***Woman in White***

***Part 2***

***Section 1***

***Chapter 6***

***Summary:***

* Marian grows increasingly anxious and paranoid.
* She sneaks out when the mail is set to arrive in order to get her expected letter from Mr. Kyrle before anyone else does.
* Mr. Kyrle's letter is very reassuring and says Laura should refuse to sign anything. He also says Laura can demand that he look over the document, as her lawyer.
* Marian chills with Count Fosco for a while, who is playing with his pet mice.
* Creepy.
* Later a breathless Laura rushes in and tells Marian that she's just met Anne Catherick.
* Anne is her good old crazy self and gives all sorts of cryptic warnings about Sir Percival.
* Marian is frustrated that Laura isn't the best detective, and doesn't have many useful details to share.
* Anne looked awful, and Laura learned that she is dying.
* Anne also tells Laura that Sir Percival has a Secret with a capital S.
* (If it's that he's a big old jerkface, we already knew.)
* Marian then fills Laura in on Mr. Kyrle's letter and says they have to stay firm, since Sir Percival is obviously trying to get his hands on Laura's money.
* Sir Percival's method of getting cash seems overly elaborate. (Just saying.)
* Later that evening Count Fosco kinda-sorta hits on Marian. Yipes!

***Critical Study (Ch3-6):***

The narrative resumes six months later, at the end of June. Laura and Sir Percival are about to return to England, accompanied by [Count Fosco](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-woman-in-white/study-guide/character-list#count-fosco) and his wife. Marian has already moved to Sir Percival's estate, Blackwater Park, to await their arrival. Marian knows that Walter has arrived safely in Honduras, but has not recently heard from him. No trace was ever found of [Anne Catherick](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-woman-in-white/study-guide/character-list#anne-catherick) and [Mrs. Clements](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-woman-in-white/study-guide/character-list#mrs-clements) and the search for them has been abandoned. [Mr. Gilmore](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-woman-in-white/study-guide/character-list#mr-gilmore) has fallen ill, and as a result has had to leave his work and go abroad to recover. Mr. Fairlie is relieved to have been left to his own devices at Limmeridge House. Letters from Laura during her time abroad have been vague and non-descriptive, leaving Marian deeply unsure of what her sister's experience of marriage has been like.

Marian spends the following day exploring the gloomy estate, and is horrified when she comes across a wounded dog. Upon bringing him back to the house, a housemaid explains that it was likely shot by Baxter, the gamekeeper. When Marian seeks further explanation by questioning the housekeeper, she learns that the dog belongs to Mrs. Catherick. Mrs. Catherick visited the estate the previous day to ask about Anne, since she had heard rumors of someone resembling her daughter having been seen in the neighborhood. No one at the estate had heard anything about these rumors, though they were struck by her saying that there was no need to tell Sir Percival about her visit.

Upon Laura's return, Marian is startled to see that she is still unwilling to give any details about her marriage and relationship with Sir Percival. From what she can observe, Sir Percival seems unsettled and often suspicious. Marian has also been observing Count Fosco and his wife. She is shocked by the change in the former, who has gone from a silly and talkative woman to someone very reserved and cold. Count Fosco, by contrast, is a larger-than-life and colorful figure, who puzzles Marian, but whom she cannot help but admire, even though she also distrusts him. A short time after the return, the group is interrupted at lunch by news that [Mr. Merriman](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-woman-in-white/study-guide/character-list#mr-merriman) has arrived to see Sir Percival. Percival seems distressed by this news and leaves in a hurry, at which point Fosco explains to the rest of the group that Merriman is his lawyer. This unexpected arrival seems to indicate that Merriman has very serious news to share. As the two men exit from their meeting, Marian overhears their conversation. Merriman refers to Laura's signature being obtained on a document in the presence of witnesses, within a week's time, and suggests that if this does not happen, the longest delay he could obtain on the payment of bills would be three months. Percival is quick to assure him the signature will be obtained.

