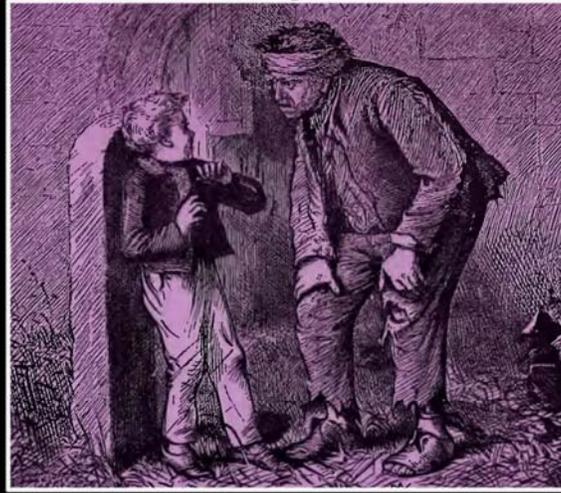


# *Great Expectations*



Adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens

**Tracy Wells**

Adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens

**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

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*Great Expectations*

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*For my family—  
Thank you for the love and support  
you always show me.  
I love you.*

## *Great Expectations*

**CLASSIC.** Adapted from the novel by Charles Dickens. Pip, a young orphan, lives with his abusive sister and her husband Joe Gargery, a blacksmith. While visiting the graves of his parents, Pip encounters an escaped convict who asks Pip for food and a metal file to saw off his leg iron. Pip obeys, but the convict is soon captured. Years later, Pip is taken to Satis House, where the wealthy, eccentric Miss Havisham has arranged for Pip to play with her adopted daughter, the beautiful but cruel Estella. When Pip meets Estella, she treats him coldly and contemptuously, but he falls in love with her and dreams of becoming a wealthy gentleman someday so that he may marry her. One day, a London lawyer appears and informs Pip that he has "great expectations." A secret benefactor has given Pip a large fortune and he must go to London to begin his education as a gentleman. Overjoyed, Pip assumes Miss Havisham must be his benefactor and that she intends for him to marry Estella. As Pip becomes a gentleman, he deserts his true friends but is humbled in the end when he discovers the true identity of his benefactor.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 120-150 minutes.



Charles Dickens, 1858

### *About the Story*

English author Charles Dickens (1812-1870), the second of eight children, lived in the coastal region of Kent as a young child and looked back on his life there as idyllic. But when Dickens was 9 years old, his family moved back to London where his father, who had a reputation for being unable to manage money, was arrested and imprisoned in a debtors' prison. At age eleven, Dickens was sent to work 10 hours a day in a warehouse where he pasted labels on pots in order to help support his family. Dickens eventually returned to school and later worked as a law clerk and court reporter before publishing his first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*, in 1836. *Great Expectations*, Dickens's 13th novel, remains one of his most well-known works and includes some of the most memorable characters in English literature.

## *Characters*

(17 M, 13 F, 1 flexible)

(With doubling: 13 M, 10 F, 1 flexible)

- PHILIP "PIP" PIRRIP:** Orphan boy who lives with his sister and her husband, Joe, but whose life completely changes after he meets an escaped convict; wears tattered clothing in his village and a fine suit in London; male.
- MRS. JOE GARGER:** Pip's overbearing, abusive older sister; female.
- JOE GARGER:** Pip's kindly brother-in-law and best friend who works as the village blacksmith; male.
- UNCLE PUMBLEHOOK:** Joe's greedy, arrogant uncle who works as a merchant; wears a fine suit; male.
- MISS HAVISHAM:** Wealthy, eccentric old woman who lives in a decaying manor who was jilted by her fiancé just before her wedding; she arranges for Pip to regularly visit with Estella, her adopted daughter; wears an old faded wedding dress and veil and one shoe; female.
- ESTELLA:** Miss Havisham's beautiful adopted daughter who acts coldly and cruelly toward Pip and has been raised to break men's hearts; wears an elegant dress; female.
- MR. JAGGERS:** Lawyer hired by Magwitch to supervise Pip's education as a gentleman; also works for Miss Havisham; wears a fine suit; male.
- MOLLY:** Mr. Jaggers's housekeeper; Estella's birth mother and Magwitch's estranged wife; wears servant's clothing; female.
- MR. WEMMICK:** Mr. Jaggers's clerk who befriends Pip; male.
- ROSEMARIE:** Impoverished woman living in London who must pay Mr. Jaggers to get her husband out of jail; female.
- AMELIA:** Impoverished woman living in London who must pay Mr. Jaggers to get her son out of jail; female.
- MATTHEW POCKET:** Miss Havisham's cousin who is uninterested in her wealth; educates young gentlemen and is Pip's teacher; male.
- BELINDA POCKET:** Matthew's wife; female.
- HERBERT POCKET:** Matthew Pocket's son who was invited by Miss Havisham to visit Estella and challenges Pip to a fistfight; becomes Pip's best friend in London; male.
- CLARA BARLEY:** Herbert's girlfriend who lives with her sickly father; female.
- SARAH POCKET:** Matthew Pocket's sister and Miss Havisham's cousin; wears a dark dress; female.

