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**NAXOS**

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COMPLETE  
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The background is a detailed painting of a Gothic church with a prominent spire, situated in a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a graveyard with several tombstones. The sky is filled with dramatic, purple and blue clouds, and several birds are seen in flight. The overall style is reminiscent of 19th-century landscape painting.

**Charles Dickens**  
**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

Read by **Anton Lesser**

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## CD 1

1	<b>Chapter 1</b> My father's family name being Pirrip...	7:01
2	He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll...	4:22
3	<b>Chapter 2</b> My sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery, was...	6:26
4	On the present occasion, though I was hungry...	6:24
5	It was Christmas Eve, and I had to stir the pudding...	7:17
6	<b>Chapter 3</b> It was a rimy morning, and very damp.	6:48
7	I had often watched a large dog of ours...	4:48
8	<b>Chapter 4</b> I fully expected to find a Constable...	7:21
9	'Mrs. Joe,' said Uncle Pumblechook:	7:32
10	Joe offered me more gravy, which I was afraid to take.	6:30
11	<b>Chapter 5</b> The apparition of a file of soldiers...	7:11
12	At last, Joe's job was done...	5:15

**Total time on CD 1: 77:00**

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## CD 2

1	It was a run indeed now...	6:26
2	We had not gone far when three cannon...	5:27
3	<b>Chapter 6</b> My state of mind regarding the pilfering...	4:34
4	<b>Chapter 7</b> At the time when I stood...	5:42
5	There was no indispensable necessity...	7:05
6	I could think of nothing better to say...	6:13
7	Joe made the fire and swept the hearth...	6:24
8	<b>Chapter 8</b> Mr. Pumblechook's premises...	5:44
9	My young conductress locked the gate...	7:00
10	I regret to state that I was not afraid...	6:30
11	She won the game, and I dealt.	5:24
12	My sister's bringing up had made me sensitive.	6:26
13	<b>Chapter 9</b> When I reached home, my sister...	1:17

**Total time on CD 2: 74:19**

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### CD 3

1	The worst of it was that that bullying old...	7:00
2	Now, when I saw Joe open his blue eyes...	8:18
3	<b>Chapter 10</b> The felicitous idea occurred to me...	4:30
4	It being Saturday night, I found the landlord...	6:34
5	All this while, the strange man looked...	4:59
6	<b>Chapter 11</b> At the appointed time I returned...	6:17
7	As we were going with our candle...	6:37
8	These crawling things had fascinated my attention...	5:24
9	Miss Sarah Pocket, whom I now saw to be...	5:28
10	I was going to wish her many happy returns...	6:11
11	I was secretly afraid of him when I saw...	4:33
12	<b>Chapter 12</b> My mind grew very uneasy...	5:32
13	There was a song Joe used to hum fragments of...	7:02

**Total time on CD 3: 78:32**

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## CD 4

1	When I got home at night, and delivered...	1:08
2	<b>Chapter 13</b> It was a trial to my feelings...	6:45
3	As if he were absolutely out of his mind...	7:30
4	The Justices were sitting in the Town Hall...	4:12
5	<b>Chapter 14</b> It is a most miserable thing to feel...	5:12
6	<b>Chapter 15</b> As I was getting too big...	7:48
7	In brief, Joe thought that if I thought well of it...	4:52
8	My sister had been standing silent in the yard...	8:18
9	As I never assisted at any other representation...	6:26
10	<b>Chapter 16</b> With my head full of George Barnwell...	6:11
11	When, at last, she came round so far...	5:29
12	<b>Chapter 17</b> I now fell into a regular routine...	6:54
13	My sister was never left alone now...	7:18

**Total time on CD 4: 78:09**

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## CD 5

1	'Biddy,' I cried, getting up...	7:26
2	<b>Chapter 18</b> It was in the fourth year...	6:37
3	We were all deeply persuaded that the unfortunate...	5:37
4	My dream was out...	6:48
5	'Well, Joseph Gargery? You look dumbfounded?'	6:02
6	'Pip's a gentleman of fortun' then,' said Joe...	6:41
7	<b>Chapter 19</b> Morning made a considerable difference...	7:07
8	'Well? What are you stopping for?' said I.	6:35
9	When he had at last done...	6:43
10	At about this time, I began to observe...	6:57
11	'Well, Pip?'	5:19
12	Biddy was astir so early to get my breakfast...	3:55

