

Informative essay on the woman in black

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Introduced in the novel as an old man describing his younger self as arrogant. A young solicitor looking for a higher position in his law firm. A typical ghost story main character, a sceptic, a non-believer- “ I never thought of myself as a fanciful man”. He was sent to CG to deal with the papers of Mrs Alice Drablow. He is a little stuck up and believes that he is above the country people- “ Unsophisticated than we cosmopolitans”. Refuses to be phased by their “ superstitions”. Eventually pays the price of his ignorance and loses his wife and child in a tragic accident.

The Woman in Black- Jennet Humfrye The sister of Alice Drablow who pregnant out of wedlock. This was a huge shame to the family so they decided that Jennet would be sent to Scotland and Mr. and Mrs. Drablow would bring up her child. Jennet was not the sort of person to follow the rules and when the child was 6 she went to EMH, planning to kidnap him back. Whilst on his way back from a trip out with his maid, the pony and trap that they had been riding had fallen into the marshes and had been sucked up, the child, the maid and the trap driver, Keckwick's father all dies. Jennet blamed Alice for her child's death. She never forgives her sister and due to distress and anger she soon falls ill with a wasting disease that she eventually dies of. She continues to haunt her sister's house after her death and kills children as a result of her child being ripped away from her. Some may see her as a victim in the novel but her pain and hurt can never justify her actions. Mr. Samuel Dailey He is a “ big man” with a “ beefy face” and “ huge raw hands”. A local land owner. Guidance but also a “ companion” for Kipps. Met in “ A Journey North”. Quite rich and well known in Crithin Gifford and the surrounding area. Daily's purpose in the novel is to guide Arthur, but Kipps decides to ignore

him. He is quite an open person; you can tell what he's feeling. " Openness of his gaze and the directness of his manor. " Owner of Spider. Quite judgmental, makes snap decisions about people. He is Kipps' guardian, comes to save him at the end. He tries to protect Kipps though out by hinting that he shouldn't go to EMH without putting the burden of the Woman in Black's secret on his shoulders. Mr. Jerome; A small, ginger man, a local lawyer and Mr Kipps' company at the funeral. o He is seen in " The Funeral of Mrs Drablow" and " Mr Jerome is Afraid" His purpose in the novel is to warn Kipps about the dangers at EMH and the effects it will have on him, like Daily , Kipps chooses to ignore Jerome. He has quite a dramatic reaction to the Woman in Black on page 51 where his face fills with fear. o This is one of the only points that Jerome shows his fear, through out the rest of the novel he is portrayed as quite collected and able to hide his emotions.

However, despite not showing fear through his expressions you can see it in his hands- " I noticed his hands, which rested on the sides of the chair, were working, rubbing, fidgeting, gripping and un-gripping in agitation" and " Mr Jerome's hands continued to scrabble around like the paws of some struggling creature. " We later find out that he had lost his children and it had " broken" him. Mr. Bentley o Mr Bentley is the boss of Kipps before, during and long after Kipps' experiences at EMH. He is seen in " Christmas eve" and " A London Particular". Mr Bentley is there to prove that Kipps wasn't the only one who was changed by TWIB and her story. He began, like Kipps, an arrogant power-hungry (" Mr Bentley had never been able to resist making a good story better"- " A London Particular") but fast forward time but go back in the novel to " Christmas eve" and Mr Bentley seems almost

as affected as Kipps was. He is the complete opposite of what he was (“ He was an abstemious man” “ He had always blamed himself”). Mr Bentley represents the enormity of the WIB’s influence. The Landlord- The Land lord is a polite, hospitable man from Crithin Gifford- “ No intention to pry, Sir. ” He reflects the attitude of all the people in CG, a “ If we don’t talk about it, it doesn’t exist” attitude. He knows everything about the people of CG and all their business, reflecting small community. “ It was true that Mr. Daily and the Landlord seemed anything but sturdy men”- Although he tried to hide the secrets with a smile and lots of chatter, he was not to be seen as a fool, he was just trying to keep spirits high. Page 42 shows the Landlord’s reaction to TWIB. Esme- Esme is the older Kipps’ second wife. She is only briefly mentioned but we get the impression that Kipps has found love and comfort in her. She is, however, a little different from Kipps- “ Yet at times I had caught Esme looking at her wistfully, and she had more than once voiced, though gently and to me alone, a longing for Isobel to be a little less staid, a little more spiritual, even frivolous” She also provides a background of normality and family to contrast with Kipp’s story and make it seem yet more terrifying. o Kipps not having children with Esme may be because he is scared that they would have the same fate as his first born.

Themes and Key ideas: Fear: Fear is a key theme in “ The Woman in Black”. As a ghost story its purpose is to entertain and to frighten. Susan Hill keeps the reader on edge through the rise and fall of tension. In the first chapter it begins quite calmly but when ghost stories are mentioned the tension builds, Kipps storms out leaving the Ainsley children, Esme and the reader confused. She uses this technique to catch out the reader. Just when she has fooled

you into thinking everything will be okay something will happen, catching you off guard. An example of this is when Kipps is when he first sees EMH.