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- GEORGIANA POCKET:** A relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money; wears a dark dress; female.
- MR. RAYMOND:** A relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money; wears dark clothing; male.
- MRS. CAMILLA:** A relative of Miss Havisham who is only interested in her money; wears a dark dress; female.
- BENTLEY DRUMMLE:** Wealthy, arrogant young gentleman from a noble family; attends tutoring lessons at Matthew Pocket's house with Pip; wears a fine suit; male.
- STARTOP:** Kindly student who attends tutoring lessons at Matthew Pocket's house with Pip; male.
- MR. WOPSLE:** Church clerk; male
- AUNT PETUNIA:** Mr. Wopsle's sleepy aunt who runs a school for children; female.
- BIDDY:** Aunt Petunia's kind granddaughter; a simple country girl who cares for Mrs. Joe after she is attacked and later marries Joe; female.
- ABEL MAGWITCH:** Uneducated, coarse convict who escapes from a prison ship; Pip helps him and he eventually becomes Pip's secret benefactor after making his fortune in Australia; wears tattered convict clothing with leg irons; male.
- COMPEYSON:** Convict who escapes a prison ship; Magwitch's former partner who is now his enemy; educated gentlemanly swindler who was once engaged to marry Miss Havisham in order to defraud her of her fortune; male.
- DOLGE ORLICK:** Works as a day laborer in Joe's forge; viciously attacks Mrs. Joe and tries to kill Pip; male.
- SERGEANT:** Sergeant looking for convicts who have escaped the prison ship; male.
- SOLDIERS 1-2:** Guards looking for escaped convicts; male.
- GROCER:** Merchant in London; flexible.

*Options for Doubling*

- WEMMICK/WOPSLE (male)  
MOLLY/AUNT PETUNIA (female)  
MATTHEW POCKET/SOLDIER (male)  
BENTLEY DRUMMLE/SOLDIER (male)  
BIDDY/AMELIA (female)  
MRS. JOE/ROSEMARIE (female)  
PUMBLEHOOK/GROCER (male)

## *Setting*

Early to mid-1800s, Kent and London, England.

## *Sets*

Note: The sets may be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows.

**Graveyard.** Graveyard in the foggy marshes of Kent. A few large gravestones are present. Two gravestones are covered in moss and leaves. A fog encircles the gravestones, opt.

**Joe Gargery's house.** A large stone fireplace with a pot is CS with a small stool nearby. There is a wooden dinner table chairs on one side and a smaller table on the other side.

**Satis House.** There are two large imposing doors that can be moved on and off. Behind the doors is the interior of Satis House. There is a settee, a small table with two chairs, and a vanity with a comb, a jewelry box, a deck of cards, and a clock it. A large grandfather clock is CS, and there are other clocks throughout the room that are all stopped at 8:40. At SL is a dining room with a large wedding cake and other serving dishes set up for a wedding feast. All décor is grey and covered with dust and cobwebs. Many dusty candles are scattered about the room.

**London street.** The street is dirty, gray, and ugly. There is a backdrop depicting shops, buildings, and a police station. There is a Grocer's cart filled with fruit, vegetables, and bread and a nearby table with two chairs. One of the building fronts has a sign that reads, "Tailor." One of the shops has a sign that reads, "Bookstore."

**Home/school of Matthew Pocket.** A small fireplace is CS. A chair and side table with a lamp are on one side, and a large table is CS with four chairs on three sides. A large chalkboard is set up on one side. For Scene 8, a bed is set up CS where the table had been. Next to the bed, there is a chair and a small table with a lamp on it.

