

# Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*



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English 9 Honors



## Stage I of Pip's Expectations: Ch. I to IX

### Chapter I

1. How does Dickens use setting to convey the mood right at the opening?
2. What does Dickens' description of the first convict tell us about him?
3. What is surprising about the narrative point-of-view Dickens has adopted?
4. How does Dickens contrast the convict and Pip?
5. But in what ways are these two characters similar?
6. What objects does the convict want brought to him?
7. What personal circumstance of Pip's is convenient for the convict?\*

*Note:* This is the first coincidence of a plot that comes to depend on coincidences.

*Vocabulary:* "wittles" = vittles (food); "battery" = gun emplacement, in this case probably dating from the Napoleonic Wars, which ended at Waterloo in 1815.

### Chapter II

1. How does Dickens arouse our sympathies for certain characters?
2. Why does Pip live with village blacksmith Joe Gargery?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between these two characters?
4. What object that Pip takes the convict makes him feel guilty and nearly gets him discovered?

*Vocabulary:* "bolting" = swallowing without properly chewing (probably an indication of Pip's apprehensiveness at the dinner table); "hulks" = former naval vessels now being used as temporary prisons.

[The first instalment (1 Dec. 1860) ended here.]

### Chapter III

1. What is surprising about the attitude of the two convicts towards one another?
2. What object in this chapter leads to a real mystery later on?

*Vocabulary:* "rimy" = frosty.

### Chapter IV

Note Mr. Wopsle's self-righteous biblical allusion: "Swine were the companions of the prodigal" (see *Luke XV:11-32*).

1. Explain the expression "like monumental Crusaders as to their legs."
2. What special occasion is being celebrated and how?

3. And yet why does Pip feel apprehensive and miserable?

*Vocabulary:* “penitentials” = possibly a reference to prison uniform; also, clothing worn as a sign of repentance or sorrow for sin; “banns” = announcement of impending marriage made in church; “thrown open” = Wopsle is ineligible for the post of clergyman in the [Church of England](#) because he is not a university graduate — the profession has not been made accessible to members of the lower classes.

[The second instalment (8 Dec., 1860) ended here: is Pip about to be arrested?]

#### Chapter V

1. How was the suspense of the previous chapter explained? (Note the effect of the serialized format on the novel's structure; this sustaining of suspense from the end of one instalment through the beginning of the next involved careful plotting to coincide with the closing and opening of “curtains.”)
2. How did the first convict show his appreciation for Pip's loyalty at this point?
3. What apparently is the cause of the hostility between the two convicts?
4. Explain: “like a wicked Noah's ark” at the very end of the chapter.

[The third instalment (15 Dec., 1860) ended here.]

#### Chapter VI

1. Who is Pumblechook, and how does he get Pip into Satis House?

#### Chapter VII

“I was to be apprenticed to Joe”—a seven-year apprenticeship was the usual way of entering a trade.

1. How does Dickens satirize public education in this chapter?

2. Note that Pip describes his alphabet as "a bramble bush" and his fingers as "thieves"; how do these references contribute to the book's imagery?

3. Explain: "steam was yet in its infancy" (most British cities were connected by railways in 1860).

4. What is implied about England's government when Dickens has Joe tell Pip that Mrs. Joe, being given to government, does not want him to be able to read and write?

[The fourth instalment (22 December 1860) ended here.]

### Chapter VIII

1. Note the connection between the vegetation and the prison imagery in the descriptions of both Pumblechook's shop and Miss Havisham's house; how is Pip's very name involved in this imagery?

2. Note the description of Satis (Latin, meaning "enough" or plenty" as in satisfaction) House: "old brick, and dismal and had a great many bars to it." What other type of building does the derelict mansion seem to resemble?

3. Miss Havisham behaves like an aristocrat; by \_\_\_\_\_, however, her father made his fortune, which passed to her.

4. What does Miss Havisham's appearance remind Pip of? How is this analogy apt?

5. What about Pip does Estella criticize?

6. What does his reaction to her criticism tell us about Pip?

7. The key image for English society of the nineteenth century is the "rank garden with an old wall". God started our world, Dickens seems to say, as a paradise (The Garden of \_\_\_\_\_), but sinful and careless men have made a "rank garden" of it. Once again, the "old wall" suggests a prison. Early nineteenth-century Britain had so many prisoners that there weren't prisons enough to hold them. Hence there are improvised prisons, the "\_\_\_\_\_" at the end of the "Meshes"; later, the convicts will be "transported" by prison ships to \_\_\_\_\_. Return means death.

[The fifth instalment (29 December 1860) ended here.]

