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THE WOMAN IN BLACK

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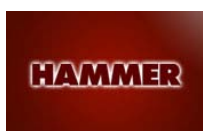
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THE WOMAN IN BLACK

GENRE	GOTHIC / HORROR
DIRECTOR	JAMES WATKINS <i>Eden Lake</i> (In development on <i>Methuselah</i> for Warners and David Heyman)
WRITER	JANE GOLDMAN <i>Kick-Ass, The Debt, Stardust</i>
INSPIRED BY	The best selling book <i>The Woman In Black</i> by Susan Hill
PRODUCERS	Talisman Films <i>Rob Roy</i> Vertigo Entertainment <i>The Departed, The Grudge, The Strangers, The Ring</i>

SYNOPSIS

Young lawyer Arthur Kipps leaves his son in London to settle the legal affairs of the recently deceased Alice Drablow. He discovers a series of inexplicable accidents and suicides have forced the parents of her village to barricade their children indoors, as if protecting them from an unseen foe. When Arthur stays the night all alone at the Drablow's foreboding house, he hears the screams of a drowning child and sees decaying children listlessly wandering the marshes. He will soon discover these haunting figures share the same date of death, and the same killer.

The ghost of a scorned woman, who was unable to save her beloved son Nathaniel from drowning, *The Woman In Black* takes on a horrifying form. Set on vengeance, her veil hides gaping sockets eaten away by scavengers and her curse hides an even darker secret ...

... whenever *she* is seen, a child dies.

In the face of hostility from the local residents, Arthur dredges up Nathaniel's skeleton and buries it with his mother, hoping the evil spectre will finally rest in peace. In a cruel twist of fate *The Woman In Black* turns her claws toward Arthur's young son. To avoid a fate worse than death, Arthur must now sacrifice everything he holds dear and save his child.

The Woman in Black

by
Jane Goldman

Based on the novel by Susan Hill

Second draft 8.3.10

EXT. GIFFORD ARMS INN. DAY.

A welcoming-looking VICTORIAN INN in a rural market square. Outside, A MARKET is in swing. VILLAGERS bustle to and fro.

In the gabled roof of the inn, an attic window is open, curtains billowing in the breeze.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ATTIC ROOM. DAY

A sparsely decorated but pleasant-enough country child's bedroom - three small beds, a rocking horse, a window-seat beneath the open window.

THREE LITTLE GIRLS, 8, 10 and 11, and dressed in simple mid-period Victorian dresses and pinafores, sit on the floor playing tea party.

TEDDY BEARS and PORCELAIN DOLLS are seated, picnic-style, on a KERCHIEF as the girls cheerfully prepare them make-believe cups of tea in a china TEA SET.

Outside, we can hear the chatter of the market-day crowd.

Without warning, the three girls stop and look up simultaneously, their eyes fixed on something across the room, their faces suddenly, disturbingly, blank.

With steady, synchronised movement, the girls stand.

The things they had been holding - china tea cups, dolls - drop from their hands and laps, and fall to the floor.

In eerily perfect unison, the girls turn away from us to face the window.

As one, they step daintily towards the window, oblivious as they knock over toys, crush little china plates.

They climb onto the window seat and stand in the frame of the open window, silhouetted against the bright sky.

Then, they jump.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY.

Staring blankly at himself in a washstand mirror, ARTHUR KIPPS, 27, uses a cut-throat RAZOR to shave. His shirt is clean, hair neat, but he has a distracted, distant look.

He wipes his face with a washcloth

From O.S. We hear a soft woman's voice.

FEMALE VOICE
Hello, angel.

Arthur closes his eyes a moment, finishes wiping his face, then turns slowly, wanting to prolong the moment.

The room is empty. No one but Arthur here.

Behind him is a LADIES' DRESSING TABLE. A brush, comb, hand-mirror, perfume and powder are laid out neatly, along with a dish of SUNFLOWER SEEDS.

Beside the dressing table is a BIRDCAGE. From within, a MYNAH BIRD looks at Arthur, its head cocked.

He moves towards it carefully.

ARTHUR
(whispering to the bird)
Again. Say it again.

Silence. Then the bird speaks, in a perfect imitation of Arthur's own voice.

MYNAH BIRD
(in Arthur's voice)
Say it again.

Arthur and the bird stare one another out.

MYNAH BIRD (CONT'D)
(in Arthur's voice)
Not my voice. Wretched bird.

Arthur shakes his head in bleak amusement and feeds the bird a couple of sunflower seeds.

ARTHUR
I could just forget to remind
Nanny to feed you while I'm gone,
you know.

Arthur turns his back on the bird and busies himself closing a SUITCASE that is lying on the bed nearby.

Now we hear a different voice OS, this time coming from outside the room. It belongs to Arthur's son's NANNY, 50s.

NANNY (O.S.)
Mr. Kipps?

ARTHUR
I'll be there in a moment!

Arthur slips on a waistcoat and moves to the NIGHTSTAND. He opens a drawer and brings out a HIP FLASK. He shakes it near his ear, and slips it into his trouser pocket.

From on top of the nightstand he picks up a FOB WATCH. Observant aficionados of Victorian mourning jewelry might note that the fob is woven from STRAWBERRY-BLONDE HAIR.

Arthur clicks open the cover of the watch. On the inside is a portrait of a YOUNG WOMAN with hair the same colour.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Time to go.

He snaps the cover shut.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

A sheet of paper bearing a child's DRAWING: a stick-figure man waving to a stick-figure child outside a house. Below, an uneven square contains the word "Tuesday".

Over this we hear a child's voice. It belongs to Arthur's son EDWARD, 6.

EDWARD

Do you like it, Daddy?

ARTHUR (O.C.)

Very much.

Arthur sits in an armchair holding the drawing which, we notice, is bound together with other pictures by a ribbon. Edward, frail and tiny, perches on the arm of the chair.

EDWARD

You didn't look at it properly.

ARTHUR

Of course I did. Nanny, have you seen this? Edward made me a calendar.

Nanny, just now entering the room holding Arthur's COAT, stops and regards Arthur with genuine surprise.

NANNY

My goodness you look dapper, Mr Kipps.

(catching herself)

Not that I meant to imply -

Arthur smiles weakly, waves away her apology. Edward squirms impatiently for attention, pokes the calendar.

EDWARD

You can cross off the days 'til we're back together.

Arthur leafs through the other three pages... Wednesday and Thursday have just a named box.

ARTHUR

I will.

The final page, Friday, also bears a drawing: a stick-figure man carrying a stick-figure child. Beside them is a large train, clouds of steam billowing from it's engine.

The stick-man's face has a straight line for a mouth, a grave expression in contrast to the child's big smile.

Arthur peers at this, his attention caught now.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Why do I look so sad?

EDWARD

That's what your face looks like.

ARTHUR

Oh it is, is it?

He scoops Edward up onto his lap, into his arms and growls mock-crossly, playfully tipping him backwards - an attempt at playful rough-and-tumble that we get the impression doesn't happen very often.

They both laugh. But when the laughter dies, Edward suddenly looks serious.

EDWARD

I wish you didn't have to go away from me.

NANNY

(warning, don't start)

Edward...

Arthur leans in to whisper to him.

ARTHUR

Me too. But we'll have the whole weekend in the countryside.

(flipping through the calendar)

See... Tomorrow, then Thursday, then we're together again. Not long at all.

(looking at the last drawing)

Which reminds me - Nanny, I must give you the train tickets before I go. Don't let me forget.

NANNY

I... Mr Kipps, may I have a word?

She gestures at Edward: not with him in the room.

ARTHUR

Can you fetch Daddy's hat from the stand, please? The brown one?

Edward trots away obediently. Alone now, Nanny looks grave.

NANNY

Are you sure about this? Edward travelling in his condition? The doctor said -

ARTHUR

And I suppose the doctor reckons all this smog is just the thing for a bad chest, does he?

NANNY

Sir...

ARTHUR

Getting out of London will do him the power of good. You'll see.

NANNY

Yes sir.

Edward runs in carrying Arthur's HAT. He is out of breath.

ARTHUR

Don't run, darling! Don't run.

Arthur scoops him up and holds him close.

EXT. LONDON STREETS. DAY.

A Hansom cab clatters through a thick, unpleasant smog.

INT. HANSOM CAB. DAY.

Arthur leans against the window, suitcase at his feet. Outside, visibility through the smog is virtually zero.

Over this, we hear MR BENTLEY, 60s, head of Arthur's firm.

MR. BENTLEY (V.O.)

I don't want you to regard this assignment as any sort of short straw, Kipps. I want you to view it as... an opportunity.

INT. MR BENTLEY'S OFFICE. DAY.

An austere room. Arthur sits across from Bentley, a hulking desk between them, a sheaf of paperwork in Arthur's hands.

ARTHUR

(leafing through it)
The late Mrs. Alice Drablow.
(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Lived in India the last twenty six years. Widow. One son, died in early childhood. Leaving her estate to charity... Sounds straightforward enough.

BENTLEY

Come on, Kipps. I'm sure you've heard the talk among the clerks. The likely disarray of her paperwork... She left the country rather suddenly. And her home has been empty ever since.

ARTHUR

I'm sure I can tolerate a little dust, sir...

BENTLEY

I'm sure you can.

(beat)

I expect you to gather any documents of importance, retrieve the deeds for Eel Marsh House from the local solicitor, Mr Jerome. And resolve any matters that might hinder a sale.

ARTHUR

And do you expect there to be... such matters?

BENTLEY

You have read the paperwork?

ARTHUR

(lying)

Of course.

BENTLEY

Then you'll be aware that all past attempts at a sale have ended in failure.

ARTHUR

Yes... Well, I'm quite sure that three days will be sufficient to get to the heart of it.

Bentley regards Arthur with a mixture of doubt and pity. He stands - Arthur follows suit - and hands over an envelope.

BENTLEY

A key to the house. And funds to cover your expenses.

ARTHUR

Thank you, sir.

BENTLEY

I'm aware that these last years
have been difficult for you,
Kipps. I'm heartened to see the
effort you've made today...

He gestures up and down, indicating Arthur's appearance.

BENTLEY (CONT'D)

And I'm hoping that you'll seize
this chance to prove your
dedication to pursuing a future
with this firm.

ARTHUR

My son is receiving medical
treatment that I can scarcely
fund even on my present wage, Mr
Bentley. I can't afford to
consider a future without it.

BENTLEY

You have my sympathy. But we
cannot afford to carry cargo. And
I'm increasingly concerned that
cargo is what you have become.

(a beat)

You have an opportunity to prove
me wrong. Make use of it.

INT. LAW FIRM CORRIDOR. DAY.

Arthur leaves Bentley's office, smarting.

Farther down the hall a group of well-dressed young LEGAL
CLERKS are gathered, talking and laughing. At the sound of
Arthur closing Bentley's door behind him, they look over,
their chatter suspended.

Arthur ignores them and walks towards the exit.

EXT. TRAIN. DUSK.

Daylight begins to fade and rain falls lightly as a STEAM
TRAIN cuts through the countryside.

INT. TRAIN. DUSK.

Inside the train, Arthur shares a carriage with a LITTLE
BOY, 4, and his exceptionally pretty NURSEMAID, 20s.

It's brightly lit in here, cosy.

Arthur holds a NEWSPAPER but doesn't read it, only stares
out of the window, his mind wandering.

The child watches him. As if sensing this, Arthur glances over. Smiles vaguely. The boy beams back.

Arthur pulls a face and the boy dissolves into giggles.

Arthur raises his newspaper before the girl notices, then, when she's looking away, lowers it to reveal another funny face. More giggles. Arthur hurriedly hides again.

NURSEMAID
(flirtatious)
It's rare to see a man who has
such a way with children.

The boy bounces, wanting Arthur to play more. He complies.

NURSEMAID (CONT'D)
He's a charmer, isn't he?
...Hope to have one of my own
just like him one day.

Finally, Arthur makes eye contact with her.

ARTHUR
He's not yours?

NURSEMAID
(I'm available)
I'm his nursemaid.

