

Miss Havisham: quotations

What do the following quotations tell us about Miss Havisham? Think carefully about the actions and movements described, what the room looks like and whether Miss Havisham appears to us as the kind person Pip thinks she is.

“Estella left me standing near the door, and I stood there until Miss Havisham cast her eyes upon me from the dressing-table.”

On going in to another room under Miss Havisham’s direction:

“It was spacious, and I dare say had once been handsome, but every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and the clocks all stopped together. An epergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite undistinguishable; and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckled legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it ... I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels ... But, the blackbeetles took no notice of the agitation, and groped about the hearth in a ponderous elderly way.”

“It’s a great cake. A bride-cake. Mine!
She looked all round the room in a glaring manner.”

When Pip returns to see Miss Havisham, having come in to the money, and mistakenly believing Miss Havisham to have provided it. A young girl is also present, Sarah Pockets. Pip says he is grateful for the money and Miss Havisham replies:

“‘Ay, ay!’ said she, looking at the dromfited and envious Sarah, with delight. ‘I have seen Mr Jagers. I have heard about it, Pip. So you go tomorrow?’

‘Yes, Miss Havisham.’

‘And you are adopted by a rich person?’

‘Yes, Miss Havisham.’

‘Not named?’

‘No, Miss Havisham.’

‘And Mr Jagers is made your guardian?’

‘Yes, Miss Havisham.’

She quite gloated on these questions and answers, so keen was her employment of Sarah Pocket’s jealous dismay. ... She looked at me, and looked at Sarah, and Sarah’s countenance wrung out of her watchful face a cruel smile. ... She looked at Sarah Pocket with triumph in her weird eyes, and so I left my fairy godmother, with both her hands on her crutch stick, standing in the midst of the dimly lighted room beside the rotten bride-cake that was hidden in cobwebs.”