**Total time on CD 5: 75:54**

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## CD 6

1	<b>Chapter 20</b> The journey from our town...	6:41
2	While I looked about me here...	6:29
3	'Here's Mike,' said the clerk...	4:58
4	<b>Chapter 21</b> Casting my eyes on Mr. Wemmick...	5:10
5	So imperfect was this realization of the first...	5:13
6	<b>Chapter 22</b> The pale young gentleman and I...	4:29
7	He was still a pale young gentleman...	7:29
8	'There appeared upon the scene...'	5:42
9	It had not occurred to me before...	7:05
10	This collation disposed of at a moderate price...	5:20
11	<b>Chapter 23</b> Mr. Pocket said he was glad to see me...	4:24
12	Both Mr. and Mrs. Pocket had such a noticeable air...	6:05
13	After dinner the children were introduced...	5:11
14	It happened that the other five children...	4:06

**Total time on CD 6: 78:29**

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## CD 7

1	<b>Chapter 24</b> After two or three days...	7:03
2	In the room over that, a little flabby terrier of a clerk...	7:23
3	<b>Chapter 25</b> Bentley Drummle, who was...	7:19
4	I was falling into meditation on my guardian's...	6:02
5	'Is it your own, Mr. Wemmick?'	4:14
6	<b>Chapter 26</b> It fell out as Wemmick had told me...	6:59
7	Induced to take particular notice of the housekeeper...	4:06
8	While he said these words in a leisurely critical style...	6:09
9	<b>Chapter 27</b> 'My dear Mr Pip...'	4:53
10	'Joe, how are you, Joe?'	7:40
11	I had neither the good sense nor the good feeling...	6:09
12	<b>Chapter 28</b> It was clear that I must...	7:18
13	It is impossible to express with what acuteness...	3:13

**Total time on CD 7: 78:34**



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## CD 8

1	After overhearing this dialogue...	3:51
2	<b>Chapter 29</b> Betimes in the morning I was up and out.	6:31
3	Upon that, I turned down the long passage...	5:37
4	It was settled that I should stay there...	6:25
5	Her handsome dress had trailed upon the ground.	6:32
6	'Well, Pip! How often have you seen Miss Estella...'	6:57
7	<b>Chapter 30</b> After well considering the matter...	6:14
8	The coach, with Mr. Jaggers inside...	4:10
9	I stopped for a moment to consider...	4:04
10	I turned my head aside...	6:12
11	<b>Chapter 31</b> On our arrival in Denmark...	6:28
12	We made all the haste we could downstairs...	6:45
13	<b>Chapter 32</b> One day when I was busy with my books...	6:03
14	Thus, we walked through Wemmick's greenhouse...	2:56

**Total time on CD 8: 78:53**

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## CD 9

1	As we came out of the prison through the lodge...	3:50
2	<b>Chapter 33</b> In her furred travelling-dress...	6:14
3	It was no laughing matter with Estella now...	4:40
4	I should have been chary of discussing...	5:18
5	<b>Chapter 34</b> As I had grown accustomed...	5:29
6	As I am now generalizing...	5:12
7	However, my determined manner...	3:08
8	<b>Chapter 35</b> It was the first time that...	7:05
9	The neighbourhood, however...	6:00
10	'I have not heard the particulars...'	5:50
11	<b>Chapter 36</b> Herbert and I went on...	6:20
12	I was beginning to express my gratitude...	6:59
13	I could have posted a newspaper in his mouth...	2:51
14	<b>Chapter 37</b> Deeming Sunday the best day...	4:00
15	Miss Skiffins was of a wooden appearance...	5:39

**Total time on CD 9: 78:42**

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## CD 10

1	The flag had been struck...	7:34
2	<b>Chapter 38</b> If that staid old house near the Green...	5:08
3	This was all the preparation I received...	4:02
4	It happened on the occasion of this visit...	6:55
5	Miss Havisham, with her head in her hands...	5:26
6	I thought I saw him leer in an ugly way at me...	4:56
7	At a certain Assembly Ball at Richmond...	5:57
8	<b>Chapter 39</b> I was three-and-twenty years of age.	6:15
9	He looked about him with the strangest air...	6:00
10	As I put my glass to my lips...	6:05
11	The abhorrence in which I held the man...	5:40
12	I tried to collect my thoughts, but I was stunned.	6:45
13	<b>Chapter 40</b> It was fortunate for me...	6:31