He describes it as “ Romantic” and states that the “ June birds poured out their finest songs” before suddenly stating that “ the last light went from the sun and the wind rose in a gust” until finally “ I saw her again, the woman with the wasted face. ” Susan Hill also creates fear through her use of unexplainable noises. “ The rumbling and creaking of the trap were coming” “ I could hear it again, the odd, faint, rhythmic noise- bump bump, pause, bump bump, pause, bump bump...” “ That maddeningly familiar bump that tantalized me because I still could not identify it. “ In The Nursery” is good to look at when discussing noises. The existence of evil/ the supernatural: Hill makes us question the existence of evil/ the supernatural. Kipps is a typical ghost story skeptic, he is arrogant and ignorant. He tries to hold onto his belief that ghost didn't exist as he is established as “ A man of logic” “ I did not believe in ghosts, or at least I didn't up until then. ” Power o Kipps describes there being a “ conviction” between him and Monks Piece the first time he sees it and that he felt “ seized” by it. He has the same reaction in his first encounter with EMH, calls its “ romantic” and “ handsome” He keeps going back to EMH and says he's “ addicted”, EMH clearly has a power over him. TWIB also has a power over him, he is terrified of her yet he still goes back to find out more about her. Revenge o Revenge is one of the central themes for “ The Woman in Black”. Jennet Humfrye was seeking revenge on her lost child by haunting her sister and then Kipps because he figured out her secret. TWIB takes her revenge on Kipps at the very end of the book where he is most oblivious “ could not have been less prepared for what was

to come” Kipps realizes that Jennet was traumatized by the loss of her child but describes her actions as “ understandable too but not forgivable”. The conspiracy of silence: Used though out the novel, the conspiracy of silence frustrates Kipps as everyone around him keeps him in the dark. Although he doesn’t know it, they’re doing it to protect him but he feels annoyed and angry at times about this game they are playing. There is an “ elephant in the room” every where Kipps goes where he can tell that there’s something they’re all hiding from him and when they do tell him they only reveal information in dribs and drabs that Kipps can’t piece together. In the first chapter we get the impression the older Kipps now understands their reasoning behind not telling him as he too gives us, the reader, the same treatment. “ Silence” is used to describe nearly every characters reaction to Kipps telling them he saw TWIB. Even Mr Bentley fell “ silent” when Mr Kipps question him about Mrs D’s family.

The importance of place: Monks Piece: Monks piece could be a play on words from Monks (symbolising tranquillity and contentment) and Peace (symbolising peace). He describes it as “ The happiest of homes. ” Buildings have a power over him “ Seized” “ Conviction” (theme of power) Eel Marsh House: Cut off from anywhere else, isolated, “ lonely”. Kipps is “ addicted” and “ fascinated” by EMH. “ This extra ordinary place was imprinting it’s self on my mind and deep into my imagination. ” The vulture could be forewarning Kipps about the house. Kipps describes EMH as a “ light house” something we use for guidance, reinforcing Kipps distorted perception of the house. Nine Lives Causeway: Forever changing, “ shifting mists. ” The name “ Nine lives” comes from the saying that cats have 9 nine live suggesting

dangers and death. The way the causeway is clear and open at one moment and then foggy and boggy the next could be reflecting Hill's use of rise and fall with the tension in the novel. Kipps feels "sucked in", suggesting he feels helpless and lost. Maybe the fact he can't see anything is reiterating his frustration with the whole situation. Crithin Gifford: CG is introduced as a small community. It's described as having its "back to the wind" and being "tucked in" this could reflect its residents' attitudes who try to ignore what is right in front of them. There is a lot of hustle and bustle to contrast with the remoteness of EMH. Structure: The novel is set up so that it is told by older Kipps, this helps us, the reader, get a better understanding about the situation as older Kipps is able to give hints to us about what is to come, for example, "Yet I do not believe that I have ever slept as well as I did that in the inn at Crithin Gifford. Weather: Hill uses pathetic fallacy (attributing human feelings to the weather). The weather is used throughout the novel to forewarn Kipps about an event or act that is about to happen. A good quote to support this is "My spirits have for many years now been affected by the ways of the weather." The fog is used as a metaphor for the mystery surrounding the supernatural, the unexplained. "A bright crisp day" could represent Kipps' optimism in "In the Nursery". Exam language Useful phrases: The writer shows that... The writer demonstrates... We can see from

The description of the setting sets the tone for... Her choice of language indicates... Hill establishes that... Another interpretation could be... In the exam... In the exam you will be given two possible questions to choose from. You should choose the question that you would feel most confident about

answering and something that you know where to find quotes for if possible, don't try something you've never practiced before if you have the choice of doing something you are more familiar with. An example of a question would be something like this: " How does Hill create a sense of isolation in the novel? It is useful to create a brief paragraph plan before begging you essay so that you know what you are going to write about and don't spend too much time going on about one thing. For this question you could plan this:

1. Introduction, paraphrase question and summaries what you are going to write about.
2. Physical isolation of EMH, have to cross a causeway to get there, no neighbors, contrast to CG.
3. Kipps' isolations, he feels alone as no-one will tell him the truth about the WIB, feels like he's being kept in the dark, separated from his family.
4. The Woman in Black's isolation, she (Jennet Humfrye) was separated from her child and family, banished to Scotland because she was a shame to the family.
5. Kipps still isolated, even in the first chapter older Kipps feels he is different from everyone else, despite being surrounded by family, he will always be different, no-one will ever be able to fully understand what he experienced.

