

Joe Gargery

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Great Expectations Essay

In the book Great Expectations many themes are present. Over the course of the story Charles Dickens shows the reader many things, and the character Pip learns many life lessons. Even though Pip deserts his loved ones in the beginning of Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, the lesson of this story is that one should never wrong others because bad decisions will always follow a person.

Dickens uses Joe's fate to show that if one shows others kindness the world will show one kindness in return. "Joe and [Pip are] fellow sufferers" under Mrs. Joe's care, but Joe always manages to show Pip kindness (Dickens 5). On Christmas when all of Pip's relatives are ridiculing him, "Joe g[ives him] some more gravy" (Dickens 20). This might not seem like much to most people, but to Pip who has so little, this meant so much. For all of Joe's selflessness and lack of bad decisions, Dickens ensures that this character gets his happy ending. "[Biddy marries] Joe," and they both were very happy (Dickens 375).

Magwitch in his life does some very good things such as being Pip's benefactor, and some very bad things in his life of crime. Life is unkind to "to him a sinner"; he was blamed for many things and went to prison (Dickens 36). Yet he tried to turn his life around by becoming Pip's benefactor. Magwitch could have been a very wealthy man, but instead of indulging himself "sure as [he] earned a guinea, that guinea [went to Pip]" (Dickens 250). By his kindness in making Pip a gentleman Dickens lets Pip be by his side as he dies. "He raised [Pip's] hand to

his lips” and died peacefully with his legacy at his side (Dickens 361).

Through Mrs. Joe, Dickens shows that if a person is cruel to others, he or she will get what is deserved. Joe and Pip were “fellow sufferers” because of Mrs. Joe (Dickens 5). Pip, the child that was entrusted to her care, “served as a connubial missile at Joe” when he broke curfew (Dickens 6). Life is fair though, and “[Mrs. Joe was] knocked down by a tremendous blow on the back of the head” to symbolize that a life of cruelty to others won’t get a person anywhere (Dickens 92).

In conclusion, the moral of this story is that what goes around comes around, so Dickens expresses that being kind to others will result in further kindness. Mrs. Joe and Magwitch learn this lesson the hard way when they both make some very bad decisions and are not shown kindness in the world of Great Expectations. Joe, on the other hand, is proof that if one is forgiving and a good person overall one will have a good fate.