

DRAMATURGY NEWSLETTER

VOL

4



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Join us in exploring the life and times of Charles Dickens and the world and history of his classic novel.

READ ALONG WITH US

Great Expectations was originally published in weekly installments in the magazine *All the Year Round* from December 1860 - August 1861. We will likewise send portions of the novel to you in our biweekly summer newsletters.

CHAPTERS 20-26

WHAT THE DICKENS?

One hallmark of Charles Dickens' writing is the memorable names he gave his characters. Many of the names were his invention, and often serve as vivid indicators of who the characters are through puns, etymology, or phonetic suggestion. Consider the following. Do you notice anything evocative about any characters' names?

- **Pumblechook**, a pompous, self-important man with a name that makes your jowls jiggle.
- **Biddy**: a biddy is a hen, and Biddy is a nurturing caregiver, ready to gather people under her wings.
- **Bentley Drummle** is a bent, warped sort of person.
- **Miss Havisham** can be broken up into “Have-is-sham— Dickens' moral reminder that “having” or possessing doesn't bring happiness.
- **Pip**: a pip is a seed. In what way does our main character grow, in context of the ground in which he is planted, how he is tended, etc? What is Pip growing into?



CHAPTER & SCRIPT ANNOTATION

Need to find the chapter that matches your scene?

[FIND IT HERE](#)

ADAPTATION

When a piece of art is adapted from one form to another, choices must inevitably be made. Alex has mentioned the inherent violence of adaptation--elements are lost, characters are excised, plot points are condensed or transformed. The choices made in the adaptation process may emphasize one theme or tone over another.

Great Expectations has been adapted many, many times. We will be featuring some of these to give you different ways to engage with the story before we dig into Neil Bartlett's script together.

The earliest film adaptation of *Great Expectations* was released in 1917, and has not survived. The oldest extant film was directed by Danish filmmaker A.W. Sandberg. Below is a link to the Danish Film Institute website, where you can watch this beautiful silent film. It is interesting to consider various scenes in a purely visual medium. We invite you to spend some time with it. It's a beautiful piece.

1922 SILENT FILM

