

SETTING: *Various locations in England including Pip's home in Kent, a cemetery on the marshes, Miss Havisham's estate a.k.a. Satis House, Joe Gargery's forge, and Pip's rooms in London. The time flows between the years 1812 and 1840.*

AT RISE: *The ruined gardens of Satis House, 1840. ACTORS #3, #4, #5, and #6 enter. They look around the garden in wonder, then take the positions they will assume at play's end. PIP enters and looks around at the disaster of what was once a grand estate. After a moment...*

PIP

(To audience)

My name is Philip Pirrip, but ever since I was a young lad I was known as...

ACTOR #4

Pip...

ACTOR #5

Pip...

ACTOR #6

Pip...

ACTOR #3

Pip...

(ESTELLA enters.)

ESTELLA

Hello, Pip.

(PIP turns to her, surprised. He takes a step towards her.)

PIP

Estella!

(ESTELLA, ACTOR #6, and ACTOR #5 twirl off.)

PIP (cont.)

(To audience)

At the age of two I was orphaned, and was taken in by my brother-in-law, a kind-hearted blacksmith named Joe Gargery...

(ACTOR # 4 steps forward and becomes JOE.)

...and his wife, my much older sister, whom I have always referred to as "Mrs. Joe."

(ACTOR #3 steps forward and becomes MRS. JOE.)

Mrs. Joe resented my presence in her household.

MRS. JOE

I did and I do and I don't deny it. Left with a child such as this to raise up...

(She shakes PIP.)

Lazy and useless, that's what you are! A trial to my very soul!

JOE

Now, there's no need for that. Pip's a good chap...

MRS. JOE

Did I ask you? Get back to your forge and earn your keep!

(She shoves JOE off and turns back to PIP.)

As for you ... fetch me the switch.

PIP

No.

MRS. JOE

What did you say?

PIP

I've done nothing wrong.

MRS. JOE

You were born, weren't you? Fetch it!

PIP

No!

PIP

(To audience)

And I ran – ran as fast as my legs would take me, out of the house, past the village gate, and out onto the marshes...

MRS. JOE

Pip! Pip, come back here!

*(She exits as the scene shifts to a churchyard on the marshes.
A large tombstone appears center.)*

PIP

(To audience)

And so it was that I, as a boy of ten, found myself in the churchyard that Christmas Eve long ago, staring at the tombstone belonging to my parents...

(PIP crosses to the tombstone and kneels.)

And with the wild wind rushing off the sea, I felt more alone than ever.

(MAGWITCH springs up from behind the tombstone.)

MAGWITCH

Alone, is it?!

(PIP screams. MAGWITCH steps around the tombstone and grabs him by the throat. He is wearing leg chains.)

Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat! Tell me your name. Quick!

PIP

Pip.

MAGWITCH

Show me where you live, Pip. Point out the place.

PIP

There, sir. In the village, sir.

MAGWITCH

And who d'ye live with? Supposin' you're let to live...

PIP

With my sister, sir – Mrs. Joe Gargery – wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith.

MAGWITCH

Blacksmith...? Now, look here – do you know what a file is?

PIP

Yes, sir.

MAGWITCH

And you know what vittles is.

PIP

Yes, sir – food, sir.

MAGWITCH

You get me a file and you get me vittles. You bring ‘em both to me, or I’ll tear your heart and liver out.

PIP

Please, sir, you’re hurting me...

MAGWITCH

You bring me that file and them vittles tomorrow morning early, over yonder at the Battery. You do it, and never say a word that you’ve seen me, and you’ll be let to live. You fail, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out. D’ye want that, boy?

PIP

No, sir!

MAGWITCH

I ain’t alone out here. There’s a young man hid with me. This young man has a way of getting at a boy’s heart and liver. He’ll be watching your every move. If you stray by word or deed...

PIP

I won’t, sir!

MAGWITCH

Go on then. And don’t forget the young man.

(MAGWITCH shuffles off. The scene shifts to the Gargery home.)

PIP

(To audience)

I ran home as fast as my legs could carry me...

(JOE enters.)

JOE

Pip! Mrs. Joe is out lookin' for you – and she's got the switch.

MRS. JOE (O.S.)

Pip, where are you?!

JOE

That's her a-comin' now – here. To soften the blow – hurry!

(JOE hands PIP a burlap sack from his apron pocket. PIP shoves it down the back of his pants. MRS. JOE enters carrying a switch.)

MRS. JOE

I'll teach you to run away, boy. Bend over!

(PIP grabs his knees. JOE covers his eyes. MRS. JOE whips him in slow motion.)

PIP

(To audience)

Mrs. Joe taught me all right, applying the switch with a vengeance. Ouch!

(PIP grabs his backside. MRS. JOE and JOE enter real time again.)

MRS. JOE

There now – off to bed with you.

JOE

Without his supper, Mrs. Joe?

MRS. JOE

He'll get plenty to eat tomorrow.

JOE

Tomorrow?

MRS. JOE

Isn't tomorrow Christmas Day? And haven't I spent the whole day baking a pork pie for my Uncle Pumblechook's visit? I wager there'll be some left for the boy. I said to bed with you, Pip!

(PIP turns to leave. Suddenly we hear the sound of a distant cannon being fired. Everyone turns to look off.)

JOE

Cannon fire. Coming from the Hulks. Heard it last night, too, just after sunset.