Arthur smiles, nods politely and begins to read the newspaper, oblivious to the girl's irritation at his total lack of interest in her.

EXT. COUNTRY STATION. NIGHT.

It's dark, and the rain heavier, as Arthur carries the nursemaid's CASE and his own onto the lonely, windswept platform.

Then he lifts the boy from the train and passes him to her.

NURSEMAID
Thank you.

The child's face lights up as, down the platform, he spots his waiting FATHER and MOTHER. He wriggles from his nurse, runs to them and is happily scooped up in the man's arms.

Arthur watches wistfully as they leave.

Moments later, the train pulls away, the warm glow of the carriage interiors and smiling PASSENGERS within flashing past, then finally gone.

...And Arthur is left entirely alone on the empty platform in the darkness and rain.

Nearby, a CHALK BOARD reads:

Last train for the Northeast: 9 O'Clock.

Rain sluices down over the board, beginning to wash the letters away.

Arthur opens his POCKET WATCH and looks at the time in dismay before closing it again and sitting down on the solitary BENCH here, drawing his coat around him and holding his newspaper ineffectually over his head.

He opens his pocket watch again, but this time to look not at the watch face, but at the portrait.

EXT. COUNTRY STATION. NIGHT.

The chalk board is bare now, just empty blackness, slick with rain. In the distance, we hear an approaching TRAIN.

Arthur is drenched, his now sodden - nearly disintegrated - newspaper discarded by his side.

Momentarily, the train arrives with a piercing WHISTLE, filling the damp air with a cloud of STEAM.

This train is considerably shorter than the London train, squat and plain. Inside, the carriages are unlit. It's not just unwelcoming, it's almost foreboding.

Arthur moves through the steam and opens the door to a darkened carriage with a mixture of relief and trepidation.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. NIGHT.

The grim little train moves through an endless stretch of deserted countryside. No houses, no lights, not a living soul for miles around. We're in the middle of nowhere.

INT. UNWELCOMING TRAIN. NIGHT.

Alone in a carriage, Arthur sleeps as the train rattles on.

The train whistle SHRIEKS, continuing for just a little too long... and we realise that the sound has mutated into something that sounds very much like a woman's SCREAM.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE - UPPER HALL. NIGHT.

The woman's piercing scream continues. A younger Arthur paces anxiously, listens at a closed door, paces again.

The screaming ceases and Arthur rushes to the door, listening nervously. Silence. Then the cry of A BABY. Arthur breaks into a broad grin.

As this new cry dies down we hear movement and low VOICES from within. Finally the door is opened by a DOCTOR, 30s.

DOCTOR
Mr. Kipps...

ARTHUR
Is it...? May I...?
(barging past)
Stella?

DOCTOR
Mr. Kipps.

INT. ARTHUR'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur's attention is instantly stolen by the sight of Nanny standing by the door, holding a swaddled BABY.

NANNY
It's a boy.

Arthur reaches out instinctively, too enraptured to notice her odd expression and tone. Gently, she hands it to him.

The baby stares at Arthur, and Arthur stares back in awe.

ARTHUR
Hello little one! Hello...
Edward. You definitely are an
Edward, aren't you?... Don't you
think, Stella?

In the bed beyond, Arthur's wife STELLA, 20, is propped against a pillow, her head bowed, long strawberry blonde hair hanging loose and damp with sweat.

She doesn't respond.

Arthur looks to the sombre-faced doctor, to nanny, and then back to the bed again. He reacts in queasy horror and now we see what else he has seen, what he failed to see before:

The bottom half of the sheet is drenched in blood.

DOCTOR
I'm so sorry, Mr Kipps.

Arthur clutches the baby close as the doctor leans Stella back, revealing her lifeless face, and draws the sheet up.

Over this image we hear another piercing SHRIEK...

INT. UNWELCOMING TRAIN. NIGHT.

...The train whistle wakes Arthur from his nightmare.

He wipes the film of sweat from his forehead, shakes himself properly awake and looks around to register that the train is stationary, stopped at another station.

As it begins to move again, the door to Arthur's carriage opens and a man enters: SAMUEL DAILY, 58, ostentatiously well-dressed. Accompanying him is his little dog, SPIDER.

ARTHUR
Good evening.

Daily nods back at him, and for a while they ride on in silence as, outside, the rain lashes the train windows.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Headed for Crythin Gifford?

DAILY
Be in trouble if I weren't. It's
the last stop on the line
tonight.

ARTHUR
(extending his hand)
Arthur Kipps.

DAILY
Samuel Daily.

Arthur pets the dog.

ARTHUR
Hello, boy.

DAILY
Her name's Spider.

ARTHUR
I see.

Arthur stares out of the window. Silence now - just the rain lashing against the glass and the occasional shriek of the whistle.

Arthur sighs, happier not talking, but knowing he should take the opportunity to learn what he can.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Lived in Crythin Gifford long?

DAILY
All my life. For my sins.

ARTHUR

Then I wonder if you might be able to tell me anything about Eel Marsh house? I'm the solicitor charged with handling the estate of the late Mrs Alice Drablow.

DAILY

Died, did she? And you're instructed to dispose of the place, I suppose. Well... property is my trade, and I'll tell you this much for nowt: You'll not find a local buyer.

ARTHUR

Really? Why's that?

DAILY

(shrugging)

None wanted it before, so why would things change now?

Arthur smiles thinly, disappointed.

ARTHUR

For a moment there, Mr Daily, I thought you were going to be the answer to my prayers.

DAILY

If you're looking for that, try the fella upstairs.

ARTHUR

Oh I've tried. Believe me.

Something in Daily's face softens. Silence. And then:

DAILY

Staying at the Gifford Arms?

Arthur nods.

DAILY (CONT'D)

Then allow me to take you there on my way home. Crythin Gifford's not the kind of place you'll find a cab.

EXT. GIFFORD ARMS. NIGHT.

Daily's impressive AUTOMOBILE pulls up outside the Gifford Arms, the inn we saw earlier. Arthur climbs out, wrestling with his suitcase.

Daily hands him a BUSINESS CARD and shouts to be heard over the rain.

DAILY

Why don't you join my wife and I
for some supper tomorrow evening,
Mr Kipps. Seven O'Clock, if that
suits? We don't get many new
faces round this way, we'd
welcome the company.

Arthur opens his mouth to protest, but it's too late -
Daily has slammed the car door closed. He pulls away.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ENTRANCE HALL. NIGHT.

The inn-keeper, MR FISHER, late 30s, is waiting at the
door. He watches Daily drive off.

FISHER

Friend of yours?

ARTHUR

We just met.

FISHER

Well, I hope he hasn't given you
the wrong impression of Crythin
Gifford, Mr...?

ARTHUR

Kipps. Arthur Kipps. I'd like a
room please?

Fisher opens a LEDGER and runs his finger down a page, his
non-response leaving an awkward silence which Arthur, now a
little irritated, tries to fill.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

On the contrary, Mr Daily was
most hospitable.

FISHER

First automobile in Crythin
Gifford. And the last, if the
locals have any say in the
matter.

(closing the ledger)

I'm sorry Mr Kipps, it seems
we're packed to the rafters.

Arthur looks at him, puzzled. O.S., we hear muted
conversation from the bar, three or four people at most.

ARTHUR

But... my offices telegraphed
ahead and we were assured -

The inn-keepers wife - MRS FISHER, mid 30s - enters.

MRS FISHER
Evening sir!

FISHER
I was just telling this gentleman
that unfortunately we have no
room at all.

She looks confused, then gestures to the bar with a weary,
resigned look.

MRS FISHER
Those loafers too soused to walk
home again?
(to Arthur)
Well we can't have you out on the
streets now, can we?
(to Mr Fisher)
What about the attic room?

FISHER
We can give you something for the
night. But you'll have to leave
in the morning. That's booked
too. For the rest of the week.

Mrs Fisher, now utterly bemused, looks at her husband.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - UPPER HALL. NIGHT.

Arthur follows Mrs Fisher down the narrow hall.

MRS FISHER
I'm sure we can find something
for tomorrow, if you need. Long
journey ahead of you, is it?

ARTHUR
Oh no, I'm not... I'd planned to
remain here until Friday at
least. And I was hoping to find a
second room for the weekend. My
son and his nanny are travelling
up to join me.

MRS FISHER
I see... That's... People pass
through on their way up North,
usually... If a holiday's what
you're after, sir, you'd honestly
be better off further inland.

At the end of the hall is a BIRDCAGE, a SHAWL thrown over
it for the night. Arthur stops beside it.

We may notice, although Arthur doesn't, that there is a PHOTOGRAPH on the wall here: Mr and Mrs Fisher with their daughters, the girls from the ill-fated tea party.

ARTHUR

What kind of bird do you have?

MRS FISHER

Mynah bird. Hope you don't mind it. Lot of folk find them unsettling. The mimicry and all.

ARTHUR

No, no. I like them well enough. My wife had one.

MRS FISHER

What happened to it?

ARTHUR

Nothing.

Mrs Fisher realises what he means. She looks away.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

They're a fine bird.

MRS FISHER

That they are. Nice to have someone to talk to.

Now it's Arthur's turn to read the upspoken, feel awkward. But in the silence, there's a moment of connection.

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)

It's this way.

Arthur follows her up a tiny, narrow staircase towards a tiny landing, a single door.

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)

How old is your son?

ARTHUR

Six.

Mrs Fisher fumbles with a large bunch of KEYS; struggles to unlock the door and to fight a wave of emotion.

MRS FISHER

Lovely age.

(a beat)

I'm afraid this room doesn't get used very often. It'll do for the night though, eh?

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM. NIGHT.

In his pyjamas, Arthur sits on a bed - there are three in here - and surveys the room. It's undoubtedly the one we saw the three little girls in at the beginning, but many years have since passed. It's bare now, the curtains faded and tattered, the small bedsteads rusted, paint peeling from the walls.

In the corner is a pile of items covered by dusty SHEETS.

Arthur opens his case and gets out Edward's calendar and his hip flask.

He takes a long drink while staring at the calendar.

He takes a pen from his pocket and draws a mark through the box marked "Tuesday". Then he rolls up the calendar and tucks it into the inside pocket of his COAT, which is hanging over the back of a nearby chair.

He climbs into bed and reaches out to extinguish the BEDSIDE OIL LAMP. Before he does, his fingertips come to rest briefly on the fob watch, which lies beside it.

ARTHUR

Goodnight.

Finally, he turns out the light.

Arthur's eyes close, then open again.

In the darkness, the white sheets covering the pile of hidden items are still visible. Intriguing, unsettling.

Curiosity piqued, Arthur turns the light on again, gets up and pulls off a sheet... to be greeted by an alarming old ROCKING HORSE, the paint peeling unpleasantly from its grimacing face.

Beside it is a box of long-neglected DOLLS and TOYS.

Looking again at the disturbing face of the rocking-horse, Arthur throws the sheet back over it and returns to bed.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICES. DAY

Arthur stands outside a small office on a winding country lane. The sign above the door reads: "JEROME & SON". And underneath in smaller letters: "Solicitors".

Arthur checks a piece of paper in his hand, then checks his watch before trying the door, for what we assume is not the first time. It's locked. There's nobody here.

He looks up and down the street. It's mainly residential, apart from a small POST OFFICE next door, and deserted, aside from some children in a front garden across the road.

They are VICTORIA HARDY, 7 and her brothers TOM, 8, and CHARLIE, 5. They stare curiously at Arthur through the gaps in their picket fence.

Behind them, their father GERALD HARDY, 30s, stares equally curiously through a front window.

Arthur smiles at the children.

They don't smile back.

Seconds later, Gerald Hardy emerges from indoors, fixing Arthur with a suspicious look. He shouts across the road.

HARDY
Yes? Can I help you?

ARTHUR
Do you happen to know where I
might find Mr Jerome?

Hardy shrugs and shakes his head before protectively pulling his children away from the fence.

Arthur goes to call after him, but is distracted by a sound from the stairwell leading down to the cellar below Jerome's office. He looks down to see:

MRS JEROME, 30s, emerging from the cellar, looking anxious.

