for the Copperfield home.

It was an attractive cottage, conforming to the style of the times, the early Victorian period, and the diamond-paned casement windows, arched heavily by leafy and bordered by early flowers, gave it a quaint char, quite in keeping with the little English sea coast town of Blunderstone.

The hatchet-faced woman peered into the parlor through the window, pressing her nose to the glass so that it looked like a large, flattened biscuit. She saw, sitting by the fire, a young, lovely woman, dressed in mourning weeds. There was a sad. fragile sort of beauty about her as she bent forward, intent on placing the white-headed pins on a dainty pin-cushion. When fin-

NOTICE

Under and by virtue, of the power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Trust executed on the 14th day of October, 1930, by and between Will Hunt and wife Pearl Hunt, of Wilkes county, N. C. to the undersigned Trustee, said Deed of Trust being to secure the payment of a certain note, which note is past due and unpaid, and the undersigned Trustee, will offer for sale at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, on the 20th day of April, 1935, at 12 o'clock, noon, at the courthouse door in Wilkesboro, Nortli Carolina, the following described land, to-wit: Beginning on a poplar, A. C.

and M. L. Petty's corner, and running north 82 1-2 degrees east 748 feet to a stake, corner of Hobson Blackburn's lot; thence northward crossing Wilson Street and with the line of Poplin Heights Development 1188 feet to the Northwest cor-ner of Poplin Heights Development and corner of lot No. 46 in Section B. owned by J. K. Tharpe, thence north 52 1-2 degrees west with W. A. Durham's line 446 feet to Tucker Road. thence westward to Tucker road 68 feet to Church lumber company land; thence South 3 degrees west with Hugh Hickerson heirs land 1205 feet to a gum corner of A. C. and M. L. Petty land; thence south to said Petty's land 20 degrees east 250 feet to the point of beginning. and being 19.2 acres more or

This 18th day of March, 1935. C. T. DOUGHTON,

4-8-4t.

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kidneys; should help them pass off the irritating poisons. Doan's are recommended by users the country over. Get them from any druggist.

ished, the completed arrangement spelled "Bless the Baby." She touched the tiny baby garments lying in a heap beside her, and stifled a tiny sob. It was then her eyes met those at the window seemed to reach forward as if to pane, and she jumped up, start-

With a brusque gesture the figure at the window directed her to open the door. Her manner conveyed she was one accustom-

ed to being obeyed. When the door was opened to her, the woman inspected the girl as critically. "Mrs. David Copperfield. I think," she stated.

nowledged faintly. "I am Betsy Trotwood," the woman announced. "You've heard

"Yes," Mrs. Copperfield ack-

of her, I daresay?" "-I've had that pleasure."

"Now you see her.' "Pray come in," Mrs. Copper-

field said with youthful dignity. Miss Trotwood marched into the sitting room and glanced around inquisitively, her eyes finally coming to rest on the portrait of Mr . Copperfield. She shook her head sadly.

Mrs. Copperfield sat down, her little jerky movements betraying her nervousness. Miss Trotwood scrutinized her in silence when suddenly she was astonish ed by a torrent of weeping.

"Oh, tut, tut. Don't do that Come, come. Well, bless my heart! You are a very baby!"

"I'm old enough to be a widow." Mrs. Copperfield returned tearfully-"and a mother if I live-". She tried to cover her eves with the moist ball of handkerchief. "I'm all in a tremble. I shall die, I'm sure."

"Nonsense. Have some tea." Miss Trotwood was answered by a fresh burst of tears. "Tut, tut, child," she said, softening a little. "David Copperfield was my favorite nephew." A note of sternness crept into her voice. "I'm frank to admit I was mortally offended when he married without consulting me, to a wax doll, I heard" . . . there were more sobs, "-of course. I'd never seen you-and now that there's a child coming-What will you call your girl?"

"Perhaps it will be a boy."

"Don't contradict . I have a presentment it will be a girland I shall be her godmother She shall be christened Betsy Trotwood Copperfield. She must be well brought up. I shall see to that." She twitched her head. "Better than my impractical nephew would have done."

"Mr. Copperfield has been dead only six months," Mrs. Copperfield cried agitated'y. "It's cruel of you to speak unkindly of him to me." She continued to sob softly.

