

## Chapter 38 - Estella's Confrontation with Miss Havisham

Carefully reread the conversation between Estella and Miss Havisham on pg.305-307.

### 1. What is Miss Havisham's reason for criticizing Estella in this scene?

Use one quotation to support and illustrate your answer.

2. On the top half of pg.307, Estella tells her adoptive mother: "I begin to think...that I almost understand how this comes about," and then Estella describes two distinct goals or purposes Miss Havisham may have had in raising Estella in the way she did. Carefully read these two parallel but opposing scenarios (found at the top half of pg.307), which each use "daylight" as a metaphor to describe what may have been Miss Havisham's goal or purpose in raising Estella in the way she did:

"I begin to think," said Estella, in a musing way, after another moment of calm wonder, "that I almost understand how this comes about. If you had brought up your adopted daughter wholly in the dark confinement of these rooms, and had never let her know that there was such a thing as the daylight by which she had never once seen your face,—if you had done that, and then, for a purpose had wanted her to understand the daylight and know all about it, you would have been disappointed and angry?"

Miss Havisham, with her head in her hands, sat making a low moaning, and swaying herself on her chair, but gave no answer.

"Or," said Estella,—"which is a nearer case,—if you had taught her, from the dawn of her intelligence, with your utmost energy and might, that there was such a thing as daylight, but that it was made to be her enemy and destroyer, and she must always turn against it, for it had blighted you and would else blight her;—if you had done this, and then, for a purpose, had wanted her to take naturally to the daylight and she could not do it, you would have been disappointed and angry?"

Miss Havisham sat listening (or it seemed so, for I could not see her face), but still made no answer.

"So," said Estella, "I must be taken as I have been made. The success is not mine, the failure is not mine, but the two together make me."

- Why does Estella use the metaphor of "daylight" to describe the way Miss Havisham raised her; what is the metaphorical meaning of "daylight" here?
- Moreover, what does each alternative mean that Estella presents Miss Havisham with, and why does she rhetorically ask Miss Havisham if she "would have been disappointed and angry" at her daughter in either scenario? What point or argument does Estella make here?
- Use two quotations from the passage to support and illustrate your ideas.

3. One recurring motif in *Great Expectations* is the motif of a child's upbringing and how this upbringing shapes the child into an adult. Dickens presents us with multiple young characters who are raised, "brought up," and educated in striking ways, as well as multiple adult characters who have been permanently shaped and influenced by their childhood upbringing and parental figures (or lack thereof). How might this motif of Estella's upbringing, education, and exposure to "daylight" apply to Pip? Which characters have contributed to Pip's "upbringing" and education so far, and what effects has each character had on Pip?

- Among Pip's parental figures, who has "raised" or "educated" Pip in a way that is similar to how Miss Havisham raised Estella? Which characters might fall into this category in Pip's life, and why?
- In contrast, which character or characters have actually shown Pip genuine "daylight" and taught Pip about "daylight"? How can we tell?