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**Dramatic
Publishing**

Charles Dickens'

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

A Dramatization

by

ROBERT JOHANSON



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • London, England • Melbourne, Australia

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ROBERT JOHANSON

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(GREAT EXPECTATIONS)

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To the memory of my dear friend and mentor
CHRISTOPHER SERGEL
a man who always had the greatest expectations
of life and art—

and with grateful appreciation to Angelo Del Rossi
and the Paper Mill Playhouse
for the first production of this work.

FROM THE AUTHOR AND FIRST DIRECTOR

This play can be done as elaborately or simply as you desire. Don't be discouraged by the number of scenes and many locations. They can be done literally as they were in the premiere at the Paper Mill Playhouse or suggestively as you might stage a Shakespearean drama. The important thing is the story and the characters. Plan your production so that it can flow quickly and never lose the momentum of this masterful plot. It is also great fun to let actors double in several parts—including having men and women playing opposite sex roles. It's fun for the audience and a wonderful challenge for the actors. But, if you have a large company, there are great roles for everyone. Always remember you are retelling one of the greatest stories ever concocted. The audience becomes unbelievably involved in the pathos and humor of Pip's journey. Most of them really don't know this tale and they are constantly surprised and gripped by the many plot twists and revelations. I have tried to retain all of Dickens' story lines, so that the way all of them inevitably thread together has not been lost. It is important when mounting this play that you give equal emphasis to every character because they all will ultimately have a profound effect on Pip's life. Joe, Biddy, Jaggers and Wemmick are every bit as important as Miss Havisham, Magwitch, Estella and Herbert. Each character's relationship with Pip could be a play unto itself, the magic of this rich stew is enjoying them all neatly mixed together. I hope you will find as much satisfaction from this play as I have.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

A Play in Two Acts

For 11 men and 5 Women

(or as many as 20 Men, 10 Women and extras, with doubling)

DRAMATIS PERSONNAE

(in order of appearance)

ON THE MARSHES:

PIP

YOUNG PIP an orphan, aged 11

ABEL MAGWITCH a convict

JOE GARGERY a blacksmith

MRS. JOE his wife, Pip's older sister

COMPEYSON another convict

UNCLE PUMBLEHOOK Pip's Uncle

MR. HUBBLE neighbor

MRS. HUBBLE neighbor

SERGEANT

SOLDIERS

ESTELLA as a young girl, adopted by Miss Havisham

MISS HAVISHAM an eccentric rich lady

MR. JAGGERS a lawyer

MISS SARAH POCKET relation of Miss Havisham

CAMILLA relation of Miss Havisham

THE PALE YOUNG GENTLEMAN .. young Herbert Pocket

ESTELLA as a young lady

ORLICK a journeyman

BIDDY an orphan

TRABB the tailor

TRABB'S BOY

IN LONDON:

WEMMICKJaggers' clerk

JAGGERS' CLIENTS

HERBERT POCKET

BENTLEY DRUMMLE

MOLLYJaggers' housekeeper

THE AGED PARENT Wemmick's father

OFFICER ON THE THAMES

TWO GENTLEMEN

LITTLE PIP Joe's son

LONDONERS, BALL GUESTS, PRISONERS, SEAMEN

THE PLACE:

The marshes east of London and London itself.

THE TIME:

1836-1857

SUGGESTED DOUBLING COMBINATIONS

Pip

Miss Havisham / Mrs. Hubble

Mr. Jaggers / Compeyson

Abel Magwitch / Mr. Trabb / London Person / Jaggers' Client

Young Pip / London Child / Little Pip / Female Ball Guest

Joe Gargery / London Person / Ball Guest

Mrs. Joe / Jaggers' Client / London Person / Ball Guest /

1st Gentleman

Uncle Pumblechook / London Person / Aged Parent / Ball Guest

Young Estella / London Child / Ball Guest

Estella / Molly / Soldier / London Person

Orlick / London Person / Jaggers' Client

Biddy / Soldier / London Person / Jaggers' Client / Ball Guest

Wemmick / Mr. Hubble / London Person

Herbert Pocket / Soldier / Sarah Pocket

Drumle / Camilla / Sergeant / London Person

Young Herbert / Trabb's Boy / Drummer Boy /

London Person / Female Ball Guest

GREAT EXPECTATIONS was first presented at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey in February and March of 1992 with the following cast:

