

The Woman in White

Late one night, on a lonely road near London, Walter Hartright, a young drawing teacher, meets a solitary woman dressed in white. This is the opening scene of *The Woman in White*, a great Victorian sensation novel, full of mystery, excitement, and suspense. Who is the mysterious woman in white, and why is she alone on the road to London at midnight?

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READING & TRAINING

Wilkie Collins

The Woman in White



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Wilkie Collins

The Woman in White

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Wilkie Collins
THE WOMAN IN WHITE
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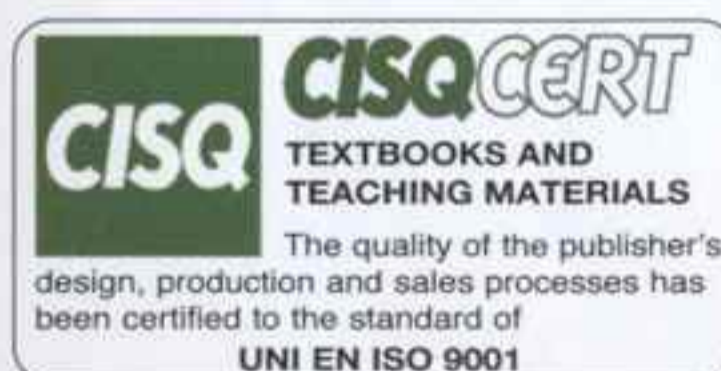
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Contents





| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| About the Author | 4 |
| The Characters | 7 |
| CHAPTER ONE | A Strange Adventure 9 |
| CHAPTER TWO | The Aristocrat from Hampshire 23 |
| CHAPTER THREE | Blackwater Park 34 |
| CHAPTER FOUR | A Note by the Lake 46 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | A Death 59 |
| CHAPTER SIX | Sir Percival's Secret 70 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN | Mrs Catherick's Story 81 |
| CHAPTER EIGHT | A Night at the Opera 90 |
| CHAPTER NINE | Confronting Count Fosco 99 |
| Dossier | Victorian Asylums 54 |
| INTERNET PROJECT | 57 |
| ACTIVITIES | 6, 8, 19, 31, 43, 52, 56, 67, 78, 87, 95, 106 |
| EXIT TEST | 109 |
| KEY TO EXIT TEST | 111 |

FCE Cambridge First Certificate English Test-style exercises

T: GRADE 7 Trinity-style exercises (Grade 7)

Chapters 1,2,3,5,6,7,8 and 9 are recorded on the accompanying CD.
Chapter 4 is downloadable from our website: www.cideb.it or
www.blackcat-cideb.com.

 These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the extracts
 linked to the listening activities.



Wilkie Collins.

About the Author

Wilkie Collins (1824-89) was born in London. His father, William Collins, was a painter. As a schoolboy, Collins was always inventing stories. After working in the tea trade and then studying law, Collins published his first major book – a biography of his father. He then began to write seriously for a living. Wilkie Collins met Charles Dickens in 1851, and they became close friends. Collins wrote for *Household Words*, the magazine that Dickens edited, and Collins and Dickens wrote two plays and a book together.

Collins wrote a series of novels and short stories in the 1850s, but his true genius became apparent in the 1860s when he became the leading writer of a popular new genre called the 'sensation novel'.

Sensation novels – like Collins's *The Woman in White* and *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon – were the most popular fictions of the 1860s. Like the gothic novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they created feelings of fear, excitement, and curiosity. Like the detective stories of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they used suspense to keep the reader's interest. In the sensation novel, as in the detective story, there is always a secret that is revealed at the end.

Collins's best-known works – all of which fall into the category of sensation fiction – are *The Woman in White* (1860), *No Name* (1862), *Armada* (1866), and *The Moonstone* (1868). All these works follow Collins's personal philosophy of fiction writing: 'Make them laugh, make them cry, make them wait'. That is to say, they all contain elements of comedy, pathos,¹ and suspense.

The Woman in White is told by several narrators. Each narrator tells the events they saw in their own words. Three of the novel's characters (Walter, Laura and Sir Percival) are typical of Victorian fiction. However, Collins also gives us two other central characters – Marian and Count Fosco, who are fascinating, original, and unconventional.² It is the relationship between these two kinds of characters – the familiar and conventional with the new and surprising – that makes the novel so successful. As we read, we want to know the answers to many questions. But as each question is

1. **pathos** : the ability to create sadness.

2. **unconventional** : not following the accepted rules and standards in society.

answered, a new one appears: Who is the woman in white? Will Laura marry Sir Percival? What is Sir Percival's Secret? At the end of the book, when all questions are answered, we feel great satisfaction. In fact, some people say that *The Woman in White* is one of the most brilliantly constructed, exciting and satisfying novels ever written. Wilkie Collins died aged 65 in 1889. He was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery, London. As he requested, on his grave is written only his name, his birth and death dates and the simple tribute: 'Author of *The Woman in White* and other works of fiction'.

1 Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

- 1 When was Wilkie Collins born and when did he die?
- 2 What did his father do?
- 3 What did Collins do before becoming a writer?
- 4 Who was Collins's famous literary friend?
- 5 What was the name of the magazine that they worked on together?
- 6 What were 'sensation novels'?
- 7 What qualities did Collins's novels have in common with the Gothic novel?
- 8 What are the titles of Collins's most famous novels and when were they published?
- 9 What was Collins's writing philosophy?
- 10 How is *The Woman in White* told?

The Characters



From left to right: Mr Pesca, Mrs Jane Catherick, Marian Halcombe, Walter Hartright, Anne Catherick, Laura Fairlie, Sir Percival Glyde, Count Fosco, Countess Fosco, Mr Fairlie

Before you read

1 Vocabulary

Use a dictionary to help you match the words below with their definitions.

- A invalid B fugitive C narrator
D guardian E aristocrat

- 1 ☐ A person who escapes from somewhere and does not want to be caught.
- 2 ☐ A person who is legally responsible for another person, for example a child.
- 3 ☐ A person who has an illness or disability.
- 4 ☐ A person who tells a story, often from his or her point of view.
- 5 ☐ A person who comes from a high social class.


2 Listening

FCE Listen to the beginning of Chapter One. You will hear about Walter Hartright's strange adventure. For questions 1-7, complete the sentences.

- 1 Walter went to see his mother and sister one evening in, 1849.
- 2 His friend Pesca had found him a in Cumberland.
- 3 The woman in white wanted to know if she was on the road to
- 4 The woman in white was with a pale, worried face.
- 5 The woman in white had hidden
- 6 The woman in white wanted to know if Walter knew any
- 7 A lady called Mrs Fairlie had been to the woman in white.

CHAPTER ONE

A Strange Adventure

This is the story of a crime committed against a woman. I —  Walter Hartright, drawing teacher — have asked several people to contribute narratives. Each narrator will describe what he saw with his own eyes, so that the narrative will be as truthful as possible, and the evidence will be presented as in a court of law.

1. Walter Hartright's narrative

One evening in July 1849, I went to see my mother and sister at their house on Hampstead Heath.¹ My Italian friend Pesca was there, and he had good news for me. He had found me a job in Cumberland in the north of England: four months teaching

1. **Hampstead Heath** : a large park in north London.

drawing to the nieces of Mr Frederick Fairlie of Limmeridge House. On the evening before I left for Cumberland, I went to say goodbye to my mother and sister. It was past midnight when I left their house to walk home to my apartment in London. As I stood at the crossroads,¹ I felt someone suddenly touch my arm. I turned around quickly in fear and surprise. There, behind me, stood a woman dressed completely in white.

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

She was young and thin with a pale, worried face. After a pause, I replied, 'Yes. Sorry for not answering you before. I was surprised to see you — the road was empty just a moment ago.'

She indicated a tree nearby. 'I hid behind that tree to see what kind of man you were. Don't worry, I've done nothing wrong — but there's been an accident. Will you help me?'

'Certainly.'

'I need to go to London. I have a friend there. Could you help me to get a carriage?'²

As we walked together down the London road, looking for a carriage, she said, 'Do you know any aristocrats?'

'Some,' I replied, surprised by her strange question. 'Why do you ask?'

'Because I hope that there's one you don't know — one who lives in Hampshire.'

'What's his name?'

'I can't say his name; it upsets me too much! Tell me the names of the aristocrats you know.'

1. **crossroads** : a place where two roads meet in the form of a cross.

2. **carriage** : a vehicle pulled by a horse.



I named three gentlemen in whose houses I had taught drawing.

'You don't know him!' she cried with relief.¹

'Has this gentleman treated you badly? Is he the reason you're here alone at this hour?'

'I can't talk about it,' she said.

We left the Heath and entered an area of houses. After a while she asked me if I lived in London.

'Yes, but tomorrow I'm going to Cumberland for four months.'

'Cumberland!' she cried. 'I was happy there once, in a village called Limmeridge. A lady called Mrs Fairlie was kind to me, but now she and her husband are both dead.'

END

I looked at her in surprise and was about to ask her more, but just then I saw a carriage. I stopped it and asked the driver to take the young woman into London. She got into the carriage, then turned to me and kissed my hand. 'Thank you!' she said, then the carriage drove off, and the woman in white was gone.

I walked on, thinking about this strange adventure. As I passed a policeman, I heard a carriage on the road behind me. The carriage stopped and the driver spoke to the policeman: 'Have you seen a woman dressed in white?'

'No, sir.'

The man gave the policeman a piece of paper. 'If you see her, stop her and take her to this address.'

'Why?' asked the policeman. 'What's she done?'

'She's escaped from my asylum!' ² the man replied, and he drove off.

1. **relief** : the good feeling you have when an unpleasant situation or fear ends.

2. **asylum** : a hospital for the mentally disturbed.

Late the next evening, I arrived at Limmeridge House. Mr Fairlie and his nieces were already in bed. A servant gave me dinner and showed me to my room. The next morning I went down to breakfast at nine. The dining-room was long with windows overlooking the sea. A lady was standing by a window at the far end of the room, looking out. She was tall and had a beautiful figure. She turned and walked gracefully towards me. 'What will her face be like?' I asked myself as she got nearer. First I noticed that she was dark, then that she was young, and finally (to my great surprise) that she was rather ugly! She had a large, strong masculine jaw.¹ Her expression was honest and intelligent, but it had none of the gentleness that is the greatest charm of a woman.

'Mr Hartright?' she asked, shaking my hand. 'I'm Marian Halcombe, one of your new students. I hope you won't be bored here. You'll have no men to talk to. Mr Fairlie never leaves his room. He's an invalid, or so he thinks. This morning I'll be your only company for breakfast since my sister Laura is in her room with a headache. Your life here will be very quiet. I hope you aren't the kind of person who's unhappy without adventures.'

'Oh, no,' I replied. 'I like a quiet life, and recently I had such an adventure that I don't want another one for years.' As we ate breakfast side by side like two old friends, I told Miss Halcombe about the woman in white. She listened with interest and looked surprised when I told her the part about Mrs Fairlie.

1. **jaw** : the bottom part of the face below the mouth.

When I had finished, she said, 'Mrs Fairlie was my mother. She was married twice: once to my father, who was a poor man, and then to Mr Philip Fairlie, who was rich. My sister Laura is the daughter of her second marriage. My mother died, then Mr Fairlie died. His brother Frederick Fairlie is Laura's guardian. Laura and I are very different: she's blonde, and I'm dark; she's beautiful, and I'm ugly; she's rich, and I'm poor. But even so we love each other very much. When my mother came here, she started a school in the village. This woman in white was probably a student there. I wonder who she was?'

*

After breakfast, I went to see Mr Frederick Fairlie in his room. He was a weak, lazy hypochondriac¹ who considered himself a man of artistic sensibility. I left his room with a feeling of relief and spent the morning looking forward to my meeting with Miss Laura Fairlie. That afternoon I went for a walk with Miss Halcombe. In the garden we met her sister, Miss Fairlie. She was a fair, delicate girl in a simple white dress. She looked at me with kind, honest and innocent, blue eyes. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and yet there seemed to be something missing — I did not know what.

'Laura,' said Miss Halcombe, 'you have your drawing book with you. You see, Mr Hartright, she's the perfect student: she can't wait to begin her studies.'

'No, I'm afraid to begin,' said Laura gently. 'I know my drawings aren't good, and I'm afraid to show them to you.'

1. **hypochondriac** : a person who is constantly worried about their health without reason.

'Well,' said Miss Halcombe, 'I'm sure that Mr Hartright will pay us compliments¹ even if our drawings are horrible.'

'I hope he won't pay me any compliments,' said Miss Fairlie.

'Why not?' I asked.

'Because I'll believe everything you say to me,' she answered simply.

I, a humble² drawing teacher with no money, fell in love with the rich and beautiful Miss Laura Fairlie as soon as I saw her. That evening, after dinner, Miss Fairlie went outside to walk in the garden. I started to follow her, but then Miss Halcombe called me, and I returned to the drawing-room.³ Miss Halcombe was holding a letter. Beyond her, through the window, I could see Miss Fairlie walking in the moonlight.

'After the story you told me this morning, I've been reading my mother's old letters,' said Miss Halcombe. 'She wrote this to her second husband, Mr Philip Fairlie, when he was in London on business. Listen: *"There is a new student at the village school, a little girl called Anne Catherick. She has come to Limmeridge from Hampshire with her mother for a few weeks. Her mother is a respectable woman but there is something mysterious about her..."*

As Miss Halcombe read, I watched Miss Fairlie walking in the garden.

"I like little Anne a lot. I noticed that she was slow in her studies, so I asked the doctor to examine her. He says that she'll

1. **pay us compliments** : say nice things about us and our work.
 2. **humble** : not important, of low position in society.
 3. **drawing-room** : the room in a large house where people relax or entertain guests.



get better. Her clothes were old, so I gave her some of Laura's white dresses. I told her that blonde girls look nice in white. She kissed my hand and said, 'I'll always wear white! It'll help me to remember how kind you've been to me!' Poor little soul!"

Miss Halcombe looked up from the letter. 'The woman in white must be Anne Catherick!' she said.

Just then, Miss Fairlie passed by the window again. Her white dress shone¹ in the moonlight. My heart beat fast.

'Listen to the last sentences of the letter,' said Miss Halcombe. "The other reason I like Anne is that she looks very much like Laura. She isn't as pretty, but her hair, eyes, and figure are exactly like Laura's."

I stood up quickly, feeling the same sudden fear I had felt when that hand touched my arm at the lonely crossroads. There stood Miss Fairlie, alone outside in the moonlight, looking exactly like the woman in white! I suddenly realised that the 'something missing' was this: my realisation of the disturbing similarity between the fugitive from the asylum and my student at Limmeridge House.

1. **shone** : (Past Simple of 'to shine') gave out light.

Go back to the text

1 Characters

Match the characters (A-F) to the following statements (1-11). For one of the statements you will need to use two characters.

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| A Walter Hartright | C Marian Halcombe | E Mrs Fairlie |
| B Laura Fairlie | D Frederick Fairlie | F Anne Catherick |

- 1 ☐ This person once lived in Cumberland for a short time.
- 2 ☐ This person started a school in a village in Cumberland.
- 3 ☐ This person is attractive and rich.
- 4 ☐ ☐ These people look very similar.
- 5 ☐ This person teaches drawing.
- 6 ☐ This person dresses in a certain way to remember a kind friend.
- 7 ☐ This person is physically attractive except for his/her face.
- 8 ☐ This person thinks he/she is ill.
- 9 ☐ This person's father, who is no longer alive, was rich.
- 10 ☐ This person needed help to find her way to London.
- 11 ☐ This person's father, who is no longer alive, was not rich.

2 Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

- 1 How did Walter get his job in Cumberland?
- 2 What was the strange question that Anne Catherick asked Walter?
- 3 What was her reaction to his answer?
- 4 Why was the man in the carriage looking for the woman in white?
- 5 How are Laura and Marian related?
- 6 What did Walter think of Laura when he first met her?
- 7 Do you think Laura has a very trusting nature? Why/why not?
- 8 Who is Anne Catherick?
- 9 Why did Mrs Fairlie give Anne Catherick some of Laura's dresses?
- 10 What was the 'something missing' that Walter felt when he first saw Laura?

T: GRADE 7

3 Speaking: early memories

Even though she was only a young girl at the time, Anne Catherick remembers her teacher Mrs Fairlie very well. Tell your class about a teacher who has had a positive influence on your life.

You can use these questions to help you:

- 1 When did you first meet this person?
- 2 What did he/she teach?
- 3 How did this person have a positive influence on you?
- 4 What do you remember about him/her?
- 5 Are you still in contact with this person?

FCE 4 The real woman in white

For questions 1-12, read the text below about the woman who inspired Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each space. There is an example at the beginning (0).

