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Dramatic Publishing

MISS HAVISHAM'S EXPECTATIONS

A One-act Play

Dramatized

by

ROBERT JOHANSON

Based on Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

Miss Havisham's Expectations

A One-act Play

For 5 men, 6 women, 2 boys, 1 girl

CHARACTERS

PIP

YOUNG PIP an orphan, 11 years old
JOE GARGERY a blacksmith
MRS. JOE his wife, Pip's older sister
YOUNG ESTELLA adopted by Miss Havisham
MISS HAVISHAM an eccentric rich lady
MR. JAGGERS a lawyer
SARAH POCKET relation of Miss Havisham
CAMILLA relation of Miss Havisham
YOUNG HERBERT relation of Miss Havisham
ESTELLA as a young lady
HERBERT POCKET poor relation grown up
BIDDY an orphan
BENTLEY DRUMMLE suitor to Estella
LITTLE PIP Joe's son (doubles with Young Pip)

TIME AND PLACE

The action of the play is at Satis House, Rochester, England, over a period of several years during the mid-nineteenth century.

Miss Havisham's Expectations

(As the audience arrives, they see at stage R, impressive gates inscribed with the words "Satis House." [They could simply be columns and the opening and closing of the gates could be mimed.] Nothing else is visible at this time. Everything cloaked in darkness and mystery.

The SOUND of a chilling wind and perhaps occasional cries of rooks or crows and the slightest whisper of a lonely flute caught on the breeze.

The HOUSE LIGHTS fade.

PIP enters and crosses to the gates. He stands looking through the gates for a moment and then turns to the audience.)

PIP. Satis House. Satis House. This dismal house high on a hill. Shrouded in mystery. Locked to the world. Everybody for miles around had heard of Satis House and the old eccentric rich lady who lived there in seclusion. Miss Havisham. Miss Havisham. She had asked for a young boy who could come up here and play. That young boy was me.

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(JOE GARGER, the blacksmith, and his wife, MRS. JOE, enter.)

MRS. JOE *(calling offstage)*. Pip! Come along, Pip!

PIP *(observing from the side)*. My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer than Pip. So I called myself Pip and came to be called Pip.

MRS. JOE *(still calling offstage)*. Pip! Come along, you young monkey!

(YOUNG PIP now enters reluctantly. He is dressed in the clothes of a common laboring boy, though scrubbed and shiny clean.)

MRS. JOE *(grabbing him by the ear and dragging him to the gate)*. Who brought you up by hand?

YOUNG PIP. You did.

MRS. JOE. And why did I do it, I should like to know?

YOUNG PIP. I don't know.

MRS. JOE. And I certainly don't. I'd never do it again. I know that! It's bad enough being a blacksmith's wife—and him a Gargery—without being your mother, as well!

PIP *(to audience)*. Mrs. Joe Gargery was my sister and only relative. The rest of my family lay in the bleak churchyard just off the marshes.

MRS. JOE. You'll both drive *me* to the churchyard one of these days and a pr-r-recious pair you'd be without me. *(She turns and rings a bell attached to the gate. JOE and YOUNG PIP steal a look at each other and a smile.)*

JOE. Now, my boy, your fortune may surely be made this day. Miss Havisham—hmmmm, Miss Havisham.

YOUNG PIP. Yes, Joe.

MRS. JOE. Boy, be forever grateful to them what's brought you up by hand.

(YOUNG ESTELLA now walks toward the gates carrying a ring of keys. She is as pretty and graceful as a precious china doll. She is also very proud.)

YOUNG ESTELLA. What name?

MRS. JOE. This is Pip.

YOUNG ESTELLA. This is Pip, is it? *(She unlocks the gate.)* Come in, Pip. *(YOUNG PIP goes in, MRS. JOE attempts to follow.)* Oh. Did you wish to see Miss Havisham?

MRS. JOE. If Miss Havisham wishes to see me.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Ah, but you see, she don't. *(Closes the gate and locks it. YOUNG PIP is inside.)*

MRS. JOE. Boy! Let your behavior be a credit unto them which brought you up by hand.

JOE. Good luck, Pip.

YOUNG PIP. Goodbye, Joe. *(MRS. JOE and JOE exit.)* Is that the name of this house, miss?

YOUNG ESTELLA. Yes. Satis House. "Satis" is Greek or Latin for "enough."

YOUNG PIP. Enough House—that's a curious name.

YOUNG ESTELLA. It means that whosoever has this house could want nothing else. They must have been easily satisfied in those days, I should think. Don't loiter, boy. *(YOUNG PIP disappears into the house with YOUNG ESTELLA.)*

PIP. Oh Estella—so beautiful—so self-possessed and as scornful of me as if she had been a queen. She led me through that dark house to Miss Havisham's door.

