

Wilkie Collins

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

The Woman in White is the first English 'sensation novel' full of mystery and dark secrets. After meeting a strange woman one night in London, Walter Hartright begins to realise that this mysterious woman is connected, in some way, to his new life at Limmeridge House and the woman he loves, Laura Fairlie. Soon, Walter is caught up in a frightening world of crime, madness and mistaken identity as he tries to save Laura from Count Fosco and Sir Percival Glyde.

In this reader you will find:

- Information about Wilkie Collins
- CLIL History: Women in the Victorian Age
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and extension activities, including B1 Preliminary style activities
- Exit test

Tags

Secrets Mystery Crime

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STAGE 3	1000 headwords	Intermediate	B1	Preliminary
STAGE 4	1800 headwords	Upper Intermediate	B2	First
STAGE 5	2500 headwords	Advanced	C1	Advanced
STAGE 6	Unabridged Texts	Proficiency	C2	Proficiency

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ELT
B1

Wilkie Collins

Stage 3 B1

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

Readers



Young Adult

Young Adult

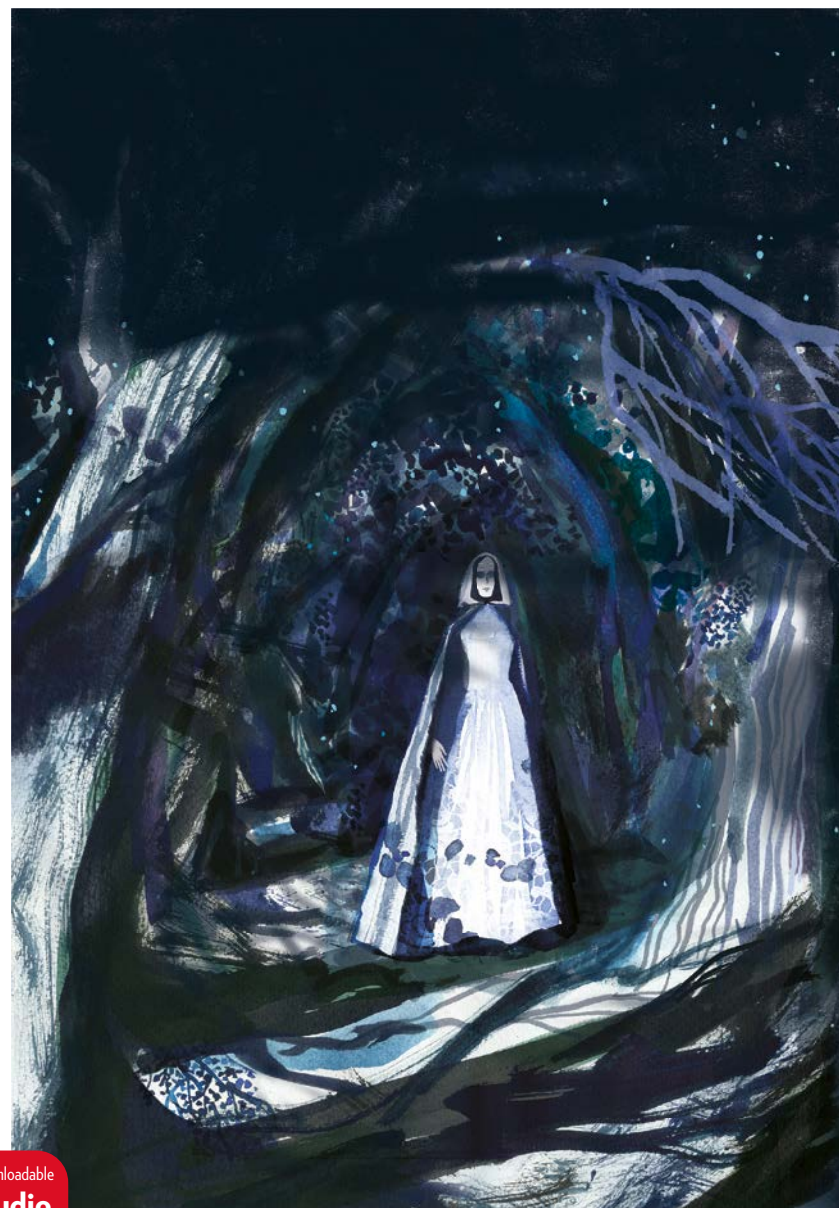


Readers

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE



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Book brief

- 1 *The Woman in White* is the first and greatest of the Victorian thrillers known as 'sensation novels' written by British author, Wilkie Collins in 1859, and considered an early example of detective fiction.
- 2 The novel is set in mid-19th century England, between London, Cumberland and Hampshire. Some say it's based on a true story Collins found in a book about French crimes.
- 3 The story is told from the point of view of almost all the main characters through what seems like a series of documents.
- 4 After meeting a strange young woman dressed in white, Walter Hartright enters a world of mystery and crime as he tries to save Laura from the terrible plans of Sir Percival and Count Fosco.
- 5 Main themes include the social injustices of Victorian England especially towards women and the mentally ill.