One July evening (0) 1854 Wilkie Collins and his brother Charles were (1) the artist John Everett Millais back to his studio. As they walked past a large house they (2) a horrible scream coming from the garden. Just as they were deciding (3) to do, a young and very beautiful woman appeared. She was wearing a white dress (4) shone in the moonlight. She stopped, looked at them in terror and then ran (5) Wilkie Collins said, 'I must see who she is and what the (6) is.' He left his brother and Millais and went to look (7) her. He later found her. Her name was Caroline Graves. Her husband (8) dead and she had a baby daughter. She (9) that she had been held prisoner in the house. Collins (10) in love with her, and they soon began living together. (11) though Collins eventually married another woman, his relationship with Caroline Graves lasted for the (12) of his life.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------|----------------|-----------|
| 0 A in | B at | C on | D to |
| 1 A bringing | B going | C accompanying | D getting |
| 2 A listened | B heard | C noted | D noticed |

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| 3 A how | B which | C why | D what |
| 4 A who | B whose | C what | D that |
| 5 A away | B from | C by | D towards |
| 6 A wrong | B matter | C difficulty | D danger |
| 7 A at | B to | C for | D of |
| 8 A had | B is | C has | D was |
| 9 A told | B spoke | C talked | D said |
| 10 A fell | B became | C went | D got |
| 11 A Also | B Even | C While | D So |
| 12 A entire | B remains | C last | D rest |

5 Reading pictures

Look back at the picture on pages 16-17.

- 1 Name the two characters in the picture. Where are they?
- 2 Describe what each character is doing.
- 3 How do you think the man is feeling?

Before you read**1 Vocabulary**

Match the words below (A-E) to their correct definitions (1-5). Then use the words to fill in the gaps in the sentences that follow. You can use a dictionary to help you. Remember to change the form of the word if necessary.

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------|
| A to inherit | B a property | C a debt |
| D to sign | E a will | |

- 1 ☐ To write your name on something — often to show agreement.
- 2 ☐ A building and its surrounding land.
- 3 ☐ Money that you owe somebody else.


- 4 ☐ A legal document that says who will have a person's money after their death.
- 5 ☐ To receive money or possessions from somebody after their death.
- 1 I had to a legal contract when I bought this house.
- 2 Sir John is a very rich man. He has a large in the country, two in London and also several abroad.
- 3 Lady Jane looks very rich, but she has many ; she must find a way to pay back all the people she owes money to.
- 4 His mother died last week; her says that he'll receive all her money and his sister won't get anything.
- 5 Harry did not use to be rich but last year he all his aunt's money after she died.

2 Fill in the gaps

Read the extract below and use the words in the box to fill in the gaps.

happy and secret quickly heart
touch good in but smell

The days and weeks at Limmeridge House passed so (1) ! What a (2) time that was! I spent every day (3) the company of two excellent ladies. Marian Halcombe became my (4) friend and Laura Fairlie was my (5) love. The (6) of her fingers or the sweet (7) of her hair made my (8) beat fast. A drawing teacher must spend his life in the company of beautiful women who can never be his. I had always known this, (9) I had never before felt anything more than a teacher's interest in my students. (10) with Laura it was different.

 Now listen to the beginning of Chapter Two to check your answers.



CHAPTER TWO

The Aristocrat from Hampshire

2. Walter Hartright's narrative continued

The days and weeks at Limmeridge House passed so quickly! What a happy time that was! I spent every day in the company of two excellent ladies. Marian Halcombe became my good friend and Laura Fairlie was my secret love. The touch of her fingers or the sweet smell of her hair made my heart beat fast. A drawing teacher must spend his life in the company of beautiful women who can never be his. I had always known this, and I had never before felt anything more than a teacher's interest in my students. But with Laura it was different.

One day, when I had been at Limmeridge for three months, Miss Halcombe asked me to walk with her in the garden. 'I know

your secret,' she said. 'You're in love with my sister. I don't blame¹ you; I feel sorry for you, because your love is hopeless. I know you haven't told Laura that you love her. You've behaved honourably. Take my hand. What I'm about to say will hurt you, but it must be done.'

Her sudden kindness and sympathy was too much for me. My eyes filled with tears. 'You must leave Limmeridge at once,' she said. 'It's not because you're only a drawing teacher but because Laura's already engaged to be married. Her future husband is coming to stay next Monday. She's never loved him. He was chosen by her father just before he died. Until you came here, Laura was like hundreds of other women who marry without being attracted to their husbands. They learn to love them (if they don't learn to hate them!) after they're married. Tell Mr Fairlie that your sister's ill, and that you must return to London. Go before Sir Percival Glyde arrives.'

'Sir Percival Glyde?'

'Yes, Laura's future husband. He has a large property in Hampshire.'

'Hampshire!' I cried. 'Anne Catherick spoke to me of an aristocrat from Hampshire who'd caused her suffering. But it can't be the same man! I must be going mad! Ever since I saw the similarity between Miss Fairlie and the woman in white, I've connected them in my mind. The Lord knows, I don't want to do so! I don't want that sad woman to be connected in any way with Miss Fairlie. Will you please ask Sir Percival Glyde if he knows Anne Catherick?'

1. **blame** : think someone responsible for doing something wrong.



Miss Halcombe looked surprised. 'I've never heard anything bad about Sir Percival,' she said. 'But yes! I'll ask our lawyer, Mr Gilmore, to ask Sir Percival about it.'

The next day, I returned to London. My narrative ends here, at the end of the happiest period in my life.

3. Vincent Gilmore's narrative

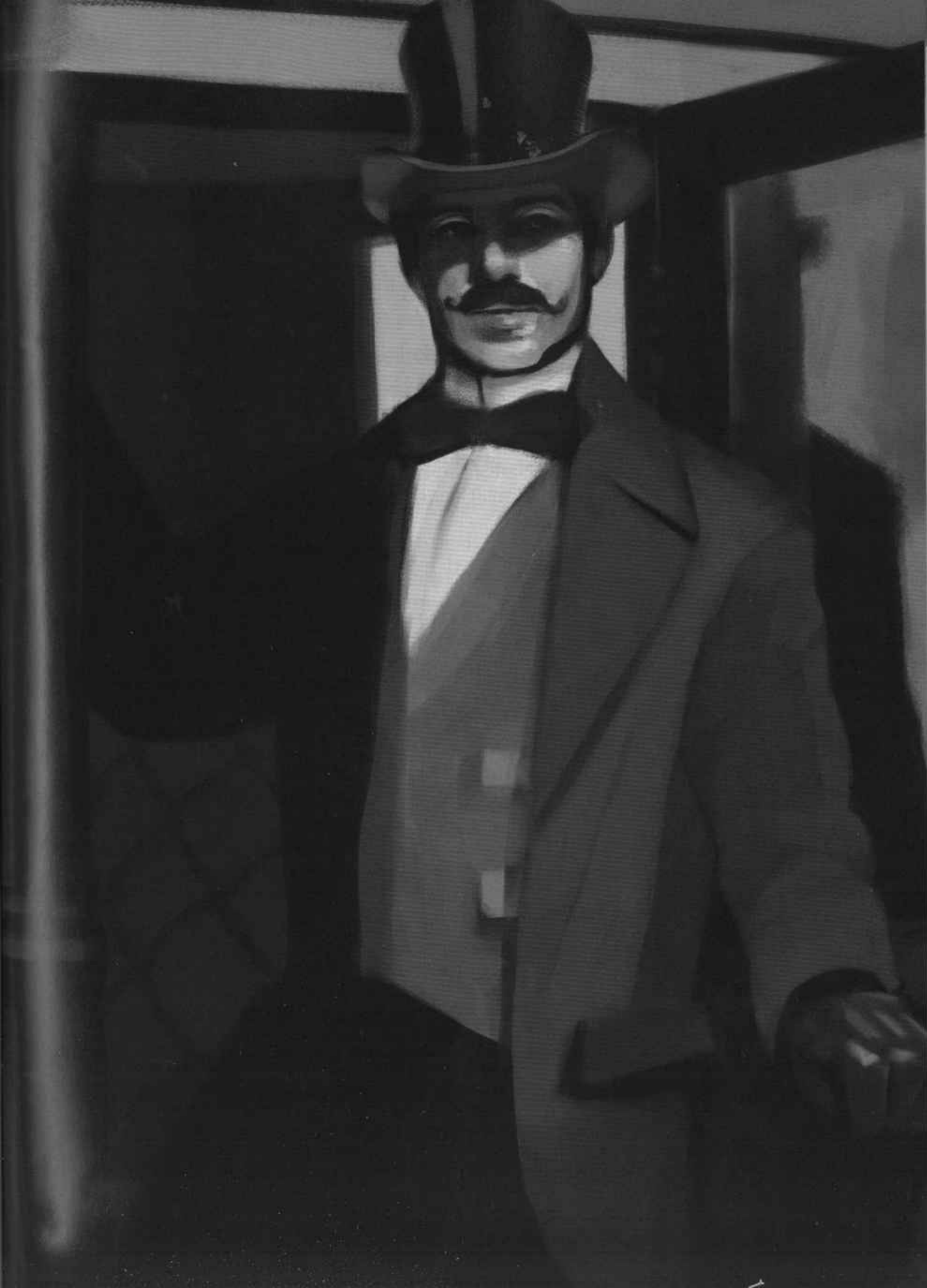
I, Vincent Gilmore, am Laura Fairlie's lawyer. I arrived at Limmeridge House on the second of November. I had dinner with Miss Halcombe, Miss Fairlie, and Mr Hartright, their drawing teacher. They all seemed sad. The next morning, Mr Hartright left for London.

After lunch, Miss Halcombe told me about Mr Hartright's adventure on Hampstead Heath and her mother's letter describing Anne Catherick. She explained Mr Hartright's concern that Sir Percival Glyde might be the aristocrat the woman in white had talked about. She also showed me an anonymous letter¹ that her sister had received that morning:

Dear Miss Fairlie,

I hear that you are going to marry Sir Percival Glyde. Do not do it! He is an evil man. Please believe me. Your mother was very kind to me, so you and your happiness are important to me.

1. **anonymous letter** : the writer of the letter is not known.



I made a copy of the letter and sent it to Sir Percival's lawyer, asking for an explanation. On Monday, Sir Percival arrived at Limmeridge House. He is a charming man of about forty-five years old. He treated Miss Halcombe like an old friend, was polite and friendly to me, and treated Miss Fairlie with tenderness and respect. He was obviously concerned about her pale face and sad expression. Miss Fairlie seemed to be uncomfortable in his company and left us soon after dinner. Sir Percival then turned to Miss Halcombe and said, 'My lawyer sent me the copy of that letter. I'm not surprised that it made you worry, but I can explain everything.'

His manner was open and honest. He told us that Mrs Catherick, Anne's mother, had been a servant in his family for many years before leaving to get married. Years later, Sir Percival heard that her husband had abandoned her and her daughter was mentally disturbed. He wanted to do something to help the poor woman. Mrs Catherick told him that she wanted to put Anne in a private asylum, but she did not have enough money. Sir Percival offered to pay. Years later, when Anne discovered this, she considered him responsible and developed a passionate hatred for him.

This explanation seemed satisfactory to me, but Miss Halcombe still looked concerned.

'Please, Miss Halcombe,' said Sir Percival, 'write to Mrs Catherick and ask her to confirm my explanation.'

Miss Halcombe wrote a brief letter, Sir Percival wrote the address on the envelope, and a servant posted it.

Two days later, Miss Halcombe received a reply:

Madam,

My daughter was put into a private asylum with my knowledge and approval. Sir Percival Glyde very kindly paid for the asylum, and I thank him for that.

Yours truly,

Jane Catherick (Anne's mother)

*

On my last day at Limmeridge House, I talked to Miss Fairlie, explaining the details of her father's will. 'Next March, on your twenty-first birthday, you'll inherit thirty thousand pounds.¹ If you die before your aunt Eleanor — Madame Fosco — she'll inherit ten thousand pounds of that money. You must now write a will saying who you wish to leave the other twenty thousand pounds to when you die.'

'Can I leave it to Marian?' asked Miss Fairlie.

'All of it? Is there no one else you wish to include in your will?'

'Yes, there is someone,' she said in a trembling voice, and she burst into tears.²

'Don't cry, my dear,' I said. 'We'll discuss the details another time, when you're feeling better.'

I returned to London and wrote Laura Fairlie's marriage settlement.³ Her father had been my good friend, and his daughter was like a daughter to me. I wanted to make the best marriage settlement I could in order to protect her interests. 'If

1. **thirty thousand pounds** : the equivalent of one million pounds today.

2. **burst into tears** : suddenly started crying.

3. **marriage settlement** : a legal document, made before the marriage, about who should have control of the money.

Laura Fairlie dies,' I wrote, 'the twenty thousand pounds will be left according to her will.' That evening, I sent the settlement to Sir Percival's lawyer.

The next day, it was returned to me. In the margin, by my statement about the twenty thousand pounds, the lawyer had written, 'No — if Laura Fairlie dies, Sir Percival will inherit the twenty thousand pounds.'

I knew that Sir Percival had many debts. This worried me, so I wrote to Mr Frederick Fairlie and explained the situation. I told him not to sign the settlement unless the part about the twenty thousand pounds remained as I had first written it. The next day I received his reply:

My dear Gilmore,

I am too ill to argue with Sir Percival. Please agree to whatever changes he wants to make in the marriage settlement.

Yours truly,

Frederick Fairlie

This letter made me very angry. The man was too lazy to look after the interests of his own niece! I went to Limmeridge the next day and told him that no one should sign a marriage settlement like this — it gave the husband a large financial interest in the death of his wife! But Mr Fairlie did not want to listen. He closed his eyes and asked me to leave him in peace.

Go back to the text

1 Comprehension check

Match the phrases in column A with the phrases in column B to make true statements.

A

- 1 ☐ Walter knew he could never marry one of his beautiful, rich students
- 2 ☐ Walter had acted honourably with Laura
- 3 ☐ Marian wanted Walter to leave Limmeridge
- 4 ☐ Walter became worried when Marian told him about Sir Percival
- 5 ☐ Sir Percival said that he helped Mrs Catherick
- 6 ☐ According to Sir Percival, Anne Catherick hated him
- 7 ☐ Marian wrote to Mrs Catherick
- 8 ☐ Mr Gilmore wanted Laura to have the best marriage settlement
- 9 ☐ Mr Gilmore was not happy with the marriage settlement
- 10 ☐ Frederick Fairlie agreed to Sir Percival's changes to the settlement

B

- A because she considered him responsible for putting her in an asylum.
- B because Anne Catherick had told him about an evil aristocrat from Hampshire.
- C because he was 'too ill' to argue.
- D because it gave Laura's husband a reason to want her dead.
- E because he was only a drawing teacher.
- F because she had been his servant for many years.
- G because Sir Percival was coming to stay.
- H because he never told her that he loved her.
- I because she was like a daughter to him.
- J because she wanted confirmation of Sir Percival's explanation.

FCE 2 Writing

Mr Gilmore does not like Sir Percival's proposed marriage contract and is worried about Laura. Imagine you are Mr Gilmore: write a letter to your wife explaining your feelings about the situation. You should write between 120-180 words. Tell her briefly:

- Why you are not happy with the marriage settlement
- What Sir Percival is like
- Why you wrote to Mr Fairlie
- Mr Fairlie's reaction to your letter and how this made you feel

You can begin like this:

Dear Helen,
I'm sure you remember Laura Fairlie. Her father and I

I hope I can help Laura.
Your husband,
Vincent

'Sir Percival offered to pay'

When we introduce reported speech with 'to say' we change the tense of the verb, the pronouns, adverbs and so on. For example:

- 'Don't worry, I'll come tomorrow,' said Walter.
 → Walter said that he **would come the next day**.

Sometimes we can use a more precise reporting verb to introduce reported speech. Look at the same sentence again below. Notice the use of the infinitive construction.

- 'Don't worry, I'll come tomorrow,' said Walter.
 → Walter **promised to come** the next day.

Now look at these other examples using the verbs 'offer' and 'refuse' to report what is said.

- 'Please, let me pay for the asylum,' said Sir Percival.
 → Sir Percival **offered to pay** for the asylum.
- 'I won't leave without an explanation,' said Marian.
 → Marian **refused to leave** without an explanation.

3 Reported speech

Change these sentences into reported speech using the verbs *offer*, *refuse*, *promise* or *agree* according to the context. All of these verbs use the infinitive construction. You will need to use one of the verbs twice.

