***Woman in White***

***Part 2***

***Section 1***

***Chapter 9***

***Summary:***

* Later that night Marian decides to go spy on Fosco and Percival to learn about their evil schemes.
* A hardcore super-spy, she creeps out onto the roof and finds a spot above Fosco and Percival to eavesdrop.
* The count and Percival have a conveniently detailed conversation. It's nice how villains tend to do that, huh?
* Turns out Marian was right about everything: Sir Percival needs cash, as does Fosco, and they are trying to trick Laura into signing her savings away to them.
* Fosco lectures Percival about his lack of finesse and insists on handling things himself from now on.
* Fosco rambles about how great Marian is, and Marian tries hard not to barf.
* He then questions Sir Percival about what would happen to the cash if Laura were to suddenly die.
* *Zoinks*, says the Scooby-Doo gang.
* Sir Percival also fills Fosco in on the whole "secret" business. Percival thinks Laura knows the secret, courtesy of Anne, and that Laura also told it to that dude she's in love with (i.e., Walter).
* It starts to rain and Marian gets soaked.
* After the dudes finish chatting, Marian creeps back to her room.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

Later that night, [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) leans out of the window of her bedroom to take in the warm evening air. She notices a red spark moving on the lawn, and another approaching it, and knows that one is [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco)’s cigarette and that the other spark is [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s. She overhears the Count tell Sir Percival that they may now have their conversation—which Sir Percival has been pushing for all day—but that he wants to wait until Marian’s light is out and then check the rooms to make sure she has not come downstairs to listen.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Count Fosco displays extreme self-control; a quality Sir Percival lacks. Although Sir Percival has tried all day to make Count Fosco submit to his will, Count Fosco controls the situation and only agrees to speak to Sir Percival when he is ready and feels the situation is right. Count Fosco believes Marian is capable of spying on them without being detected. This shows a level of respect for her bravery and ingenuity. Sir Percival, on the other hand, does not give Marian this credit and has not considered this possibility.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) knows that [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) and [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) usually sit out on the veranda on warm nights and she wishes to overhear their conversation. She puts out her candle—so that it looks like she is in bed—and puts on a dark cloak. She plans to climb out of her window, crawl along the veranda and listen to the men from above, even though she knows this will be dangerous and that she may be discovered.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Marian demonstrates her bravery and determination to protect her sister. She puts herself in danger to discover the intentions of Sir Percival and Count Fosco and, cleverly, thinks of a plan that they will never suspect. She also demonstrates the idea that crime is a “battle of wits” between the criminal and the detective, as Count Fosco described it. Marian here takes on the role of the detective and tries to foil a criminal plot.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) creeps down onto the roof and slides along to the space above the library doors where the men usually sit. She has to duck under [Madame Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/madame-fosco)’s window—the Countess is still not in bed—and hides anxiously under the sill. As she predicted, [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) and [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) sit down at the open doors to smoke and have their conversation.

***Analysis Part 3:***

If Marian is caught by Madame Fosco, she will be exposed to Sir Percival and Count Fosco and could be in real danger of being separated from Laura or even killed.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) and [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) discuss their financial affairs. They are both ruined and deeply in debt; the Count by several hundred pounds, Sir Percival by several thousand. Count Fosco reminds Sir Percival that his debts have been put off by three months but that after that time he will be in trouble. He also rebukes him for treating [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) like a brute, as he feels that she is a difficult woman to manage and must be tamed like an animal or treated with respect like a man. He tells Sir Percival that—because of his treatment of Marian and her sister—Marian has written again to her lawyer for help but that Count Fosco, luckily, intercepted the letters.

***Analysis Part 4:***

The full extent of Sir Percival’s financial worries is here revealed to the reader. It is now clear that Sir Percival married Laura for her money in order to pay off his own debts, and that he needs access to her inheritance when she comes of age or else he will be ruined. Count Fosco respects Marian and, because she is intelligent, is afraid that she will try and foil their plans. His assertion that Marian must either be respected or tamed shows the binary way in which Count Fosco views gender; men are to be respected and women are to be tamed—unless they are clever enough to seem “like a man.”

