**Great Expectations by Charles Dickens**

***Chapter 39***

I relinquished the intention he had detected, for I knew him! Even yet, I could not recall a single feature, but I knew him! If the wind and the rain had driven away the intervening years, had scattered all the intervening objects, had swept us to the churchyard where we first stood face to face on such different levels, I could not have known my convict more distinctly than I knew him now as he sat in the chair before the fire. No need to take a file from his pocket and show it to me; no need to take the handkerchief from his neck and twist it round his head; no need to hug himself with both his arms, and take a shivering turn across the room, looking back at me for recognition. I knew him before he gave me one of those aids, though, a moment before, I had not been conscious of remotely suspecting his identity.

He came back to where I stood, and again held out both his hands. Not knowing what to do - for, in my astonishment I had lost my self-possession - I reluctantly gave him my hands. He grasped them heartily, raised them to his lips, kissed them, and still held them.

‘You acted noble, my boy,’ said he. ‘Noble, Pip! And I have never forgot it!’

At a change in his manner as if he were even going to embrace me, I laid a hand upon his breast and put him away.

‘Stay!’ said I. ‘Keep off! If you are grateful to me for what I did when I was a little child, I hope you have shown your gratitude by mending your way of life. If you have come here to thank me, it was not necessary. Still, however you have found me out, there must be something good in the feeling that has brought you here, and I will not repulse you; but surely you must understand that - I—‘

My attention was so attracted by the singularity of his fixed look at me, that the words died away on my tongue.

‘You was a saying,’ he observed, when we had confronted one another in silence, ‘that surely I must understand. What, surely must I understand?’

‘That I cannot wish to renew that chance intercourse with you of long ago, under these different circumstances. I am glad to believe you have repented and recovered yourself. I am glad to tell you so. I am glad that, thinking I deserve to be thanked, you have come to thank me. But our ways are different ways, none the less. You are wet, and you look weary. Will you drink something before you go?’

He had replaced his neckerchief loosely, and had stood, keenly observant of me, biting a long end of it. ‘I think,’ he answered, still with the end at his mouth and still observant of me, ‘that I will drink (I thank you) afore I go.’