This will keep you on track and make sure you cover a variety of points; you must do this if you are aiming for the top marks. When answering the question you should analyze the language and also the structure using PEEEL.

Make sure to keep track of time because no-one will tell you when the recommended 45 minutes are over which may result in you having less time for your Section B: Exploring cultures. It is wise to leave 5 minutes at the end to check over your work to see if you could add in any extra points, quotes, correct spelling or punctuation ect.

Practice Questions:

1. Arthur Kipps is both the narrator and the central character in the ghost story. How does he change from the young lawyer about to travel to Crithin Gifford to the middle-aged step-father who feels compelled to write his story?
2. Why do you think Susan Hill called her story “ The Woman in Black”? How effective is it as a title?
3. The purpose of a ghost story is to entertain and frighten. Discuss whether Susan Hill achieves this.
4. Explore how Susan Hill prepares the reader for the rest of the novel in the opening chapter of “ The Woman in Black”.

Quote bank: ----- Name:Teacher:

..... Class: A London Particular.

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

Drablow is mentioned. Mr. Bentley explains who Mrs. Drablow was and her situation without giving too much away. Bentley explains that accommodation and the landlord. Kipps sets off for CG Christmas eve.

Elderly Kipps describes his younger, arrogant self. Kipps' first encounter with Monk's Piece. Hints that something bad has happened in his past. Introduction to Esme and family. Children begin to tell ghost stories Arthur feels greatly uncomfortable and storms out. Kipps decides to write down his story. The Funeral of Mrs. Drablow. Kipps arrives at the inn. Land lord reacts to mention of Mrs. D Meets Mr. Jerome. Mr. K and Mr. J are the only people at the funeral. First viewing of TWIB Mr. J looks as if he's about to pass out. Mr. Kipps is left confused. The Journey North. Kipps begins of quite a comfortable train. Switches to a rickety train to CG. Meets Samuel Dailey Dailey explains the sea mists to Kipps. Mr. Dailey sees the " Drablow papers" and becomes quite tense. They arrive in CG Across the causeway. Nine lives causeway. First encounter with Eel Marsh house. He sees it at beautiful and romantic, emphasizing his naivety. The WIB makes another appearance. Mr. Kipps then becomes " paralyzed" Kipps is still trying to find a logical explanation. Kipps goes for a walk across the marshes. The sound of a pony and trap. The mist started playing trick n him. He can hear a pony and trap and a crying child. Goes back to EM house. Keckwick arrives and strongly suggest that Kipps doesn't spend the night at EM house. Kipps feels that people aren't telling him the full story. He gets the feeling that he will see the WIB that night. Whistle and I'll come to you. Kipps spent night @ EMH A storm outside the house. Began to doubt his sanity. Spider woke him up, scratching at the door. Spider went outside, Kipps followed. Spider ran into the boggy marshes, Kipps ran after her. Kipps had to pull her out the sinking sand marshes. Heard the pony and trap again, passed out In the Nursery. Kipps is optimistic about the day ahead. EM house had a power over him.

Kipps finds Jennet Drablow's grave stone. Felt like something was going to happen. Kipps found letters explaining how Jennet Drablow had fallen pregnant out of wed-lock and she was sent to Scotland. Mr. and Mrs. D looked after Jennet's son. Spider By morning, Kipps has changed his mind. Kipps denies that EM house is having an effect on him. Sam Daily tells him he can't go back to EM house alone. Daily gives Kipps his dog spider for protection while he's out in EM house. Kipps says he's excited about going back to EM house. Mr. Jerome is afraid. Kipps plans to leave CG after his experience the previous day. He hates how he's not in control. Goes to Mr. J to ask if anyone from CG will come out to EM house with him. Mr. J says that no one would go with him Kipps decides not to go back to EM house. The Woman in Black. Kipps takes medical advice and stays away from CG. A child hasn't dies as a result of Kipps' last viewing of TWIB yet. Stella gives birth to a son. Just when Kipps is at his happiest, a family trip out to the park, he sees the WIB again. Stella and the son are flung off a donkey they were riding and the baby immediately dies. Stella later dies of her injuries. Packet of Letters. Kipps is saved by Sam Daily and taken back to his house. Kipps reads the letters and Daily learns of the truth. They discuss the story together. Kipps stayed at the Daily's house for the next few days and the nursed him. Stella arrived to see him.