

# Great Expectations: A Critical and Appreciative Look by G.K. Chesterton

Charles Dickens's 1861 novel, *Great Expectations*, is a classic work of Victorian literature that has captivated readers for generations. The novel tells the story of Pip, a young orphan boy who is raised in poverty but dreams of a better life. When he unexpectedly inherits a fortune, he is thrown into a world of wealth and privilege, but soon discovers that it is not all that it seems.



## Great Expectations; With Appreciations and Criticisms

By G. K. Chesterton by Charles Dickens

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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*Great Expectations* is a complex and multifaceted novel that has been praised for its rich characters, vivid descriptions, and insightful social commentary. However, it has also been criticized for its melodramatic plot and its sometimes heavy-handed moralizing. In this essay, I will explore both the strengths and weaknesses of *Great Expectations*, arguing that it is

a flawed but ultimately profound work of literature that deserves its place as a classic.

## **Appreciations**

One of the most striking things about *Great Expectations* is its vivid and memorable characters. Pip is a complex and sympathetic protagonist, and his journey from poverty to wealth and back again is both heartbreaking and inspiring. Miss Havisham, the eccentric and vengeful spinster who takes Pip under her wing, is one of the most unforgettable characters in all of literature. And Estella, the beautiful and enigmatic young woman who Pip loves, is both alluring and unattainable.

Dickens's characters are not simply types, but fully realized individuals with their own unique motivations and desires. He is particularly skilled at creating characters who are both good and bad, and who defy easy categorization. Miss Havisham, for example, is a cruel and manipulative woman, but she is also capable of great kindness. And Pip, while he is often naive and selfish, is also capable of great courage and compassion.

In addition to its memorable characters, *Great Expectations* is also praised for its rich and evocative descriptions. Dickens was a master of language, and his descriptions of the English countryside, the bustling streets of London, and the decaying grandeur of Miss Havisham's mansion are some of the most vivid and memorable in all of literature.

Finally, *Great Expectations* is a novel with a powerful social message. Dickens was a lifelong critic of the harsh conditions faced by the poor in Victorian England, and *Great Expectations* is a powerful indictment of the class system and the injustices it creates. The novel shows how poverty

can warp and damage people's lives, and how the pursuit of wealth can lead to moral corruption.

## **Criticisms**

Despite its many strengths, *Great Expectations* has also been criticized for a number of weaknesses. One of the most common criticisms is that the plot is melodramatic and contrived. The novel is full of coincidences and unlikely events, and the ending is particularly far-fetched.

Another criticism is that Dickens's moralizing can be heavy-handed and preachy. The novel is full of overt moral lessons, and Dickens often seems to be more interested in teaching his readers a lesson than in telling a good story.

Finally, some critics have argued that *Great Expectations* is too sentimental and unrealistic. The novel is full of emotional scenes, and Dickens often seems to be more interested in tugging at the reader's heartstrings than in exploring complex social issues.

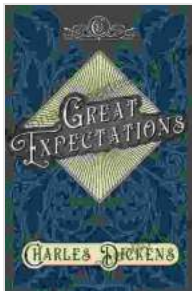
*Great Expectations* is a flawed but ultimately profound work of literature. It is a novel that is full of memorable characters, vivid descriptions, and powerful social commentary. However, it is also a novel that is melodramatic, moralistic, and sentimental.

Despite its flaws, *Great Expectations* remains a classic work of literature that deserves its place in the canon. It is a novel that has something to offer everyone, and it is a novel that will continue to be read and enjoyed for generations to come.

## **Works Cited**

Chesterton, G.K. "Great Expectations." *The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Edited by Ian Watt. Oxford University Press, 1971.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Edited by Robert Patten. Penguin Classics, 2003.



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