PIP

What's the Hulks, Joe?

JOE

The prison ships, right across the marshes.

PIP

Why do they fire their guns?

MRS. JOE

Don't you know anything? They fire their guns when a convict's escaped.

PIP

What's a convict?

MRS. JOE

Convicts are folks put in prison ships because they steal and murder, and they always begin by asking too many questions. Now off to bed with you!

(JOE and MRS. JOE exit. PIP, pulls the burlap sack out of his pants.)

PIP

(To audience)

I climbed the stairs, but there was no sleep to be had, for I was certain every shadow belonged to the terrible young man who wanted my heart and liver. Finally the long black night began to fade. I crept into the pantry, where I found Mrs. Joe's pork pie cooling on the sideboard...

(MRS. JOE enters with the pork pie and holds it out. PIP takes it. She exits as JOE enters opposite holding a file.)

Then onto the forge, where I retrieved a file from among Joe's tools...

(JOE holds out the file. PIP takes it. JOE exits.)

And with my stolen goods clutched in my arms, I ran onto the marshes...

(The scene shifts to the marshes.)

Eventually I spied my convict in the distance.

(COMPEYSON enters, his back to PIP. PIP crosses to him.)

PIP

Excuse me, sir.

COMPEYSON

Who's there?!

(He turns around.)

PIP

(To audience)

This man, with a scar across his cheek, was not my convict at all!

(COMPEYSON shoves PIP then runs off.)

Without question he was the young man who haunted my dreams last night! After making certain my heart and liver were intact, I continued on to the Battery, where my convict was waiting...

(MAGWITCH enters.)

MAGWITCH

So you've come back. What's in that sack?

(PIP pulls out the file.)

PIP

A file and a pork pie.

(MAGWITCH grabs the sack and begins to devour the pie.)

Shouldn't you save some for him?

MAGWITCH

Him? Him who?

PIP

The young man you spoke of.

MAGWITCH

Oh, him. No – he don't want no vittles.

PIP

He looked to me as if he did.

MAGWITCH

Looked? When?

PIP

Just now.

MAGWITCH

Where?

PIP

Yonder. I thought he was you.

MAGWITCH

What did he look like? His face – anything unusual?

PIP

He had a scar, here, on his cheek.

MAGWITCH

Show me which way he went! Quick, boy!

PIP

That way, sir.

(MAGWITCH starts off, only to stumble.)

MAGWITCH

Curse this leg iron! Give me that file, boy!

(PIP hands him the file. MAGWITCH exits.)

PIP

(To the audience.)

And with that he disappeared into the mist. But all the way home I could hear it, the sound of that file biting into his leg iron...

(We hear the sound of a file rasping against metal. MRS. JOE enters opposite as the scene shifts to the Gargery home.)

MRS. JOE

Where the devil have you been this morning, boy? And with so much to do to get ready for Christmas dinner! Uncle Pumblechook will be here in half an hour.

(UNCLE PUMBLECHOOK enters.)

PUMBLECHOOK

My dear Mrs. Joe.

MRS. JOE

Uncle Pumblechook! You're early.

PUMBLECHOOK

I am, indeed, for I have news of the highest import that could not bear the waiting – news that applies to the lad.

MRS. JOE

Pip, did you hear that? Uncle has news for you!

(She shoves PIP forward. Beat.)

PUMBLECHOOK

Have you nothing to say to me, Pip?

PIP

Happy Christmas, Uncle.

PUMBLECHOOK

Happy Christmas, indeed! It is a very Happy Christmas, for you have much to be happy about. Much to be grateful for – if you take my meaning.

PIP

(To audience)

I must confess that I did not take his meaning.

PUMBLECHOOK

If he ain't grateful this day, Mrs. Joe, he never will be. For it's not every day that Miss Havisham requests the company of our Pip.

MRS. JOE

Miss Havisham?!

PUMBLECHOOK

The very one. Do you know Miss Havisham, boy?

PIP

Yes, sir. She lives in town, sir – in the big house.

PUMBLECHOOK

Big house? Why, I wager Satis House is the biggest house in all of Kent!

MRS. JOE

Uncle, what does Miss Havisham want with a boy like Pip?

PUMBLEHOOK

Miss Havisham has adopted a young girl named Estella and desires that Pip come and play with her. I need not remind you of Miss Havisham's wealth and influence. By accommodating her in this manner, Pip is investing in his future – Miss Havisham may well become his benefactor.

MRS. JOE

Benefactor...? Well, this is good news! We must celebrate at once. *Joe Gargery, fetch the pie!*

(To PUMBLEHOOK)

I made the most savory pork pie, which on the usual I would save for after dinner, but this being a special circumstance..... *Joe Gargery!*

PUMBLEHOOK

No need to bother Joseph – I shall fetch the pie.

(PUMBLEHOOK exits.)

PIP

(To audience)

The pie was being fetched – the very pie I had stolen! If my sister discovered the truth... There was only one way out – through the front door!

(PIP starts off but is stopped by SOLDIER #1 entering. He carries handcuffs.)

SOLDIER #1

Ho, lad – look sharp!

PIP

(To audience)

A soldier! With handcuffs! I was caught!

PIP

Please don't arrest me!

SOLDIER #1

Oy. What's this, now?

MRS. JOE

Goodness gracious! What's going on here?