#### Chapter IX

1. Why does Pip "embroider" his account of his visit to Satis House?
2. Why do Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe believe this far-fetched account?
3. Note the admonition to the reader at the very end of the chapter; how does this passage further connect the story's vegetation and the prison imagery?

#### Chapter X

1. How do we know the bank notes come from the convict?
2. What does this incident with the bank notes indicate about Joe?

[The sixth instalment (5 Jan., 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XI

1. Why does Miss Havisham scorn her relatives?

2. Explain how "toadies and humbugs" applies to the Pockets.
3. What strange epergne does Pip see on the table? How does this object relate to Miss Havisham's dress?

[The seventh instalment (12 Jan., 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XII

1. What kind of punishment does Pip expect for striking the young gentleman?
2. Instead, Miss Havisham rewards Pip later: how?

#### Chapter XIII

1. Why does Pip feel uncomfortable when he and Joe visit Satis House?
2. Who takes most of the credit for Miss Havisham's generosity? Who takes the money?
3. Explain: "I should never like Joe's trade. I had liked it once, but once was not now."

[The eighth instalment (19 January 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XIV

1. What fear involving Estella "haunted" Pip now?
2. Pip is ashamed of his home, and is unhappy there: why doesn't he run away?

## Chapter XV

1. Describe the two new characters introduced here and Pip's relationship with them.
2. How does Joe get into a fight with Orlick?
3. How does this fight become important later on?
4. What becomes of Estella?
5. Why does Pip identify himself with George Barnwell in George Lillo's play *The London Merchant*?

[The ninth instalment (26 January 1861) ended here.]

## Chapter XVI

1. Who is suspected of the crime committed here, and why?
2. What does Dickens convey through Pip about the police?
3. Whom does Biddy suspect of Mrs. Joe's assault, and why?

## Chapter XVII

1. What additional reason does Pip now have for disliking Orlick?

2. What is the relationship between Pip and Biddy now?

3. What is the mental and emotional conflict Pip undergoes here?

[The tenth instalment (2 February 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XVIII

1. Where had Pip encountered the mysterious stranger before?

2. What were the conditions upon which Pip would receive his "great expectations"?

3. What reason does Pip have for thinking Jaggers is Miss Havisham's agent in terms of his suddenly receiving "great expectations"?

4. Though he now is to have wealth and education, why is Pip discontented?

#### Chapter XIX

1. Why have Trabb and Pumblechook changed their attitude towards Pip?

2. What clue are we given as to Trabb's true character?

3.. Why does Miss Havisham fail to correct Pip when he thanks her for his fortune?

4. Compare “and the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me” with the conclusion of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, an epic poem based on the opening of “The Book of Genesis” in the Bible:

The World was all before them, where to choose  
Thir place of rest, and providence thir guide:  
They hand-in-hand with wand'ring steps and slow,  
Through Eden took thir solitary way.

This is the end of the first stage of Pip's Expectations and the end of the twelfth instalment (16 February 1861).

Note on Symbolism: A literary symbol extends the meaning of a word or phrase beyond its usual literal or denotative meaning by bringing in its many associative or connotative meanings. How are the following Symbolic? Pip, Estella, Pocket, Hubble, meshes.

## **Stage II of Pip's Expectations**

### Chapter XX

1. What kind of lawyer is Mr. Jaggers? (That is, what is specialty?)
2. What is Pip's first impression of London?

### Chapter XXI

1. Who is Pip's room-mate? By coincidence, when did we meet him previously/
2. Why does the selection of this young man as his companion confirm Pip's suspicions that Miss Havisham was his benefactor?

The thirteenth instalment (23 Feb., 1861) ended here.

### Chapter XXII

"half-price to the theatre" — at an evening performance, after the first play, admission was reduced in most Victorian theatres.

1. What does his new friend tell Pip about Miss Havisham's past?
2. Why has she ordered Herbert's father out of her house?
3. What is Herbert's occupation? What does "cut into the Direction" suggest about his goals?

[The fourteenth instalment (2 March, 1861) ended ended here.]

### Chapter XXIII

Mr. Pocket aspired to "the Woolsack" (the seat of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords) or the "mitre" (a bishop's hat).

1. What is Herbert's father's chief fault? Why is he especially suitable to educate Pip?
2. In what way are Mrs. Pocket and Pip alike?
3. How do Drummle and Startop differ?

*Vocabulary:* "grinder" = private teacher or tutor of children of the rich; "blades" = fashionable young men; "baronet" = hereditary aristocratic title above the degree of knight, although both are addressed as "Sir" followed by Christian and surname.