**Total time on CD 10: 77:21**

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## CD 11

1	By-and-by, his door opened and he came out.	7:20
2	Some sense of the grimly-ludicrous moved me...	5:18
3	It would seem a simple matter to decide...	6:27
4	Wemmick was out...	7:02
5	<b>Chapter 41</b> In vain should I attempt to describe...	6:28
6	Poor fellow! He little suspected with whose money.	6:37
7	<b>Chapter 42</b> 'Dear boy and Pip's comrade.'	6:08
8	'I might a-took warning by Arthur...'	7:28
9	He had worked himself into a state...	3:17
10	<b>Chapter 43</b> Why should I pause to ask...	4:20
11	It was poisonous to me to see him in the town...	7:19
12	<b>Chapter 44</b> In the room where...	5:22
13	'I have been thrown among one family...'	4:35

**Total time on CD 11: 77:47**

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## CD 12

1	'It seems,' said Estella, very calmly...	6:58
2	All done, all gone!	1:59
3	<b>Chapter 45</b> Turning from the Temple gate...	6:26
4	'Now, Mr. Pip, you know,' said Wemmick...	6:13
5	I thanked him for his valuable advice...	5:36
6	<b>Chapter 46</b> Eight o'clock had struck...	6:21
7	There was something so natural and winning...	6:00
8	Our conference being now ended...	5:09
9	<b>Chapter 47</b> Some weeks passed...	6:57
10	The second piece was...	5:08
11	'Steady!' I thought.	3:20
12	<b>Chapter 48</b> The second of the two meetings...	4:01
13	Receiving this as an intimation...	2:55
14	He dismissed her, and she glided out of the room.	2:34

**Total time on CD 12: 69:44**

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## CD 13

1	We took our leave early, and left together.	7:08
2	<b>Chapter 49</b> Putting Miss Havisham's note...	2:42
3	As I brought another of the ragged chairs...	6:14
4	'O Miss Havisham,' said I, 'I can do it now.'	6:48
5	'I had been shut up in these rooms...'	5:35
6	She was insensible, and I was afraid...	3:08
7	<b>Chapter 50</b> My hands had been dressed...	4:22
8	'Does it strike too cold on that sensitive place?'	4:34
9	<b>Chapter 51</b> What purpose I had in view...	6:14
10	Even Mr. Jaggers started when I said those words.	5:16
11	'Now, Pip,' said Mr. Jaggers, 'put this case.'	5:08
12	Standing by for a little, while they were at work...	2:12
13	<b>Chapter 52</b> From Little Britain...	5:53
14	I had had load enough upon my mind...	6:02
15	<b>Chapter 53</b> It was a dark night...	5:49

**Total time on CD 13: 77:11**

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## CD 14

1	Whom I had looked for, I don't know.	6:08
2	He had been drinking, and his eyes were red...	6:49
3	There was a clear space of a few feet...	6:31
4	When I told Herbert what had passed...	4:50
5	<b>Chapter 54</b> It was one of those March days...	5:46
6	At the Stairs where we had taken him abroad...	6:25
7	We pushed off again, and made what way we could.	5:06
8	In the infinite meaning of his reply...	6:40
9	Startop could make out, after a few minutes...	4:52
10	The Jack at the Ship was instructed...	3:50
11	<b>Chapter 55</b> He was taken to the Police Court...	7:14
12	On the Saturday in that same week...	5:53
13	That discreet damsel was attired as usual...	4:16
14	<b>Chapter 56</b> He lay in prison very ill...	3:58

**Total time on CD 14: 78:26**

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## CD 15

1	The whole scene starts out again...	6:21
2	The number of the days had risen to ten...	4:19
3	<b>Chapter 57</b> Now that I was left wholly to myself...	5:33
4	At last, one day, I took courage...	6:43
5	I never discovered from whom Joe...	5:03
6	When we got back again and he lifted me out...	6:26
7	It was on the third or fourth occasion...	6:16
8	<b>Chapter 58</b> The tidings of my high fortunes...	7:10
9	'Say that likewise,' retorted Pumblechook.	6:40
10	'Dear Biddy,' said I...	4:40
11	<b>Chapter 59</b> For eleven years, I had not seen...	5:30
12	'I am greatly changed. I wonder you know me.'	5:31

**Total time on CD 15: 70:18**

**Total time on CDs 1–15: 19:09:19**



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## Charles Dickens

(1812–1870)

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Although he originally conceived *Great Expectations* in 1860 as one of a series of essays, Charles Dickens confided to his close friend, John Forster, that he had begun to ‘...see the whole of a serial revolving on it, in a most singular and comic manner’. This was fortuitous as his magazine, *All The Year Round*, had become less popular and *Great Expectations* was therefore intended to be the work which would restore healthy reader numbers. Dickens having three decades of writing experience behind him by this time, could take public opinion into account and tailor his writing accordingly, with a story which began with great excitement and suspense, these elements continuing through each episode, and with a dramatic high point at the end of each. The result was a work which many believe to be Dickens’s finest.

