

Great expectations: passage commentary essay sample

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

" I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. ...It's a great cake. A bride's cake. Mine'"

Chapter 11, Page 84-84

This commentary will be about a passage that is obtained from the book Great Expectations, a book that was written by Charles Dickens. The novel is about a protagonist, Pip, who expects great things from life. The book starts when Pip is a little boy who is an orphan. His older sister and her husband Joe raise him. The family is in the lower social class, and Pip has the expectation of growing into a higher social status. This after he meets Miss Havisham. In this passage Pip is at Miss Havisham's house wondering through her house.

He comes upon a room where it's cold and dirty, here he gets told that this is the room Miss Havisham wants to be displayed when she is dead. Also in a corner stands her wedding cake. A cake that is obviously very old, since it is covered in cobwebs. Charles Dickens published this book in parts. He published them per chapters in the newspaper. Only later was it that it appeared as a novel. In this commentary different aspects will be discussed. Things such as characters in the passage, the tone and diction used in the passage, imagery and other literary features of a commentary. The conclusion will consist of a personal opinion about this certain passage.

This passage mainly consists of Miss Havisham and Pip, yet Estella is also in the house, but not mentioned in this passage. They are strolling around the Miss Havisham house. In this passage we get a bit more insight into Miss Havisham's character. She is still mourning about the fact that her wedding never happened. This is apparent from the way Miss Havisham is dressed: all <https://assignbuster.com/great-expectations-passage-commentary-essay-sample/>

in white, and the fact that she has still kept her wedding cake. She is still obsessed with the fact that she almost got married, yet she was left at the altar. The anger that she built up after that, she was never able to deal with. She has become a bitter, man hating woman who is making Estella a tool of revenge on men. All this is not apparent in the passage as clearly but the whole chapter makes this clear.

Of the major themes from Charles Dickens novel "Great Expectations", themes such as redemption, love and isolation. In this passage the theme of isolation becomes apparent. Miss Havisham live all alone with Estella in a large house. She doesn't get a lot of visitors, this is apparent on the state of the room she shows Pip. One would make ones house presentable if visitors where coming round. Especially a lady in a higher social class would have been expected back then to keep a clean house, not a house with cob-webs and mice walking between the drawing boards.

Dickens in this novel and this passage uses very descriptive words, describing things that only a child would notice, this is also especially in the beginning of the novel as Pip then is still a young boy. An example of this is how Dickens describes the spider Pip sees: "I saw speckled legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it, as if some circumstance of greatest occurrence were important to their interests. 1" It is these kind of diction that makes it seem as if time has stopped, or at least is passing by slowly.

The passage due to passing by so slow creates a very gothic like scene. One pictures a dark spooky house, with a ghost like figure, Miss Havisham,

<https://assignbuster.com/great-expectations-passage-commentary-essay-sample/>

dressed in white floating around. This is all very scary to Pip. Again since he is a little boy, and from lower standards, all this luxury may overcome him and maybe even intimidate him. A small child could easily be scared by a figure like Miss Havisham, she is old and spirit like. But Pip sees her more as a person that can help him get into higher social class. Dickens uses words like: "grow, like a black fungus", "the daylight was completely excluded" to create this eerie and spooky like scene.

The whole book is written through the first person narrative. We see all that happens through the eyes of Pip, instead of an all knowing narrator. This narrative point of view is restricted in the way that it only tells one side of the story. One cannot find out what other characters think or do when they're not with Pip. Yet since the book is about Pip and how his great expectations are worked out, this narrative point of view is effective. As a reader one can see Pip develop from young boy till a man. This whole process wouldn't be as vivid if it had been told by another character, or an all knowing narrator. The story line would be completely different, and less affective had the narrative perspective been changed. It's about Pip growing towards his expectations, and not about any other character.

Personally I enjoy this book to a large extent, it is a bit dull at points, but that is compensated by various climaxes. From what I have read the book has grasped my attention from the first page onwards. It is sometimes a bit confusing with the dialect some characters speak, but never the less still captivating. It is also no surprise to me that this book has become a classic, that everyone will have read at one stage. It is different than other books as

a grown man portrays a story through the eyes of a small boy. Dickens has done a good job at doing so. It is a timeless book. Some times the language and ways of thinking differ greatly after some years, but this book still remains enjoyable more than a hundred years later. That truly is a classic if an author can pull that off. As many have tried but only a few have succeeded, for example Dickens, and Shakespeare, even though the two are in completely different categories.