

How far can we revise plot, character, setting and themes?

Challenge:

How far can we understand how to analyse and interpret language, structure and form?

The Woman in Black

Context

- Hill experienced a great deal of tragedy in her life. Her fiancé died suddenly, she later married and lost her second daughter who died shortly after her birth
- She faced a 'long and desperate road' to have her third child
- Out of this dark time came a classic ghost story *The Woman in Black*
- Susan Hill felt that the form of the classic ghost story was being neglected due to the rise in popularity of the horror genre
- Her inspiration for the novel came from reading *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James.

Ghost stories

- Ghost stories and the appearance of ghosts form a powerful and compelling part of the history of literature
- They act as a mirror to reflect the fears and paranoia of society.
- What fears are explored in the novel?



Chapter 1 – Christmas Eve

- Introduces the protagonist of the story and the narrator Arthur Kipps.
- Written in first person narrative which helps the reader to identify exclusively with Arthur Kipps and his viewpoint.
- The story is told in flash back; the main events of the novel happen before the novel begins.

Chapter 1 – Christmas Eve

- Kipps is approaching old age.
- A retired lawyer who has settled into the safety of Monk's Piece with his wife and family, ready to enjoy Christmas.
- Kipps is shaken by his stepsons' harmless pursuit of telling ghost stories.
- He resolves to exorcise his own ghost by writing his story in the new year.
- Until then he feels protected by his Christian beliefs.



Chapter 2 – A London Particular

- Fog is used to introduce London.
- Hell- like descriptive language, “Great boiling cauldrons of tar”
- First experience of the silence that follows every time Mrs. Drablow is mentioned.



Chapter 2 – A London Particular

- Mr. Bentley explains who Mrs. Drablow was and her situation without giving too much away.
- Bentley explains the accommodation and the landlord.
- Kipps sets off for Crythin Gifford.



Chapter 3 – The Journey North

- Kipps begins his journey on quite a comfortable train.
- Switches to a rickety train to CG.
- Meets Samuel Dailey



Chapter 3 – The Journey North

- Dailey explains the sea mists to Kipps.
- Mr. Dailey sees the “Drablow papers” and becomes quite tense.
- They arrive in CG



Chapter 4 –The Funeral of Alice Drablow

- When Arthur arrives at Crythin Gifford he tries to find out more about Mrs Drablow
- No-one will speak about her
- Mr Jerome and Arthur go to Alice Drablow's funeral
- He notices the WIB for the first time
- He thinks she is ill and feels sympathy for her
- Mr Jerome denies seeing anyone else at the funeral
- He refuses to take Arthur to Eel Marsh House.



Chapter 5 – Across the Causeway

- Keckwick takes Arthur to Eel Marsh house in a pony and trap
- Arthur explores the grounds of EM House and discovers a small graveyard
- He sees the WIB again and this time he is extremely unnerved by her appearance
- He questions whether she could be a ghost even though he does not believe in them
- Arthur finds piles of papers that he needs to go through
- He decides to walk back to CG.



Chapter 6 – The Sound of a Pony and Trap

- Arthur gets lost in the sea-mists on the Causeway
- He hears the sound of a pony and trap and assumes it is Keckwick
- However he hears screams and noises that sound like the pony and trap being dragged into the marshes
- Arthur makes it back to the house. He is shaken by the whole experience
- He explores the house and eventually finds a door which is locked (this is the Nursery but the reader doesn't know this yet!)
- Arthur falls asleep and later gets collected by Keckwick
- Unnerved by events, he goes back to the hotel for the night



Chapter 7 – Mr Jerome is Afraid

- Kipps plans to leave CG after his experience the previous day.
- He hates how he is not in control.
- Goes to Mr. J to ask if anyone from CG will come to EM house with him.
- Mr. J says that no-one would go with him.
- Kipps decides not to go back to EM house.



Chapter 8 - Spider

- By morning Kipps has changed his mind.
- Kipps denies that EM house is having an effect on him.
- Sam Daily tells him he can't go back to EM house alone.
- Daily gives Kipps his dog Spider for protection while at EM house.
- Kipps says he's excited about going back to EM house.



Chapter 9 – In the Nursery

- Kipps is optimistic about the day ahead.
- EM house has a power over him.
- Kipps finds Jennet Drablow's grave.
- Kipps finds letters that give information about Jennet Drablow



Chapter 9 – In the Nursery

- Kipps encounters strange noises during the night.
- The noises lead him to the locked door.
- Kipps discovers the door open after hearing the noises again
- The door leads to an immaculate nursery.



