***Woman in White***

***Part 2***

***Section 1***

***Chapter 1***

***Summary:***

* It's been six months since Laura and Marian saw each other.
* Marian is headed to Sir Percival's pad, Blackwater Park, to live with him and Laura. She's not super-pleased.
* The Foscos are staying at the house too.
* Marian is very nervous about seeing Laura again, but also excited.
* Mrs. Vesey goes with Marian as far as London and gets dropped off there.
* Marian worries about how Sir Percival is treating Laura.
* Finally Marian arrives at Blackwater, which is very imposing and not at all inviting.
* Marian actually beats the honeymooners home, so she'll have to wait to see Laura.
* That night she discovers a dying dog, which dies a very sad death.
* A servant girl says it's Mrs. Catherick's dog.
* Mrs. Catherick came to see Sir Percival about Anne, who is still missing.
* Marian settles in for the night in the creepy house.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe)’s diary picks up again on the 11th of June, the summer after [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) and [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s wedding. She is writing from Blackwater Park, which is Sir Percival’s home in Hampshire and now the home of the two sisters. Laura and Sir Percival are still in Italy and Marian eagerly awaits their return the next day. Sir Percival and Laura will also bring [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) and [Madame Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/madame-fosco), Laura’s aunt, to stay at Blackwater for the summer. Marian does not care who they bring as long as she is reunited with her sister.

***Analysis Part 1:***

There is a time jump as the narrative moves from the first “epoch” (a distinctive period of time) to the second. Marian has relocated to Blackwater Park to live with her sister in Sir Percival’s home. She has struggled with the temporary separation from Laura because the bond is so strong between them.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) is not very taken with Blackwater Park, which she arrived at the evening before. It is surrounded by dark trees and Marian finds the setting claustrophobic. The servants are friendly, however, and she is pleased with her room. As she writes in her room, she wishes that she was a man so that she could ride out to meet [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) and [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) on the road. Being a woman, though, she must wait patiently at the house for their return. She decides to fill in her diary with the events which have taken place since she last wrote six months ago.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Blackwater Park makes Marian feel trapped and confined and the trees surround it like the bars of a prison. This foreshadows her time spent with Laura here, which is defined by containment and coercion. Again, Marian demonstrates that she is frustrated by her lack of freedom as a woman; particularly her lack of physical freedom to go where she likes and be as active as she chooses.

***Summary Part 3:***

She has received a note from [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) with news of his safe arrival in Honduras. She has also seen a clipping from a newspaper which announced the start of the expedition into the jungle, but she has heard nothing of him since then. She also hasn’t heard anything about [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) or [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements), and even Sir Percival’s lawyer, [Mr. Merriman](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mr-merriman), has given up the hunt for them. [Mr. Gilmore](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mr-gilmore), Laura and Marian’s lawyer, has unfortunately been taken ill and can no longer work. Marian hopes their new lawyer will be as reliable and friendly as he was to deal with. [Mrs. Vesey](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-vesey) has also been removed from Laura’s service, as Laura will have new servants at Blackwater, and has gone to live with her sister in London. [Mr. Fairlie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mr-fairlie) is, as usual, immersed in his art and delighted to have the women out of the house.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The move to Blackwater and Laura’s marriage have separated Marian and Laura from everyone they are close to. This supports Marian’s earlier fears that marriage is like death for women, or the transition to a different world, as women become totally immersed in their husbands’ lives and often lose all connection with their own. This was normal in the nineteenth century, but Collins turns this standard social convention into something sinister to suggest the danger that this transition can put women in.

***Summary Part 4:***

As for news from [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie), [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) has had regular letters from her throughout the trip, but she cannot tell whether Laura is happy or not. She does not discern from the letters that Laura has grown closer to [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) but there is no evidence that he mistreats her either. Laura also writes that she has met with [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) and her aunt and that her aunt is very different from her younger self—she is very quiet and reserved now—but Laura says that the couple did not join them in Rome, as their plans changed at the last minute.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Marriage has been an extreme transition for Marian’s aunt as well and seems to have transformed her personality; Marian remembers her as a loud and outgoing person. This also makes Count Fosco seem foreboding, since he has apparently broken his wife’s spirit.

***Summary Part 5:***

Since [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) does not write enthusiastically of [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco), [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe)—who trusts Laura’s instincts with people—thinks that he must be an unpleasant man. She decides to go to bed, excited about seeing Laura the next day.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Like Marian, Laura is an honest person and a good judge of character. Because of this, she sees through others when they are putting on an act.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) gets up the next morning and explores Blackwater Park. She finds that parts of the house—the upper floors and the “old wing”—are ruined and uninhabitable, but that the modern part of the house has been redecorated for the inhabitants to live in. Marian is pleased to see that the “good old times” have been “swept away” by 19th century furnishing and décor. Outside in the drive, there is a [fountain](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/symbols/the-fountain) with a statue of a monster on the plinth in the middle, which Marian passes and observes as she ventures out to explore the grounds.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Marian’s delight in the new furniture and decoration reflects nineteenth-century interest in interior design and aesthetics in the home. The industrial revolution and new technology provided Victorian consumers with new goods and materials to furnish their homes and encouraged people to value comfort, personal taste, and leisure when designing their living space. The monster on the fountain reflects and foreshadows the monstrous reality of Laura’s marriage and the secret concealed by Sir Percival, the owner of Blackwater Park.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) wanders out of the garden and follows a path through the trees which surround the mansion. The path ends suddenly at the water’s edge, and she sees the stagnant, murky lake of Blackwater, which is infested with frogs, toads and snakes. A little further along the bank there is a small hut, and Marian rests inside it before the walk home.

