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Charles Dickens

# Great Expectations

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YOUNG ADULT  READERS



MAIN CHARACTERS



Pip



ESTELLA



JOE GARGERY



MISS HAVISHAM



MRS JOE GARGERY



ABEL MAGWITCH



MR JAGGERS



ORLICK





# The Cheese, the Chicken and the Brandy

2 My father's family name was Pirrip and my first name was Philip. So Philip Pirrip was my full name. It was very difficult for me to say when I was a child. So, I decided to call myself Pip and everybody called me Pip.

I lived with my sister and her husband, Joe. Everyone called my sister Mrs Joe. We lived in a village by the marshes\* near the River Thames. I don't remember my parents because they died when I was a baby, so I was an orphan\*. I often went to the church and visited their graves\*. I wasn't very happy as a boy. My life with my sister was hard. One day, I was outside the church when a horrible man jumped out from behind the graves. He was wearing dirty, old grey clothes and had an iron chain\* on his ankles. He took hold of me so I couldn't move. 'Keep still you little devil, or I'll kill you,' he said.

'Please don't hurt me, Sir,' I cried.

'What's your name? Where do you live?'

'Pip, Sir. I live with my sister and Joe the blacksmith\*.'

'Joe the blacksmith, you say. Right. If you want to live, you must bring me some food and a file\*. If you do that, I won't kill you.'

He let me go and I promised to bring the things to him the next day. I ran home, I was very afraid.

Joe was waiting for me when I got home. 'Quick! Hide! Mrs Joe's looking for you. She's got her stick\* with her.'

My sister, Mrs Joe Gargery, was twenty years older than me. She was a hard, violent woman. She often hit me and she hit her husband, Joe. She had black hair and was tall and thin. Joe was tall and blond and a kind man. He had a kind face and I liked him a lot.

I tried to hide behind the door, but I wasn't in time. 'Where have you been, you young monkey?' she shouted while she hit me.

'I only went to visit the graves,' I cried.

Then she picked me up and threw me at Joe. He caught me and put me behind him, protecting me.

'You'll send me to my grave with all the worry you give me.'

Then she started to make the tea. I was hungry, but I knew I needed to save my bread and butter for the man outside the church. So, secretly\*, and while no-one was looking, I put it in my pocket.

After tea, I was sitting by the fire. In the distance we heard the sound of a great big gun. It fired two loud shots\*.

'What's that?' I asked.

'That means another convict\* has escaped,' said Joe. 'One escaped last night. I heard the gun after sunset\*. That means another one has escaped from the transports.'

'Transports, Joe? What are the transports?'

'Questions, questions you horrible boy,' said Mrs Joe. 'Transports are prison ships. The prison ships take the convicts to Australia. And people who kill, rob and ask too many questions go on them. Now that's enough of your questions. Go off to bed.'

**marsh** an area of very wet land

**orphan** a child whose parents are dead

**grave** a place where dead people are put in the ground

**chain** metal rings linked together

**blacksmith** someone who makes things from metal

**file** a tool for working with metal

**stick** a piece of wood

**secretly** so that no-one knows

**shot** the noise from a gun

**convict** a prisoner

**sunset** evening, when the sun is going down





I went to bed with a heavy heart. I was worried about my meeting with the convict.

In the morning, I got out of bed very quietly and went downstairs to the pantry\*. All the time I could hear voices in my head shouting 'Robber! Wake up Mrs Joe, he's stealing from you!'

I felt terrible. The pantry was full of good things. We were expecting visitors for a special Christmas lunch. Quickly, I took some cheese, some more bread, some brandy and some roast chicken. I filled the brandy bottle with soapy water and put everything in my bag. I opened the door to Joe's forge\* and took a file. Then I ran outside into the wet morning air. I ran towards the marshes and the river, where the convict was waiting for me.

Before I got to the river, I saw the convict sitting outside the church. He was asleep. I touched him on the shoulder, to wake him up. But it wasn't my convict, it was another man. He was wearing dirty, old grey clothes too and he had an iron chain on his ankles. In fact everything about him was the same as my convict. He jumped up, tried to hit me and then walked slowly off into the distance. I watched him go and then went on towards the river. There, I found the right man. He was very cold and hungry. He drank the brandy very quickly, while eating pieces of cheese and the chicken. All the time he was looking around nervously. The food was disappearing quickly.

'Are you going to leave any food for the other man?' I asked.

'What other man?'

'The one like you. I saw him near the church just now. He looked very hungry too.'

'Did he have a cut on his face?'

**pantry** a room where you keep food (an old word)

**forge** a place where people work with metal







'Yes, he did.'  
 'Tell me now. Which way did he go? I'll find him. I must find him.  
 Now, give me the file. I need to free my legs so I can run.'