### Chapter XXIV

Note: The Old Bailey was London's criminal court.

1. What kind of training is Mr. Pocket to give Pip?
2. What earlier impressions of Jaggers are confirmed?

3. What is Wemmick's highly pragmatic philosophy?

[The fifteenth instalment (9 March, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XXV

The [Gothic Revival](#) in architecture was at its height in the 1860s.

1. What does Pip share with Herbert besides the Barnard's Inn Chambers and the home in Hammersmith?
2. What other side of Wemmick does Pip find at his Walworth "Castle"?

*Vocabulary:* "Cracksmen" are housebreakers or burglars; "Britannia metal" is a cheap substitute for silver; "Walworth," now absorbed into Greater London, was still a village in the mid-nineteenth century; "Greenwich time" is the standard for British time, calculated from the meridian running through the Greenwich Observatory.

#### Chapter XXVI

The "Witches' cauldron" is a reference to the apparitions that rise from the Weird Sisters' cooking-pot in *Macbeth*, IV, i.

1. What is Jaggers' warning to Pip concerning Drummle?
2. What is mysterious about Molly?

[The sixteenth instalment (16 March, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XXVII

"I had made this monster" is a humorous allusion to Mary Shelley's 1818 Gothic novel *Frankenstein*, in which a young scientist creates a highly destructive and resentful monster.

1. Why is Joe's visit not a success?
2. Why does Joe come to London?
3. Which play by Shakespeare is indicated by "the highest tragic walk of our National Bard"?

*Vocabulary:* "Roscian" = in the manner of Roscius, a famous actor in ancient Rome.

#### Chapter XXVIII

A "Half-way House" is a roadside inn that is the mid-point of a coach journey. Dickens may mean the Earl of Warwick at Welling, Kent.

1. How is the convict theme re-introduced?
2. "*Verb. Sap.*" is a Latin abbreviation meaning "To a wise man, a word is enough." Why is this expression used here?
3. Who is famous in his hometown as Pip's earliest companion, patron and friend? What is Pip's attitude to this supposed fact?

*Vocabulary:* "Lifer" = sentenced to prison or transportation to Australia for life; "Mentor" = the avuncular advisor of Prince Telemachus, son of the hero Odysseus, in the early books of Homer's *Odyssey*; "Quintin Matsys" = a Flemish painter (1466-1530) who was (supposedly) apprenticed to a blacksmith in his youth.

[The seventeenth instalment (23 March, 1861) ended ended here.]

#### Chapter XXIX

"Tag and Rag and Bobtail"--a mob or rabble wearing ragged clothes.

1. In what role does Pip see himself as he returned to Miss Havisham's?

2. In his feelings for Estella, how does Pip come to follow Miss Havisham's teaching?
3. Why does Pip not visit Joe?

[The eighteenth instalment (30 March, 1861) ended ended here.]

### Chapter XXX

1. How did Pip "get even with" Orlick?
2. How did Herbert's "love life" show a contrast with that of Pip?
3. Why does Pip refer to the codfish and barrel of oysters he sends to Joe as "penitential"?
4. Why does Herbert use the nick-name "Handel" for Pip?
5. Why does Herbert accuse Pip of "looking into our gift-horse's mouth with a magnifying glass"?

*Vocabulary:* "sour grapes" is an allusion to a fable by the Greek Aesop (c. 620-c. 560 BC) in which a fox consoles himself for a crow's unwillingness to help him obtain a bunch of grapes. The term indicates Herbert's wide reading, and suggests that he feels Pip is deluding himself about being intended for Estella.

### Chapter XXXI

1. How does Pip's night at the theatre only increase his anxieties instead of easing them?

[The nineteenth instalment (6 April, 1861) ended ended here.]

### Chapter XXXII

1. Why does Dickens include a picture of Newgate Prison?
2. How does Estella appear to Pip in contrast to his visit to the prison?

### Chapter XXXIII

1. Why has Estella come to London? 2. Why is Pip so full of misery after seeing her?

*Vocabulary:* "Moses in the bulrushes" is certainly a humorous way of describing the small quantity of butter in relationship to the surrounding parsely. In the Old Testament, Pharaoh's daughter discovers the infant Moses in a basket by the margin of the Nile River (*Exodus II: 3-6*).

The twentieth instalment (13 April, 1861) ended here. Chapter XXXIV

1. Why does Pip's life in London make things difficult for Herbert? 2. What Club did they join? What is the narrator's attitude towards this club?

Covent Garden = at the time, a disreputable part of London frequented at night by prostitutes.