Wilkie Collins

The Woman in White

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For Review Only

Contents

6	Main Characters	
8	Before you Read	
10	Chapter 1	London – A Strange Meeting
18	Activities	
20	Chapter 2	The Marriage Settlement
28	Activities	
30	Chapter 3	The Boat-house
38	Activities	
40	Chapter 4	Danger at Blackwater Park
48	Activities	
50	Chapter 5	Illness and Lies
58	Activities	
60	Chapter 6	A Death in London
68	Activities	
70	Chapter 7	A Family Secret
78	Activities	
80	Chapter 8	Count Fosco's Past Life
88	Activities	
90	Focus on...	Wilkie Collins
92	Focus on...	CLIL History: Women in the Victorian Age
94	Test yourself	
95	Syllabus	

Main Characters



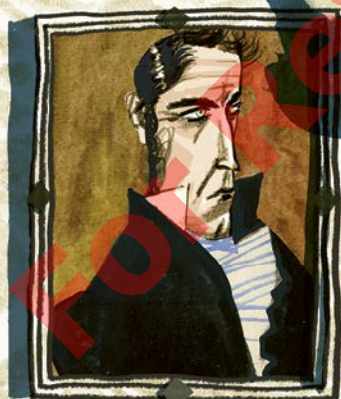
Marian
Halcombe

An intelligent young woman and Laura Fairlie's half-sister.



Count Fosco

An Italian with a mysterious past, he's Sir Percival Glyde's closest friend.



Sir Percival Glyde

A man with a secret from his past, he becomes Laura Fairlie's husband.



Madame Fosco



Laura Fairlie

Mr Fairlie's gentle, pretty niece who'll receive a lot of money left to her by her dead parents when she's 21.



Walter Hartwright

A young drawing teacher who falls in love with Laura and must try and save her.



Anne Catherick

A strange young woman who tries to help Laura. She's the 'Woman in White' of the story.



Frederick Fairlie

Laura Fairlie's uncle, he's a rich man who's only worried about his own health.

Before you Read

Reading B1 Preliminary

- 1 Choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) to complete the text about *The Woman in White*.

The Woman in White is a book about mystery and crime. There are ^{lots} of dark secrets, which the reader (1) out about as the story is told. In *The Woman in White*, there are two sisters, Marian and Laura. After her husband's death, Marian's mother marries (2), then Laura is born, so Marian and Laura are really half-sisters. Laura is beautiful and very sweet, but she does hardly (3) This was a popular type of woman with English men in the 19th century. (4), Marian isn't like Laura at all. She's clever, active and not very pretty. She takes (5) of Laura and tries to protect her as (6) as she can, also with the help of Walter Hartright. Sir Percival Glyde, and his friend Count Fosco, are the two people they have to fight (7) Count Fosco is very clever and he's (8) one who thinks up the plan which could destroy Laura's life forever. Sir Percival Glyde isn't as clever as his friend, but he's (9) as bad as Count Fosco and will do anything to get his hands on Laura's money. Finally, there's the 'Woman in White'. She hates Sir Percival Glyde but you'll have to read the story to discover (10)

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| A some | B lots | C much | D any |
| 1 A takes | B goes | C finds | D brings |
| 2 A again | B another | C yet | D still |
| 3 A something | B anything | C everything | D nothing |
| 4 A Besides | B Anyway | C Instead | D Otherwise |
| 5 A time | B trouble | C care | D decision |
| 6 A good | B better | C little | D much |
| 7 A against | B about | C for | D from |
| 8 A that | B this | C the | D which |
| 9 A only | B just | C hardly | D rather |
| 10 A who | B what | C because | D why |

Writing and Speaking

21st Century Skills

2 Answer the following questions, then discuss them with a partner.

1 What kind of books do you like reading? Why?

.....