Chapter 10 – Whistle and I'll Come to you

- Kipps spends the night at EM house
- There is a storm
- Begins to doubt his sanity
- 3am Spider wants to go outside.



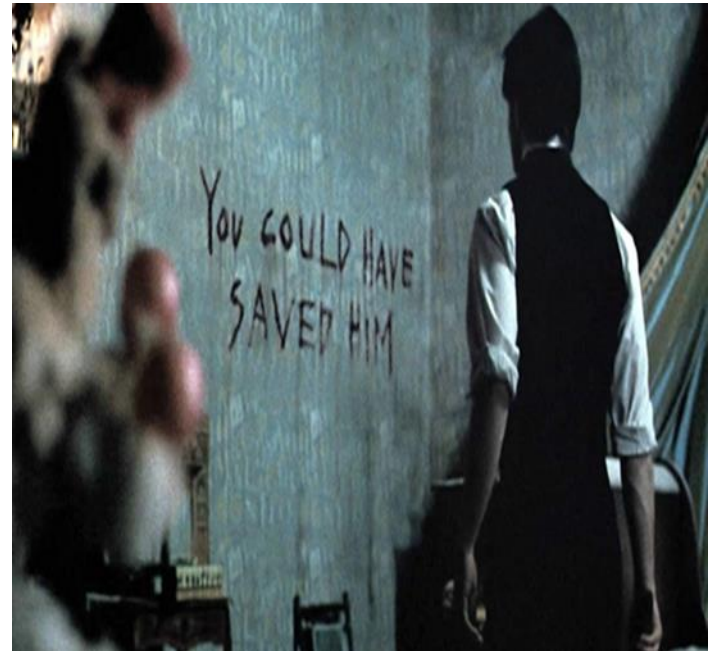
Chapter 10 – Whistle and I'll Come to You

- Spider is summoned by a whistle. She races into the wet marshes.
- Kipps rescues her. Sees the face of the WIB staring at him from the nursery window.
- He hears the pony and trap and collapses.



Chapter 11 – A Packet of Letters

- Kipps is saved by Sam Daily
- He goes into the nursery one last time. It is in a state of 'disarray'
- Kipps reads the letters and discovers the truth from Daily.
- Kipps stays with the Daily's for the next few days.
- Stella arrives to see him.



Chapter 12 – The Woman in Black

- Kipps takes medical advice and stays away from CG
- A child hasn't died as a result of Kipps' last sighting of the WIB...yet.
- Stella gives birth to a son.



Chapter 12 – The Woman in Black

- Just when Kipps is at his happiest during a family trip to the park he sees the WIB again.
- Stella and their son are flung from a pony and trap when the WIB steps in the pony's path.
- The baby immediately dies. Stella later dies of her injuries
- Kipps finishes his story abruptly as the memories are too painful to talk about



Characters

- It's important to have a good understanding of the different characters in the book.
- You may get a question that focuses on a particular character.

Arthur Kipps

- Young, privileged, well-educated, ambitious, adventurous, impatient, arrogant, brave and foolhardy.
- The first time he sees the woman in black at Alice Drablow's funeral he feels sympathetic towards her. He is a man of emotion.
- During his experiences at Eel Marsh house he begins to change his fear increases and he begins to lose his innocence and arrogance.
- Realistic and well-rounded; he reacts to the shocking events in a human way. The reader can identify with the character.
- After the death of Stella and his baby he is a broken man. It takes him twelve years to recover the tragic events, when he buys Monk's piece and moves in with his second wife Esme.

Samuel Daily

- Big, beefy local business man in Crythin Gifford.
- Successful, not embarrassed by his wealth; which annoys other local businessmen.
- Offers Arthur advice about his work at Eel Marsh House: **'you're a fool if you go on with it'**.
- Looks after Arthur following his near death experience at Eel Marsh House. After Arthur's return to London, Samuel Daily becomes his sons Godfather and visits often.

Keckwick

- A silent man.
- Very blunt and matter of fact.
- He was Alice Drablow's link to the outside world; the only '**living soul**' who saw her.
- He is very unattractive 'This creates a disturbing and visual image appropriate for a ghost story.
- He has integrity, he came back for Arthur in the middle of the night.

The Landlord

- The landlord is not named and his role is to create an air of mystery.
- He is at the centre of the conspiracy of silence and his purpose in the story is to provide Kipps and the reader with background information and to add tension and suspense.
- The landlord is more significant for what he does not say rather than what he does say. **“‘She could hardly do otherwise, living there’ and he turned away abruptly”** (pg 44).

