


## 2. Pip Meets a Convict

 **M**y father's family name is Pirrip, and my first name Philip, but as a child I couldn't say either. So, I called myself Pip, and then so did everyone else.



I say that my name is Pirrip because that's what is written on my father's tombstone and it is what my sister told me. My sister is married to the blacksmith.

We lived in a marshy area, down by the river, a few miles from the sea. One day, I stood in the churchyard and looked over my parents' tombstone at the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard. The marshes were crisscrossed with ditches and mounds. In the distance, I could see the grey line of the river and then, far away, the sea. It was a cold day.

The grey land and the grey sky made me feel sad. I suddenly realized that I was an orphan and I began to cry.



'Hold your noise!' cried a terrible voice. It came from a man who had just stepped out from behind a gravestone. 'Keep still, or I'll cut your throat!'

This man was frightening. He was dressed in rough grey clothes and he had a big iron chain on his leg. He was an escaped convict. His shoes were broken, and he had an old rag tied round his head. He was dirty from being soaked in the muddy water from the ditches. He was covered in scratches from nettles and stones. He limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled. His teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

'Oh! Don't cut my throat, Sir,'  
I pleaded in terror.

'Tell me your name!' said the man.  
'Quick!'

'Pip, Sir.'

'Once more,' said the man, staring  
at me. 'Louder!'

'Pip. Pip, Sir.'

'Show me where you live,' said the  
man. 'Point out the place!'

I pointed to where our village lay,  
a mile from the church.

The man looked at me closely. Then he turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. The upside down view of the church righted itself when he placed me on a high tombstone. I sat, trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously.

'Now look here!' said the man. 'Where are your parents?'

'There, Sir!' said I.



The man jumped and made a short  
run, but then he stopped and looked  
over his shoulder.

'There, Sir!' I timidly said, pointing  
to the tombstone.

'Oh,' said the man. 'So, who do  
you live with? If I let you live, which  
I haven't made up my mind about.'

'My sister, Sir—Mrs Joe  
Gargery—wife of Joe Gargery, the  
blacksmith, Sir.'



'Blacksmith, eh?' said he. And looked down at his leg.

After looking at his leg and me several times, he took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me. Then he stared into my eyes.

'Now look here,' he said, 'I need to decide if I will let you live. Do you know what a file is?'

'Yes, Sir.'

'And you know what grub is?'

'Yes, Sir.'

After each question he tilted me over a little more. This made me feel helpless. I was in danger.

'You get me a file.' He tilted me again. 'And you get me grub.' He tilted me again. 'You bring them both to me.' He tilted me again. 'Or I'll have your heart and liver out.' He tilted me again.

I was dreadfully frightened and hoped that he would not drop me. I clung to him with both hands. He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weathercock. Then, still holding me up on the tombstone, he went on:

'Early tomorrow morning, bring that file and the grub. You bring the lot to me, at that old Battery over there. If you do it, and you don't say a word about me, I will let you live. If you fail, or say anything at all about me, then your heart and your liver shall be torn out, roasted and eaten. Now, I'm not alone. There's a young man hiding with me. In comparison with him I am an angel.

'That young man can hear us now. That young man has a secret way of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver.



'A boy can't hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe ... but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open.

'I am keeping that young man from harming you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it very hard to hold that young man off of your inside. Now, what do you say?'

I was so frightened but I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

'Promise on your life!' said the man.

I promised, and he took me down from the top of the tombstone.

'Now,' he went on, 'remember that promise, and remember that young man, and get home!'



'Goo-good night, Sir,' I stammered.

'It is going to be a long night for me!' said he. He looked at the cold, wet, flat marsh. 'I wish I was a frog. Or an eel!'

He hugged his shuddering body in both his arms, as if to hold himself together, and limped towards the low church wall. He got over it slowly, like a man whose legs were numbed and stiff, and then turned round to look for me. When I saw him turning, I was frightened again, and ran home without stopping.

(Adapted from *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) is known as the greatest writer of the Victoria era. He wrote a huge number of novels and stories that were very popular in his lifetime and that remain popular to this day. He was known for creating wonderful characters. Dickens wanted the world he lived in to change for the better. He campaigned for children's rights, education and for the reformation of society, to make it more equal.