MRS JEROME
Mr Kipps?

ARTHUR
Yes?

Mrs Jerome locks and bolts the cellar door behind her and begins to ascend the stairs.

MRS JEROME
My husband was just on his way to
see you at the Gifford Arms.

She lets herself into the door leading to her home above the office, and closes it behind her, leaving Arthur alone.

Arthur pauses to absorb this abrupt exchange before walking away. He glances back over his shoulder at the cellar door. Something about it makes him feel uneasy.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ENTRANCE HALL. DAY.

Fisher is deep in conversation with a man in his early 40s. He is, in fact, JEROME. Mrs Fisher stands nearby listening, a sad, distant look on her face.

The conversation dies abruptly the moment Arthur arrives, as Fisher appears to point him out.

JEROME

Mr Kipps.

ARTHUR

Mr Jerome? I just came from your office. We must have walked directly past one another.

JEROME

I made it clear to your firm that there was no need for you to make the journey.

Waving away what he takes to be an apology.

ARTHUR

Please, it's of no concern. It was only a few minutes walk.

JEROME

The journey to Crythin Gifford, Mr Kipps. No need at all. We could have sent all the relevant documents to London.

Arthur is lost for words as Jerome thrusts a FILE at him.

JEROME (CONT'D)

In any event, you'll find everything you need in here. Mr. Fisher tells me you're leaving today.

ARTHUR

No, I need to -
(to Fisher)
Your wife said -

He looks to Mrs Fisher, who avoids his gaze, awkward.

FISHER

I'm afraid she was mistaken, Mr Kipps. It's market day tomorrow. We're entirely full.

ARTHUR

This is... I'm going to have to contact my employers. Do you have a telephone?

Fisher and Jerome look at Arthur incredulously.

FISHER

Not even your friend Mr Daily has a telephone, sir. You'll not find one in Crythin Gifford.

ARTHUR

Then I'll send a telegram. Which way is the post office?

JEROME

You'll find it directly next door to my own premises.

Arthur turns to leave. Jerome falls into step beside him.

JEROME (CONT'D)

...But it's closed on a Wednesday morning.

(a beat)

The London train leaves in half an hour. My colleague Keckwick is waiting outside with your luggage.

At the entrance, Mr Jerome opens the door for Arthur and politely gestures for him to go first. Arthur steps out.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Kipps.

And with that, Jerome closes the door on him.

EXT. GIFFORD ARMS. DAY.

Arthur stands before the closed door, speechless.

The square has become busier now, VILLAGE FOLK busying themselves with preparations for the market.

Not far from the entrance, a PONY AND TRAP is waiting. Sitting atop it is KECKWICK, 42, a weather-beaten man in threadbare country clothes.

Arthur's suitcase is on the back of the trap.

Fighting his anger, Arthur climbs up beside Keckwick.

ARTHUR

Mr Keckwick? Change of plans. I'm not catching the train. I need to get to Eel Marsh House.

KECKWICK

Jerome paid me to take you to the station.

Arthur fishes in his pocket and produces the envelope Bentley gave him. He offers Keckwick a COIN from it.

Keckwick stares at it, unimpressed, and gestures to the envelope.

KECKWICK (CONT'D)

Make it six and I'll think about it.

ARTHUR

Six shillings?

Keckwick's face tells us that he's serious. Arthur digs resentfully into the envelope and hands over the cash.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You're fortunate my firm provided me with expenses.

KECKWICK

Think you'll find you're the fortunate one, Mr Kipps. You'll not find anyone else willing to take you to Eel Marsh House.

EXT. CRYTHIN GIFFORD. DAY.

Arthur and Keckwick ride silently through the town. VILLAGERS stop to stare at Arthur as the trap passes. There are many weathered old faces here, giving Arthur - and us - an uneasy sense of rural 'otherness'.

We pass an empty SCHOOL, its iron gates rusted and padlocked, its yard overgrown. But we don't linger on these details, nor imply any significance.

In fact, Arthur's attention is taken up with a bag of ROTTING APPLES that sits between them, attracting flies.

ARTHUR

Not planning to eat those, are you?

KECKWICK

For the pony.

They ride on in silence.

EXT. MARSHES. DAY

At the end of a road, the pony trap arrives at the start of a causeway - a narrow path snaking across an incredible vista of shining marshland, with EEL MARSH HOUSE, perched on it's little island, lying at it's distant end.

Arthur reacts in awe.

KECKWICK

Nine Lives Causeway. Lucky the tide's out.

ARTHUR

How many hours a day is it passable?

KECKWICK

Couple in the morning. Couple later on.

Arthur gives a low whistle.

ARTHUR

Well there's something that might put off a prospective buyer.

KECKWICK

Fewer if a fret's up.

ARTHUR

You mean the sea mists?

KECKWICK

Come in without any warning. The tide too. One minute the road's there, next - under water. People have drowned on that causeway. And the marshes are even worse.

ARTHUR

Worse than drowning.

Keckwick fixes Arthur with a look, then picks up one of his moldy apples and tosses it onto the apparently solid ground beside the causeway.

Within seconds, it has been sucked down, swallowed. Gone without a trace. And likewise Arthur's amusement.

KECKWICK

Ask them what they reckon.

He points ahead to where a TALL WOODEN CROSS is erected in the marsh, a few feet from the causeway.

Silence reigns once again as they ride on, broken only by the eerie WHOOPS of the birds circling overhead.

EXT. EEL MARSH ISLAND. DAY.

Keckwick halts the trap at the beginning of the driveway leading up to Eel Marsh house. Arthur looks at him, puzzled, and nods towards the house.

ARTHUR

Shall we...?

But Keckwick doesn't move. He points up toward the house.

KECKWICK

Storehouse is to the East by the kitchen garden. Should still be some oil in there for the lamps.

ARTHUR

I didn't realise you knew the house so well Mr Keckwick. Perhaps you could show me around.

KECKWICK

My father worked here all his life. I'll be back for you at five. Before the tide comes in. Plenty of time to get to the station for the late train.

Arthur stares at Keckwick, realises that he really isn't going to go any closer, and climbs off the trap, unable to keep from laughing at the absurdity of the string of obstructions he is meeting.

ARTHUR

Despite Mr Jerome's apparent keenness to run me out of town, I won't be leaving Crythin Gifford until my work is done.

Arthur turns to walk toward Eel Marsh House but, remembering something, he turns back, waving the file that Jerome gave him earlier.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Oh, and he forgot to put the deeds to the house in here. Collect them from him on your way to fetch me?

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - GROUNDS. DAY.

The sound of the pony and trap recedes further and further as Arthur walks up the drive, carrying his bag. He notes that, to the East, close to the marshes, a GNARLED TREE stands beside the ruins of an old GATE KEEPER'S COTTAGE. Beyond that lies a crumbling FAMILY GRAVEYARD.

But his attention is drawn away again by the imposing sight of EEL MARSH HOUSE itself looming up ahead of him. Vast, grey and magnificent against the open sky and marshland.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

Silence now, but for the birds. Arthur lets himself in.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. DAY.

A dark entrance hall. Arthur inches along the wall until he finds a LAMP. He fumbles with it, but it doesn't light.

He opens the first door he finds.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

Faint rectangles of daylight glow around the shuttered windows, but still we can't make out much detail in here.

Arthur tries another WALL LAMP. Nothing.

Something - it sounds like a pile of papers - falls to the floor as Arthur fumbles with a DESK-LAMP. This too fails.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

Arthur walks around the East side of the house, past a barren KITCHEN-GARDEN...

EXT. STOREHOUSE. DAY.

Arthur arrives at the STOREHOUSE that Keckwick mentioned.

He swats the cobwebs from the handle of the warped and dilapidated storehouse door and tries it. The years have wedged it tightly shut.

Eventually, he shoulders it open.

INT. STOREHOUSE. DAY.

The daylight from outside provides just enough illumination for Arthur, and us, to survey the contents of the room.

A pile of LOGS are stacked against one wall, and against the other a plethora of GARDENING TOOLS, SPORTING EQUIPMENT for cricket, badminton and croquet and VARIOUS CONTAINERS.

Spying what he needs, Arthur grabs a canister of LAMP OIL.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

As Arthur walks back past the kitchen garden, carrying his canister, he stops, unsettled. Carried on the wind is something that sounds unmistakably like CHILDREN'S VOICES.

Arthur squints towards the marshes, but can see nothing untoward. Nevertheless, the sound of voices persists.

Still carrying his canister, he walks towards the marshes.

ARTHUR

Hello?

EXT. EEL MARSH ISLAND - GROUNDS. DAY.

Uneasy, Arthur walks past the graveyard, out to the end of the drive, following the sound.

In the upper window of the ruined Gate Keeper's cottage we may notice - though some may not - a WOMAN IN BLACK looking out over the marshes.

Looking out to the marshes himself, Arthur doesn't see her.

The children's voices are louder here, more distinct. But no children are to be seen. He is alone. Or is he?

Suddenly, as if sensing that someone is watching him, Arthur turns uneasily to look behind him.

But there is no one there.

In an increasing state of discomfort, Arthur turns and begins to walk briskly back toward the house.

As he passes the cottage, he again fails to see what we see, clearly this time, although again fleetingly: the Woman in Black at the window. She is dressed in the formal funeral garb of the mid-1800s, her bonnet and mourning veil concealing her face in a way that makes us nervous as to what might be under there.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

Arthur opens the front door, the haste in his movements conveying an intangible desire to get indoors fast.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. DAY.

Arthur closes the door behind him, hesitates a moment, then bolts it shut.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

Canister of oil in hand, Arthur stumbles into the darkened room and makes for the closest window. He throws open the shutters and peers outside, but the grounds are still deserted.

We may make out a slight tremble in Arthur's hand as he uses the canister of oil to fill the desk lamp.

He lights it...

And surveys the now-illuminated room, an untidy testament to Mrs Drablow's unstable mental state. The entire surface of the desk is covered with LETTERS and DOCUMENTS. Nearby is a DECANter of brandy and TWO GLASSES, thick with dust.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN. DAY.

DIRTY WATER chokes in noisy spurts from a faucet into a long-unused SINK. Somewhere distant, in the walls of the house, pipes THUMP and RATTLE in complaint.

Arthur, pumping the handle, sighs and abandons his efforts. The kitchen is bleak, under three decades of dust. On the counter is the decanter and a glass from the drawing room.

Arthur grabs an old DISHCLOTH and beats it on the counter, sending thick clouds of DUST dancing in the shafts of light that stream through the grimy windows.

He wipes the glass, pours a large brandy and drains it.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. DAY.

Arthur climbs the stairs. The walls here are dotted with PORTRAITS and PHOTOGRAPHS. He glances at them as he walks.

A formal portrait of MR AND MRS DRABLOW AND THEIR SON, 6.

A formal portrait of THE SON, alone.

A SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH: Eleven neatly-dressed CHILDREN of varying ages stand posed for the camera outside the village school. Behind them stands their TEACHER. She wears a pale dress, and in contrast to the solemnity of the children, she is smiling.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. DAY.

Arthur walks the upper hallway, trying each door in turn. The first on his left reveals a completely EMPTY ROOM, devoid of furniture or window-dressings.

The second opens into ANOTHER EMPTY ROOM.

The third door, at the very end of the hallway, is firmly locked shut. Eventually Arthur gives up trying to open it.

He returns down the other side of the hall. The first door reveals a BATHROOM, its curtains closed.

Shafts of light slant in from above through exposed slats where a section of the roof has succumbed to the elements. He enters.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM. DAY.

Arthur opens the curtains... the window affords a clear view of the graveyard, tree, cottage and marshes beyond.

Arthur peers out, scanning the landscape. He sees nothing untoward, but tenses a little when he hears a SCRABBLING noise from somewhere nearby.

He freezes. Nothing. Then the noise again. Arthur presses his ear to the wall dividing this room from the not-yet-investigated room next door.

A long pause, then the noise. It's definitely in there.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. DAY.

Outside the closed door to the next room, Arthur gathers himself and turns the handle. The door fails to open, but this time the noise from within is not so much a scrabbling as a sudden THUMP. Arthur jumps back.