ON THE MARSHES:

Pip	<i>Michael James Reed</i>
Young Pip	<i>Daren Edward Higgins</i>
Abel Magwitch	<i>John MacKay</i>
Joe Gargery	<i>Michael O'Gorman</i>
Mrs. Joe	<i>Suzanne Toren</i>
Compeyson	<i>Joe Ambrose</i>
Uncle Pumblechook	<i>Jim Hillgartner</i>
Mr. Hubble	<i>Kermit Brown</i>
Mrs. Hubble	<i>Linda Poser</i>
Sergeant	<i>Jeff Woodman</i>
Estella, as a young girl	<i>Jennifer Holmes</i>
Miss Havisham	<i>Elizabeth Franz</i>
Mr. Jiggers	<i>Larry Grey</i>
Miss Sarah Pocket	<i>Michael Lewis</i>
Camilla	<i>Jeff Woodman</i>
Raymond	<i>Timothy Wheeler</i>
The Pale Young Gentleman	<i>Jeff Seelbach</i>
Estella, as a young lady	<i>Nancy Bell</i>
Orlick	<i>Timothy Wheeler</i>
Biddy	<i>Marceline Hugot</i>
Trabb	<i>Robert Molnar</i>
Trabb's Boy	<i>Chris Rempfer</i>

IN LONDON:

Wemmick	<i>Kermit Brown</i>
Jaggers' Clients	<i>Carina Andersson, Andrew Segal</i>
Herbert Pocket	<i>Michael Lewis</i>
Mrs. Belinda Pocket	<i>Linda Poser</i>
Pocket Children	<i>Emily Blau, Dante Deiana, Daren Edward Higgins, Jennifer Holmes, Chris Rempfer, Jeff Seelbach</i>
Nursemaids: Flopson	<i>Jim Hillgartner</i>
Millers	<i>Timothy Wheeler</i>
Mr. Matthew Pocket	<i>Robert Molnar</i>
Bentley Drummle	<i>Jeff Woodman</i>
Startop, student of Mr. Pocket	<i>Kyle Saunders</i>
Molly	<i>Nancy Bell</i>
The Aged Parent	<i>Robert Molnar</i>
Officer On The Thames	<i>Kyle Saunders</i>
Little Pip	<i>Daren Edward Higgins</i>

Executive Producer	<i>Angelo Del Rossi</i>
Artistic Director	<i>Robert Johanson</i>
Stage Adaptation And Direction	<i>Robert Johanson</i>
Scenic Design	<i>Michael Anania</i>
Costume Design	<i>Gregg Barnes</i>
Lighting Design	<i>Timothy Hunter</i>
Music	<i>Albert Evans</i>
Sound Design	<i>David R. Paterson</i>
Hair Design	<i>Paul Germano</i>

ACT ONE

AT RISE: *Strange music—a combination of wind and ghosts.*

PIP appears at center with a traveling bag—he wraps his coat about him. As he speaks, the lights gradually reveal a churchyard on the marshes. It is a bleak, windy day.

PIP. My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

(YOUNG PIP enters the churchyard with a fistful of winter flowers—stops—stares at one tombstone in particular.)

It was in this bleak churchyard, that I found out for certain that Philip Pirrip, Late of this Parish, and also Georgiana, Wife of the Above, were dead and buried and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias and Roger, five little brothers of mine, were also dead and buried and that the flat wilderness beyond the churchyard was the marshes; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that small bundle of shivers—that orphan growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry—was Pip.

