

Chapter 3 Banished to Boarding School

➤ Discuss the Question

1. Have you ever lived in a boarding school? How did you feel staying away from your family?
2. What's your impression of your teachers in middle school? Have anyone of them left a deep impression on you?

➤ Read by Yourself

My mother said a tearful goodbye to me the following morning, and after a long ride I arrived in front of a high wall with a sign reading "SALEM HOUSE". This was to be my new school.

Salem House was a shabby¹, square, brick building. It was silent inside because it was holiday time and all of the other boys were at home. The headmaster, Mr Creakle, was also on holiday. The only people around were a teacher, called Mr Mell, and Mr Creakle's wooden-legged assistant, Tungay, a horrible man with a booming voice. Mr Mell showed me round the building. Everything I saw dragged my spirits down further.

The classrooms had long rows of desks, and their floors were filthy² and littered with old scraps³ of paper. The dormitory where I was to sleep was bare and unwelcoming.

I spotted a sign on a desk, with the words: "Take care of him. He bites".

"Where's the dog?" I asked Mr Mell, looking around fearfully.

"It's not for a dog," Mr Mell replied. "It's for you."

I couldn't believe it. I would have to wear that horrible sign on my back. All of the other boys would laugh and bully me.

On the night Mr Creakle returned, Tungay took me to see him. Mr Creakle was scary, with thick veins⁴ in his forehead, mean, small eyes and a large chin⁵.

"What trouble has he got up to?" rasped⁶ Creakle, in a terrifying whisper.

Tungay looked disappointed. "Nothing yet," he bellowed⁷.

Creakle beckoned me towards him. "Mr Murdstone has told me all about yow." At that second, Mr Creakle's hand suddenly shot out and grabbed my ear, pinching⁸ it tightly. Terror gripped me. Was this going to be another beating?

"You will behave in my school," he hissed⁹, "because if you don't, you will be in very serious trouble."

"Very serious trouble," shouted Tungay, making my ear throb¹⁰ even more.

¹shabby /'ʃæbi/ *adj.*
破旧的; 破败的

²filthy /'fɪlθi/ *adj.*
肮脏的; 污秽的

³scrap /skræp/ *n.*
碎片, 小块(纸、织物等)

⁴vein /veɪn/ *n.* 静脉

⁵chin /tʃɪn/ *n.* 颏;
下巴

⁶rasp /ræsp/ *v.*
用刺耳的声音说

⁷bellow /'beləʊ/ *v.*
(对某人) 大声吼叫,
怒吼

⁸pinch /pɪntʃ/ *v.*
拧; 捏; 掐

⁹hiss /hɪs/ *v.*
发嘶嘶声

¹⁰throb /θrɒb/ *v.*
(有规律地) 抽动, 抽
痛;

Although I was scared, I was even more scared of meeting the other boys. “Can I take off this sign?” I whispered.

As soon as I’d said this, the dreadful¹¹ man leaped out of his chair with a roar. I sprang¹² out of the way and ran up to my dorm where I hid for two hours. But Mr Creakle didn’t follow me.

Soon after this, the other boys started to return. One of the first was a cheerful, friendly boy called Tommy Traddles. After introducing himself, he stared at my sign.

“Mr Creakle says I have to wear this all of the time,” I explained miserably.

Traddles frowned, but then his face slowly broke into a smile. “I think I can help you out,” he said.

As the next group of boys arrived, Traddles called out to them, “Hey! Come and meet the new boy, Copperfield. It’s a new game and he’s wearing this sign!”

My stomach tightened with anxiety. The boys laughed a bit but didn’t bully me. Traddles told everyone about the “game” I was playing. A few of them said things like “Sit down, dog!”, but it could have been so much worse.

Then Traddles smiled at me. “Now, there’s someone you need to meet.”

Immediately, several boys lifted me up and carried me outside like a statue. They put me down under a shed in the playground where a handsome boy, about six years older than me, was sitting behind a desk.

