

## Plot Summary

1	<b>Chapter 1</b>	An older Arthur Kipps tells how he came across his new home (Monk's Piece) and bought it to live in with his new family. On Christmas Eve, Kipps' stepchildren invite him to tell a ghost story. He has one but is too disturbed to tell it, so he decides to write it down.
2	<b>Chapter 2</b>	Kipps begins to relate the story of his past. In it, he is sent by his employer (Mr Bentley) to settle the affairs of one of the firm's clients, Mrs Alice Drablow, and to attend her funeral. He is told that Mrs. Drablow had no family or friends and lived as a recluse.
3	<b>Chapter 3</b>	On the train to Crythin Gifford (the home of Alice Drablow) Kipps meets Samuel Daily and they strike up a conversation about Kipps' business in the village, where Daily also lives.
4	<b>Chapter 4</b>	Kipps stays the night at a local pub and then travels to Mrs. Drablow's funeral with Mr. Jerome. At the funeral, Kipps sees a sickly-looking young woman dressed in black. No one else sees her but Jerome is terrified when Kipps tells him what he has seen.
5	<b>Chapter 5</b>	The next day, Kipps is taken to Eel Marsh House, the isolated home of Mrs. Drablow, by Mr Keckwick. They travel across the causeway in a pony and trap (cart). While at the house, Kipps sees the woman in black again, this time in a graveyard. When she mysteriously vanishes, he is forced to conclude she is a ghost.
6	<b>Chapter 6</b>	Kipps attempts to return across the causeway on foot but gets lost in a mist that suddenly appears. He is horrified to hear the sound of a child screaming and a pony and trap sinking in the marshes. Kipps eventually concludes that the sounds were supernatural. Keckwick returns to take Kipps back to the village.
7	<b>Chapter 7</b>	The next day, Kipps visits Jerome to ask for help with sorting out Mrs. Drablow's affairs. Jerome is terrified at the thought of visiting Eel Marsh House and refuses to help. Kipps resolves to return to the house alone.
8	<b>Chapter 8</b>	Kipps goes for a meal at the home of Daily and his wife. He tells Daily what happened to him at Eel Marsh House, and also of his intention to return there the next day. Daily suggests he takes his dog, Spider, for company.
9	<b>Chapter 9</b>	Kipps goes back to Eel Marsh House and takes provisions, as he intends to stay the night. He begins the process of sorting through Mrs. Drablow's documents. During the night, he and Spider are awakened by a mysterious thumping noise coming from a locked room. The next day, he discovers documents relating to the birth of an illegitimate child and his adoption by a married couple. Later that day, Kipps hears the ghostly child screaming again on the marsh, and finds the locked door suddenly open. The room within is a perfectly-preserved child's nursery.
10	<b>Chapter 10</b>	During the night, Kipps hears the sounds on the marsh again and becomes convinced there is a ghostly presence in the house. He goes outside for some air. While outside, he hears a strange whistling from out on the marsh. Spider runs towards this sound and becomes trapped in the mud. Kipps risks his own life to save the dog.
11	<b>Chapter 11</b>	Daily arrives at Eel Marsh House the following morning and finds Kipps and Spider hovering on the brink of death after their escape from the mud. He takes them back to his house where they both recover. Kipps reads some letters that he brought back from Eel Marsh House and learns the full story of Jennet Humfrye, her illegitimate son, and the revenge she has been taking on the villagers since her death.
12	<b>Chapter 12</b>	Kipps returns home, marries his fiancée Stella and is blessed with a son. One year later, Stella and their son are riding in a pony cart at a local fair. The woman in black appears, steps in front of the horse and causes it to rear and crash the cart into a tree. The child is killed outright; Stella dies later from her injuries.

## Characters

1	<b>Arthur Kipps</b>	The protagonist of the story. A young solicitor who is sent to Eel Marsh House to attend the funeral of Alice Drablow. He begins the tale as a confident young man but soon becomes affected by the woman in black's presence.	4	<b>Mr. Jerome</b>	The land agent for Alice Drablow (in charge of selling her property). He shows signs of increasing fear throughout the novel and we eventually learn that his child died as the result of the woman in black's appearance.
2	<b>Samuel Daily</b>	A prominent businessman in Crythin Gifford. He acts as Kipps' protector; it is he who finally rescues him from the torment of Eel Marsh House	5	<b>Mr. Keckwick</b>	The caretaker of Eel Marsh House. Late in the story, we learn that he also lost a child after the woman in black's appearance.
3	<b>Alice Drablow</b>	The deceased inhabitant of Eel Marsh House, who lived for many years as a recluse. As the story progresses, we learn that she adopted the illegitimate son of her sister, Jennet Humfrye.	6	<b>Jennet Humfrye</b>	A young woman who became illegitimately pregnant (outside marriage). She was forced to give up her son for adoption to her sister. He later drowned on the marshes, and Jennet herself died years later of a wasting illness.

## Themes

1	<b>Isolation</b>	All characters in <i>TWIB</i> are isolated in some way and this makes them vulnerable. The novel has an isolated setting (Eel Marsh House). Even the village of Crythin Gifford is a long way from the nearest town.
2	<b>Fear</b>	A powerful force in the novel that that has a transformative effect on Kipps. It often manifests itself, in many characters, as a physiological symptom, such as a pounding heart.
3	<b>Revenge</b>	Jennet Humfrye is driven by her desire to get revenge, not just on her sister (who she blamed for her son's death) but on all parents who still have living children, including Kipps.
4	<b>The Past</b>	The past events that occurred at Eel Marsh House are the driving force behind the narrative. Kipps' "telling" of this ghost story is his attempt to put his own past behind him.

## Key Vocabulary

1	<b>Postmodern</b>	A text that deliberately uses conventions of earlier styles (in this case, the supernatural).
2	<b>Supernatural</b>	A genre that features creatures or events that can't be explained by science (and aren't "real").
4	<b>Pastiche</b>	Copying conventions of a style of writing in a flattering way.
5	<b>Narrative</b>	A carefully constructed story in which all events are connected.
6	<b>Frame Story</b>	A "story around a story". In Chapter 1, the older Kipps narrates the story of Christmas Eve with his family. This "frames" the story of the events that took place at Eel Marsh House many years earlier.
7	<b>Novella</b>	A text that is shorter than a novel but longer than a short story. Hill intentionally used this form, as ghost stories were traditionally told, or read, in one sitting.
8	<b>Protagonist</b>	The main character in a story. In supernatural stories, this is conventionally a confident person who does not believe in ghosts (which is how Kipps begins this tale).

## Context

1	<b>Edwardian Values</b>	The novel, although written in 1983, was set in the Edwardian Era. At this time, women were expected to have strong moral values. A woman who had a child outside marriage was likely to be cast off by her family and friends, particularly if she came from a wealthy background.
2	<b>Gothic tradition</b>	The literary tradition of Gothic stories was to include an isolated house or castle in order to increase fear for the reader. Hill loved Gothic stories and was particularly inspired by "The Turn of the Screw" by Henry James.
3	<b>Thatcher's Government</b>	It could be argued that Hill is also making a comment about the Conservative Government of the 1980s, led by Margaret Thatcher. Their reduction of welfare provided for single mothers meant that women were much more reliant on men if they wanted to start a family.