(Wind moans—church bell clangs fitfully—suddenly, a fearful MAN, all in coarse grey, with no hat and an iron

on his leg jumps up from behind the tombstone. A MAN who has been soaked in water, smothered in mud, lamed by stones, torn by briars, and whose teeth chatter in his head as he seizes YOUNG PIP by the chin.)

CONVICT. Hold your noise! Keep still or I'll cut your throat!

YOUNG PIP. Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir!

CONVICT. Tell us your name! Quick!

YOUNG PIP (*softly*). Pip, sir.

CONVICT. Once more, give it mouth!

YOUNG PIP. Pip. Pip, sir.

CONVICT. Where's your mother?

YOUNG PIP. There, sir. (*The CONVICT starts to run, stops, looks over his shoulder.*) There, sir. (*YOUNG PIP points to the tombstone.*) "Also Georgiana." That's my mother.

CONVICT. Oh! And is that your father alonger your mother?

YOUNG PIP. Yes, sir, him, too; "late of this parish."

CONVICT (*sitting YOUNG PIP on a tombstone*). Ha! Who d'ye live with—supposin' ye're kindly let to live—

YOUNG PIP. My sister, sir—Mrs. Joe Gargery—wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir.

CONVICT. Blacksmith, eh? (*Looks down at his shackled leg—grabs YOUNG PIP with both hands—tilts him backwards.*) You know what a file is?

YOUNG PIP. Yes, sir.

CONVICT. You know what wittles is?

YOUNG PIP. Food, sir.

CONVICT. You get me a file. And you get me wittles. You bring 'em to me tomorrow morning early, or I'll have your heart and liver out. There's a young man hid with me, in comparison with which I am a angel. That young man has a secret way of getting at a boy, and at his heart and at his

liver. It will be very hard to hold that young man off your insides. Now what do you say?

YOUNG PIP. I'll get you the file and wittles and come to you in the morning.

CONVICT. Say, Lord strike me dead if I don't!

YOUNG PIP. Lord strike me dead if I don't!

CONVICT. Now get home! And don't tell no one you seen such a person as me! (*YOUNG PIP runs and the CONVICT limps away.*)

PIP. I made the best use of my legs and didn't stop running till I reached the forge.

(Lights come up on the Gargery Kitchen. A simple table with two benches, a hutch for plates and food and a fire-place. Seated in the chimney corner is JOE—mild, good-natured, easy-going—a Hercules in strength and also in weakness.)

JOE. Mrs. Joe has been out a dozen times, looking for you, Pip. And she's out now making it a baker's dozen.

YOUNG PIP. Is she, Joe?

JOE. And what's worse, she's got Tickler with her.

PIP (*remembering—rubs the spot that most felt the blow*).

Tickler was a wax-ended piece of cane, worn smooth by collision with my tickled frame.

YOUNG PIP. Has she been gone long, Joe?

JOE. Well—she's been on the rampage this last spell about five minutes. Oh! She's a-coming! Get behind the door, old chap.

(MRS. JOE enters "on the rampage." Not a good-looking woman, black hair and eyes and such a prevailing redness

of skin that perhaps she washed herself with a nutmeg grater instead of soap.)

MRS. JOE (*finding YOUNG PIP and beating him with Tickler*). Where have you been, you young monkey?

YOUNG PIP. I have only been to the churchyard.

MRS. JOE. Churchyard! If it warn't for me, you'd have been to the churchyard long ago, and stayed there. Who brought you up by hand?

YOUNG PIP. You did.

MRS. JOE. And why did I do it, I should like to know?

YOUNG PIP (*whimpering*). I don't know.

