

Chapter 24

Plot Summary:

This chapter sums up Matthew Pocket as being an honest man and caring man. He encourages Pip to seek new educational opportunities to learn “mere rudiments” (220) which will help him achieve the status of a basic nobleman.

Pip also befriends Wemmick, a bookkeeper, who introduces him to the source of Jaggers’ firm’s wealth; the blight of former convicts whose debts were left to the firm. Wemmick also brings Pip to watch Jaggers “ ‘at it’ “ while he practices law.

Pip is somewhat confused at Jaggers’ practice, because he can’t really tell ‘which side he’s playing for’. He does however see the strength and conviction in Jaggers’ speech.

Characters

Matthew Pocket: Pocket’s character is just strengthened by this chapter because we learn a bit more of his sincerity. His desire to have Pip learn and achieve a stronger social standing are apparent to the reader.

Jaggers: (Introduced pg. 220, re-intr. pg. 225) This chapter really gives Pip a sense of Jaggers’ character. Although he speaks in a professional manner, Jaggers’ attitude is very harsh in Pip’s eyes. “ This strongly marked way of doing business made a strongly marked impression on me, and that not of an agreeable kind.” (221) His strong ability to practice law is also shown in the chapter. He is a very good lawyer although he is not necessarily the most honest or straightforward. His words are so powerful that Pip notices “he was making the legs of the old gentleman who presided, quite convulsive under the table,” (225)

Wemmick: (Introduced 221-225) Although Wemmick is mentioned in previous chapters, this chapter gives more detail to Wemmick’s character. He is a simple, and professional clerk. He adjusts to his personal and home life in his speech. When speaking of professional matters he has a much higher and appropriate tone than when speaking of personal matters such as his home. (224) Pip also learns of how Wemmick supports himself and the firm by receiving tidings and money from condemned men. “These are two celebrated ones. Famous clients of ours that got us a world of credit.” (223) Although he does not enjoy the idea at first it becomes apparent that to Wemmick it’s a necessity.

Historical allusions:

The hanging of two men, one for murder and one for forgery:

This passage brings to light Dickens’ dislike of the overly strict justice system. A man, who has committed forgery, is condemned to the same fate as a man who committed murder. This representation does hold true to a point in history, because people convicted of forgery were often put to death in the 19th century.

The Crudeness of the Judicial system:

Jaggers' ability to excel at his profession of law is a jab at the judicial system. Jaggers' shows that the lawyers do not need evidence to support their claims but rather a clever mind.

Passage with literary value

"Which side he was on, I couldn't make out, for he seemed to me to be grinding the whole place in a mill; I only know that when I stole out on tiptoe, he was not on the side of the bench; for, he was making the legs of the old gentleman who presided, quite convulsive under the table, by his denunciations of his conduct as the representative of British law and justice in that chair that day." (225)

Pip, describes Jaggers at work and explains his character in a few sentences. He exemplifies Jaggers' strong persona and accompanies that with his clever ability to persuade a courtroom. He represents British law, and makes a direct comment on it through his actions.

Themes?

Self-improvement/Social Class

These two themes tie together in this chapter as it opens up with Pip and Matthew Pocket discussing Pip's future and how his social class can be enhanced by learning rudimentary skills and acquiring more knowledge. This is a simple idea to follow because education would of course better Pip.

Figurative Language

"he sometimes caused the boots to creak, as if they laughed in a dry and suspicious way" (221)

Personification, symbolism.

This quote not only personifies the boots but it symbolizes Jaggers' character. The dry laugh equates to the humor he finds in belittling and frightening others.