

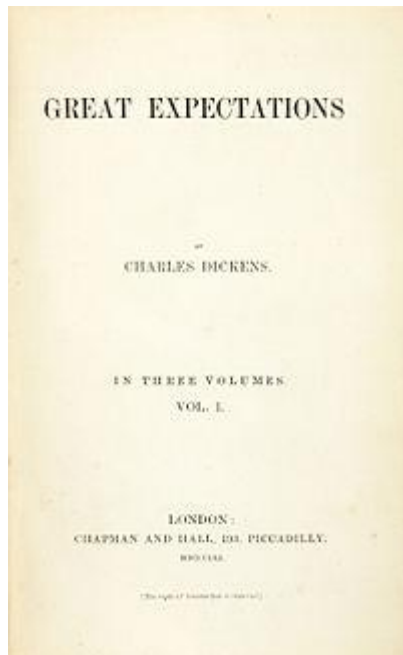
Great Expectations

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This article is about the Charles Dickens novel. For other uses, see [Great Expectations \(disambiguation\)](#).

Great Expectations



Title page of Vol. 1 of first edition, July 1861

Author(s)	Charles Dickens
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Series	Weekly: 1 December 1860 – 3 August 1861
Genre(s)	Fiction Social criticism
Publisher	Chapman & Hall
Publication date	1861 (in three volumes)
Preceded by	A Tale of Two Cities
Followed by	Our Mutual Friend

Great Expectations is a novel by [Charles Dickens](#). It depicts the growth and personal development of an orphan named Pip. The novel was first published in [serial](#) form in [All the Year Round](#) from 1 December 1860 to August 1861.^[1]

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[\[edit\]](#) Plot summary

On Christmas Eve, around 1812,^{[\[2\]](#)} Pip, an orphan of about seven, encounters an escaped convict in the village churchyard while visiting his mother's, father's and younger brothers' graves. The convict scares Pip into stealing food for him, and a file to grind away his shackles, from the home he shares with his older sister and her husband Joe Gargery, a blacksmith. The next day, soldiers recapture two convicts engaged in a fight and return them to the prison ship.

[Miss Havisham](#), a wealthy spinster, who wears an old wedding dress and lives in the dilapidated [Satis House](#), asks Pip's Uncle Pumblechook to find a boy to play with her adopted daughter [Estella](#). Pip begins to visit Miss Havisham and Estella, with whom he falls in love.



Miss Havisham with Estella and Pip. Art by [H. M. Brock](#)

As a young apprentice at Joe Gargery's forge, Pip is approached by a lawyer, Mr Jaggers, who tells him he is to receive a large sum of money from an anonymous benefactor and must leave for London immediately where he is to become a gentleman. Pip believes Miss Havisham to be his benefactress and visits her and Estella, who has returned from studying on the Continent.

With Pip now heavily in debt, his benefactor is revealed to be Abel Magwitch, the convict he helped, who was transported to [New South Wales](#) where he eventually became wealthy.



Magwitch makes himself known to Pip

There is a warrant for Magwitch's arrest in England and he will be hanged if he is caught. A plan is therefore hatched for him to flee by boat. It is also revealed that Estella is the daughter

of Magwitch and Mr Jaggers's housemaid, Molly, whom Jaggers defended in a murder charge and who gave up her daughter to be adopted by Miss Havisham.

Pip confronts Miss Havisham with Estella's history. Miss Havisham stands too close to the fire which ignites her dress and she eventually dies from her injuries.

While attempting to escape, Magwitch is captured and sent to jail where he dies shortly before his execution. Pip is about to be arrested for unpaid debts when he falls ill. Joe nurses him back to health and pays off his debts.

