



Great Expectations
By
Charles Dickens

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**A Short Story for ESOL & Functional
Skills Learners**



Pip is a poor orphan boy who lives with his older sister and her kind husband, Joe Gargery. Joe is a blacksmith and treats Pip like a son. Pip expects that when he grows up, he will become a blacksmith like Joe.



One cold evening, Pip visits his parents' graves in a churchyard. Suddenly, an escaped prisoner called Magwitch appears and frightens him. He orders Pip to bring him some food and a file to cut the chains around his legs.



Pip is terrified, but the next morning he secretly takes some food and a file to Magwitch. Later, soldiers capture Magwitch and take him away. Pip believes that he will never see the prisoner again.



One day, Pip's Uncle Pumblechook tells the family that a rich and mysterious woman called Miss Havisham wants a local boy to visit her house and play there. He arranges for Pip to go. Pip does not know why Miss Havisham has chosen him, but his family hopes that knowing such a rich woman may help him in the future.



Pip arrives at Miss Havisham's large, dark home, Satis House. He discovers that the clocks have all been stopped and Miss Havisham is still wearing an old wedding dress. Many years ago, the man she loved left her on their wedding day. Heartbroken, she stopped the clocks and has kept her house almost unchanged ever since.



At Satis House, Pip meets Estella, a beautiful girl who was adopted and raised by Miss Havisham. Estella looks down on Pip and makes fun of his poor clothes, rough hands and simple way of speaking. For the first time, Pip feels ashamed of being poor.



Pip continues visiting Miss Havisham and spending time with Estella. He soon falls in love with Estella, even though she is often cold and unkind to him. Because Estella has made him ashamed of his simple life, Pip begins to dream of becoming educated, rich and gentlemanly.



Years later, a London lawyer named Mr. Jaggers arrives with surprising news. A secret benefactor has given Pip a large amount of money so that he can move to London, receive an education and become a gentleman. Pip is not allowed to know who the person is.



Pip immediately believes that Miss Havisham is his secret benefactor because she is rich and has always encouraged his interest in Estella. He convinces himself that she wants him to become a gentleman so that he can one day marry Estella. Excited about his new future, Pip says goodbye to Joe and leaves for London.



In London, Pip receives an education, wears expensive clothes and learns how wealthy gentlemen live and behave. When Joe comes to visit him, Pip feels embarrassed by Joe's simple clothes, country manners and way of speaking. Pip has started to care too much about wealth and social class, and he is ashamed of the kind man who raised him.



Pip continues to visit Estella and hopes that becoming a gentleman will finally make her love him. However, Estella warns Pip that she cannot love him. Pip ignores her warning because he still believes that Miss Havisham intends them to be together.



One stormy night, a rough-looking stranger arrives at Pip's home in London. To Pip's shock, the man is Magwitch, the escaped prisoner he helped many years ago. Pip is even more shocked when Magwitch tells him why he has returned.



Magwitch reveals that he is Pip's secret benefactor, not Miss Havisham. After being sent to Australia, Magwitch worked hard and became wealthy. He never forgot the kindness Pip showed him as a frightened boy, so he secretly used his money to turn Pip into a gentleman.



At first, Pip is horrified to discover that all his money has come from a former prisoner. However, as he learns about Magwitch's difficult life and sees how much the old man cares for him, Pip's feelings change. He begins to respect Magwitch and feels ashamed that he judged him because of his past and social position.



