

Miss havisham

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Pip first meets Miss Havisham when he is summoned to play with her adopted daughter Estella. Satis house is set in a very upper class area but is very run down, the windows and doors are barred and locked, to keep people in as well as out. There is a dark and brooding image of the house. The reader's first introduction to Miss Havisham occurs when Pip enters her room which is gloomy and lit only by candlelight. She is dressed in posh clothes like silks and lace, all in white which has now yellowed and shabby with age very similar to her spiteful attitude towards men. She continued to wear her veil, and dried and wilted flowers in her hair. In contrast she wears shining jewels around her hands and neck. He observes that the dress that she is wearing had been put on the figure of a young woman and the carcass on which it now hangs had shrunk to skin and bone. The gloomy and decaying theme continues throughout Pip's encounters with Miss Havisham. Dickens uses words like "faded", "no brightness", "like black fungus" and "the daylight was completely excluded" to relate the atmosphere of both the house and Miss Havisham. As he walks to her he notices that all the clocks have stopped at twenty to nine and she says: "Look at me, you are not afraid of a woman who has not seen the sun since you were born?". Dickens uses a great deal of straight forward language in the novel relating to death and decay, especially in his description of Miss Havisham. She openly talks about having her heart broken. Pip notices that it is kind of like she has stopped living and that her life as she knew it had ended once her fiancé stood her up. It is as if she is stuck in the past and can't and will not move forward. We learn later that her fiancé Compeyson abandoned her on her wedding morning at this exact time. Pip describes Miss Havisham's

appearance when he first meets her as “ the strangest lady I have ever seen”. He is anxious, scared and confused and his childlike use of imagery gives us a vision of decrepit old woman. He says he is like a “ a ghastly waxwork” he saw at a fair and also to skeleton he saw in a church. Pip notes “ So she sat corpse like.... ” another reference to death, not only physical, but that of love dying. Miss Havisham was bought up by her father and never had children . This may explain her difficulty to show love on Pip and Estella and the harsh way in which she treats them. She had been badly treated by men throughout her life, her father who spoiled her “ and denied her nothing”, ensuring that she does not have what normal children had. She is obsessive in her attempt to get revenge on Compeyson and in all men in general. During Victorian times there was a big difference between rich and poor and social class was very important. Pip came from the working class and was not very educated. He feels embarrassed about his lack of education and the way he looks and the way he talks, and when Estelle mocks him for being “ a common labouring boy with course hands”. Miss Havisham taunts Pip with Estella’s beauty and finds some strange pleasure in encouraging Estella to break his heart. Throughout the book she messes with their lives. she is controlling from the very start, for instance when Pip comes to play at Satis House; she mutters witch-like incantations at him: “ Play, play, play...” and “ love her, love her, love her...” Pip fall in love with Estella, something that Miss Havisham in her twited head, enjoys. She loves the fact that Pip has fallen for Estella and is enjoying seeing some-one love another person only and knowing they are goin to have their heart broken just like she did. On Pip’s last visit to Satis, he is no longer a young boy, he is

an adult and has a different perspective of the world. He is older and wiser and the roles of he and Miss Havisham have reversed. He has come to ask her for a favour, to borrow some money, but when he was young and she always asked him for stuff. But when she asked him for stuff, it was always in a demanding way and she had to be in control, but now she is begging his forgiveness. She feels that God cannot forgive her but it is more important to her that Pip does. Which shows that she really does have a heart and isn't just a grumpy old witch. Dickens makes sure that the reader considers whether Miss Havisham's fate was deserved. She was cruel to both Pip and Estella, however she had led a very sad and unfulfilled life and her life ended in a very cruel way. She did in the end appear to find a friend in Pip and begs his forgiveness. Pip like a true gentleman does in fact forgive her before she dies.