MRS. JOE. I certainly don't! I'd never do it again! I know that. It's bad enough being a blacksmith's wife—and him a Gargery—without being your mother. Hah! Churchyard, indeed! You'll drive me to the churchyard betwixt you, one of these days, and oh, a pr-r-recious pair you'd be without me! (*JOE and YOUNG PIP exchange raised eyebrows as they sit to the table. MRS. JOE slaps butter on a loaf of bread, saws it in half—gives one to JOE—one to YOUNG PIP. SOUND of great guns booming is heard in the distance.*)

JOE. Ah! There's another convict off.

YOUNG PIP. What does that mean, Joe?

MRS. JOE. Escaped. Escaped.

JOE. There was a convict off last night after sunset-gun. And they fired warning of him. And now it appears they're firing warning of another.

YOUNG PIP. Who's firing?

MRS. JOE. Drat that boy—what a questioner he is. (*Another BOOM.*)

YOUNG PIP. Mrs. Joe, I should like to know—if you wouldn't mind—where the firing comes from.

MRS. JOE. Lord bless the boy! From the Hulks! (*Covers a fresh pork pie—puts it up on shelf.*)

YOUNG PIP. And please, what's Hulks?

MRS. JOE. Answer him one question and he'll ask you a dozen more. Hulks are prison ships.

YOUNG PIP. Who's put into prison ships?

MRS. JOE (*this is too much*). Oh! I didn't bring you up by hand to badger people's lives out. People are put in Hulks because they murder, and because they rob, and do all sorts of bad; and they always begin by asking questions!

PIP. I had begun by asking questions—and I was going to rob Mrs. Joe—I was clearly on my way to the Hulks. (*BOOM. Lights fade on kitchen—ALL exit as PIP continues.*) I was in mortal terror of my convict with the leg irons; mortal terror of the young man he said wanted my heart and liver; mortal terror of myself for making such an awful promise.

(*Dawn. Distant cock crow. YOUNG PIP sneaks into the kitchen—stuffs his jacket with stolen goods.*)

And I was terrified Mrs. Joe would find me robbing her pantry—a stone bottle of brandy, a rind of cheese, a meat bone with very little on it and Mrs. Joe's beautiful pork pie. I ran to the forge for the file and stole out onto the misty marshes.

(*The kitchen disappears. YOUNG PIP returns to the churchyard.*)

Instead of running at everything, everything seemed to be running at me. Even the cows cried as plainly as could be, "A boy has stolen somebody's pork pie! Stop thief! Stop thief!"

(A DIFFERENT MAN in grey, with a leg-iron, sits on a rail fence facing away. YOUNG PIP taps him softly. THE MAN jumps up instantly, swings at YOUNG PIP, misses and runs off into the mist.)

YOUNG PIP *(running in the opposite direction)*. The man who wants my liver! *(Runs into the FIRST CONVICT—screams.)*

CONVICT. What's in the bottle, boy?

YOUNG PIP. Brandy.

CONVICT. And that?

YOUNG PIP. A pork pie. *(The CONVICT grabs the bottle and food—cramming it all down his throat as fast as he can.)* I'm glad you enjoy it.

CONVICT. Did you speak?

YOUNG PIP. I said, I was glad you enjoyed it.

CONVICT. Thankee, my boy. I do.

YOUNG PIP. I'm afraid you won't leave any of it for him.

CONVICT. Leave any for him. Who's him?

YOUNG PIP. The young man that you spoke of.

CONVICT. Oh, ah! *(Laughs gruffly.)* Him! He don't want no wittles.

YOUNG PIP. I thought he looked as if he did.

CONVICT *(stops eating—sits up keenly)*. Looked? When?

YOUNG PIP. Just now.

CONVICT. Where?

YOUNG PIP. Yonder—over there—I thought it was you. *(The CONVICT grabs him roughly by the collar.)* Dressed like you—only with a hat—and—and—and with the same reason for wanting to borrow a file.

CONVICT. Did you notice anything else on him?

YOUNG PIP. He had a scar on his cheek.

CONVICT *(slapping his left cheek)*. Not here?