“I’m J Steerforth,” the boy greeted me. “What name do you go by?”

“I’m David Copperfield,” I replied.

“And what brought you here, Copperfield?” he asked.

I told him all about biting Mr Murdstone’s hand and being kept prisoner in my room for five days. Steerforth listened quietly.

“Sounds like a bad situation,” he said.

I nodded glumly¹³.

“How much money have you got, Copperfield?” he asked.

“Seven shillings,” I replied nervously.

“Give it to me to take care of,” he said.

I hesitated for a few seconds. Was this going to be a cruel trick? Slowly I handed the coins over to him.

¹¹dreadful /'dredfl/ *adj.*
糟糕透顶的; 讨厌的

¹²spring /sprɪŋ/ *v.*
(sprang; sprung)
跳; 跃; 蹦

¹²statue /'stætʃu:/ *n.*
雕塑, 雕像

¹³glumly /glʌmli/ *adv.*
忧郁地

“Don’t worry,” he said, with a smile. “I’ll spend it well for you.”

And he was true to his word. That night, up in our dorm, Steerforth laid out seven shillings’ worth of treats — candies and almond¹³ cakes and biscuits. Steerforth and I, plus the other boys in our dorm, polished off the feast, and I listened with wide eyes as Steerforth talked about our headmaster.

¹³almond /'ɑ:mənd/ *n.*
扁桃仁

“If Creakle ever dared to cane me, I would hit him with his own ink bottle,” said Steerforth boldly. I looked up at him in awe¹⁴. The other boys told me that Mr Creakle hit every pupil in his school, but never Steerforth.

¹⁴in awe 敬畏地

When it was time to go to sleep, Steerforth came over to me. “Goodnight, young Copperfield,” he smiled, “and don’t worry about your stay here at Salem House. I’ll look after you.”

School began the next day. The teachers droned¹⁵ on and on, and often Mr Creakle would run among us, whacking anyone who was in his way.

¹⁵drone /drəʊn/ *v.*
嗡嗡叫；嗡嗡响

“Copperfield,” he said one morning, “take off your sign.”

I couldn’t understand this sudden act of kindness until he explained viciously¹⁶, “Wearing that sign protects you from my cane.”

¹⁶viciously /'viʃəsli/
adj. 邪恶地，敌意地

Living with Mr Creakle lurking¹⁷ round every corner was a nerve-racking¹⁸ experience. But with Steerforth as a friend, none of the boys bullied me and the teachers treated me quite well. I was so grateful to him for taking me under his wing that I would have done anything to please him. Sometimes, he used to ask me to tell him stories. And although it did feel a little as if I was his servant, I’d retell all the books I could remember from my long, lonely days at home.

¹⁷lurk /lɜ:k/ *v.*
(尤指为做不正当的事而) 埋伏，潜伏

¹⁸nerve-racking
/'nɜ:v rækɪŋ/ *adj.*
令人十分紧张的；

One day I had visitors. “Look at you, David Copperfield!” laughed Dan Peggotty, as he and Ham bustled¹⁹ into the room.

¹⁹lurk /'bʌsl/ *v.*
四下忙碌；催促

After listening to all their news, I told them, “You must meet my new friend Steerforth! I know you’ll like him!”

And they did like him. They were both dazzled²⁰ by his gentleman’s appearance and by the way he spoke.

²⁰dazzle /'dæzl/ *v.*
(强光等) 使目眩；(美貌、技能等) 使倾倒

“You must come down to Yarmouth with David,” insisted Dan Peggotty, shaking Steerforth by the hand. “You’ll always be welcome in my house.”

When term finished I was very excited at the thought of seeing my mother and Peggotty again. But I was dreading having to spend the whole holiday with the hateful Murdstones.