[\[edit\]](#) Original ending

At the end of the original version Pip meets Estella on the streets, who has remarried after her abusive husband has died. Pip says that he is glad she is a different person now from the coldhearted girl Miss Havisham reared her to be and that "suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching and had given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be." Pip remains single.^[3]

[\[edit\]](#) Revised ending

Following comments by [Edward Bulwer-Lytton](#) that the ending was too sad, Dickens rewrote the ending so that Pip now meets Estella after the death of her husband in the ruins of Satis House with the suggestion that they will marry. Early 20th century writers including [John Forster](#), [George Bernard Shaw](#) and [George Orwell](#) felt that the original ending was "more consistent with the draft, as well as the natural working out of the tale"; modern literary criticism tends to support the more common second ending.^[3]

[\[edit\]](#) Main characters in *Great Expectations*

[\[edit\]](#) Pip and his family

- **Philip Pirrip**, nicknamed Pip, an orphan and the [protagonist](#) and [narrator](#) of *Great Expectations*. Throughout his childhood, Pip thought that he was going to be trained as a blacksmith, but with [Magwitch](#)'s anonymous patronage, Pip travels to London and becomes a gentleman.
- **Joe Gargery**, Pip's [brother-in-law](#), and his first father figure. He is a blacksmith who is always kind to Pip and the only person with whom Pip is always honest. Joe was very disappointed when Pip decided to leave his home and travel to London to become a gentleman rather than be a blacksmith.
- **Mrs Joe Gargery**, Pip's hot-tempered adult sister, who raises him after the death of their parents but complains constantly of the burden Pip is to her. Orlick, her husband's journeyman, attacks her and she is left disabled until her death.
- **Mr Pumblechook**, Joe Gargery's uncle, an [officious bachelor](#) and corn merchant. While holding Pip in disdain, he tells Mrs Joe how noble she is to raise Pip. As the person who first connected Pip to Miss Havisham, he even claims to have been the original architect of Pip's precious fortune. Pip despises Mr Pumblechook as Mr Pumblechook constantly makes himself out to be better than he really is. He is a cunning impostor. When Pip finally stands up to him, Mr Pumblechook turns those listening to the conversation against Pip and his usefulness at succession.

[\[edit\]](#) Miss Havisham and her family

- [Miss Havisham](#), wealthy [spinster](#) who takes Pip on as a companion and who Pip suspects is his benefactor. Miss Havisham does not discourage this as it fits into her own spiteful plans which derive from her desire for revenge after being jilted at the alter several years before. She later apologizes to him as she's overtaken by guilt. He accepts her apology and she is badly burnt when her dress, which she has never taken off since being jilted, catches aflame from a spark which leapt from the fire. Pip saves her, but she later dies from her injuries.
- [Estella](#), Miss Havisham's adopted daughter, whom Pip pursues romantically throughout the novel. She is secretly the daughter of Molly, Jaggers's housekeeper, and Abel Magwitch, Pip's convict, but was given up to Miss Havisham after a murder trial. Estella represents the life of wealth and culture for which Pip strives. Since her ability to love has been ruined by Miss Havisham, she is unable to return Pip's passion. She warns Pip of this repeatedly, but he is unwilling or unable to believe her.
- **Matthew Pocket**, a cousin of Miss Havisham's. He is the patriarch of the Pocket family, but unlike others of her relatives he is not greedy for Havisham's wealth. Matthew Pocket has a family of nine children, two nurses, a housekeeper, a cook, and a pretty but useless wife (named Belinda). He also tutors young gentlemen, such as Bentley Drummle, Startop, Pip, and his own son Herbert, who live on his estate.
- **Herbert Pocket**, a member of the Pocket family, Miss Havisham's presumed heirs, whom Pip first meets as a "pale young gentleman" who challenges Pip to a fist fight at Miss Havisham's house when both are children. He is the son of Matthew Pocket, Pip's tutor in the "gentlemanly" arts, and shares his apartment with Pip in London, becoming Pip's fast friend who is there to share Pip's happiness as well as his troubles. He is in love with a girl called Clara. Herbert keeps it secret because he knows his mother would say she is below his "station".
- **Arthur Havisham**, Miss Havisham's estranged brother, who tried to steal Miss Havisham's money, along with Compeyson. Arthur is only mentioned in the book; the reader never meets him in person.
- **Camilla**, an ageing, talkative relative of Miss Havisham who does not care much for Miss Havisham and only wants her money. She is one of the many relatives who hang around Miss Havisham "like flies" for her wealth.
- **Cousin Raymond**, another ageing relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money. He is married to Camilla.
- **Georgiana**, an ageing relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money.
- **Sarah Pocket**, "a dry, brown corrugated old woman, with a small face that might have been made out of walnut shells, and a large mouth like a cat's without the whiskers." Another ageing relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money.

