

"The pictures are really good.
You can easily imagine just what the
characters are like." Ruby, 10



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

CHARLES DICKENS

An escaped convict threatens to eat young Pip's heart for breakfast. The ghostly Miss Havisham invites Pip to her eerie home. A mysterious benefactor makes him suddenly wealthy. Pip's life will never be the same again.

Pride, humility, love, loyalty and shame compete for Pip's emotions. Will his quest to become a gentleman enable him to melt the cold heart of the beautiful Estella, or will it destroy his happiness?

Pip's tale is full of mystery and surprises. What is the nature of Miss Havisham's interest in him? Why does Estella want to break his heart? Why does the dangerous convict return? Most importantly, who has given Pip his great expectations?



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Charles Dickens

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THE CHARACTERS



Pip

As Pip grows from a young boy into a young man, he wants answers to many questions. Will the answers surprise him? Can he soften Estella's heart?

Magwitch

A dangerous, desperate villain. Will he harm Pip, or help him?



Joe Gargery

Pip's uncle is a simple, honest blacksmith. Will Pip ever return Joe's love and respect?

Mrs Gargery

Pip's angry, frightening sister. Will she ever discover the truth about her pork pie?



Estella

Cold, cruel and beautiful. Why does she want to break Pip's heart? Will she succeed?

Miss Havisham

A heart-broken and bitter old lady. Despite her strangeness, does she want to help Pip?



Biddy

An adorable village girl. Whose heart will she win?



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

A little bundle of shivers called Pip stood in front of his parents' gravestones, afraid and crying. The savage wind howling across the unfriendly marshes threw the dark mist at him, making him cry even louder.

'Hold yer noise!' roared a terrible voice. A man appeared between the graves and put his hand roughly over Pip's mouth. 'Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut yer throat.'

He was a large man in rough grey clothes. On one leg was a prisoner's heavy leg iron, which made him limp. He wore an old rag around his head, and his shoes were broken. He was soaked, smothered in mud, stung, torn and cut. He shivered and glared at Pip, then growled, 'Tell us yer name. Quick! Show us where you live, you young dog.'

He tipped the terrified Pip upside down to empty his pockets, making it impossible for

Pip to work out where he did live. 'What fat cheeks you ha' got,' he told Pip's upside-down face. 'Darn me if I couldn't eat 'em.'

He turned Pip back onto his feet. 'Tomorrow you get me a file to cut off this leg iron, and some food, or I'll 'ave yer 'eart and liver fer me breakfast. And you do it secretly, or I'll creep into yer home when you're all comfy and safe and warm in bed, and I'll tear you open.'

His great hands at last released Pip. Not once looking back, Pip ran all the way home.

For the rest of that evening Pip felt terrified. At suppertime he managed to sneak some bread and cheese into his lap without anyone noticing. After supper he crept into the kitchen and gathered together half a jar of mincemeat, an old bone with a little meat still on it, and some brandy. Then he noticed a whole perfect pork pie on the shelf, and took that too. Finally, still unnoticed, he crept into the workshop and found a file.

Very early the next damp, dreary, misty morning, Pip once more set off into the marshes. The wind lashed at him and the mist made it hard to see. As he ran, stumbling, he imagined that he was being chased by a horde of people shouting 'Stop thief! Stop that boy! He's stolen a perfect pork pie!'



Miss Havisham of Herbert's good character, and she leaves him money in her will.

- When Pip's fortune disappears with Magwitch's death, he goes abroad to work for Herbert for eleven years. His meeting with Estella in the grounds of Miss Havisham's ruined house takes place after this period of time.
- Between Miss Havisham's fire and the end of the novel, Estella marries an unpleasant man called Drummle. Their marriage is very unhappy. When she finally meets Pip, she is a widow.
- Mrs Joe's illness and death are actually due to her having been attacked by Joe's bitter, jealous employee Orlick. Orlick also attacks and almost kills Pip, who is saved by Herbert.

Back in time

Victorian England was experiencing a period of great transition. Having been an agricultural, rural economy, it was moving swiftly towards

industrial nationhood. The old rural life, represented in *Great Expectations* by Joe, was being lost as people aspired to greater wealth. Like Pip, many left traditional rural life in favour of cities like London.

A new 'middle class' was emerging. These people were below the aristocracy, their wealth usually created through trade and industry. This gave rise to a lively debate about the nature of a true gentleman. To be considered a gentleman required a combination of wealth, education and manners. Pip spends much of his time in London studying to acquire the education to be considered a gentleman.

The Victorians believed that they could overcome crime. Great numbers of prisoners were transported to colonies in Australia. This practice peaked between 1820 and 1850.

Charles Dickens experienced poverty at first hand – his father was imprisoned for debt and the young Charles made to work in a warehouse. These experiences affected him deeply.