***David Copperfield***

***Chapter 10 – I Become Neglected, and Am Provided For.***

***Summary:***

* The first thing Miss Murdstone does after the funeral is to fire Peggotty. (*Classy!*) Peggotty has a month to find another place to live.
* Peggotty explains to David why she's leaving.
* Miss Murdstone tells David that he's not going back to boarding school.
* But David's not sure what he is supposed to be doing: mostly, the Murdstones ignore him and he stays out of their way.
* David tells Peggotty that he's worried about what's going to happen to him: every time Mr. Murdstone sees David, he looks so angry.
* Peggotty tells David sadly that she can't find a job close by, so she won't be able to stand by David even though she wants to.
* Peggotty plans to go to Yarmouth to live with her brother.
* She suggests that David come and visit Yarmouth for two weeks, since no one seems to want him around the Rookery right now.
* Miss Murdstone agrees to let David go (totally ungracefully), and David has to hide how happy he is just in case she takes it back to spite him.
* David and Peggotty drive to Yarmouth in Mr. Barkis's cart.
* David comments to Mr. Barkis that Peggotty seems pretty comfortable.
* Mr. Barkis nudges Peggotty with his elbow and asks, "*Are* you pretty comfortable?" (10.35).
* Peggotty laughs and answers yes.
* They continue to joke together throughout the trip.
* Finally, they arrive at Yarmouth. Mr. Barkis makes an extremely odd comment: he says that he will be a friend of David's because David "made it all right first" (10.47).
* David has no clue what Mr. Barkis is talking about.
* A bit later on, Peggotty asks David how he would feel if she got married.
* David asks if Peggotty plans to marry Mr. Barkis.
* Peggotty says yes.
* David agrees that that would be all right, because then she would always have access to the horse and cart and could come to see him often.
* Peggotty is delighted that David is okay with her plan, because she would never marry Mr. Barkis if it would hurt David.
* David is genuinely happy for her.
* They all arrive at the boat-house in Yarmouth.
* Everything looks just the same. Mrs. Gummidge waits at the door, the house is full of the smell of shellfish. Little Emily is coming home from school soon.
* David feels oddly disappointed by the old house, perhaps because little Emily is not waiting for him.
* He tries to kiss her when she gets home, but she laughs, turns away, and says she isn't a baby any more.
* Little Emily is totally spoiled by all the Peggottys, but she's still sweet-tempered and nice.
* David's crush on her is even stronger than it was before.
* Little Emily is so sad to hear that David has become an orphan that she tears up.
* Mr. Peggotty points out the little Emily and Ham Peggotty are both fellow orphans.
* Mr. Peggotty asks after David's friend, Steerforth.
* The two male Peggottys and David go off into a long exchange about how awesome, smart, and handsome Steerforth is. (Fan club!)
* At this point, David catches a glimpse of little Emily's face. In the middle of hearing about Steerforth's greatness, her face is shining.
* Even though the house is just the same, there is a new distance between David and Emily now. In the year that they haven't seen each other, she really has started to grow up. Even though she likes David, she also enjoys teasing him.
* During his visit, David gets to observe Mr. Barkis courting Peggotty. Mr. Barkis does this by leaving weird little presents at the door every day and sitting by the fire and staring at her in the evenings. He hardly ever speaks.
* His courtship is an object of lots of laughter among the Peggottys.
* Just before David is supposed to go home, he finds out that he is going on an outing with little Emily, Mr. Barkis, and Peggotty.
* Peggotty looks the same as usual, but Mr. Barkis is all dressed up in new clothes.
* Mrs. Gummidge rains on everyone's parade by complaining that she's miserable and bursting into tears before the children, Mr. Barkis, and Peggotty get into the coach and head out.
* They stop at a church and leave David and Emily in the coach while Mr. Barkis and Peggotty head inside.
* In the coach, David makes Emily promise to be nice to him, kisses her, and declares his undying love.
* Emily bursts out laughing: she thinks of herself as much older than David, and tells him he's being "a silly boy" (10.115).
* Mr. Barkis and Peggotty come out of the church after a long time.
* The carrier winks at David and tells him that Peggotty's new name – is Clara Peggotty *Barkis*. Yes, those two crazy kids are finally married.
* Peggotty seems totally unchanged by marriage: she's just the same as always.
* Mr. Barkis drives Peggotty, David, and little Emily home.
* As they ride back to the Peggottys' house in Yarmouth, David thinks that he would be so happy if he and Emily were married. They could live in the forest and never grow old.
* They arrive back at the boat house. Peggotty says goodbye and heads back to Mr. Barkis's home. David feels that he has lost Peggotty – but at least he has little Emily.
* Because her family guesses that David feels a bit abandoned by Peggotty, Ham and Mr. Peggotty feed him dinner, and Emily sits with him.
* Even so, the next morning, Peggotty comes by the boat house just as usual.
* David says goodbye to Mr. Peggotty, Ham Peggotty, and Emily, and goes to spend his last night in Yarmouth with Peggotty.
* Peggotty promises that, no matter what happens, as long as she is alive, David will have a place in her home.
* David thanks Peggotty, and gets into the cart that will bring him back to the Murdstones.
* Once David gets back to the Rookery, he finds himself completely alone: the Murdstones pretend he isn't there, and he is completely neglected.
* The only time they ever pay attention to David is to stop him from making friends. The old doctor, Mr. Chillip, invites David to visit (because he's a lonely widower), but David is rarely allowed to go.
* The Murdstones also won't let David visit Peggotty often, because they are afraid he will complain to her.
* The only thing that makes David happy during this awful period of loneliness is his father's old books.
* And then, things get worse.
* David bumps into Mr. Murdstone and another gentleman in the road near the Rookery.
* The man next to Mr. Murdstone is Quinion, one of the two guys who teased David before Mr. Murdstone married his mother in the second chapter.
* Quinion asks David where he's going to school.
* Mr. Murdstone answers for David: he's not going to school right now.
* Quinion asks if David is a clever kid.
* Mr. Murdstone tells Quinion not to bother with David, and the two men let him go on his way.
* Quinion spends the night in the Rookery.
* That evening, the Murdstones and Quinion corner David.
* Mr. Murdstone tells David that young people should not just mope around, especially bad young people like David. David needs to get out into the working world.
* Miss Murdstone adds that David's stubbornness must be crushed.
* Mr. Murdstone adds that he can no longer afford to keep David, so the sooner David goes out into the world, the better.
* (By the way, David is, at this point, *10 years old*!!)
* Mr. Murdstone informs David that Quinion is the manager of the "counting-house" of his London wine company, Murdstone and Grinby. (A counting house is an accounting firm.)
* David is going to go to work for Quinion.
* Mr. Murdstone continues: in return for his work, David will make enough money to cover food and drink and a small allowance; Mr. Murdstone will pay for his room and washing.
* Miss Murdstone tells David to do his duty.
* David is completely confused, particularly since he has to leave with Quinion the next day – he doesn't exactly have time to collect his thoughts.
* So, the next morning, David gets into a coach to London with Quinion.