*Synopsis of Scenes*

**ACT I**

**Scene 1:** Graveyard.

**Scene 2:** Joe's house.

**Scene 3:** Graveyard.

**Scene 4:** Satis House.

**Scene 5:** Satis House.

**Scene 6:** Joe's House.

**Scene 7:** Satis House.

**Intermission**

**ACT II**

**Scene 1:** London street.

**Scene 2:** Matthew Pocket's home/school.

**Scene 3:** Matthew Pocket's home/school.

**Scene 4:** Satis House.

**Scene 5:** London street.

**Scene 6:** Satis House.

**Scene 7:** London street.

**Scene 8:** Matthew Pocket's home/school.

**Scene 9:** Graveyard.

*Props*

Wild flowers	Hat and coat, for Jaggers
Moss	Hat and coat, for Wemmick
Leaves	Rusted leg iron
Knife (plastic)	Wheelchair
Leg shackles	Assorted fruit and vegetables, for Grocer's cart
Plates, cups, silverware	Apples
File	Accounting book
Food for dinner table	Small bag of money
Cane	Men's handkerchief, for Jaggers
Stick	List
Large towel (to make knapsack)	Basket
Slices of bread	Papers
Jug	4 Quill pens
Flask	4 Inkpots
Bottle for tar water	Women's handkerchief, for Belinda
Meat pie	2 Parcels
Spoon	Satchel, for Drummle
Broken handcuffs	Ill-fitting suit and hat, for Joe
Coat and hat, for Pip	Smart suit, for Pip
Comb	Suitcase, for Estella
Decorative jewelry box	Rumpled suit, for Magwitch
Deck of cards	Black clothing or cape, for Compeyson
Jeweled hair clip	Blanket
Bowl	Bandages, for Pip's hand
School slate	Rope
Chalk	Pocket watch, for Herbert
Old wedding cake (covered in dust and spider webs)	Cloth
Legal paperwork	Letter
Books	Gun
Basket with groceries	Receipt
Small wad of money	Baby doll wrapped in a baby blanket
Hat, for Orlick	
Coat and hat, for Joe	
Briefcase, for Jaggers	

*Special Effects*

Canon blast  
Knock on the door  
Eerie light, for interior of Satis House  
Bell  
Sounds of children laughing and screaming  
Train whistle  
Lit candles (can be lighting effect for safety)  
"Fire" (orange spotlight)  
Fog machine would enhance the graveyard scenes but is not required.  
Gunshot  
Splash

*"I am instructed to communicate to him  
that he will come into a handsome property.  
Further, that it is the desire  
of the present possessor of that property  
that he be immediately removed  
from his present sphere of life and from this place,  
and be brought up as a gentleman—  
in a word, as a young fellow  
of great expectations."*

*—Mr. Luggers*

*ACT I*

*Scene 1*

*(AT RISE: Graveyard in the misty marshes of Kent, Christmas Day, early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. A few large gravestones are present. Two are covered in moss and leaves. A misty fog encircles the gravestones, opt. Pip enters and crosses to the center gravestone. He is carrying a few small flowers.)*

PIP: *(To himself, brushing away debris at the tombstone.)* What a mess. *(Puts flowers down in front of the tombstone.)* Mum and Pop, you really must learn to stay a bit more tidy. *(Cleans off the moss and leaves.)* Or else I am just going to have to visit more often so that I might keep my eye on you. *(Admires his work.)* There, that's better. *(Sits, leaning against the tombstone.)* I guess that's what I'll have to do then. I'll just have to visit more often. *(To tombstone.)* Is that all right with you, Mum? And what about you, Pop? *(Leans his back against the tombstone.)* I thought you might say that. And I agree. I enjoy our visits, too. *(Smiles. Suddenly sad.)* But you can't really hear me, can you, Mum? *(Stands. Angrily.)* And I don't even know what you look like, Pop. You both had to go and die before I was even old enough to remember you! All I can do is guess what you might have looked like since Mrs. Joe refuses to tell me anything about you. I suppose it makes her sad. You were her parents, too. *(Tracing letters on his father's tombstone.)* Lookin' at your name on this tombstone, Pop, I suppose you must have been a small, stout, curly haired man—with dark hair—yes, I can picture you exactly! *(Traces letters on his mother's tombstone.)* Mum, I imagine that you were thin and graceful and had the loveliest golden hair. It's really a shame Mrs. Joe didn't take after you. I daresay, she is the ugliest woman in town! But she is my sister, so I guess I'm supposed to say that. *(Coughing is heard. Nervously looking around.)* Who coughed? Mrs. Joe, is that you? I'm sorry I said that you were ugly. I didn't mean it...really I didn't. *(Looks around. Pip relaxes and sits, leaning against the tombstone.)* I guess I was just hearing things. It must have been the wind.

