

A SUMMARY

Great Expectations tells the story of Philip Pirrip, known as 'Pip', an orphan brought up by his bad-tempered sister and her warm-hearted husband, Joe Gargery, the village blacksmith.

We first meet Pip on the marshes near his home. He is seized by an escaped convict called Magwitch who demands that Pip bring him food.

Magwitch is later recaptured and life goes on as usual for Pip until he is invited to Satis House, where a woman called Miss Havisham lives. Miss Havisham was jilted on her wedding day many years before and has not left her house since. She lives there with her adopted daughter, Estella, whom she has brought up as a cold, heartless child to gain her revenge on men. Pip falls in love with Estella but she is always rude and cold to him.

When he is fourteen Pip's visits to Satis House end because Miss Havisham pays for him to be apprenticed to Joe Gargery, the blacksmith.

Four years later Pip is visited by an Old Bailey lawyer called Jaggers, who tells him that he has money for Pip from an anonymous donor. The money is to make Pip a gentleman. The only condition of the gift is that Pip must not try to find out whom it has come from. Pip thinks it is from Miss Havisham and that she is preparing him to marry Estella.

Pip goes to London to learn to be a gentleman but there he becomes proud and snobbish and forgets his friends at home. He gets himself in to debt and is continuously snubbed by Estella.

Pip finds out the identity of his benefactor: Abel Magwitch, the convict, who has made a fortune in Australia. Pip finds out that Estella is to marry a man called Bentley Drummle.

Pip discovers who Estella's real parents are and the identity of the person who jilted Miss Havisham. She is badly burned in a fire at her house and later dies.

Magwitch is recaptured and is sentenced to death but he dies before he can be executed. Pip is left penniless.

Pip becomes ill and is nursed back to health by Joe Gargery.

Pip leaves the country but returns eleven years later. He meets up with Estella again, who is now a widow and a changed woman.

The story ends with the expectation that Pip will marry Estella.