2 How often do you read for pleasure?

.....

3 Why do you think e-books have become popular?

.....

4 What else do you do in your free time?

.....



Listening

3 Listen to the start of Chapter One and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- Walter Hartright was learning to draw.
- 1** The story starts at the end of July.
- 2** Walter Hartright had a good job in London.
- 3** Mr Pesca had just arrived in London.
- 4** The two men had been friends for a long time.
- 5** Mr Pesca was a drawing teacher.
- 6** Mr Pesca had found himself a new job in the country.
- 7** Two women lived with Frederick Fairlie.
- 8** Walter Hartright left his mother's home before midnight.
- 9** It wasn't cold that night.
- 10** Walter Hartright met a woman dressed in white.

T	F
☐	☒
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

London – A Strange Meeting



The Victorian period was a time of great technological change. Trains started running from London to Brighton in 1841, which made Brighton a popular place for many people, rather than only a holiday place for the rich.

Cumberland is on the northwest coast of England, over 800 km from London.

THE STORY BEGUN
BY WALTER HARTRIGHT –
DRAWING TEACHER.

Sometimes the police don't always discover crimes. The story of this crime is told for the first time in these pages. Walter Hartright, twenty-eight years old and a drawing teacher, will begin the story.

It was the last day of July. After a long hot summer, I found myself in London with no job and no money. One evening I went to visit my sister and mother in Hampstead. My old Italian friend, Mr Pesca was there too. He had left Italy many years ago and now taught languages in London. I had saved his life once in the sea at Brighton a long time ago, and we had become great friends.

'I've found you a job in a rich country house,' said Mr Pesca. 'You'll teach two lovely ladies how to draw.'

I'd work for a rich businessman, Frederick Fairlie of Limmeridge House, Cumberland. He wanted me to start immediately. I thanked my dear friend and spent the rest of the evening with him and my family.

It was almost midnight when I started walking back to my flat in London. I was enjoying the peace and quiet of that warm night when

The Woman in White

suddenly my heart almost stopped – somebody had touched me on the shoulder. I turned round. There, in the middle of the road was a woman dressed from head to foot in white.

3 'Is this the road to London?' she asked.

I looked at her carefully. Her face was very pale*. She was young and thin and had long, fair hair. There was nothing wild about her. She was quiet.

'Did you hear me?' she said, still quietly and quickly. 'I asked you if this was the way to London.'

'Yes, sorry,' I said. 'This is the right road. I was just a bit surprised to see you.'

'You don't think I've done anything wrong, do you?' she said. 'I've done nothing wrong. I've met with an accident.'

'Please, believe me, I don't think you've done anything wrong,' I said. 'Tell me how I can help you.'

'Can I get a carriage*?' she said. 'Is it too late? I've a friend in London. Will you promise to let me leave you when you find me a carriage?'

'Yes,' I said.

We started walking together towards London. Suddenly she asked: 'Do you know many important people in London?'

'Yes, why?'

'Because I hope that there's one important person you don't know.'

'Will you tell me his name?'

'I can't – don't ask me to talk about him!' she said angrily.

I could see she was upset so I decided to change the subject.

'I'm a drawing teacher,' I said. 'Tomorrow I'm leaving London to go and work in Cumberland.'

‘Cumberland!’ she said. ‘I wish I was going there too. I was once happy there. I was born in Hampshire, but I went to school in Cumberland for a short time. I’d love to see Limmeridge House again.’

I couldn’t believe it and stopped suddenly. She’d just mentioned Mr Fairlie’s house.

‘Is there anything wrong?’ she asked.

‘No, it’s just that some people from Cumberland mentioned Limmeridge House to me a few days ago,’ I said.

‘Ah! Not my people,’ she answered. ‘Mrs Fairlie is dead – and her husband too; and their little girl may be married and gone away by this time.’

We could see the lights and the houses of the city now. A carriage stopped to let some people out. The woman ran towards the carriage and got in it. She took my hand and kissed it as the carriage drove away. The woman in white was gone. Suddenly I heard the wheels of another carriage. It stopped and two men spoke to a police officer.

‘Have you seen a woman in white?’ said one of the men.

‘No,’ answered the police officer. ‘Why are you looking for her?’

‘She’s escaped from my Asylum*!’ said the other man.

Escaped from an Asylum! She’d seemed a little strange but not mad. I got home but couldn’t sleep. I kept thinking about the woman in white. Would we meet again?

