

“the woman in white”  
and “the lady in the  
lake” essay sample



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The theme secrecy is portrayed in both ‘The woman in white’ and ‘The lady in the lake’. The two extracts I have chosen to convey secrecy is the scene from ‘The woman in white’, when Marian climbs on the rooftop on pages 251-253. I also chose the scene from ‘The lady in the lake’, when Miss Fallbrook is first introduced inside Lavery’s house on pages 112-115. Both extracts convey secrecy as both extracts are set around a situation where there is either a secret being covered up or someone is close to uncovering a secret. The setting also sustains the secrecy in both extracts. The use of first person narrative also sustains the theme in both extracts. In ‘The woman in white’, the setting of the extract explores and sustains Marian’s mood and reinforces secrecy. This is because of it being set at the dead of night, this explores the dangers that Marian is taking by being outside on ledge, ‘I placed myself sideways’. Secrecy is also portrayed through the suspense in the first section of my extract as there is the risk of Marian being caught, ‘I heard Madame Fosco through the open window yawning’.

This shows the secrecy and determination of Marian that she is willing to get caught on the window to find out the hidden secret of Sir Percival and Count Fosco. Wilkie Collins emphasises Marian’s characterisation through her willingness for danger, and that she doesn’t conform to the stereotypical woman values of not getting involved in business. Collins also uses abstract nouns to show Sir Percival’s impatience, ‘take your restlessness! When do you mean to sit down?’ growled Sir Percival’s voice’, this is also an imperative sentence as it shows an impatient demand. This also reinforces the tension of Sir Percival and builds suspense towards the revelation of the secret. The use of long complex sentences reinforces the tension and

suspense it also pushes the reader into discovering the hidden secret. The idea of Marian listening in also shows that the secret is dangerous and in contrast to where she is as its dark and she is in a threatening situation 'peril of my situation'. Marian's situation can also imply and reinforces the idea of the secret being important to sustaining the plot.

The use of first person narrative also shows us Marian's feelings and her anxiety of being in such a dangerous situation. The secrecy surrounding Sir Percival and Fosco is explored further through the use of, 'speak to each other without fear of accidents' the use of the exclamatory sentence shows the mood and fear of the secret that it could cause disastrous sequences. The secret also changes the characteristic mood of Count Fosco as the use of 'certain troubles and anxieties', shows that Fosco's once calm and calculated manner is being broken down by this secret. The repetition of 'crisis' also shows the reader that the secret could cause long term problems for the characters involved, the use of pre-modification of 'serious' to describe the crisis reinforces the mood surrounding the secret. The use of exclamatory and declarative sentence 'if we are to decide on the future at all', this implies that the secret may affect the future.

The use of the imperative sentences to show the importance of the decision surrounding the secret 'we must decide secretly to-night' implies that they need to plan what is going to happen in order to keep the secrecy between them. The use of auxiliary verbs reinforces the tension between Count Fosco and Sir Percival, 'what I DO know'. This implies that the secrecy is taking on the characters mood. The use the declarative sentence declarative sentence 'I do NOT know' also shows that Count Fosco is determined to stay in control  
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and not let the secrecy allow him to make mistakes. Count Fosco also puts the idea of a ‘ proposal’, to show that his intentions are to only benefit him and Sir Percival and that they are prepared to plan and scheme in secret in order to get what they want. The use of parenthesis creates and sustains the pace of the final paragraph of the extract In ‘ The lady in the lake’, the theme of secrecy is conveyed in the setting outside Lavery’s house.

The house is given an active verb to convey it having a ‘ sleepy look’ and is symbolic of the events that may have happen inside the house. This is reinforced with the further description of the door, ‘ not quite shut’ this can infer that the events concerning the house aren’t what they seem. The use of lighting also sustains the theme of secrecy. The use of ‘ beyond dim’ can give the impression of something being hidden and not quite visible. The secrecy is sustained through the wine being on the table, ‘ almost empty and another full bottle waited’. This shows that the use of alcohol is involved, this is shown also through the ‘ two glasses had been used’, and this sustains the plot and creates ambiguity. This allows the reader to create their own assumption on what could have happened inside the house. In conjunction to the house being silent creates mystery and can be seen as the truth being concealed. The repetition of the idea of the stillness of atmosphere with the house being ‘ hushed’, ‘ silence’ and ‘ hearing nothing’, can imply that the house is abnormally quiet and can reinforce the reader’s assumption of foul play, due to revelation of the use of ‘ two glasses’ been found used in the home.

The way Mrs Fallbrook is introduced is mysterious, as Marlowe describes the home moments before as, ‘ fixed sounds belonging to the house’. The <https://assignbuster.com/the-woman-in-white-and-the-lady-in-the-lake-essay-sample/>

secrecy is conveyed as it seems as if there is no one else in the home. Mrs Fallbrook isn't seen fully only a 'hand in a glove', this use of pre-modification can show the secrecy concerning her identity, as it would be seen as her not wanting to leave even a single finger print. Her quiet entrance creates ambiguity 'woman came quietly' as it can show that she doesn't want to stick around, and is hoping to leave without a problem, this would also create intrigue and suspense. This also sustains the secrecy of her character as the only detail that has been revealed is that she is wearing gloves. Mrs Fallbrook's appearance is seen as being messy, 'scarlet mess of a mouth', 'untidy brown hair' and the 'shadowed eyes'. This is seen as the stereotypical appearance of someone who had a one night stand or had drunk too much alcohol the evening before. The stereotype is also sustained by her being quiet as it is common for people on a one night stand to sneak away. The suspense heightens when it is revealed that Mrs Fallbrook is holding a gun, 'small automatic'.

The way Mrs Fallbrook is holding herself also conveys secrecy, 'distressed sound' and 'high nervous giggle', can imply that she knows more than she is letting on and can also show that she is trying to seem unaware of the situation. The use of interrogative sentences between Marlowe and Mrs Fallbrook shows Marlowe questioning her motives of being inside the house. There is the use of turn taking but Marlowe allows Mrs Fallbrook to lead the conversation as she has the most dialogue. When she talks about being there 'all I wanted was my rent', Marlowe becomes curious, this makes a change in her as she becomes nervous that he knows the real reason for her being inside the home. Mrs Fallbrook's dialogue is very formal and polite and

gives straight answers to most questions, ‘ Three months’ and ‘ two hundred and forty dollars’. This allows the reader to pick up on the details that she is trying to appear innocent and unaware.

The theme of secrecy is presented through the hidden motives Mrs Fallbrook’s involvement and why the gun became to be in her possession. Mrs Fallbrook’s intentions aren’t fully revealed in the extract and her characterisation becomes questionable. In ‘ The woman in white’, Sir Percival and Fosco are the character’s that aren’t what they seem. This is shown through how the introduced and the dialogue and language they use. The theme of secrecy is shown in both extracts through the eyes of the first person narrative as they are both trying to uncover the truth, Marlowe is out to uncover Mrs Fallbrook’s motives and Marian is trying to uncover Sir Percival’s true intentions. The settings of both extracts have use of pathetic fallacy and develop the secrecy throughout. Both extracts rely on the use of suspense of withholding information from the reader to present secrecy around the questionable characters.