Gingerly, he turns the KEY that is in the lock beneath the handle. Almost immediately, another THUMP.

Arthur opens the door... to discover a BEDROOM. The curtains drawn. Dark, but for the same shafts of light through the ruined roof. And silent. He steps in.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY.

The shafts of daylight shine onto a dresser crowded with medicinal-looking BOTTLES. Dimly, we can also see a bureau that, like the desk downstairs, is covered with PAPERS.

Arthur stands very still, eyes darting around the room. The SCRABBLING noise is louder now, frantic, low to the ground.

Arthur scans the ill-lit floor.

A noise - though not the same noise as the one he heard before, this time a HIGH-PITCHED SQUEALING - leads Arthur deeper into the room, to the FIREPLACE where he finds:

A NEST filled with BABY BIRDS. Their beaks are wide open in the hope of receiving food. Eight wide, dark, gaping holes, out of proportion with their tiny bodies.

Arthur exhales, relieved.

Then he notices: one RUNTISH BABY BIRD has fallen out of the nest and is writhing on the hearthstone. It's both pitiful and creepy in its naked vulnerability.

Arthur bends down and replaces it in the nest.

Suddenly, an almighty FLURRY - this is the noise he heard before - and a BIRD flies past Arthur, THUMPING into the wall behind him. It drops to the ground, stunned.

Arthur reacts, shocked but - again - relieved. He looks up to the gaping ceiling, where the bird must have got in, then back at the bird itself.

Arthur moves to the window, where he pulls open the curtains...

Arthur steps back in alarm.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Arthur's distant, elevated POV, but still we plainly see:

In the tree by the cottage, the Woman in Black hangs by a rope around her neck. Silhouetted against the sky, her dead form sways grotesquely in the wind.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY.

Arthur closes his eyes tightly, certain his mind is playing tricks on him again.

Sure enough, when he opens them, the distant tree is bare.

Arthur grasps the handles of the sash window and, with some effort, wrestles it open.

He looks back at the bird. Gestures to the open window.

ARTHUR

Go on.

It doesn't move.

The baby birds scream for food.

Arthur gestures at them, addresses the bird again.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You've got mouths to feed.

Then he points again at the window.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Off you go.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

Arthur is settled at the chaotic writing desk, beginning to stack the reams of scattered paperwork into piles, a large tumbler of brandy at hand.

Occasionally, he pauses to take a drink, or to stoop to pick up papers that have fallen to the floor.

Suddenly the silence is interrupted by the unmistakable sound, in the far distance, of A PONY AND TRAP.

Arthur glances up at the large WALL CLOCK mounted nearby. The hands are motionless. Stopped at eight o' clock.

Arthur checks his pocket watch. It's ten to three.

The sound of the pony and trap is still distant, but growing louder.

Confused, Arthur moves to the window and peers out.

Outside, a light MIST has begun to descend. Obscuring the view of the driveway and the marshes beyond.

But as Arthur stands here, the steady rhythm of hooves and wheels is replaced by a CLATTERING. Arthur freezes.

A HORSE whinnies in panic, a MAN shouts for help, a WOMAN and a CHILD scream.

Arthur rises and makes for the door.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

Arthur bursts out into the daylight and begins to sprint through the mist. Out here, the catastrophic sounds coming from the marsh beyond are even louder.

ARTHUR
Keckwick?

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - GROUNDS. DAY.

Horried, Arthur runs blindly down the driveway into the white nothingness ahead, towards the anguished cries.

ARTHUR
Keckwick!

EXT. NINE LIVES CAUSEWAY. DAY.

The mist seems to be getting thicker, and Arthur begins to move ahead a little more gingerly.

The mainland is entirely obscured from view, and the only visible landmark is the faint, indistinct outline of the wooden cross out in the marsh. Soon, this too is swallowed by the thickening mist.

But now the cries abate and there is only a ghastly SUCKING NOISE.

Then silence.

Arthur stops, chilled to the core.

And looking down, he notes with dismay that he can no longer see the ground beneath him.

Reluctantly he looks back... only to find that the mist is all around now: he can see nothing in any direction.

Treading carefully, Arthur steels himself and continues to move through the whiteness towards the mainland.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

Only a trace of the sea mist hangs in the air here, as Arthur arrives outside Jerome's office.

INT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

The door is unlocked. Arthur bursts in, but no one is here.

ARTHUR
Mr. Jerome?

No response... beside a faint SHUFFLING noise from beneath the floorboards.

Arthur stoops to peer through a crack in the floorboards, but before he can investigate further, Jerome enters from a back room. He is both shocked and displeased to see Arthur.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
There's been an accident on Nine
Lives Causeway! It's Keckwick -

JEROME
Mr. Kipps?? Why are you...

ARTHUR
I had him take me to Eel Marsh.
He was coming back for me. We
must fetch help! It sounded as if
he had others with him, too - a
child!

Jerome sits down at his desk, starts fussing with papers.

JEROME

He would never risk it. His own father died crossing the causeway during a fret.

(beat)

You shouldn't have gone, Mr Kipps.

Arthur stares at Jerome in mute confusion. Before he can find words to express his disbelief, there's a KNOCK at the door, announcing the arrival of Keckwick.

Arthur's eyes widen. Keckwick looks equally puzzled.

KECKWICK

I was on my way to fetch you. Came to collect the deeds first, like you asked.

JEROME

I thought more of you, Keckwick. How much did he pay you?

ARTHUR

Mr Jerome, are you quite mad?! Someone - if not Keckwick, someone - met with great misfortune out on the marshes not thirty minutes ago! And you -

At this, Keckwick falters and turns away.

JEROME

No, not thirty minutes ago, Mr Kipps. Thirty years ago.

Jerome busies himself again. Arthur stares at him agape.

ARTHUR

What are you talking about?

KECKWICK

Twenty seven. To be precise. Showed you the cross out on the marsh this morning, didn't I?

Arthur stares from one to the other in disbelief.

ARTHUR

Ghost stories. Wonderful.

JEROME

Take a look at your own paperwork if you doubt it. Mrs Drablow was the only survivor. Threw herself clear, onto the causeway. The others, the little Drablow boy...

(MORE)

JEROME (CONT'D)

They never even made it out of
the trap before it sank.

KECKWICK

Weren't even able to have a
proper funeral. Still out there,
they are.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

The street is empty, but for the Hardy children playing
quietly in their front yard.

Arthur strides purposefully next door to the Post Office.

A sign on the door reads: "CLOSED".

Inside, we can see the POST-MISTRESS, 50s, pottering
around, clearing up for the day.

Arthur knocks urgently at the window. The woman waves her
hands sternly, points to the sign. He shouts to be heard.

ARTHUR

Could you direct me to the police
station?

The woman points vaguely and returns to her chores.

EXT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

An establishing shot of a small rural police station.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

Arthur stands across a counter from an old policeman, P.C.
ROBERT COLLINS, 60, who fills in a form very, very slowly,
his calm demeanor providing stark contrast to Arthur's
state of agitation.

PC COLLINS

No one's used Nine Lives Causeway
for years, sir. No one visits Eel
Marsh House - it's empty.

ARTHUR

I know what I heard, Constable.

PC COLLINS

At any rate, we can't get anyone
out there until this fret lifts.

ARTHUR

But -

Collins raises his hand, indicating for Arthur to wait. He writes some more, painfully slowly, until - from somewhere in a back room - a BELL rings. He downs his pen.

PC COLLINS

Excuse me one moment, sir.

Arthur can't hide his frustration as, very slowly, Collins shuffles away into a back room.

Just the sound of a clock TICKING now, as Arthur waits.

Momentarily, the front door opens to reveal Tom Hardy. The boy looks to the empty desk, then at Arthur.

ARTHUR

He'll be back in just a moment, I think. Is everything alright?

The boy shakes his head. With a growing sense of dread, Arthur looks behind the boy to see that, hanging back a few feet behind him are the younger boy, Charlie, and their sister Victoria. The girl looks horribly ill.

Arthur leaps to his feet.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

What happened?

Charlie and Victoria step in silently. The little girl is deathly pale and stares straight at Arthur; a blank, glazed, wide-eyed stare. None of the children speak.

Tom points at his sister.

The girl's eyes stay locked onto Arthur's as he drops to his knees and takes her gently by the arms.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

(off her silence)

What's your name? Can you tell me your name?

TOM

Her name's Victoria Hardy.

ARTHUR

Can you tell me what's wrong, Victoria? Did something bad happen?

TOM

She drank some lye. Our mam was out.

CHARLIE

It's wash day.

ARTHUR
Lye? Oh god...
(shouting)
Constable!

TOM
Is she going to die?

ARTHUR
Constable!

CHARLIE
My cat died. He went to heaven.

ARTHUR
We need a doctor!
(softly, to Victoria)
It's alright, darling. It's going
to be alright.

Eyes still fixed on Arthur, her face remaining expressionless, the little girl's jaw falls slack, and a stream of THICK, BLOODY VOMIT spills from her mouth and spatters down her front and onto the floor.

EXT. GIFFORD ARMS. DAY.

Arthur sits on a bench in the market square, shell-shocked, oblivious to the stares of the ELDERLY VILLAGERS who pass.

He draws his flask from his inside pocket and goes to drink from it, not caring who sees, only to find that it's empty.

He looks over at the Gifford Arms. Nothing else for it. Reluctantly, he gets up and heads towards the entrance.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ENTRANCE HALL. DAY.

The entrance hall is deserted.

ARTHUR
Hello?

Receiving no reply, he walks through to the bar room.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - PUBLIC ROOM. DAY.

The bar room is deserted, too. Not a soul here.

ARTHUR
Hello?

In the empty silence, Arthur can now hear a sound coming from upstairs. It's faint, but sounds distinctly like a woman sobbing.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ENTRANCE HALL. DAY.

Arthur wanders uneasily back into the entrance hall. The sound of sobbing is louder here, coming from upstairs.

ARTHUR
Mrs Fisher?

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - UPPER HALL. DAY.

Arthur makes his way down the hall, towards the sound...

It is a moment before he realises that it is coming from the birdcage.

Grimly fascinated, he stares at the mynah bird within. Its beak is open, utterly human-sounding sobs coming from it.

Now for the first time Arthur notices the family photograph on the wall here. The sobbing continues as he stares at it.

MRS FISHER
Mr Kipps?

Arthur turns, a little startled, to see Mrs Fisher emerging from a nearby bedroom, carrying a pile of folded sheets.

The bird continues its horrible imitation of her crying.

There's nothing either of them can say.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - PUBLIC ROOM. DAY.

Mrs Fisher pours Arthur a large brandy.

MRS FISHER
Say when.

He stares at her. The glass fills. Still he says nothing. She stares back, still pouring. Her look says she understands.

She walks back to the bar, replaces the bottle and begins to busy herself wiping dust from the other bottles.

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)
There was nothing you could have done, you know.

ARTHUR
Who can say? If I'd acted faster.
Noticed her when I passed by...

MRS FISHER
If you hadn't done this or that.
Or been distracted.
(MORE)

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)
If the events of the day had
shifted by only a minute.
Everything would be different.

He looks over to meet her gaze.

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)
Trust me, Mr Kipps, thinking that
way can drive you to madness.

He drains his glass dry and tips it in her direction.

ARTHUR
Or drink. Join me for one?

MRS FISHER
It's getting late. You'll miss
the London train.

ARTHUR
I'm not leaving Crythin Gifford
just yet. I still have work to do
here. More's the pity.

MRS FISHER
My husband will be back soon.

Behind the bar, Mrs Fisher stands stock still. She's not going to be serving any more drinks. Arthur shakes his head in amused resignation and stands to put on his coat.

ARTHUR
I don't think I've ever met a
publican so hell bent on avoiding
custom as your husband.

MRS FISHER
He means well, I assure you.

Arthur smiles wistfully at her as he places a handful of coins on the bar and turns to leave. He is surprised when Mrs Fisher catches his arm, a little too tightly.