### Chapter XXXV

1. How does Mrs. Joe's death affect Pip? 2. Why does her death not bring Pip and Joe any closer together?

*Vocabulary:* "Mummery" is suggestive of play-acting, namely that the Victorian mourning rituals accompanying Mrs. Joe's funeral are farcical.

[The twenty-first instalment (20 April, 1861) ended ended here.]

### Chapter XXXVI

1. How do Pip's fortunes improve on his twenty-first birthday? 2. What does Pip still not find out?

### Chapter XXXVII

1. What plan does Wemmick propose for Pip's desire to help Herbert? 2. What humorous touch concerning Wemmick is shown?

[The twenty-second instalment (27 April, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XXXVIII

1. Why is Miss Havisham so pleased with Estella's behaviour? 2. How does the success of Miss Havisham's teaching cause her grief? 3. What happened to cause Pip even more pain in his pursuit of Estella?

[The twenty-third instalment (4 May, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XXXIX

1. Who is the strange visitor?
2. Why has he come?
3. What is Pip's reaction to this revelation
  - in regard to himself?
  - In regard to Estella?
  - In regard to Joe?

*Vocabulary:* "A Game One" is a lively, eager, daring fellow; Magwitch pronounces "vermin" (a repulsive creature such as a rat) "warmint," indicating his low-class speech.

[The twenty-fourth instalment (11 May, 1861) ended here.]

### **Stage III of Pip's Expectations**

#### Chapter XL

1. What is the new problem that Pip faces?
2. What is his frightful but rich patron's name?
3. How does Pip's discussion with Jaggers disabuse him of the notion that Miss Havisham has been his patron?

*Vocabulary:* "I'm a heavy grubber" (voracious eater), admits Magwitch. Fresh from his voyage from "New South Wales" (the British colony in Australia) or "Botany Bay" (the harbour of present-day Sydney, where transported convicts disembarked), he wears a pea coat" (a sailor's heavy blue woolen jacket). The "Calendar" to which Pip alludes is the infamous *Newgate Calendar* (1771) containing the biographies of notorious criminals. Finally, Pip compares himself to Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, "the imaginary student pursued by the misshapen creature who made me" for he sees Magwitch in terms of both the creator and the persecutor in the 1818 novel.

[The twenty-fifth instalment (18 May, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter XLI

1. Upon his return, what solution does Herbert suggest?

*Vocabulary:* "muzzled" = restricted, confined, suggesting that Magwitch is trying to be "genteel" for the sake of Pip and Herbert.

#### Chapter XLII: "Magwitch's Story"

1. What kind of life had Magwitch had as a child, and then as an adult?
2. What do we learn of the cause of Magwitch's hatred for Compeyson (the second convict)?
3. What do we learn about a certain "mad lady"?
4. What was the result of Magwitch's assault on Compeyson after their escape from the prison ship?
5. What details does Herbert add?

*Vocabulary:* "traveller's rest" = a tramps' shelter; "tatars" = potatoes; "Epsom" = famous racecourse; "dab" = expert; "the horrors" = violent fit of shaking caused by alcoholism; "Bridewells and Lock-ups" = prisons and jails (gaols).

[The twenty-sixth instalment (25 May, 1861) ended here.]

### Chapter XLIII

1. What added danger do they now realize "Provis" to be in?

### Chapter XLIV

1. Why does Miss Havisham lead Pip on to believe she was his benefactress?

2. What admission does Estella make to Pip?

3. What is Pip's reply?

[The twenty-seventh instalment (1 June, 1861) ended ended here.]

### Chapter XLV

1. Why is it necessary to move Magwitch?
2. What does Wemmick advise Pip to get hold of?

*Vocabulary:* "Dover road" = road leading south to the port on the English Channel by which travellers made their way to France; "Divinely Righteous" = this satirical description of the four-post bedstead as a species of tyrant alludes to the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings espoused by the Stuart monarchs in the 17th c.; "Argus" = monster from Greco-Roman myth that possessed a hundred eyes, and therefore was never completely sound asleep but always on watch; "shoot the bridge" = pass rapidly under the dangerous narrow arches of Old London Bridge in a small boat at ebb tide on the Thames.

### Chapter XLVI

1. Where is "Mr. Campbell" found by Pip?

2. Why is Pip to obtain a boat?

*Vocabulary:* "Double Gloucester" = an orange- coloured cheese named after a city in the west of England; "Old London Bridge" was torn down in 1843 to make way for a new bridge, since transferred brick by brick to Havasu City, Colorado.

[The twenty-eighth instalment (8 June, 1861) ended ended here.]