Marian presumes that Sir Percival is experiencing financial problems, and needs money from Laura. She shares this news with her sister, who is unsurprised and agrees not to carelessly sign anything. Marian speculates that Count Fosco must know something about these troubles, but is also struck by how attentive and kind Sir Percival has become. The next morning, the whole group goes on an excursion to the estate grounds. During this excursion, Marian ends up revealing that Mrs. Catherick visited the house; this news agitates Sir Percival until Fosco urges him to be calm. Sir Percival hurries back to the house to question the servants, and Marian fills in the Count about all the events related to Anne and Mrs. Catherick. When they return to the house, Sir Percival is about to leave for a journey.

Before he goes, he invites his wife, the Count and Eleanor into his study to attend to a business matter. Count Fosco, however, insists that Marian serve as the second witness, since there might be ambiguity about he and his wife both being witnesses. Sir Percival directs Laura to sign a document, and when she asks what she is signing, he says in too much of a hurry to explain it. When she holds firm, he becomes increasingly angry, accusing her of mistrusting him. He becomes increasingly angry with Marian when she stands up to him, and takes Laura's side. Laura and Sir Percival argue, and she is about to leave in anger, when Marian begs her to stay on the good side of Count Fosco. Fosco gets Percival to admit that the signature could wait until tomorrow, and urges him to return to the subject after he comes back from his trip. Percival reluctantly leaves, vowing to get Laura's signature the following day.

After his departure, Laura wonders if he is going in pursuit of Anne Catherick now that he has heard there are rumors of her being in the area. She also admits to Marian how unhappy her marriage is, but declines to go in to detail. Instead, she and Marian discuss what to do now. They are convinced the document was an agreement in which Laura would agree to lend him money, and they worry about where the money would go, and what kind of responsibility she might be held to. They write to the lawyer who has taken over for Mr. Gilmore, asking for his advice, and request that he reply by special messenger so that they can get the answer in time before Sir Percival's return. As Marian mails this letter, she is distracted by Countess Eleanor, which seems suspicious and leads her to verify her letter later. It seems possible that someone has opened the letter, so she reseals it.

The evening, Marian and Laura go for a walk, and Laura shares the details of her marriage. Percival has been cruel to her from the beginning, and she has pined constantly for Walter. When Marian cautions her about being careful to conceal Walter's identity, Laura explains that Percival already knows who her beloved is. Marian is stricken with remorse for having discouraged the relationship between Walter and Laura. As the two women start to return to the house, they see a figure walking near the lake. They hurry back, thinking they are being followed, but reach the house without incident. Once there, Marian is able to account for the whereabouts of everyone from the house, leaving her confused as to who could have been outside on the grounds.

The reunion of the characters at Blackwell Park, as well as the introduction of Count Fosco and the Countess, make it clear that all of Marian's worst fears about the marriage have been realized. As soon as she gets to the estate, all of the imagery suggests that this is a dark and foreboding place. Everything seems to be stagnant, decaying, and potentially dangerous. The death of the dog on Marian's first day there offers vivid symbolism of something innocent and trusting coming to a violent end, foreshadowing potential threats to both Marian and Laura. Laura's initial refusal to give any details about her marriage is more chilling than a description might have been, because it leaves the reader in suspense as to what kind of abuse she might be experiencing. The fact that the Countess, who had been a very willful and stubborn woman before her marriage, now seems completely submissive, offers a further perspective on how a domineering husband can break a woman's spirit.

The introduction of Count Fosco offers another threatening presence. At the same time, Marian cannot help but be fascinated by him. While Percival is grim and dour, Fosco is colorful and charismatic. As an emblem of the Continental European, he is very different from the English male characters, and seductive because of his exoticism. He was clearly very compelling to Eleanor Fairlie, who seems to have somewhat resembled Marian in her willfulness and non-traditional attitude. The fact that he has managed to control her and make her subservient suggests that he is just as interested in dominance as Percival is, but that he is more skillful and smooth at manipulation and trickery, rather than brute force.

