David Copperfield 2 Essay, Research Paper

The many differences between James Steerforth and Tommy Traddles

In the novel, David Copperfield, Charles Dickens contrasts many different characters. The main two characters that he contrasts are Tommy Traddles and James Steerforth. He displays the contrast between these two characters in many different ways. The only common thing that they share is their close friendship with David. Dickens shows these differences through their looks, personalities, and the final results of their lives.

For one thing, Charles Dickens contrasts these two characters through their looks. He tells the readers that James Steerforth is an extremely handsome young person whom everyone seems to adore. In every instance in the book when someone sees him for the first time, they recognize him as being very attractive. He was described as being tall and thin character. On the other hand, Traddles was pictured as being somewhat on the heavy side. He reminds the reader of the fat clumsy kid in their own school. Dickens portrays this when he says, “Poor Traddles! In a tight sky-blue suit that made his arms and legs like German sausages, or roly-poly puddings,” (143).

Besides being different in appearance, Charles Dickens contrasts these two characters through their personalities. From the beginning, James Steerforth leads people to believe that he is a good person. There are many instances in which he shows off his true colors. The first sign of his deceitful manner occurs when David allows Steerforth to keep his money. Steerforth uses this money to buy food for many of the students. Steerforth displays his selfishness when he insults his schoolmaster, Mr. Mell, and gets him fired. Again, Steerforth shows his stern personality again when David arrives in London, and he is given a very small room over a stable. Steerforth confronts the hotel employee, and David is given a much better room. The greatest example of Steerforth?s brute personality is when he runs off with little Em?ly. Dickens tells us that Steerforth and Em?ly fought a lot and finally Steerforth leaves her, and suggests she marries Littimer. On the other hand, Tommy Traddles is a very nice person. Trad

dles shows his kindness by introducing David to the boys at the Salem House. Charles Dickens shows Traddles? personality when he says of him, “He was very honourable, Traddles was, and held it as a solemn duty in the boys to stand by one another” (143). Traddles is a strong-willed person. Even though he receives more punishment than anyone else at the school, he maintains his honor. Traddles is a very reserved person. He keeps many of his feelings hidden, revealing them only as skeletons drawn on paper.

The biggest difference between James Steerforth and Tommy Traddles is final results of their lives when the book ends. James Steerforth dies a tragic and horrible death. Steerforth spent most of his boisterous life looking down on the people. In the end, it is nature that pays him back by drowning him in the ocean. In contrast, Tommy Traddles becomes a very successful magistrate. He is happily married to the love of his life, Sophy. She and Traddles have two boys and they are living a happy family life.

In this novel, Charles Dickens shows contrast between several of the main characters. He shows these characters to be different in many ways. He especially shows this between James Steerforth and Tommy Traddles. He does this by contrasting their looks, personalities, and the final results of their lives.