- 1 'I will not help you,' Marian said to Sir Percival.
 Marian
- 2 Marian: 'Mr Gilmore, would you please ask Sir Percival about this letter?'
 Mr Gilmore: 'Yes, of course.'
 Mr Gilmore
- 3 'Would you like me to carry your drawing materials?' Walter said to Laura.
 Walter
- 4 Laura: 'I'd like to see your book of drawings.'
 Walter: 'I'll show it to you tomorrow!'
 Walter
- 5 'I won't lend you any more money, Percival,' said his friend.
 Percival's friend

Before you read



1 Listening

Listen to Marian's narrative at the beginning of Chapter Three. For questions 1-6, complete the sentences.

- 1 Laura will marry Sir Percival on
- 2 After they are married they will travel to
- 3 Laura says she can never break her to Sir Percival.
- 4 Laura gave Marian a book of
- 5 Sir Percival is a good-looking, man.
- 6 Walter has gone to

CHAPTER THREE

Blackwater Park

4. Marian Halcombe's narrative (extracts from her diary)

Limmeridge House, Cumberland

8 November

The date of the wedding is the twenty-second of December of this year. The married couple will go to Italy for the winter months. When they return — with Sir Percival's friend Count Fosco and his wife (Laura's aunt Eleanor) — I will go to live with them in Hampshire. Laura asked Sir Percival if I could, and he very kindly agreed. Sir Percival has noticed that Laura seems unhappy in his company. This morning he spoke to me, and this afternoon I told Laura what he had said: 'He was very generous. He said that if you want to break your engagement, you can.'

'I can never break my engagement,' said Laura. 'It was my

father's dying wish that I marry Sir Percival. But I can tell him that I love someone else. Then, perhaps, he'll break the engagement himself.'

Suddenly she seemed the stronger sister: she would not change her mind.¹ After dinner, Laura explained to Sir Percival that she loved someone else. She told him he was free to break the engagement.

'After what you've just said, I want to marry you more than ever,' said Sir Percival. 'You've been so honest that I value you even more than I did before.'

Laura's eyes filled with tears. 'If you insist on our marriage, I'll be your faithful wife,' she said, 'but I'll never love you!'

'I'll be satisfied with that,' he said gently, and left the room.

After he had gone, Laura gave me a book of drawings that Mr Hartright had given her. 'Marian, you must keep it now,' she said. 'If I die, please tell Walter that I loved him!' Then she put her head on my shoulder and burst into tears.

Sir Percival is a good-looking, charming and friendly man. His actions towards Anne Catherick and her mother have been generous. I cannot even blame him for not breaking his engagement this evening. Sir Percival is certainly an admirable man — and yet, in three words, I hate him!

28 November

Our dear friend Walter has gone to Central America. He wrote to me, asking me to use my contacts to find him a job in a distant country. I knew of a scientific expedition to Honduras.

1. **change her mind** : think differently.

They needed someone to draw the plants and animals they found there. I recommended Walter, and now he has gone.

22 December

They are married! My dear sister has gone! I am crying so much I cannot write anymore.

[Six months later]

Blackwater Park, Hampshire

15 June 1850

Six lonely months have passed, and I am with dear Laura once more, but we now live at Blackwater Park, Sir Percival's house in Hampshire. It is a big old house, surrounded by trees. I find it dark and depressing. I arrived here a few days ago. Sir Percival, Laura, Count Fosco, and Madame Fosco arrived yesterday.

Laura has changed in the last six months. I noticed it in her letters, and now I see it in her face. That honest, open look has gone. There are things now that she will not discuss with me — her husband, her married life — but before we kept no secrets from each other.

Sir Percival has changed too. At Limmeridge, he was always friendly, but when he saw me yesterday he was cold. His manner towards Laura has changed: he does not look at her with tender interest anymore.

Madame Fosco is different from the Eleanor Fairlie I once knew. Eleanor Fairlie was an irritating woman who talked too



much and wore expensive clothes. Now she dresses very simply and sits silently, rolling cigarettes for her husband.

And her husband? What can I say of Count Fosco? He has certainly tamed¹ his wife, and he looks like a man who could tame a tiger. He interests and attracts me; he forces me to like him. He is enormously fat, and his face looks like Napoleon's. He has intelligent grey eyes; when I look into them, I feel things that I do not want to feel. He speaks English fluently with no accent. He tells me that he left Italy a long time ago, for political reasons.

The Count has been Sir Percival's friend for years. They first met in Rome. Percival was attacked by thieves, and Count Fosco saved his life. The Count's influence over Percival is much stronger than Laura's. I have never before met a man like Count Fosco. I am very glad he is not my enemy, but is this because I like him or because I am afraid of him?

16 June

This morning Sir Percival's lawyer came to see him. As I was walking to my room, I heard them talking.

'Don't worry,' said the lawyer. 'If your wife signs the document, everything will be all right. If not —'

'Of course she'll sign the document,' said Sir Percival angrily.

I went to Laura's room and told her what I had heard. 'I know that Percival has debts,' she said, 'but I won't sign anything without reading it first.'

1. **tamed** : domesticated.

After lunch, Sir Percival said, 'Will you sign this, Laura? It's just a formality. Miss Halcombe and Count Fosco, will you be our witnesses?'¹

He folded the document and placed it on the desk with his hand resting on the folded part. The only part of the document that was visible was the line for her signature and the lines for the signatures of the two witnesses. 'Sign your name here,' he said.

'What is the document about?' asked Laura.

'I've no time to explain,' said Sir Percival. 'A carriage is waiting for me outside. I have to go away on urgent business. Come on. Sign it.'

'I can't sign it unless I've read it. Mr Gilmore always asked me to read documents before I signed them.'

'Gilmore was your servant, I'm your husband. Don't you trust me?' cried Sir Percival angrily.

'It's not fair to say I don't trust you,' said Laura. 'Ask Marian if she thinks I should read the document first.'

'It's none of Miss Halcombe's business!'² said Sir Percival.

'Excuse me,' I said, 'but, as a witness to the signature, it is my business. Laura's objection seems to be fair to me. I can't be a witness unless Laura understands what she's signing.'

'What disrespect!' cried Sir Percival. 'You're just a guest in this house!'

I wanted to hit him, but I was only a woman, and I loved his wife so dearly!

'Percival!' said the Count. 'Remember you are in the company

1. **witnesses** : people who can confirm an event or a person's identity.

2. **It's none... business!** : it doesn't concern Miss Halcombe!



of ladies!' They looked at each other, and Sir Percival was the first to look away. Those cool grey eyes had tamed him.

'I don't want to offend anybody,' he said. 'Just sign the document, will you?'

'I'll happily sign when I know what's in it,' said Laura. 'I'll make any sacrifice, so long as it's honest. I simply think it's wrong to sign a document I haven't read.'

'Who said anything about sacrifice?' cried Sir Percival, furious again. 'And it's strange to hear you talk of right and wrong; a woman who had a passion for her drawing teacher!'

Laura looked at him coldly then turned her back on him. When I left my chair to go to her, I heard the Count whisper¹ to Sir Percival, 'You idiot!'

Laura walked towards the door, and I followed her.

'One moment!' said the Count.

Laura continued walking, but I whispered to her, 'Stop! Don't make an enemy of the Count!' We stopped and waited.

'Percival,' said the Count. 'Can it be signed tomorrow?'

'Yes, I suppose it can.'

'Then let's wait until tomorrow.'

'All right,' said Sir Percival. He left the room, went straight to his carriage, and drove away.

1. **whisper** : say very quietly.

Go back to the text

1 Comprehension check

Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F). Then correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Laura asked Sir Percival if Marian could come to live with them at Blackwater Park. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Laura did not break her engagement with Sir Percival because she did not want to hurt him. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Laura's aunt Eleanor had changed very little since her marriage to Count Fosco. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Count Fosco had left Italy for financial reasons. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Sir Percival had once saved Count Fosco's life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Marian and Count Fosco were the two witnesses at the signing of the document. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Laura refused to sign Sir Percival's document because he had many debts. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Sir Percival knew that Laura was in love with Walter. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Discussion

'Laura was like hundreds of other women who marry without being attracted to their husbands.'

In 19th century England, marriages among the rich and aristocratic families were often more like business deals than love affairs. In many cases, future wives and husbands were chosen by people's families.

- What is your opinion of marriage as a 'business deal'? Do you think it can be successful?
- With your partner, make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of people marrying in this way.
- What you think Wilkie Collins's opinion of arranged marriages was?

T: GRADE 7

3 Speaking: national customs

Give a short presentation to your class about marriage and its customs in your country. Use the following questions to help you.

- 1 Why do people usually get married in your country?
- 2 In general, how old are people when they get married?
- 3 What is a 'traditional' wedding like in your country? What particular rituals and customs do people follow? Do most people still choose this type of wedding?
- 4 If you are not married, would you like to have this kind of traditional wedding? Give reasons for your answer. If you wouldn't like to have a traditional wedding, explain how you would do things differently.

FCE 4 Sentence transformation

For questions 1-4, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given. There is an example at the beginning (0).

- 0 She would not change her mind.
to
She *refused to* change her mind.
- 1 There are things that she will not discuss with me.
everything
She with me.
- 2 After what you've just said I want to marry you more than ever.
me
What you've just said marry you more than ever.
- 3 That honest, open look has gone.
has
She open, honest look.
- 4 Now she dresses very simply.
simple
She now.

5 Summary

Number the paragraphs in the right order to make a summary of chapters 1-3, and then fill in the gaps with the words in the box.

document wedding drawing tame asylum aristocrats
settlement lawyer future nieces student

- A ☐ Marian told the family to investigate, but Sir Percival explained everything satisfactorily. However, in the marriage, he insisted on inheriting twenty thousand pounds of Laura's money if she died. Laura's uncle did not argue with this.
- B ☐ The night before he left for Limmeridge House, Walter met a strange young woman dressed in white. She asked him if he knew any, and she told him about a woman called Mrs Fairlie. Later, Walter heard a man saying that she had escaped from an
- C ☐ A day after their arrival, Sir Percival tried to force Laura to sign a Laura refused and Sir Percival became angry, but the Count was able to him with his cool, grey eyes.
- D ☐ Two days later he was in Limmeridge. He immediately fell in love with Laura. He told Marian about the woman in white. Marian thought that she was a of her mother's called Anne Catherick.
- E ☐ Walter Hartright was given a job teaching to Marian and Laura, the two of Frederick Fairlie, at Limmeridge House.
- F ☐ After their, Laura and her husband went to Italy for six months. They returned to Sir Percival's home together with Count and Madame Fosco.
- G ☐ Three months later, Walter had to leave Limmeridge House because Laura's husband, Sir Percival, was coming. Walter was worried that Sir Percival was the evil aristocrat Anne had mentioned.



CHAPTER FOUR

A Note by the Lake

5. Marian Halcombe's narrative continued

Later on that afternoon, I went for a walk with Laura.

'I can tell you everything now, Marian,' she said. 'After what Percival said to me this morning, I don't feel any obligation to him. At first, just after we were married, I tried not to think of Walter. I tried to be a good wife, but Percival was so cruel! One day in Rome, a lady called Mrs Markland came to visit us. She started talking about drawing. I tried to change the subject, but she went on. She said that her favourite drawing teacher was Mr Hartright. I looked away from her and saw my husband looking at me closely. I suppose my face gave away¹ my secret. Later, when we were alone, he told me he had only married me for my money. After that, I thought about Walter often, especially on

1. gave away : showed (something secret).

A Note by the Lake

the nights when Percival left me alone and went to parties with the people from the opera house.'

I remembered my conversation with Walter that day in the garden with horror. I had placed myself between those two young lovers! It was all my fault! Now Walter is thousands of miles away in a foreign country. His heart is broken, and so is Laura's! I did this, and I did it for Sir Percival Glyde!

18 June

Sir Percival returned yesterday just before lunch. The Count took him for a walk in the garden. Later, the Count came to me and said, 'Miss Halcombe, Sir Percival has changed his mind. He won't ask Lady Glyde to sign anything today.'

I told Laura the good news, then she went for a walk alone by the lake, and I went to my room. An hour later, she came to my room looking agitated. 'Marian!' she said. 'I just met Anne Catherick by the lake! She looked ill and talked to me strangely. Marian, she looks like a paler, thinner version of myself! She says that she's dying. She spoke of how kind Mother had been to her and said that she wanted to die and be buried beside Mother. Then she spoke of Percival. How she hates him! She said that her mother had told her a secret — Percival's secret — and when he discovered that Anne knew it, he put her in the asylum. Then she suddenly stopped speaking and listened. "Did you hear anything?" she asked me. I'd heard nothing. Then she said, "Someone is nearby. It's not safe to talk. Meet me here again tomorrow at the same time," and she ran away.'

After lunch today, Laura went down to the lake alone again. She waited in the same place. After some time, she noticed that

someone had written the word 'Look' on the ground with a stick. She dug in the earth under the word and found a piece of paper. On it, Anne Catherick had written this:

I was seen with you yesterday by a fat old man. When I ran away, he followed me, but I ran faster than he could. I am afraid to come back this afternoon, so I am leaving you this note at six in the morning. When we speak of your husband's secret, we must be in a safe place, where no one can hear us.

A. C.

As Laura was reading Anne's note, she heard footsteps behind her. There was Sir Percival, looking furious. 'What did Anne Catherick tell you?' he cried. 'It's no use lying to me. I know you spoke to her yesterday.' Laura told him everything, but he did not believe her. He was certain that she knew the secret. He held her arm so tightly that he left dark bruises¹ on her white skin. She showed them to me later, and they made me want to kill him.

He took her back to the house and shut her in her room. 'You'll stay there until you tell the truth!' he cried. When I went to see her, I found the room was locked. Laura told me what had happened through the door. I went to the drawing-room. There Sir Percival, the Count and Madame Fosco were speaking quietly. I walked up to Percival and said, 'You can't keep your wife a prisoner in her own house! There are laws in England to protect women from cruelty and injustice!'

1. **bruises** : dark marks left on the skin after an injury or being hit.



'I'll lock you up¹ too, if you threaten me,' he replied.

I felt the Count's cool grey eyes on my face. Then he turned from me and nodded² to his wife. She came to my side and said, 'Sir Percival, I must leave. I can't stay in a house where women are treated like this.'

Sir Percival looked shocked. The Count took his wife's arm and said, 'She is simply wonderful! I'm at your service,³ Eleanor. And at Miss Halcombe's service too.'

'Damn it! What do you mean?' cried Sir Percival.

'I mean I agree with my wife.'

'All right! Do what you want!' said Sir Percival, and he left the room.

'We've won,' said the Count. 'Lady Glyde will be released from her room.' Then, turning to me, he added, 'Let me express my sincere admiration for your courage.'

I went to Laura's room and found the door unlocked. 'Laura, dear,' I said. 'The Count persuaded Percival to unlock your door.'

'Don't speak of the Count!' cried Laura. 'The Count is a spy!'

Just then there was a knock at the door. I opened it and found Madame Fosco there, holding my handkerchief. 'You dropped this downstairs,' she said. Her face was pale, her hand was trembling, and her eyes looked at Laura with hatred. I realised that she was listening at the door a moment ago.

When she was gone, I said, 'Oh, Laura! You shouldn't have called the Count a spy!'

1. **lock you up** : shut you in a room and lock the door.

2. **nodded** : indicated with his head, made a sign.

3. **I'm at your service** : an expression meaning 'I will do anything to help you'.

When I left Laura's room and went downstairs, I saw Madame Fosco alone in the drawing-room. She had never liked Laura. Laura's father (her brother) had been angry with her for marrying an Italian. She had no money of her own and had to rely on her brother's generosity, but he wasn't generous. And then, instead of leaving ten thousand pounds to his sister directly, he left the money to Laura. Madame Fosco would only inherit the money if Laura died before she did. However, since Madame Fosco was forty-three and Laura was twenty-one, that was unlikely. Because of this, Madame Fosco had always disliked Laura. Now she had a new reason to dislike her.

'Countess,' I began. 'I'm afraid that when you so kindly brought my handkerchief to me you probably heard Laura say something very offensive. I hope you didn't tell the Count.'

'There are no secrets between my husband and me,' she said. 'He saw that I was upset, and I told him why.'

'I hope that you and the Count will understand that Laura wasn't herself when she spoke those words. I hope you can both forgive her.'

'Certainly!' said the Count's voice behind me. 'I've already forgiven Lady Glyde.'

'You're very kind,' I replied.

'Let's forget about it,' he said, then he took my hand and put it to his lips. I tried to hide my disgust behind a false smile.