Mr Jerome

- Alice Drablow's estate agent.
- When Arthur meets Mr Jerome for the second time in his office seeking help with his task it is clear that he is a broken man '**...his hands...were working, rubbing, fidgeting, gripping and ungripping in agitation**'.
- We find out in the penultimate chapter from Mr Daily that he was victim of the woman in black and had lost a child in a tragic accident.

The Woman in Black (Jennet Humfrye)

- Approximately 60 years before Alice Drablow's death, her unmarried 18 year old sister gave birth to a baby boy.
- The baby was taken against her will and given to Alice and her husband to adopt.
- The boy, Nathaniel, is killed with his nurse Rose Judd and Keckwick's father.
- After suffering with a wasting disease, 12 years later Jennet died of heart failure.
- She has been seeking revenge ever since; every time the ghost is seen a child dies in dreadful and violent circumstances.
- As a result the villagers live in fear and dread.

Alice Drablow

- Alice Drablow was an old eccentric client of Mr Bentley's father.
- Kipps is given the responsibility of handling the legal requirements due to her death.
- She has no friends or relatives.
- From the outset mystery surrounds her: Mr Bentley, Samuel Daily and the landlord's reaction all help to create this mystery.
- It becomes clear that Alice was haunted by her dead sister who wanted revenge for the death of her son.

Themes

Fear

- **Individual fear** of the unknown shown by Kipps .
- Kipps exposed to the terror caused by the unknown: the rocking chair in the nursery. The whistle in the darkness.
- **Collective fear** of what is known (but not discussed) by the residents of Crythin Gifford and the surrounding area.
- The fear that clearly grips the residents of Crythin Gifford and keeps them silent.
- The ghost of Jennet Humfrye is the source of all the fear and repulsion in the novel, not only for her spectral presence but for her deliberate act leading to the death of Kipps' wife and child – foreshadowed by the warning from Mr Daily that a child died whenever she appeared.
- Kipps telling the story later in life as a way of 'driving out' the fear he has lived with for decades. An attempt to live the rest of his life without the weight of fear.

The Supernatural

- Events that cannot be explained by reason or scientific theory.
- Kipps frequently tries to reassure himself that he, **“Did not believe in ghosts What other rational explanation was there?”**
- It is clear that Kipps transforms throughout the novel from someone who is sceptical of the supernatural to someone who clearly believes in ghosts.
- This is apparent when he sees the Woman in Black for the second time and hears the tragic sounds of the Pony and the trap, **“That the woman by the graves had been ghostly I now – not believed, no – *knew*, for certainty lay deep within me.”** (pg. 97)

Revenge

- Kipps recognises from the Woman in Black's face that she is vengeful and wants to inflict harm on others: **"What I saw – as a desperate, yearning malevolence."**
- Kipps is sympathetic to the ghost of Jennet Humfrye at first.
- This is ironic as we learn at the end of the novel that the Woman in Black's appearance foreshadowed the death of his wife Stella and their baby son.

Isolation

- Kipps' isolation and vulnerability at Eel Marsh House is emphasised by the descriptions of the surrounding nature. "...
- Many of the characters in *The Woman in Black* are part of a conspiracy of silence which further isolates Kipps as they deliberately withhold information about the Woman in Black.

Language

Pathetic Fallacy

- The weather often reflects the mood/human emotions of the characters.
- The weather is important to Arthur, **'My spirits have for many years now been excessively affected by the ways of the weather.'**
- In London the fog is given the colloquial term **'London Peasouper'** and is described as **'menacing and sinister'** which sets an ominous tone for Kipps' journey to Crythin Gifford.
- Throughout the novel the sea frets or mists, great gales and howling winds add to Kipps' fears when he is stranded at Eel Marsh House.

Imagery / Descriptive Language

- **Metaphor** (describes something *IS* something else) – **'That great cavern of a railway station'** (pg. 33) is like saying that King's Cross Station is an enormous cave.
- **Simile** (compares something by saying it is *AS* or *LIKE* something else) – **'It was a mist like a damp, clinging cobwebby thing.'** (pg. 85) is like saying the mist attached itself to Arthur like a cobweb.
- **Personification** (gives human qualities to something inanimate) - **'The wind will blow itself out and take the rain off it by morning,'** (pg. 35) says Samuel Daily to Arthur making the wind and rain sound almost like a human couple.