*(Magwitch stands from behind a tombstone.)*

MAGWITCH: It wasn't the wind, boy.

*(Magwitch grabs Pip.)*

PIP: (*Shouts.*) Let me go! Let me go!

MAGWITCH: (*Holding a knife to Pip's throat.*) Hold yer noise and keep still, little devil, or I'll cut yer throat!

PIP: Oh, don't cut my throat, sir! Please, let me go!

(*Magwitch turns Pip to face him.*)

MAGWITCH: Tell me yer name, quick!

PIP: Pip, sir.

MAGWITCH: Pip, is it? Well, if that isn't the oddest name I done heard in me life.

PIP: It's really Phillip. Phillip Pirrip.

MAGWITCH: (*Chuckles.*) Phillip Pirrip. That's a mouthful, isn't it?

PIP: I couldn't say it, so I started calling myself "Pip," and I guess it stuck.

(*Magwitch goes around the tombstone and lets Pip go.*)

MAGWITCH: Well, Pip, tell me, where do ya live?

PIP: (*Nervously backing away.*) I...I don't want to tell you that.

MAGWITCH: (*Shaking Pip.*) You'll tell me if ya know what's good for youse! Now point out the place!

PIP: (*Pointing.*) It's right there. I live with my sister and her husband in his home next to the forge.

MAGWITCH: Why do ya live with yer sister? Where are yer parents?

PIP: (*Pointing to tombstone.*) Right there, sir.

MAGWITCH: I see. And why do ya live next to the forge?

PIP: Because Joe – that's my brother-in-law – he's the blacksmith.

MAGWITCH: Is that so? (*Lifts shackled leg and looks at Pip, pinching his cheek.*) What fat cheeks you have. I could just about eat them.

PIP: (*Covering his cheeks.*) Don't eat my cheeks, sir.

MAGWITCH: I might...unless you do something fer me.

PIP: Anything! Just name it!

MAGWITCH: Ya said yer brother-in law is the blacksmith, right?

PIP: Right...

MAGWITCH: Then ya know what a file is?

PIP: Yes, sir. Joe uses one all the time.

MAGWITCH: And yer sister keeps plenty of wittles in the house?

PIP: Wittles?

MAGWITCH: Food, boy! Food!

PIP: Since it's Christmas morning, our pantry is full. But she's not that good of a cook, sir.

MAGWITCH: That don't matter when you're as hungry as me. (*Grabs Pip. Looking at him earnestly.*) I'll tell ya what, Pip. I'll let ya live if you go back home and get me some food, drink, and that file. Ya bring it all back here to me... (*Threateningly.*) ...or be sure that I'll find ya. (*Puts knife to Pip's throat.*) And when I do, I'll cut yer throat fer sure.

PIP: I'll do it, sir. I'll get you the food and the file.

MAGWITCH: And drink.

PIP: And drink.

MAGWITCH: And ya better not dare say a word to anyone that ya saw me, or it will be the last word ya ever say. Ya see, Pip, I ain't alone out here. There's a young man hidden out here with me, and he is so bad, that when compared to him, I'm a downright angel.

PIP: (*Looking around nervously.*) Where is he?

MAGWITCH: Don't mind him. Ya listen here...all I'd have to do is say the word, and my friend would be after ya. You could lock your door, and hide in yer room, but he would find ya. And when he does –

PIP: (*Scared.*) I won't tell anyone about you, I swear!

MAGWITCH: That's a good boy. Now go! And remember what I told ya to bring me...and what will happen if you don't! (*Pip runs off. Magwitch crosses behind the tombstone. Cannon blast is heard. Looks up. To himself.*) They know I've escaped, but they won't find me...at least for now. As soon as that boy comes back with me supplies, I'll be gone...and I'll never be heard from again.

(*Blackout.*)

*Scene 2*

(AT RISE: Interior of Joe's house. A large stone fireplace with a pot is CS with a small stool nearby. A wooden table set for dinner and chairs is on one side. A table with food and drink is on other side. Joe is seated at the table, sharpening a file. Pip enters on tiptoe. He looks around nervously. Not seeing Joe, he starts to cross to the food. Joe sees Pip.)

