***David Copperfield***

### *Chapter 14 – My Aunt makes up her Mind About Me*

***Summary:***

* David comes downstairs the next morning to find his aunt deep, both in thought and in breakfast.
* David's really nervous because he still doesn't know what her long-term plans are for him.
* Miss Betsey informs David that she has written to Mr. Murdstone, and that they'll see what would happen next.
* David becomes deeply sad at this news.
* Miss Betsey instructs David to go upstairs and ask Mr. Dick about his Memorial.
* She wonders if David thinks "Mr. Dick" is a short name.
* In fact, his real name is Mr. Richard Babley, but he hates it.
* Miss Betsey tells David that he has been so cruelly treated by people who share his name that he can't stand it, which is why he is only known as Mr. Dick in the Trotwood household.
* David promises that he will only call him Mr. Dick, and goes upstairs to find him.
* Mr. Dick comments to David that it's a crazy world, and that he has just made a start on his Memorial.
* Mr. Dick asks David if he knows the year when King Charles the First was beheaded?
* David answers that it was 1649 (which is true).
* Mr. Dick can't figure out why, if his execution happened so long ago, people have bothered to try and make Mr. Dick memorize this fact.
* The man is glad Miss Betsey has asked after his progress, and wonders what David thinks of the giant kite sitting in the corner of his room. It's about seven feet tall.
* Mr. Dick shows David that the kite is covered with handwritten pages of facts. Mr. Dick uses this kite to send these facts off into the air and away from his mind.
* David laughs at this, and Mr. Dick joins him. They both become friends.
* The boy goes downstairs and tells Miss Betsey that Mr. Dick seems to be doing well.
* Miss Betsey wants to know what David thinks of him.
* David asks if Mr. Dick might possibly be a tiny bit crazy?
* Miss Betsey says that he is not mad at all – Mr. Dick has been *called* crazy, which is why Miss Betsey has been able to enjoy the pleasure of his company for the past ten years. But he's a lot saner than many people, she says.
* Mr. Dick is distantly related to Miss Betsey.
* The man's own brother wanted to lock him up in a mental institution because he is a little eccentric – even though their father asked Mr. Dick's brother to take particular care of him in his will.
* Mr. Dick also had a sister who was very kind to Mr. Dick, but she was abused by her husband, which upset him very much.
* Between the brother who wanted to put him away and the sister whom he saw mistreated, Mr. Dick was very ill when he came to live with Miss Betsey.
* Miss Betsey says that Mr. Dick uses "King Charles the First" as a way of expressing his memory of his own agitation and illness – and why shouldn't he express it that way! she adds.
* The Memorial is Mr. Dick's history of himself (though it is supposed to be a history of some lord or other), but King Charles the First keeps creeping in no matter how hard Mr. Dick tries to keep him out – his history of himself keeps getting interrupted by his memory of his illness.
* Miss Betsey says that Mr. Dick is the nicest guy in the world, and if he likes to fly a kite now and then, who cares?
* Hearing David's strong defense of Mr. Dick, he (a) starts to hope that she will take him in, and (b) begins to respect her merits.
* As David waits for Mr. Murdstone's answer to his aunt's letter, he is really nervous, but he does his best to be nice to Miss Betsey and Mr. Dick.
* At last, the day arrives when Mr. Murdstone himself is supposed to come to see Miss Betsey.
* Just as they are about to eat lunch, Miss Betsey sees someone sitting sidesaddle on a donkey come riding across her beautiful lawn: it's *Miss Murdstone*. And Mr. Murdstone comes up soon after.
