

Across the Causeway

- Moving away from civilisation and life and moving closer to death – or things associated with death
- Contrast with Crythin Gifford – pleasant and warm – and a contrast with London
- Detached, isolated and neglected
- Sense of detachment – not part of the world
- Wide space heightens his sense of isolation
- Foreshadows how alone he will be in the story and at the end of the story
- Being taken away from normal life

Keckwick

- His father died in the marshes – he has a historical connection with Eel Marsh house – death
- Contrasts to Arthur's personality – annoyed, unhappy
- Not very open – symbolises the hiding of secrets
- A reliable figure that saves Arthur at times
- Contrasts to Arthur's openness about his feelings and thoughts
- Symbol of returning – memories never die – working class – logical thought

Theme: Fear

- Different kinds of fear – loneliness, trapped, death, loss of a loved one
- Parents constantly live in fear
- Nursery – highlights how fear can be found in the most unlikely of places – fear is everywhere
- Arthur isn't scared at the start of the events, but by the end he feels true fear
- Ghost stories explore fear and what causes fear and the doubts
- Graveyard and Jennet Humfrye are symbols of fear – a fear of dying

Jennet Humfrye

- Both her and Arthur are alike – he becomes like her as a result of his investigation
- His dealing with death contrasts with her – she wants revenge / he wants to forget
- Our thoughts towards her change across the book. We feel sympathy at the funeral but that changes to fear and anger in the book. Complex changes.
- There are two different versions of the woman – Jennet and the woman in black
- Symbol of revenge / sorrow / evil / justice

Arthur Kipps

- Lonely like Jennet – suffers a loss or on their own - holds feminine characteristics
- Holds a child-like innocence which connects to the underlying theme in the novel
- Loses confidence through the book
- Kip is slang for sleep – which reflects his laziness towards things
- Represents the reader in how he behaves and acts
- There are three different versions of Arthur in the story

Theme: Supernatural

- Isolation of the house a typical cliché used in stories
- Supernatural contrasts with the normal lives of people affected
- Conflict between the natural and supernatural worlds
- We see the journey of someone passing over to the supernatural – WIB
- Constantly comparing supernatural things to everyday things
- Symbols associated with it dog, graveyard, abandoned house, chapel

Opening

- Set after the events – reflects the impact of what happen
- Technically this chapter is the end of the story
- Creates the sense of mystery – what has affected him
- Raises a challenge for the reader: they don't know what is scary
- Dispels the conventions of a ghost story to add a sense of realism
- Contrast to the rest of the novel – calm, tranquil atmosphere before things change – Monk's Piece

Ending

- The ending mirrors the woman in black's own experience – a child dies
- Demonstrate the ghost's full power – she has waited for the perfect moment
- Arthur cannot escape the ghost as the woman in black cannot escape her grief
- Sunny weather contrasts with the shocking events
- The child is described in very little detail. However, the death is described in an emotionless and blunt manner.
- Cyclic structure – there is a pattern and the pattern has been completed

Ghost Story Conventions

- A rational person is forced to believe in the existence of a supernatural force
- First person narrator – usually an unreliable narrator
- Mood and setting is at the heart of the story telling – the reader needs to share the experience of the narrator
- Set at night-time and in an isolated place.
- Ghostly figure usually masculine in appearance
- Repetition of events
- Senses evoked through description

The Nursery

- Locked door symbolises the secret at the heart of the story. Only opens when Arthur is near.
- Contrasting image – should be safe and secure, yet isn't
- Locked memories of the past for the woman in black
- Symbolises the innocence of childhood – reinforces the tragedy of a child dying
- Reflects the past – the woman in black has kept the room as it was – attempting to keep the child alive
- Rocking chair symbolises the role that the woman had – the mother

The Train

- Goes from the city to a rural place – backwards in technology (contrast)
- Fog reflects his anxious state of mind – he can't think clearly /confused - doesn't go away easily
- Constant cold foreshadows that something bad is going to happen
- Train is going at a high speed and can't be stopped – symbolises Arthur's journey
- Arthur is on a journey into the unknown, whereas the train is on a fixed route – is Arthur's fate fixed?
- Personification of the rain – ghostly 'breath'
- Isolated on the train

Inside Eel Marsh House

- Isolated – a symbol of Arthur's isolation from events
- Dangerous before you even get to the house – the marshes
- Clichéd 'ghost house'
- The house has an argument with Arthur
- House recreates the feelings of the mother
- The house is cluttered and messy – another symbol of confusion and disorder
- Eel suggest something slippery and hard to grasp like the real truth

Theme: Madness

- Women tended (in the past) to be associated with madness – different causes of madness
- Novel explores the psychology of a man going mad – sense of equality
- Madness affects people and stays with them
- Links to Victorian attitudes towards women and madness. 'Jane Eyre' featured a mad woman in the attic, but never explore the reason why she was mad. WIB provides a reason cause for madness.

Techniques

- Pattern of three
- Lists
- Repetition
- Pathetic fallacy
- Turning the familiar into something unfamiliar
- Foreshadowing
- Symbolism
- Metaphors / similes
- Use of names, settings

London

- Use of fog – sense of entrapment, confusion and a higher power in control
- Contrast of busy life to the quiet, relaxed environment in the opening
- Urban environment – reflects a fear of technology and industrialisation
- A formal environment is used to introduce the mystery to create a sense of credibility to the mystery. It is a legal conundrum and not a rumour.
- A familiar setting is used to give the story a realistic basis. The village isn't real but London is. Realism by association.

Children

- Children are in the background of the story. The parent's relationship with children is at the foreground of this story – mainly the loss of a child.
- They are the casualty of the woman in black's revenge – her hatred is reflected in the brutal death of a the child at the end
- The children frame the events in the story – start and end
- Like the Victorian attitude towards children, the novel generally shows them as being seen and not heard
- Their loss is the ultimate fear for a parent - a primal fear common to all

Women / Men

- Women are marginalised in the story in a way – very few of them. The woman in black is the main female character, yet she is stronger than the males.
- Element of fear over the women. Mrs Drablow is seen as 'odd' and the woman in black is strong and disfigured.
- Strong emphasis on the mother. Sympathises with her pain. The understanding of her revenge is the mystery at the heart of the novel.
- Every man in the text seems to fear something. The women don't.

Theme of Isolation

- Physical isolation occurs in every chapter. Some are more explicit than others. Characters seem to want to be cut off from the world – Arthur at Monk's Piece
- The death of a children causes a kind of emotional isolation. The woman in black will always wear black spiritually and physically.
- Novel explores forced isolation – isolating a parent from their child.
- A ghost is a form of spiritual isolation. The woman in black is spiritually isolated from the mortal world and Heaven or Hell.