

# The Living Past in Literature

# **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

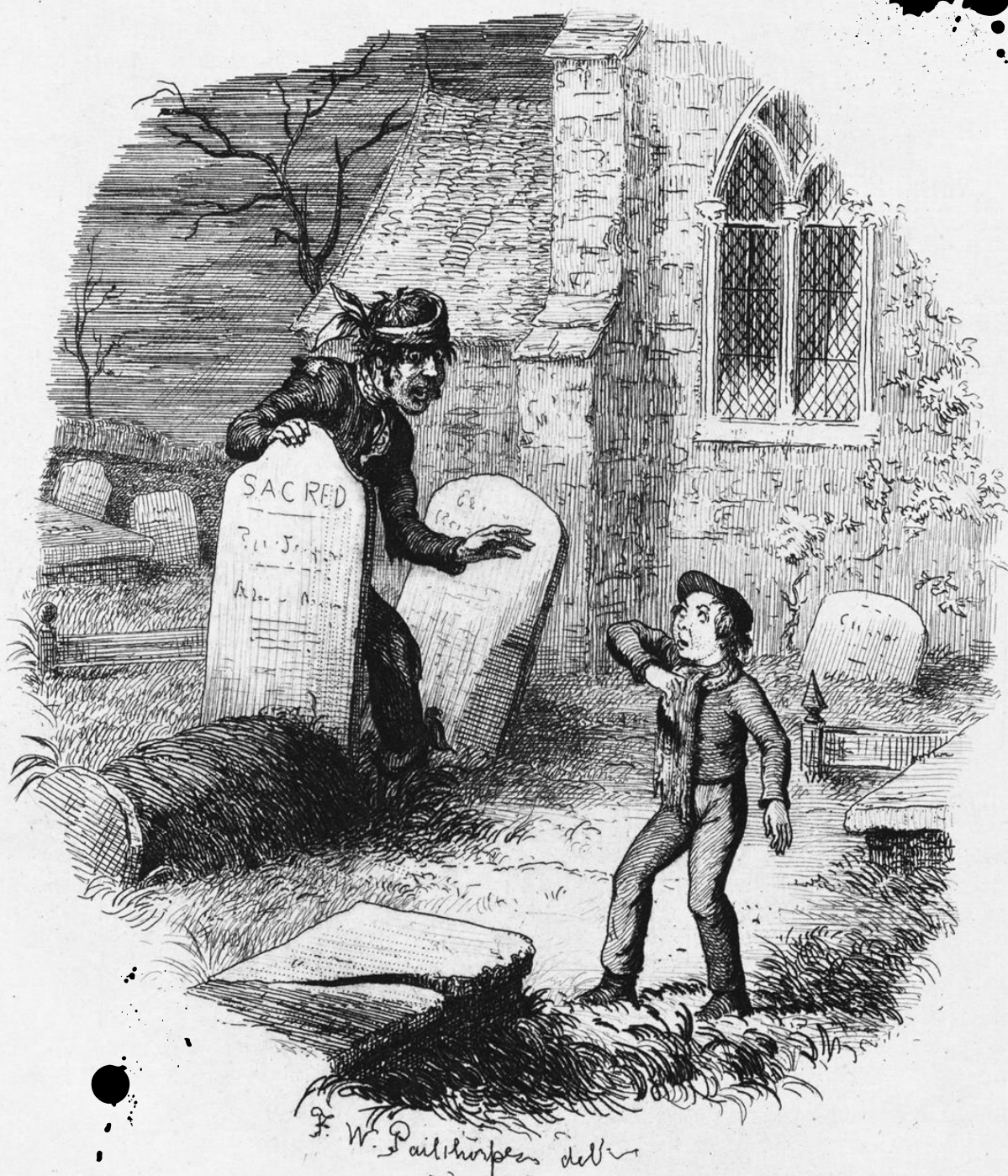


Illustrations for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of *Great Expectations* by  
FREDERICK WILLIAM PAILTHORPE

Concept art for the 2018 film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* by  
SONY PICTURES ANIMATION