MISS HAVISHAM'S VOICE. Enter.

(Strange music. Traveler opens or lights come up to reveal a room lit with wax candles. Prominent is a vanity table with a broken looking-glass covered in cobwebs. In an armchair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, is MISS HAVISHAM. She is dressed in satins, lace and silk—once white. A long once-white veil descends from her white hair in which there are traces of withered bridal flowers. Bright jewels sparkle on her neck and fingers and on the dressing table. One shoe is on her foot—the other on the table. Handkerchief, gloves, dead flowers and prayer book lie confusedly in front of the mirror. The bride within this bridal dress has shrunken like the flowers. The clock has stopped at twenty minutes to nine.)

MISS HAVISHAM. Who is it?

YOUNG PIP. Pip, ma'am.

HAVISHAM. Pip?

YOUNG PIP. The blacksmith's boy. Come to play.

HAVISHAM. Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close. *(He does.)* You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?

YOUNG PIP. No.

HAVISHAM. Do you know what I touch here? *(She lays her hands upon her left side.)*

YOUNG PIP. Yes, ma'am.

HAVISHAM. What do I touch?

YOUNG PIP. Your heart.

HAVISHAM. Broken. (*Pauses—slowly removes her hands to her lap.*) I am tired and I want diversion. Play. (*YOUNG PIP does not move.*) I sometimes have strange fancies, and I have a fancy that I want to see some play. There, there! Play, play, play!

YOUNG PIP. I am very sorry, ma'am, I can't play just now. If you complain of me I shall get into trouble with my sister, so I would do it if I could—but it's so strange, so new to me—so melancholy.

HAVISHAM. Call Estella—you can do that. Call Estella at the door.

YOUNG PIP (*crosses to door and bellows*). Estella!

(YOUNG ESTELLA appears with her candle and passes YOUNG PIP.)

HAVISHAM. So new to him—so old to me. So strange to him, so familiar to me; so melancholy to us both. (*MISS HAVISHAM takes a jewel from the table, tries its effect on the young girl's dress and pretty hair.*) Your own, one day, my dear. Let me see you play at cards with this boy.

YOUNG ESTELLA. With this boy! Why he is a common laboring boy!

HAVISHAM (*drawing YOUNG ESTELLA close*). Well? You can break his heart.

YOUNG ESTELLA. What do you play, boy?

YOUNG PIP. Nothing but Beggar My Neighbor, miss.

HAVISHAM (*to YOUNG ESTELLA*). Beggar him. (*The two children sit at MISS HAVISHAM's feet and begin to play at cards.*)

PIP. As Estella dealt the cards, I began to understand that everything in the room had stopped, like the clock, at twenty minutes to nine. The shoe on the dressing table had never been worn. The withered bridal gown looked so like grave clothes, the long veil so like a shroud.

YOUNG ESTELLA (*throwing down her cards—imperiously*). He calls the knaves, jacks, this boy! And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots! He's a stupid clumsy laboring boy.

HAVISHAM. You say nothing of her. She says many hard things of you, yet you say nothing of her. What do you think of her?

YOUNG PIP. I don't like to say.

HAVISHAM (*bending down to him*). Tell me in my ear.

YOUNG PIP. I think she is very proud.

HAVISHAM. Anything else?

YOUNG PIP. I think she is very pretty.

HAVISHAM. Anything else?

YOUNG PIP. I think she is very insulting.

HAVISHAM. Anything else?

YOUNG PIP. I think I should like to go home.

HAVISHAM. When shall I have you here again?

YOUNG PIP. Today is Wednesday...

HAVISHAM. I know nothing of days of the week; nothing of weeks of the year. Come again after six days. Estella, show him out. Go, Pip. (*YOUNG ESTELLA picks up her candle and leads YOUNG PIP back to the gate as the traveler closes or the lights fade on MISS HAVISHAM.*)

PIP. Estella treated me as if I were a dog in disgrace. I looked at my coarse hands, my common boots. In this little world in which children have their existence, there is nothing so finely perceived as injustice. It may be

only a small injustice; but the child is small and his world is small.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Why don't you cry?

YOUNG PIP. Because I don't want to.

YOUNG ESTELLA. You do.

(She unlocks gate and lets him out with a contemptuous laugh—closes gate and exits as JOE and MRS. JOE run to meet YOUNG PIP who stands bewildered.)

MRS. JOE. Well, boy, how did you get on?

YOUNG PIP. Pretty well.

MRS. JOE. Pretty well? Pretty well is no answer. Tell us what you mean by pretty well?

YOUNG PIP. I mean pretty well.