MRS FISHER (CONT'D)
Mr Kipps, Sir... Eel Marsh house
is a dangerous place. You said
you have a son?

ARTHUR
Yes...

MRS FISHER
Go home to him. Cherish him.

Arthur is taken aback by her odd change of mood, this strange statement. He wrests his arm from her grip.

ARTHUR

Believe me, Mrs Fisher, I
wouldn't be here if it weren't
for the fact that I love my son.

EXT. MARKET SQUARE - DAY.

A few VILLAGERS, most elderly, toddle through the square.

Arthur stops one, a sullen ELDERLY MAN. Though his hair is mostly grey, we can tell that he was once red-haired.

ARTHUR

Can you tell me the quickest way
to Alton Hall?

ELDERLY MAN

By motorcar, apparently.

The two stare one another out for a beat.

Then the old man relents, pointing his WALKING STICK towards a churchyard - beyond it are open fields and a distant MANOR HOUSE - and walks away.

EXT. CRYTHIN GIFFORD CHURCHYARD. DAY.

Arthur walks at a brisk pace through the churchyard, past row upon row of GRAVES, many with recently-placed FLOWERS. He pays them no mind until he notices:

On one is a weather-beaten TEDDY BEAR. Threadbare and bleached silvery grey by years in the elements.

Arthur pauses, overcome with sadness. Then he walks on, now uneasily noticing details on the other plots he passes.

One reads: ANNIE BROWN May 25th 1861 - January 23rd 1872.
The headstone bears the carved image of a lamb.

On the next grave, a shrivelled DAISY CHAIN is draped over the headstone.

On the next, a sleeping CHERUB STATUE and the inscription:
"Taken from us too young"

The one next to that, someone has left a small WOODEN TOY TRAIN.

Though we put no emphasis on this, the observant among us may note that all these graves bear the same date of death: January 23rd 1872.

Unsettled, Arthur checks his watch and picks up his pace.

EXT. PICTURESQUE LANE. DUSK.

Arthur stops at a set of wrought iron GATES.

Behind them is a sweeping drive, leading up to a MANOR HOUSE. Arthur opens the gates and sets off up the drive.

EXT. DAILY'S HOUSE - GROUNDS. DUSK.

Arthur is halfway to the house when Spider the dog bounds up to him.

ARTHUR
Spider! Hello girl.

Moments later, Daily emerges from an avenue of trees. Arthur calls out as he approaches.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Sorry, I'm a little early.

DAILY
No bother. I was just on my way
back. Just bidding my son
Nicholas a good night.

The two begin to walk together, Spider following behind.

ARTHUR
Lives on the estate, does he?

Daily smiles ruefully and gestures beyond the trees. Arthur looks back to see that the end of the avenue lies a small white MAUSOLEUM.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
My condolences, Mr Daily.

DAILY
Please: call me Sam. And no need
for condolences. It was a long
while ago.
(re: the mausoleum)
Designed it myself. Just for him.

ARTHUR
It's beautiful.

DAILY
There's a place in there ready
for me. And my wife. So one day
we can all be together again.

Arthur smiles awkwardly, unsure what to say. They are close to the front entrance of the house now, but Daily stops.

DAILY (CONT'D)

May I ask you a favour, Mr. Kipps?

ARTHUR

Arthur.

DAILY

Arthur. My wife... It'd be for the best if you'd avoid the subject of our bereavement in conversation. Indeed the general subject of children, if at all possible.

Before Arthur can speak, the door is opened by a BUTLER.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL. NIGHT.

MRS DAILY, 58, appears behind the Butler, grinning broadly.

MRS DAILY

Mr Kipps! I've been so looking forward to meeting you!

ARTHUR

The pleasure's all mine.

The butler helps Arthur out of his coat, but as he does so, Arthur's jacket is momentarily pulled open.

MRS DAILY

Good heavens, is that blood on your shirt? Are you quite alright?

Arthur looks down to see: spatters of Victoria Hardy's blood on his white shirt. He rearranges his jacket.

ARTHUR

Oh, no I... I'm fine, thank you. Earlier this afternoon I -
(he remembers not to mention children)
I cut myself shaving... I apologise for not changing. It seems I'm unexpectedly without a room at the Gifford Arms any longer. Some sort of mix-up.

MRS DAILY

Well then you must stay here, mustn't he, Samuel?

DAILY

Aye. Come. Let me get you something to drink.

Daily steers Arthur towards the drawing-room.

MRS DAILY

Oh but first you must meet the
twins!

(calling up the stairs)

Sarah! Emily!

DAILY

My dear, I'm sure Mr. Kipps
doesn't -

He tails off as we hear a SCAMPERING noise on the stairs,
and two LITTLE DOGS bound down into the hall. Both wear
immaculate little dresses and bonnets, with white mittens
on their fore-paws, and patent leather booties on their
hind ones.

The overall effect falls somewhere on the wrong side of the
line between comical and disturbing, and Arthur tries to
hide his discomfort.

MRS DAILY

Now now girls, what have I said
about running about?

ARTHUR

What a... charming pair.

Mrs Daily scoops up one dog in either arm, cradling them on
their backs, beaming with pride.

MRS DAILY

(to the dogs)

Say hello to Mr Kipps.

Arthur nods awkwardly. Mr Daily gives his wife a sharply
disapproving look, which she ignores.

INT. DAILY'S DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur and the Dailys follow the Butler into the formal-
looking room, but anger floods Mr Daily's face as he sees:

Two additional places - with TINY CHINA PLATES - have been
set at the table before two infants' HIGH CHAIRS.

DAILY

(to butler, testy)

We have a guest, Archer. The...
twins won't be dining with us
this evening.

The Butler moves swiftly to begin clearing the tiny plates.

MRS DAILY

But, Samuel!

ARTHUR
 (to Daily)
 Truly, it makes no odds to me.

Samuel sighs and nods tersely to the Butler, who replaces the plates as Daily and Arthur take their seats.

Mrs Daily places the dogs in the high chairs and ties BIBS around their necks before sitting down in between them.

TWO MAIDS step in and serve the first course.

Mrs Daily begins to feed one of the dogs with a TEASPOON.

MRS DAILY
 I am glad you'll be staying with us tonight, Mr Kipps. Ought we to have Archer collect your bags from the Gifford Arms? It would be no bother.

ARTHUR
 Actually, I'm without my possessions at present. I left my case at the house where I'm working.

MRS DAILY
 Emily! Table manners! We have a guest!
 (to Arthur, calm again)
 I'm so sorry Mr Kipps. Whatever must you think of us!

ARTHUR
 It's really... quite alright.
 (a beat)
 Actually you may know the place -

DAILY
 (cutting in)
 Oh let's save talk of business until after supper shall we? Tell me, how is London these days? It's been a long time since I've visited.

MRS DAILY
 Stuff London! I should like to know more about Mr Kipps. Are you married?

Before Arthur has a chance to reply, Mrs Daily looks sharply to her husband, who is looking away, stony-faced, feeding a table-scrap to Spider, who sits at his feet.

MRS DAILY (CONT'D)
SAMUEL! I have TOLD you not to
feed that animal at the table!
(brightly, to Arthur)
Any children?

ARTHUR
(avoiding Daily's eye)
A son.

MRS DAILY
Glad to hear it. You don't want
to end up like this poor sap.
Wealthiest man in the county, and
no one to leave it all to. The
good Lord's little joke.
(a beat)
Did he tell you about Nicholas?

DAILY
Elizabeth...

MRS DAILY
That's him.

She points across the room to a portrait on the wall. A
rather tacky, chocolate-box number featuring a little boy
wearing a sailor suit in a pastoral setting, rendered
slightly creepy by the presence of a heavenly "doorway" of
bright white light near him, obscuring much of the sky.

Arthur looks at it uncomfortably.

ARTHUR
A... handsome portrait.

MRS DAILY
I painted it myself. I love to
paint and sketch.

ARTHUR
Well, it's excellent. You're -

MRS DAILY
Nicholas loved to sketch, too.
(a beat)
He still does.

DAILY
Elizabeth...

MRS DAILY
(to Arthur)
Nicholas wants to draw a picture
for you right now.

DAILY
Elizabeth, no!

Arthur looks at Daily in desperate confusion, then back to Mrs Daily... Whose eyes roll back into her head as she begins to have some kind of seizure. Her arms flail, and she knocks her plate to the ground. Her little dogs BARK.

Daily leaps up and runs from the room leaving Arthur alone.

Arthur watches in mute distress as Mrs Daily blindly grabs for her STEAK KNIFE. A beat, then she begins frantically to carve into the surface of the table.

All the while, the two dressed-up dogs bark in their highchairs.

Momentarily, Daily returns with the maid, who is carrying a bottle of LAUDANUM. The two struggle to subdue Mrs Daily and administer it. She fights them, still stabbing at the table until the knife is eventually wrested from her grip.

MRS DAILY

No! Nicholas hasn't finished!

Finally, the medicine administered, she falls silent. The dogs do, too. The maid loosens Mrs Daily's collar as Mr Daily stands up to leave the table. He gestures for Arthur to follow him.

ARTHUR

Is she going to be alright?

DAILY

Aye.

INT. DAILY'S STUDY. NIGHT.

The men sit by the fire drinking. On the table by Daily are a number of family PHOTOGRAPHS, mostly featuring his son.

DAILY

I'm very sorry, Arthur. I thought some youthful company might do her good.

ARTHUR

Please, think nothing of it.

DAILY

If she'd only take her medication... But she believes there's nothing wrong with her. Says it's our son, using her to communicate. I take it you're not one for all this fashionable spiritualist claptrap?

ARTHUR

Tried it once. My wife wasn't in the habit of ringing bells and wobbling tables when she was alive, so...

DAILY

Forgive me, I didn't... Bloody charlatans. Preying on those most in need. Makes my blood boil.

ARTHUR

Well... It's good to meet a fellow sceptic. They seem in short supply round these parts.

DAILY

The locals been telling you stories?

ARTHUR

Oh yes.

DAILY

Problem is, Arthur, even the most rational mind can play tricks. Fill a man's head with enough rot and any shadow glimpsed from the corner of the eye may - in the mind - become a woman in black.

(off his look)

You not heard that one?

Daily indicates a PHOTO nearby. The same school portrait we saw at Eel Marsh. He points to the smiling teacher.

DAILY (CONT'D)

Jennet Humfrye. She was Mrs Drablow's sister. Taught at the village school for a while. Doesn't look scary to me, does she you?

ARTHUR

Doesn't look like she's in black either. How did she... Was it the accident? On the marshes?

DAILY

No, no. Hanged herself.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

A flash back to Arthur's POV from the bedroom window.

In the tree by the cottage, the Woman in Black hangs, silhouetted against the sky, swaying in the wind.

INT. DAILY'S STUDY. NIGHT.

Arthur can't hide his discomfort. Daily misreads it.

DAILY

No such thing as ghosts, Arthur.
You and your wife, me and
Nicholas... we will be together
again. When you die, you go up
there. You don't stay down here.

ARTHUR

I'd like to believe that.

DAILY

I have to. Else how would I get
out of bed.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur holds up a large pair of PYJAMAS that have been left
on the bed for him to borrow.

He removes his jacket, hangs it over the back of a chair
and searches the inner pocket. It's empty.

Quietly, he opens the door and steps out into the hall.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - UPPER HALL. NIGHT.

As Arthur creeps down the hallway, he passes the open door
to Mrs Daily's bedroom. At first his eye is drawn to two
CRADLES, one empty, one occupied by a dog in a nightgown.

Then: a disconcerting glimpse of Mrs Daily sitting up in
bed, cradling the other dog. Oh my god, is she nursing it?

Arthur hurries past, but it's too late - she's seen him.

MRS DAILY

Mr Kipps?

ARTHUR

(averting his eyes)
Sorry to disturb you. I needed to
fetch something from my coat.

MRS DAILY

Someone close to you is ill.
That's why you're still here.

ARTHUR

Excuse me?

MRS DAILY

Nicholas told me. He knows these things. And he says the situation is graver than you know.

ARTHUR

I... I see. I hope he's wrong.