Go back to the text

FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-5, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

- 1 Sir Percival discovered that Laura loved Walter because
 - A ☐ Mrs Markland told him.
 - B ☐ Laura never wanted to talk about drawing.
 - C ☐ Laura's expression clearly showed her secret.
 - D ☐ Laura herself told him.
- 2 Anne came to see Laura because she wanted to
 - A ☐ tell her Sir Percival's secret.
 - B ☐ tell her that Sir Percival is evil.
 - C ☐ tell her that Count Fosco is evil.
 - D ☐ meet Mrs Fairlie's daughter.
- 3 Sir Percival locked Laura in her room
 - A ☐ so that she could not see Anne again.
 - B ☐ so that she could not tell anybody what she knew.
 - C ☐ because he thought she was lying to him.
 - D ☐ because she refused to sign the document.
- 4 Who persuaded Sir Percival to let Laura out of her room?
 - A ☐ Count Fosco
 - B ☐ Marian
 - C ☐ Count Fosco's wife
 - D ☐ Laura
- 5 Laura's father had been angry with his sister because
 - A ☐ she had never liked Laura.
 - B ☐ she had married a foreigner.
 - C ☐ she had always asked him for money.
 - D ☐ she wasn't very generous.

2 Vocabulary

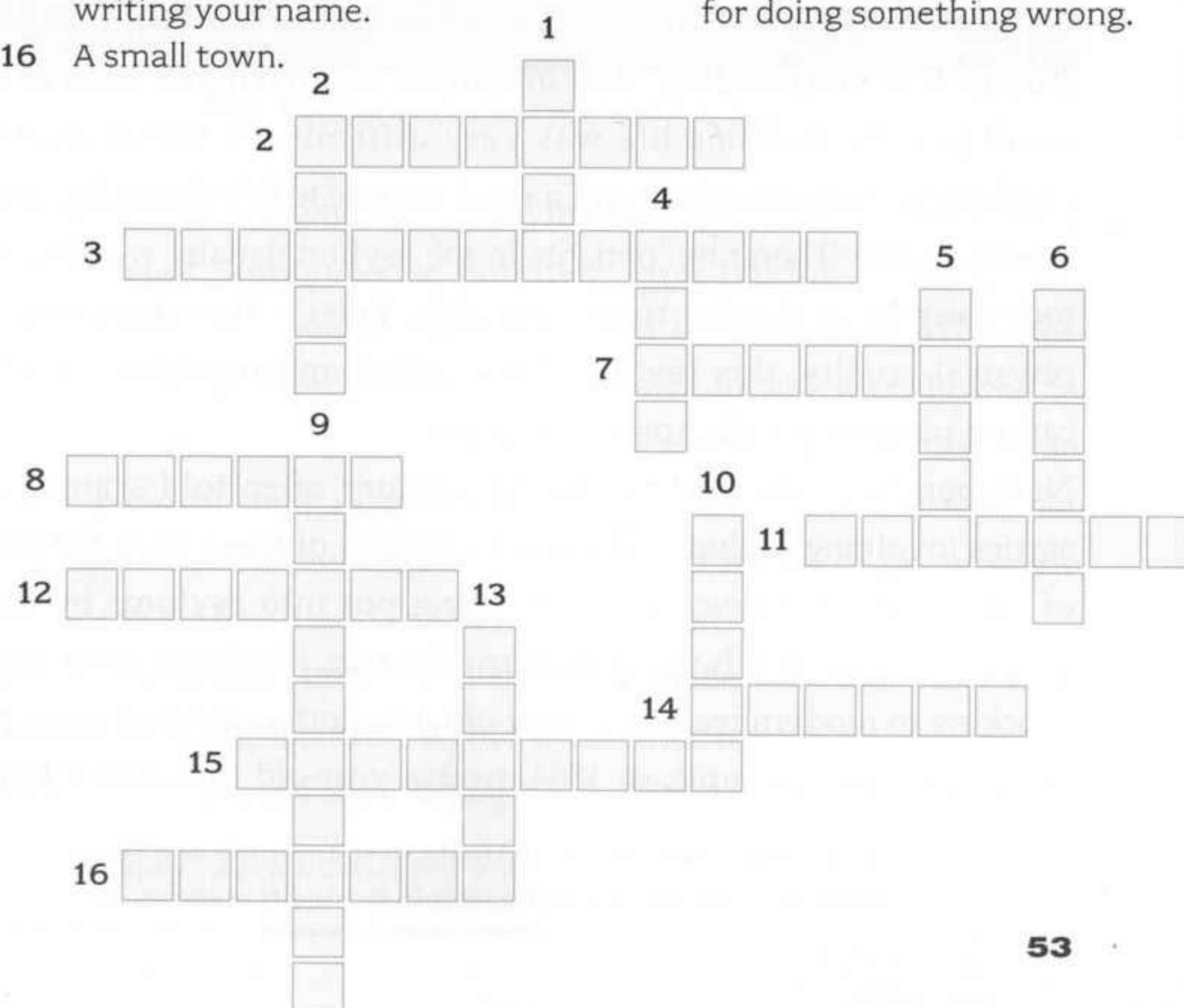
Read the clues and complete the following crossword. All the words have been taken from chapters 1-4.

Across

- 2 Kind understanding of another person's suffering or problems.
- 3 Someone who has imaginary illnesses.
- 7 A vehicle pulled by horses.
- 8 A professional person who deals with legal problems.
- 11 A person who officially confirms the signing of a document.
- 12 Speak very softly and quietly.
- 14 Named.
- 15 The characteristic way of writing your name.
- 16 A small town.

Down

- 1 Hurt.
- 2 Past Simple of 'to shine'.
- 4 The opposite of 'poor'.
- 5 It is my = I am responsible for the bad thing that happened.
- 6 The good feeling you have when you have been freed from fear.
- 9 Particularly.
- 10 The daughter of your brother or sister.
- 13 Hold somebody responsible for doing something wrong.



Victorian Asylums

During the Victorian period in Britain (1837-1901), many asylums were established. The new buildings were large and surrounded by high walls so that the patients could not escape. Between the asylum building and the wall, there was an open space where patients were allowed to walk at certain hours. Inside, on the ground floor there was usually a large communal eating hall, the offices of the asylum director and staff, and recreation rooms¹ for patients. Upstairs, many identical small rooms were connected by corridors. In public asylums, there were two or three patients in each room. Private asylums gave each patient his or her own room.

The word 'asylum' means 'a place of safety', but for Victorians the asylum was one of the most feared places. The public asylums were famous for overcrowding² and inhumane treatment, but even in the small private asylums life was very difficult. Victorian doctors considered strict discipline and a rigid routine to be essential to good mental health. Therefore, patients in the asylum usually worked and took exercise at regular times each day. Even where there was no physical cruelty, this regime of discipline and repetitive routine caused patients to suffer psychologically.

Newspapers of the mid-nineteenth-century often told scandalous stories involving asylums. The most common of these were the cases of 'difficult' middle-class wives being put into asylums by their husbands with the help of corrupt doctors. Perhaps even more shocking to modern readers is how often Victorian children were put in asylums. For example, in 1864, twelve-year-old Elizabeth Clifton

1. **recreation rooms** : places for patients to spend time and relax.

2. **overcrowding** : having too many people in too little space.



The Madhouse (1865) by Telemaco Signorini.

was put in a public asylum. Her symptoms were violent behaviour, biting herself, 'immoderate laughter', and talking to imaginary people. Elizabeth remained in the asylum for four years. When the doctors noted an improvement in her behaviour, she was allowed to leave. In 1898, five-year-old Edith Annie Craven was admitted to an asylum because she had epilepsy.¹ Her parents came and took her home again after a few days, but it is not difficult to imagine the horror of those few days for a five-year-old girl.

Harriet Martineau (1802-76), a British woman novelist, journalist, feminist and intellectual, wrote a fascinating article on private asylums. She argued that, though rich patients in private asylums

1. **epilepsy** : a brain condition which causes a person to lose consciousness and move in a uncontrolled, violent way.

lived in better conditions than poor patients in public asylums, their situation in the long term was worse. Because upper- and middle-class Victorians considered madness a scandal, they preferred to put their mentally disturbed relatives in asylums and leave them there. Whereas many patients were declared cured and allowed to leave public asylums, very few ever left private asylums. In public asylums, journalists and other members of the public were allowed to come in and see the patients. In private asylums, however, the only people allowed in were relatives of the patients. In her article, Harriet Martineau said there should be less secrecy and greater efforts to cure the mentally ill of the middle and upper classes.

1 Comprehension check

Read the following statements and decide whether they are true (T) or false (F). Then correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Many asylums were built in Britain during the Victorian period. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 In Victorian times asylums were places of safety. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Victorian doctors thought that kindness and minimal discipline were necessary for good mental health. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Newspapers often wrote stories involving asylums. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Sometimes, middle-class wives were put into asylums only because they became a problem for their husbands. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Children could not be put into asylums. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Harriet Martineau was put into an asylum because she had epilepsy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 In some ways, the situation of poor patients of public asylums was better than that of rich patients of private asylums. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

INTERNET PROJECT

Connect to the Internet and go to www.blackcat-cideb.com or www.cideb.it. Insert the title or part of the title of the book into our search engine. Open the page for *The Woman in White*. Click on the Internet project link. Go down the page until you find the title of this book and click on the relevant link for this project.

The first musical version of *The Woman in White* was recently staged at the Palace Theatre in London. Answer the following questions:

- ▶ When did the musical first appear? Is it still running?
- ▶ Who was the musical's composer? Can you name any of his other famous musicals?
- ▶ Has the musical won any awards? If so, how many?
- ▶ Apart from in London, where else has the musical been performed?
- ▶ Which male pop star recorded one of the songs from the musical and made it a chart success?

Now look at some of the photos of the actors and actresses from the musical. Are they as you had imagined them to be? If not, how are they different? Is this difference important?

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Before you read



1 Listening

Listen to the beginning of Chapter Five. For questions 1-6 choose the best answer, A, B or C.

- 1 Where is Mr Gilmore?
 - A ☐ In Germany
 - B ☐ In Central America
 - C ☐ In Limmeridge
- 2 Why did Marian go to bed earlier than usual?
 - A ☐ She had a headache.
 - B ☐ She didn't want to be around the Count and Sir Percival.
 - C ☐ She wanted to listen in to the Count's conversation.
- 3 How much does Sir Percival owe?
 - A ☐ Hundreds of pounds
 - B ☐ Thousands of pounds
 - C ☐ Millions of pounds
- 4 What does Count Fosco think of Laura?
 - A ☐ She is foolish.
 - B ☐ She is intelligent.
 - C ☐ She is courageous.
- 5 Who gets the most money if Laura dies?
 - A ☐ Sir Percival
 - B ☐ Count Fosco
 - C ☐ Madame Fosco
- 6 According to Sir Percival, who knows his secret?
 - A ☐ Laura and Walter
 - B ☐ Laura, Walter and Anne Catherick
 - C ☐ Laura, Walter and Marian



CHAPTER FIVE

A Death

6. Marian Halcombe's Narrative continued



20 June

Laura and I have no father or brother to protect us. Our dearest friend Walter is in Central America, where no letter can reach him. Mr Gilmore is ill and is staying with relatives in Germany. Our uncle Frederick Fairlie is a lazy hypochondriac, but he is also our only hope. This afternoon, I wrote him a letter, asking if we could return to Limmeridge House.

After dinner, Percival said to the Count, 'I want to talk to you in private.'

The Count replied, 'Later, when the ladies are asleep.'

I said that I had a headache and went up to my room earlier than usual. I thought to myself, I must hear their conversation.

I took off my dress and put on a simple cloak.¹ I climbed out of the window and moved along a narrow ledge² to the library roof, where I sat down. There I could hear the voices of Sir Percival and the Count through the open windows.

'Percival, we are now at a financial crisis,' said the Count. 'I owe hundreds of pounds; you owe thousands. We must find the money to pay those debts. Recently you've acted very foolishly. Can't you see that Miss Halcombe has more intelligence than most men? She is a noble creature, full of strength and courage, and she'll use it all to protect that foolish little wife of yours. Now, explain to me about your wife's money.'

Sir Percival said, 'It's very simple. While my wife lives, I get three thousand pounds a year, but that's not enough to pay my debts.'

'And if she dies?' asked the Count.

'If she dies without children, I'll get twenty thousand pounds.'

'Ah!' said the Count. 'The rain has come at last.'

He was right. Up on the roof, I was getting wet, but I had to hear their conversation to the end.

'Do you love your wife, Percival?' asked the Count.

'What a question!'

'If she dies, you get twenty thousand pounds.'

'Yes, and your wife gets ten thousand pounds!' cried Sir Percival. 'Don't forget that. Anyway, the money isn't my only problem. I have a secret.'

'Don't tell me the secret; just tell me who knows it.'

'My wife knows it, and a drawing teacher called Walter

1. **cloak** : a long piece of clothing, usually worn over other clothes (see picture on next page).

2. **ledge** : a long, narrow, flat surface (also in picture).



Hartright knows it. I know that Hartright's left the country. He's in love with my wife, and she loves him too. Anyway, the important thing is that they know the secret. Anne Catherick knows it, and she hates me. I'm sure she told them. I've tried to find her, but I can't.'

END

'What does she look like?' asked the Count. 'I saw a woman by the lake, but I only saw her from behind.'

'She looks like my wife. She's not as pretty, and she's very ill, but still she looks very similar.'

'Really?' said the Count in surprise. He then smiled to himself and laughed. 'Don't worry, Percival. You'll pay your debts, and you'll find Anne Catherick, I promise. Good night!'

Up on the roof, I was cold and wet. I moved slowly along the ledge to my bedroom window and climbed back in. I changed into dry clothes, lit a candle, and wrote down the conversation. But now I am ill! I have a fever! I cannot get ill now, when Laura needs me more than ever!

[Note: Here the diary becomes impossible to read. On the next page, another entry appears, but it is in a man's handwriting.]¹

Postscript by a Sincere Friend

The illness of the excellent Miss Halcombe has given me the opportunity to read this interesting diary. There are hundreds of pages here, and I have read them all with pleasure. I admire Marian greatly; her intellect, graceful style and courage. The description of my own character is brilliant. I'm sorry that our

1. **handwriting** : a person's personal style of writing.

interests are opposed. And even though they are opposed, and even though I will be victorious, I want Miss Halcombe to know how much I admire her diary and that nothing in it contributed to my victory and her failure.

FOSCO.

7. Eliza Michelson's narrative

I am the housekeeper¹ at Blackwater Park, and I took care of Miss Halcombe when she was ill. During that time, Lady Glyde was so worried about her sister that she herself became ill and stayed in her room.

One day, Sir Percival called me into his study and said, 'I plan to leave Blackwater Park. As soon as Miss Halcombe and my wife are well enough, they'll go to stay with their uncle in Cumberland. Count Fosco and the Countess will soon go to their new house in London, and I'll go to Paris. Send away all the servants tomorrow. You'll stay to manage the house while I'm away.'

The Count spent his days by the lake (I have no idea why). The next day, when the Count returned from the lake, I heard Sir Percival ask him, 'Did you find her?' The Count did not reply but he smiled. The next day was my day off.² When I returned, Sir Percival told me that Count Fosco and the Countess had left for London. I then went to Lady Glyde's room to see how she was. She was still weak and depressed, and she asked me to take her to her sister's room. As we walked along the corridor, Sir Percival

1. **housekeeper** : servant who manages the cooking and cleaning of a house.

2. **day off** : day when you don't go to work.

came up the stairs and said, 'She's not there. She went to London with Count Fosco and the Countess. Then she'll go to your Uncle in Cumberland.'

'That's impossible!' cried Lady Glyde. 'She didn't tell me she was going or say goodbye! I must go to her immediately!'

'You must wait till tomorrow,' said Sir Percival. 'I'll write to Fosco. He'll meet you at the station and take you to his house.'

Lady Glyde began to shake. 'I don't want to sleep in London,' she said.

'You must. The journey from here to Cumberland is too long to do in one day.'

Lady Glyde was ready to leave the next morning. I took her to the station. When we got there, she suddenly seemed frightened. 'I don't want to go alone!' she said. 'You've been very kind to my sister and me. Thank you!'

She looked so lonely as she said those words that my eyes filled with tears. 'Goodbye, my lady!' I called, as the train moved off.

When I returned to Blackwater Park, Sir Percival said to me, 'Go and see if Miss Halcombe is all right. She's in the guest room on the second floor.'

'Miss Halcombe?' I cried.

'Yes,' said Sir Percival. 'I had to lie to Lady Glyde. You heard the doctor say that she needed fresh air. The only way to make her go to Cumberland was to tell her that her sister had already gone. It was done with the best of intentions.'

'Sir Percival,' I said firmly. 'I can't work here anymore. I'll stay until Miss Halcombe is well enough to leave, but then I must go.'

That night Sir Percival left Blackwater Park. I never saw him again, and I hope I never will.