***Analysis Part 7:***

The swamp filled with reptiles forebodes the conspiracy that will trap Marian and Laura at Blackwater, hemmed in by its trees and lake. Snakes are associated with lies and evil because of their biblical connotations in the story of Adam and Eve, and Collins’s contemporary readers would be aware of this symbolism.

***Summary Part 8:***

Sitting in the little shed, [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) is startled to hear something breathing nearby. Frightened, she rises and, glancing around, finds a wounded dog huddled underneath the bench. Horrified at the sight of the poor creature in pain, Marian gathers the dog up and rushes it back to the house.

***Analysis Part 8:***

The dog is yet another sinister omen of Laura and Marian’s time at Blackwater, as it is an innocent creature that has been deliberately injured.

***Summary Part 9:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) calls for help from the servants when she arrives with the dog. The first servant who appears is a large, “stupid looking” girl who laughs when she sees the injured dog and says that someone called Baxter has shot it. Marian asks her who Baxter is, hears that he is the groundskeeper, and dismisses the girl. The housekeeper, [Mrs. Michelson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-michelson), whom Marian likes, then arrives to help her.

***Analysis Part 9:***

The servant girl does not seem to have any sympathy or compassion for the dog and is slightly sadistic in her reaction to the sight of the animal’s suffering. All this adds to the mood of dread permeating the entire property.

***Summary Part 10:***

[Mrs. Michelson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-michelson) is shocked when she sees the dog and says that the animal belongs to [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick). Mrs. Catherick, [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman)’s mother, came to Blackwater to enquire if there was any news about her daughter. While they treat the dog, Marian remembers her promise to [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) that she will try to solve the mystery of Anne Catherick if ever the opportunity arises. She resolves to follow this lead and find out anything she can in this direction.

***Analysis Part 10:***

Marian is surprised by this unexpected connection to Anne Catherick. Marian has been so preoccupied with Laura’s marriage that she has put off investigating the mystery of the woman in white.

***Summary Part 11:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) asks [Mrs. Michelson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-michelson) if [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) lives nearby, but the housekeeper tells her that Mrs. Catherick lives twenty-five miles away in Wellingham. Marian asks the housekeeper if she knows Mrs. Catherick well and the housekeeper seems surprised and says that she has never met her before, although she is aware of [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s kindness to Mrs. Catherick’s daughter. Marian wonders if Mrs. Catherick stayed for long on her visit. The housekeeper says that—although Mrs. Catherick seemed to be a strange, yet respectable woman—she was talkative and seemed likely to stay a long time until a man came to the door and asked what time Sir Percival would be back. While the housekeeper was attending to this man, Mrs. Catherick slipped out and told another servant not to mention her visit to Sir Percival.

***Analysis Part 11:***

At first Mrs. Michelson’s story seems to corroborate Sir Percival’s explanation as to why he placed Anne in the asylum. Sir Percival has clearly spoken openly about Mrs. Catherick and her daughter, and his involvement in their situation, if even the servants are aware of it. However, when Mrs. Michelson tells Marian that Mrs. Catherick left when she heard that Sir Percival was on his way to the house, and that she told Mrs. Michelson to keep her visit a secret, it suggests that they are not close friends at all.

***Summary Part 12:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) and [Mrs. Michelson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-michelson) both think this is very odd, and the housekeeper remarks that [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) did not talk about her daughter much but asked a lot of questions about [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) and his new wife. While they are talking, the dog passes away.

***Analysis Part 12:***

It seems strange that, when her daughter is missing and may be too vulnerable to take care of herself, Mrs. Catherick shows more interest in Sir Percival’s new wife. It also seems odd that, considering her interest, Mrs. Catherick does not stay to meet Laura.

***Summary Part 13:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) returns to her diary in the early evening, still restlessly waiting for [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie)’s return. She thinks about the poor dog and wishes that this had not happened on her first day at Blackwater, as it feels like a bad omen. Thinking back to her conversation with the housekeeper about [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick), she resolves to sneak out one day and visit her at Wellingham to get information about [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde). While she is writing, she hears a carriage downstairs and rushes away to meet Laura.

***Analysis Part 13:***

Mrs. Catherick’s mysterious visit, the sinister appearance of Blackwater Park, and the sad incident with the dog compound in Marian’s mind and make her anxious about the future for Laura and herself.