***David Copperfield***

### *Chapter 13 – The Sequel of My Resolution*

***Summary:***

* David sits down for a time on a stoop to collect his thoughts.
* Luckily, it's a warm summer night.
* Unluckily, he has very little money and no real plan beyond walking all the way to Dover (which is about 73 miles from London).
* He happens to walk past a shop that advertises buying used clothes, with the best price given for rags.
* David rolls up his waistcoat and brings it to the shopkeeper, Mr. Dolloby.
* Mr. Dolloby offers David ninepence – about U.S. $5.00 in today's money ([**source**](http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/)).
* David decides to spend the night in a haystack he knows is located behind his old school, Salem House (which, we remember, is near London).
* David has some trouble finding Salem House, but at last he does, and the haystack as well – and that's where David passes his first night outside.
* David dreams of talking to his school friends, and jerks awake with Steerforth's name on his lips.
* It's just about dawn, and David falls asleep again.
* When he wakes up again, he creeps off without ever announcing himself to the boys at Salem House.
* David hears church bells ringing: it's Sunday morning.
* David walks about 23 miles on that first day.
* He is too afraid to spend the night at an inn, so he sleeps outside again, in a field near a troop outpost where a guard is patrolling. This makes David feel safe.
* David realizes he needs more money for food the next day, so he takes off his jacket to sell.
* Most of the second-hand clothing stores he finds are too grand for his poor little jacket.
* Finally, he finds a small place that caters to sailors.
* An old man in the shop keeps asking David what he wants, and punctuating every sentence with "goroo" (13.23).
* David asks eighteen pence – about $10 – for his jacket, and the man says he won't give it to David – he offers David an exchange instead of cash.
* David says that he will wait outside while the old man thinks over his offer.
* David sits and waits for many hours.
* The man – Charley – is an old drunk, frequently teased by boys in the neighborhood.
* This is why he behaves so badly with David.
* Charley comes out of his shop throughout the day with other things he offers David instead of money: a fishing rod, a fiddle, a hat, and a flute.
* David asks, with tears in his eyes, for either his money or his jacket.
* Finally, Charley starts doling out David's money a little bit at a time.
* David is exhausted by all of this, but he continues on his way.
* What frightens David the most as he travels on the road to Dover are the other "trampers" (13.44), men like David who are walking the roads.
* One of them is a young tinker (a person who fixes tin pots, pans, and tools) traveling with a woman.
* This man grabs David by the shirt and demands to know where David is going.
* He threatens to knock David's brains out if David says he's better than the tinker.
* The tinker demands "the price of a pint of beer" (13.54) from David, but the woman with the tinker shakes her head no.
* David takes his cue from the woman and says he's very poor and has nothing.
* The tinker then asks how David dares to wear his brother's silk handkerchief? The tinker grabs the handkerchief from around David's neck and throws it to the woman.
* She laughs as though this is a joke, throws the handkerchief back to David, and whispers to David to get away.
* The tinker grabs the handkerchief back and punches the woman to the ground.
* David is so frightened by this exchange that he hides from all people passing him from then on out, which slows his travel a lot.
* The only thing that keeps David going is his memory of his mother's face in her youth, which gives him hope for the future.
* Finally, David makes it to Dover.
* David asks around everywhere for Miss Betsey Trotwood, but the people he asks either laugh at him or else they won't tell him because they don't like the looks of him.
* At last, he meets a good-natured fellow driving a carriage, who knows where Miss Betsey lives. What's more, he gives David a penny, which David uses to buy bread before he goes to meet his aunt.
* Following the driver's directions, David winds up near a cluster of houses.
* He stops in at a general store to ask which house is Miss Betsey's.
* A customer, a young woman standing at the counter, turns around and asks David what he wants of her employer.
* The young woman thinks David is a beggar, but she agrees to lead David to the house anyway.
* The young woman takes David to the house and then hurries in.
* David stands at the garden gate and looks inside.