The second child of the Dickens family, Charles was born on 7 February 1812 in Portsmouth. An intelligent young man, Charles Dickens particularly enjoyed reading works such as Smollett’s *Roderick Random* and Fielding’s *Tom Jones*. However, although clever, young Dickens had rather a disrupted education due to the family’s fluctuating finances. His own great expectations, like Pip’s, disintegrated when his father’s debts resulted in the twelve-year-old Charles having to leave school and work in a shoe-blackening factory, and only later was he able to return to education for a further two-and-a-half years. The humiliation of his factory experience undoubtedly remained with Dickens into adult life and left him with feelings of isolation and insecurity, as well as leading him to identify with the poor, the lonely and the outcast. However,

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although as an adult he himself avoided any such places, Dickens did include a reference to a 'Blacking Ware'us' in *Great Expectations*, with Joe Gargery examining the architecture of one whilst visiting Pip in London. In addition, Dickens's father's incarceration in a debtors' prison also left its mark on his son, with convicts, jails and crime figuring large in *Great Expectations* as in many other of his works.

Like *David Copperfield* which preceded *Great Expectations* by some ten years, the latter was written as a first person narrative. The narrator, the older Pip, is looking back on his early years to events surrounding his younger self – the protagonist. The work itself, after weekly serialisation between December 1860 and June 1861, was published as a complete novel in October 1861 and falls into three main parts of roughly equal length: Pip's childhood (Chapters 1–19); his London life (Chapters 20–39) and his attempt to save Magwitch (Chapters 40–58), the three parts corresponding to the three stages of Pip's own moral development. The final chapter Dickens rewrote after persuasion by the novelist Edward Bulwer. The

original version, with a chance meeting and then separation of Estella and Pip, was seen as too pessimistic for readers and Dickens's revised version, although somewhat ambiguous, gave them some hope of a possible union between the two. The complex plot may actually be viewed as three interwoven stories, the main character in each harbouring his or her own 'great expectations'. Pip's story concerns his expectations of acquiring a fortune and becoming a gentleman. In Miss Havisham's story her expectation is to avenge herself on all males through her adopted daughter, Estella. Magwitch in the third story has expectations of making Pip a gentleman since the law is kinder to gentlemen than it is to those of the lower class such as himself.

As a young man Charles Dickens spent eighteen months working in a solicitors' office where he acquired the knowledge of the law which he used to such great effect in *Great Expectations*. This was followed by many years of work as a reporter during which time he travelled widely, keenly observing both people and places, as well as refining his

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journalistic skills. These skills, such as his ability to use language effectively and his attention to detail, are evident in *Great Expectations*. In a style which is both fluent and varied, he at times describes at length and in depth, at others he conveys vivid meaning through judicious choice of a single word or a short phrase. His use of imagery is very effective, with graphic images of both people and places, whilst contrasts also frequently feature, the most vivid contrast probably being that between the dream of wealth and its actual reality. Symbolism, such as the flowing River Thames representing the flow of life, is also much in evidence in *Great Expectations*, as are mystery and suspense, and over all Dickens adopted a style which is often highly melodramatic. The need to retain his magazine's readers and also his other great interest of giving highly theatrical public readings of his own works were no doubt instrumental in this.

Dickens portrays his many characters in *Great Expectations* by their obvious external characteristics, since in real life this is how we see people. He ensures

information about his characters is retained by his readers through repeated reference to individuals' distinctive features or gestures, for example Matthew Pocket's habit of attempting to lift himself by his hair or Mr Wemmick's 'post-office of a mouth'. Dickens usually based his characters on real life individuals and his own grandfather, after whom he was named and who escaped conviction for theft of money by fleeing to the Continent, provided a pattern for Magwitch. He probably also had his own tortuous love affair with the actress Ellen Ternan in mind when he wrote of Estella, and Pip's declaration of love for her. It is notable, too, that among his large cast of characters, some, such as Pip and Magwitch, are seen to develop in terms of their moral awareness, some are gradually revealed to us, Joe and Biddy being examples, whilst others such as Wopsle are immediately obvious. Dickens's use of contrasts is evident also, between the pleasant and the unpleasant characters, although the key character, the villain, Compeyson, is actually seldom seen.