There'll be a policeman waiting for me when I get home, I thought. But it was all quiet and everything seemed normal. I was very pleased. Mrs Joe was in a bad temper\*, which wasn't very unusual. She was busy cleaning and cooking and preparing for our Christmas visitors. Joe and I had our breakfast of bread and milk, then we went to wash and change our clothes for church. It was strange, but when Joe wore his work clothes he looked quite ordinary. But, when he wore his best clothes for Sunday, he never really looked quite right. Joe came out of his room in his dark suit and clean white shirt, looking uncomfortable. I looked at him for a minute and decided that his Sunday clothes weren't the wrong size for him, he was the wrong size for his clothes. My best clothes too, were always uncomfortable. Perhaps my sister wanted them that way. Every time we bought new best clothes, they were always too tight. It was always difficult for me to move in them.

Joe and I went off to church. My sister was too busy with the Christmas preparations so she couldn't go to church. 'I'll be with you in spirit,' she said.

All the time at church, I worried about Mrs Joe and the things from the pantry - the cheese, the chicken and the brandy. My stomach turned over and over. 'Surely something's going to happen,' I said to myself.

When we got home from church, everything was ready for the Christmas visitors. Mrs Joe was dressed and ready. The table was

to be in a bad temper to be angry



set and beautifully decorated. The front door wasn't locked\*. It was usually locked all year and we never used it. Mrs Joe was still in a bad temper and shouted at us. We followed all her instructions, nervously. Soon, the visitors arrived. I opened the front door. I pretended\* that it was perfectly normal for me to use that door.

Mr Wopsle was the first to arrive. He helped at the church and was often very boring. Mr and Mrs Hubble were next. Last of all was Uncle Pumblechook. I say *Uncle*, but I was never allowed\* to call him that. Only Mrs Joe could call him *Uncle*.

'Mrs Joe,' said Uncle Pumblechook, 'I have brought you a bottle of Sherry wine and a bottle of Port wine as a present for Christmas and to thank you for your invitation.'

Every year he said exactly the same thing.

'Oh, *Un-cle Pum-ble-chook!* This is kind.'

And every Christmas Day, like this Christmas Day, he answered, 'It's nothing, my dear lady.'

We sat down to lunch and Mr Wopsle said a prayer\*. He finished, as usual, with the words, 'And we must be extremely thankful.'

Then he turned to me. 'Do you hear that, boy? You must be extremely thankful, especially to your sister. You are a terrible little boy. She's so good to you.'

'Yes, Mr Pumblechook,' I answered quietly, thinking that he was probably very right.

All the time I was still worrying about the things in the pantry - the cheese, the chicken and the brandy. And then the terrible moment came.

'Have a little brandy, Uncle Pumblechook,' said my sister.

locked closed with a key

to pretend to act like something is true when it isn't

allowed you can do something, someone lets you

prayer words you use to talk to God



She gave him a large glass.

I held the table. I was very frightened\*. He's going to drink it, I thought. He'll know it's soapy. He'll say it's soapy. Everyone will know it's me. Then I watched in horror as he took a large drink from the glass. His face went red, then purple, then red again and he jumped up from the table and ran out of the door. Joe and Mrs Joe went to help him.

'Soap! Mrs Joe, there's soap in here!' he said.

'But how did soap get in there?' said my sister.

She gave him some water and he came back to the table. We all continued our lunch. I was waiting for my sister to find the chicken was missing. And then the moment came.

'You really must taste my beautiful roast chicken.'

And she went to the pantry to get it.

I couldn't stay there any more. I jumped up and I ran to the door. I wanted to escape. I opened the door to run out and saw a policeman and some soldiers\* outside. The policeman was carrying handcuffs\*. 'They've come for me!' I thought. 'I stole the food and now they've come for me.'

But Mrs Joe didn't say anything about the brandy or the chicken and the policeman simply asked for Joe's help. He needed help to mend\* the handcuffs and was looking for help to find the convicts. I couldn't believe my luck.

As soon as the handcuffs were mended, Joe and I went with the soldiers to look for the convicts. 'I hope we don't find them,' I said quietly to Joe.



But then, in the distance, we heard shouting and splashing\*. The soldiers ran towards the noise, it was the two convicts. They were fighting in the marshes. My convict was holding the other man and trying to stop him running away.

'I've got him! I've got him,' shouted my man to the soldiers. 'Here! I've caught him!'

'He tried to kill me! He tried to kill me!' shouted the other convict.

My convict then saw me. 'Is the blacksmith here?' he said.

'Yes, I am,' said Joe. 'What do you want from me?'

'Nothing. I only have to say sorry. I took some food from your house last night. I was hungry, so I'm sorry.'

All my worries were gone. Joe, seeing that I was tired from the evening's excitement, picked me up and carried me home on his shoulders.



frightened afraid

soldier a person whose job is to fight

handcuffs metal things the police put on your wrists

to mend to put something back together if it is broken

to splash to make a noise with water