***Summary Part 5:***

[Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) is furious and kicks over a chair, which muffles the startled sound [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) makes when she hears that [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) has prevented her letters from being sent. Count Fosco then asks Sir Percival what money he expects to receive from [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) when [Mr. Fairlie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mr-fairlie) dies. Sir Percival says that, if Mr. Fairlie dies, he expects three thousand pounds a year as the income from Limmeridge House, but that this will not cover his debts and, besides, that Mr. Fairlie may not die soon and may marry and produce an heir before then.

***Analysis part 5:***

It is clear that Sir Percival’s debts are very severe and need to be paid urgently. He cannot afford to wait for Mr. Fairlie to die and must access the money as soon as possible. If Mr. Fairlie marries and has a son, this son will be heir to Limmeridge House rather than Laura, as property always automatically went to male relatives before female ones.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) then asks [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) what he will receive if [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) dies. Sir Percival is reluctant to discuss this but grudgingly tells Count Fosco that he will receive twenty thousand pounds and also reminds him that his own wife, [Madame Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/madame-fosco), will receive ten thousand. Count Fosco suggests that Sir Percival pay his debts in three months through Laura’s death. At that moment, the light in Madame Fosco’s window goes out.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Sir Percival and Count Fosco both stand to gain financially by Laura’s death. If Madame Fosco receives her share of the money, Count Fosco will be in charge of it because of his dominance in the relationship. When the light goes out, it symbolizes the true darkness of Sir Percival and Count Fosco’s plan, which Marian has so far only suspected.

***Summary Part 7:***

As [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) crouches on the roof, listening in horror, it begins to rain. [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) begins to press [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) about [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) and the secret that she knows about him. Sir Percival refuses to tell him what this secret is. Count Fosco lets this go and makes a show of his great trust and respect for his friend by dropping the subject.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Count Fosco does not know Sir Percival’s secret, so it seems the only person who can reveal it or threaten him with it is Anne.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) confesses that he is utterly ruined if he cannot find [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman), and [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) asks how Anne knows his secret. Sir Percival replies that she was told by her mother, [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick). Count Fosco asks if Mrs. Catherick is likely to tell anyone else, and Sir Percival answers that she will not because the secret is as shameful to her as it is to him. He is deeply concerned, though, that Anne Catherick might tell [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) the secret.

***Analysis Part 8:***

If Mrs. Catherick shares Sir Percival’s secret, then her reputation will be ruined too. This suggests that she has been Sir Percival’s accomplice in some way. Anne, however, has such a low social status as a poor, (supposedly) mentally ill woman that she has no reputation to worry about losing.

***Summary part 9:***

[Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) asks [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) why he is so afraid; surely, he suggests, if the secret is scandalous to Sir Percival, then [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) will also wish to keep it hidden to protect her reputation as his wife. Sir Percival believes that this would normally be the case, except that Laura is in love with [Walter Hartright](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) and, he believes, would throw Sir Percival over for a chance to marry him. He feels Walter has plotted against him; helping [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) escape the asylum and then again at Limmeridge.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Count Fosco assumes that husbands have the power to make all wives as obedient as he has made his own. Wives were also considered partially responsible for their husband’s behavior, so any ruin that fell on the husband would also fall on the wife. Sir Percival is clearly very paranoid and feels that people are plotting against him when, really, Walter’s interaction with Anne and connection with Laura is just an accident.

***Summary Part 10:***

[Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) says that they will dispose of [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) if he ever returns. He then asks [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) what [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) looks like, as he saw [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) with a woman a few days ago, at the boathouse. Sir Percival says she looks very much like Laura, as if they are related, and [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) hears the Count jump up. Sir Percival asks him why he is laughing, and the Count tells him smoothly not to worry, and that he will hatch a plan that night which will free Sir Percival from his troubles. The two men go back inside and Marian, horrified by all she has heard, slinks back to her room.

***Analysis Part 10:***

Count Fosco demonstrates that he is an extremely ruthless and mercenary person, as he is willing to kill Walter, a stranger whom he has no reason to dislike, in order to protect his own interests in Sir Percival’s crime. Although this decision may seem like loyalty to Sir Percival, Count Fosco is only thinking about the money he will receive from Laura and doesn’t want this plan to be foiled by the revelation of Sir Percival’s secret. Count Fosco’s triumphant reaction to the likeness between Laura and Anne suggests that he has been struck by an idea—he has thought of a way to exploit this similarity between the two women for his own ends.