**49:17**

*PIP looks out of a sooty window at a murky view of London. A bustle behind him, and HERBERT POCKET is there, young, lanky, pale, laden down with parcels of food.*

**HERBERT:** Mr. Pip?

**PIP:** Mr. Pocket?

**HERBERT:** I am extremely sorry, but I thought, coming from the country you might like a little fruit. Strawberries! *(a red pulpy mess)* Strawberry jam! Have you seen yourlodgings? It is by no means splendid, butI’m sure we shan’t come to blows...

*He stops in his tracks, stares at PIP, then raises his fists and assumes an absurd boxing stance.*

**HERBERT:** Put them up! Come on, come on...Is he mad perhaps?

**PIP:** I beg your pardon?

**HERBERT:** Take your ground! Regular rules apply!

*And PIP remembers too.*

**HERBERT:** The prowling boy!

**PIP:** The pale young gentleman!

*SERVING BOYS lay out a meal in the small, comfortable drawing room - a kind of early take-away. Wine is poured and HERBERT tells his story.*

**HERBERT:** I was there with my Aunt Sarah on a trial visit. Miss Havisham fancied that she wanted to ‘see me play’. Clearly she didn’t take a fancy to me. Poor taste on her part but just as well, otherwise I might have been what-d’you-called-it to Estella.

*(PIP leans in)* Affianced. Betrothed. Engaged. But it wasnot to be.

**PIP:** I’m very sorry.

**HERBERT:** Sorry? The girl’s a Tartar, hard and haughty and capricious to the last degree, brought up by Miss Havisham to wreak revenge on all the male sex.

**PIP:** Why should she wreak revenge?

**HERBERT:** Lord, Mr. Pip, don’t you know?

**PIP:** Please - tell me.

*A little later. PIP and HERBERT are eating now.*

**HERBERT:** Miss Havisham was very rich and very proud, a spoilt child. Her mother died when she was young, and her father married again, his cook would you believe, and they had a boy, Arthur, who was - how might I put this? – not entirely legitimate and consequently nursed a terrible grudge… At this point I might break off and mention that in London it is not the custom to put the knife into the mouth, for fear of accidents-

*(PIP removes the knife)*

Also the spoon is not generally used overhand, but under. Do you mind?

**PIP:** Not at all. I am grateful.

**HERBERT:** Now, Miss Havisham met a certain man and loved this man devotedly, passionately, idolised him, and soon they were engaged. He persuaded her to buy her halfbrother’s share in the brewery at an immense price, so that when he was her husband he could hold and manage it all. Well, the happy day arrived - The wedding dresses were brought, the wedding tour planned out ...the wedding guests were invited, my parents among them, the feast laid out, a great bride-cake made. The groom wrote her a letter ... She received the letter -

**PIP:** - when she was dressing for marriage -

**PIP/HERBERT:** - at twenty minutes to nine.

**HERBERT:** It was a conspiracy between the groom and her brother to defraud Miss Havisham and break her heart. And in that they most surely succeeded. *(a moment)* Let’s step out, get some fresh air, shallwe?