8. The cook's narrative

I am the cook at Count Fosco's house in London. When the Count and Countess arrived from the countryside, they brought a guest with them: the Countess's niece, Lady Glyde. She was a pretty blonde lady with blue eyes, but she looked very weak. The day she arrived, she became very ill. Dr Goodricke examined her and said, 'This is a serious case of heart disease. Lady Glyde won't live much longer.'

The next day she died. Dr Goodricke registered the death, and my mistress made all the arrangements for the funeral. The dead lady's husband was out of the country, so my mistress arranged for the lady to be buried in her home town in Cumberland in the same grave¹ as her mother.

In conclusion, I'll answer two questions that Mr Hartright asked me.

- 1.) I never saw Count Fosco give Lady Glyde any medicine.
- 2.) He was never alone in the room with her.

9. The doctor's narrative

I certify that Lady Glyde, aged twenty-one, died on 25 July 1850 at 5 Forest Road, London. The cause of death was heart disease.

(Signed) *Dr Alfred Goodricke*

10. The gravestone's narrative

Here lies Laura, Lady Glyde, wife of Sir Percival Glyde, born 27 March 1829; married 22 December 1849; died 25 July 1850.

1. **grave** : place in the ground where a dead person is buried.

Go back to the text

1 Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Who did Percival think knew his secret? Was he right?
- 2 How did the Count react when he learnt that Anne and Laura looked very similar?
- 3 Why did Marian become ill with a fever?
- 4 Who read Marian's diary?
- 5 Who was Eliza Michelson?
- 6 Where did Sir Percival plan to go after he left Blackwater Park?
- 7 Before leaving Blackwater Park, where did Count Fosco spend a lot of time?
- 8 Where did the Count and Countess go when they left Blackwater Park?
- 9 Why did Percival tell Laura to go to London before going to Cumberland?
- 10 Why couldn't she say goodbye to Marian?
- 11 Who was Alfred Goodricke?
- 12 Where and how did Laura die?

2 Comprehension check

Look at the cook's narrative and answer the following questions.

- 1 Who made the arrangements for Laura's funeral and why?
- 2 Where was Laura buried?
- 3 What were the two questions that Walter asked the cook?
- 4 Why do you think he asked these questions?

3 Fill in the gaps

Read the text below about another famous 'woman in white' in English literature. Fill in the gaps with the words in the box.

even in and when always by
before but since through

Anne Catherick is a very famous 'woman in white', (1) there is another one who is (2) more famous. Her name is Miss Havisham; (3) her inventor was Wilkie Collins's great friend Charles Dickens. Miss Havisham, who appears in Dickens's novel *Great Expectations*, was abandoned (4) her future husband twenty years ago 'at twenty minutes to nine.' (5) then she has never seen sunlight and she has (6) worn the same wedding dress. Unlike Anne, though, she is a truly frightening character, especially because we see her (7) the eyes of a little boy, the hero of the book. Dickens took his inspiration for Miss Havisham from a strange lady he saw walking the streets (8) he was a boy. She always wore white and it was said that a wealthy man had rejected her. The idea of a mad woman in white fascinated Dickens and he considered *The Woman in White* to be 'the very title of titles'. It was published (9) his magazine just three months (10) the publication of *Great Expectations*.

4 Discussion

The characters of Anne Catherick and Miss Havisham are both obsessed by something in their lives: Anne by Sir Percival and Miss Havisham by her broken wedding plans. With your partner, discuss a film you have seen with an obsessed character. Answer the following questions and then report your answers to the class.

- What was the film? Did you enjoy it?
- Describe briefly the character.
- What was this character's obsession?
- Why did he/she have this obsession?

Before you read

1 Reading pictures

Look at the picture on page 71.

- 1 Who are the people in the picture?
- 2 What is strange about seeing these people together? Can you think of a way to explain this situation?



2 Listening

Listen to the beginning of Chapter Six. For questions 1-5, choose the best answer, A, B or C.

- 1 Walter returned to England on


| | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|
| A | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30 October 1850. |
| B | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 October 1850. |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> | 03 October 1850. |
- 2 Who told him that Laura was dead?

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------|
| A | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marian |
| B | <input type="checkbox"/> | his sister |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> | his mother |
- 3 Where does Marian tell Walter that they should go?

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| A | <input type="checkbox"/> | Blackwater Park |
| B | <input type="checkbox"/> | Walter's house |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> | London |
- 4 Who told Marian that Laura was dead?

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| A | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eliza Michelson |
| B | <input type="checkbox"/> | Count Fosco |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sir Percival |
- 5 After Marian left Mr Kyrle, where did she go?

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------|
| A | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limmeridge |
| B | <input type="checkbox"/> | London |
| C | <input type="checkbox"/> | the asylum |


A black and white photograph of a gravestone in a cemetery. The stone is rectangular with a decorative top and contains an inscription. The background shows a grassy field and a cloudy sky.

Here lies
Laura, Lady Glyde,
wife of Sir Percival Glyde,
born 27 March 1829;
married 22 December 1849;
died 15 July 1850.

CHAPTER SIX

Sir Percival's Secret

11. Walter Hartright's narrative

On 13 October 1850, I returned to England. I still loved Laura,  but I knew I had to live without her. First I went to my mother's house. When she met me she told me — very gently — that my love was dead.

In the deepest misery, I went to Limmeridge to see her grave. The countryside and the sea reminded me of the happy months we had spent together. I went to Mrs Fairlie's grave. There was a new inscription written on it: 'Here lies Laura, Lady Glyde...' In the near distance I saw two women with veils² over their faces. When they saw me, one lifted up her veil. It was Miss Halcombe, her face sadly changed by suffering and sadness. The other woman walked towards me. I looked at her closely. She stopped in front of me and lifted up her veil. Standing before me — beside her own grave — was Laura, Lady Glyde!

1. **veils** : pieces of material that women sometimes wear to cover their heads and faces.



*

I cannot describe my feelings of shock and joy at that moment. Miss Halcombe said, 'Walter, we must all go to London immediately! We're probably being followed!'

On the train Miss Halcombe told me everything that had happened since she last wrote to me.

'When I woke up from my illness,' she said, 'I found myself in a strange room. Mrs Michelson told me that Laura had gone to London, where she'd become ill and died! This terrible news made me ill again, and I was unable to leave that house for another three weeks. I then went to London to see Mr Gilmore's partner, Mr Kyrle. I told him I was suspicious about the circumstances of Laura's death. Mr Kyrle investigated and told me that he saw nothing suspicious. I then went to Limmeridge and saw my uncle. He told me that Count Fosco had accompanied the body from London and had gone to the funeral (which my uncle himself had been too ill to go to). The Count had left a letter for my uncle, telling him that Anne Catherick was back in the asylum, but she now believed that she was Lady Glyde! I left Limmeridge and went to the asylum. I explained who I was and asked to see Anne. Imagine my feelings, Walter, when I saw my dear sister there in the asylum, and that everyone believed she was Anne Catherick! I gave the nurse one hundred pounds to help Laura escape. We came to Limmeridge and explained everything to my uncle, but he said that I was a fool. He doesn't recognise his own niece! He's sure that she's Anne Catherick!'

Laura had certainly changed. Her face was pale and thin, and her long suffering in the asylum had affected her mind, so that her expression was vague and her memory confused. Now the

END

similarity between Laura and Anne Catherick was stronger than ever. Because of our great love for her, Miss Halcombe and I had recognised her immediately, but the Count's letter had influenced Mr Fairlie, and even the servants at Limmeridge House had not recognised her.

*

I found two apartments in the same house in London. I took one, using a false name, and Marian and Laura lived in the other under the same name; I said they were my sisters. I spent my days drawing and selling my work at nearby shops. Marian cooked and cleaned for us. My one hope now was to prove Laura's identity, but Mr Kyrle, having heard the whole story, said that it would be impossible. When I left his office, he gave me a letter to give to Marian. In the street, I noticed two men following me. I got in a cab¹ and escaped from them.

At home, I gave the letter to Marian. It was from Count Fosco.

This was the letter:

I write, magnificent Marian, to console you. Fear nothing! No one will follow you or your lovely companion if you leave us in peace. If Mr Hartright returns to England, do not contact him. Be happy, dear lady, with what you have.

F

The only signature was an 'F' at the bottom of the page.

'Marian,' I said. 'We must bring them to justice! We must give Laura back her true identity! Mr Kyrle says we can't prove that she is Lady Glyde, so we must force one of them to confess it. The Count has no weak point that we know of, but Sir Percival does.'

1. **cab** : a taxi carriage.

'The secret!' cried Marian. 'But we don't know it.'

'Anne's mother, Mrs Catherick, knows it,' I said, 'and I'll find out what it is. Then I can use the secret to force Sir Percival to tell the truth about Laura.'

The next day I went to Mrs Catherick's house in the village by Blackwater Park. Mrs Catherick was a hard-looking woman dressed in black. 'Say what you've come to say and then leave,' she said in a cold, aggressive voice.

'I've come to tell you that your daughter is dead.'

'How do you know?' she asked indifferently.

'I can't tell you, but it's true,' I said. 'Sir Percival Glyde was involved in your daughter's death and has committed a crime against someone I love. I know that he's your enemy as well as mine. I know that you know his secret. Tell me his secret, and we'll both get our revenge! He has used you — he, a rich man from an aristocratic family —'

'Oh, yes,' she cried sarcastically. 'A very aristocratic family! Especially on his mother's side!' She stopped speaking suddenly, as if she had said something she did not mean to say.

*

So! Sir Percival's secret was something to do with his mother! Mrs Catherick said no more. When I left her house, I saw two men following me, but I did not care. I went to the village church and spoke to the parish clerk.¹

'Please can I see the register of marriages² in this church for the years just before 1804?' I asked.

1. **parish clerk** : a church official who manages the business of the church.

2. **register of marriages** : a book recording the details of all the local marriages.

I followed the parish clerk into the vestry,¹ a small building attached to the church. The room was full of old papers. The parish clerk took a register from a shelf. 'Those registers are full of important documents,' I said. 'Surely they should be kept more safely?'

'That's just what the old parish clerk said,' the man replied. 'Not the one before me — his name was Catherick — but the one before him. He was so concerned about the registers that he kept copies of them locked up at his home, in case anything happened to the originals. Every day, he copied down the births, marriages and deaths recorded that day. Here's the register for 1804 and the one for 1803, sir.'

'Did you say that the parish clerk before you was called Catherick?' I asked in surprise.

'Yes, sir. Well, I'll leave you to look at the registers.'

I found the record of the marriage of Percival's father, Sir Felix Glyde, to Cecilia Elster in September 1803. It was written in a very small space at the bottom of the page. The entry above — recording the marriage of a man called Walter — took much more space. The entry on the next page also took a lot of space, recording a double marriage. I wondered why so little space had been given to the record of Sir Felix's marriage, but apart from that there was nothing unusual about it. I was disappointed. As the parish clerk put the register back on its shelf, I said, 'You spoke of old copies of the register. Is there a copy of the records of 1803?'

'I think so.'

'Can I see it?'

1. **vestry** : a room in the church where the registers of births, marriages, and deaths are kept.

'Well, I suppose you can. The old parish clerk is dead now, but his son lives in the village. He probably still has the copies.'

I went to the house of the old parish clerk's son and asked if I could see his father's copy of the register for 1803. He let me in and brought me the heavy book.

I found the record of the marriage of the man called Walter, but the space at the bottom of the page was empty! On the next page was the record of the double marriage. The copy had no record of Percival's father's marriage! I realised that the record in the original register must be a forgery,¹ added in years afterwards. The truth was that Percival's father had never married Percival's mother. I knew I had to get the original. It was not safe in the vestry, and it was the only evidence of Sir Percival Glyde's secret: that he has no right to his title and his property!

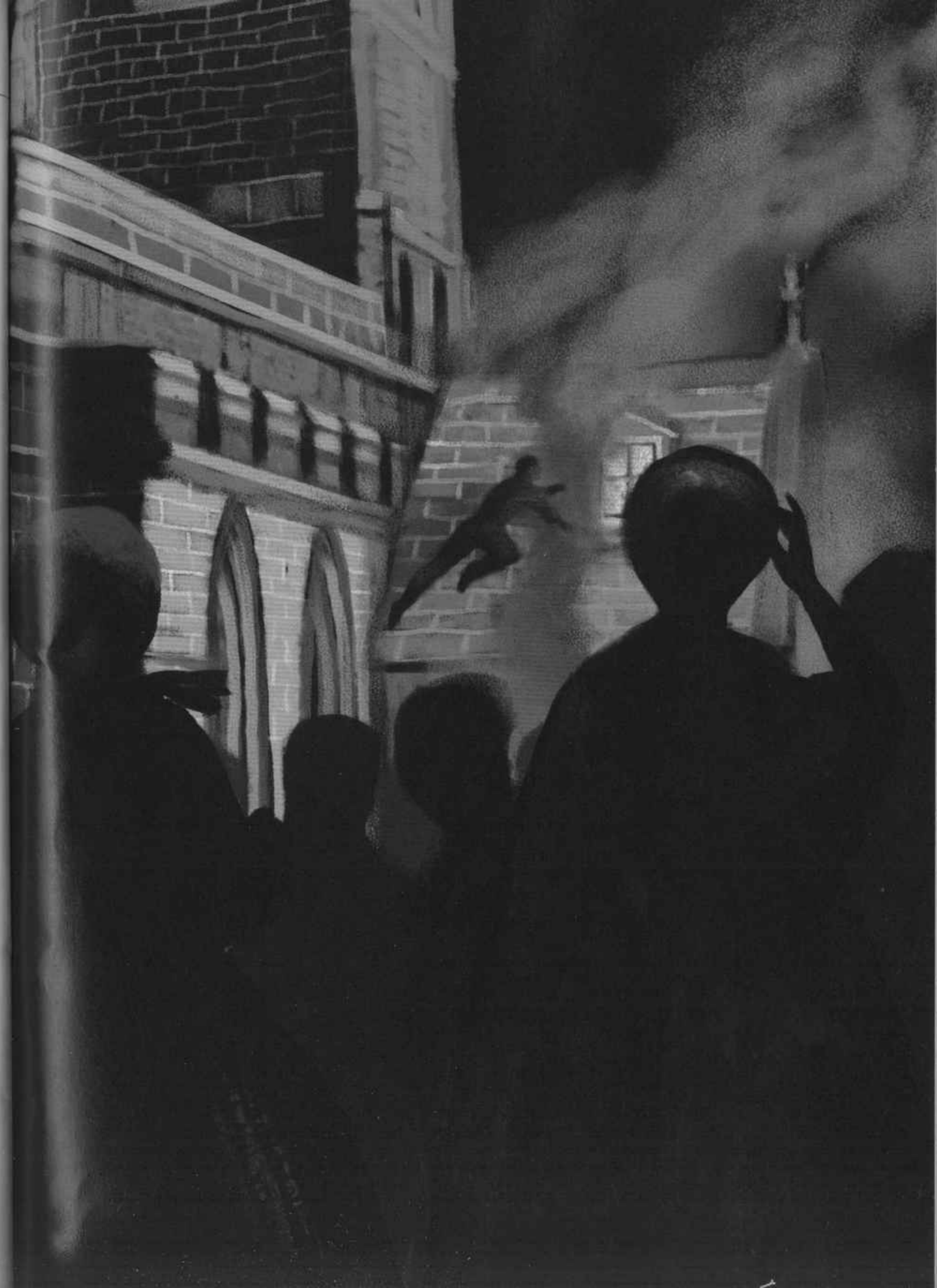
As I ran back towards the church, I saw flames against the evening sky. The vestry was on fire! I heard the sound of a man crying for help. A crowd of people had gathered. 'Someone's inside!' I cried. 'Who is it?'

A man close to me said, 'It's my master, Sir Percival Glyde.'

For a long time I had felt nothing but hatred for Sir Percival, but I could not watch as he burnt to death in the vestry. I saw a window on the roof. Quickly I climbed onto the wall beside the vestry then onto the roof. Perhaps he could escape through the window! I broke the glass, but then the flames jumped out of the open space.

Just then, the fire engine arrived. Firemen broke down the door and went in. They came out carrying the dead body of Sir Percival Glyde.

1. **forgery** : a copy of something that is made to look like the original, but is false.



Go back to the text

1 Comprehension check

Match the phrases in columns A and B to make true sentences. There are three phrases in column B that you do not need to use.

