

Great Expectations: Novel vs. Movie

In 1946, David Lean made a movie version of Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*. Both the book and the movie are set in England and tell the story of a young apprentice named Pip. In both versions, a mysterious and unnamed supporter gives Pip money so he can become a gentleman in London. Throughout the film version of *Great Expectations*, what happens to Pip is very similar to what happens to him in Dickens's novel. However, the movie is different from the book because it leaves out certain characters, is told mostly through dialogue instead of narration, and ends in a different way. The novel *Great Expectations* has many characters, unlike the movie. For example, in the novel a menacing man named Orlick works in the forge where Pip is apprenticed. Later in the story, Orlick attempts to kill both Pip and his sister. In contrast, Orlick is not present in the movie version. Another major character, Pip's tutor in London, is also missing from the movie. The characters that are included in the movie version often have shortened story lines. For example, the movie leaves out details about Pip's friend Mr. Pocket, such as what he does for a living and his fiancé. These missing or changed characters make the movie less appealing and entertaining than the novel. In the novel, the reader discovers many strange and different characters and learns about each character's background. The movie is more focused on a single story line. Another difference between the movie and the book version of *Great Expectations* is the narration. Dickens wrote the novel from Pip's point of view. As a narrator, Pip often spends pages describing his thoughts and feelings. For instance, he describes in detail his love for Estella. He reveals how he feels ashamed about his snobbishness toward his old friend Joe, and he tells about his shock when he discovers his benefactor's identity. John Mills, who plays Pip in the movie, uses his actions and dialogue to reveal Pip's thoughts. In addition, there are voiceovers, such as when Pip explains something or repeats what a character said earlier in the movie. While these elements help the audience know about Pip's character, Pip's feelings in the movie are still not as clear as they are in the book. The ending of the movie version of *Great Expectations* is the most significant difference from the book. Although parts of the novel are left out of the movie, Pip and Estella's stories are not changed much until the ending. In the novel, Estella gets married and never finds out who her parents are. Pip and Estella's last conversation is in Miss Havisham's house. Near the end of the movie, Pip and Estella also talk to each other in Miss Havisham's house, but what they say to each other is very different from the conversation in the novel. Also, Estella finds out who her parents are but does not get married. Except for the ending, the main story line of the movie *Great Expectations* is very similar to that of the novel. While the number of characters, the type of narration, and the ending differ, the theme remains the same. In the end, Pip learns that the best people can come from poor circumstances. In both versions, he finally comes to value kindness more than wealth.