"Mercy! this will never do, Aunt Betsy said severely. "You'll make yourself ill, and that won't be good, for either you or my god-daughter." She suddenly noticed Mrs. Copperfield leaning weakly over to one side. me!" Aunt Betsy looked around, disconcerted for the moment to meet the amazed stare of Peggotty, who had entered with the tea things.

"Peggotty! Pegotty!" Copperfield called feebly.

Peggotty forgot everything as she saw the serious condition of her beloved mistress. She hurried to her, just in time to catch Mrs. Copperfield as she fainted in her arms. 'Oh, my lamb-my precious."

"I'll fetch the doctor," Miss Trotwood said with characteristic decision.

And after many hours of suspense, while the elm trees swayed more wildly than ever, and Doctor Chillip went about his tasks swiftly and silently. Aunt Betsy left off her steady pacing

as he entered the sitting room, a mild smile of greeting on his

"Mercy on the man!" she burst out. "What's he doing? Can't he speak? How is she?"

"As comfortable as we can expect a young mother to be" "But the baby," said Aunt

Betsy sharply. "How is she?" "She, ma'am?" The doctor looked at her in bawilderment. "I apprehended you had known. It's a boy."

There was a loud gasp and Aunt Betsy, swinging her bonnet of your mamma's., Davy. Go on. by the strings, struck Doctor Chillip squarely on the head with it. Then, jamming the bent bonnet on her head, she walked out of the house like a discontented

Eight years later, the boy that was to have been a girl, little David Copperfield, sat before the fire in the sitting room. His eyes drooped sleepily every now and then as he read from the book in his lap, while Peggotty wait up." He climbed off the

back and forth to aproach him listened, her needle busily engaged in sewing a fine seam. He stopped for a moment, in sad remembrance.

> "Poor father. How lonely and dark it must be for him while we're at home by the fire." Peggotty nodded and sighed

'Yes. Davy." "That man we saw in church today," he said, hesitantly, "he's he's like the black pan ther in my animal book, Peg-

Peggotty lowered her eyelids discreetly. "Hush, that's a friend

He picked up the book slowly reluctant to drop the subject "So the mother crocodile," he read, "leaves the baby eggs in the sand for the sun to hatchand then-" The last word had turned into a prodigious yawn. Peggotty glanced at him slyly.

'Bed. Mas'r Davy?" David pulled himself together and sat up, blinking excitedly. "Mummy promised me I could

gotty smiled indulgently. "Now read me some more about the Crockindills. Some sort of vegstable, ain't ft?"

He had no more than started again, when the doorbell rang. darted for the door and flew into Carolina, resigned. his mother's arms. She shower ed him with affectionate kisses.

"This little fellow is highly privileged," David heard someone murmur, and looked up to see Mr. Murdstone—The Black Panther—a tail darkly handsome man, standing directly behind his

Murdstone patted David beningly on the head, at the same time managing to touch: Mrs. Copperfield's hand. With an involuntary gesture of jealousy David pushed him away.

"Oh, Davy," Mrs. Copperfield reproached him.

"Let us say goodnight, my fine boy," Mr. Murdstone said heartily.

David hung back. "Goodnight," he murmured.

Murdstone laughed good-naturedly. "Come. Let us be the best of friends." He offered his hand and David unwillingly put out his left hand, clinging to his mother with the right.

When Murdstone had gone, Mrs. Copperfield moved about the room lightly, glancing in the mirror casually and fussing with her dress. She was in a sprightly winsome mood, obviously affected by Murdstone's admira-

Peggotty watched her disap-provingly. "Hope you've had a pleasant evening, ma'am."

"A stranger or so makes an agreeable change," she suggested significantly.

Mrs. Copperfield smiled, then swung David to her, and for a few moments the room rang with their laughter, as they romped and whirled about. Finally the boy was deposited in the large chair by the fire, flushed, laughing and out of breath.

A moment later his head was nodding and he was dozing towards deep sleep. The crocodiles were doing all sorts of fantastic things in a particular delightful dream, when he suddenly came to with a start.

At first, he had thought it was a part of the dream. It took him a few seconds to realize, with a sudden cold clutching at his heart, that in this house where anger and unpleasantness were unknown, there were two voices now raised high in quarrel; that bitter quarrelsome words were being spoken, words that seemed to portend evil things to come.

(Continued next week.)

Reed's Appointment Confirm

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