MRS DAILY

Nicholas is never wrong, Mr Kipps.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - CLOAKROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur's coat is hanging here. He rifles desperately in the inner pockets. Relief washes over him as he retrieves:

Edward's calendar. He raises it to his face and closes his eyes, searching for the comforting scent of his son.

Then he turns the page, draws a PENCIL from his pocket and draws a line through the box marked "Wednesday".

He flips forward through the next page to the final one - Friday, the picture of himself, Edward and the train. He presses the calendar close to his heart, then turns back to the blank "Thursday" page and rolls it up again.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL. NIGHT.

Still holding the calendar, Arthur makes his way back towards the stairs. As he walks, however, his attention wanders to the open door of the dining room.

He reacts in alarm and fear at something within. With a sense of dread, he changes course for a closer look.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur stops cold in the doorway as we now see:

The DRAWING, carved into the surface of the table by Mrs Daily. Incomplete, child-like, but easily recognisable as a depiction of the woman in black, a noose around her neck.

INT/EXT. DAILY'S CAR. DAY.

Daily's automobile chugs down a country lane.

Inside, Arthur sits beside Daily with Spider on his knee.

ARTHUR

This is very good of you.

DAILY
Pleasure. Been a while since I
felt useful.

EXT. GIFFORD ARMS. DAY.

Market day is in full swing, and the entire village seems to have descended on the square.

Daily's automobile drives through the CROWDS at a crawl.

Market-goers stop and stare coldly at Daily and Arthur as they pass, and those who must move out of the path of the car do so grudgingly.

INT/EXT. DAILY'S CAR. DAY.

The market square behind us now, we find the side streets deserted and silent. The automobile drives on.

The shops and offices we pass are closed, the houses dark.

Unsettled, Arthur looks back to see, in the window of one deserted home, TWO VERY YOUNG CHILDREN. They return his stare.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

Daily and Arthur climb out of the car.

Arthur knocks on the door to Jerome's office. No response.

DAILY
Like I said, he might be at
market.

ARTHUR
Even better.

Arthur opens the door.

INT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

Daily stands lookout by the door, peeking out onto the street while Arthur rifles through a drawer of FILES.

Within moments, he has produced a bundle of DOCUMENTS. He shakes his head in disbelief.

DAILY
The deeds?

Arthur unties the STRING binding the bundle and waves the topmost DOCUMENT aloft.

ARTHUR

A legal man, obstructing the sale of property... He's insane.

DAILY

Jerome? A superstitious fool is what he is. Just like the rest. A frightened, superstitious fool.

ARTHUR

Frightened? Of what?

DAILY

Outsiders. People who don't understand the ways of Crythin Gifford.

ARTHUR

What ways? You're talking in riddles.

DAILY

(sighing)

Staying clear of Eel Marsh house.

ARTHUR

(mocking)

For fear of disturbing the spirits?

DAILY

Something like that, yes.

Before Arthur can respond, both men hear an unmistakable noise from beneath the floorboards. Spider barks and snuffles at the ground.

ARTHUR

(whispering)

That noise... I heard it before. From the cellar below. There's someone down there.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

Daily and Arthur hurry outside followed by Spider. A quick check reveals that the street is still deserted.

Arthur signals silently for Daily to stay and keep watch.

As Daily looks up and down the street, Arthur ventures down the cellar steps, down to where he first saw Mrs Jerome.

EXT. JEROME'S CELLAR. DAY.

Arthur tries the door. It's locked. He puts his ear to it, but now all is silent within.

He puts his eye to the KEYHOLE and peers inside.

INT. JEROME'S CELLAR. DAY.

From Arthur's POV, we see a limited view of the cellar. It has been converted into some kind of room for habitation, with a bed in one corner. But it seems to be unoccupied.

We hear Arthur breathing, but gradually we realise that this is not all: someone else is breathing too.

A split second later, our view of the room is obscured by AN EYE looking back at us!

INT/EXT. JEROME'S CELLAR. DAY.

Arthur leaps away in distress, and at the same time, we hear from a SCREAM from within the cellar - the owner of the eye, just as shocked as Arthur.

Arthur braces himself to look again, and sees:

A PALE GIRL, 12, scuttling backwards, terrified.

ARTHUR

Wait! Don't be afraid! I mean you
no harm!

The girl huddles in a corner of the cellar, silent.

Hearing the commotion, Daily and Spider run down the steps.

DAILY

Whatever is it?!

ARTHUR

(low, to Daily)
A girl! A young girl! He's
keeping her imprisoned or...
(through the door)
We're going to get you out.

DAILY

Arthur -

The girl turns around now, imploring and desperate.

PALE GIRL

Leave me alone!

ARTHUR
I'm not going to hurt you, I
promise.

PALE GIRL
You killed her.

ARTHUR
I... I don't know who you think I
am, miss, but -

PALE GIRL
Victoria Hardy is dead because of
you. My Daddy told me. But I'm
safe down here.

ARTHUR
The girl at the police station?
This is absurd! Why would he say -

PALE GIRL
GO AWAY!

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

A shell-shocked Arthur walks back to the car with Daily.

ARTHUR
Do you think she's going to be
alright?

DAILY
Aye. As well as she can be with
the Jeromes for parents.

INT/EXT. DAILY'S CAR. DAY.

Daily's car drives through the countryside.

Arthur sits beside Daily, Spider on his lap, hindering his
efforts to leaf through the papers in the stolen file.

ARTHUR
And here - look. Two attempted
sales by Jerome himself. Both
buyers from outside the area.
Seems he wasn't always so fearful
of visitors to Eel Marsh house.

DAILY
People find reason to believe,
Arthur. It's as I said before -
just as any shadow may turn to a
spectre, so any act of misfortune
may be taken for the work of a
curse.

(MORE)

DAILY (CONT'D)

And presto, another wise man is turned to a superstitious fool.

ARTHUR

A curse? Jerome has suffered misfortune?

DAILY

All families suffer misfortune at some time, Arthur. That's just what I mean.

They round a curve. The marshes and causeway come into view ahead... Along with a line of people - Jerome, Keckwick, Fisher, PC Collins, Gerald Hardy, the Elderly Man that Arthur asked for directions, and four other VILLAGE MEN - forming a human blockade.

Daily slams on the brakes and the car comes to a stop.

Daily and Arthur catch their breath and exchange looks.

The men walk towards the car.

JEROME (O.S.)

Your work here is complete, Mr Kipps.

FISHER

We don't wish you any ill. We just think it's high time you went home.

PC COLLINS

For your own good. For the good of us all.

(to Daily)

Turn this contraption around, Mr Daily.

The mob stand, silent and menacing, waiting for him to comply. A tense stand-off.

Finally, Daily puts the car into reverse.

ARTHUR

Sam, no! I'm not leaving! I have to... All Mrs Drablow's documents - I can't return to London without them!

DAILY

Calm yourself, Arthur.

The car continues to reverse erratically down the lane, away from the mob and the marshes.

ARTHUR

What are we going to do?

DAILY

Take you to the one place the
village idiots won't dare follow.

Daily changes gears and the car lurches violently forwards.

Daily's car veers off the lane and into a field,
circumventing the mob entirely.

The men watch in disbelief as the car circles behind them,
back onto the path and out onto Nine Lives Causeway.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

Arthur exits the car. Daily passes him a small LUNCH SACK.

DAILY

I had cook make up some supper.
Late tide's due at eleven. Shall
I come for you half past ten?

ARTHUR

You're very kind, Sam.

Arthur begins to walk towards the house. Daily calls after
him.

DAILY

Arthur? Do something for me? Take
Spider. For company.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

Arthur and Spider stand by the front door, dwarfed against
the landscape as they watch the car shrink into the
distance.

Arthur looks up at the house, hesitates. Then he turns the
door handle.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM. DAY.

Standing beside the wall clock, Arthur checks the time on
his pocket watch. He lingers a moment to look at Stella's
portrait, as if drawing strength from it, then snaps the
watch shut and resets the hands on the clock.

He winds it up. It begins loudly to TICK. The house is
coming back to life.

Like a man going into battle, Arthur picks up the canister
of lamp oil and fills the first of the wall-mounted lamps.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. DAY.

Arthur fills another oil lamp and tests it. It comes on.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN. DAY.

Arthur fumbles inside the cooking range. It fires up with a loud WHOOF that startles Spider.

ARTHUR
It's alright, old girl. It's just
the range. We'll be nice and
toasty soon.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. DAY.

Arthur marches purposefully upwards, carrying a JUG OF WATER and a handful of CANDLES. Close to the top, he turns to see that Spider is still waiting at the foot of the stair. He pats his thigh and reluctantly, she follows.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM. DAY.

Arthur places the jug of water on the wash stand and a candle in the CANDLESTICK beside it.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. DAY.

Arthur pulls the burnt-down CANDLE-ENDS from a wall sconce and replaces them with fresh candles.

That done, his eye is drawn to the locked door again.

He moves to it, tries it one more time. It's still locked.

Spider watches, head cocked, as Arthur produces a bunch of KEYS and tries every one. None work. Fighting to keep his resolute mood, he pockets them and makes off down the hall.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY.

Arthur stands in the doorway to the darkened bedroom. He hesitates, then strides in, though Spider remains outside.

He pauses at the window, then grasps the drawn curtains and yanks them open... Relief as he sees: the branches of the tree by the cottage are bare.

He looks over to the fireplace and sees that the baby birds in the nest are now dead. FLIES buzz around them.

Arthur's face falls, saddened by the this sight. But he rallies himself and gathers the papers from the bureau.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. DAY.

The key is still in the lock on the hallway side of the bedroom door, as when he first visited. Papers stuffed under his arm, Arthur locks the door from the outside.

EXT. STOREHOUSE. DAY.

Arthur emerges from the storehouse carrying an armful of LOGS and an AXE. Spider follows behind.

Moments later Arthur is chopping the wood with considerable aggression, releasing some of his pent up nerves.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - MONTAGE. DAY.

A fire blazes in the grate. Arthur sits at the writing desk, Spider at his feet, the previously-scattered papers now in some semblance of order, in tall piles.

Arthur studies the first DOCUMENT from the pile. Then he screws it into a ball and tosses it in the WASTEBASKET.

The clock ticks.

Arthur studies a PAIR OF DOCUMENTS. His look suggests that finally he has found something useful. He places the documents directly into his suitcase.

The fire has burned low. Arthur throws on another LOG.

Arthur reads a LETTER. The pile on the desk is lower too.

Another balled-up document lands in the wastebasket.

The clock hand CLICKS to the four o'clock mark. It CHIMES four times, a nasty, hollow chime.

Arthur takes a SANDWICH and a bottle of BEER from the lunch sack. He opens the beer and takes a swig. As he eats, Arthur continues to go through the papers. Opening a large ENVELOPE, he finds two CERTIFICATES.

Looking closer, we see that they are DEATH CERTIFICATES. The first belongs to Nathaniel Drablow.

Arthur puts down the sandwich, his appetite lost. He places the first certificate in the bag and examines the second.

It belongs to Jennet Humphrye.

The clock ticks.

Arthur reads, files and disposes of more documents.

The fire in the grate gutters and goes out.

The hands of the clock click into place. Ten to six.

At the now almost-clear desk, a weary Arthur looks up at the clock, then back down to the remaining stack of papers.

ARTHUR

Shall we take a breather?

The dog regards him quizzically.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Arthur wanders the silent graveyard with Spider. He looks up anxiously at the tree. Still nothing untoward.

He scans the names on the HEADSTONES. Most have been worn away by time and the salty air, but soon he finds a newer one, marked Jennet Humfrye. He looks around anxiously.

He is still quite alone, but he notices now a STATUE behind him, close by: a disquieting STONE ANGEL with a worn-away face. He bends to read the inscription.

It reads: In loving memory of Nathaniel Drablow.

The rest reads: "Beloved son of Alice and Charles Drablow. August 2nd 1863 - December 29th 1871"

Ahead, a stone path, overgrown with weeds, leads toward the ruined cottage. The roof is virtually gone, interior exposed to the elements. Arthur wanders towards it...

