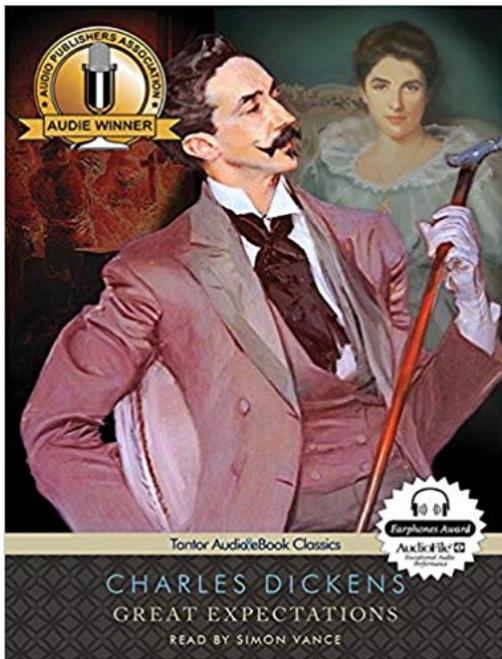


## Great Expectations (Tantor Unabridged Classics) by Simon Vance, Charles Dickens



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**Author:** Simon Vance, Charles Dickens

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Considered by many to be Charles Dickens's finest novel, *Great Expectations* traces the growth of the book's narrator, the orphan Philip Pirrip (Pip), from a boy of shallow dreams to a man with depth of character. From its famous dramatic opening on the bleak Kentish marshes, the story abounds with some of Dickens's most memorable characters. Among them are the kindly blacksmith Joe Gargery, the mysterious convict Abel Magwitch, the eccentric Miss Havisham and her beautiful ward Estella, Pip's good-hearted roommate Herbert Pocket, and the pompous Pumblechook. As Pip unravels the truth behind his own "great expectations" in his quest to become a gentleman, the mysteries of the past and the convolutions of fate through a series of thrilling adventures serve to steer him toward maturity and his most important discovery of all—the truth about himself.



Reviews of the [Great Expectations \(Tantor Unabridged](#)

## Classics) by Simon Vance, Charles Dickens

### *Daiktilar*

If you're looking for a reading edition of *Bleak House*, as far as I am concerned, this is the one to get.

More than most Dickens novels, this one needs annotations if you're really going to understand the target of the satire: the pre-1852 English Chancery Court. Yes, you do get the basic idea without fully understanding the historical background, but the novel is much richer if you do. The Norton annotations in this regard are uniformly concise and helpful. The many allusions (both to high and low culture) are also glossed, and while you may be well-versed enough in the Christian Bible to do without some of these, Dickens' reading otherwise was highly idiosyncratic -- to the point that even the most well-read consumer is probably going to need a hand from time to time (e.g., Dickens will allude very specifically to a line from something like Milton's *Comus* instead of one of the more important works). As to the popular culture, I defy anyone other than a time traveler or historian specializing in the period to identify references to popular songs, ballads, etc. without some one pointing them out. That the annotations appear at the bottom of the page -- rather than forcing you to flip to the back -- is a welcome bonus.

As for the other features of this edition, the critical apparatus (comparing differences in various editions that appeared within Dickens' lifetime) is unlikely to interest anyone other than specialists, but there are other, more helpful features for the general reader. There is a very good introduction to the Chancery Court (oddly missing from the Modern Library edition -- which otherwise uses the same base text and contains the same annotations if you need a hardback edition), some helpful primary documents about some of the topics that inform the novel, and (like all Norton Critical Editions) a small sampling of excerpts from critical essays (usually several decades old) which are sometimes interesting, but almost always superseded by more recent scholarship.

The trade paperback binding is flexible and durable --allowing you to lay the open book on a flat surface without immediately cracking the spine. You could even read it this way so long as you're not doing silly things like mashing the book completely flat. Though the pages might be fractionally thinner than some may prefer, it does help to keep the bulk down in such a lengthy novel (saving shelf space, as well as making it easier to handle while reading). The type is high enough contrast with the page so as not to cause undue eyestrain, and the font is not minuscule to save space. This edition does include the illustrations by Phiz (Hablot Browne), which are essential as far as I am concerned.

Bottom line: this is a quality, useful edition of one of Dickens' most important novels, and while I appreciate the look and feel of quality hardbacks like the lovely Nonesuch editions, I primarily buy books to read -- not to look attractive on the shelf. I would avoid non-trade paperbacks (good luck not cracking the spine for such a long novel), cheaply bound trades that are likely to begin falling apart after one reading, or hardbacks that don't include at least cursory notes (unless you really are buying more for the look and feel -- I would suggest the leather spines and sewn bindings of the Nonesuch for this).

### *Llbery*

Oh, the beauty and the agony tears at me as I think about this stunning story. The characters are vivid and the settings so well written that I was transported to the graveyard alongside young Pip and his convict, fear streaking through me as it was for that small boy torn by a near-impossible decision. And I'm there with Pip and kind-hearted Joe in the forge. I can feel the fire on my skin and taste hot metal on the back of my tongue. In my mind, I hear the crackling of the decades-old crinoline of Miss Havisham's skirts rustling against the marble floors of the mausoleum she calls

home. Amid the stopping of Miss Havisham's clock, the cool radiance that is Estella vibrates from the pages, bringing her to life.

If you haven't read *Great Expectations*, I encourage you to do so. Yes, it was first published in 1861, and the syntax is more eloquent than that we've become accustomed to, but once this tale grabs hold, you will forget the language and year it was written and be all in with these new friends. The love, the heartbreak and the lessons still hold true today. Some choices, once made, can leave long-reaching scars on the hearts of those we never knew we touched. A good deed can ripple through time to places never imagined. The consequences of our actions must be accounted for, and there will always be outcomes we could never have anticipated.

*Great Expectations* is the real deal! The deliciously-satisfying prose is the whipped cream on the proverbial sundae that is Dickens. The plot and subplots (and sub-subplots) are astounding! The way he can weave this tangled web yet keep the interest of the reader while giving nothing away until the perfect moment ... and BAM! He has you, and you sigh with the perfection of it all.

You've missed a gorgeous piece of literature if you don't dive into this book.

*Puchock*

This was the early 1800's. How could one expect it Not to be bleak, although the house, Bleak House, is the antithesis of bleak.

A great "series" and pretty realistic. I've read a few reviewers talk about Downtown Abbey as good but Bleak House as dark and bleak. No kidding. It's the 1800's and if you didn't have money life was pretty horrendous. Also, Downton Abbey was the early 1900's, 50+ years later than is shown here.

Downton Abbey, although a favorite, it is very detailed and realistic for the rich, with little to no realistic reflection of the details of poverty other than what's shown of the downstairs workers. Gillian is good but has the same 3 looks used over and over. I get she's lived a tortured life and has made decisions, i.e. marrying her husband, for her own survival and welfare but we really don't get to see much beyond the one dimensional presentation of her living an unhappy rich life.

The other characters are far more interesting only because they've fleshed out their characters. Sadly I was unaware of the history and although I knew it was Season 1 in 2005, I believed there was a Season 2. So, I'd not realized when it's done, it's done. No more.

It should really be presented as a Mini-series.

I won't ruin it for those who haven't seen it, so I'll only say I really liked watching however I thought the last 30-60 minutes could have been done better.

*Kage*

Nice cover and illustrations, but the publisher has added a forward that manages to be transphobic, homophobic and emphasizes a conservative Christian viewpoint while railing against political correctness. I was just trying to buy a copy of a classic, not stumble into an angry comments section. Bonus: the pages tear out easily.

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