Although Dickens wrote of the

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comedy he foresaw within *Great Expectations*, it is not a comic novel. In general the information given us by the narrator is sober, sad and ironic, although the style is far less gloomy than many of Dickens's other works such as *A Tale of Two Cities*. Humour is present however, not least in episodes relating to characters such as Wopsle, and his many years of writing experience enabled Dickens to interweave comedy and pathos so skilfully that the comedy intensifies the serious rather than detracting from it. He is able to do so even within a single character, that of Joe Gargery, who although a figure of fun, also presents an example of high morality.

Without specifically stating it, Dickens leads us to believe that the time in which he sets *Great Expectations* is the early nineteenth century. A reference to Pip at nearly twenty-one, in a street illuminated by gas-lamps which were not introduced until 1827, tells us that Pip's birth, in approximately 1807 was five years before that of the writer himself. Dickens likewise sets some of the story in his own home area, the marshes between the

Medway and the Thames being one of his favourite walking places, and his model for Satis House still stands in the Vines in Rochester.

Dickens's concern for social reform was always evident in his writing, sometimes dominating it, as he tried to expose injustices. In *Great Expectations*, although the lessons are less obvious, he did wish to highlight the effect of a class society on the law: justice only applying to the rich. He also illustrated the effect of class divisions on friendship, as exemplified by that of Pip and Joe. Dickens wished readers to appreciate the pointlessness of false gentility and to acknowledge that the qualities which make a true gentleman are not wealth and social position but honesty and moral courage.

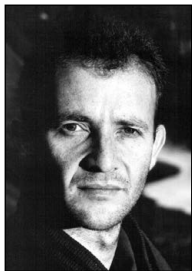
The theatre played a prominent part in Charles Dickens's life. He enjoyed amateur dramatics and also became romantically linked with an actress, Ellen Ternan. In 1858 this resulted in separation from his wife Kate, to whom he had been married for twenty-two years and with whom he had ten children. Giving public readings of his novels was another way in which

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Dickens enjoyed performing, and many people have suggested that he actually wore himself out doing so. He died on 9 June 1870 and was buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

During his lifetime Dickens was a prolific novelist. Following the publication of *The Pickwick Papers* in 1836–7, *Oliver Twist* in 1837 and then *Nicholas Nickleby*, he produced *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 1840–41, *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841, *A Christmas Carol* in 1843, *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1843–44, *Dombey and Son* in 1846–48, and *David Copperfield* in 1849–50. *Bleak House* followed in 1852–53, *Hard Times* in 1854, *Little Dorrit* in 1855–57, *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1859, *Great Expectations* in 1860–61 and *Our Mutual Friend* in 1864–65, whilst at the time of his death Dickens was working on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

**Notes by Helen Davies**



**Anton Lesser** is one of Britain's leading classical actors. He has played many of the principal Shakespearean roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company including Petruchio, Romeo and Richard III. His career has also encompassed contemporary drama, notably *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter. Appearances in major TV drama productions include *The Oresteia*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Mill on the Floss* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. His readings for Naxos AudioBooks also include *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *A Tale of Two Cities* (unabridged), *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Hamlet*.

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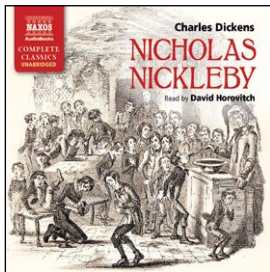
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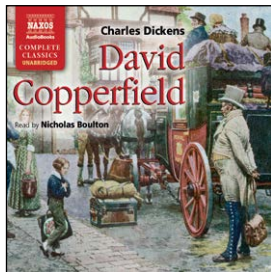
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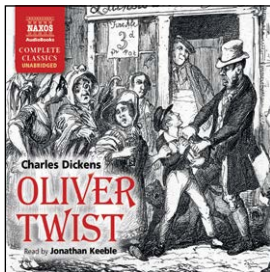
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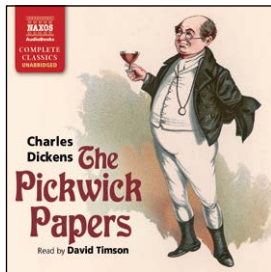
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