* Miss Betsey exclaims that it doesn't matter who it is, she won't have trespassers on her grass!
* Finally, they all assemble inside.
* Miss Betsey makes David sit down and then turns to receive the Murdstones.
* She's obviously still furious that they trespassed on her grass (although, honestly, they couldn't have known her rule).
* Miss Betsey tells Mr. Murdstone it would have been better if he had left Mrs. Copperfield ("that poor child" (14.83)) alone.
* Miss Murdstone agrees, and adds that it would have been better if Mr. Murdstone had never made such a marriage.
* Miss Betsey rings for Janet and asks her to bring down Mr. Dick.
* Mr. Murdstone tells Miss Betsey that David is a bad tempered, ungrateful boy whom he and his sister have tried to discipline.
* Miss Murdstone adds that David is the worst boy in the world.
* Mr. Murdstone continues: he has done what he thinks is best with a boy of David's type: to give him an occupation under a respectable man. But David (being ungrateful) has run away from that job Mr. Murdstone so *kindly* arranged for him.
* Miss Betsey wonders if Mr. Murdstone would have set his own son to such a job, or if he would have sent David to London if Mrs. Copperfield were still alive.
* Mr. Murdstone answers that Mrs. Copperfield would have known the Murdstones were acting in David's best interests.
* As this conversation is going on, Mr. Dick keeps rattling his money more and more loudly, until Miss Betsey glances at him to stop him.
* David's aunt finds out the deal with Mrs. Copperfield's property. The house and garden were left to David's mother after her husband died. However, everything went straight to Mr. Murdstone when David's mother died, leaving David with diddly squat.
* Mr. Murdstone plans to take David back with him, and to do with David what he likes. He refuses to make Miss Betsey any promises.
* David's stepfather warns Miss Betsey that if she steps in on David's behalf, she has to take full control of him: Mr. Murdstone will never deal with David again.
* Miss Murdstone then thanks Miss Betsey sarcastically for her politeness.
* Miss Betsey asks David what he wants.
* David begs Miss Betsey not to let him go, because the Murdstones have never liked him, and because they turned his own mother against him.
* Miss Betsey turns to Mr. Dick for his opinion.
* Mr. Dick says that they should have him measured for a suit of clothes.
* Miss Betsey applauds Mr. Dick's common sense, and tells the Murdstones that she will keep David because she's sure they're lying about him.
* Miss Betsey accuses Mr. Murdstone of misleading Mrs. Copperfield with pretty words and promises, marrying her, and then bullying her into behaving as he wanted her to.
* As Miss Betsey makes these totally true accusations, Miss Murdstone keeps trying to get a word in edgewise, but her sarcasm doesn't make a bit of difference to Miss Betsey.
* Miss Betsey exclaims that Mr. Murdstone is a tyrant, that he broke Mrs. Copperfield's heart, and that his domination is what killed her.
* Miss Betsey concludes that the reason Mr. Murdstone can't stand to look at David now is because he remembers how he used Mrs. Copperfield's own son against her, to torment her and to break her spirit.
* As David watches Mr. Murdstone's face, he notices that Mr. Murdstone's expression doesn't change, but he goes completely pale at this.
* Miss Betsey tells them both good day, and the Murdstones leave her cottage.
* David's aunt turns to Mr. Dick and instructs him that he and Miss Betsey will share David's guardianship.
* Mr. Dick says he will do so gladly.
* Miss Betsey decides to change David's name: she wants to call him Trotwood Copperfield.
* David is in a daze: his old life in Suffolk seems incredibly distant, and it's as though a veil has fallen over his awful experiences after his mother's death.