***Synopsis:***

After the funeral, the Murdstones fire Peggotty. Instead of trying to humiliate and punish David, they completely ignore him. When Peggotty tells David that she is returning to her family in Yarmouth, she suggests that he come with her for a visit in order to get out of the Murdstone house for a while. When the two of them go to Yarmouth, they ride with the same carriage driver, Mr. Barkis, who continues to drop hints about his willingness to marry Peggotty. When they reach Yarmouth, Peggotty asks David if he thinks it would be a good idea to marry Mr. Barkis. David is enthusiastic about the possible union.

David settles back into his routines at Yarmouth, and renews his crush on Emily. One day, David, Emily, Peggotty, and Mr. Barkis go on a picnic. One the way to the picnic, Mr. Barkis and Peggotty take a quick detour into a church and come out married.

David eventually must go home to the Murdstones after his pleasant vacation. At first the Murdstones continue to ignore him. Finally, Mr. Murdstone arranges for David to take a job at a counting house in London connected to the Murdstone family.

This chapter provides a pleasant interlude in David's misfortunes. His bonds with Peggotty's family grow stronger and will continue to be some of the dominant bonds he will form throughout his life. As for his new job in London, it is assumed that this will have some negative outcome because the job has some connection with Mr. Murdstone. The presence of Mr. Murdstone's old friends who participated in some of the deceptions surrounding the marriage between Murdstone and David's mother also bodes ill for David's future in London.

