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1 A meeting in the churchyard

3 My father's family name was Pirrip, and my name is Philip. Because these names were difficult for me to say when I was small, I called myself Pip. From then on I was known as Pip.

My parents were both dead and I lived with my sister. She was twenty years older than me and married to Joe Gargery, a local blacksmith. He was a sweet-tempered, easy-going man with brown hair and blue eyes. My sister Mrs Joe Gargery was the opposite. She had black hair and eyes and was very bad-tempered. She almost always wore an apron over her dress because she was always busy. I often felt the power of her strong hands on the side of my head. Joe did too, but he never said anything to her. I couldn't understand why he married my sister – I suppose she made him.

We lived in a village on the edge of the marshes. The land there was flat and without much vegetation because it was near the sea. It was a grey, windy, wild place.

I found the grave of my parents one foggy evening. It was half-hidden in the long grass of the old churchyard about a mile from the village. I read the names on the tombstone: Philip Pirrip and his wife Georgiana. Seeing them made me sad and I started to cry.

Suddenly a terrible voice roared, 'Be quiet! Or I'll cut your throat!'

I looked up and saw a man coming towards me out of the fog. He had no hat and old, broken shoes. His clothes were old and covered in mud and there was a big iron ring on his leg.

Glossary

- **apron:** something you wear to protect the front of your clothes
- **edge:** end; border
- **grave:** place where a dead body is buried in the ground
- **mud:** very soft, wet dirt
- **sweet-tempered:** pleasant, kind and gentle
- **throat:** front part of the neck
- **tombstone:** large stone put over the place where a person is buried

He took hold of my chin with one of his hands. I was very frightened.

'Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir,' I cried. 'Please don't, sir!'

'What's your name?' said the man. 'Quick!'

'Pip, sir.'

'What did you say?' said the man, putting his face close to mine. 'Speak up!'

'Pip, sir.'

'Where do you live?' he asked. 'Show me.'

I pointed to the village in the distance.

The man looked at me for a moment. Then he kicked me up, turned me upside down and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them, only a small piece of bread. After putting me down on top of a tombstone, he took the bread and ate it hungrily. I was trembling with fear as I watched him. I had to try hard to stop myself from crying.

'Where's your mother?'

'Over there, sir!'

He started running away, but then stopped and looked over his shoulder.

'There, sir!' I explained, pointing to her grave. 'Georgiana. That's my mother.'

'Oh!' he said coming back. 'And is your father there too?'

'Yes, sir,' I replied.

'Who do you live with?' he asked.

'My sister, sir. Mrs Joe Gargery, wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir.'

'Blacksmith? What?' he said and he looked down at the ring on his leg.

Then he took hold of my arms and pushed me backwards.

'Do you know what a file is?'

'Yes, sir.'

'And do you know what wittles are?'

'Yes, sir.'

‘Well, get me a file and some wittles,’ he said, holding my arms tighter. ‘And bring them to me tomorrow morning early. And don’t tell anyone that you have seen me. If you don’t do exactly what I’ve told you, I’ll cut out your heart, roast it and eat it! Now, what do you say?’

He was hurting me, so I quickly agreed to do what he asked when he let me go. I sat and watched him as he limped to the low churchyard wall and climbed over it. As soon as he disappeared into the darkness, I jumped off the tombstone and started to run. I didn’t stop until I got home.

THE MAN

Who do you think the man is?
 What is he doing in the churchyard?
 Why does he want a file?
 Is Pip going to tell anyone about him?

Joe’s forge was closed when I got back from the churchyard. I opened the kitchen door and went in. Joe was sitting there alone.

‘Mrs Joe is looking for you, Pip,’ he said. ‘She’s been out several times.’

‘Has she?’

‘Yes, Pip,’ said Joe, ‘and she’s taken the stick with her this time!’

Glossary

- **file:** metal tool used for making wood or metal smooth
- **forge:** place where blacksmith works
- **limped:** walked with difficulty because of an injury
- **stick:** thin piece of wood
- **wittles:** informal Victorian expression for food

Just at that moment the door opened and Mrs Joe burst in. She looked very angry.

‘Where have you been, you young monkey?’ she shouted.

‘Only to the churchyard,’ I replied.

‘The churchyard!’ she repeated. ‘What were you doing here at this time of night? I’ve spent the last hour looking for you. Worry and work! That’s all I get for looking after you!’

She put the stick back in the corner and started to prepare tea. She cut two slices of bread, put some butter on them and gave one to Joe and the other to me. I remembered the terrible night in the churchyard and I was too afraid to eat mine. I knew that I had to keep it for him. So I quickly put it into the pocket of my trousers where Joe wasn’t looking.



The next day was Christmas Day. I got up before it was light and crept[•] downstairs. I stole some bread, some cheese and a beautiful pork pie[•]. The pie was a present from Uncle Pumblechook, a rich corn merchant[•] in the town. Then I went to the forge to get the file.

It was cold that morning and the fog was thicker than usual. When I got to the churchyard, I saw the man sitting on a tombstone in front of me. He seemed to be asleep, so I went up to him and touched him on the shoulder. He jumped up immediately and I saw that it was a different man! He was dressed like the other one and he also had a big iron ring on his leg, but he was younger. When he saw me, he ran away quickly into the fog. I walked a bit further into the churchyard and soon I saw the other one. Without saying anything, I handed him the file and the bag of food. He pushed the bread and the cheese into his mouth together, and then he started on the pie.

'I'm glad you like it,' I said.

'I do, my boy. Thank you,' he replied with his mouth full of pie.

'I have to go now,' I said, but he wasn't listening. He was too busy finishing the pie. I started to walk away. When I turned to look at him, he was trying to cut the iron off his leg with the file.



Glossary

- **burst in:** suddenly came in
- **corn merchant:** person who buys and sells corn
- **crept:** moved very quietly and slowly
- **pork pie:** pork meat inside a pastry case