***Synopsis:***

At breakfast the next morning, Miss Betsy tells David that she has written to his stepfather to say that David is staying with her. She tells David that she will not be able to make any decision about him until his stepfather writes or visits.

David learns more about Mr. Dick, who has some mental problems and is writing a never-ending manuscript about his connection to the beheading of King Charles. Mr. Dick also enjoys flying kites. Miss Betsey explains that she took him in after his family planned to put him in a mental institution. She thinks that Mr. Dick is perfectly fine.

The Murdstones arrive to discuss David's future. They explain their intentions to treat David as they wish, and express their opinion that he is a horrible child. Miss Betsey accuses them of ruining the life of David's mother and decides to accept David as her ward. She tells the Murdstones to leave and never return. David is delighted to stay with his aunt and hopes the Murdstone chapter of his life is finally over. Miss Betsey nicknames him "Trotwood."

Miss Betsey and Mr. Dick are introduced as two eccentric characters who have chosen to make an alternative life together. Each of them has their own strange habits, but both are shown to be essentially kindhearted. The confrontation between both Miss Betsey and Mr. Dick and the Murdstones is a change from previous standoffs between the Murdstones and other adults. Miss Betsy refuses to believe what they say about David and defends David. This defense is a strong contrast to the way that David's own mother acted. The difference between Miss Betsey and David's mother sets up one of the fundamental contrasts in David's views of women, in which he is emotionally drawn to women of his mother's type while being nurtured and protected by those of Miss Betsey's type.

***Critical Analysis:***

The next morning, Miss Betsey reveals to David that she has written Mr. Murdstone to tell him where David is. She has invited Mr. Murdstone there to discuss David’s fate.

Miss Betsey sends David up to check on Mr. Dick’s progress on his Memorial, an autobiography he is trying to write. But Mr. Dick continually starts his project over from scratch because, each time, he begins to muse in the text about King Charles I, whose demons he believes possess him. Mr. Dick has an enormous kite that he promises to fly with David someday. David returns to Miss Betsey and tells her that Mr. Dick sends his compliments to her. Miss Betsey reveals that she took in Mr. Dick when his brother tried to have him placed in an asylum. Mr. and Miss Murdstone arrive on donkeys, and Miss Betsey rushes out to chase the donkeys off her lawn. The Murdstones are rude to David during their visit, and Miss Betsey scolds them and forces them to leave. Mr. Murdstone warns her that if David does not come with him immediately, he will never be able to come back again. Miss Betsey asks David what he wants to do, and he says he wants to stay with her. It is resolved that he will do so, and Miss Betsey renames him Trotwood Copperfield.

***Critical Study (Ch13-14):***

Determined to reach Miss Betsey's home in Dover, David sets out on foot. He passes a small second-hand clothing store, sells his waistcoat for a small sum, and then spends the night in a haystack near Salem House School.

David, "a dusty, sunburnt, half-clothed figure," arrives in Dover after six days of traveling and inquires about his aunt. After several unsuccessful inquiries, he is directed to Miss Trotwood's cottage. Miss Trotwood, seeing the ragged urchin in her garden, sternly bids him, "Go away! Go along! No boys here!" But when David tells her who he is and what an unhappy life he has led since his mother's death, she takes charge of him with vigor, but it should be added, with abruptness.

Janet, the Trotwood housekeeper, is directed to prepare a bath for David; in the meantime, his aunt feeds him some broth. After David naps, he is fed a large supper while Miss Trotwood comments on the folly of marriage. The conversation is interrupted with her cry, "Janet! Donkeys!" Suddenly Miss Trotwood and the housekeeper rush outside to chase the donkey-riders off the lawn. This is a frequent occurrence at the cottage.

The household consists of Miss Trotwood, the housekeeper, and Mr. Dick, a congenial simpleton whom Miss Trotwood has befriended. They are all kindly people, and David feels fortunate to be there. At breakfast the next morning, Miss Trotwood tells David that she has written to his stepfather. David implores her not to send him back, but she is noncommittal in her reply.

David visits with Mr. Dick (actually, his name is Mr. Richard Babley, but he detests the name), who is writing a long "Memorial" to the Lord Chancellor. When a part of the manuscript is finished, Mr. Dick uses it to paper a huge kite. In this way Mr. Dick circulates his "facts a long way." David thinks him quite mad, but a harmless, friendly fellow nonetheless.

A reply to Miss Trotwood's letter arrives, stating that the Murdstones are coming to speak to her about David. David is terrified at the prospect of this visit. When the Murdstones arrive the, next day, they immediately incur the wrath of Miss Trotwood by guiding their donkeys across the front lawn. Finally, the Murdstones enter the house, and David's stepfather tells about the many difficulties he has had with the rebellious boy. Miss Trotwood counters by saying that David's interests, particularly his annuity, has not been looked after and that his mother was ill-used. Exasperated, Mr. Murdstone states that if David does not return, "my doors are shut against him . . ."

Miss Trotwood asks David if he wishes to return, and he replies that he does not; she then asks Mr. Dick what she should do with the boy and after a bit of thought, he replies, "Have him measured for a suit of clothes directly." She thanks Mr. Dick for his good sense, and with some final caustic remarks, she ushers the Murdstones out of the house. David now has a new set of guardians and his aunt decrees that he shall now be known as "Trotwood Copperfield." And so David begins a new life.