Structure

First Person Narrator

- The story told from Arthur's perspective.
- Ensures that the reader feels closer to the person that is narrating.
- You know what the narrator knows and it allows the reader to see change and growth in his character.
- The reader can also understand Alice Drablow's and Jennet Humfrye's viewpoint as Arthur reads their letters and correspondence.

Foreshadowing

- Lots of foreshadowing in the opening chapter which hints to the reader that the novel will feature supernatural events.
- Also foreshadowing that something traumatic will happen to Kipps.
- Later chapters foreshadow the haunted house, Kipps' loss of innocence and the rescue of Spider.

Form

Gothic Style

- **Pastiche** (imitation) of **Victorian Gothic** and is written in a very similar style to Dickens' novels.
- Densely detailed text.
- Evocative descriptions.
- Language that is lavish and dense as any Victorian tale.

Ghost Story

- Woman in Black uses many key conventions of a Gothic ghost story.
- Fog/Mist.
- Haunted house.
- Secrets.
- Ghosts/ unexplained sounds.
- Key elements of form – discuss why she has used these and the effect they have.

Assessment Objectives – Woman in Black

AO₁ – **Respond** to texts **critically** and **imaginatively**; select and **evaluate** relevant textual detail to illustrate and support interpretations (10%)

AO₂ – **Explain** how **language, structure** and **form** contribute to writers' presentation of **ideas, themes** and **settings** (10%)

Modern Texts Exam Structure

- 1 hour 30 mins
- 40% of final Literature grade
- Section A 20% – The Woman in Black (30 marks)
- Section B 20%– Of Mice and Men (30 marks)
- Spend 45 minutes on each question.
- Section A – choice of two questions. Answer **one**.
- Section B – No choice of question. Answer part a) and b)
- Each question worth 30 marks PLUS 4 marks for SPaG
- MAKE SURE YOU ANSWER QUESTIONS ON THE TEXTS YOU HAVE STUDIED!!!!

Exam Questions – Themes, Characters, Settings

Ideas /Themes/Issues	Characterisation	Settings
How does Hill present a sense of isolation in the novel? How does Susan Hill leave the reader with a sense of horror at the end of the novel?	How do you think Hill creates sympathy for the character of Arthur? How do you respond to Hill's presentation of the woman in black in the novel?	Hill writes that setting is 'so important' in a ghost story. How does Hill present the setting of Eel Marsh House and why do you think it's important? In chapter 3, The Journey North, how does Hill's description of the train journey from London to Crythin Gifford prepare the reader for what is to come in the novel?

Essay Structure

- Intro (link the character to a concept – what is their role OR consider what Hill is saying about the theme you are exploring e.g. Violence.)
- P1= Beginning (opening)
- P2= Middle (complication)
- P3= End (Resolution)
- Conclusion

Character/setting/themes, ideas and issues

Remember- You're being assessed for

AO1- 10% and 2- 10%

REMEMBER

P-Point
E-Evidence
A-Analyse (technique)
I-Interpret (layers of meaning)
C-Compare
E-Evaluate

- Language
- Structure
- Form



3 paragraphs (beginning, middle, end)



Analyse/comment on these when exploring ideas e.g. how does the language/structure/form contribute to the presentation of fear and isolation?

Model paragraph

P E A I C E

In the chapter Across the Causeway the Woman in Black appears to Arthur Kipps again but this time her presence unnerves him as he starts to doubt whether she is real or not; 'I had never in my life been so possessed by it...my flesh to creep and then to turn as cold as stone.' The use of the word 'possessed' is effective as it suggests both the power of the Woman in Black and the fear that she creates in others. It implies that the vision of this mysterious figure has consumed Kipps. He is both curious and terrified by her and she clearly exerts some kind of hold over him. This is further reinforced when he says; 'cold as stone'. This simile emphasises the physical effects of his terror. His blood has run cold and he is motionless, this is a far cry from the sympathy he feels for her at Alice Drablow's funeral. This change in Kipps is effective as it shows that even a man as sensible and level-headed as he is can be traumatised by the Woman in Black's presence.

Mark scheme – What do you need to do to gain full marks?

26-30 marks

- Insightful exploratory response to task
- Close analysis of detail to support interpretation
- Evaluation of the writer's uses of language and/or structure and/or form and effects on readers/audience
- Convincing/imaginative interpretation of ideas/themes

Mark scheme – What do you need to do to gain full marks?

SPaG (maximum 4 marks)

- Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy and effective control of meaning in the context of the demands of the question
- Where required, they use a wide range of specialist terms adeptly and with precision.