EXT. GATE KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Try as he might to ignore it, Arthur's attention is grimly drawn by the tree. He ambles towards the back of the building, where it stands.

Behind the cottage, he stops in his tracks.

On the crumbling back wall is a crudely daubed message, the paint worn away by the years, but still just legible: "YOU COULD HAVE SAVED HIM"

Arthur stares, chilled to the marrow. O.S., Spider begins to BARK.

EXT. EEL MARSH GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Arthur walks back around the cottage, and soon sees Spider, facing the causeway, barking furiously.

As Arthur nears the marshes, we hear the same distinct sound of children's voices that he heard earlier.

But this time when he looks out toward the mainland Arthur sees, some distance away in the fading twilight, A GROUP OF CHILDREN standing motionless on the causeway, silhouetted against the sky.

He begins to sprint toward the end of the drive.

ARTHUR

Hey!

EXT. EEL MARSH ISLAND - GROUNDS. DAY.

Where the drive meets the causeway, Arthur stops. He's still not close enough to make out detail, but the group of small figures stay in plain view. Unsettling. Incongruous.

ARTHUR

It's not safe! You shouldn't...

The sound of their voices continues. But Arthur notes with discomfort that the figures stay still, do not react.

Their lack of movement, the absence of sound now... as Arthur squints into the distance, we see him beginning to doubt his own mind.

Suddenly, as if sensing - as before - that someone else is nearby, watching him, Arthur turns uneasily to look back toward the cottage.

No one is there.

And looking out again to the causeway, the children - if indeed they were ever there - are gone too.

Shaking his head defiantly, Arthur turns away and starts back toward the house.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Come, Spider. Come.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DUSK.

The sun is low in the sky. Arthur and Spider walk towards the house, their long shadows playing across the drive.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur is hard at work, going through the remaining stack of papers. The fire burns in the grate, the windows are shuttered and the room is lit by the oil lamps. And yet somehow, there is nothing cosy about this room.

The silence is suddenly broken when Spider leaps up and BARKS at one of the shuttered windows.

Arthur approaches the window and slides the LOCK into place, closing the shutter even more tightly.

But as he walks back towards the desk, he too can hear the sound that has disturbed Spider: HOOVES AND WHEELS.

Trying to maintain composure, he crouches down and comforts the dog - and himself.

ARTHUR
It's alright.

The dog trembles and Arthur grits his teeth as they hear the awful accident play out again. The CRASHING. The CHURNING. The SCREAMING. Then there is silence once more.

Arthur pats Spider, stands shakily and returns to the desk.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
You see? It's over now.

Defiantly, he takes a document from the top of the pile, but before he can glance at it, he realises another noise is still present: an intermittent BUMPING, rumbling sound.

Spider runs to the drawing-room door and stands there, hair on end, growling.

Afraid now, but trying to suppress his fear, Arthur rises and gingerly opens the door, realising immediately, and to his great dismay, that the sound is coming from upstairs.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. NIGHT.

Arthur mounts the stairs. The upstairs hallway is in near darkness, illuminated only by the dim light from the oil lamps in the downstairs entrance lobby.

Again, Spider remains at the foot of the staircase. Arthur looks back, pats his thigh. But Spider doesn't move.

Arthur continues up the stairs alone.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. NIGHT.

In the upstairs corridor, the sound is much louder.

It is patently coming from behind the locked door.

Arthur strikes a MATCH and lights the candles in the wall sconce. Their weak light makes precious little difference.

The noise continues as Arthur approaches the locked room.

Standing outside the door now, the rhythmic, bumping sound from within is ridiculously loud, absurdly clear.

A breath, and then Arthur's hand shoots out and grabs for the handle. The door is still locked fast... But, as if in response to his rattling of the handle, the sound stops.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur enters. It's pitch black, the view from the window brighter than the room within - the tide out, the causeway and mirror-like surface of the marshes lit by the moon.

Arthur strikes a match and lights the candle on the washstand, the view obscured now, the window glass reflecting the interior of the bathroom instead.

Pouring some of the water from the jug into the basin, Arthur splashes his face.

ARTHUR
Come on, Arthur.

Wiping his brow dry with his sleeve, he peers at his reflection in the window behind the washstand.

Then something outside catches his attention. Arthur presses his face closer to the window.

EXT. THE MARSHES. NIGHT.

From Arthur's POV, we see the distant view of the marshes. Far away, in the previously smooth surface beneath the wooden cross, there now seems to be a tiny, irregular BUMP.

Intercutting, we see Arthur react in horror...

There is definitely a bump now. And it seems to be growing, rising out of the marshes.

Despite the distance, it soon becomes apparent that it is, unmistakably, a SMALL HUMAN FIGURE, covered in mud.

Now fully risen, it stands motionless under the moonlight for a few moments before beginning to lumber awkwardly towards the house.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur involuntarily takes a step back from the window, away from the approaching figure, but just then, the sound from the locked room begins again, shocking him.

Arthur spins around to look behind him. He's still alone.

Looking again through the window, the figure has vanished.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Arthur makes his way down the hall, towards the noise.

He kicks at the door. It won't open. The noise continues.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. NIGHT.

Arthur exits the house into the pitch black night, a LANTERN in his hand, Spider yapping noisily at his heels.

The drive is deserted. He heads for the East of the house.

INT. STOREHOUSE. NIGHT.

In the storehouse, containers CLATTER to the ground and Spider yaps as Arthur fumbles in the clutter for the axe.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. NIGHT.

Arthur downs the lantern, bolts the front door and, with determination and axe in hand, heads for the stairs.

Upstairs, the rumbling from the locked room continues.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. NIGHT.

This time, Arthur doesn't even stop to acknowledge that Spider has stopped following him. He marches on, shouting up the stairs as he approaches, wielding the axe.

ARTHUR

Enough!

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Arthur keeps going, the noise louder as he enters the hall.

ARTHUR

Enough of that infernal noise!

I'm coming in there! And I -

Arthur's words die on his lips and he stops in his tracks.

The door at the end of the corridor is now open.

Arthur lowers the axe in shock. Then he seizes a candle from one of the wall sconces, raises the axe again, and walks towards the open door.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - NURSERY. NIGHT.

The room is in complete darkness, but the noise continues.

Arthur steps in and, breathing unevenly, shines the small pool of candle-light around the room with an unsteady hand.

A BED. A TOY-BOX. TOYS. DOLLS. Some disconcerting AUTOMATA - mechanical monkeys in finery, protected under glass domes.

This is a nursery. And in stark contrast to the rest of the house, it is immaculate.

Finally, by the fireplace, Arthur at last sees the source of the noise: a ROCKING CHAIR. It's rocking. Hard, but with decreasing speed, as if very recently vacated.

Arthur reaches out nervously and steadies it into silence.

ARTHUR
(whispering)
Who's there?

Arthur looks frantically behind him. No one.

Spying a WARDROBE big enough to conceal a person, he pulls its doors open. But there are only children's clothes here.

Arthur picks up a small SAILOR JACKET in both hands, his fear suddenly replaced by a sense of sadness.

Slowly, he now moves around the room, touching the toys: the army of LEAD SOLDIERS, a beautiful TEDDY BEAR.

He turns the key on one of the automata, a MONKEY PIANIST. Then another, an ACROBAT. And another. Until the whole shelf is alive with movement and the room filled with a cacophony of different MELODIES.

Arthur sits down on the little bed, his head in his hands.

Outside in the upper hallway, the candles blow out, leaving Arthur in darkness, but for the candle on the nightstand.

Then that gutters, too, and there is only pitch blackness. Arthur stumbles out of the room.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. NIGHT.

Breathless, Arthur throws on his coat, hastily unbolts the front door and grabs his suitcase and the lantern. Spider looks up at him expectantly.

ARTHUR
Enough. Enough for tonight. The tide's out, the moon is bright enough to walk by...

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. NIGHT.

A light rain has begun to fall. Arthur sets out down the drive at quite a pace, Spider at his heels.

ARTHUR
We'll be home within the hour.
Come back tomorrow morning, in
daylight. Complete our work.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - GROUNDS. NIGHT.

Arthur and Spider continue down the drive, Arthur becoming increasingly out of breath.

The rain is a little heavier now.

East of the driveway, the graveyard, cottage and tree loom into view. He hurries past without looking over.

But as Arthur nears the end of the drive, he stops.

Aghast, he looks at his pocket watch. It's only half past nine. But...

Ahead of him, we can clearly see: the tide is now in.

An expanse of black water lies between Arthur and the mainland. He is trapped at Eel Marsh House.

He closes the pocket watch and clasps it tightly in his hand, tightly to his chest.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING-ROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur drains a large glass of brandy as outside, rain falls noisily. There is a distant rumble of thunder.

Arthur settles back at the desk, but his earlier resolve has gone. He reads the first document in the pile. Then crushes it and throws it forcefully into the wastebasket.

Next: A BUNDLE OF LETTERS, bound with black ribbon. The signature on the topmost letter catches Arthur's eye: Jennet. He tears off the ribbon and begins to read.

As Arthur reads, we hear JENNET HUMFRYE's voice.

JENNET (V.O.)
August 16th, 1865. My dear
sister, it would seem that
father's mind cannot be changed
and there is no option left to me
but to give up my son.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE. DAY.

A hollow-eyed Jennet - the teacher we saw earlier in the school photograph - takes a last look back at Eel Marsh house before climbing into a waiting CARRIAGE.

JENNET (V.O.)
To see him become a part of your
household, rather than have him
go to strangers is, I suppose,
some small comfort.

INT/EXT. CARRIAGE/CAUSEWAY. DAY.

On the seat beside her, Jennet sees a blue crocheted BABY BLANKET. She brings it to her face and begins to sob.

JENNET (V.O.)
But know this always: Nathaniel
is mine. He is mine alone and can
never be yours.

The carriage thunders down Nine Lives causeway, tiny against the lonely sky as it takes Jennet from her son.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING-ROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur puts the letter down, and begins to study the next.

JENNET (V.O.)
April 14th, 1866. I find it hard
to express the depth of betrayal
I feel at your continued refusal
to allow me to visit my son.

INT. SPINSTER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

A bleak little garret room. Jennet stumbles across the room in blind anger, a LETTER clutched in her hand.

JENNET (V.O.)
I begin to believe that you are
doing this not for the good of
the boy, but to cause me pain.

She sits heavily on the bed and tears the letter in two, screwing up the pieces and hurling them across the room.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - DRAWING-ROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur reacts in discomfort and skim-reads the next four letters in the pile with a look of equal concern. He swallows hard and pets Spider, obviously seeking to find comfort as much as he wishes to give it.

He hesitates, then reluctantly turns over the next letter.

JENNET (V.O.)
May 29th 1871. Six long years you
have kept us apart, but no more.

EXT. CRYTHIN GIFFORD. DAY.

Echoing Arthur's first ride through the town as an outsider, we see Jennet walk slowly towards the iron gates of the village school.

JENNET
I don't care what you or anyone
in this hateful village would
wish for me.

Outside the school YOUNG MRS DAILY fusses over NICHOLAS DAILY, 8. A RED HAIRED MAN hugs his daughter, a RED HAIRED GIRL. Further sets of PARENTS and CHILDREN interact.

As they notice Jennet approaching, the adults eye her with suspicion and disapproval before returning their attention to their CHILDREN.

Through Jennet's eyes, we look from one vignette of parental affection to another.

We can see in Jennet's face that this bitter reminder of what she has been denied is killing her. But she holds her head high, angry determination in her eyes.

JENNET (CONT'D)
I have a scheme of my own, and my
beloved boy shall now be in my
daily company.

INT. CRYTHIN GIFFORD SCHOOL - CLASSROOM. DAY.

A smiling Jennet stands before a CHALK BOARD. On it is written: Miss Humfrye.

In front of her, eleven children of varying ages sit at wooden desks. The children from the photograph.

CHILDREN
Good morning Miss Humfrye!

JENNET
My, what a lovely welcome. I'm
very much looking forward to
teaching you all. Now let's see
if I can remember all your
names... One at a time now.

