***Woman in White***

***Part 1***

***Section 1***

***Chapter 13***

***Short Summary:***

From his hiding place in the cemetery, Walter sees two women approach the grave stone of Mrs. Fairlie. The woman in white is covered in a long, blue, hooded traveling cloak and her companion wears plain clothes and a shawl. The woman in the shawl goes for a walk leaving the woman in white alone by the grave. The woman in white goes to a nearby brook where she dips a cloth in the water and then cleans the grave stone with it. Walter cautiously approaches the woman, reminding her that they met on the road and that he is staying at Limmeridge House. He gently brings up the subject of Laura and the letter, confirming that the woman in white, Anne Catherick, wrote it. He asks her to come to Limmeridge House to talk to Laura in person about the warning in the letter. When he mentions the name of Sir Percival Glyde, Anne screams. This confirms Walter's theory that she was placed in a nearby private asylum by Glyde. Anne's friend, Mrs. Clements, runs to her side and calms her. They leave, pausing at the sexton's house to talk with the woman there. Walter watches them disappear in the darkness.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) feels miserable, looking out across the “dreary” grave yard as the evening draws in. However, before the sun has fully set, he hears a woman’s voice and footsteps approaching. Walter hears the woman tell her companion not to “fret” and that she has delivered the letter without being seen. He sees two women pass and move towards Mrs. Fairlie’s grave. One of the women, the one speaking, wears a “bonnet and shawl” while the other wears a dark cloak. The hem of a [white dress](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/symbols/white-clothes) is visible beneath this.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Two women approach the grave and Walter suspects that one is Anne Catherick, or the woman in white. The other woman is unknown to Walter, but it’s later revealed to be Mrs. Clements.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) listens anxiously as the woman with the bonnet tells the other [woman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) that she looks strange wearing [white clothes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/symbols/white-clothes) all the time, and that the dark cloak suits her. When they reach the grave, this woman assures her companion that she will wait nearby and then makes her way out of the church yard. Walter sees her face as she passes and notes that she is a kindly looking old woman.

***Analysis Part 2:***

This comment from the woman in white’s companion suggests that her habit of always wearing white is a part of her personality that others do not understand. It connects to her tendency to fixate on certain memories and ideas, such as the vow she made to Mrs. Fairlie as a child.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) decides not to approach her and, instead, he watches the other [woman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman), who begins to clean Mrs. Fairlie’s grave with a cloth. After a few moments, Walter approaches the woman slowly. She is startled when she sees him, but he tells her not to be frightened and asks her if she remembers him. The woman gradually recovers from her fright and says that Walter is kind, just as he was kind to her the night they met.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The woman in white has clearly been to Mrs. Fairlie’s grave before and has returned to finish cleaning it. She is clearly the figure that the schoolboy saw and mistook for a ghost. Walter is finally able to confirm that this is Anne Catherick and the same woman he met on the road to London.

***Summary Part 4:***

They stand on either side of the grave, and [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) asks if she will talk to him without becoming frightened. Walter tells her that he has been staying at Limmeridge and the woman, whom he now knows is [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman), is delighted and feels that he must be terribly happy there. He sees clearly the likeness between [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) and Anne, and this makes him shudder, as it seems to suggest some terrible future change in Laura’s circumstances.

