***Woman in White***

***Part 3***

***Section 2***

***Chapter 1***

### ***The Story Continued by Mrs. Catherick***

***Summary:***

* Mrs. Catherick is glad Sir Percival is dead and figures Walter has earned the story.
* Basically, Sir Percival needed access to the vestry and an accomplice to help him alter the registry.
* So he bribed Mrs. Catherick with gifts and stuff for her help.
* Since she knew his secret, he helped her out over the years, giving her money and sticking Anne in an asylum.
* That last bit was only partially to help Mrs. Catherick—Anne had overheard a mention of a secret and parroted it back to Sir Percival, not understanding what she was saying.
* Paranoid Percival flipped and had her committed, something Mrs. Catherick really could have cared less about since she felt Anne was a pain in the butt.
* Wow. What a loving family.
* Mrs. Catherick hates Sir Percival since he cost her a husband and respectability and also kept her pretty much trapped in Welmingham.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) is pleased by [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde)’s death. She feels that [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) has had a hand in it—by investigating Sir Percival and frightening him into trying to destroy the evidence himself—and thanks him for it; she would have hated Walter if he had managed to save Sir Percival from the fire. As thanks for his part in Sir Percival’s death, Mrs. Catherick writes to tell Walter about her own history, which he came to ask her about.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Although Mrs. Catherick’s joy over Sir Percival’s death seems somewhat callous and cruel, Mrs. Catherick has good reason to hate Sir Percival. as he deliberately ruined her reputation to save his own and blackmailed her into living in a community where she was despised.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) describes herself as a young woman living in Old Welmingham when [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) came to the village. She says that he used to buy her presents and flatter her. He promised her a gold watch if she would get him the key to the vestry and, unable to resist, she did. She spied on him when he was there and learned of the forgery. She was young and careless and kept Sir Percival’s secret for him because she did not realize what he did was illegal. Sir Percival told Mrs. Catherick that he was born illegitimate and that his father died without producing a will.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The gold watch which Sir Percival gave Mrs. Catherick has been mentioned before. It was inscribed with his own name, and it was this that led Mr. Catherick to believe that Mrs. Catherick and Sir Percival were having an affair. Again, a piece of written evidence has seemed to provide a clue to the truth but has, in fact, misled the person who discovered it. Sir Percival tries to make himself seem unfortunate to Mrs. Catherick, but he is really an opportunistic fortune hunter who wants to forge his nobility rather than earn wealth.

***Summary Part 3:***

In order to claim his father’s property—Blackwater Park—[Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) needed a marriage certificate from his parents. The property should really have been inherited by a cousin of Sir Percival’s. Sir Percival originally planned to tear the page out of the register and destroy it so that no one could prove he was illegitimate, but he decided, on a whim and noticing the space at the bottom of the page, to forge his parent’s names.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Sir Percival essentially steals his cousin’s inheritance. Even if he is unfortunate and has been born illegitimate (a state which was considered lowly and inherently bad in Victorian era Britain), the reader can only have limited sympathy for Sir Percival because he has treated other people so poorly throughout the novel.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) helped [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) because he promised her a gold watch. She begged him to clear her name with her husband and tell him that she and Sir Percival were not having an affair. Sir Percival, however, refused, and told Mrs. Catherick that he wanted people to believe that they were having an affair so that they would never suspect his real secret. He also frightened Mrs. Catherick by implying that she would be hung if anyone found out that she had helped him. He paid her to remain in the village where she would have no friends and could not spread his secret. Mrs. Catherick, who needed money to provide for [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman), did as he told her.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Sir Percival openly admits that he has tricked Mrs. Catherick once he has got what he wanted from her. He shows this same callous attitude to Laura after they are married; openly admitting that he does not care about her at all. He threatens Mrs. Catherick and cruelly imprisons her in a place where she cannot have personal relationships and is socially ostracized, just as he later imprisons Anne in the asylum and keeps Laura and Marian at Blackwater. He is a man who is always willing to get his own way by force.