A

- 1 ☐ Walter was shocked when he saw Laura
- 2 ☐ Marian told Walter that they had to go to London
- 3 ☐ The nurse helped Laura to escape
- 4 ☐ The servants at Limmeridge House did not recognise Laura
- 5 ☐ Marian and Walter wanted to discover Sir Percival's secret
- 6 ☐ Walter went to the village church
- 7 ☐ Sir Percival had no right to his father's property or title
- 8 ☐ Walter climbed onto the wall of the vestry

B

- A because he wanted to find out more about Sir Percival's mother.
- B because they knew that Laura wasn't Anne.
- C because they wanted to make him admit Laura's true identity.
- D because he wanted to save Sir Percival's life.
- E because someone was following them.
- F because he wanted to find out more about Mrs Catherick's husband.
- G because she had changed so much in the asylum.
- H because his parents were not really married.
- I because Laura was still married to Sir Percival.
- J because Marian had given her one hundred pounds.
- K because he thought she was dead.

FCE 2 The real Marian

Read the text below about the 'real' Marian. Use the word given in capitals at the end of each line to form a word that fits in the space in the same line. There is an example at the beginning (0).

The (0) popularity of *The Woman in White* in the 19th century can best be compared to that of (1) films and TV shows today. Its characters were (2) : Walter became a common name for boys, and Fosco for cats. (3), many male (4) fell in love with the 'ugly' Marian. They wrote to Collins asking him the name of the woman who was his (5) for her. Collins never replied, but some of his (6) believe that the (7) Marian was Marian Evans, better known as George Eliot, the great (8) Marian Evans was physically (9), but brilliant and (10) She wrote books that went against the standard ideas of the time, and she dared to live (11) with a (12) man who was separated from his wife.

POPULAR
SUCCESSIDOL
INTERESTING
READINSPIRE
BIOGRAPHY
ORIGINNOVEL
ATTRACTIVE
COURAGEOPEN
MARRY

3 Summary

Read the summary of chapters 4-6, and chose the right word or words to fill in the gaps. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Laura meets Anne by the (lake/sea/river) (0) lake Anne tells her that Sir Percival has a terrible secret but, before she can tell Laura the secret, she runs away. When Sir Percival hears of their meeting he gets angry and does not believe Laura when she says she knows nothing about the secret. A couple of days later Marian climbs up on to the (library/bedroom/study) (1) roof to listen to a conversation between Fosco and Sir Percival. She hears that Sir Percival would get twenty thousand pounds and Fosco's wife ten thousand pounds if (Laura died/Mr Fairlie died/Laura signed the document) (2) While she is listening, it begins to rain. She gets wet and becomes very ill. Laura is so worried about her sister

that she gets (angry/confused/ill) (3) and stays in her room, too. Later, Sir Percival tells Laura that Marian has gone to (London/Limmeridge/Paris) (4) He tells her to follow Marian there. However, after Laura has left, we learn that Sir Percival was lying and Marian never left Blackwater. A short time later we learn that Laura has died in London of heart disease.

Walter returns to England and hears of Laura's death. He goes to visit her grave at Limmeridge. To his great surprise, he sees both Marian and Laura there. Marian tells him that she found Laura (in the Count's house/at Limmeridge/in the asylum) (5) She explains that the Count had told Mr Fairlie that Laura was really Anne Catherick. When he hears this, Walter is determined to prove Laura's real identity. He thinks that Sir Percival will tell the truth if he can discover his secret. He decides to go and talk to (Mrs Michelson/Mrs Catherick/Mrs Fairlie) (6) All he learns from her is that the secret concerns Sir Percival's (father/mother/friendship with Fosco) (7) Later, by examining the marriage registers, Walter discovers that Sir Percival's parents were not married. Therefore, Sir Percival has no right to (Laura's property/his property and title/the Countess's property) (8) However, this information does not help Walter because Sir Percival dies in a fire in the church vestry and the marriage register is destroyed.

Before you read



1 Listening

Listen to the beginning of Chapter Seven, and say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Everybody knew why Sir Percival was in the vestry. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 The inquest concluded that Sir Percival had been murdered. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Walter told the officials everything he knew. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Marian and Laura changed house in London. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Walter received a letter from Mrs Catherick. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



CHAPTER SEVEN

Mrs Catherick's Story

12. Walter Hartright's narrative continued



At the inquest¹ the next day, the parish clerk said that the key to the vestry had gone missing just before the fire. Perhaps somebody had stolen it. Nobody could understand why Sir Percival had been in the vestry. The inquest concluded that Sir Percival's death was an accident. He had probably taken a candle with him into the vestry, because by then it was dark. The vestry was full of dry papers. Somehow they had caught fire, and Sir Percival could not get to the door.

1

I did not tell them what I knew. I had no proof now of the forgery in the register because the register was burnt. Feeling depressed, I returned to my hotel. There I found two letters for me. One was from Marian:

2

1. **inquest** : an official examination to discover the cause of a death.

Dear Walter,

Please return to London. We have moved to a new house. Do not worry — we are safe — but come back quickly. Our new address is 5 Gower's Walk.

Your friend,

Marian

I put the other letter in my pocket and ran to the station to get the first train to London. On the train, I opened the other letter. It was from Mrs Catherick.

END

13. Mrs Jane Catherick's narrative

Sir,

I have heard the news of a certain gentleman's death. I also heard that you were foolish enough to try to save him. Even so, your investigations were the cause of his death, and I thank you for that. To show you how thankful I am, I will tell you what you want to know: that gentleman's secret and mine. I will not sign this letter, and I will not name the gentleman in question — let's just call him Sir P...

Twenty-three years ago, Sir P admired me. I was married to a parish clerk who was a fool with no money. Before I married him, I had worked for Major Donthorne of Varneck Hall, and I had seen how rich ladies lived. I liked beautiful things, and Sir P gave me beautiful presents. What did he want in exchange for the presents? Only the key to the vestry. I gave it to him.

My daughter Anne was born three months later. My foolish

husband found the presents hidden in my room. He told everyone in the village that Sir P had been my lover and that Anne was Sir P's child. Then he left me. He was wrong, of course. I had only known Sir P for four months.

I went to Sir P and asked him to tell the villagers that my husband was wrong. He laughed at me. He then told me what he had done to the register and he explained what the law does to people who commit that crime. 'By giving me the key to the vestry, you became my partner in the forgery,' he said. 'If the police find out, they'll put you in prison for years!'

Then he said, 'You've been very helpful to me, so now I'll help you. I'll send you money every month on two conditions: you must keep the secret and never tell anyone, in your own interest as well as mine; and you must never leave the village.'

He knew that none of the village women spoke to me because they thought I had lost my virtue.¹ He knew his secret was now safe, so he explained it all to me. His mother was already married when his father — Sir F — met her. She had married in Ireland but returned to her parents in Hampshire when her husband treated her badly. No one in Hampshire knew anything about her marriage, so when Sir F said that he had married her, no one suspected anything. Sir F told Sir P the truth when he was dying. As soon as Sir F was dead, Sir P claimed the title, Blackwater Park, and the land. No one suspected that he wasn't the legitimate heir.² But then he got into debt, and in order to borrow money he had to show a birth certificate and a certificate of his parents' marriage. That is when he came to me.

1. **lost my virtue** : here, had sex outside marriage.

2. **legitimate heir** : the person who has the legal right to a person's money, title or property after that person dies.

How I hated him! He forced me to stay here in this village, 7 where they all talked about me but no one spoke to me! Finally, now, after all these years, I have earned their respect. The vicar¹ says hello to me! But back then, when Anne was a child, my life was very hard. Sir P sometimes let me go away for a short while. He let me go to Limmeridge for a few weeks once. Mrs Fairlie of Limmeridge House liked Anne. That made me laugh. Mrs Fairlie was a foolish ugly woman who had somehow managed to marry one of the most handsome men in England.

Another time I wrote to Sir P to ask if I could go away for a few 8 weeks. His reply was very rude. As I read it I became so angry that I insulted him out loud in front of Anne — I said he was a miserable impostor.² The next day he came to my house to say that he had changed his mind. Anne was in the room, and he told her to leave rather rudely. Anne turned to him and said, 'You're a miserable impostor.' She had no idea what it meant — she was just repeating my words — but Sir P was terrified. He was sure that she knew his secret, so he put her in the asylum. I did not object: I have never loved my daughter.

14. Walter Hartright's narrative 9

When I got to our new house, Marian and Laura were waiting for me. Marian had told Laura that we had moved to a new house because it was in a nicer part of London. When Laura had gone to bed, I asked Marian, 'What's the real reason?'

'Count Fosco,' said Marian. 'Yesterday, I looked out of the window in our old house, and I saw the Count standing outside

1. **vicar** : the local priest.

2. **impostor** : a person who says he is someone else in order to deceive others.



with the doctor from the asylum! Then they went away. Later the Count came back alone. When I saw him, I told Laura that I was going for a walk, and went out to him. He said he'd come for two reasons: first, to express his feelings for me (I refused to listen to them) and secondly, to repeat the warning in his letter. He told me that Percival was dead, and that you were investigating Percival's secret when he died. The Count had contacted the asylum doctor and said he knew where Anne Catherick was. But, when he and the doctor were outside the house, the Count changed his mind and sent the doctor away, saying that he'd been mistaken.'

'Why?'

'It's embarrassing, Walter, but I must tell you: he changed his mind because of me. The one weak point in that man's iron character is the admiration he feels for me. He said, "Tell Mr Hartright to stay away from me! If I must put your pretty sister back in the asylum to stop Mr Hartright from investigating me, I shall do so. But I prefer not to, because I don't want to cause you pain, Miss Halcombe." As soon as he left, I decided to take this new house.'

The next day we told Laura that her husband was dead and that her marriage, the greatest error of her life, was over.

Go back to the text

1 Comprehension check

Chapter Seven has been divided into nine sections. Choose from the list A-J the heading which best summarises each part (1-9) of the chapter. There is one extra heading which you do not need to use. The first one has been done for you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| A <input type="checkbox"/> He tells her all | F <input type="checkbox"/> Repeating an insult |
| B <input type="checkbox"/> A foolish husband | G <input type="checkbox"/> A favour for your favour |
| C <input type="checkbox"/> Two women write | H <input type="checkbox"/> The admiration of a bad man |
| D <input type="checkbox"/> Her daughter's friend | I <input type="checkbox"/> She loves him anyway |
| E <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A fatal accident | J <input type="checkbox"/> Trapped by her own guilt |

2 Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Why didn't Mrs Catherick sign her name in the letter?
- 2 Why did Mrs Catherick finally decide to reveal Sir Percival's secret to Walter?
- 3 Who did Mrs Catherick work for before she was married?
- 4 What did Sir Percival want from Mrs Catherick?
- 5 What did he give her in return for her help?
- 6 Why did Mrs Catherick describe her husband as 'foolish'?
- 7 Why didn't Mrs Catherick tell anyone what Sir Percival had done?
- 8 Why did Sir Percival commit forgery?
- 9 What made Sir Percival 'terrified'?
- 10 What did he do as a consequence of this event?
- 11 Why did Fosco come to Marian's house?
- 12 Why didn't Fosco take the asylum doctor to Laura?

FCE 3 The Lady of Glenwith Grange

You are going to read a summary of another story by Wilkie Collins. Seven sentences have been removed from the story. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap (1-7). There is one extra sentence that you do not need to use.

I recently met Miss Ida Welwyn at her home Glenwith Grange. A friend of hers later told me the sad story of her life. Ida's father was a very handsome but not particularly intelligent man. Her mother, though, was extremely intelligent. 1 But they seemed very happy together, especially after the birth of their daughter Ida.

Ida and her mother did everything together and were very happy. In fact, Ida had no other friend in this world. 2 Before she died, Ida's mother made her promise to care for Rosamond as if she were her mother. Ida, even though she was only a young girl, turned out to be an excellent mother to Rosamond.

When Rosamond was a beautiful young woman, the Welwyn family travelled to Paris. Here they heard about a French aristocrat, the Baron Franval. 3 Reports of his death had reached Paris, but they were all false and he had returned to France.

Both Rosamond and Mr Welwyn were favourably impressed by the Baron. 4 Mr Welwyn even invited the Baron to visit them at Glenwith Grange.

After spending many months at the Grange, the Baron proposed marriage to Rosamond. She happily accepted. Still, Ida felt a vague terror about their marriage. 5 Despite Ida's doubts, the marriage was happy, and all went until Rosamond was seven months pregnant. 6 He said that the real Baron Franval had just returned to France, and that Rosamond's husband was an impostor and a criminal.

7 Now, ten years later, Ida lives alone at Glenwith Grange with her sister's daughter and her memories of the happy days with her loving mother.

A When the Baron went to London on business, a French policeman arrived at the Grange.

- B When Rosamond heard the horrible news, she was so shocked that she gave birth prematurely to a baby girl, and then died.
- C Unfortunately, when Ida was only eleven years old, her mother became very ill after giving birth to Ida's sister Rosamond.
- D Only Ida had strong doubts about him.
- E Everyone was surprised when she married him.
- F Her only consolation was that the Baron agreed to let her continue to live with Rosamond.
- G People thought that they were perfect for each other.
- H The Baron had gone to South America 15 years earlier to make his fortune.

4 Discussion

Work in pairs or groups. Think about the characters, their relationships and the general storyline of *The Lady of Glenwith Grange*. What elements does it have in common with characters and the plot of *The Woman in White*?

Before you read**1 Listening**

Listen to the beginning of Chapter Eight and decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F). Then correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Laura was getting better and began to look less like Anne Catherick. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Laura was starting to remember things about her time in the asylum. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Walter wrote a letter to Mrs Catherick. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Major Donthorne lived at Varneck Hall. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Major Donthorne was a good friend of Sir Percival's. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Mr Philip Fairlie had often visited Varneck Hall in the past. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Dear Mr Hartright,

In answer to your questions, I never met Sir Percival Glyde, and he certainly never came to Varneck Hall. Mr Philip Fairlie, however, was a frequent visitor here, and, yes, he was here in September 1826. I hope this helps your investigations.

Yours truly,

Major Donthorne



CHAPTER EIGHT

A Night at the Opera

15. Walter Hartright's narrative continued



We lived quietly in our new house. Laura was getting better. Now she looked like the Laura I first met at Limmeridge: her expression was lively once more, she smiled frequently, and she had lost that sad nervous look that made her so very like Anne Catherick. The only thing that had not improved was her memory of the period between her departure from Blackwater Park and her escape from the asylum. She remembered nothing of that painful time. Mr Kyrle told us that if she could not remember what had happened to her, we had no hope of proving her identity.

During that time, I thought often of Anne Catherick. Some parts of her mother's letter were of particular interest. I had certain suspicions, so I wrote a letter to Mrs Catherick's old employer, Major Donthorne of Varneck Hall. I asked him some questions about the time when Anne Catherick's mother had worked at his house. This is the reply I received:

Anne was born in June 1827. She was very like Laura, and Laura was very like her father. The conclusion was obvious. I thought of those famous words from the Bible: *'The sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children.'*¹ The fatal similarity between two daughters of one father had caused all this suffering.

I thought also about Laura's meeting with Anne Catherick by the lake. Anne had said that she wanted to die and to be buried beside Mrs Fairlie. A little more than a year had passed since she had said that, and now her wish had come true. The mystery of the woman in white had finally been solved. I could now say goodbye to the ghostly figure who has haunted² these pages as she haunted my life.

*

April came — the month of spring — and things were beginning to change between Laura and me. Throughout her long illness, I had been like a brother to her. Now that she was better, my heart began to beat fast again when she was near me, our hands began to shake when they met.

One day I spoke to Marian. 'You know that I've loved Laura since the day we met. I want to protect her and fight for her

1. **'The sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children'** : children will suffer the consequences of their parents' bad actions.
2. **haunted** : visited repeatedly.

interests with all my strength. I want to marry her so that I'll have the right to protect her. What do you think?

'I agree,' said Marian, kissing me on the forehead. 'I'll go and speak to her now.' She ran out of the room, and I waited, trembling. After a few minutes, Laura ran into the room and threw her arms around my neck. 'My darling!' she whispered. 'Can we say that we love each other now?'

Ten days later, we were even happier: we were married.

★

At the beginning of May, I began watching the Count's house. One evening he got into a cab and told the driver to go to the opera house. I took a cab to my friend Pesca's house and asked him to come to the opera with me. I knew that Pesca had left Italy for political reasons. I also knew that the Count had left Italy many years ago. Perhaps Pesca knew the Count? Perhaps the Count really was a spy — a spy in a much more important sense than Laura had intended when she called him by that name.