In Chapter 13, Dickens uses elements of the popular picaresque, or adventure story. This type of novel was well established in Dickens' time and consisted of the wandering journey of a hero through a series of thrilling, unconnected incidents. The hero is forced to live by his wits as he encounters different people (usually of low station) who attempt to cheat him or otherwise use him for their own ends. Because the hero sees all levels of society, the author is able to give a panoramic picture of life during a particular time.

The delineation of Miss Trotwood's true character in Chapter 14 is Dickens' way of revealing that behind the brusque exterior shown in the first chapter lies a compassionate nature. Note, too, her concern, as evidenced in her guardianship of Mr. Dick and her instinctive rejection of the Murdstones.

***Significance:***

The following morning, when Miss Betsey tells David she has contacted Mr. Murdstone, he fears she'll send him back to Murdstone. Mr. Dick tells David he's writing a memorial, or autobiography, but he has to keep rewriting it because references to the beheading of King Charles I keep creeping into it. Mr. Dick has constructed a huge kite from his discarded manuscript pages, which he says will take "the facts a long way." Miss Betsey explains that Mr. Dick is eccentric but harmless, and she took him in 10 years ago when his family wanted to put him in an asylum. She's learned to value his advice.

The next day, Mr. Murdstone arrives at the cottage with his sister to discuss David's future. Miss Betsey questions them in detail and minces no words in telling them she thinks they bullied David's mother, took advantage of her youth and innocence, and have shamefully mistreated David. After some discussion, Miss Betsey says she'll take her chances with David, and she angrily chases the Murdstones out the door. Miss Betsey declares she and Mr. Dick will be joint guardians of David, and she'll change his name to Trotwood Copperfield. David gratefully draws a curtain on his time at Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) still seems to be mulling over [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield)'s fate the next morning at breakfast, and David finds her attention alarming. Eventually, she tells David that she has written to [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone), but that she has not yet decided whether she will send him back to his stepfather. This depresses David, and when Miss Betsey suggests that he go and give her "compliments" to [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick), he jumps at the chance to please her. Before he can leave, however, his aunt explains that Mr. Dick's real name is Richard Babley, but that David must not use it, because Mr. Dick associates the name with "ill-use" he has endured.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Since David isn't yet familiar with his aunt's gruffness, he's understandably concerned by her demeanor and words in this scene. Even beyond that, his desperation to please her—and his hope that doing so will improve his chances of staying with her—stem from his cruel treatment at the Murdstones' hands. David has grown accustomed to the idea that he has to earn not only his keep but also his family's love.

***Summary Part 2:***

[David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) goes upstairs to [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick), whom he finds at work on what [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) has called "his Memorial." When he sees David, Mr. Dick remarks that "it's a mad world,' and then asks him whether he knows when Charles I was executed. David responds that it was in 1649, which leads Mr. Dick to wonder confusedly how "if it was so long ago," Charles I's  "troubles" have been transferred from his head to Mr. Dick's. David is unsure how to respond, but Mr. Dick soon changes the subject and directs David's attention toward a kite in the room, which he promises they will fly together some time. He then explains that flying the kite is his way of "diffusing" facts that distract him (like those surrounding Charles I's death).

***Analysis Part 2:***

Although it's mostly played for laughs, Mr. Dick's "Memorial" functions as a shadow or parody of David's own memoir. David's memoir is at heart an attempt to uncover a coherent path from his childhood self to the man he is today. Mr. Dick's memoir, however, hints that David is attempting to impose order on something that is basically random and illogical. In particular, the fact that Mr. Dick can't keep Charles I out of his own memoir suggests that personal identity is not as rational and unified as a narrative like David's would tend to imply.

