***Woman in White***

***Part 3***

***Section 1***

***Chapter 8***

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

***Summary:***

* Walter goes down for breakfast and meets Mrs. Vesey.
* Mrs. Vesey is not the sharpest knife in the drawer, and she seems somewhat narcoleptic (prone to falling asleep). She's sweet though.
* After breakfast Marian takes Walter outside to meet Laura.
* Walter instantly falls in love and spends the rest of this chapter waxing poetic about the beautiful Laura.
* Think Romeo rambling on and on about Juliet and you get the gist of Walter's feelings for Laura.
* Later that evening Marian pulls Walter aside and says she's gone through her mom's old letters for some clue about the woman in white's identity.
* Marian reads Walter an old letter that Mrs. Fairlie wrote to her husband, Philip Fairlie (Laura's dad).
* A Mrs. Catherick was in town tending to an ill relative and enrolled her daughter Anne at the local school, run by Mrs. Fairlie.
* Anne is a bit slow but is very sweet and insists on wearing all white after Mrs. Fairlie tells her it looks nice on her.
* Anne also bears a resemblance to Laura.
* Marian and Walter decide the woman in white is most likely this mysterious Anne Catherick.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

When [**Walter**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) returns to London, he finds [**Laura**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie) very upset. She complains that she is not paying her way in the house and Walter agrees that she should start drawing for money to help. Although Walter cannot really sell her drawings, he lies to her and gives her some of his own money because he feels that her desire to help is a sign that her health is improving, and he thinks that this sense of independence will be good for her.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Walter lies to Laura to give her a sense of purpose and responsibility. Like many middle-class Victorians, Collins believes it is bad for people to lack responsibility and that, even if they are not responsible for anything important, it gives people a sense of self-esteem and dignity to feel that they are contributing to society.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) tells [Marian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/marian-halcombe) that he is going to Welmingham to try and discover [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s secret. Marian fears for Walter’s safety. It is [Count Fosco](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/count-fosco) she is afraid of, rather than Sir Percival. Walter sets out and catches a train towards the village.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Marian thinks that Count Fosco is the real driving force behind the conspiracy. She believes that he controls Sir Percival, that most of the plans have been his idea and that, without Count Fosco’s influence, Sir Percival’s guilty conscience and reckless behavior would have given him away.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) arrives and finds [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick)’s house easily. He finds Mrs. Catherick a hard-looking woman dressed all in black. She asks if he has come to tell her that [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) is dead, and Walter confirms that she is. Mrs. Catherick takes this news stoically and tells Walter he can leave if he has nothing else to say. Walter tells her that he plans to uncover [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s secret, for the sake of one who has been wronged, and that he knows of Mrs. Catherick’s involvement in it.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Mrs. Catherick dresses in black because she is Anne’s opposite. While Anne is innocent, Mrs. Catherick is Sir Percival’s co-conspirator. She does not seem to care that her daughter is dead and seems to have expected this news.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) thinks she understands [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright)’s intention—she thinks he is trying to blackmail her by threatening to ruin her reputation—and mocks him. She tells him that she has “claimed” her place back in the town through sheer determination; she is a respectable member of the community now and nothing Walter says will tarnish that. As she is speaking, the minister passes the window and bows to Mrs. Catherick. Walter alludes to [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s rank and social power. Mrs. Catherick scoffs at this too and makes a comment about Sir Percival’s mother. Walter tells her that he does not plan to blackmail her but that he can “crush” Sir Percival Glyde with her help, since he can tell that she hates Sir Percival as he does. Mrs. Catherick tells him to do it himself and leave her out of it.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Mrs. Catherick has regained her reputation as a respectable woman in the community by sheer, brazen force of will. Even if the people in the community do not really believe she is respectable, they behave as if she is. In Victorian society, reputation and social place determines how one is treated by the people around them. Mrs. Catherick has learned that, although she cannot undo her history, she can convince people to treat her with respect if she demands it with enough conviction. Mrs. Catherick, therefore, believes that reputation and social class are partly constructed, and this explains her cynicism when Walter refers to Sir Percival’s reputation. Mrs. Catherick’s laugh seems to imply that Sir Percival social status is as much as act as hers is.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) tries to provoke a reaction out of [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) by implying that he knows the secret; he knows what took place “in the vestry of the old church.” Mrs. Catherick is horrified by this, and Walter gains confidence. He tells her that he knows [Anne Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) is not [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s child. This makes Mrs. Catherick angry. She shouts at Walter that he has no right to bring up Anne’s father and dismisses Walter from the house. As Walter leaves, the minister passes Mrs. Catherick’s window again and bows to her as he goes by.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Walter’s revelation seems to genuinely frighten Mrs. Catherick, and this tells Walter that he is on the right trail to discover Sir Percival’s secret. However, it is the mention of Anne’s father that makes Mrs. Catherick really angry, which suggests that she still has feelings for this man. The minister’s bow shows that, although Mrs. Catherick may not be a respectable woman, she wields the social power of one in this town.