**Great Expectations by Charles Dickens**

***Chapter 8***

In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

She was dressed in rich materials - satins, and lace, and silks - all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on - the other was on the table near her hand - her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a prayer-book, all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass. … Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

‘Who is it?’ said the lady at the table.

‘Pip, ma’am.’

‘Pip?’

‘Mr. Pumblechook’s boy, ma’am. Come - to play.’

‘Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close.’

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

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

I regret to state that I was not afraid of telling the enormous lie comprehended in the answer ‘No.’

‘Do you know what I touch here?’ she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.

‘Yes, ma’am.’ (It made me think of the young man.)

‘What do I touch?’

‘Your heart.’

‘Broken!’

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

‘I am tired,’ said Miss Havisham. ‘I want diversion, and I have done with men and women. Play.’

I think it will be conceded by my most disputatious reader, that she could hardly have directed an unfortunate boy to do anything in the wide world more difficult to be done under the circumstances.

‘I sometimes have sick fancies,’ she went on, ‘and I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. There there!’ with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand; ‘play, play, play!’