MRS. JOE. Oh! Don't you look at me with that tone of voice! Of all the ungrateful...

JOE. Pip, what was Miss Havisham doing when you went in today?

YOUNG PIP *(stubbornly)*. She was sitting in a black velvet coach.

JOE & MRS. JOE *(incredulous)*. In a black velvet coach?

YOUNG PIP. Yes, and Miss Estella handed her in cakes on solid gold plates.

BOTH. Solid gold plates!

MRS. JOE. Was anybody else there?

YOUNG PIP. Four dogs.

BOTH. Four dogs!

JOE. Large or small.

YOUNG PIP. Immense. And they fought for veal cutlets out of a silver basket!

MRS. JOE. Where was this coach, in the name of gracious?

YOUNG PIP. In Miss Havisham's bedroom.

JOE. Did you play, Pip? What did you play at?

YOUNG PIP. Flags.

BOTH. Flags?

YOUNG PIP. Estella waved a blue flag, and I waved a red one, and Miss Havisham waved one sprinkled with little gold stars, out of the coach window.

PIP. My story grew larger and stranger!

MRS. JOE. Well, Miss Havisham will surely "do something" for that ungrateful boy. Come along. *(She exits.)*

PIP. But when I saw Joe's wide-open eyes, I felt myself a young monster.

YOUNG PIP. Oh, Joe, I have something to tell you, Joe.

JOE. More wonders, Pip—then tell it.

YOUNG PIP. It's a terrible thing, Joe; all I told you just now—it ain't true.

JOE. You don't mean to say it's—

YOUNG PIP. Lies, Joe—it's lies.

JOE. But, not all of it? No velvet coach? *(YOUNG PIP shakes his head.)* At least there was dogs, Pip? *(YOUNG PIP shakes head "no.")* A puppy? *(Shakes "no.")* Pip!

YOUNG PIP. No, Joe, nothing. It's terrible, Joe.

JOE. Terrible? Awful! What possessed you?

YOUNG PIP. I don't know what possessed me. But I wish you hadn't taught me to call the knaves, jacks; and I wish my boots weren't so thick nor my hands so coarse. And Miss Estella—oh, she's a beautiful young lady, Joe—she called me common. I wish I weren't common. And all the lies come of this somehow.

JOE. Well, there's one thing you may be sure of, Pip—namely, that lies is lies—howsoever they come. If you can't get to be uncommon by going straight, you'll never get to do it through going crooked. So don't tell no more lies.

YOUNG PIP. You are not angry with me, Joe?

JOE. No, never, old chap. But you're sure there weren't no dogs?

YOUNG PIP. No, Joe—no dogs. *(Breaks down crying and throws himself into JOE's arms.)*

JOE. Pip? Don't cry, old chap. Ever the best of friends, ain't us? Ever the best of friends.

PIP. I dated a new admiration of Joe from this night. I was looking up to Joe in my heart.

(JOE exits—YOUNG PIP rings bell—YOUNG ESTELLA appears with candle.)

PIP. At the appointed time, I returned to Miss Havisham's.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Well?

YOUNG PIP. Well, miss.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Am I pretty?

YOUNG PIP. Yes. I think you are very pretty.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Am I insulting?

YOUNG PIP. Not so much as you were last time.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Not so much?

YOUNG PIP. No. *(YOUNG ESTELLA slaps his face sharply.)*

YOUNG ESTELLA. Now? You little coarse monster, what do you think of me now?

YOUNG PIP. I shall not tell you.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Because you are going to tell inside,
is that it?

YOUNG PIP. No, that's not it.

YOUNG ESTELLA. Do you want to cry again, you little
wretch?

YOUNG PIP. No.

*(A burly man with an exceedingly large head and hands
comes toward them. He takes YOUNG PIP's face in his
hands.)*

JAGGERS. Boy of the neighborhood, heh?

YOUNG PIP. Yes, sir.

JAGGERS. How do you come here?

YOUNG PIP. Miss Havisham sent for me, sir.

JAGGERS. Well! Behave yourself. I have a pretty large
experience of boys, and you're a bad set of fellows.
Now mind you, behave yourself. *(He lets YOUNG PIP's
face go and exits.)*

YOUNG ESTELLA. Wait in here today.

*(The traveler now opens or lights come up to reveal a
dining room. There is a smoldering fireplace with wintry
branches of candles on the mantelpiece. Most prominent
is a long table set for some feast, but overgrown with
cobwebs and dust. In the center, a large decayed wed-
ding cake. Rats may crawl in and out of the crevices of
the cake [through the trickery of puppeteers beneath the
table]. MISS HAVISHAM silently enters using a cane.
She comes up behind YOUNG PIP and startles him by
touching his shoulder.)*