***Critical Analysis(Ch7-10):***

Mr. and Miss Murdstone take no interest in David after his mother’s death. They make it clear that they want him around as little as possible. Miss Murdstone fires Peggotty, who goes home to her family. Peggotty proposes to take David with her for a visit. On the ride there, Mr. Barkis flirts with Peggotty, who asks David what he would think if she married Mr. Barkis after all. David says he thinks it is a wonderful idea.

At Mr. Peggotty’s house, David finds Little Em’ly older and more beautiful than before, though she has become a bit spoiled and coy. Mr. Peggotty and Ham praise Steerforth, whom they have met at Salem House. Mr. Barkis and Peggotty get married in a private ceremony at a church one afternoon while Little Em’ly and David are out riding around. When David returns home, Mr. and Miss Murdstone completely ignore him. David falls into a state of neglect until Mr. Quinion, Mr. Murdstone’s business partner, appears. When Mr. Quinion arrives, the Murdstones arrange for David to go to London to work in the wine-bottling industry.

Mothers and mother figures in David Copperfield represent a safe harbor from the cruelty of the world. They fill this role not only for children but for adults as well. David’s mother offers him emotional support and occasional reprieve from the Murdstones’ cruelty. Peggotty takes on the role of mother figure to both David and David’s mother, as she cares for both of them when they need her help. Many of Dickens’s novels feature orphans who, lacking this important refuge from a cruel world, come across as especially pitiful characters. In David’s case, Peggotty (and later, Miss Betsey) save him from this fate. But until these mother figures are able to help him, he suffers a great deal in losing his natural mother and living with the disadvantages that motherlessness creates.

Although the large cast of secondary characters in David Copperfield may seem overwhelming, these characters serve two important narrative functions: they mark the different phases of the novel and give editorial commentary about the actions of the main characters. Throughout the novel, secondary characters voice general opinions about the events involving the main characters. Because Dickens goes into such great detail in describing the lives of the main characters, the thoughts and actions of the secondary characters provide welcome breaks from the novel’s main plots. The secondary characters also alert us to transitions between the novel’s different sections, for they often appear at critical moments when the emotional intensity of the main plot is at its height. Mr. Omer, for example, appears in order to inform David of his mother and sister’s death. Moreover, the Omers’ happy family life serves as a contrast to David’s sorrow at his mother’s death. In this way, secondary characters not only comment on the novel’s main characters but also provide transitions between the novel’s different phases.

In his vanity, egotism, and pride, James Steerforth acts as a foil for David’s naïve innocence and wide-eyed trustfulness. David worships Steerforth, but this adoration is undeserved. We see that Steerforth’s support of David originates not from kindness but rather from a desire to increase his own importance and control over the other boys. Steerforth’s willingness to manipulate David both contrasts with and highlights David’s willingness to trust Steerforth. The only clue we have that David might suspect that Steerforth is not what he seems is David’s occasional remark that Steerforth did not bother to save him from Mr. Creakle’s punishments. It is clear to us, however, that Steerforth is bigoted and self-centered, especially in his interactions with Mr. Mell. This disparity between David’s perception of his world and our perception of it provides dramatic irony that persists throughout much of the novel.

***Critical Study(Ch9-10):***

David's tenth birthday falls on a foggy school day during March, and he is called into Mr. Creakle's parlor, happily anticipating a basket from Peggotty. Instead he is told by the proprietor's wife that his mother has died. "If ever child were stricken with sincere grief, I was," says David, as he prepares to return home by night-coach the next afternoon, not imagining that he is "never to return" to Salem House. David is met in Yarmouth by Mr. Omer who, along with his three daughters, makes a living preparing funeral arrangements. David is fitted for a funeral suit, and over tea he learns from the funeral arranger that his infant brother has also died and "is in his mother's arms."

Peggotty meets David at the door and ushers him into a silent house, where even the Murdstones don't speak to one another. Miss Murdstone sits imperturbably at her desk each day, writing; Mr. Murdstone alternately sits and paces silently. A day or two before the funeral, Peggotty takes David to his mother's room to see her laid out.