***Summary Part 3:***

Returning downstairs, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) relays [Mr. Dick's](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick) compliments to [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood), who asks David what he thinks of him and—when David hesitates—says that David's "sister Betsey Trotwood" would speak directly. David tentatively asks whether Mr. Dick is insane, but Miss Betsey vehemently denies this, and explains that Mr. Dick's brother tried to shut him up permanently in an asylum for being "a little eccentric." This, she says, is how Mr. Dick came to live with her: she offered to care for him, and regards him as both a friendly and wise man. She acknowledges, however, that Mr. Dick's ill-treatment at his brother's hands, along with the ill-fated marriage of his favorite sister, caused him to develop a "fever" that he has not fully recovered from emotionally. According to Miss Betsey, Mr. Dick's obsession with Charles I is his "allegorical way" of talking about this.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Mr. Dick's background is another challenge to the idea that the Victorian home was always a place of refuge: Mr. Dick’s family not only mistreated him but ultimately abandoned him. Fortunately, he and Miss Betsey have formed a makeshift family of their own, but Mr. Dick's memories of his past abuse clearly continue to haunt him (regardless of whether Miss Betsey's theory about his "allegorical" use of Charles I are correct). In this way too, Mr. Dick serves as a kind of warning of what David could become if he allows his memories of the past to overtake him.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) then begins to discuss [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick)'s Memorial, which she says Charles I must be kept out of in case people misunderstood Mr. Dick's state of mind. As it turns out, Mr. Dick has been working on this memoir for ten years, because he cannot manage to write it without referring to Charles I. [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) suspects that his aunt is recounting all of this more for her own benefit than for David's. Nevertheless, the knowledge of Miss Betsey's fondness for Mr. Dick relieves some of his anxieties about his own future and makes him to feel kindly toward his aunt.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Mr. Dick's inability to finish the Memorial further emphasizes the "dangers" David needs to avoid in writing his own memoir: Mr. Dick is so bogged down in memories, and so unable to separate his own experiences from others' (specifically, Charles I's), that he never makes any progress on his narrative. Meanwhile, Miss Betsey's protectiveness of Mr. Dick reveals more of her softer and warmer side.

***Summary part 5:***

Over the next few days, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) waits nervously for a response from [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) and tries to make himself "agreeable." Finally, [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) tells David that she has received a letter from Mr. Murdstone, and that he will be visiting them the next day, which throws David into a state of terror.

***Analysis Part 5:***

David's desperation to prove himself deserving of his aunt's help is understandable, given his experiences with the Murdstones: for the past few years, David hasn't had a guaranteed home or family to fall back on.

***Summary Part 6:***

Later, the next afternoon, [Miss Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone) arrives in front of the cottage on a donkey, and [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) tries to shoo her away even after [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) tells her who she is. [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) then arrives, and he, his sister, Miss Betsey, Janet, and the donkey's owner begin to struggle with one another. The owner eventually runs off, and Miss Betsey reenters the cottage without speaking to the Murdstones.

***Analysis Part 6:***

The altercation over the donkeys mostly serves as comic relief, but it also clearly hints that Miss Betsey and the Murdstones aren't going to get along. Miss Betsey's actions are also perhaps a reminder of how hard she has had to work, as a single woman, to be respected; her obsession with donkeys is comical, but her desire to protect her home and property, at a time when it was unusual for a woman to own either, is understandable.