Morning came and I left for Cumberland. I arrived at Limmeridge House late that night. When I got up the next morning, it was a beautiful sunny day and I could see the sea from my window. I went downstairs for breakfast and met one of my pupils, Miss Marian Halcombe. She was a young dark-haired woman, not very pretty, but tall and slim.

‘I’m afraid it’s just the two of us for breakfast,’ she said. ‘My sister,

The Woman in White

Miss Fairlie, has a headache and my uncle, Mr Fairlie never has his meals with us. He stays in his room all the time as he thinks he's always ill. Actually Mr Fairlie isn't really my uncle and Miss Fairlie isn't really my sister.'

'Sorry, I don't understand,' I said.

'I'll explain,' she said smiling. 'My mother was married twice. The first time to Mr Halcombe, my father, the second time to Mr Philip Fairlie, my half-sister's father. Now our parents are all dead. My father was a poor man and Miss Fairlie's father was rich. Everybody thinks I'm strange, and everybody thinks she's sweet and charming. Mr Frederick Fairlie, who you'll meet later, is Mr Philip Fairlie's younger brother; he isn't married and he's Miss Fairlie's guardian*. I won't live without Miss Fairlie and she can't live without me – and that's why I'm at Limmeridge House. Even if we're so different, we're very fond of each other. Will you manage to accept a quiet, country life or will you secretly wish for a change and adventure?'

'I had an adventure, before coming here,' I said. I then told her about my meeting with the woman in white. She was interested and surprised to hear that the woman in white had spoken kindly about Mrs Fairlie, her mother.

'I wish we knew her name,' she said. 'We must try and solve this mystery. Don't tell Mr Fairlie or my sister yet; they'd get worried. After her second marriage, my mother started the village school, but the old teachers are all dead. However, I have the letters she wrote to my sister's father. I'll look at them this morning while you're with Mr Fairlie. I'll see you for lunch at 2 p.m., Mr Hartright, and you'll meet my sister too. Till then goodbye.'

guardian a person who by law looks after a young person

I saw Mr Fairlie for not more than 10 minutes. He was too tired and nervous to talk to me. He was a horrible man. I met Miss Fairlie after lunch in the garden. How can I describe Laura Fairlie as she was then before everything that has happened since that happy moment? She was a young, slim girl with long fair hair and light blue eyes. A fair, delicate* girl, in a pretty, light dress. She was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen.

After a long pleasant drive in the countryside, I met the two ladies again that evening for dinner. Miss Fairlie was wearing a simple white dress. I later found out that she always dressed in a simple way because she didn't want to seem richer than Miss Halcombe. After dinner, Miss Fairlie went out into the garden. I was just going to join her when Miss Halcombe called me. She'd found something interesting in one of her mother's letters.

'Listen,' she said. 'Here my mother is speaking about the school. She says:

Dear Philip,

Mrs Kempe is very ill so her sister from Hampshire, Mrs Catherick, has come to look after her. She has a sweet little girl. She's about a year older than our dear Laura. Her name's Anne and she's going to come and do lessons. Anne is eleven years old but she's a little slow. The doctor saw her but thinks she'll improve, as she grows up. Although she's slow, once she has an idea in her head she never forgets it. She's so sweet, I gave her some of Laura's old white dresses and hats. She said: 'I'll always wear white as long as I live. It'll help me to remember you.' Now my love, the most surprising thing: although Anne Catherick isn't half so pretty, she has the same hair, colour of eyes and shape of face as -'

'Miss Fairlie!' I said. She was standing in the garden looking

The Woman in White

towards us. She really looked like the woman in white! So, Anne Catherick was the woman I'd met on the road to London!

'You see it now, as my mother saw it eleven years ago!' said Miss Halcombe. 'Let's keep this a secret between you and me for now.'

The days and weeks passed happily. I taught my pupils to draw and enjoyed being with them. Miss Halcombe had become a great friend and Miss Fairlie? I think you can guess. I was in love with Miss Fairlie! Of course I never said anything and neither did she, but it was obvious to everybody that we enjoyed being with each other. Then everything changed.

One morning, I went down to breakfast. The ladies hadn't arrived yet. Then Miss Halcombe came in, followed by Miss Fairlie. They seemed worried.

'Sorry,' said Miss Halcombe, 'I was talking to Mr Fairlie.' Miss Fairlie didn't look at me. Her face was very pale. Then Miss Halcombe said:

'I've seen your uncle, Laura. He thinks we should get the purple room ready; and Monday is the day – not Tuesday.'