After the funeral, Miss Murdstone gives Peggotty a month's notice and hints that David will not be returning to school. David's presence in the house is almost ignored by the Murdstones, and once more he is able to visit in the kitchen with Peggotty. She tells him that she will return to Yarmouth to live, and that perhaps (the Murdstones approving), David can come and stay with her for a short time. Permission is given by Miss Murdstone, and at the end of the month, Barkis calls to take them on a journey.

After a bumpy ride, during which Barkis quizzes Peggotty about her "situation," they arrive in Yarmouth and are welcomed by Ham and Mr. Peggotty. On the way, Peggotty tells David that she intends to marry Barkis unless "my Davy . . . [is] . . . any-ways against it." David says that he is happy for her.

The household is much the same as David remembers, although little Em'ly has grown more beautiful and has become the family favorite. Mr. Peggotty inquires about Steerforth, and David launches into a long description of Steerforth's noble character while little Em'ly listens intently. David prays that evening that he "might grow up to marry little Em'ly."

Each evening Barkis courts Peggotty by calling at the house with a gift and sits silently in the parlor while Peggotty sews. One day, just before the end of his visit, David, little Em'ly, Peggotty, and Mr. Barkis take a holiday trip together. Mr. Barkis stops the coach at a church, and he and Peggotty go inside. Alone with Em'ly, David professes his love for her, and Em'ly allows him to kiss her. When the couple returns from the church, David learns that Mr. Barkis and Peggotty have just been married.

David returns to the Murdstones and is neglected again. Most of his days are spent reading or daydreaming, with an occasional visit to Mr. Chillip, the family doctor who presided at David's birth. Peggotty comes once a week to see David, and on one trip, she indicates that Mr. Barkis is "something of a miser."

One day, Mr. Murdstone tells David that educating him serves no purpose; what David needs is a fight with the world — and "the sooner . . . the better." Mr. Quinion, the manager of Murdstone and Grinby, wine merchants, has been summoned to escort David to London, where he will work to provide his "eating, drinking, and pocket-money." David realizes that the Murdstones simply want to get rid of him.

The sentimentality of Chapter 9 is partially balanced by the realistic psychological behavior of David, who, finding that he is the center of attention by his schoolmates on that last day, makes the most of it and receives a "kind of satisfaction" which makes him feel very "distinguished." This is paralleled by the attitude of Mr. Omer's daughter and her boyfriend, who, although surrounded by a coffin, mourning clothes, etc., continue their courtship, oblivious of the surroundings. Life continues, Dickens seems to say in this chapter; people seek enjoyment even in the face of unhappiness.

In Chapter 10, David's association with the Peggotty household is strengthened, suggesting a continuing relationship. His glowing account of the virtues of Steerforth suggests that he too will be heard of again, and little Em'ly's wide-eyed interest in David's eulogy hints at future developments.

The description of David's life after his return to the Murdstones is one of Dickens' classic themes — the cruel neglect of children — worse, in his own view, than physical abuse. "What would I have given to have been sent to the hardest school that ever was kept!" says David.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

Shortly after the funeral, [Miss Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone) gives [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty) a month's notice. [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield), however, is left in the dark about his own future, though Miss Murdstone hints that he will not be returning to school. Much to David's relief, however, he is now largely ignored by [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone), and thus allowed to spend time with Peggotty.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Now that the one link between them is gone, Mr. Murdstone abandons any pretense of caring about David's future. The fact that he now allows David to spend time with the servant is ominous (albeit a relief to David), as is the hint that David's formal education is over: Mr. Murdstone apparently doesn't care if David falls out of the middle class or even into poverty.