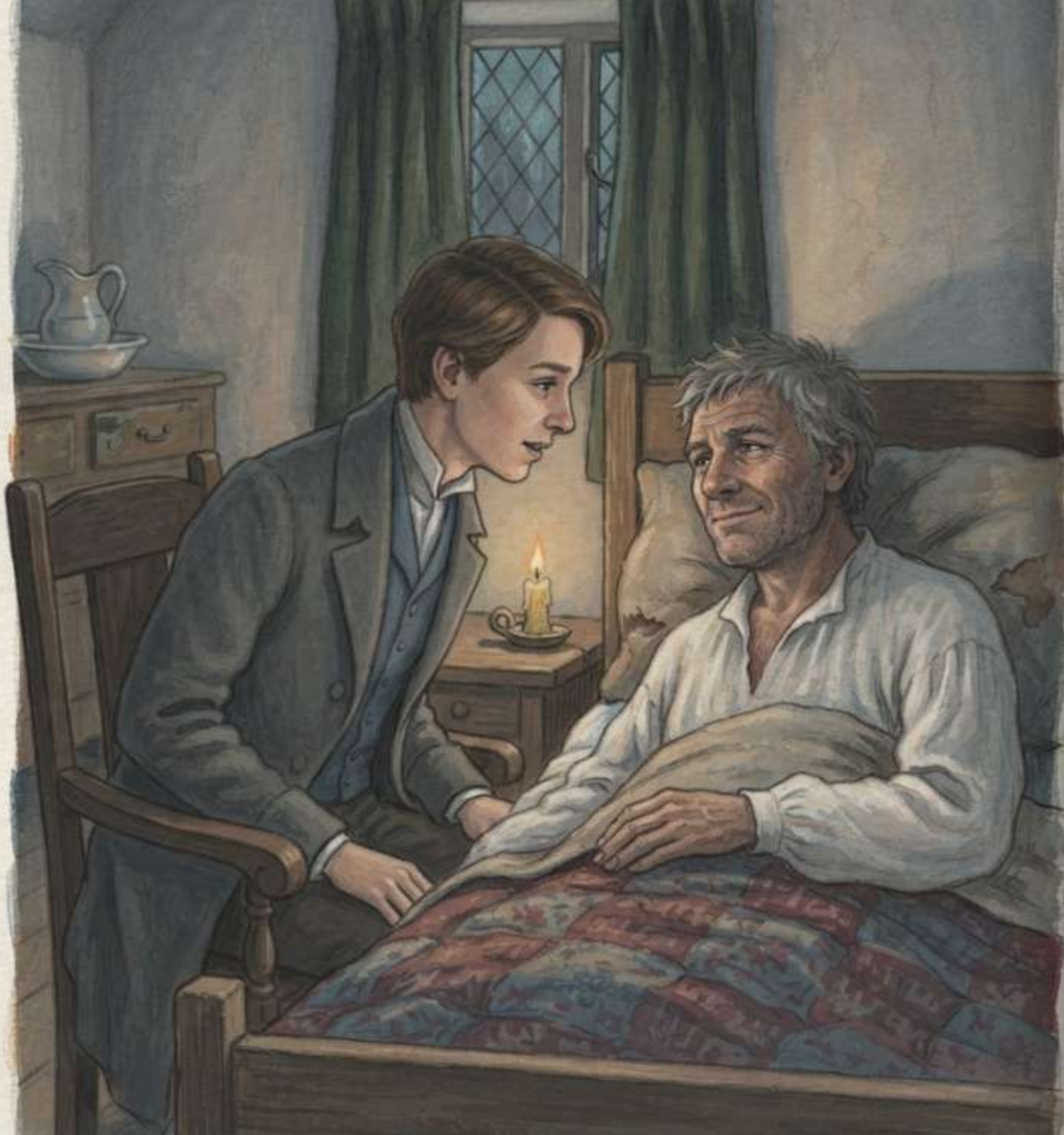
Pip later discovers another surprising truth: Magwitch is Estella's father, although Magwitch does not know what happened to his daughter. Estella was adopted by Miss Havisham when she was a child. Hurt by her own broken heart, Miss Havisham raised Estella to be cold towards men so that Estella would break their hearts too.



Pip finally tells Estella how deeply he loves her, but she tells him that she is going to marry another man. Pip is heartbroken. Miss Havisham sees the pain she has caused by encouraging Pip to love Estella and begins to regret what she has done.



Because Magwitch returned to England illegally, he is in great danger of being arrested. Pip and his friend Herbert make a plan to help him escape by boat. Their plan fails, and the police capture Magwitch before he can leave England.



Magwitch is badly injured during his capture and becomes seriously ill. Pip stays beside him and cares for him until the end. Before Magwitch dies, Pip gently tells him that his daughter Estella is alive and that Pip loves her.



Without Magwitch, Pip loses his fortune. He falls into debt and later becomes seriously ill. Joe comes to London, cares for Pip and even pays his debts, although Pip had once been ashamed of him. Pip finally understands that Joe's love, loyalty and kindness are worth far more than wealth or social position.



Years later, after becoming a humbler and wiser man, Pip meets Estella again at the ruins of Satis House. Estella has also suffered and changed, and she is now kinder than she was when they were young. Pip has finally learned that being a true gentleman is not about money or social class, but about kindness, loyalty and how we treat other people.