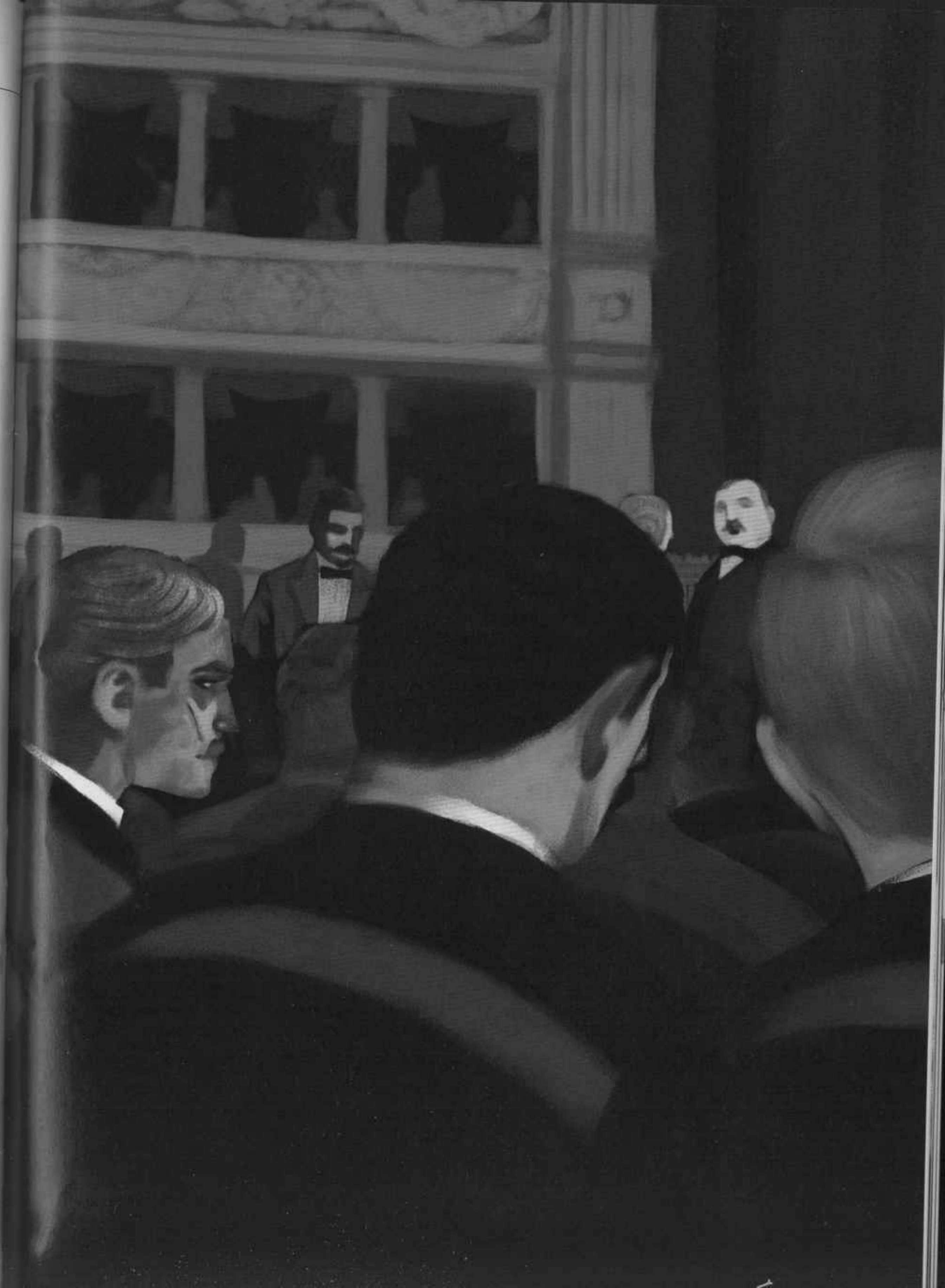
At the opera, I asked Pesca, 'Do you recognise that fat man over there?'

I noticed that a man close to us was listening with interest to our conversation. He was a thin blond man with a scar¹ on his cheek.

'No,' Pesca replied. 'I've never seen him before.'

Just then, the Count looked up and saw Pesca. The Count's face — which had been happy a few seconds before — was suddenly full of fear! He stood up and quickly left the theatre. We tried to follow him, but the corridors were crowded. I noticed that the man with the scar on his cheek ran through the crowd and followed Fosco out of the theatre.

1. **scar** : the mark that is left on the skin after a cut.



We went to Pesca's apartment. 'My dear friend,' I said. 'I know you left Italy for political reasons. You told me long ago that you couldn't explain them to me, but this is an emergency. Please help me if you can. You say you don't recognise that man, but he recognises you, and he's afraid of you. Can you explain why?'

Pesca got up and walked around the room nervously. After a few minutes of intense thought, he sat down again and said, 'What I'm going to tell you now is a secret, and I could be killed for telling it to you. When I was young, I joined a secret political association in Italy called the Brotherhood. The aim of the Brotherhood is to stop the abuse of power and to maintain the rights of the people. Members murder people who abuse their power. Anyone who joins the Brotherhood must stay in it for his lifetime. Anyone who betrays¹ the Brotherhood will be killed by another member. When I was young, I had passionate political beliefs. Now I'm older, I want to leave the Brotherhood, but I can't. That's why I left Italy and came to live in England as a teacher. Here I'm of no use to the Brotherhood. Each member of the Brotherhood has a scar like this one on his arm.' Pesca rolled up his sleeve and showed me a small red scar. 'I was a leader before I left Italy. This man recognises me, but I don't recognise him. I haven't changed much over the years, but perhaps this man has. Perhaps he wasn't always so fat. Perhaps he had a beard or different coloured hair. One thing is clear: he looked afraid when he saw me, so he has probably betrayed the Brotherhood; he probably thinks I'm following him so that I can kill him. Listen, Walter, I don't want to have to kill this man. Please tell me nothing about him. If I discover that he has betrayed the Brotherhood, I'll have to act.'

1. **betrays** : is not loyal to.

Go back to the text

FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-7, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best.

- 1 Now that Laura was feeling better
 - A ☐ she looked less like Anne.
 - B ☐ she looked more like Anne.
 - C ☐ she smiled less.
 - D ☐ she began to see Walter as a brother.
- 2 What was Mr Philip Fairlie's sin?
 - A ☐ He was not married to his daughter's mother.
 - B ☐ He did not take care of Anne.
 - C ☐ He did not tell Mrs Fairlie who Anne really was.
 - D ☐ He did not tell Laura that she had a sister.
- 3 How were the sins of Mr Fairlie 'visited upon' Anne?
 - A ☐ She had an unloving mother.
 - B ☐ She was put into an asylum.
 - C ☐ She never knew who her real father was.
 - D ☐ She looked like her sister.
- 4 Walter had acted like a brother to Laura because
 - A ☐ he did not love her any more.
 - B ☐ he respected her engagement to Sir Percival.
 - C ☐ he thought that she didn't love him.
 - D ☐ her health had been bad.
- 5 Fosco left the theatre because he saw
 - A ☐ Walter.
 - B ☐ the man with the scar.
 - C ☐ Pesca.
 - D ☐ a large crowd in the corridor.

- 6 Pesca probably didn't recognise Fosco because
- A ☐ he'd never met him before.
- B ☐ he had met him too long ago.
- C ☐ he hadn't seen him very well.
- D ☐ Fosco's appearance had changed.
- 7 If Pesca discovers that Fosco has betrayed the Brotherhood,
- A ☐ he will have to kill him.
- B ☐ he will have to leave England.
- C ☐ he will have to follow him.
- D ☐ he will have to join the Brotherhood.

FCE 2 Writing

Many readers feel that Count Fosco and Marian are the most important characters in the book. Do you agree? If not, who do you think is the most important character? Write between 120-180 words to give your opinion. Think about the following questions to help you with your answer:

- Which characters do you consider responsible for creating the situation in the story?
- Which characters do you find the most interesting and/or unusual?
- Which characters seem to be the most intelligent?
- Which characters contribute most to the dramatic tension and suspense of the book?

3 Discussion

Walter admires Marian very much, but he doesn't fall in love with her. If Marian were beautiful do you think Walter would have fallen in love with her instead of Laura? Why do you think Fosco sees beyond Marian's physical appearance?

FCE 4 The Brotherhood

For questions 1-13, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space. Use only one word in each space. There is an example at the beginning (0).

The Brotherhood in *The Woman in White* (0) loosely based on a secret political association of the early 1800s (1) the Carbonari. This association, (2) members came from every social class, fought to free Italy from foreign rule and to set up a constitutional government. (3) actively participated in numerous failed revolutions (4) Italy. In around 1831 the Carbonari became part (5) another secret group, Young Italy, (6) was founded by Giuseppe Mazzini. On 14 January 1858, Felice Orsini, a member of Young Italy, tried to assassinate the French Emperor Napoleon III. (7) French suspected that the Italians who planned the attack lived in England. A major crisis occurred (8) France and England. Fortunately, the Emperor himself kept the situation under control. It is likely (9) the first readers of *The Woman in White*, which was published in 1860, immediately thought of the Carbonari when they read (10) a mysterious Italian Brotherhood. Wilkie Collins, (11) adored Italy, probably (12) Pesca and Fosco members of (13) association for its dramatic effect.

5 Vocabulary

The verbs in the box are all used in Chapter Eight. Put each one into the correct sentence below. Remember to change the form of the word if necessary.

protect bury betray haunt whisper
recognise join improve

- 1 She his name to me because she didn't want anyone else to hear.
- 2 You've changed the colour of your hair since I last saw you. I almost didn't you!
- 3 Have you been studying a lot recently? Your English has really

- 4 I've started to take boxing lessons so I can myself if I'm ever attacked.
- 5 I asked you not to tell my secret to anyone. Why did you me? Now I won't ever trust you again.
- 6 Why don't you my gym? It doesn't cost very much.
- 7 They say that the ghost of an old lady this house at night.
- 8 I once heard that a famous explorer all his treasure on this island.

Before you read



1 Listening

Listen to the beginning of Chapter Nine. For questions 1-5, choose the best answer, A, B or C.

- 1 Walter wrote Pesca a letter saying that Fosco
 - A ☐ had not been loyal to the Brotherhood.
 - B ☐ had not been loyal to him.
 - C ☐ had harmed Laura.
- 2 Walter arrived at Fosco's house at
 - A ☐ 9 o'clock.
 - B ☐ midnight.
 - C ☐ 11 o'clock.
- 3 Outside Fosco's house, Walter saw
 - A ☐ a policeman.
 - B ☐ Pesca.
 - C ☐ the man with the scar on his face.
- 4 When Walter entered the drawing-room, Fosco was
 - A ☐ getting ready to leave.
 - B ☐ writing a letter.
 - C ☐ walking around the room nervously.
- 5 Fosco knew that Walter had won when
 - A ☐ Walter told him to roll up his sleeve.
 - B ☐ he read the note from Pesca.
 - C ☐ Walter took out his gun.

CHAPTER NINE

Confronting Count Fosco

16. Walter Hartright's narrative continued

I was still thinking about what Pesca had told me when I walked back from his apartment that night. As I came closer to home, an idea started to form in my mind.

When I got home, I wrote this letter to Pesca:

The man you saw at the opera is a member of the Brotherhood and has betrayed the cause. I am sure of this. His name is Fosco and he lives at 5 Forest Road. Find him and look at his arm. The scar is there. By the time you read this, I will be dead. Please get revenge for my death.

I signed it and put it in an envelope. On the envelope I wrote, 'Open this letter at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning unless you hear from me before. Please send a signed note back saying that you have received this letter.' I then gave it to a messenger and waited. An hour later the messenger returned with Pesca's note.

As I was leaving our house, Marian touched my arm. 'Where are you going?'

'It's Fosco,' I said. 'He'll probably leave England tonight. I must act immediately.'

I got a cab and went to Forest Road. It was midnight. As I walked up to the Count's door, I noticed the blond man with the scar on his face from the opera. He looked at me and walked on down the road. I rang the doorbell. The servant showed me into the drawing-room where the Count was packing his bags. 'Sit down, Mr Hartright. I'm in a hurry.'

'I know,' I replied.

'What do you know?'

'I know you're leaving England, and I know why.'

The Count went quickly and quietly to the door and locked it. 'I don't believe you,' he said.

'Roll up the left sleeve of your shirt,' I said. 'And you'll see the reason.'

Count Fosco put his hand into the desk and took out a gun. 'Perhaps I should kill you,' he said.

'Read this first,' I replied, handing him the note from Pesca.

The Count read the note and immediately knew that I had won. 'What do you want?' he asked.

'I want a full confession, written and signed, of your conspiracy¹ with Sir Percival Glyde against Laura Fairlie,' I said, 'and I want proof of your story so that everyone knows the truth at last.'

'I agree,' said the Count. 'Now I'll tell you what I want. When

1. **conspiracy** : agreement or secret plan between a group of people to do something illegal.

END



I've given you the confession and the proof you ask for, the Countess and I will leave this house without any interference from you.'

I agreed.

The Count began to write. He wrote quickly, with great intensity and pleasure. When he had finished, he cried, 'Done, Mr Hartright!' He gave me his confession and a letter from Sir Percival to him, dated 26 July 1850. The letter said, '*Lady Glyde will arrive in London this evening*'. This was the proof I needed! The death certificate said that Lady Glyde had died on 25 July, and here was a letter from Sir Percival proving that she was still alive on 26 July!

At eight o'clock the messenger went to Pesca's house. He returned at eight-thirty with the unopened letter. The Count burnt the letter, and, half an hour later, he and the Countess were gone.

17. Count Fosco's narrative

My story begins with this simple fact: Percival and I needed money. Immense necessity! Universal want! We discovered this common problem when we met in Europe after Percival's marriage. We discussed it as we travelled to England. There, at Blackwater Park, I met the magnificent creature who is inscribed on my heart as 'Marian'. At sixty, I adored that woman with the volcanic passion of an eighteen-year-old. Marian herself has described our time at Blackwater Park with perfect accuracy. My narrative must therefore begin with Marian's terrible illness.

At that time, all my energy was directed at finding Anne Catherick. The fact that Anne had escaped from the asylum first gave me the idea for the conspiracy. I said to Percival, 'We'll simply exchange their identities: Lady Glyde and Anne will exchange names, places, and destinies. Anne is dying. When she dies as Lady Glyde, our money problems will be solved, and your secret will be safe! Anne spoke to your wife by the lake. One day she'll come back to the lake, but this time I'll be there!'

On my third day by the lake, I met Anne. I told her that Lady Glyde had sent me. I said that Lady Glyde had gone to London and wanted Anne to go there too to meet her. Anne believed me. I told her to meet me in the village the next day. Anne, my wife and I then drove to London.

We wrote to the servants at Forest Road to tell them that Lady Glyde was coming to visit. When we arrived, Anne was immediately suspicious. Her anxiety caused her to become very ill indeed, and the next day she died. This was a great shock to me. The plan depended on Anne staying alive until the real Lady Glyde left Blackwater Park.

I met Lady Glyde at the station with a carriage, but it was not my carriage: it was the carriage of the doctor from the asylum. He never for a moment doubted that she was Anne Catherick. He did not listen to what she said. Why should he listen to a mad woman? I told him that Anne was even more confused than before; she now believed she was Lady Glyde. That, in short, was our great conspiracy. So simple! So brilliant! So interesting!

FOSCO.

