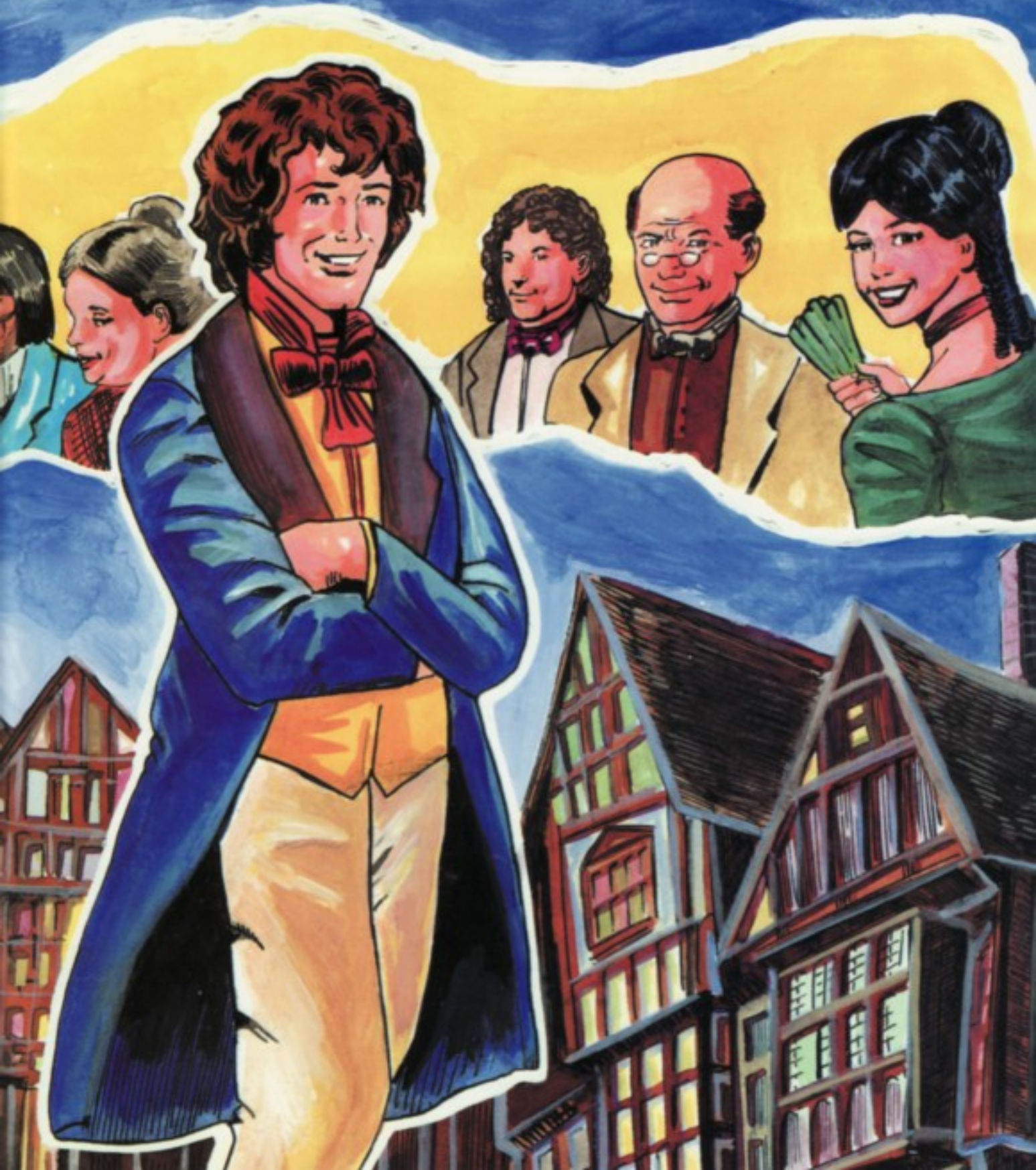


David Copperfield

Charles Dickens

LEVEL 4



WORDS USED

Story 71 **Story 72** **Story 73** **Story 74** **Story 75**

KEY WORDS

companion	blame	grumble	dignity	customer
Mama	imitate	nephew	quiver	deed
Papa	jail	service	ruin	elegant
servant	pause	success	stagger	hesitate
shiver	professor	wicked	stalk	obey
whiskers	rat	wine	tramp	poison

NECESSARY WORDS

barge	pawn	business	death
jealous			difficult
misbehave			wedding
orphan			

David is Born



Mama hugs her new, baby boy. "I'll call you David Copperfield," she said.

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
 2. Look at the picture.
 3. Read the sentences under the picture.
 4. Read the first four paragraphs of the story.
 5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that David's father

- a. did not want a son.
- b. wanted a little girl.
- c. was proud of his new child.
- d. was not present at David's birth.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read to find out why David leaves home.

David is Born

"It's a boy!" the doctor cried at my birth. As the clock struck twelve, my cries could be heard through the night.

"Someone is mistaken," Aunt Betsey said, "it *must* be a girl!" And angrily, she disappeared into the night's darkness.

"Bad luck to be born so late at night," said a helper.