This difference becomes very clear as Percival tries to force Laura to sign some sort of agreement without allowing her to know what it specifies. As Mr. Gilmore predicted and feared prior to the marriage, Percival seems intent on securing access to Laura's money. The fact that despite his large estate he is impoverished and in debt introduces a further critique of the old landed aristocracy. By this time, it was not uncommon for ancient and well-established families to have the trappings of wealth but no available cash. Percival seems to think that he can simply tell Laura what to do and she will unquestioningly obey him. However, even docile Laura is not that trusting, and she stands up for her own intellectual ability by insisting that she could understand the terms of the contract if it was explained to her.

Marian also takes on the role of Laura's champion, defending her and warning Sir Percival that Laura has legal rights. At the same time, Marian is uncomfortably aware that these warnings are hollow. As her husband, Sir Percival has almost complete control of Laura. Moreover, with Walter overseas and Mr. Gilmore now away recovering from illness, Marian and Laura have no male ally to turn to. This leaves them both in a very vulnerable position, and despite Marian's apparent strength and defiance, she knows that as a woman she is very limited in how much she will be able to protect and help Laura.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) spends a sleepless night regretting her decision to send [**Walter**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) away from Limmeridge. When she rises the next morning, she hears that [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) has lost one of her favorite brooches and all of the servants have been sent out to search for it. Marian decides that—while everyone is distracted—this will be a good time for her to slip out and meet the messenger on the road, who has been ordered to carry a letter to her from her solicitor, [**Mr. Kyrle**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mr-kyrle), in London. Before she sets out, Marian ensures that [**Count Fosco**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) is in his sitting room—she hears him playing with his pet birds—and that [**Madame Fosco**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/madame-fosco)—whom she sees in the garden on her way out—does not plan to leave the house before lunch.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The lost brooch is a good distraction and allows Marian to slip out to meet the messenger. Again, Madame Fosco seems to be guarding the house as she remains outside where she can see people coming and going. Count Fosco playing with his birds also shows once more that he has a strange affinity for animals—he seems to genuinely enjoy their company, while he manipulates people like chess pieces.

***Summary Part 2:***

[**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) waits on a stretch of road some distance from the house, hidden between two high hedges on either side. The messenger pulls up on his way past and gives her the letter. [**Mr. Kyrle**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mr-kyrle) agrees that [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) should not sign the document produced by [**Sir Percival**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde). He says it is most likely an agreement which allows creditors to take money from Laura’s twenty thousand pounds to repay Sir Percival’s debts. He advises that Laura should sign nothing without allowing Mr. Kyrle to look at the document first.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Mr. Kyrle’s letter confirms Marian’s suspicions about Sir Percival’s intention. He plans to use Laura’s money to pay for his own debts. This further supports her belief that Sir Percival has only married Laura for her money. How this all connects to the woman in white and Count Fosco’s manipulations, however, is still a mystery.

***Summary Part 3:***

[**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) gives the letter back to the messenger and tells him to thank the person that sent it. Just as she is handing the letter back to him, [**Count Fosco**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) appears suddenly on the road and sees Marian. The messenger drives off and Marian is horrified that her actions have been discovered. The Count, however, makes no reference to this. He simply says that he heard she was going for a walk and wished to join her. Almost rigid with fear, but striving to hide it, Marian takes his arm and allows him to lead her back to the house.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Marian suspects that Count Fosco is spying on her and has followed her to intercept the message from Mr. Kyrle. She believes that they are both putting on an act, as he pretends that he has bumped into her by accident and she pretends that she was just out for a walk—and also that she is not terrified of him. The nature of the women’s imprisonment is especially sinister because on the surface all seems normal and well, as everyone still abides by social norms of politeness.