[\[edit\]](#) Characters from Pip's youth

- [The Convict](#), an escapee from a prison ship, whom Pip treats kindly, and who turns out to be his benefactor, at which time his real name is revealed to be Abel Magwitch, but who is also known as Provis and Mr Campbell in parts of the story to protect his identity. Pip also covers him as his uncle in order that no one recognizes him as a convict sent to Australia years before.
 - [Abel Magwitch](#), the convict's given name, who is also Pip's benefactor.

- **Provis**, a name that Abel Magwitch uses when he returns to London, to conceal his identity. Pip also says that "Provis" is his uncle visiting from out of town.
 - **Mr Campbell**, a name that Abel Magwitch uses after he is discovered in London by his enemy.
- **Mr and Mrs Hubble**, simple folk who think they are more important than they really are. They live in Pip's village.
- **Mr Wopsle**, the clerk of the church in Pip's village. He later gives up the church work and moves to London to pursue his ambition to be an actor, even though he is not very good.
 - **Mr Waldengarver**, the [stage name](#) that Wopsle adopts as an actor in London.
- **Biddy**, Wopsle's second cousin; she runs an evening school from her home in Pip's village and becomes Pip's teacher. A kind and intelligent but poor young woman, she is, like Pip and Estella, an orphan. She is the opposite of Estella. Pip ignores her obvious love for him as he fruitlessly pursues Estella. After he realizes the error of his life choices, he returns to claim Biddy as his bride, only to find out she has married Joe Gargery. Biddy and Joe later have two children, one named after Pip whom Estella mistakes as Pip's child in the original ending. Orlick was attracted to her, but his affection was unreciprocated.

[\[edit\]](#) The lawyer and his circle

- **Mr Jaggers**, prominent London lawyer who represents the interests of diverse clients, both criminal and civil. He represents Pip's benefactor and is Miss Havisham's lawyer as well. By the end of the story, his law practice is the common element that brushes many of the characters.
- [John Wemmick](#), Jaggers's clerk, only called "Mr Wemmick" and "Wemmick" except by his father, who himself is referred to as "The Aged Parent", "The Aged P.", or simply "The Aged." Wemmick is Pip's chief go-between with Jaggers and generally looks after Pip in London.
- **Molly**, Mr Jaggers's [maidservant](#) whom Jaggers saved from the [gallows](#) for murder. She is revealed to be the former lover of Magwitch, and Estella's mother.

[\[edit\]](#) Pip's antagonists

- [Compeyson](#) (surname), a convict, and enemy to Magwitch. A professional swindler, he had been Miss Havisham's intended husband, who was in league with Arthur Havisham to defraud Miss Havisham of her fortune. He pursues [Abel Magwitch](#) when he learns that he is in [London](#) and drowns when, grappling with Magwitch, he falls into the Thames. In some editions of the book, he is called "Compey".
- **"Dolge" Orlick**, [journeyman](#) blacksmith at Joe Gargery's [forge](#). Strong, rude and sullen, he is as churlish as Joe is gentle and kind. His resentments cause him to take actions which threaten his desires in life but for which he blames others. He ends up in a fist fight with Joe over Mrs Joe's taunting and is easily beaten. This set in motion an escalating chain of events that lead him to secretly injure Mrs Joe grievously and eventually make an attempt on Pip's life. He is discovered and arrested.
- **Bentley Drummle**, a coarse, unintelligent young man whose only saving graces are that he is to succeed to a title and his family is wealthy. Pip meets him at Mr Pocket's house, as Drummle is also to be trained in gentlemanly skills. Drummle is hostile to Pip and everyone else. He is a rival to Pip for Estella's attentions and marries her. It is

said he ill-treats Estella. Drummle would later be mentioned to have died from an accident following his mistreatment of a horse. "The Spider" is Mr Jaggers' nickname for him.

