

## CHAPTER I

Dombey sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great arm-chair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead, carefully disposed on a low settee immediately in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age. Son about eight-and-forty minutes. The father was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance, to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and though (of course) an undeniably fine infant, somewhat crushed and spotty in his general effect, as yet.

'The House will once again, Mrs. Dombey,' said Mr. Dombey, 'be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son;' and he added, in a tone of luxurious satisfaction, with his eyes half-closed as if he were reading the name in a device of flowers, and smelling their fragrance at the same time;

'Dom-bey and Son!' He will be christened Paul, my - Mrs. Dombey - of course.'

She feebly echoed, 'Of course,' or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes again.

'Dom-bey and Son!'

Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre.

He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey, and for nearly

twenty years had been the sole representative of the Firm. Of those years he had been married, ten – married, as some said, to a lady with no heart to give him; whose happiness was in the past, and who was content to bind her broken spirit to the dutiful and meek endurance of the present. Mr. Dombey would have reasoned\*: that a matrimonial alliance with himself must, in the nature of things, be gratifying and honourable to any woman of common sense. That the hope of giving birth to a new partner in such a House, could not fail to awaken a glorious and stirring ambition in the breast of the least ambitious of her sex.

He had a daughter, six-year-old Florence, but she was not valued in a firm named Dombey and Son. So he said, 'Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like, I daresay. Don't touch him!'

The child glanced keenly at the blue coat and stiff white cravat, which, with a pair of creaking boots and a very loud ticking watch, embodied her idea of a father; but her eyes returned to her mother's face immediately, and she neither moved nor answered.

Next moment, the lady had opened her eyes and seen the child; and the child had run towards her; and, standing on tiptoe, the better to hide her face in her embrace, had clung about her with a desperate affection very much at variance with her years.

Fanny, Dombey's wife, was attended by the family physician, Mr. Pilkins, as well as by the noted obstetrician, Doctor Peps.

'Good! We must not disguise from you, Sir,' said Doctor Parker Peps, 'that there is a want of power in

\* Тут і в усіх інших подібних випадках: модальні дієслова з перфектним інфінітивом вживаються для позначення минулої дії, яка відбулася раніше іншої минулої дії у цьому реченні, або для вираження нереальної, умовної дії, яка в перекладі українською мовою супроводжується такими словами: б (би), можливо, мабуть, вірогідно, очевидно, напевно, мався б, повинен був тощо.

Her Grace the Duchess; I should say, in your amiable lady. That there is a certain degree of languor, and a general absence of elasticity.'

Nature must be called upon to make a vigorous effort in this instance; and that if our interesting friend the Countess of Dombey should not be able to make the effort then, a crisis might arise, which we should both sincerely deplore.'

Mr. Dombey's sister, Mrs. Louisa Chick, arrived to encourage her brother. She had brought her friend, Miss Tox, with her. As the doctors called Mr. Dombey out, Louisa asked Miss Tox her opinion of her brother and Miss Tox admitted that she admired him greatly. They were interrupted when Mr. Dombey returns, looking pale. Fanny was weakening. The three went upstairs, where Florence was holding on to her mother. Louisa scolded Fanny, telling her that she had to make some effort into getting better.

The Doctor gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child, aside from the face and mouth of the mother. Alas how calm they lay there; how little breath there was to stir them!

Thus, clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.

## EXERCISES

### I. Answer the following questions:

1. Why Dombey's son birth was so significant for the father?
2. What kind of person was Mr. Dombey?
3. What was the relationship between the mother and the daughter?
4. What was Mrs. Chick's advice for Fanny Dombey?
5. Why the atmosphere in Dombey's house was so tense?

## II. Who are:

1. Mr Dombey?
2. Miss Tox?
3. the Court Physician?
4. Mrs. Louisa Chick?
5. the obstetrician?

Match the characters (1-5) to the following statements (a-f). For one of the characters you will need to use two statements. Think of your own word or phrase to describe each character.

- a) He was a noted specialist.
- b) She admired Mr. Dombey.
- c) He was stern and pompous.
- d) He was unspeakably admired.
- e) She arrived to support her brother.
- f) At that time his idea of his life came true.

III. Find the synonyms to the given words in the chapter. Make up your own sentences with the words you found, write them down.

swear regret transmit hide weakness  
sad well-bread gentle endurance

IV. Fill in the blanks with prepositions or adverbs:

1. Mrs Dombey had had daily practical knowledge \_\_\_\_\_ his position in society.
2. We must not disguise \_\_\_\_\_ you.
3. Florence was holding \_\_\_\_\_ to her mother.
4. He had been married \_\_\_\_\_ a lady with no heart to give him.
5. The House will once again be not only \_\_\_\_\_ name but in fact Dombey and Son.