***Summary Part 5:***

She next tells [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) that she will explain how [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) came to be involved in the secret and why [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) locked her up. [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) admits that she never really cared much for her daughter and was glad that [Mrs. Clements](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-clements) took her off her hands. However, she did not like Mrs. Clements either and decided to separate Mrs. Clements and Anne after their time at Limmeridge. She did this because Anne had taken to dressing all in [white clothes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/symbols/white-clothes) and Mrs. Clements encouraged this, while Mrs. Catherick hated it. Mrs. Catherick notes that Anne was encouraged to wear all white by Mrs. Fairlie, whom Mrs. Catherick also seems to dislike, and who, she says, “entrapped” the “most handsome man” in the county, [Mr. Philip Fairlie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters).

***Analysis Part 5:***

Mrs. Catherick demonstrates her own spiteful nature through her admission that she separated Anne and Mrs. Clements on a whim and despite their close relationship. Mrs. Catherick’s dislike of Mrs. Fairlie is implied by her distaste for the white clothes she gives Anne. These symbolize Mrs. Fairlie’s own purity as a good, honest woman, while Mrs. Catherick herself is shallow and unpleasant. She also seems to be jealous of Mrs. Fairlie’s connection to Mr. Philip Fairlie: Laura’s father.

***Summary Part 6:***

While [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) was living with her mother, [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) wrote to [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) and asked if she could take Anne to the seaside for a change of scenery. Sir Percival wrote back rudely and Mrs. Catherick, losing her temper, cried out that she could “ruin” Sir Percival “for life” if she revealed his secret. Anne overheard her and seemed to take this idea to heart.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Anne again demonstrates her tendency to cling to certain ideas that appeal to her. She obviously already dislikes Sir Percival and is ready to believe something unpleasant about him.

***Summary Part 8:***

The next day, [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde) arrived at [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick)’s house. When he saw [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman), he ordered her out of the room, but Anne refused to go. Sir Percival called her an “idiot”—a word she hated—and Anne lost her temper. She warned Sir Percival that he must treat her with respect and that she could “ruin” him if she chose to by telling his secret. Sir Percival became frantic upon hearing this. Mrs. Catherick tried to persuade him that Anne really knew nothing and only repeated what she had heard Mrs. Catherick say the day before, but Sir Percival would not believe her. He insisted that Anne be placed in an asylum, and Mrs. Catherick did not protest; she only insisted that it be a private asylum and not a pauper’s one.

***Analysis Part 9:***

Sir Percival is very disrespectful and dismissive of Anne. Although Anne is vulnerable, she is proud and resents it when people think she is stupid. It is tragically ironic that Anne tries to stand up to Sir Percival by pretending that she has power over him, when she really has no power at all in society and no one to protect her. Mrs. Catherick’s insistence that Anne be placed in a private institution suggests that Mrs. Catherick only cares about her own pride and does not want the shame of a daughter in a pauper’s asylum—she doesn’t really care about her daughter herself as a person.

***Summary Part 10:***

She believes that [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/anne-catherick-the-woman) was clever enough to work out who had locked her up and why, but that—even if she pretended to know the secret in her letter to [Laura](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/laura-fairlie)—she really could not have told them anything about [Sir Percival](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/sir-percival-glyde), except that he had a secret. [Mrs. Catherick](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/mrs-catherick) closes the letter by saying that she has saved enough of the money Sir Percival sent her to live comfortably after his death. She also tells [Walter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-woman-in-white/characters/walter-hartright) that he must not criticize anyone he suspects of being Anne’s father, as he did when he came to visit, and that she wants him to apologize. She tells him that he may come to see her again and that she will remain in Welmingham and continue her life as a respectable lady.

***Analysis Part 10:***

Mrs. Catherick is still emotionally attached to Anne’s father and clearly has fond memories of him, as she does not want his reputation attacked. Ironically, Mrs. Catherick is now wealthy and will continue to live on as a pillar of her community. This shows that, although reputation was deeply important in the nineteenth century, it was also more flexible than it appeared and could be transcended with enough luck and effort.