

Havisham has lost the ability to form coherent sentences and has instead been reduced to animalistic noises.

“Sounds not words”

This takes away her identity and leaves her as simply a shell of the person she once was.

Havisham has become so consumed by the idea of revenge that she no longer possesses her own identity; it is instead replaced by a inhuman insanity that she no longer has control over.

Change is also a heavily featured theme throughout Havisham. It encompasses the reasons for Havisham's descent into madness and how loss impacted her life and sense of self.

“Bang”

The onomatopoeia represents a sudden shock to Havisham and the change to her life. This is also quite sarcastic as while the change to her life was sudden, her spiral into insanity was slow and painful. Her madness is constant and ongoing, while a bang is quickly forgotten.

Havisham reflects on the hope she had for a normal domestic life, and the pain she feels as she believes she was robbed of that possibility.

“Red balloon bursting”

The red balloon is Havisham's dreams of married life, which quickly disappears. ‘Bursting’ is used ominously here as Havisham's mind and life have already been destroyed in her own eyes. This makes the bursting a direct link to the pain Havisham both experiences and wants to inflict upon her ex, summarising Havisham's overall goals. This also proves the extent of mental instability Havisham experiences at the changes in her life. Before she could only wish for marriage but now she craves vengeance and violence over anything else.

The reader is directed to the end of the poem so they are fully reminded of the gravity of Havisham's situation.

“Don't think it's only the heart that b-b-b-breaks”

The harsh ‘B’ sound is repeated from the first line forces the reader to rethink everything they know that has happened to Havisham and how she came to be in her current situation, which also makes for an effective ending to the poem.

To conclude Havisham is a thought provoking poem in which Duffy is able to explore the true extent of the human psych, especially through the development of themes such as conflicting emotions, identity, and change.