* He is not looking too great: his shoes have practically lost their soles, his clothes are stained and torn, and his hair hasn't been brushed in days.
* David doesn't know how he can meet his aunt in this condition.
* He sees a gray-haired man with a red face looking at him through the parlor window. The man winks at David, laughs, and then goes away.
* David is so surprised by this man that he is about to turn away and reconsider his plan when he sees a lady come out of the house.
* The lady is carrying gardening gloves and a knife. David is sure she is Miss Betsey.
* Miss Betsey tells David to go away, because boys aren't wanted here.
* His aunt goes to a corner of the garden to work.
* David is so desperate that he approaches Miss Betsey, touches her softly with his arm, and tells her that she is his aunt.
* Miss Betsey sits down suddenly on the ground, she's so shocked.
* David explains that his mother has died and that he has been miserable since then, and that he walked all the way here to find Miss Betsey.
* David is so exhausted and strung out that he bursts into tears.
* Miss Betsey takes him straight into the parlor and starts feeding him random things to try and get him to calm down (among these potions? Salad dressing. Ick.).
* David is still hysterical, so Miss Betsey makes him lie down on the couch.
* Miss Betsey rings a bell, and her servant (the young woman from the store, whose name is Janet) comes in.
* Miss Betsey asks Janet to bring Mr. Dick downstairs.
* Mr. Dick comes into the room laughing: it's the gray haired man who winked at David through the parlor window and frightened him.
* Miss Betsey tells Mr. Dick that this boy is David Copperfield, who has run away.
* David's aunt exclaims that his sister, (the fictional) Betsey Trotwood would never have run away!
* Miss Betsey tells Mr. Dick that, since he is so sharp, she wants his advice on what to do with David.
* Mr. Dick says that, if it was him, he would wash David.
* Miss Betsey turns to Janet and instructs her to heat the bath.
* During all this, David takes a look at the three people around him: his aunt is attractive, but very stern looking. Mr. Dick seems childish and strange: David thinks he may be a bit crazy.
* Janet, the servant, is around 19 or 20; she's very neat and pretty.
* As Janet is heating David's bath, Miss Betsey suddenly cries out, "Janet! Donkeys!" (13.113).
* Miss Betsey feels very possessive of the patch of green in front of her house, and her main horror in life is the sight of donkeys trying to get into it.
* So, she spends much of her time driving away kids who happen to ride their donkeys into her green patch.
* But even as Miss Betsey is driving away the donkeys, she is feeding David spoonfuls of broth.
* His bath is also very helpful: it soothes his aching limbs and makes him warm.
* After his bath, Miss Betsey and Janet put him into a set of Mr. Dick's clothes, wrap him in several shawls, and let him sleep on the sofa.
* As he dozes, Miss Betsey pushes David's hair from his face and seems generally to feel pity for him.
* When he wakes up, they all have dinner.
* Throughout this meal, David is very nervous: what is Miss Betsey going to decide to do to him?
* David explains everything that has happened to him in his life up to this point.
* Miss Betsey wonders why "the Baby" – a.k.a. Mrs. Copperfield – bothered to get married again.
* Mr. Dick wonders if it was because she wanted to.
* Miss Betsey dismisses this out of hand – her husband would be certain to abuse her somehow, so why did Mrs. Copperfield want another one?
* Also, Miss Betsey wants to know, why David's mother couldn't have given birth to a girl like she was supposed to?
* As though it wasn't enough that Mrs. Copperfield *insisted* on giving birth to a son, *then* she had to go off and marry someone named Murderer!
* No wonder David has become a wanderer, Miss Betsey decides.
* And then that Peggotty! Miss Betsey continues. She had to go and get married next!
* David protests that Peggotty is the best and most devoted friend he could have, and that he would have gone to Peggotty instead of Miss Betsey except that he wasn't sure she could support him.
* Miss Betsey approves of David's loyalty.
* After a long day of suspense for David about his fate, Miss Betsey turns to Mr. Dick and asks what she should do with David.
* Mr. Dick answers that she should put David to bed.
* And so she does: David gets sent to a pleasant bedroom overlooking the sea.
* Miss Betsey locks his door from the outside, probably, David guesses, to keep him from running away.
* David is so grateful that he prays never to be homeless himself, nor to forget what it is to be homeless.