JOE: Mrs. Joe has been out about a dozen times looking for you, Pip.

(Startled, Pip jumps and turns around.)

PIP: Joe! I didn't see you there!

JOE: Your sister is awfully mad, Pip. And what's worse...she's got Tickler with her.

PIP: Oh, no! Not Tickler!

JOE: That's right. Last time she started yelling, grabbed Tickler and rampaged out of here. If I were you, I'd hide.

(Mrs. Joe enters, carrying a cane. Pip runs behind Joe.)

MRS. JOE: No use hiding now, Pip! I've found you, and you better tell me where you've been!

PIP: I haven't been anywhere, Mrs. Joe.

MRS. JOE: You're gonna hold your tongue, are you? Well, the Tickler will make you talk. (Holds cane up in air, ready to strike.)

JOE: Now, Mrs. Joe, just wait one—

MRS. JOE: You best be quiet, Joe, or you'll feel Tickler's sting yourself! (Swats at Joe with the cane.)

JOE: (Fending off the cane.) All right! All right!

(Pip crosses in front of Joe to stop Mrs. Joe.)

PIP: I was down at the churchyard.

MRS. JOE: The churchyard?! What use do you have going down there?

PIP: I was visiting Mum and Pop's graves.

MRS. JOE: You would have been buried in the churchyard yourself, if it weren't for me, and you'd better not forget that. Now, you two, wash up for dinner. Our guests will be here any minute for our Christmas feast. I have a few more dishes to prepare. (Exits.)

JOE: You got off easy this time, Pip. No disappearing on us again.

PIP: I'm sorry, Joe. (Hangs his head in misery.)

*(Joe puts his arm around Pip.)*

JOE: Don't go hanging your head, Pip. It's not that bad. I'm not mad at you.

PIP: I know, Joe. You're never mad at me. I just want to be a good boy, that's all.

JOE: You're the best boy I know, Pip. Don't let Mrs. Joe tell you otherwise. Now you and I'd better get our hands washed if we want to keep the Tickler at bay. *(Starts to exit.)*

PIP: You go on ahead, Joe. I'll be there in a minute.

JOE: All right, Pip. But don't take too long. You wouldn't want to make Mrs. Joe angry.

*(Joe exits, leaving the file on the table. Pip looks around nervously, crosses to the fireplace, picks up a stick, crosses to the food, and picks up a large towel. He ties the towel to the stick, making a knapsack.)*

PIP: *(To himself.)* I better choose something Mrs. Joe won't miss. *(Picks up the bread, takes a few slices, and places them in the knapsack.)* She won't miss a few slices of bread. *(Picks up a jug.)* The man said he needed some drink, too. *(Grabs a bottle or flask and pours from the jug. Shakes jug.)* Mrs. Joe will know some is missing. I'd better refill it with something. *(Looks on the shelves. Picks up a bottle of tar water.)* It looks like there's only this tar water. *(Smells bottle, shakes his head, and starts gagging.)* Mrs. Joe loves to make Joe and I drink this when she's mad at us, which is all the time. The less tar water in the bottle, the better it is for me and Joe. *(Pours the tar water into the jug and places both back on the shelf. Puts the flask in the knapsack.)* The man also said he needed a file. *(Crosses to the table, grabs the file, and put it in the knapsack.)* Joe has so many files in the forge. He'll never miss this one. *(Looks in the knapsack.)* This will never be enough to feed that hungry man. *(Puts his hand to his cheeks.)* I better make sure he doesn't go hungry or else he might think about eating my cheeks. *(Crosses back to the food.)* Now what should I take?

MRS. JOE: *(Offstage.)* Merry Christmas, Uncle Pumblechook! How good of you to come.

PIP: *(To himself.)* Oh, no! The guests are arriving. *(Grabs the meat pie.)* This pie will have to do.

*(Pip puts the pie in the knapsack and hides the knapsack near the exit. Mrs. Joe enters with Pumblechook.)*

MRS. JOE: (*Suspiciously.*) What are you doing hanging about by the food, Pip?

PIP: Nothing. Everything smells so good, I was just having a look.

PUMBLECHOOK: Trying to sneak a little nibble before the guests arrived, eh, Pip?

(*Mrs. Joe grabs the bottle of tar water and a spoon.*)

MRS. JOE: If he's so hungry, he can get down some of this tar water to curb his appetite.