But Mama hugged me close, whispering, "Your papa would have been proud. I'll call you David Copperfield, after him."

Papa died before my birth, but still I was happy. I loved our house, the Rookery, and my mama. I loved our servant, too. "Away from those sweets!" our servant, Peggotty often shouted. But she loved us like family.

One day a man with great black whiskers visited. "He be Mr. Murdstone," Peggotty said. She thought he was bad. I didn't understand just why, but I sensed he was not nice. One day, I asked Mama for a hug. "Now, now, Clara," her new companion said. "Do not hug David. He does not need hugs. What he needs is a strong hand!" How could Mama like him when he was so jealous of me?

One morning Peggotty said, "Come along now, Master Davy. You're coming to my house for awhile."

"But Mama can't live alone," I told her.

"She's staying with a friend," Peggotty explained. But there were tears in Mama's eyes as she waved good-bye. Soon I forgot about Mama and the awful Mr. Murdstone. "Over there's my brother's house," Peggotty said, pointing to a barge by the bay.

"This boat is his *house*?" I asked. "It's wonderful!" I even liked the fishy smell. Her brother, Mr. Peggotty, was a fisherman. He loved all who shared his funny

house. With them lived an orphan girl, little Emily, and an orphan boy, Ham. Ham was older than Emily. He was six feet tall, with strong arms used for hard work. Little Emily wore blue beads and had beautiful hair. I could tell that Ham loved Emily.

On the beach one day, Emily told me the ocean scared her. She feared her uncle would die there, as had her father. "When I become a lady," she told me, "we'll all move to a beautiful palace far away." She skipped along a sea wall, the high waves hitting against the stones.

Very scared, I screamed, "Please stop, Emily! You'll drown!" But Emily just laughed. "Let's look for sea shells," she called. Later, she kissed me. Just then, I knew I loved Emily, even with her strange ways.

My two-week visit with Peggotty passed quickly. "But I don't want to leave," I cried, with a shiver. I thought of Mr. Murdstone's mean face.

"It be time," Peggotty said, "so don't be a baby."

"I'll miss you," I told Emily. We waved to each other as the carriage headed toward the Rookery.

At home again, a strange servant greeted us. I cried, "Where's Mama?" Something was terribly wrong; I could feel it! My legs began to shake, and I cried, "Has Mama died?"

"Quiet," Peggotty said, adding seriously, "your mother has remarried." Then Mama's arms were around me, and I hugged her very hard.

"Clara," said Mr. Murdstone, "now don't forget. Boys need a strong hand." I felt Mama shiver as she showed me to my new room. It was far from the one she shared with her new companion.

I hated Mr. Murdstone, so I often stayed with Peggotty in the

kitchen. But sometimes, even Peggotty seemed angry. I missed the old, happy Mama who now did *exactly* as Mr. Murdstone directed. It was *his* fault that Mama had changed. One day, in anger, I pushed Mama away.

"Davy, my child! What's wrong?" she cried.

Mr. Murdstone jumped up and snapped, "Do you know how I treat a bad dog should he misbehave? He gets the whip!"

The next months I passed in quiet fear. My mother jumped to do all that Mr. Murdstone told her. I was too unhappy to learn my lessons as I should have. "I can't learn anything!" I screamed at Mr. Murdstone.

Whiskers sticking out, he dragged me upstairs as I begged, "Don't beat me! Please, I'll behave!" His angry eyes burned with hate, and he tightened his hold. When I couldn't escape, I went wild and I bit him! His heavy hand hit me again and again. Then he left me, hurt and unhappy.

I remained in my room for five days. I received meals there, and ate alone with no visitors. Once, a servant came to take away some of my clothing and shoes. Had I broken the law? Perhaps I would be hanged! Then came a whisper at the door. "Peggotty?" I asked.

"Davy," she said, "be as quiet as a mouse, or the cat will hear!" I knew she meant Mr. Murdstone. "How's Mama?" I asked.

Peggotty cried softly. "You'll see her tomorrow...before you go away."

I stood frozen for a moment. "Away?" I asked, my heart beating wildly.

"Yes," Peggotty replied... "to a London school."

Her words hit me like a hammer. I would be leaving the Rookery. My tears began to fall.

David is Born

VOCABULARY CHECK

companion	Mama	Papa	servant	shiver	whiskers
-----------	------	------	---------	--------	----------

I. Sentences to Finish

Fill in the blank in each sentence with the correct key word from the box above.

1. That dog is the old woman's best _____.
2. Shelley's cat has the longest _____ I have ever seen.
3. Horatio, the king's kindest _____ was loved by everyone.
4. I bought _____ a new dress for her birthday.
5. I like to go fishing with _____.
6. It makes me _____ to think of going out in the cold air.

II. Matching

Write the letter of the correct meaning from Column B next to the key word in Column A.

Column A

- ___ 1. shiver
- ___ 2. servant
- ___ 3. Papa
- ___ 4. companion
- ___ 5. Mama
- ___ 6. whiskers

Column B

- a. a person who spends time with another
- b. hair growing on a man's face
- c. to shake from cold or fear
- d. a name for one's father
- e. someone who works in another's home
- f. a name for one's mother

Check your answers with the key on page 69.