YOUNG PIP. Yes, there!

CONVICT (*a guttural scream*). Where is he? I'll pull him down, like a bloodhound. Curse this iron! Give us hold of the file, boy! (*YOUNG PIP no sooner hands over the file than the CONVICT is down on the grass filing at his iron like a madman*).

PIP. Being that it was Christmas morning, I was very much afraid of keeping away from home any longer. I told the convict...

YOUNG PIP. I must go.

PIP. ...but he took no notice. The last I heard of him was his file still going in the mist.

(SOUND of file grows louder—the Kitchen reappears. The table is laid for Christmas dinner. Seated there are JOE and MRS. JOE, MR. HUBBLE—a tough high-shouldered stooping old man; MRS. HUBBLE—a little sharp-edged person; UNCLE PUMBLEHOOK—large, hard-breathing, middle-aged, with hair standing upright on his head, so he looks as if he has just been choked. YOUNG PIP slips into his seat at the table and the GUESTS give forth a burst of laughter.)

PUMBLEHOOK. Mrs. Joe—I have brought you as the compliments of the season—I have brought you, mum, a bottle of sherry wine—and I have brought you, mum, a bottle of port wine.

MRS. JOE. Oh Uncle Pum-ble-chook! This is kind! (*To YOUNG PIP.*) D'you hear that? Be grateful.

PUMBLEHOOK. Especially, be grateful, boy, to them which brought you up by hand.

MRS. HUBBLE. Why is it the young are never grateful?

PUMBLEHOOK. Never grateful!

MR. HUBBLE. Naterally wicious.

PUMBLECHOOK and MR. HUBBLE. True—(Nods.)

MRS. HUBBLE and MRS. JOE. True—(Nods.)

ALL (but JOE and YOUNG PIP). True! (ALL nod.)

MRS. JOE (to JOE). Clean plates—cold. (JOE goes to fetch them.) Now, Uncle, you must taste—you all must taste, to finish along with such a delicious present as Uncle Pumblechook's—a nice savoury pork pie.

MRS. HUBBLE. A bit of savoury pork pie would lay atop anything you could mention and do no harm!

MR. HUBBLE. Naterally dewicious!

PUMBLECHOOK. Mrs. Joe, we'll do our best endeavors; leave us have a cut of this same pie.

JOE. You shall have some too, Pip. (A DRUM ROLL is heard as MRS. JOE climbs up to the shelf—YOUNG PIP jumps up in abject terror and bolts for the door—before he opens it MRS. JOE exclaims:)

MRS. JOE. Gracious goodness gracious me, what's gone—with the pie!

(YOUNG PIP opens the door—standing there is a party of SOLDIERS in red coats with muskets—a SERGEANT faces the astonished PIP holding up a pair of handcuffs.)

SERGEANT. Here you are, look sharp, come on! (SERGEANT passes by YOUNG PIP.) Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, but I am on the chase in the name of the King and I want a blacksmith.

MRS. JOE. And what might you want with him?

SERGEANT. Missis, speaking for myself, I should reply, the honor and pleasure of his fine wife's acquaintance; speaking for the King, I answer, a little job done. (MRS. JOE is momentarily flattered. SERGEANT shows handcuffs.) You

see, blacksmith, the lock on these has gone wrong—and they are wanted for immediate service.

JOE. Yes, sir—I'll see to it at once. (*Goes off with the handcuffs.*)

MRS. HUBBLE. Convicts, sergeant?

SERGEANT. Aye! Two. Anybody here seen any sign of such game? (*Various denials—SERGEANT looks at YOUNG PIP who remains silent.*)

PIP (*as they ALL move outside*). It seemed to take an eternity for Joe to finish his job—but by some stroke of luck Mrs. Joe didn't mention anything about her stolen pie. So far I was free and clear—so far.

JOE (*handing the cuffs to the SERGEANT*). Sergeant—may we here—Pip and me—see what comes of your hunt?

