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# Great Expectations (Classics Edition)



## Synopsis

Raised in squalor in the marsh country of Kent, the orphan Pip is taken under the wing of the eccentric and reclusive Miss Havisham—only to blindly give his heart to the dowager's beautiful but ice-cold adopted daughter, Estella. Even as a mysterious benefactor helps to shape Pip's life into one of fortune, success, and self-discovery, the unspeakable secrets of his unrequited love continue to haunt him—and promise to change his life once again. With its indelible cast of characters, immersive epic narrative, and startling dramatic twists, Charles Dickens's powerful classic continues to enthrall generations of new readers. Revised edition: Previously published as *Great Expectations*, this edition of *Great Expectations* (Classics Edition) includes editorial revisions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

British author Charles Dickens (1812–1870) was a titan of English literature. Among his most beloved works are classics such as *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Great Expectations*. He wrote continually about the plight of the poor and the division of wealth in nineteenth-century England, the heartbreaking circumstances of which he knew only too well. When Dickens was twelve years old, his father was sent to debtors' prison, forcing the young boy to leave school and seek factory work to help support his parents and seven siblings. Although Dickens eventually began his literary career as a journalist, it is his endearing novels that have stood the test of time. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

1. Pip the narrator. The story is essentially the story of Pip's life as told by now older and wiser Pip as he reflects back on his life, the turning points and wrong decisions he made. The good, the bad and the ugly of his life. I identify with this Pip and do similar things myself.

2. Pip the protagonist. It is hard not to like the central character Pip. We see him grow up, we follow him wherever he goes, we get to hear his thoughts and empathise with his dreams and lovesick ways. We see some of ourselves in him. He makes mistakes and is annoying at times but aren't we all?

3. The story. Unbelievable if you think about it but Dickens can make you believe the unbelievable if just for a while. As it was written in serial form there are continual tantalising developments at the end of chapters to whet your appetite for more (for example chapter XXXIV ends with the paragraph telling of the death of Mrs Joe Gargery). Each of the three parts of the novel deals with a different expectation, and we watch how Pip changes in the face of his changing expectations. The full story is not revealed until the final chapters but it is gripping all the way.

4. Characters. What an incredibly interesting group of characters with fascinating and appropriate names. Miss Havisham (HAVE A HAM), the rich eccentric who still wears her wedding dress after being jilted 25 years before. Mr Jaggers (JAG.), the razor sharp lawyer, villains Orlick, Drummle (a DRUM heavy abusive) and Compeyson (COME PAY ME) sound bad and the beautiful but unreachable Estella (star). Dickens characters stick around in your mind long after you read his story.

5. Moral issues. In a time of great wealth in England there is great poverty and injustice. No one can describe these issues as well as Dickens.

6. Humour. There is a lot of excellent humour in Great Expectations. The Pocket household, which is an upside down Alice in Wonderland place run by the servants Flops and Millers, is a good example.

7. Symbols, Imagery and allegory. The atmospherics of mists (in graveyard when he meets the convict), huge storm (when Magwitch visits), light (Joe's forge a light across the marshes) and darkness are great in creating moods. Miss Havisham's garden and mansion are symbols of wealth and privilege of high society. Perhaps Dickens has a message when we see they are decaying.

8. Beautiful writing. These words from the Narrator Pip say so much "Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bind you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day."

9. Wealth of human issues. Crime, social class, injustice love and friendship in all its forms, bitterness and hate, unrequited love, coming of age and life's expectations.

10. Dickensian. Dickens is to literature what Shakespeare is to plays. In the Oxford dictionary the term Dickensian is used to describe something that is reminiscent of Dickens and his writings, such as poor social

conditions or comically repulsive characters.

Phillip Piripp, introduced on page one and known thereafter as

Pip, is the protagonist: a young boy, the step-son of a benevolent (though broke) blacksmith who married Pip's sister Mrs. Joe Gargery". Pip and Joe have a kindred attraction; Mrs. Joe, on the other hand, exhibits a strange temper that would make her contemptible except that she

hand-raises Pip... a devotion not expected, or necessarily common of the time and class. Pip's Great

Expectation is a very peculiar opportunity to make a gentleman of himself and rise above his circumstances and that is the fuel for the story that plays out over Pip's boyhood through young adulthood. "In the little world in which children have their existence whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice." Dickens takes scissors to a full-skein of characters in the first half of his story and before the end of the book he cleverly ties each of the loose ends of yarn together for the reader. A dozen or more sub-plots spontaneously combust over the course of the read. Dickens always manages to illustrate the impulse and reaction of his characters: there is a rewarded expectation of karma and frequently a demonstration of what goes around comes around. And all of the sub-plots are shown to be, in one way or another, essential to the story. The story is complex and full of eccentric, often oddly named, characters: Mr. Wopsle, Startup, Able Magwich, Mr. Bently Drummel, Mr. Pumblechook, etc. Does he use names to imply character (hapless, clumsy, dangerous, buffoonish, etc)? Like many of Dickens's other novels, this one is a 5-star, must read and # 23 on "The Greatest Books" list that I am using (thegreatestbooks.org). A recommended read.

Great Expectations is a very fine novel composed relatively late in the career of Charles Dickens. It is really quite excellent and in many ways embodies all that is good in the writing of Charles Dickens. I have found that some authors seem to lose some of their magic as their careers evolve. This is not the case with Charles Dickens. Charles Dickens novels have a good deal in common, but, at the same time, each tend to be unique. Charles Dickens novels have a good deal of ironic humor, pathos, and address social injustice. At the same time, Charles Dickens novels each stand

alone in the storyline. Great Expectations is a "coming of age" novel about a particular young man "Pip". A good deal of the novel is narrated by Pip as he grows from youth to adulthood. Charles Dickens novels, and really many novels of this era in Great Britain, tend to be lengthy and "wordy" by modern American popular reading standards. This is the most common criticism that I hear from modern readers who I speak with who do not care for Dickens. At the same time, I know many people who wish to read at least one book by all the greatest novelists. Therefore if one wanted to read only one Charles Dickens novel, this really would be as good as any. In that many do Mr. Dickens works are lengthy by modern standards, I find it easier to commit myself to a leisurely reading experience and I read other, shorter works along the way. Thank You...

It took me 60 years to get around to reading this book. I'm catching up on all the classics that I missed and loving this adventure. At first this book seemed slow, unlike Tale of Two Cities, but now that I've finished it, it has become part of me, as any good classic will. I really loved it. I'm reading David Copperfield now and so far, I'm surprised to say I am less taken with it than Great Expectations. I purchased the audible version to go with the kindle version. I love the old language and the fact that I can play it with grandkids around and not worry about foul language, which is a big problem with some of the more modern "good reads."

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