PIP: (*Backing away.*) That's all right. I can wait until suppertime.

MRS. JOE: Not so fast, Pip. You get over here and drink this tar water, or do I need to get the Tickler out again?

PIP: No. I'll drink it. (*Opens his mouth.*)

MRS. JOE: (*Putting spoon in Pip's mouth.*) Down the hatch.

PIP: (*Coughing, sputtering.*) Yuck! Ugh!

PUMBLECHOOK: That tar water gets 'em every time. Good for you for raising the boy by the hand, Mrs. Joe.

MRS. JOE: Doesn't do him much good, though, I'm afraid. Just today, he disappeared without telling me where he ran off to.

PUMBLECHOOK: I bet the Tickler set him straight, though, eh, Mrs. Joe?

MRS. JOE: Not yet. Joe stepped in before I had the chance.

PUMBLECHOOK: Well, I'm sure Pip will give you another chance to put the Tickler to good use. (*Bends down. To Pip.*) Is there anything you've done wrong, Pip? Anything you haven't told your sister?

PIP: (*Shaking his head adamantly.*) No, Uncle Pumblechook. I haven't done anything wrong, I swear!

(*Pumblechook chuckles and pats Pip on the head.*)

PUMBLECHOOK: I was only having a go at you, Pip. (*To Mrs. Joe.*) Now, when are we going to get to sample this fine meal you made for us? Did you make some of that pork pie I am so fond of?

MRS. JOE: Of course, I did. In fact, it's right over here— (*Looks for the pie but doesn't find it.*) At least, I thought it was here. Maybe I left it in the other room. Have a seat, and I'll be right back.

(*Mrs. Joe exits. Pumblechook sits. Pip crosses to the stool next to the fireplace.*)

PUMBLECHOOK: Why are you sitting over there, Pip? Surely, there's a spot for you at the table.

PIP: Mrs. Joe prefers me to take my meals over here when we have guests.

PUMBLECHOOK: Well, I have some news to share with you and your sister that may mean you never have to take your meals over on that stool ever again.

PIP: Really? What is it?

PUMBLECHOOK: Let's wait until dinner. This news is the kind of news that requires an audience.

*(Joe enters with Mr. Wopsle, Bidly, and Aunt Petunia. Aunt Petunia crosses to a chair, sits, and immediately falls asleep.)*

WOPSLE: *(Dramatically.)* A good day to each and every one of you, and might I pass along my best wishes for a happy Christmas.

PUMBLECHOOK: And a happy Christmas to you as well, Mr. Wopsle. How are things down at the church?

WOPSLE: Very well, although there isn't much excitement when one is a lowly church clerk. If only I was given the chance to give the sermon on Sunday. *(With enthusiasm, dramatics.)* I could bring the audience to tears.

PUMBLECHOOK: The audience, Mr. Wopsle? Surely, you meant to say the congregation?

WOPSLE: Of course, Mr. Pumblechook. That's what I meant.

PUMBLECHOOK: Thank you for inviting me to Christmas dinner, Joe.

JOE: It is our pleasure, Uncle. Christmas is a time for bringing friends and family together. Mrs. Joe and I are lucky to have the best friends and family in the world. *(Crosses to Pip and hugs him.)* Isn't that right, Pip?

PIP: Sure thing, Joe.

JOE: Pip is the most kind, most honest boy I know. I'm so glad to call him my best mate.

BIDDY: He really is an honest boy. The most honest boy in the whole school, don't you think so, Grandmother?

PETUNIA: *(Awakens with a snort.)* Er...ah...what was it that you said, Bidly?

BIDDY: I said, Pip is the most honest boy in school, wouldn't you say?

PETUNIA: Honest? Yes, indeed. Although I would prefer it if he paid a little more attention to his lessons.

WOPSLE: *(To Pumblechook.)* My dear Aunt Petunia runs the evening school for the village children.

PUMBLECHOOK: Education is very important. Do you know your sums, Pip?

PIP: Well, I—

BIDDY: Pip is actually quite smart, if he just puts his mind to it.

PETUNIA: Pip spends most of the time staring out the window and daydreaming when he should be working out his sums.

PIP: And you spend most of our lesson time sitting at your desk and sleeping.

JOE: Pip! That's no way to talk to your teacher!

BIDDY: (*Chuckling.*) Well, it's true. Like I said, Pip is the most honest boy in the entire school.