***Summary Part 7:***

When the Murdstones enter the room, [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) attempts to leave, but [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) insists that he stay. She and [Miss Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone) trade jabs over her policy on trespassing donkeys until [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) intervenes. Having confirmed his identity, Miss Betsey criticizes his decision to marry [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield), whom she describes as a "poor child." Miss Murdstone is visibly annoyed, but agrees with Miss Betsey's characterization of Clara, and agrees that the marriage should not have taken place.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Despite her outward disdain for women who marry (and women who are childish or weak), Miss Betsey clearly feels sympathy for Clara. Besides hinting at Miss Betsey's basic decency (Miss Murdstone, significantly, agrees that Clara was childish but feels no sympathy for her), this compassion presumably also reflects Miss Betsey's similarly disastrous marriage. In that sense, it's worth noting that despite being a considerably tougher woman than Clara, Miss Betsey was also a victim of her husband's abuse. The lack of legal protections for nineteenth-century women made virtually all wives vulnerable to mistreatment.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) sends for [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick), whom she introduces to the Murdstones. [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) then begins to describe the many problems [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) has caused him, as well as all the flaws in his character. He further explains that he feels obliged to warn Miss Betsey of this, and of what will happen if she "abets" David's attempts to evade Mr. Murdstone's plans for his improvement. In response, Miss Betsey wonders first whether Mr. Murdstone would have treated his own child similarly, and then whether he would treat David this way if [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield) were alive. This prompts a discussion of Clara: although Miss Betsey irritably agrees with Mr. Murdstone that Clara would have supported him in anything, she expresses outrage over the fact that no provisions were made for David's inheritance before his mother's remarriage.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Although Mr. Murdstone clearly doesn't care about David's well-being or future prospects, the speech he gives about hoping that hard work will improve David is plausible from a Victorian point of view. Fortunately for David, Miss Betsey recognizes Murdstone's hypocrisy. This doesn’t mean, however, that Miss Betsey disagrees with the basic principles Mr. Murdstone is espousing. When asking about David's inheritance, for instance, she criticizes David's father for passing through life without ever giving any thought to his or his son's future. On the other hand, her displeasure with Clara's meekness is an implicit critique of Victorian norms (specifically, surrounding wifely submissiveness).

***Summary Part 9:***

[Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) says that he intends to take [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) back, and warns [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood) that if she helps David now, he will not offer David any assistance going forward. Miss Betsey then asks [Miss Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone) and David whether they have anything to say: Miss Murdstone agrees with her brother, while David begs her not send him back to people who had treated both him and [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield) so badly. Finally, Miss Betsey asks [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick) what she ought to do with David, and Mr. Dick suggests having him measured for clothes (since David is, at this point, still wearing Mr. Dick's oversized things). Miss Betsey congratulates Mr. Dick for his "common sense" and then tells the Murdstones that they can leave, and that she doesn't believe anything they have said.

Home and Family Theme Icon

***Analysis Part 9:***

Although she seems to have already made up her mind about the Murdstones, Miss Betsey nevertheless consults and then appears to defer to Mr. Dick's opinion. This is one of the instances in which Miss Betsey and Mr. Dick's relationship functions like a kind of mock marriage.

***Summary part 10:***

The Murdstones, insulted, begin to object to what Miss Betsey has said, but she cuts them off, explaining that she can easily imagine how [Mr. Murdstone](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-murdstone) must have seduced [Clara](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/clara-copperfield) only to "begin to break her, like a poor caged bird" after they married. This, she suggests, is what killed Clara, and it is partly Mr. Murdstone's guilt that causes him to dislike [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) so intensely. She then repeats that the Murdstones should leave, and threatens to "knock [[Miss Murdstone's](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-murdstone)] bonnet off" if she ever rides by on a donkey again.

***Analysis Part 10:***

In suggesting that Mr. Murdstone's hatred of David stems in part from his "disagreeable remembrance" of how he used David to torment Clara, Miss Betsey draws attention to the ways in which memories can distort current relationships. This idea  is central to the subplot surrounding Mr. Wickfield and his daughter, Agnes, which Dickens introduces in the very next chapter.

***Summary Part 11:***

The Murdstones leave, and [David](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/david-copperfield) embraces [Miss Betsey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/miss-betsey-trotwood), thanking her profusely. Miss Betsey announces to [Mr. Dick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/david-copperfield/characters/mr-dick) that they will both act as guardians to David, whom she intends to call "Trotwood" from now on. They buy David a new set of clothes, so that by the end of the day he has a "new life, in a new name, and with everything new about [him]." His past at the counting-house already seems to lie behind a "curtain," and David writes that it is only with a "reluctant hand" that he has "raised that curtain" in this account of his life.

***Analysis Part 11:***

David's new nickname is the same as Miss Betsey's surname, and consequently marks him as her adoptive child (it's also another sign of Miss Betsey's unconventionality, since a child traditionally takes the father's last name). In fact, David is so immediately at home with his new family that his memories of the counting-house are already becoming indistinct. This is likely a good thing, given how traumatic David implies the memories are: even briefly reliving them through writing has been an upsetting experience.