***Analysis part 4:***

Walter’s unease about the similarity between Anne and Laura returns. The mystery of why Anne Catherick was locked in the asylum, and Anne’s apparent connection with Laura’s fiancé, Sir Percival, makes Walter concerned that Laura may be caught up in these events and that her future husband may not be what he seems.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) continues to talk with [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) and tries to put her at her ease. He tells her about the men from the asylum who pursued her that night. Anne becomes frightened at the mention of this and asks Walter if he thinks she should be taken back there. Walter says he is pleased she escaped and asks her if she found her friend in London. Anne tells him that she has found her friend, [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements), and that Mrs. Clements is very kind to her, although no one is as kind as Mrs. Fairlie.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Anne seems to want to prove her innocence. Her repetition of this question, which she also asked Walter on the night they met, suggests that she does not think she deserved to be locked up and is afraid that others will believe that she does.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) tells [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) that she has known [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) since she was a little girl. He asks about her mother and father, and Anne says that she does not know her father and does not get on with her mother. Walter wonders if perhaps Anne has been ruined by a lover, who has deserted her, and this is why she was unfairly placed in the asylum. When he asks her this, she answers so innocently that Walter knows this cannot be the case. He wants to find out why Anne implicated [Sir Percival Glyde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) in her letter but does not wish to frighten her away.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Conventions surrounding gender in the nineteenth century meant that it was easy for a man to “ruin” a woman’s reputation and then silence her to prevent retaliation. If a man seduced a woman and then refused to marry her, she would often be rejected by society as a “fallen woman.” Although men’s reputations could be damaged if they behaved in this way, society did not judge men nearly as harshly for having premarital sex. The man’s story was more likely to be believed than the woman’s and, because women had fewer legal rights than men, it was easy for men to have women imprisoned or to publicly shame them.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) tells him that she is staying at a farm near Limmeridge called “Todd’s Corner” and that she is very happy there. The only thing she dislikes is that her companions tease her about dressing all in [white clothes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/symbols/white-clothes) and she knows that Mrs. Fairlie would never do this. This leads Anne to think about [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie), and she asks if Miss Fairlie is well. [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) replies that she is not well because Anne’s letter has upset her deeply.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Anne’s obsession with Mrs. Fairlie seems to stem from the idea that Mrs. Fairlie took her seriously and treated her with respect, whereas other people mock her and think that her behavior is irrational. Anne’s experience in the asylum has enhanced this view, as her incarceration seems to have legitimized the idea that she belongs there and made her desperate to prove that she does not.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) is shocked that [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) has seen the letter. She begins to panic and pound on Mrs. Fairlie’s grave with her hands. She laments that she is alive rather than in the grave with Mrs. Fairlie, whom she loves. Walter tries to calm her by telling her that [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) will keep her secret. When she refuses to settle down, he asks her not to make him think that whoever put her in the asylum had “some good reason for doing so.”

***Analysis Part 8:***

Anne’s perceived connection with Mrs. Fairlie is so strong that she wishes to be with her even if this means dying. This idea of following a loved one to the grave is very common in nineteenth century fiction—it also shows just how bleak Anne’s life is. Walter tries to manipulate Anne by implying that he can understand why whoever put her in the asylum acted as they did.

***Summary Part 9:***

At the mention of this person, a change comes over [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) and her face twists with hatred. She asks [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) what he wants, and he says that he wishes to gain information for [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) about [Sir Percival Glyde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde). The use of this name sends Anne into a screaming fit and Walter is certain, beyond a doubt, that it was Sir Percival who imprisoned Anne in the asylum.

***Analysis Part 9:***

The intensity of Anne’s reaction lets Walter know that he has made a mistake by trying to manipulate her this way. She clearly feels a great sense of injustice about the way she has been treated. The idea that Laura’s fiancé treated Anne this way does not bode well for her future marriage.

***Summary Part 10:***

When she hears [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) scream, [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) rushes back towards the grave and verbally attacks [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) for scaring Anne. Anne recovers slowly and tells Mrs. Clements that Walter is her friend and whispers something in Mrs. Clements’ ear. Mrs. Clements leads Anne away and Walter calls after her and apologizes for causing her distress. Anne looks back and tells him that he “will always frighten her” because “he knows too much.” Before she leaves the church yard, she runs back and kisses Mrs. Fairlie’s grave.

***Analysis Part 10:***

Walter regrets that he has frightened Anne, but Anne is understandably nervous of Walter because he seems to know so much about her circumstances. He is not only involved with her escape from the asylum, but is also in a position to know the man who put her there through his connection to Laura. As a man, Walter could easily use this information against Anne, who is a poor, vulnerable woman, and have her locked up again.