

Student Essay on Pivotal Moment in Great Expectations

Pivotal Moment in Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

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Essay

The pivotal moment I have chosen in the novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens is Pip's experience during his first visit to Miss Havisham's house (Chapter 8). Pip went to her house to play, but he was appalled by Miss Havisham's strange behaviours, and badly insulted by Estella. So Pip finally left the house after he cried helplessly.

I was moved by Pip's suffering because he was so abused by Miss Havisham and Estella. Miss Havisham treated Pip like a toy; she forced him to play with Estella while encouraged her to insult and flirt him. "You can break his heart." (Page 61) She enjoyed having Pip shameful and afraid. Estella, on the other hand, used her beauty to flirt Pip, and then insulted him. Estella belittled Pip as a kid, she always scorned at Pip for no reason, and enjoyed seeing Pip offended. She called Pip a common-labour boy who has coarse hands and thick boots. Their actions must be criticized because their higher social classes cannot justify the injustice done on Pip. All men are created equal, so one's social standing doesn't represent one's virtue. Unfortunately, Pip did not react because he felt that Estella was so fine and pretty that she must be right. He envied Estella's social standing while despised his own. He wished that he could be more genteelly brought up so he can win Estella's favour. Pip begins to change his view on social class; he is no longer content to be an ignorant country boy, instead he wants to become a gentleman. Eventually, Pip will realize that the higher social class doesn't necessarily make him a better person; it only alienates his closest friends, Joe and Biddy. Pip's great expectation is therefore a vain effort to better himself.