

Yoela Olson

Ms. Alyssa R Martin

LAN0900

May 4, 2020

Great Expectations Essay: Miss Havisham

Deception comes in many forms. Some deception is easy to spot, others take a bit of time, and a few go undetected until the damage is done. The same goes for lies. You do not need to speak to lie and deceive someone; both can be done without uttering a word. Miss Havisham showed this when she fooled Pip. She spent over twenty years feeling resentment towards all men just because of the one man who had abandoned her at the altar. Miss Havisham could not, would not, forgive Compeyson (as his name was found out to be) and sought out to get revenge on all men. So, she preyed on Pip's view of Estella's beauty. Miss Havisham let anger, bitterness, resentment, and revenge dictate the rest of her life and cause her to hurt many people directly and indirectly.

Miss Havisham adopted a little girl and named her Estella and it was through her that Miss Havisham got revenge on men. Miss Havisham was a wealthy lady and she used that wealth to ensure that Estella grew into a beautiful young woman who men longed to court. Then, Miss Havisham instructed Estella to lead them on into thinking that she was interested in them before dumping them for random reasons. Through this, Estella became a very proud woman who played upon the hearts of men and did not care about anyone she hurt. Miss Havisham would send Estella to men, or bring them to her, so that Estella could do the damage and Miss Havisham could take joy in watching. Unfortunately, poor young Pip also became a victim. Miss

Havisham took immense joy in watching Pip fall for the heartless Estella, but in the end, she regretted it.

Pip was an innocent, young boy who did not know the difference between “common” and a gentleman. Estella was the first to make Pip question himself, he spoke about her saying, “Though she called me ‘boy’ so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about my own age. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen” (Dickens 98). This self-possessed girl was very rude and cruel to Pip, pointing out how “common” he was and how he was just a lowly laborer who was not worth her time. All her rude comments hurt Pip and when he began to cry, Estella found great joy in it and made sure to tell him that. Estella’s words and actions had a significant impact on Pip and opened his eyes to the harsh reality of social classes. And yet, Pip still tried to become a gentleman to win Estella’s heart. On the way home from his first meeting with Miss Havisham and Estella, Pip wrote:

I set off on the four-mile walk to our forge; pondering, as I went along, on all I had seen, and deeply revolving that I was a common labouring-boy; that my hands were coarse; that my boots were thick; that I had fallen into a despicable habit of calling knaves Jacks; that I was much more ignorant than I had considered myself last night, and generally that I was in a low-lived bad way. (113)

Miss Havisham knew how Estella acted and encouraged her. When Estella exclaimed that she did not want to play with the “laborer”, Pip wrote that “I thought I overheard Miss Havisham answer - only it seemed so unlikely - ‘Well? You can break his heart’” (104).

Obviously, Miss Havisham wanted Estella to do just that and encouraged it throughout the time that followed.

Just because Miss Havisham did not tell Pip the truth does not mean she did not lie to him; it is only a different form of deception. In the end, Miss Havisham came face-to-face with what she had done and realized that Pip was a wonderful young man whose feelings she never should have taken advantage of. Because of the resentment in her life, Miss Havisham missed so many things. She could have found someone else to marry or raised a beautiful young girl who brought joy and honor to her life. Instead, Miss Havisham locked herself up in a house and refused to go out during the day. She let resentment and revenge ultimately ruin everything. The devil wishes to do the same to each of us. He lies to us and deceives us by promising things he cannot give us and justifying our sins, so we feel better about them. We need to open our eyes to the lies and conquer them before we waste years of our life waiting for the fulfillments that will never come. Miss Havisham thought that by getting revenge she would feel better, but it only made her feel worse. Neither resentment nor revenge ever bring fulfillment, they only bring more pain and blind us to the real solution through forgiveness.

Works Cited

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*.