When I got home though, to my delight, I found out that my mother had had a baby boy. She was very tired and weak after the birth, but overjoyed with her new son—my step-brother. As the Murdstones were out for the day, I stayed up late holding and patting my new step-brother. As soon as I heard them return, I scampered²¹ upstairs and out of the way.

²¹scramper
/ˈskæmpə(r)/ v.
欢快地奔走

The next morning when I came down to breakfast and picked up my baby brother, Miss Murdstone was horrified²².

²²horrified /ˈhɒrɪfaɪd/
adj. 惊恐地

“He’s got it!” she screamed.

I looked at her in shock.

“Give it back!” she shrieked. “Give that baby back NOW!”

“I’m not going to hurt him,” I said.

“You will NEVER touch it again,” yelled Miss Murdstone. “Do you understand me?”

Instead of standing up for me, my mother took the baby back. “You are right, my dear Jane,” she nodded nervously at Miss Murdstone. “David won’t hold the baby again.”

How I hated what the Murdstones had done to my mother! They had made her pale and fearful with their cruelty and bullying.

²³put up with
忍受；容忍

“How long do we have to put up with²³ you?” snapped²⁴ Miss Murdstone one morning.

²⁴snap /snæp/ v. 厉声说；怒气冲冲地说

“A month,” I faltered²⁵.

“Then listen to me,” said Miss Murdstone. “From now on, you are forbidden²⁶ to talk to Peggotty and you are not allowed to sneak up to your room.”

²⁵flatter /ˈflætər/ v.
结巴地说；支吾其词

The month passed incredibly slowly, and when it finally ended I was almost glad to be going back to Salem House. At least I had friends there.

²⁶forbid /fəˈbɪd/ v.
禁止；不准

As the carriage pulled away from our house, my mother held my baby brother high in the air and waved me off. I can see her even now, her face pale and sad, full of feelings that she dared not show.

Life back at Mr Creakle’s school was still boring and harsh, but at times I was very happy. Tommy Traddles was full of fun and he never stayed downhearted for long, although he was always getting into scrapes. Sometimes I laughed till my sides ached. And Steerforth was always there as my protector and friend.

Two months into the new term, I was called to the Creakles’ office. Mrs Creakle was sitting with a letter in her hand.

“I’m sorry to say that your mother has been very ill,” said Mrs Creakle, “and now she is dead.”

➤ **Check Your Understanding**

1. How did Mr. Murdstone do with me after the fighting?

2. How was the boarding school? Try to find the details describing it.

3. Who did I meet in the boarding school?

Name	Job	Appearance	Character
Mr. Mell			
Tungay			
Mr. Creakle			
Tommy Traddles			
Steerforth			

4. What did Mr. Mell, Tungay and Mr. Creakle do to me?

5. How did Traddles and Steerforth help me?

6. How did my mom change before and after I went to the boarding school?

My mother started crying and reached out toward me. My mother fell silent as Mr. Murdstone turned his steely gaze on me.

I heard my mother and Peggotty screaming on the stairs outside my room, begging Mr. Murdstone to stop.

Change →

“You will NEVER touch it again,” yelled Miss Murdstone. “Do you understand me?”

Instead of standing up for me, my mother took the baby back. “You are right, my dear Jane,” she nodded nervously at Miss Murdstone. “David won’t hold the baby again.”

7. Try to find the sentence describing the following feelings: “surprised”, “unhappy”, “happy”, “worried”, and “frightened”.

➤ **Share Your Opinion**

1. Appreciate the underlined words in the following sentences.

School began the next day. The teachers **droned** on and on...Living with Mr. Creakle **lurking** round every corner was a nerve-racking experience.

And they did like him. They were both **dazzled** by his gentleman’s appearance and by the way he spoke.

2. David’s feeling experienced ups and downs in this chapter. Try to draw a curve of the changes of David Copperfield’s feeling according to the events.

When I arrived
at the school...

When I meet
Mr. Creakle...

When I meet
Steerforth...

When I returned
home...

When I returned
to the school...

When I heard my
mom’s death...