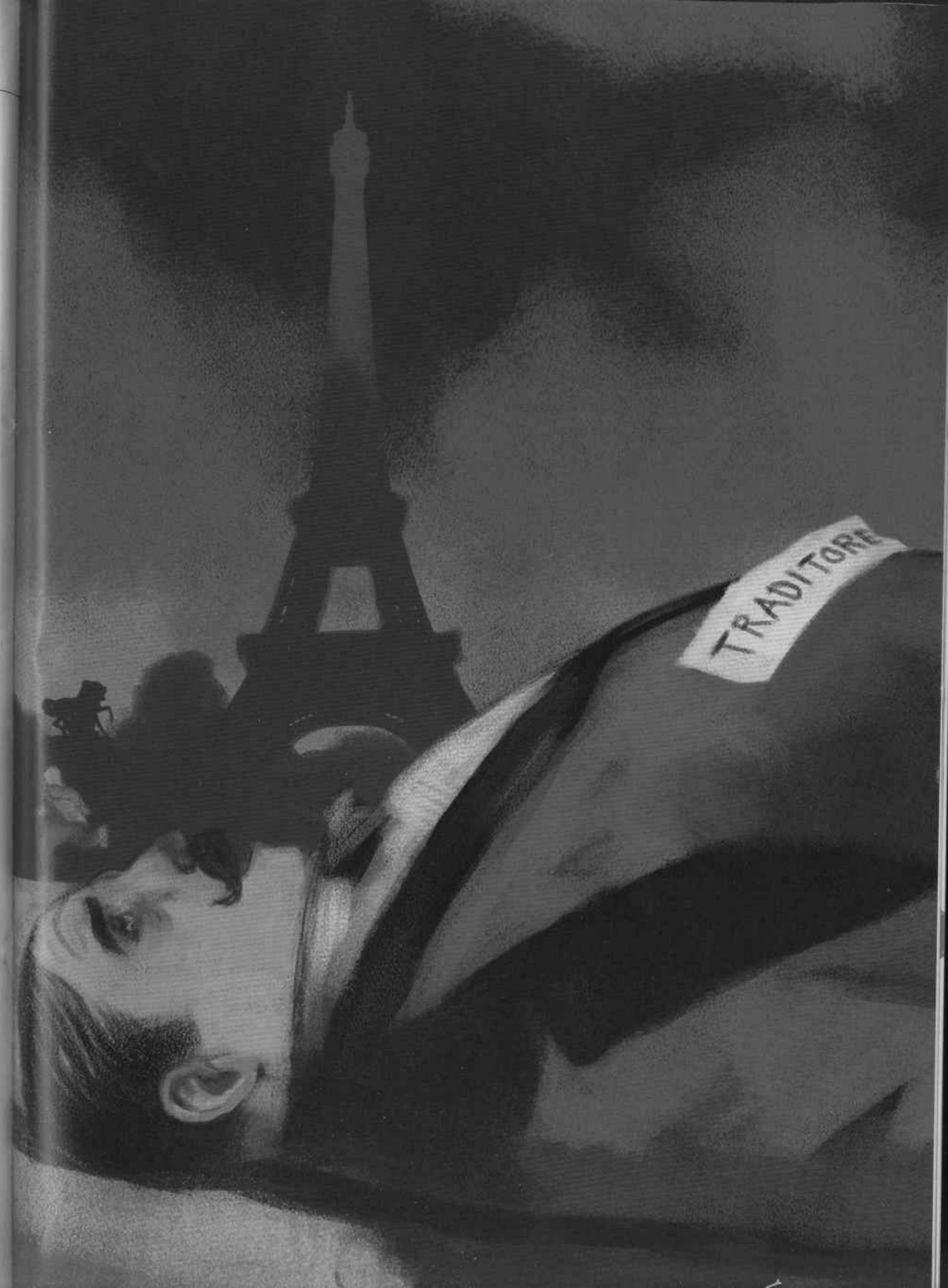
18. Conclusion by Walter Hartright

Over the year of my investigation, I had asked the people involved to provide the narratives that have been presented here. We took the narratives and Sir Percival's letter to Mr Kyrle's office. After having read them all, Mr Kyrle said that Laura's identity was now proved. The next day, we went to Limmeridge House. Mr Kyrle confirmed to Mr Frederick Fairlie that Laura was in fact his niece and not Anne Catherick. The people who had been at the funeral were all invited to come and see that Laura, Lady Glyde, was in fact alive and well. I copied down the words on the gravestone before it was removed.

A few weeks later, I read in the newspaper that the Count had been murdered in Paris. The murderer had not been caught, but witnesses described him as a blond man with a scar on his cheek. The newspaper said that the murderer was believed to be a member of the Brotherhood. He had left a note on the Count's body with the single word 'Traditore' — the Italian word for traitor¹ — written on it.

Sir Percival and the Count had spent all Laura's money, so we could not get it back, but the following year Mr Frederick Fairlie died, so Limmeridge House was Laura's. Marian, Laura, and I lived there happily. The following year our son was born, and he is now the heir of Limmeridge House.

1. **traitor** : a person who has not been loyal to a person or an ideal.



Go back to the text

1 Comprehension check

Say whether the following sentences are true (T) or false (F), and then correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Walter had to hurry to talk to Count Fosco before Pesca killed him. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Sir Percival's letter showed that Laura was alive one day after the date on her death certificate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Count Fosco did not particularly like Marian. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Anne became very ill because she was so anxious. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Mr Kyrle did not think Count Fosco's signed confession and Percival's letters were enough to prove Laura's identity. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 The doctor of the asylum did not know that he had brought Laura, and not Anne, to the asylum. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Pesca killed Count Fosco. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Count Fosco was killed because of the part he played in the conspiracy against Laura. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Once her identity was proved, Laura became a wealthy woman. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 Laura and Walter had a son. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

FCE 2 Writing

Laura is said to be the 'ideal woman' of Victorian England. Using her as your model, write a description (120-180 words) of what you think the ideal Victorian woman was like. Use these questions to help.

- What was she like physically?
- What sort of character did she have? (For example, was she strong-willed, courageous, easily influenced, etc.)
- How did she act with the man she loved?

3 Speaking

Now think of a female character in a recent book or film that you particularly liked. Tell your partner how your chosen character is:

- similar to Laura.
- different from Laura.

4 Vocabulary

Look at the following definitions. What is the word that is being defined? Complete the letters to make the correct word. You have been given the first letter of each one. All words are used in chapters 7-9.

- Mother and father p_____
- For example, Lord, Sir, Count t_____
- A person who deceives by saying he is someone else i_____
- Causing a bad situation or death f_____
- 'Got ' = became husband and wife m_____
- A play in which the words are sung to music o_____
- Someone who belongs to a group/organisation m_____
- Another word for 'murder' k_____
- Something/facts that shows the truth p_____
- A secret plan with others, to do something bad against someone c_____
- A person who has not been loyal to someone/something t_____
- The person who will receive a position/money/property after someone's death h_____

5 Summary

Below is a summary of the final chapters of the *The Woman in White*. Number the paragraphs in the correct order, and then use the words from exercise 4 to complete the gaps.

- A ☐ Now that Laura had proved her real identity, she, Marian and Walter returned to Limmeridge House. Her uncle and all those

who had attended her funeral came to see that Laura was alive and well. Two weeks later Fosco was killed in Paris as a of the Brotherhood. Two years after this, Laura and Walter's son was born — the new of Limmeridge House.

- B ☐ In May, Walter invited his Italian friend Pesca to the house to see if he knew the Count. Pesca didn't know him, but the Count certainly recognised Pesca, and he quickly left.
- C ☐ 1 After Sir Percival died in the fire, Walter received a letter from Mrs Catherick in which she revealed Sir Percival's secret: his were not really married and he had no legal right to his father's property and
- D ☐ After the opera, Pesca told Walter that he was a of a secret association called the Brotherhood. He said that anyone who betrayed the Brotherhood would be killed. Pesca asked Walter not to tell him anything about Fosco because he did not want to have to him.
- E ☐ In her letter, she also revealed that Anne had once called Percival an Fearing she knew his secret, he sent her to the asylum. Walter also received a letter from Marian saying that she and Laura had moved house.
- F ☐ After Walter left Pesca, he formed a plan to obtain a written confession from Count Fosco. He wanted of the Count and Percival's against Laura. That same night Walter went to see Fosco. His plan worked — the Count gave him everything he wanted. Afterwards, the Count and his wife left England.
- G ☐ Laura got better in the new house and Walter continued his investigations. A letter from Major Donthorne finally explained the mystery of the similarity between Laura and Anne: they had the same father. When April arrived, Laura's illness was over and Walter and Laura got

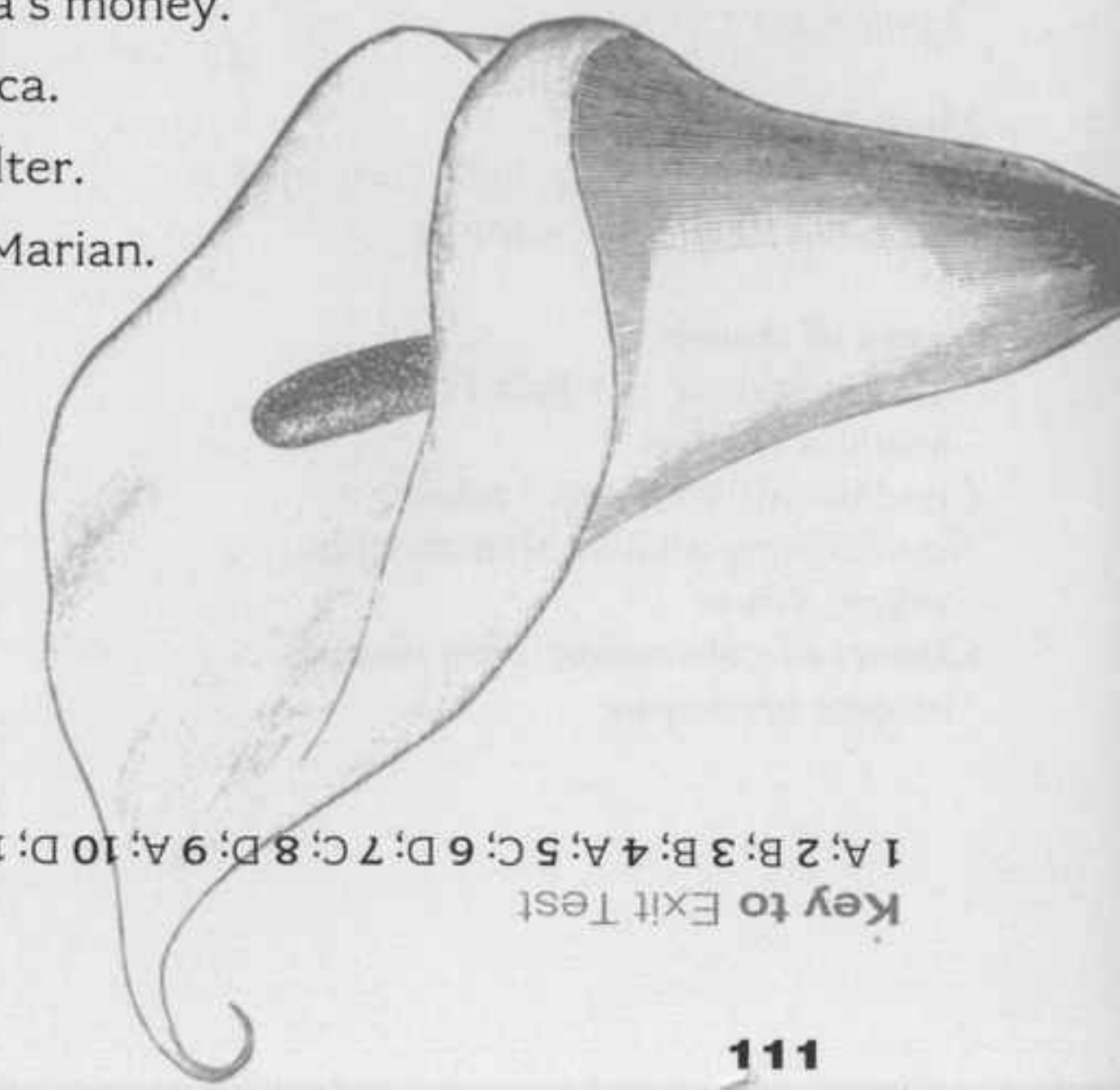
FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-14 choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best.

- Where did Walter first meet the woman in white?
 - ☐ just outside London
 - ☐ at Sir Percival's home
 - ☐ in London
 - ☐ in Limmeridge
- What was the strange question that the woman in white asked Walter when they first met?
 - ☐ Do you know the way to London?
 - ☐ Do you know any aristocrats?
 - ☐ Do you know Mrs Fairlie?
 - ☐ Do you know Laura Fairlie?
- Who first gave Anne Catherick a white dress to wear?
 - ☐ her mother
 - ☐ Laura's mother
 - ☐ Count Fosco
 - ☐ Mr Philip Fairlie
- Where did Walter go after he left Limmeridge House?
 - ☐ Central America
 - ☐ Paris
 - ☐ Blackwater Park
 - ☐ North America
- What was Laura's reason for marrying Sir Percival?
 - ☐ She was in love with him.
 - ☐ She needed his money.
 - ☐ It was what her father wanted.
 - ☐ She wanted to escape Limmeridge.

- 6 What was the Countess's relationship to Laura?
- A ☐ She was her mother's sister.
- B ☐ She was her cousin.
- C ☐ She was an old friend of the family.
- D ☐ She was her father's sister.
- 7 Laura called the Count a spy because
- A ☐ the Count had told Sir Percival about her love for Walter.
- B ☐ she knew about the Count's political activities in Italy.
- C ☐ the Count had seen her with Anne at the lake and then told Percival.
- D ☐ the Count was always secretly watching her and Marian.
- 8 Walter wanted to use Sir Percival's secret to force Percival to
- A ☐ tell him who Anne really was.
- B ☐ tell the Count to leave Laura alone.
- C ☐ give Laura's money back.
- D ☐ confess that Laura was not Anne.
- 9 What was Sir Percival's secret?
- A ☐ He was not the legal heir of his title or his property.
- B ☐ Anne and Laura were his daughters.
- C ☐ Anne was his daughter.
- D ☐ He had several debts.
- 10 Which characters (before Walter discovered it) really knew Sir Percival's secret?
- A ☐ Anne, Mrs Catherick and Sir Percival
- B ☐ Sir Percival, Fosco and Mrs Catherick
- C ☐ Sir Percival, Fosco, Mrs Catherick and Anne
- D ☐ Sir Percival and Mrs Catherick

- 11 Anne and Laura looked very similar because
- A ☐ they had the same grandfather.
- B ☐ they had the same mother.
- C ☐ they had the same father.
- D ☐ they were cousins.
- 12 Pesca didn't want to talk to Walter about Fosco because
- A ☐ Walter was not a member of the Brotherhood.
- B ☐ he did not want to help Walter.
- C ☐ he was afraid of Fosco.
- D ☐ he did not want to have to kill Fosco.
- 13 Fosco found Laura's home in London but decided not to take the asylum doctor to get her because
- A ☐ he was afraid of Walter.
- B ☐ he was afraid of Pesca.
- C ☐ he was in love with Laura.
- D ☐ he was in love with Marian.
- 14 The Count gave Walter proof of Laura's true identity and signed his confession because
- A ☐ he already had Laura's money.
- B ☐ he was afraid of Pesca.
- C ☐ he was afraid of Walter.
- D ☐ he was in love with Marian.



Key to Exit Test
1 A; 2 B; 3 B; 4 A; 5 C; 6 D; 7 C; 8 D; 9 A; 10 D; 11 C; 12 D; 13 D; 14 B.

This reader uses the **EXPANSIVE READING** approach, where the text becomes a springboard to improve language skills and to explore historical background, cultural connections and other topics suggested by the text.

The new structures introduced in this step of our **READING & TRAINING** series are listed below. Naturally, structures from lower steps are included too. For a complete list of structures used over all the six steps, see *The Black Cat Guide to Graded Readers*, which is also downloadable at no cost from our website, www.blackcat-cideb.com or www.cideb.it.

The vocabulary used at each step is carefully checked against vocabulary lists used for internationally recognised examinations.

Step Four B2.1

All the structures used in the previous levels, plus the following:

Verb tenses

Present Perfect Simple: *the first / second etc. time that ...*

Present Perfect Continuous: unfinished past with *for* or *since* (duration form)

Verb forms and patterns

Passive forms: Present Perfect Simple

Reported speech introduced by precise reporting verbs (e.g. *suggest, promise, apologise*)

Modal verbs

Be / get used to + -ing: habit formation

Had better: duty and warning

Types of clause

3rd Conditional: *if + Past Perfect, would(n't) have*

Conditionals with *may / might*

Non-defining relative clauses with:

which, whose

Clauses of concession: *even though;*

in spite of; despite

Available at Step Four:

- **American Horror** Edgar Allan Poe
- **Beowulf**
- **The Big Mistake and Other Stories**
Nella Burnett-Stuart and Bruna Deriu
- **The Canterbury Tales** Geoffrey Chaucer
- **A Christmas Carol** Charles Dickens
- **Daisy Miller** Henry James
- **Dracula** Bram Stoker
- **Famous British Criminals from The Newgate Calendar**
- **The House of the Seven Gables**
Nathaniel Hawthorne
- **Jack the Ripper** Peter Foreman
- **The Last of the Mohicans**
James Fenimore Cooper
- **Macbeth** William Shakespeare
- **The Merchant of Venice**
William Shakespeare
- **A Midsummer Night's Dream**
William Shakespeare
- **Moby Dick** Herman Melville
- **The Moonstone** Wilkie Collins
- **Le Morte d'Arthur** Sir Thomas Malory
- **Much Ado About Nothing**
William Shakespeare
- **Othello** William Shakespeare
- **The Secret Agent** Joseph Conrad
- **The Sign of Four** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- **A Study in Scarlet** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- **Tom Jones** Henry Fielding
- **The Tragedy of Dr Faustus**
Christopher Marlowe
- **The Turn of the Screw** Henry James
- **The Valley of Fear** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- **Washington Square** Henry James
- **Wicked and Humorous Tales** Saki
- **The Woman in White** Wilkie Collins