

(T) Dickens wastes no time delving into the crucial role that parents play in the shaping of a child's future. (P/Q) In the opening scene, a very young Pip puzzles out his own name and his own place in the world as he studies his parents' gravestones: "I give Pirrip as my father's name on the authority of his tombstone" (Dickens 3). (P) Pip is an orphan, alone in the world except for a sister who raises him "by hand" and a brother-in-law who treats him like a best friend. (P) Pip's sister, Mrs. Joe, is a full twenty years older than Pip and is greatly lacking in empathy and patience. (A) As a result of Mrs. Joe's parenting style, Pip is a timid child who lives in constant fear of "tickler," Mrs. Joe's leather spanking strap. (P/A) As the novel progresses, additional parental figures including Miss Havisham, Matthew Pocket, Magwitch, and Wemmick also come to influence Pip. (A) Miss Havisham is the psychological parent, a manipulator; Wemmick is the adoring parent figure to his elderly father; Matthew Pocket is the hands-off patriarch of a vast brood; and, finally, Magwitch is the mysterious figure who sacrifices his life for "his child." The book jacket features the names of all of the "parents" in *Great Expectations*. (A) The different colors and fonts represent the different styles of parenting. A large red heart in the center of the front cover represents Joe, the only "parent" who never hurts or betrays Pip. (A) Joe's selfless acts, from carrying Pip on his shoulders through the marshes to paying off Pip's debts in the city, are the only constant source of love and goodness that Pip has. (A) The small lock on the heart shows that the love of a "true" parent is forever. (A) The wedding dress adjacent to the heart is a stand in for Miss Havisham, the second most significant parental figure in the novel. The back cover features quotes from the parents. The quotes were chosen specifically to demonstrate the disparate approaches to parenting. (A/Q) The best testament to Joe's boundless love comes when Joe names his blood son after his first son: "We giv' him the name of Pip for your sake, dear old chap" (Dickens 447). (A) Joe is the "truest" parent in the entire novel.