SERGEANT. Surely, blacksmith—but keep to the rear and call out if you catch sight of anyone. (*Leading the SOLDIERS off.*)

JOE. Come along, Pip—what larks!

MR. HUBBLE. I'll come awong too.

PUMBLECHOOK. I'll have another sherry, miself.

MRS. JOE. Mind you, Joe Gargery, if you bring the boy back with his head blown to bits by a musket, don't look to me to put it together again. (*SOLDIERS searching—torches, drums—a dismal, bleak evening.*)

PIP. With my heart thumping like a blacksmith I looked all about for sign of the convicts. (*With great dread.*) If we should come upon them, would my particular convict suppose that it was I who had brought the soldiers there?

SOLDIERS (*shouting and musket fire*). Convicts! Runaways! Guard! This way for the runaway convicts!

(Suddenly the two struggling CONVICTS roll forward fighting each other—SOLDIERS gather around—finally pulling them apart.)

SERGEANT. Cover them steady, men! Surrender, you two!
And confound you for two wild beasts!

FIRST CONVICT. Mind! I took him! I give him up to you!

SERGEANT. It'll do you small good my man—handcuffs there!

FIRST CONVICT. I don't expect it to do me good. I took him. That's enough for me.

OTHER CONVICT. Take notice Sergeant—he tried to murder me!

FIRST CONVICT. Murder him? I could ha' got clear of these marshes—if I hadn't made the discovery he was here! Let him go free? Let him make a fool outta me fresh again?

OTHER CONVICT. He tried to murder me!

FIRST CONVICT. See what a villain he is? Do you see those groveling and wandering eyes? That's how he looked when we was tried together.

OTHER CONVICT. You're not much to look at. *(FIRST CONVICT tries to rush him. Is pulled back.)* Didn't I tell you that he would murder me if he could?

SERGEANT. Enough of this parley—take them to the Hulks. *(FIRST CONVICT notices YOUNG PIP—YOUNG PIP shakes his head “no”—FIRST CONVICT looks away.)* Come on—down you go—into the boat there. *(OTHER CONVICT is pushed roughly down steps to the waiting boat— torchlight is reflected off the lapping water— FIRST CONVICT starts down but stops directly facing YOUNG PIP.)*

FIRST CONVICT. I wish to say something respecting this escape.

SERGEANT. You may say what you like, but you have no call to say it here.

FIRST CONVICT. I know, but this is another pint—a separate matter. I took some wittles, up at the village over yonder near the church stands.

SERGEANT. You mean stole.

FIRST CONVICT. A man can't starve; at least I can't. It was from the blacksmith's—I took a file too.

JOE. Halloa, Pip! Hear that?

SERGEANT. Blacksmith, have you missed anything?

JOE. My wife did, at the very moment you come in—don't you know Pip—a pork pie.

FIRST CONVICT. So you're the blacksmith, are you? Then I'm sorry to say I've eat your pie.

JOE. God knows you're welcome to it—so far as it ever was mine. We don't know what you've done, but we wouldn't have you starved to death for it. Would us, Pip? *(The CONVICT takes one last long look at YOUNG PIP and descends to the boat. [NOTE: Could be up the aisle of the theater.] PIP slowly walks to stand behind YOUNG PIP who is looking out to sea with JOE, MR. HUBBLE, SERGEANT and SOLDIERS.)*

PIP. By the light of the torches we saw the black Hulk lying out a little way from the mud of the shore, like a wicked Noah's ark. Moored by massive rusty chains, the prison-ship seemed to my young eyes to be ironed like the prisoners. I saw my convict rowed out, and taken up the side of the ship to disappear. Then, as if it were all over with him, the ends of the torches were flung hissing into the water and went out. *(SOLDIERS fling their torches into the pit—a loud hissing—frightening SOUND of large metal door clanging shut and—Blackout.)*