[\[edit\]](#) Other characters

- **Clara Barley**, eventual wife to Herbert Pocket. A very poor girl living with her father who is suffering from [gout](#). She dislikes Pip before meeting him because she is aware of how he influences Herbert's spending, but she eventually warms to him.
- **Miss Skiffins**, eventual wife to John Wemmick. She is known early in the novel for her occasional appearances at the cottage called "the castle" belonging to Wemmick and for the green gloves which she sports due to Pip's company. Those same gloves were interchanged for white at the only in text marriage scene, though there are several others that occur "off book."
- **Startop**, like Bentley Drummle, he is Pip's fellow student, but unlike Drummle, he is kind. He is said to have a woman's taste in many ways. He assists Pip, Herbert and Magwitch with the escaping business.

[\[edit\]](#) Style and themes

Great Expectations is written in first person and uses some language and grammar that has fallen out of common use since its publication. The title *Great Expectations* refers to the 'Great Expectations' Pip has of coming into his benefactor's property upon his disclosure to him and achieving his intended role as a gentleman at that time. *Great Expectations* is a [bildungsroman](#), a novel depicting growth and personal development, in this case, of Pip.

Some of the major themes of *Great Expectations* are crime, social class, empire and ambition. From an early age, Pip feels guilt; he is also afraid that someone will find out about his crime and arrest him. The theme of crime comes in to even greater effect when Pip discovers that his benefactor is in fact a convict. Pip has an internal struggle with his conscience throughout the book. *Great Expectations* explores the different social classes of the [Georgian era](#). Throughout the book, Pip becomes involved with a broad range of classes, from criminals like [Magwitch](#) to the extremely rich like [Miss Havisham](#). Pip has great ambition, as demonstrated constantly in the book.

[\[edit\]](#) Film, TV, and theatrical adaptations

Like many other Dickens novels, *Great Expectations* has been filmed several times, including:

- 1917 – a silent film, starring [Jack Pickford](#), directed by [Robert G. Vignola](#).
- 1922 – a silent film, made in Denmark, starring Martin Herzberg, directed by [A.W. Sandberg](#).
- 1934 – *Great Expectations* film starring [Phillips Holmes](#) and [Jane Wyatt](#), directed by [Stuart Walker](#).
- 1946 – *Great Expectations* film starring [John Mills](#) as Pip, [Valerie Hobson](#) as Estella and [Jean Simmons](#) as Young Estella, directed by [David Lean](#).

- 1954 – a two part television version starring [Roddy McDowall](#) as Pip and [Estelle Winwood](#) as Miss Havisham. It aired as an episode of the show [Robert Montgomery Presents](#).
- 1959 – a [BBC](#) television version starring [Dinsdale Landen](#) as Pip, Helen Lindsay as Estella and [Derek Benfield](#) as Landlord.
- 1967 – a television serial starring [Gary Bond](#) and [Francesca Annis](#).
- 1974 – [Great Expectations](#) – a film starring [Michael York](#) and [Sarah Miles](#), directed by Joseph Hardy.
- 1975 – Stage Musical (London West End). Music by [Cyril Ornadel](#), starring [Sir John Mills](#). Ivor Novello Award for Best British Musical.
- 1981 – [Great Expectations](#) – a [BBC](#) serial starring Stratford Johns, Gerry Sunquist, [Joan Hickson](#), [Patsy Kensit](#) and [Sarah-Jane Varley](#). Produced by [Barry Letts](#), and directed by [Julian Amyes](#).
- 1983 – an animated children's version, starring Phillip Hinton, Liz Horne, Robin Stewart, and Bill Kerr.
- 1989 – [Great Expectations](#) – a film starring [Anthony Hopkins](#) as Magwitch and [Jean Simmons](#) as Miss Havisham, directed by [Kevin Connor](#).
- 1998 – [Great Expectations](#) a film starring [Ethan Hawke](#) and [Gwyneth Paltrow](#), directed by [Alfonso Cuarón](#).
- 1999 – [Great Expectations](#) a film starring [Ioan Gruffudd](#) as Pip, [Justine Waddell](#) as Estella, and [Charlotte Rampling](#) as Miss Havisham ([Masterpiece Theatre—TV](#))
- 2009 – Directed by Steve Eagles at 'The Gantry' with Emily Jean, Reza Rajraj, Holly Granger, Hannah Scott and Sam Walshaw.
- 2009 – Performed at Theatre Clwyd by Graham Bickley, Eleanor Howell, Steven Meo, Rhiannon Oliver, Greg Palmer, Vivien Parry, Robert Perkins, Steffan Rhodri, Simon Watts and directed by Tim Baker.
- 2011 – [Great Expectations](#) - a [BBC](#) adaptation written by [Sarah Phelps](#), directed by [Brian Kirk](#) and starring [Douglas Booth](#) as Pip, [Vanessa Kirby](#) as Estella, [Gillian Anderson](#) as Miss Havisham, [Ray Winstone](#) as Abel Magwitch, [David Suchet](#) as Jaggers, [Shaun Dooley](#) as Joe Gargery, [Claire Rushbrook](#) as Mrs Joe and [Harry Lloyd](#) as Herbert Pocket.^[4]
- 2012 - An upcoming feature film to be directed by [Mike Newell](#).