PUMBLECHOOK: Honesty is the most important virtue there is. Wouldn't you agree, Mr. Wopsle?

WOPSLE: (*Dramatically.*) People often hear me say, quite astutely, that honesty is the best policy. In fact, many often quote that exact phrase of mine.

PUMBLECHOOK: Actually, that phrase was coined by Sir Edwin Sandys in the 16th century.

WOPSLE: Mr. Sandys may have said those words first, but he never uttered them quite as well as I do.

*(Cannon blast is heard.)*

PIP: What was that?

JOE: Another convict must have escaped from the prison ships anchored just off the marshes. That's the prison sergeant firing off a warning.

PUMBLECHOOK: That'll be the second escaped convict today. I heard a warning shot fired earlier.

PIP: (*Nervously.*) Why are people put on prison ships?

*(Mrs. Joe runs onstage angrily and crosses to Pip.)*

MRS. JOE: (*Shaking Pip.*) I'll send you to the prison ships if you don't tell me where my pork pie is!

PIP: (*Frightened.*) I don't know where your pork pie is, ma'am! I swear!

*(Joe crosses to Mrs. Joe and pulls her off of Pip.)*

JOE: Now why would Pip know what happened to your pork pie, Mrs. Joe?

MRS. JOE: All I know is that when something goes wrong in this house, it's usually that little urchin's fault.

*(Joe puts his arm around Mrs. Joe.)*

JOE: Now, now, Mrs. Joe, let's settle down a bit. It is Christmas, after all. I see that Mr. and Mrs. Hubble have arrived, and this is no way to welcome them into our home. I'm sure your pork pie will turn up eventually.

MRS. JOE: (*Pushing Joe's arm off, angrily.*) I don't want it to turn up eventually. I want it to turn up now! I made it special for Uncle Pumblechook. It's his favorite.

PUMBLECHOOK: That's all right, Mrs. Joe. Let's all just sit down and enjoy the food we do have. Everything looks and smells delightful.

MRS. JOE: Well, it won't be much of a Christmas dinner without my pork pie, I'm afraid. (*To Pip, angrily.*) If I find out you had anything to do with this, I'll send for the prison sergeant straightaway and have you sent off to the prison ships!

PIP: Yes, ma'am.

(*Pip hangs his head and sits on a stool. Others sit.*)

WOPSLE: (*Dramatically.*) Mrs. Joe, this is the most glorious Christmas feast I have ever laid eyes on.

MRS. JOE: It would have been better with a pork pie. (*Starts to dish out the food.*)

JOE: Why don't we talk about something else...perhaps something a bit more happy?

BIDDY: Pip has been working very hard at writing sentences. He can nearly write an entire page full.

MRS. JOE: (*Sarcastically.*) Well, la-de-da! I suppose he deserves a medal. We have ourselves a right old scholar, eh, Joe?

JOE: I think that's great, Pip.

PIP: Thanks, Joe.

PETUNIA: (*Awakens with a snort.*) The bunion that has been plaguing my right toe fell off the other day.

WOPSLE: That's great news, Aunt Petunia.

(*Petunia pulls her foot up and looks at it.*)

PETUNIA: Now, if only I could figure out where it went to. (*Starts digging around in her food.*)

PUMBLECHOOK: (*To others.*) Well, I have a bit of happy news, actually.

JOE: What is it, Uncle?

PUMBLECHOOK: Surely everyone at this table has heard of Miss Havisham—the esteemed lady who resides at the great Satis House Manor.

BIDDY: Miss Havisham is the richest woman in the county! She lives next to the old brewery that closed down, right?

MRS. JOE: (*Agitated.*) It was her family's brewery. Everyone knows that, but no one knows why it shut down.

PUMBLEHOOK: It's a mystery. Even though the brewery is no longer operational, Miss Havisham is still the richest lady in these parts, and she wants your Pip to come play at her house.

JOE: (*Skeptically.*) Pip, play at her house? Why would she want him to do that?

MRS. JOE: (*Excitedly.*) What does it matter? If Miss Havisham wants Pip to come over to play, then that's exactly what he's going to do! (*Stands Pip up and starts fussing over him.*) You need to look your best, Pip. Tuck in your shirt! Comb your hair! (*Pip tucks in his shirt and runs his fingers through his hair.*) And you have to be on your best behavior. Miss Havisham is a very important woman. (*To Pumblehook.*) An important woman whose money I wouldn't mind getting my hands on.

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**