#### Chapter XLVII

1. Why does Pip return Magwitch's unopened pocket book?

2. Who sits behind Pip at the theatre?

*Vocabulary:* "swab" = clumsy fellow; a term used by sailors to denigrate co-workers, originally pertaining to the labourer who mopped the ship's deck, from Dutch nautical term "zwabber."

#### Chapter XLVIII

1. Who does Pip feel Molly to be?

2. What reasons does he have for his suspicions?

3. What sort of husband does Jaggers think The Spider would be to Estella?

4. The phrase "over the broomstick" means "not legally married," and implies a common-law marriage. Who are the people who were "married" in this informal manner?

5. Hounslow Heath, about twelve miles west of London, was a maze of footpaths: What event transpired there?

[The twenty-ninth instalment (15 June, 1861) ended ended here.]

#### Chapter XLIX

1. Why does Pip go to Satis House?
2. What does Miss Havisham ask of Pip in return for the £900?
3. What information does she give him about Estella?
4. Although Pip has saved Miss Havisham from the fire, how is she when he leaves?

#### Chapter L

1. From what Magwitch tells Pip, what does Pip deduce?

[The thirtieth instalment (22 June, 1861) ended ended here.]

#### Chapter LI

1. In confirming his conclusion, what side of his nature did Jaggers show?

#### Chapter LII

1. What good thing does Pip complete?
2. How has Pip's rescue of Miss Havisham delayed his plans?
3. When do they plan to put their plan into action?

4. Where does Pip go Monday night?

5. What happens to the letter which concerns his uncle Provis?

[The thirty-first instalment (29 June, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter LIII

1. Who captures Pip in the old sluice house?

2. Why does Pip feel he was doomed?

3. How is Pip providentially saved?

Dickens wrote in a memorandum that Pip is now about 23, and that he was about 7 at the opening of the story. Magwitch, now 60, was about 40 when he first met Compeyson.

[The thirty-second instalment (6 July, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter LIV

1. What news disturbs Pip when they got Magwitch as far as the public-house on the river?

2. How are his fears justified when they set out for the steamer?

3. How does Pip's attitude toward Magwitch change after the convict had been rescued from the water?

*Vocabulary:* "coal-whippers" = workmen who unload coal from ships; "ballast-lighters" = Thames barges carrying stabilizing weight to be transferred to sailing ships; "thowels" = wooden pegs that serve oarlocks for rowing; "jack" = one who performs odd-jobs.

[The thirty-third instalment (13 July, 1861) ended here.]

## Chapter LV

A note of suspense "Don't go home". "Hummums," a hotel in Covent Garden, had once been a Turkish bath: "Hamman" is Arabic for "bathtub."

1. What happened to Compeyson, who had prevented Magwitch's escape?
2. What kept Pip from taking a job with Herbert?
4. What is characteristic about Wemmick's wedding?
5. The "Pool" is a particularly busy stretch of the Thames between London Bridge and Greenwich: why is Provis to be kept here?

*Vocabulary:* "The Red Book" gives the titles and addresses of the British aristocracy; "Hymen" is the Greco-Roman patron god of marriage seen at the close of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*; "provided by contract" means "paid in advance for goods or services."

## Chapter LVI

1. How does Pip repay his benefactor before Magwitch escaped his hanging sentence through death?

*Vocabulary:* "The Home Secretary" in the British cabinet had the power to commute a convicted felon's death-sentence.

[The thirty-fourth instalment (20 July, 1861) ended ended here.]

## Chapter LVII

1. Who has nursed Pip through his illness and paid his debts?
2. What does Joe tell Pip of Miss Havisham's generosity in death?

*Vocabulary:* Joe mispronounces "codicil" (a legally binding addition to a will) as "coddleshell," as if referring to coddled eggs, "coddle" meaning both "to boil gently" and "to treat as an invalid.

#### Chapter LVII

1. What does Pip plan to do after Joe left?

[The thirty-fifth instalment (27 July, 1861) ended here.]

#### Chapter LVIII

1. What does Pip do when he found Joe and Biddy happily married?

#### Chapter LIX

1. When Pip visited Biddy and Joe and their two children eleven years later, what did Biddy advise him to do?
2. What had Pip heard of Estella?
3. What change had come over Estella when he met her at the site of Satis House?
4. How does "a cold silvery mist" recall the end of the First Stage of Pip's expectations? Why is Dickens making this connection?
5. In what ways does the revised ending seem as believable as the original one?

[The last weekly instalment in *All the Year Round*, 3 August, ended here.]

