

Pip, magwitch, miss havisham and estella in great expectations

[People](#), [Charles Dickens](#)



Compare and contrast the presentation of Pip, Magwitch, Miss Havisham and Estella in the opening chapter of Great Expectation Compare and contrast the presentation of Pip, Magwitch, Miss Havisham and Estella in the opening chapters of ' Great Expectations'. Explain which characters you feel sympathy for and why? ' Great Expectations' written by Charles Dickens is a classic Victorian novel and is often regarded as the author's finest achievement. However it was originally written as a series with each chapter appearing in a newspaper which has an affect on the whole structure. The end of each chapter must be exciting to make the reader read the next edition. In the novel, Dickens manages to express his criticisms of Victorian society, most probably due to his own experiences as a child. In ' Great Expectations' sympathy is a key emotion and theme felt by the reader and some of the characters. Dickens manages to make the reader sympathise towards the four main characters; Pip, Magwitch, Estella and Miss Havisham despite their different ages, gender, characteristics and social status. In the opening chapter we are introduced to Pip, a lonely orphan, and Magwitch an escaped convict. Magwitch threatens Pip into stealing some food for him as well as a file to get rid of the ' irons' on his legs. These two characters are complete contradictions of each other with Pip being described a ' small bundle of shivers' while Magwitch is described with animal like characteristics. We can easily understand that Magwitch is dangerous because he has ' irons' on his legs, suggesting that he is an escaped convict. At this point the audience will feel sympathetic towards Pip and angrier towards Magwitch because he threatens the innocent and misfortuned Pip. The opening chapter portrays Pip as; innocent, lonely, vulnerable and scared.

He is described as a 'trembling' 'bundle of shivers' and on a few occasions his speech falters due to his fear of Magwitch. On the other hand, Magwitch, is described as a fearful man in coarse grey, 'smothered in mud' and in 'broken shoes'. His voice is described as 'terrible' and he growls depicting him as animal like or with animal characteristics which does not let the reader feel any sympathy for him. From the opening chapter we learn that Pip is an orphan, his parents as well as his brothers and sisters are all buried side by side. He was 'bought up by hand' by his sister who is wife of a local blacksmith, Joe Gargery, Pip's closest friend. This causes the reader to almost instantly feel sympathy for Pip. However the reader's reaction or feelings towards Magwitch are more likely to be hostile. They may feel that the intimidation or bullying of a vulnerable child deserves no sympathy but by the end of the novel, Dickens manages to justify Magwitch, as the individuals life of the main characters are joined up and all the answers are revealed. The setting is also important. Dickens had decided to use pathetic fallacy in order to reflect the characters' feelings by describing the surrounding environment. In this case, Pip is almost crying. He is surrounded by the graves of his family and is feeling depressed which is made worse by this sudden appearance by this fearsome stranger, Magwitch. This is shown by the repetition of 'dead and buried' and emotive words such as 'savage liar', 'bleak' and 'dark, flat and wilderness' which reflect Pips emotions. In chapter 8 we are introduced to Estella and Miss Havisham, Pip is sent to 'Satis House' to 'play' where he meets a beautiful but cold hearted, Estella and a rather eccentric Miss Havisham. Pathetic fallacy is used once again as Satis House reflects Miss Havisham's feelings. When Pip first sees Satis

House, and Miss Havisham's room he notices that there were: ' No glimpses of daylight,' and that it was ' empty and deceived'. Miss Havisham's clothes and herself also seem, melancholy and decayed: ' everything within my view which ought to be white ...was faded and yellow.' This shows how she's depressed and old. At first, the reader may feel that Miss Havisham is mad or eccentric. The reader will feel little sympathy for her situation until later on in the novel when they learn the cause of her misery. Although the author does give the reader a clue when he makes Miss Havisham shout: ' Broken!' whilst pointing to her heart. This action will cause intrigue as the story goes on whilst we learn more about the pasts of each character. Both Miss Havisham and Estella treat Pip with disdain. They both insult him. Miss Havisham patronises him by saying ' you can do that,' when she wanted him to call Estella. Estella later exclaims ' what coarse hands he has' which later causes him to cry creating further sympathy as the reader is reminded of Pip's lower social status. Estella is portrayed as very pompous, stuck up and possibly quite cold hearted. Despite this, Pip seems attracted to Estella. He describes her as ' very pretty' and ' seemed very proud,' although the reader's attitude towards her would be that she's too arrogant and possibly spoilt. In chapter 8 there is no reason for the reader to feel sympathetic towards Estella, however, by the end, she becomes the victim and her situation earns her sympathy although some people may feel that she deserved what she got. In conclusion, in the opening chapters of ' Great Expectations,' I believe that Pip earns the most sympathy due to the way he is presented; his frailty and him being an orphan being the key emotional areas. However, later on as we learn more about each of the other characters, we feel more sympathetic

towards them. By the end of the novel, each character is an almost contradiction to themselves as Dickens argues against society suggesting that people can change. Poor, trembling Pip has grown up, he has sufficient money, which is what he wanted, he becomes educated and is a gentleman, whereas the arrogant and beautiful Estella becomes quiet and battered, her beauty now hidden behind her scars. Miss Havisham dies understanding, that although she felt it is necessary to gain her revenge on men, due to her pain, she'd caused a lot of pain by creating a monster in the cold hearted Estella which meant that her once broken heart could finally feel again. Finally, Magwitch, who seemed to be rough and animal like, mellows down and forms a bond between himself and Pip. His story helps the reader understand him and the hatred they felt towards him in the opening chapters is directed towards Compeyson who becomes the common enemy and villain who meets a just end.