***Synopsis:***

David sets out on the road to Dover. Along the way, he sells most of his clothes to buy food and sleeps outside at night. The journey frightens him and leaves a deep impression in his mind. When he finally reaches Dover, he has trouble locating his aunt's house. When he finally finds her house, he discovers that she is sharing the house with a man known only as Mr. Dick. It is a pleasant house despite being run by Miss Betsy's many eccentric habits. She takes David in, and feeds and bathes him. As David falls asleep that first night, he is unsure if she will keep him or what she might decide to do with him.

David's journey to Dover is marked by hunger and poverty. No one helps David and most people try to cheat him in some way. Coming from such a state, David is easily overwhelmed by his aunt's energy and is merely grateful to end his wanderings for a short while. The reader and David wait to see how Miss Betsey's eccentric ways will influence her decision on whether or not she will keep David, who at this point is without other options.

David sells some of the clothes he is wearing in order to buy food. The shopkeepers who buy the clothes take advantage of him, and travelers abuse him on the road. David arrives at the home of his aunt, Miss Betsey Trotwood, who initially tries to send him away.

When he tells her that he is her nephew, she consults with Mr. Dick, the man who lives upstairs in her home. Mr. Dick suggests that before she do anything, she give David a bath. Miss Betsey repeatedly compares David to the sister he never had and concludes that his sister would not have done the stupid things David has done.

Miss Betsey is a tough, sharp woman obsessed with keeping donkeys off the grass in front of her house. She bathes and feeds David and speaks to Mr. Dick at length about David’s mother, whom she pitied very much. David is nervous about whether his aunt will keep him or will send him away.

***Critical Analysis:***

[David Copperfield](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/David-Copperfield/character-analysis/#David_Copperfield) walks to Dover. Along the way, he sells his waistcoat and his jacket to buy food, and he sleeps outdoors under haystacks and in parks. At one point, he's accosted by a belligerent tinker who demands his money. Not getting any money, the tinker steals David's silk handkerchief. After six days of hard travel, David arrives at [Miss Betsey](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/David-Copperfield/character-analysis/#Miss_Betsey)'s cottage in Dover. Bedraggled and exhausted, he introduces himself to his astonished aunt, who is working in her garden. After telling her about his journey from London and the neglect that led him to make the journey, he bursts into tears. Later, Miss Betsey questions him about his history, and shares her observations with Mr. Dick, who lives upstairs. Referring to David's mother as "the poor baby," she rails against Clara Copperfield's decision to marry Mr. Murdstone and complains because Clara hadn't provided David with a sister named Betsey Trotwood. David senses Miss Betsey is beginning to feel sympathy for him, but their talk is interrupted when Miss Betsey jumps up to chase donkeys away from her front lawn. That night, before David falls asleep on clean white sheets, he hopes he'll never again be "houseless," and resolves to never forget the homeless.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

After stopping briefly to catch his breath, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) continues on down the Kent Road toward Greenwich. He is worried about having so little money (three halfpence) on hand, so he stops outside clothing shop and, approaching the owner, offers to sell his waistcoat. The owner examines the garment and asks David to name his price, but quickly turns down David's initial proposal and offers ninepence instead. David reluctantly accepts, since he is in a hurry.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Despite knowing he ought to get more for his waistcoat, David quickly yields to the shopkeeper. This is in keeping with his overall passivity as a character, which is a trait he must work to overcome as he grows older.

***Summary Part 2:***

Leaving the shop, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) decides to spend the night outside the walls of his old school. Once there, he falls asleep and dreams about lying in his bed at Salem House, waking up "with [Steerforth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/james-steerforth)'s name upon [his] lips." He is momentarily frightened, but eventually falls back to sleep. The next morning, he rejects the idea of trying to visit [Traddles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/tommy-traddles) as too risky and continues along the road to Dover.

***Analysis Part 2:***

David's decision to spend the night near Salem House reflects his tendency toward nostalgia: he thinks that by being close to the students, he can recapture the feeling of being at the school himself. His nightmare, however, is a sign of how circumstances have changed, as well as a moment that foreshadows Steerforth's later betrayal of David's trust.

***Summary Part 3:***

The sound of church bells ringing causes [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) to remember the sound of similar bells long ago in Yarmouth. In his present state, the memory distresses him, and he is only able to keep going by once again calling to mind [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) comforting [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield). All told, he covers 23 miles that day, eventually lying down to sleep near a river in Chatham, as he is afraid to spend any money on lodgings.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Traumatic experiences are not the only ones that can lead to painful memories: as David's memory of the bells demonstrates, it can also be difficult to dwell on past happiness. Nevertheless, the hope of finding a new family encourages David to keep going.

***Summary Part 4:***

[David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) is tired and sore the next day, and decides to sell his jacket before heading on. He scans the shops in the area and—intimidated by the larger and wealthier ones—eventually enters one that is small, out-of-the-way, and dirty. The shopkeeper is a drunken old man who grabs hold of David and asks him what he wants. David and the man discuss the price for the jacket, and David—frightened—quickly takes up an offer of eighteenpence. The owner begs him to trade with him instead, however, so David refuses, and says he will sit outside the shop until he is paid. This turns out to take all day, and David still does not manage to get the full amount of the owner, who pays him one halfpence at a time.