***Summary Part 2:***

One evening, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) tells [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty) that [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) seems to dislike him more than ever, despite David's own wish to bond over their shared grief. Peggotty then confesses that she has been unable to find a new job nearby, and that she will consequently be moving to Yarmouth soon. She reassures David, however, that she will visit him often, and invites him to come with her when she makes a preliminary trip to see her brother, [Mr. Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty). The idea delights David, and Peggotty quickly secures [Miss Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone)'s approval.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Dickens implies that Mr. Murdstone's increased animosity towards David stems from grief: David is a tangible reminder both of Clara and of Murdstone's own lost son. Throughout the novel, however, characters demonstrate their worth in part based on how they choose to respond to painful memories, so the fact that Mr. Murdstone reacts with anger rather than compassion is ultimately one more mark against him. Peggotty's predicament, meanwhile, reveals how her status as a servant impacts her unofficial status as a surrogate mother. As much as she would like to remain close to David, she's ultimately subject to economic pressure and her employers' whims.

***Summary Part 3:***

When the time comes to leave, [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty) is sad to say goodbye to her home. She is soon distracted, however, by the attention [Barkis](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-barkis) pays to her as she and [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) ride in his cart: he asks repeatedly whether she is comfortable, nudging her each time he speaks. [Mr. Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty) and [Ham](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/ham-peggotty) are waiting for them when they arrive in Yarmouth, and while they and Peggotty carry the baggage away, Barkis tells David that "It's all right." David later relays this to Peggotty, who asks David how he would feel if she married. David approves of the idea, provided that it does not diminish Peggotty's affection for him; in fact, he suggests that marrying Barkis would make it easier for Peggotty to visit him. Peggotty has also considered this, and it is one of the reasons she is considering accepting Barkis.

Home and Family Theme Icon

***Analysis Part 3:***

Peggotty's reasons for marrying Barkis are basically practical: she is out of work, and she wants to be able to remain close to David. Unlike Clara, Peggotty is also careful not to rush into marriage without first considering the impact it would have on David.

***Summary Part 4:***

[David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) finds that [Mr. Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty)'s house looks nearly the same as he remembers, and [Mrs. Gummidge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mrs-gummidge) is as grumpy as ever. [Little Em'ly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily), however, is away at school when David arrives, and in her absence the house seems less "delightful." He therefore waits eagerly for her to return, but when he catches sight of her, both of them pretend not to see the other. Finally, David chases after her and tries to kiss her, but she stops him and runs away laughing. She continues to be coy with David once they are inside, though she tears up when Mr. Peggotty alludes to [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield)'s death.

***Analysis Part 4:***

David's mixed reaction when he returns to the Peggottys' house likely reflects the changes he has experienced since he was last there. He arrives with memories of his prior trip in mind, and while the place physically resembles these recollections, this only underscores the fact that David himself is now different, and that he therefore can't expect to relive his past experiences. What's more, Emily has changed as well, and her relationship with David takes on a flirtatious edge that wasn't present when they were younger.

***Summary part 5:***

After tea, [Mr. Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty) asks [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) about [Steerforth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/james-steerforth), and David takes great pleasure in describing his friend's bravery, intelligence, and generosity. As he speaks, he notices [little Em'ly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily) watching him with fascination. However, when Mr. Peggotty suggests that Emily might wish to meet Steerforth, she becomes flustered and runs away.

Womanhood and Gender Roles Theme Icon

***Analysis Part 5:***

Here, Dickens begins to foreshadow Emily's affair with Steerforth, right down to the unwitting role David himself plays in it: just as he eventually makes the affair possible by bringing Steerforth to Yarmouth, David here begins to "seduce" Emily on Steerforth's behalf simply by describing his friend to her.

***Summary Part 6:***

That night, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) listens to the wind and is troubled by the idea that it "moaned of those who were gone." The rest of his visit is happier, but he cannot quite recapture his old friendship with [little Em'ly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily), who "seem[s] to have got a great distance away from [him]," and takes pleasure in teasing him.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Much as his initial response suggested, David can't quite recapture the pure joy and innocence of his first visit to the Peggottys. The sound of the wind reminds him of the loss of his own family, which perhaps makes him aware of just how fragile other families are (later in the novel, David associates the sound of the wind and water with the breakup of the Peggotty home). Meanwhile, there is a new hint of sexuality to David and Emily's relationship that strains their former closeness.

