**18.48**

**VOICE:** What name?

*A silhouette, calls from a window in a clear voice.*

**PUMBLECHOOK:** Pumblechook!

**VOICE:** Quite right.

**PUMBLECHOOK:** Now, boy, remember your station and let your conduct be a credit unto those which brought you up by hand.

*And now a strikingly pretty young girl approaches, scarcely older than PIP but proud, self-assured, fearless - YOUNG ESTELLA. She regards PIP with a judgemental eye, then produces a large bunch of keys and opens the gate.*

**ESTELLA:** Do you wish to see Miss Havisham?

**PUMBLECHOOK:** If Miss Havisham wishes to see me!

**ESTELLA:** She don’t. *(The gate is closed on PUMBLECHOOK. To PIP -)* Come along.

*And with a glance back at the indignant, excluded PUMBLECHOOK, PIP follows her into the house.*

*The gloomy house is lit by a great many candles. ESTELLA takes one up and leads the way. Portraits and draped furniture can be glimpsed as they make their way up a fine staircase towards a door. They stop outside.*

**ESTELLA:** Are you frightened?

**PIP:** I don’t know.

**ESTELLA:** Go in then.

**PIP:** After you, miss.

*ESTELLA smiles scornfully and walks away. PIP takes a breath and pushes the door open...The room is lit with candles, with no glimpse of daylight.*

*It is the bedroom, and MISS ELEANOR HAVISHAM sits in front of the mirror of her dressing table. She is quite the strangest lady he - or we - have ever seen. The wedding dress, the gloves, the veil are all decayed to a yellow-grey. The bride too has taken on this ashen, sickly taint.*

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Come nearer. Let me look at you.

*PIP approaches gingerly, taking in more of the room; the stilled pendulum, the clock stopped at twenty to nine, the half-packed suitcase, the once-fine clothes now dusty and decayed.*

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Look at me! *(He does so)* You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?

**PIP:** No, ma’am.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Then come closer. *(her hand on her chest)* Do you know what I touch here?

**PIP:** Your heart.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Broken!

*The word is spoken with a weird pride.*

**MISS HAVISHAM:** I sometimes have sick fancies and I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. Play. Play! *(PIP stands, frozen)* Are you sullen and obstinate?

**PIP:** No, ma’am! I am very sorry for you and sorry that I can’t play. If you complain of me I will get into trouble with my sister, so I would play if I could, but it’s so new here....

*She regards him. A moment. Very quiet.*

**MISS HAVISHAM:** So new to him, so old to me, so melancholy. Call Estella! Estella!

*ESTELLA is already approaching, lit by candlelight. She walks past him and straight to MISS HAVISHAM. With a strange mechanical movement, a ritual almost, ESTELLA places her head on her lap.*

*MISS HAVISHAM picks a broach from the dressing table and places it against ESTELLA’s dress, in her hair, watching how the jewels compliment her skin.*

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Your own one day, my dear, and you will use it well. *(she fixes the broach to ESTELLA, as if arming her)* Now. Let me see you play cards with him.

**ESTELLA:** But he’s a common labouring boy.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Well? *(whispered, for ESTELLA only)* You can break his heart.

*They both look to PIP.*

**ESTELLA:** What do you play, boy?

**PIP:** Nothing but beggar my neighbour, miss.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** So. Beggar him.

*The card game. MISS HAVISHAM looks on.*

**PIP:** The jack of diamonds.

**ESTELLA:** ‘Jack’! He calls the knaves ‘jacks’, this boy. *(MISS HAVISHAM smiles)* And what coarse hands he has, and what thick boots. He’s nothing but a stupid, clumsy labouring boy.

*Humiliated, fighting back tears, PIP looks to MISS HAVISHAM.*

**MISS HAVISHAM:** You say nothing of her. What do you think of her?

**PIP:** I don’t like to say.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Whisper in my ear.

*And PIP approaches, until his face is close to MISS HAVISHAM - the yellow skin, the milky eyes.*

**PIP:** I think she is very proud.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Anything else?

**PIP:** I think she is very pretty.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** Anything else?

**PIP:** I think she is very insulting. I think I should like to go home.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** What? And never see her again? *(PIP looks to ESTELLA.)* Beautiful. A whisper.

**PIP:** I think I’d like to see her again.

**MISS HAVISHAM:** *(smiles - she has won.)* Then you shall. But when, when shall Ihave you here again?

**PIP:** Today is Wednesday …

**MISS HAVISHAM:** No Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays here, no days of the week, no weeks of the year. Come again after six nights. Estella, take him down. Feed him.