



## CHAPTER I

Pip was an abbreviation of my father's name Pirrip and my Christian name Philip. When I was a child I couldn't pronounce anything longer than Pip. That's why I called myself in such a way.

I made up my mind that Pirrip was my father's family name according to my father's tombstone and the words of my sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery, who was the wife of a blacksmith. I never saw my parents or anything that could make me understand the way they were, as they were dead. My first ideas about what were my parents I got from their tombstones. According to the shape of the letters on my father's one, I got a bizarre idea that he was a square, heavy, dark man, with curly black hair. From the turn and

character of the inscription, "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above," I made a childish conclusion that my mother was a freckled and sickly woman. Moreover, beside the graves of my parents there were five little stone lozenges, sacred to the memory of my five little brothers, who stopped fighting for their lives in this harsh world.

I lived in the marsh country near the river, twenty miles of the sea. One afternoon, closer to the evening, when I was crying near the graves of my parents Philip Pirrip, Georgiana, his wife, and my brothers Tobias, Abraham, Alexander, Bartholomew, and Roger, I heard a man's voice.

"Hold your noise!" cried an awful voice, when a man appeared from the graves at the side of the church porch. "You should keep quiet, a little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

That was a fearful man, with a great iron on his leg. A man without a hat and all in coarse gray. He was wearing broken shoes, and there was an old rag tied round his head. That man had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, but his teeth chattered in his head when he took me by the chin.

"No! Don't cut my throat, sir," I begged in terror. "I pray you, don't do that."

"Quickly tell me your name!" said the man.

"Pip, sir," replied I.

"Once again," said the man, gazing at me. "Give it mouth!"

"Pip. Pip, sir," I repeated my answer for several times.

"Show the place where you live," said the man.

I pointed to where our village was. It was situated on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and pollards, a mile or more from the church.

After looking at me for some seconds, the man turned me upside down and emptied my pockets. There wasn't anything in my pockets except a piece of bread. When we reached the church I saw the steeple under my feet, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling while he ate the bread ravenously.

"You young dog, you have got fat cheeks," said the man licking his lips.

I believe that they were really fat, although I was not strong at that time and undersized for my years.

"Darn me if I couldn't eat them," replied the man, shaking his head menacingly.

I seriously showed my hope that he wouldn't, and held closer to the tombstone where he had put me; both to keep myself upon it and to keep myself from crying.

"Now look at me!" said the man. "Where's your mother?"

"Over there, sir!" said I.

He stood up, made a short run, stopped and looked over his shoulder.

"Over there, sir!" I bashfully explained. "Also Georgiana. That's my mother."

"Oh!" said he, coming back. "And is that your father along with your mother?"

"Yes, sir," answered I; "him too."

"Ha!" he muttered then, considering. "Who do you live with, - supposing that you're kindly let live, which I hadn't decided?"

"With my sister, sir - Mrs. Joe Gargery - a wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith."

"Blacksmith, yeah?" said he. And then he looked down at his leg.

After he darkly looked at his leg and me for several times, he came closer to the tombstone, where I was, took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could

hold me. His eyes looked most powerfully down into mine, and my eyes looked most helplessly up into his ones.

"And now look here," he said, "the question being whether you're to be let to live. Do you know what a file is?"

"Yes, sir," replied I positively.

"And do you know what *wittles*<sup>1</sup> is?"

"Yes, sir," replied I positively again.

After each question he tilted me over a little more for giving me a greater sense of helplessness and danger.

"You must get me a file." He tilted me once again. "And you must get me wittles as well." And again he tilted me. "You bring them both for me." He tilted me in a time.

"Otherwise I'll have your heart and liver out." He tried to scare me.

I was really dreadfully frightened, and I felt giddy, so I clung to him with both my hands, and said, "If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, maybe I shouldn't be sick, and I would be able to attend more."

My dip and roll was so tremendous, so that the church jumped over its own weathercock. Then, he took me by the arms, in an upright position on the top of the stone, and started in such fearful words: - "You bring me, tomorrow early in the morning, what I asked you about: that file and the wittles. You must bring me *the lot*<sup>2</sup>, at that old Battery over there. You do it, and you never dare to utter any word or dare to tell somebody you have seen such a kind of person as me, or any person somever, and I shall let you live.

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<sup>1</sup> wittles - *їдло (сленг)*

<sup>2</sup> the lot - *це все*