***Analysis Part 4:***

David's difficulty with the shopkeeper stems from his inexperience and his eagerness to please. Although he realizes he's being taken advantage of and attempts to stand up for himself, he is too frightened and hesitant to insist on the full price from the shopkeeper.

***Summary part 5:***

After his ordeal selling his jacket, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) buys something to eat and then settles down to sleep under a haystack. He continues on the next day, admiring the orchards and fields he passes through but disturbed by the other "trampers" he encounters. One man threatens to "rip [David's] young body open" if he won't stop to talk to him, and David complies. The man is traveling with a woman he has clearly beaten, and questions David angrily about his destination and intentions. Finally, he demands that David hand over enough money for a pint of beer, but David refuses when he sees the woman shake her head. The man therefore steals David's handkerchief and—seeing the woman urging David to run away—strikes her to the ground.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Although they appear only briefly, the "tramper" and his wife are a reminder of the dangers nineteenth-century women faced. David Copperfield contains many women who suffer at their husbands' or lovers' hands—Clara Copperfield, Miss Betsey, Emily, and arguably even Dora—this is the only depiction of physical abuse, and it underscores how limited women's options were when it came to leaving an abusive partner.

***Summary Part 6:***

After this experience, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) goes out of his way to avoid fellow travelers, and focuses on a mental image of [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield) in order to push on; as a result, he later comes to associate the image with his journey down a "sunny street of Canterbury." Finally, on the sixth day, David arrives in Dover, and the image "deserts" him, leaving him "helpless and dispirited."

***Analysis Part 6:***

The fact that David takes comfort in an image of his mother is significant in light of the fact that he's seeking out a woman who will become a mother figure to him—specifically, Miss Betsey. Although David's mother and aunt are very different kinds of women, the fact that Clara in some sense "leads" David to Miss Betsey establishes continuity between David's early childhood and the life he is about to begin; there is even a hint that in going to Miss Betsey, David is fulfilling Clara's wishes.

***Summary Part 7:***

[David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) asks several people for information about where [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) lives with little success: some joke about her, while others refuse to speak to David because of his dirty appearance. Just as he is growing desperate, David comes across a carriage driver with a "good-natured" look, and repeats his inquiry. The driver tells him to travel up the cliff toward the houses facing out on the [sea](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/symbols/the-sea) and also gives David a penny, since he warns him that Miss Betsey is "gruffish" and unlikely to help him. David follows the man's directions, eventually stopping in a shop to ask for more information. A young woman shopping there overhears David's question and identifies herself as Miss Betsey's servant. She is suspicious of David, but tells him he can follow her back to her mistress's house.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The difficulty David has in locating Miss Betsey is partly the result of his apparent poverty. Simply because he's dirty and underdressed, David finds that people are unwilling to help or trust him.

***Summary Part 8:***

David and the maid eventually come to a "very neat little cottage" with a beautiful garden, and the woman goes inside. David is left standing outside, anxious and disheveled. His nervousness grows when he notices a man in an upstairs window laughing, nodding at David, and "shutting up one eye in a grotesque manner." Just as David considers leaving, [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) emerges from the house and, catching sight of him, tells him to leave because she wants "no boys" around. David, however, tentatively approaches her and introduces himself as her nephew, causing her to fall over backwards in shock.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Miss Betsey's home is a reflection of Miss Betsey herself: it's practical and economical, but with a softer side (like the beautiful garden). This resemblance is in keeping with the Victorian idea that the mistress of a household imbued her surroundings with her own personality. In that sense, the cottage's pleasant appearance is perhaps a hint to readers that for all her unconventional behavior, Miss Betsey is "feminine" at heart and thus a fitting surrogate mother for David.

***Summary Part 9:***

 David recounts the circumstances that have brought him to [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood), and then bursts into tears. Miss Betsey then pulls David inside the cottage, gives him several disgusting "restoratives," and seats him on a couch, before telling the maid to summon [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick). This turns out to be the man David saw in the upstairs window, and Miss Betsey—after warning him not to be a "fool, because nobody can be more discreet than [he] can"—explains who David is and that he has run away. She then asks Mr. Dick what she should do with him, and Mr. Dick ponders this before saying that she should wash him.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Despite her business-like manner, Miss Betsey isn't as unfeeling as she pretends. The drinks that she gives David demonstrate her compassion for him and how much his story has upset her: flustered, she grabs bottles at random and ends up giving David salad dressing, among other things. Her gruffness with Mr. Dick also masks how tenderly she feels towards him; in fact, her refusal to treat him differently than anyone else is itself a sign of her respect for him. Her interactions with Mr. Dick are also interesting in the sense that they function as a parody of the traditional relationship between a husband and wife: Miss Betsey allows Mr. Dick to make most of her major decisions for her, but these decisions always seem to correspond to what Miss Betsey was planning to do regardless.

