

THEME: Dreams

Dreams – or ‘hopes’ or even ‘expectations’ – are things that we *wish* or *expect* to happen in the future.

‘Expectations’ has two meanings in the novel, the first being this meaning, and the second being ‘*money to inherit*’. We don’t use this second meaning in English anymore, but it would have been obvious to readers in Dickens’ time.

The title ‘Great Expectations’ meant both ‘big hopes and dreams’ *and* a lot of money to inherit. Both are true for Pip in the novel.

Dreams of the life he wants are what drives Pip throughout the story. Pip starts to *dream of a better life* after going to Satis House and meeting Estella, who made Pip aware of the *class* differences between them. Pip felt determined not to be ‘common’ as he dreams of being of a higher class, and respected by Estella.



Think about:

- What could Pip have done so that he would have been less disappointed all the time?
- How did Pip eventually become happy with his life?

Throughout the novel, Pip finds that making his dreams come true is hard, and he is often *disappointed*. When Pip gets to London, he finds it to be dirty and ugly; he finds that more money only means more debt; Estella marries Drummle; and Pip’s benefactor turns out to be not Miss Havisham, but Magwitch.

Quotes about dreams:

chapter 19

I had always wanted to be a gentleman.



chapter 36

I received an official note from Wemmick, informing me that Jaggers would be glad if I would call upon him at five in the afternoon. This convinced us that something great was to happen.



chapter 41

I am in debt – very heavily for me, who have now no expectations – and I have been bred to no calling, and I am fit for nothing.

Truly it was impossible to dissociate (Estella’s) presence from all those wretched hankerings after money and gentility that had disturbed my boyhood – from all those ill-regulated aspirations that had first made me ashamed of home and of Joe.

chapter 29

Day by day (Herbert’s) hopes grew stronger and his face brighter.

chapter 37