Miss Fairlie said nothing. She just looked down at the table. Then she stood up, looked at me sadly* and I knew I'd lose her soon.

'Mr Hartright,' said Miss Halcombe, 'get your hat and come out to the garden. I need to speak to you in private.'

I followed her out to the garden.

'Mr Hartright,' she said, 'during your time here, we've become friends. I liked you immediately for the way you were kind to the woman in white.'

These words made me suddenly think of my adventure again on the road to London.

'As your friend,' she continued, 'I'm going to tell you that I've



discovered your secret. You're in love with my sister, Laura. I'm sorry that you've opened your heart to a hopeless love.'

She took my hand and at that moment, I wanted to cry.

'Listen to me,' she said softly. 'You must leave Limmeridge House, Mr Hartright, before you hurt each other even more. You must leave because Laura Fairlie is engaged to be married to a rich man called Sir Percival Glyde, from Hampshire. You must leave, not just for yourself but also for her. I, who love her more than my own life, know how miserable she's been since she felt this love for you. She doesn't love her future husband. Her father made her promise on his death-bed two years ago. Till you came here, she was the same as hundreds of other women, who marry men without liking or disliking them, and who learn to love or hate them after marriage. I know you'll understand how important it is for you to go away so that my sister can find peace again. Be kind to her like you were with the stranger on the road.'

Hampshire! Where Anne Catherick was born. She'd been afraid of a rich man from Hampshire. I had the feeling that there was something dangerous about Miss Fairlie's future, but all I said was:

'Tell me when to go. I'll do anything you ask.'

Just then, a servant* arrived.

'Please, Miss Halcombe, Miss Fairlie wants you. She's very upset about a letter she's received,' said the servant.

I went back to my room to pack my bags, and Miss Halcombe went to her sister.



servant somebody who works for a person in their house



Reading Comprehension

1 Choose the correct answer, A, B or C about Chapter One.

Once, Walter Hartright had saved Mr Pesca's life in

A London.

B Hampstead.

☒ **C** Brighton.

1 The woman in white on the road to London was

A quiet.

B old.

C wild.

2 The woman in white said

A she'd done something wrong.

B she'd a friend in London.

C she wanted Hartright to go in the carriage with her.

3 The woman in white knew Cumberland because

A she was born there.

B she'd gone to school there.

C she lived there now with her family.

4 One of the men spoke to the police officer because

A the woman worked for him in his Asylum.

B the woman had left her bag in his Asylum.

C the woman had escaped from his Asylum.

5 Miss Halcombe and Miss Fairlie had

A the same mother.

B the same colour of hair.

C the same father.

6 Walter Hartright realised that Miss Fairlie looked like

A Miss Halcombe.

B her uncle.

C Anne Catherick.

7 Miss Halcombe told Hartright to leave Limmeridge House because

A he wasn't a good drawing teacher.

B she was in love with him.

C Laura Fairlie was engaged to be married to a rich man.

Vocabulary

- 2 Complete the sentences with a verb from the box in the correct form. The verb may be affirmative or negative.

love • ~~have~~ • be • live • wear • arrive • walk • find

At the end of summer, Walter Hartright *didn't have* a job or any money.

- 1 Before becoming a teacher in England, Mr Pesca in Italy.
- 2 As he home, Walter Hartright met a woman dressed in white.
- 3 If she had the chance, the woman in white to see Limmeridge House again.
- 4 At dinner time, Miss Fairlie a simple white dress.
- 5 One evening, Miss Halcombe something interesting in her mother's letters.
- 6 One morning, Walter Hartright went down to breakfast but the ladies yet.
- 7 Laura Fairlie miserable since falling in love with Walter.

Pre-Reading Activity • Chapter Two

Listening B1 Preliminary

- 4 3 Listen to the beginning of Chapter Two and complete the sentences with the words you hear.

The letter Laura received had no *name* on it.

- 1 Sir Percival seemed very and charming.
- 2 Mr Hartright is going to go abroad to try and Laura.
- 3 Laura would never break the she made to her father.
- 4 Miss Halcombe told Mr Hartright about the before he left.
- 5 Mr Hartright keeps thinking about Anne Catherick's
- 6 Anne Catherick was of a rich man from Hampshire.
- 7 Mr Hartright is worried about Laura's with Sir Percival Glyde.