**MARVEL**

Sony Pictures  
**Animation**

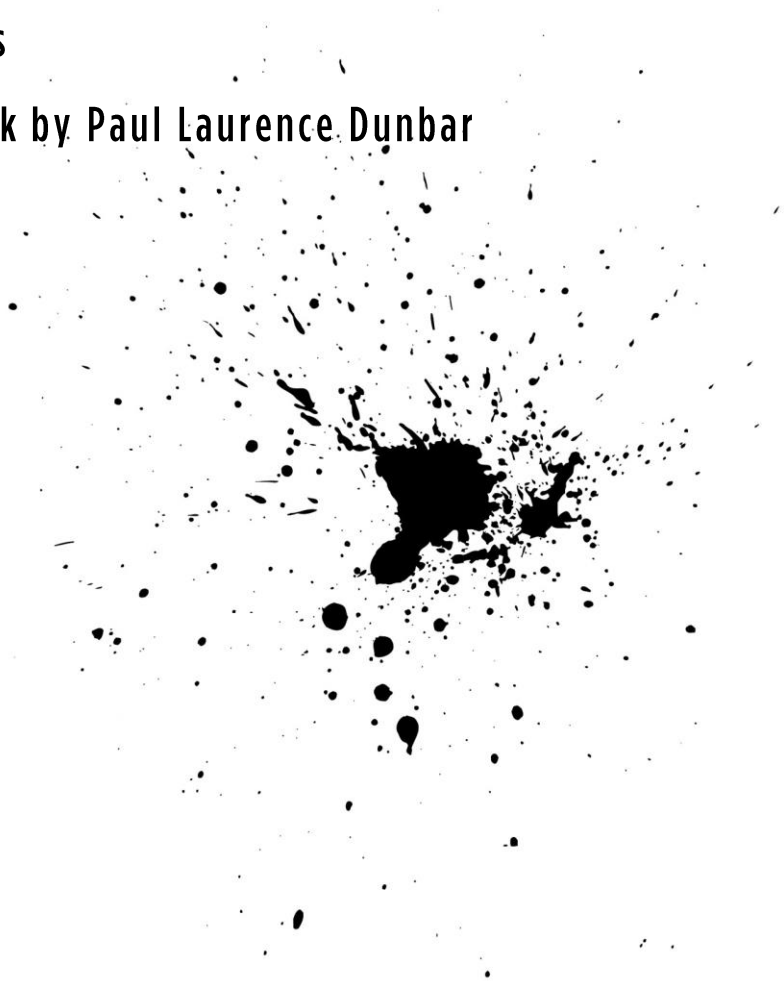


Frederick William Pailthorpe's twenty-one illustrations for Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* were produced in 1885, 25 years after the novel was first published. Perhaps one of Pailthorpe's most powerful illustrations is "The Terrible Stranger in the Churchyard": a depiction of Pip's terrifying first encounter with Magwitch. The hand-colored version of this illustration can be seen on slide 10 of the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Who was Charles Dickens, and what aspects of his life are reflected in his fictional characters' lives, especially Pip's?

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What is a coming-of-age story? How do the novel *Great Expectations* and the film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* follow this mode?

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What is Gothic literature? Choose a scene from either *Great Expectations* or *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* and describe some of the Gothic aspects of the scene. What is Gothic about the scene?

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How does Dickens's portrayal of money and class in *Great Expectations* carry over to *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*? How does wealth affect and reflect the morality of some of the characters in these works?

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What role does gender play when examining these works? How does Dickens's view of women in *Great Expectations* differ from the contemporary filmmakers' view of women in *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*? Why?

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"And May I—May I—?" by Frederick William Pailthorpe is the seventh lithograph for the 1885, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *Great Expectations*. In the passage, Uncle Pumblechook effusively congratulates Pip asking him if he may shake his hand. Pip consents and reflects that "this May I meant, might he shake hands? I consented, and he was fervent, and then sat down again" (120).

Names \_\_\_\_\_

# Little Dickens Scavenger Hunt

Break off into small groups (four or five students to a group) to do some cursory, Internet research on Charles Dickens. Use this list of questions to guide your searches. Some of the questions are more difficult to answer than others. See if your group can answer them all!

- When and where was Dickens born?
- Identify three places Dickens lived as a boy.
- What happened to his father when Charles was young?
- Identify one or two writers who influenced Dickens while he was growing up.
- What are some of the jobs Dickens had before he became a famous writer?
- Who ruled England during most of Dickens's life? How old was Dickens when she became queen?
- What was Dickens's first book?
- In what form was his first book published?
- What was Dickens's adult home called?
- What was the name of the woman whom Dickens was close to when he was age 18-20?
- What is the name of the actress with whom Dickens was deeply involved? What happened to their romance?
- What important personal event happened before Dickens began writing *Great Expectations* in 1860?
- Identify five social problems that concerned Dickens during his lifetime.
- In what magazine was *Great Expectations* first published?
- How many chapters were published at a time?
- How many copies were sold in magazine form?
- Which president of the United States did Dickens meet?
- Which Dickens novel has sold the most copies?

