***Woman in White***

***Part 3***

***Section 1***

***Chapter 7***

### ***The Story Continued by Hartright***

***Summary:***

* Walter starts asking Mrs. Clements for details about Anne's upbringing, and he gets an earful.
* In a nutshell, Mrs. Clements and her husband lived in a town called Welmingham.
* The Cathericks lived there too, and a serious scandal broke out when Sir Percival Glyde started nosing around town and visiting Mrs. Catherick.
* Mr. Catherick suspected an affair, as did most others in the town.
* To make matters worse, there was serious doubt as to whether or not Mrs. Catherick's baby was even her husband's.
* Mr. Catherick couldn't deal with the scandal, and he skipped town.
* Mrs. Clements becomes Anne's nurse and loves the little girl.
* She has it in for Mrs. Catherick, who was a lousy mother on top of all her other faults—namely, being a promiscuous girl (remember: this is Victorian England. *Everyone* is uptight).
* Walter keeps plugging away with the questions and asks if Sir Percival knew Mrs. Catherick before her marriage.
* Mrs. Clements says she's not sure, and Sir Percival didn't seem to be friends with Mrs. Catherick's former employer, a Major Donthorne.
* Walter feels bad for Mrs. Clements and finally reveals that Anne is dead.
* Mrs. Clements is super-upset.
* But she gives him Mrs. Catherick's address, even though she can't figure out why he wants to deal with that woman.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) is heartbroken over [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman)’s disappearance, as Anne was like a daughter to her. [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) believes that he may find out [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s secret by discovering Anne’s history, so he asks Mrs. Clements about Anne’s mother, [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick). Mrs. Clements clearly dislikes Mrs. Catherick. Mrs. Clements explains that she and her husband used to live near Mr. and Mrs. Catherick in Old Welmingham. She says that Mrs. Catherick was a hard-hearted, selfish woman who thought she was too good for her husband and only married him when he stopped asking her to. There was a huge scandal about them in the village, and the couple split up a few months after they moved there.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Mrs. Clements is Mrs. Catherick’s opposite and her foil in the story. While Mrs. Catherick is a negligent mother to Anne and a shallow woman, Mrs. Clements is a good-hearted mother figure to Anne and does not care about appearances or how society views Anne’s behavior. This pattern of opposites plays out several times throughout the novel. There are two criminals (Count Fosco and Sir Percival), two young heroines (Anne and Laura), two detectives (Marian and Walter), two mother figures (Mrs. Clements and Mrs. Catherick), and two lawyers (Mr. Gilmore and Mr. Kyrle).

***Summary Part 2:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) asks if the scandal was about Mr. and [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick), but [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) tells him it was about Mrs. Catherick and [Sir Percival Glyde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde). [Mr. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters) found jewelry inscribed with Sir Percival’s initials which had been sent, as a gift, to his wife. The next day he overheard them “whispering about the vestry” of the church and, that night, surprised them there at their meeting place. Sir Percival attacked Mr. Catherick and he left the town after that. People in the village thought that Mrs. Catherick had perhaps known Sir Percival before her marriage and that he might be [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman)’s father. Walter does not think that this is the secret, however, because it is a very common occurrence and not enough to ruin a nobleman’s reputation.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Although Mrs. Clements does not have all the information about the scandal, she foils Mrs. Catherick when she reveals a vital part of the conspiracy; the relation of the secret to the vestry of Welmingham church. Mrs. Clements takes the conventional view of the scandal and believes that Mrs. Catherick and Sir Percival were lovers. However, Walter astutely realizes that, although this would ruin Mrs. Catherick’s reputation (because she is a woman) it is quite common for noblemen to father illegitimate children and to ruin women’s reputations by seducing them and refusing to marry them. Although this behavior could devastate a woman’s social position and totally destroy her life, for men this behavior was considered forgivable and even normal, as men were not expected to have the same level of self-control as women.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) fled the village after the scandal, but [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) remained, despite her tattered reputation among the neighbors. [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) tells [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) that Mrs. Catherick is provided for by Sir Percival Glyde, who sends her money every month. Walter now feels sure that Sir Percival pays Mrs. Catherick to remain in Welmingham because he knows that none of the neighbors will speak to her and, therefore, she will not tell his secret. He does not believe [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) is Sir Percival’s daughter and wonders if Sir Percival has created this scandal to distract from the real secret hidden underneath.

***Analysis Part 3:***

If Sir Percival had really ruined Mrs. Catherick’s reputation by getting her pregnant and not marrying her, it would be more likely that she would have to flee the village than that he would. This suggests that Sir Percival has another secret. His decision to pay Mrs. Catherick to remain in Welmingham, where she will have no friends and be a social outcast, demonstrates Sir Percival’s cruelty and disregard for other people. He considers his own reputation more important than Mrs. Catherick’s entire life.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) tells [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) that [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) worked for a man called [Major Donthorne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters), at a place called Varneck Hall, before her marriage. She then tells him a little more about [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman)’s childhood. Mrs. Catherick took Anne away from Mrs. Clements when she was nine or ten—after they had spent time at Limmeridge—and Mrs. Clements did not see her again until she escaped the asylum. Like Walter, Mrs. Clements does not think that Anne knew [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s secret, but that she heard from her mother that there was a secret and pretended that she knew the whole thing in front of Sir Percival, who put her in the asylum to keep her quiet.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Mrs. Catherick is clearly selfish because she takes Anne away from Mrs. Clements despite their close relationship.  The idea that Anne did not know Sir Percival’s secret is tragically ironic, as it highlights the fact that Anne is truly an innocent victim and that it is Sir Percival’s guilty conscience and paranoia that persuade him to lock her up. Anne’s innocence is symbolized by her determination to dress in white: a color associated with purity.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) realizes that [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) has told him everything she can and makes to leave. Before he goes, he takes pity on the old lady and—although he cannot safely go into detail—tells her that he knows [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) is dead but that she has been “nicely buried” in a way that she would like, which comforts Mrs. Clements. Walter then asks her for [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick)’s address and tells her that he plans to uncover [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s secret. Mrs. Clements warns Walter that Mrs. Catherick is a heartless woman, but gives him the address and Walter goes on his way.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Walter feels sorry for Mrs. Clements, who is grief stricken over Anne’s death, and tells her about Anne’s burial to comfort her. This is comforting to the old lady because, as she and Anne are both poor and could not afford an expensive private burial, Anne probably would have been buried in a pauper’s grave if she had died in Mrs. Clements care. In the nineteenth century it was a mark of shame and poverty to be buried in an unmarked grave as, by the mid-1800s, even most middle-class people could afford to pay for a tombstone and a plot in a cemetery. Walter also privately knows that Anne would like to be buried with Mrs. Fairlie because he heard her say so when they were at the grave.