***Summary Part 7:***

Meanwhile, [Mr. Barkis](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-barkis) pays daily visits to [Mr. Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty)'s house, always wordlessly leaving behind some kind of gift for [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty). Finally, toward the end of [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield)'s stay, he and [little Em'ly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily) are asked to make a day trip with Barkis and Peggotty. As the group leaves, [Mrs. Gummidge](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mrs-gummidge) throws a shoe after them for good luck. The chaise stops at a church, and David and Emily flirt with one another outside while Peggotty and Barkis go into the building. When Peggotty and Barkis return, they are married. The group then has dinner at a nearby inn before heading home, David huddling close to Emily and imagining marrying her and remaining "children ever."

***Analysis Part 7:***

As he has before, David wishes in this passage that he could simply remain a child forever. In this case, however, his wish is tied not to his mother but to little Em'ly; although David fantasizes about marrying her, he wants to do so without growing any older. This again could imply a discomfort with adult sexuality.

***Summary Part 8:***

[David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) is sad when [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty) and [Barkis](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-barkis) drive off after depositing him and [little Em'ly](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/little-em-ly-emily) at [Mr. Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty)'s, but he perks up thanks to [Ham](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/ham-peggotty) and Emily's company. Peggotty visits the next morning and brings David to her new home, where David takes particular notice of an edition of Fox's Book of Martyrs. Peggotty reassures David that he will always have a place with her, but David is still distressed when he returns home the next day.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Although Peggotty's marriage allows her to remain a presence in David's life, David is nevertheless hit hard by the realization that she now has her own home that he isn't a part of. Although Peggotty attempts to reassure David that she still considers him family, the moment represents another break with David's former life.

Summary part 9:

[Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) and [Miss Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone) largely ignore [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) following his return, but he feels the neglect keenly and wishes he were allowed to go to school. The Murdstones also discourage him from visiting anyone in the neighborhood or even [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty), though she does manage to visit him weekly. By and large, however, David's only consolation is once again his books.

Analysis Part 9:

David's desire to return to school is partly a reflection of how miserable his life with the Murdstones is, but it also underscores his wish to learn and improve both himself and his position in the world. Ultimately, he will credit this kind of curiosity and determination with much of his professional success.

Summary part 10:

One day, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) sees [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) talking with one of the men—[Mr. Quinion](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters)—he had met during his visit to Lowestoft. Quinion questions David about what he has been doing lately, and then privately confers with Mr. Murdstone. The next morning, the Murdstones inform David that he will not be returning to school, but will instead be working for Quinion in his counting-house. The Murdstones suggest that the employment will improve David's character by encouraging industry and self-reliance, but David realizes that the Murdstones mostly hope to get rid of him. The following day, David leaves with Quinion and enters a period of his life, which he says has "often, without [his] invocation, come before [him] like a ghost, and haunted happier times."

Analysis Part 10:

Mr. Murdstone's insistence that David begin to make his own way in the world for himself reveals the more self-serving side of the Victorian emphasis on independence and agency. Although these qualities were often touted both as a way of building character and as the means of social advancement, Murdstone clearly doesn't care about any of that: he simply wants to wash his hands of David once and for all. The ending of the chapter is also another moment in which David's self-control threatens to slip under the weight of traumatic memories.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

Now, the whole place was, or it should have been, quite as delightful a place as ever; and yet it did not impress me in the same way. I felt rather disappointed with it. (10.69)

***Explanation:***

When David goes to visit Yarmouth after his mother's death and before he goes to London for the first time, he finds the boat house not "quite [as] delightful a place as ever." It looks different because he is different: David is growing up, and is viewing the world through new eyes. At the same time, David can't perceive his own internal changes. So, he thinks the disappointment of the old, familiar boat house must be some flaw in it rather than in him. This is another example of Dickens using the setting to show a character's transition; the location is a powerful tool of characterization in David Copperfield.

Quotation 2:

"No. It had better be done by somebody else, Dan'l," said Mrs. Gummidge. "I'm a lone lorn creetur' myself, and everythink that reminds me of creetur's that ain't lone and lorn, goes contrary with me." (10.110)

Explanation 2:

Mrs. Gummidge wallows in her own suffering when other people – creatures that "ain't lone and lorn" – are around to remind her that she is lonely. And she loves to rain on other people's parades by reminding them, at every convenient opportunity, that she is unhappy. You know the expression, misery loves company? That's Mrs. Gummidge at the beginning of the novel.