## WORDS TO KNOW



**Battery** a fort

**blacksmith** a person who creates tools and objects out of metal

**churchyard** the area around a church used for burials, usually full of tombstones

**coarse** rough

**convict** prisoner

**file** a rough-edged tool used for smoothing or shaping metal

**grub** a slang word for food

**marsh** a wetland area by water, usually covered in small plants

**nettles** a weed that stings the skin when touched

**orphan** a child whose parents are dead

**ravenously** eating fast due to greed or hunger

**tombstone** a large flat stone standing or laid over a grave

**weathercock** a device, in the shape of a cockerel, used to show which way the wind is blowing

**wilderness** a natural space that has not been shaped by, or lived in, by people

## COMPREHENSION

### 1. Answer the following questions.

- a. What was Pip's full name?
- b. Where did he live and with whom?
- c. Why did Pip start to cry in the graveyard one day?
- d. What did the convict tell Pip to get for him?
- e. Where and when did the convict want to meet him again?

**These questions are more difficult. Discuss them first.**

- f. What did the convict say and do to frighten Pip?
- g. How do we know that the convict was cold and hungry?
- h. The convict says that he is not alone and that he has a young man hiding with him. Do you think this is true? Why does he tell Pip this?

### 2. Answer the questions about this line from the story.

*The man jumped and made a short run, but then he stopped and looked over his shoulder.*

- a. Who is this about?
- b. Why did he start to run away?
- c. What did he realize that made him stop?

## WORKING WITH WORDS

1. Find the correct meanings of the following in a dictionary. Write the words and meanings in your notebook. Note that the words may have more than one meaning.

a. iron	b. safe	c. present	d. danger	e. fail
f. tuck	g. tilt	h. hugged	i. file	j. creep

2. The letters in the words below are jumbled. We call these words anagrams.  
Example: BREAD is an anagram of BEARD

What are these words? You will find the anagrams in the story.

Easy:	a. dais	b. thaw	c. newt	d. notes	e. mane
	f. vile	g. mites	h. mars	i. life	j. mace
Not so easy:	a. or dates	b. CS Hotel	c. earth	d. most T bone	

## LEARNING ABOUT LANGUAGE

### ADJECTIVES

1. Underline the adjectives in the following.

- Once upon a time there lived a young girl.
- She went to a good school and had a clever teacher.
- By mistake she brought her old textbook to class instead of the new one.
- The forgetful girl thought the teacher would shout at her in a loud voice.
- But the thoughtful teacher noticed the poor girl's expression.
- The teacher opened her metal cupboard with a shiny key.
- 'You can borrow this spare copy,' said the kind teacher.

### PHRASES AND ADJECTIVE PHRASES

Do you know what a *phrase* is?

- A *phrase* is a group of words. It is not a sentence, but part of a sentence.
- A phrase gives us an idea, but does not have a verb in it.

Here are some phrases:

in a minute  
up the tree

you and I  
my father's shirt

2. Say which of the following are phrases. Note that the punctuation has not been included.

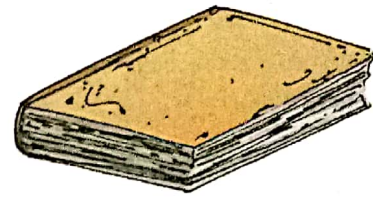
- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| a. over the fence    | b. he kicked it        |
| c. she likes mangoes | d. in a dish           |
| e. now and then      | f. I am on the road    |
| g. three or four     | h. they don't want any |
| i. are you coming    | j. good and bad        |

Sometimes **phrases** are used as **adjectives**.

Example: This is a book *with an old cover*.

He is a man *of great age*.

The **adjective phrases** are in *italics* above.



3. Add suitable adjective phrases to the following.

- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. She bought the shirt ... | b. I looked at the sky ... |
| c. They saw the fox ...     | d. This is a shirt ...     |
| e. He heard the tiger ...   |                            |

## LISTENING AND SPEAKING

What will Pip do, and why?

**Your class will be divided into four or five groups. Each group should do the following:**

1. Discuss and decide whether or not Pip will help the convict.
2. Write down the reasons why he will OR why he will not help the convict.
3. Select one speaker to put forward the views of the group.

## COMPOSITION

Pip was very frightened by the convict. The convict was frightened when he thought Pip was pointing to his parents.

**Think of a time when you have been frightened. Was it something you saw or watched? Did something or someone make you jump? Write about it.**