

Pip, a seven year old boy, has been asked to go to play in the house of a woman called Miss Havisham.

1 I entered and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles.
2 No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed
3 from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses then quite unknown to
4 me. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I
5 made out at first sight to be a fine lady's dressing-table.

6 Whether I should have made out this object so soon if there had been no fine lady
7 sitting at it, I cannot say. In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her
8 head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

9 She was dressed in rich materials,—satins, and lace, and silks,—all of white. Her
10 shoes were white. And she had a long white veil on her hair, and she had bridal
11 flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck
12 and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less
13 splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She
14 had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on. The other was on the
15 table near her hand and her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not
16 put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those objects, and with her
17 handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a Prayer-Book all heaped about the
18 looking-glass.

19 It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more
20 of them in the first moments than might be supposed. But I saw that everything
21 within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its
22 glow and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had
23 withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the
24 brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded
25 figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose had
26 shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the
27 Fair. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in
28 the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement.
29 Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me.
30 I should have cried out, if I could.

31 "Who is it?" said the lady at the table.

32 "Pip, ma'am."

33 "Pip?"

34 "Come—to play."

35 "Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close."

36 It was when I stood before her, avoiding her eyes, that I took note of the
37 surrounding objects in detail, and saw that her watch had stopped at twenty minutes
38 to nine, and that a clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

39 “Look at me,” said Miss Havisham. “You are not afraid of a woman who has never
40 seen the sun since you were born?”

41 I regret to state that I was not afraid of telling the enormous lie contained in the
42 answer “No.”

43 “Do you know what I touch here?” she said, laying her hands, one upon the other,
44 on her left side.

45 “Yes, ma’am.”

46 “What do I touch?”

47 “Your heart.”

48 “Broken!”

49 She uttered the word with an eager look, and with strong emphasis, and with a
50 weird smile that had a kind of boast in it. Afterwards she kept her hands there for a
51 little while, and slowly took them away as if they were heavy.

52 “I am tired,” said Miss Havisham. “I want diversion, and I have done with men
53 and women. Play.”

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