[[edit](#)] Cultural references and spin-offs

- *Great Expectations, the Untold Story* (1986), starring [John Stanton](#), directed by [Tim Burstall](#) is a [spin-off](#) movie depicting the adventures of Magwitch in [Australia](#).
- In explaining the character [Pip Pirrup](#), the creators of [South Park](#) made a parody episode, "[Pip](#)". It initially followed the plot, but spun off on a tangent (one involving robot monkeys) that made Miss Havisham more villainous (by way of a brain-switching device) as a parody of the fact that Dickens had changed the ending to fit the fads at the time.
- [Peter Carey](#)'s *Jack Maggs* is a re-imagining of Magwitch's return to England, with the addition, among other things, of a fictionalised Charles Dickens character and plot-line.
- [Lloyd Jones](#)'s *Mister Pip* is set in [Bougainville](#) where, during a time of civil unrest, a white man uses *Great Expectations* as the basis for his lessons to the local children.
- The plot and characters of *Great Expectations* feature heavily in Jasper Fforde's [Thursday Next](#) series. Miss Havisham is Thursday's friend and mentor, and Fforde

draws from the manuscript to further along the story and give a glimpse of what goes on inside the world of *Great Expectations* when no one is reading it.

- The [BBC Radio 4](#) radio series *Bleak Expectations* is a parody of Dickens's and other Victorian novels in general, and of *Bleak House* and *Great Expectations* in particular. Its hero is called Pip Bin.
- *Great Expectations* is the name of the first track off [The Gaslight Anthem](#)'s album *The '59 Sound*, and the lyrics reference Estella.
- [Alanis Morissette](#) compares herself to Estella on "[All I Really Want](#)," a song from her 1995 album *Jagged Little Pill*.
- *Pip and the Zombies* is a [mash up](#) of *Great Expectations* and zombie literature by Louis Skipper.
- The film *Parasomnia* the antagonist recommends the main character read *Great Expectations* as it relates to their interactions.
- The film *Cutting Edge* Douglas is given the book *Great Expectations* as a Christmas present.

[\[edit\]](#) References



[Charles Dickens portal](#)

1. [^] [How Great Expectations](#)
2. [^] Meckier, Jerome *Dating the Action in Great Expectations: A New Chronology*.
3. [^] ^{*a b*} ["The ending of "Great Expectations"'](#).
4. [^] [Great Expectations](#) at [BBC Programmes](#)

[\[edit\]](#) External links



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- [Great Expectations](#) – Searchable HTML version.
- [Great Expectations](#) – Easy to read HTML version.
- [Great Expectations](#) – PDF scans of the entire novel as it originally appeared in *The Strand Magazine*.
- [Great Expectations](#) – texts.crossref-it.info HTML etext for easy reading and searching.

Study guide

- [Great Expectations](#) – Crossref-it.info

Other

- [Original manuscript](#) – held at [Wisbech & Fenland Museum](#), [Wisbech](#).
- ["Byron, Shelley and Miss Havisham"](#): an essay on the possible inspiration for Miss Havisham from [TLS](#), March 26, 2008.
- [Map of Dickens's London](#)
- [Pip and the Zombies](#)
- [Great Expectations](#)
-  William T. Brewster (1920). "[Great Expectations](#)". [Encyclopedia Americana](#).

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