



Quicklet on Charles Dickens' Great Expectations (CliffsNotes-like Summary, Analysis, and Commentary)

Jean Asta

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Quicklets: Your Reading Sidekick!

ABOUT THE BOOK

I first read *Great Expectations* for a middle school English course. Often, I was one of the only kids in my class that would actually read the assigned title, and this book was no different. However, while I normally read the books compulsively and didn't necessarily enjoy them, *Great Expectations* I truly did relish reading. I related strongly to Pip, the protagonist, who feels pressured by a mysterious benefactor to accomplish great things. Because of the faith of this benefactor and his quick rise from a poor working background, the young Pip often feels that he must be superior to his peers from more privileged backgrounds, which often provokes their resentment. The young me didn't recognize the cause and effect of Pip's behavior and the resulting abuse from the other kids, but I think one of the reasons I identified with him so strongly was my own failure to recognize the effect my attitude might have had on the way I was treated.

Later in life, I read *Great Expectations* again. In this second reading I felt a strong kinship with the Pip character as an older man. Despite all of the support he received from his benefactor, he still ends up falling ill and deeply into debt and ultimately achieving a relatively mediocre life. I, too, came into illness and debt in my early twenties which slowed down my progress in life significantly. Pip's attitude of superiority toward his peers and the expectation that he will be great falls short of reality.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Jean Asta is the owner of Asta Communications, a freelance communications company providing writing, editing, and training services for clients around the globe. She has a BA in English Literature and a Master's in Public Administration, both from the University of Georgia.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

At the beginning of the tale Pip lives with his older sister and her husband, Joe Gargery, the blacksmith. Pip and Mrs. Joe lost their parents long ago, and we get the sense that Mrs. Joe has never really recovered from the tragedy. While Pip's relationship with his ornery older sister is tenuous, Joe actually cares for him throughout the story as if he were his own son. On Christmas Eve, Pip encounters an escaped convict who manipulates him into helping him to escape from the authorities. The assistance forces Pip to be secretive with his family and to steal resources so that the convict can survive. Pip feels a great deal of guilt about this, especially because he mistakenly believes the convict was responsible for assaulting his sister, although it was actually Joe's employee Orlick.

Miss Havisham is a bitter old woman who lives in a house that she has kept frozen in time from the moment she was jilted at the altar. She stopped all the clocks at the instant of her jilting, has never removed her wedding dress, and left all the decorations and food set out for her wedding in place in Satis House, long

since having rotted and molded. Miss Havisham is the caretaker of a pretty young girl named Estella...

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CHAPTER OUTLINE

Quicklet On “Great Expectations” by Charles Dickens

+ My Great Expectations from Great Expectations

+ Charles Dickens, From Rags to Riches

+ About Great Expectations

+ Overall Summary for Great Expectations

+ ...and much more

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