GREAT EXPECTATIONS

In this extract, a young boy named Pip has been invited to Satis House by the old woman who lives there – Miss Havisham. This is his first visit.

We went into the house by a side door - the great front entrance had two chains across it outside - and the first thing I noticed was, that the passages were all dark, and that she had left a candle burning there. She took it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase, and still it was all dark, and only the candle lighted us.

This was very uncomfortable, and I was half afraid. However, the only thing to be done being to knock at the door, I knocked, and a voice from within said to enter. I entered and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I gathered from the furniture, though much of it was old-fashioned. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady's dressing-table.

Whether I should have made out this object so soon, if there had been no fine lady sitting at it, I cannot say. 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 dressing table mirror.

I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its brightness, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress she wore, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. 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, that skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

"Who is it?" asked 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 also 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."
"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.

Q1: Read **paragraph one** again.
List 4 details we are given about the **house**.  

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________

Q2: Read again the **fifth paragraph**.
How does the writer use **language** to describe the old woman?  

You could include:
- The writer’s choice of words and phrases
- Language features and techniques
- Sentence forms

Q3: You need to think about the **whole extract** now.
How has the writer **structured** the text to interest you as a reader?  

You could write about:
- What the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- How and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops
- Any other structural features that interest you
Q4: Focus this part of your answer from paragraph 4 to the end of the extract. A student, having read this part of the text said:
“*The writer makes you feel sorry for the old woman, Miss Havisham.*”

To what extent do you agree?

[20 marks]

In your response, you should:

- Write about your own impressions of the old woman – Miss Havisham
- Evaluate how the writer arouses our sympathy for her
- Support your opinions with quotations from the text