***Summary Part 4:***

When they arrive back at Blackwater, they see that [**Sir Percival**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s cart is in the drive. They meet him in the hall, and he gruffly reminds them that [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) must meet him in the library that afternoon. [**Count Fosco**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) takes Sir Percival aside to discuss business and [**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) collapses on a sofa in the drawing room in a state of nervous exhaustion. A few minutes later, Count Fosco pokes his head around the door and tells Marian that Sir Percival has wisely decided to drop the issue of the signature for the time being. Marian falls back into a swoon after he has left, and sleeps on the settee.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Marian is physically drained by the stress of the situation she is in. It seems that Count Fosco has done Laura and Marian a favor, although Marian cannot distinguish the Count’s motives for this and is too exhausted to try.

***Summary Part 5:***

While dozing on the couch, [**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) has a dream about [**Walter Hartright**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright). She sees him lying on the steps of an ancient temple in the heart of the jungle and sees that the men around him are dying of disease. She begs him to come back. She sees him again trekking through the jungle, about to be attacked by men who lurk in the forest, and, again, she begs him to return. The third time she sees him in a storm at sea and sees him escape from a sinking wreck which kills all the other passengers. Finally, she sees him kneel beside a marble tomb and a woman in a veil rises out of the tomb and stands beside him.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Marian’s dream reflects the dangers that Walter is likely to face in his expedition abroad. Stories about explorers and adventures into foreign lands were extremely popular at the time because of the general climate of colonialism and British expansionism. In her dream, Walter faces dangers that really did trouble colonies of British settlers abroad, such as tropical diseases and attacks by natives of the lands that they had invaded. Sea travel was also still extremely dangerous, especially on long voyages.

***Summary Part 6:***

[**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) is woken from her dream by [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie), who tells her that she has just come from speaking to [**Anne Catherick**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman). The women rush to Marian’s room and Laura tells Marian that she met Anne Catherick when she went to the boathouse to look for her brooch and that Anne had already found it there. Laura was struck by the likeness between Anne and herself. Anne told Laura that she is here to “atone” for the fact that she did not do more to stop Laura’s wedding to [**Sir Percival**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde), whom she seems to hate and speaks of with a vicious, mad expression.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Anne has clearly gone out of her way to find Laura and feels guilty for not doing more to stop Laura’s wedding. Anne believes that Sir Percival is a dangerous individual because he once locked her in an asylum, and that he is now as much a danger to Laura as he is to her.

***Summary Part 7:***

[**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) told [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) that she did not do more at Limmeridge because she was afraid [**Sir Percival**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) would put her in the madhouse again, but now she is not afraid because she is dying. She told Laura that the way to frighten Sir Percival is to learn his secret. Her mother, [**Mrs. Catherick**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick), knows the secret, and she told Anne about it. Laura begged Anne to continue, but Anne seemed to hear something and rushed away into the plantation. She called back to Laura to meet her there at the same time the next day.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Anne is no longer afraid of Sir Percival because she knows she will die soon and has nothing to lose. However, she is worried that Sir Percival will find her before she has the chance to tell Laura his secret (if she knows it at all) and help Laura escape from him. This is perhaps why she rushes away when she thinks she may be caught.

***Summary Part 8:***

[**Marian**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) finds that [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) has not learned much more from [**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) and plans to follow Laura the next day, to meet Anne herself. Leaving Laura alone, she goes to find out [**Count Fosco**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco)’s whereabouts and is alarmed to hear he has gone for a walk with [**Sir Percival**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)—something he never does. Marian is even more alarmed that evening, when Count Fosco and Sir Percival return home, because Sir Percival behaves civilly and kindly with Laura, the way he did when he courted her at Limmeridge. The Count too flatters Marian and is attentive to her all evening. Marian feels oppressed by the memory of her dream and senses that something terrible is about to happen. The Count seems to confirm her fears as she makes her way to bed; he tells her that change will come the next day.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Marian is concerned that Sir Percival and Count Fosco know about Anne’s presence at Blackwater and that they have gone out to find her under the pretense of going for a walk. Their behavior at dinner seems calculating and overly attentive, which makes Marian afraid that they are now confident and cheerful because they have created a plan between then to subdue the women and prevent them from learning Sir Percival’s secret or securing Laura’s money.