[illegible]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU

When Miles Morales is in training and preparing himself to become the next Spider-Man, Gwen Stacy repeatedly asks him, “Above all, no matter how many times you get hit, can you get back up?” While being able to “get back up” may be the most important aspect of becoming a superhero, it is perhaps even more essential for your educational journey. Describe a time in your life when you were hit so many times, and so hard, that you didn’t think you would be able to get back up but somehow did. Free write on the lines below and be prepared to share your experience with the class. Your experience can be about an injury (or literally falling down), or it can be more metaphorical—about a time when you were able to battle back from some kind of adversity.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# The Ending is All That Matters

Read Dickens's original ending to *Great Expectations*, which was not published in the author's lifetime, and then answer the questions which follow.

It was four years more, before I saw herself. I had heard of her as leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband who had used her with great cruelty, and who had become quite renowned as a compound of pride, brutality, and meanness.

I had heard of the death of her husband (from an accident consequent on ill-treating a horse), and of her being married again to a Shropshire doctor, who, against his interest, had once very manfully interposed, on an occasion when he was in professional attendance on Mr. Drummle, and had witnessed some outrageous treatment of her. I had heard that the Shropshire doctor was not rich, and that they lived on her own personal fortune.

I was in England again—in London, and walking along Piccadilly with little Pip—when a servant came running after me to ask would I step back to a lady in a carriage who wished to speak to me. It was a little pony carriage, which the lady was driving; and the lady and I looked sadly enough on one another.

"I am greatly changed, I know; but I thought you would like to shake hands with Estella, too, Pip. Lift up that pretty child and let me kiss it!" (She supposed the child, I think, to be my child.)

I was very glad afterwards to have had the interview; for, in her face and in her voice, and in her touch, she gave me the assurance, that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching, and had given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be.<sup>1</sup>

Do you prefer Dickens's original ending, reproduced above, or the ending he chose to publish? Why?

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Try to think about the novel more objectively. Which ending do you think best fits with the themes of *Great Expectations*?

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<sup>1</sup> "The Original Ending" here is based on the proof slip reproduced by Edgar Rosenberg in the W. W. Norton (1999) edition of *Great Expectations*, p. 359.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# CHARACTER POSTERS

Eccentric, fascinating characters provide the seasoning for Pip's intriguing tale. Some critics argue that with so many characters populating Dickens's books, many of the secondary characters lack complexity and psychological depth. Dickens may lack psychological insight into some of his characters, but he knows how to draw characters vividly. He describes every detail of manners, appearance, dress, and other external details of his characters. In fact, readers sometimes criticize Dickens for creating characters who are so extreme that they seem unrealistic. Mostly, however, the characters entertain readers and reveal deep insights into human nature. When watching *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, readers of *Great Expectations* can see how the writers of the film were inspired by Dickens's novel. The writers updated the book's themes relating to family, inheritance, and coming-of-age so that many of the character's in Pip's life seem to transfer right on to the big screen. Use the graphic organizer below to make comparisons between some of the characters from the novel and the film. Write down brief descriptions for each character as well as some quotations that seem to define them. After we have watched the movie, your group will be assigned one of the pairings to make a poster.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>Pip</b></u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>Miles</b></u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>Estella</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is a beautiful young girl, brought up as a young lady by Miss Havisham. She uses her education to talk down to Pip and make him feel inferior.</li> <li>By the end of the novel, she appears softened by her experiences, and implies that she regrets having rejected Pip's love for her but feels that the best she can hope for is that they are friends...</li> </ul> <p>"She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed." -Pip, p.49</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>Gwen</b></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the team leader, smart, beautiful, and fearless.</li> <li>She is full of ideas and never wastes time worrying about things she can't control. When Gwen uses her Spider powers, she is almost unstoppable.</li> </ul> <p>"You know I'm older than you. Fifteen months, but it's pretty significant, if you ask me." -Gwen to Miles</p>

<u>Ms. Havisham</u>	<u>Dr. Octavius</u>
<u>Joe Gargery</u>	<u>Jefferson Davis</u>
<u>Orlick</u>	<u>Kingpin</u>
<u>Mr. Jaggers</u>	<u>Aunt May</u>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Anyone Can Wear the Mask

At the end of *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, Miles assures the audience that “anyone can wear the mask; you could wear the mask!” Miles’s closing narration echoes a chilling poem by the African American poet laureate, Paul Laurence Dunbar, “We Wear the Mask” (1895). Dunbar talks of the need to disguise his anguish as a black man and to salvage what he can of his pride. Read Dunbar’s poem, and then answer the questions which follow.

### We Wear the Mask

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
    We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
    We wear the mask!<sup>2</sup>

What does it mean to “wear the mask” in Dunbar’s poem? How does Miles’s message at the end of the film compare to Dunbar’s message in the poem?

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<sup>2</sup> From *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1993.

“Only until recently, there was this scarcity of non-white heroes and lead characters, which always created this mental stumbling block for people of color. You feel left out from these fantasy narratives unless you have a hero whose mind and heart you’re getting into.”

PETER RAMSEY, DIRECTOR