***Summary part 10:***

While [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) and [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick) are talking, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) observes his surroundings. His aunt is "austere" but good-looking and wears plain, practical clothes that include a man's pocket watch. Mr. Dick, meanwhile, is "grey-headed and florid" with a "vacant manner." David suspect he may be slightly crazy. The maid (Janet) is pretty and tidy, and David later learns that she is a "protégé" Miss Betsey hopes to dissuade from ever marrying. The room itself is neat and airy, and smells of both flowers and the [sea](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/symbols/the-sea).

***Analysis Part 10:***

Miss Betsey's appearance (particularly her style of dress) is somewhat masculine, but not to the same extent as a character like Miss Murdstone; significantly, she is still an attractive woman. At the time Dickens was writing, this half-compliance with gender norms would have signaled that Miss Betsey is, at worst, a comical figure.

***Summary Part 11:***

Janet leaves to prepare a bath, but is immediately called back by [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) crying "Donkeys!" Janet and Miss Betsey then hurry outside to shoo away a group of donkeys (and riders) who had wandered across the grass in front of the cottage. This happens two more times before [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) actually has his bath, and he ultimately learns that keeping the lawn free of donkeys is a constant preoccupation for his aunt.

***Analysis Part 11:***

For the most part, Miss Betsey's obsession with keeping her yard free of donkeys is simple comic relief (as well as a mark of her broader eccentricity). Within the context of Miss Betsey's past, however, the quirk does perhaps make some sense: given the time period, Miss Betsey would have had to work hard to establish herself as an independent woman after separating from her husband, and it stands to reason that she would be protective of her property.

***Summary part 12:***

After [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield)'s bath, [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) wraps David up in [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick)'s old clothes and sets him down on the couch to rest. He dozes off, but thinks he notices his aunt brushing his hair away from his face and speaking softly to him.

***Analysis Part 12:***

Once again, Miss Betsey's actions hint at a gentler side to her personality—albeit one she hides when she thinks anyone is watching her.

***Summary Part 13:***

When David wakes up, he has dinner with [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood), who then calls [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick) down to join them. She asks David more about himself and his history, before getting into a dispute with Mr. Dick over [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield), whom she feels should not have remarried, even for love: "A mighty pleasure for the poor baby to fix her simple faith upon any dog of a fellow, certain to ill-use her." This segues into complaint about Clara's failure to have a daughter, as well as the ill-effects her remarriage likely had on David's character. She also speaks disparagingly of [Peggotty](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/peggotty)'s marriage, at which point David jumps in to defend Peggotty, only to start crying. This seems to impress Miss Betsey, but she is distracted by the arrival of more donkeys before any "softer ideas" can be expressed.

***Analysis Part 13:***

Miss Betsey's experiences have clearly soured her on marriage (and men) in general, but her assessment of Clara, though harsh, is basically the same as the novel's—namely, that Clara wasn't mature enough to marry for the right reasons. Furthermore, her disapproval of marrying for love alone becomes increasingly relevant as the novel goes on, and David begins considering marriage himself. Likewise, her belief that Mr. Murdstone likely influenced David's development negatively echoes comments David himself has made (although Murdstone did not, as Miss Betsey suggests here, cause David to become immoral or untrustworthy).

***Summary Part 14:***

Later that day, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield), [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood), and [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick) have tea, and Miss Betsey again asks what she should do with David. Mr. Dick suggests putting him to bed, and Miss Betsey and Janet take David up to his room. He is still somewhat anxious about his future and spends some time looking out over the [sea](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/symbols/the-sea), imagining he can see either his fate or [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield) there. He is grateful to be indoors and in a bed, however, and soon falls asleep.

***Analysis Part 14:***

Although David's future is still undecided at this point, David feels more at home at Miss Betsey's than he has since leaving Blunderstone. Clara's reappearance—even as an object of David's imagination—is a further hint that David is at last safely settled with a new family.