She nods to the red-haired girl at the end of the front row.

RED-HAIRED GIRL
Polly Shaw.

JENNET
Good morning, Polly.

The next boy along is Nicholas Daily.

NICHOLAS
Nicholas Daily, miss.

JENNET
Nicholas.

Beside Nicholas sits NATHANIEL DRABLOW, who we might recognise from the portraits on the staircase.

NICHOLAS
Nathaniel Drablow.

Jennet breaks into a wide smile.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. NIGHT.

Arthur climbs the stairs and studies the PORTRAITS and PHOTOGRAPHS on wall. His gaze moves from one to the other, looking for something. Over this, Jennet's voice continues.

JENNET (V.O.)
Give me lodging at Eel Marsh
House, and I'll give my word that
he knows me only as his long-lost
Aunt, returned home to teach.

Finally, halfway up the stairs, Arthur stops. He has found the photograph he was looking for. We move in close to see:

The formal school photograph we saw earlier. The eleven children and the teacher we now know to be Jennet.

JENNET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Refuse...

We move in closer on Jennet. Unlike the serious-looking children, she is smiling broadly. Her hand rests tenderly on Nathaniel's shoulder.

We continue to move in, until we see only the faces of Jennet and Nathaniel. Mother and son. Together.

JENNET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And I'll tell him the truth.

Silence now on the stairway as Arthur stands before the photograph, both touched by the image, and chilled by the knowledge of what was yet to come.

Instinctively, he reaches towards the photograph...

But just as his fingertips are about to make contact, the silence is shattered by a loud series of KNOCKS at the front door. Arthur freezes.

Silence. Then another knock.

INT. ENTRANCE LOBBY. NIGHT.

Arthur slowly approaches the door. Spider is there already, hackles up, a low, steady GROWL coming from her throat.

Another loud knock makes Arthur flinch.

ARTHUR
Who's there?

Arthur reaches the door. From the other side, we faintly hear a CHILD SOBBING over the sound of the torrential rain.

Arthur puts his ear to the door. The sobbing continues. Then another knock.

Arthur backs away, but the weeping continues until finally, unable to ignore it any longer, he opens the door.

...Nothing. Just darkness. And rain battering the driveway.

But Arthur has barely had a chance to register his relief when Spider bolts out past him and runs down the drive.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Spider! Here, Spider! SPIDER!

Arthur walks out into the night.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - GROUNDS. NIGHT.

A full-blown storm is raging now. Arthur ranges around in the rain, drenched, but the dog is nowhere to be seen.

ARTHUR
Spider!

He keeps moving... but slows to a halt when he hears, louder than when he heard them last, the soft chattering voices of children. He stands, dripping wet and petrified.

Ahead of him, coming into view a little way down the drive, are a hoard of small, silhouetted figures.

A lightning flash... and for a second they are illuminated, providing the closest glimpse yet of the ghostly children. Some look sickly, others injured. Many appear to be victims of drowning, their hair wet, faces bloated and decayed.

They are walking slowly toward him.

Now he sees that among their number is Victoria Hardy, chin and dress stained with a long streak of dark, bloody vomit.

Arthur remains rooted to the spot.

Another flash and now we see the skeletal silhouette of the nearby tree. Beneath it, the Woman in Black stands on a small wooden STEP-LADDER, a noose around her neck.

Once again, there is darkness.

Then another flash.

This close, and by this light, we glimpse through her veil a fraction more detail than before - just enough to give us the nasty sense that there's something about her face that is decidedly not right. She kicks the ladder away.

Darkness.

Then a double fork of lightning. The Woman in Black jerks and writhes as she chokes to death.

Finally, Arthur turns and runs.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. NIGHT.

Arthur slams the front door and throws his back against it, drenched and gasping for breath.

He sweeps his hair from his eyes and looks up to see:

A single set of little muddy FOOTPRINTS. They lead all the way from the front door to the staircase...

...and up the stairs, into the darkness of the upper hall.

Gripped by terror and compulsion in equal measure, Arthur picks up the lantern he abandoned earlier beside the door, and begins to follow the trail.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALL. NIGHT.

Breathing hard, Arthur stops at the top of the stairs and shines his lantern down the darkened hallway.

The light from the lantern quivers with the trembling of his hand and throws shadows down the hall, but even so, we can see where the trail leads...

Down the corridor, it goes. And all the way to the open door of the nursery.

No turning back now, Arthur continues down the dark hall. But as he nears the open door he is shocked by a burst of MUSIC, the kind made by the automata.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - NURSERY. NIGHT

Arthur steps inside. Even in the darkness we can see: the nursery has been vandalized. The bed overturned, broken toys and clothes scattered, everything covered in mud.

With his lantern, Arthur illuminates first one spot then another in jerky, urgent succession, hunting the intruder.

On the ground, Arthur quickly finds the source of the music: an automaton - the monkey pianist - lies on its side, surrounded by the shattered glass from its protective dome. No longer in contact with its piano, the movements of its mouth, head and arms give it the grotesque appearance of something injured, echoes of the baby bird.

Arthur finds the CATCH that turns it off, and finally the toy is still, the music silenced.

Behind him, he hears movement.

Arthur swings round, streaking light from the lantern across the wall where we catch the briefest glimpse of something inhuman-looking. It quickly ducks down behind a chest of drawers. It is small, and entirely covered in mud - little more than a flash of eyes in the darkness - but unmistakably a CHILD.

Trembling, Arthur trains the lantern onto the chest. The eyes peer back at Arthur.

Arthur inches closer, his breath loud. The figure doesn't move.

But just as he reaches the chest, the lantern goes out.

Total darkness as we hear Arthur stumbling out of the room.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM. NIGHT.

The candle on the washstand has blown out, but the moonlight outside allows us to see again, albeit dimly.

Arthur fumbles for a match and lights the candle...

...Revealing the child! Somehow, he's here now. Crouched behind the washstand.

Reacting in shock, Arthur turns and bolts into the hallway.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALL - NIGHT.

Arthur darts towards the bedroom next door and fumbles desperately with the key in the lock.

Glancing anxiously over his shoulder, he looks back to see:

...The silhouette of the muddy child, casting a long, thin SHADOW down the hallway behind him.

Finally getting the bedroom door open, Arthur grabs the key from the lock and hurries inside.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT.

In here, we can still hear the FLIES in the fireplace.

Arthur slams the door shut and scrabbles to insert the key and lock himself in.

This done, he pushes the dresser across the door and slumps to the floor, fighting to catch his breath.

But to his utter dismay, he now sees...

Little muddy FOOTPRINTS on the floor.

They lead right to the bed.

And in the bed is the unmistakable shape of someone small, hidden beneath the covers.

As Arthur stares, frozen in horror, we see a mud stain slowly spreading across the white sheet.

Then the shape begins to sit up.

Arthur darts to the door, struggling to move the dresser, groping for the key in his pocket as, behind him, the figure in the bed continues to heave itself upright.

Finally, he gets the door open and runs into the corridor.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALL - NIGHT.

...Only to be confronted by the mud-covered child standing right before him, blocking his path. The child's mouth is open, the flash of his eyes and little white teeth disconcertingly bright in the darkness of the hall.

Arthur cries out and pushes blindly past the child, toward the stairs.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE LOBBY. NIGHT.

Arthur virtually falls down the last few steps of the staircase into the entrance hall, but he keeps his balance and dashes toward the front door.

But just as he reaches out to open it, he is scared out of his wits by another KNOCK at the door.

ARTHUR
Leave me ALONE!!

This time, we hear a voice clearly on the other side.

DAILY (O.S.)
Arthur? Arthur! It's me, Sam!

INT. DAILY'S CAR/CAUSEWAY. NIGHT.

The tide is out now, and Daily drives Arthur across the causeway through the storm, back towards safety.

Spider is on Arthur's lap. Arthur strokes her and stares straight ahead, a haunted look on his face.

DAILY
She must've recognised the sound of my engine from more'n a mile away, you know. Right over the other side of the causeway, she was. Running to meet me.

ARTHUR
The tide was in. I tried to leave at half past nine, and it was in.

DAILY
Just a wash from the storm, most likely... You tried to leave?

ARTHUR
If Mrs Drablow endured even a fraction of what I have just experienced, I can fully understand her desire to leave for India at the earliest opportunity and never return.

DAILY
Aye, it's an inhospitable place, Eel Marsh House. Specially at night, I'm quite sure.

ARTHUR
I saw them.
(off Daily's look)
I didn't imagine it.

DAILY

Even the most rational mind can play tricks. Especially alone in the dark. Just as I said: fill a man's head with stories of -

ARTHUR

You told me about Jennet Humfrye. And the boy. Yes. But why would I see children on the marshes? Sick children, Sam. Drowned children. Children who are dead.

For the first time, we sense Daily's bluff exterior melt away as he reacts, slumping in the driver's seat.

DAILY

Why would you say that. My wife telling you tales?
(louder now)
Was she?!

Arthur shrinks away from him, guilty and uneasy at having touched such a raw nerve. A silence, then he speaks softly.

ARTHUR

Whatever it is you're not saying, you have to... I must know.

Daily stays silent, staring at the road ahead as he drives.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You knew about Jennet Humfrye... That she'd had a child out of wedlock. That the boy was hers.

DAILY

Yes I knew. Everyone in the village knew.

ARTHUR

Not everyone. Not the boy. She kept her silence in exchange for lodging at Eel Marsh House.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

A fast flash of an image as Arthur recalls the message he saw painted on the back wall of the cottage.

You could have saved him

Only now it's not faded as Arthur saw it, but dark, the painted black letters fresh and dripping.

INT. DAILY'S CAR/CAUSEWAY. NIGHT.

The horrible truth hits Arthur.

ARTHUR
She was there.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet stands at the upper window, gazing out over the marshes.

Her pale face and light clothes may be different, but the image distinctly echoes our very first sighting of the Woman in Black.

We hear the sound of an approaching pony and trap.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

The sound of the pony and trap is muted in here. Jennet's breath mists the glass as she gazes out with distraught longing. Lightly, she traces her fingertip down the pane. In her other hand, she holds the blue baby blanket.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet watches as the trap rattles past the cottage and onto the causeway.

Over the marshes, a light mist hangs in the air.

KECKWICK SNR, 40s, sits up front. Behind him, the young MRS DRABLOW (who we might recognise from her portrait in the hall), pretty and well-dressed for a trip into town, sits cosily beside Nathaniel, her arm around him.

As they pass, Mrs Drablow looks up, making eye contact with her sister. A cold look. Then she looks away.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet watches as the trap moves away, her pain visible. She raises the blanket to her face, echoing the torment of their first parting.

Then her expression changes to one of concern as she notices...

EXT. MARSHES. DAY.

The mist has suddenly become heavier, our view of the pony and trap gradually obscured as it moves down the causeway.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet presses closer to the window in concern, strains to see, as the pony and trap become enshrouded in mist.

Suddenly, the steady rhythm of hooves and wheels turns to the sickening, chaotic clatter that Arthur heard before.

Jennet's eyes widen as she watches in horror.

EXT. MARSHES. DAY.

The Pony and trap have veered off the causeway and into the marsh. The pony flails in the dragging mud, whinnying in panic, the front wheels of the trap begin to sink.

Keckwick Snr yanks fruitlessly on the reins, shouting in anguish while behind him Mrs Drablow and Nathaniel cry out in terror.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet hammers at the window pane in impotent anguish.

NATHANIEL (O.S.)

Mummy!

EXT. MARSHES. DAY.

The point of no-return passes at alarming speed, the inevitability of the outcome clear as the trap and pony are pulled deeper and deeper into the marsh.

Keckwick Snr abandons the reins and turns to try and aid his screaming passengers.

Overcome with fear and a primal urge for survival, Mrs Drablow stands and jumps from the sinking trap.

NATHANIEL

Mummy!

Desperate, Mrs Drablow looks back towards the trap. It's sinking. Then she looks back to the cottage, praying her sister didn't see her act of cowardice; knowing she did.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet meets her sister's eyes in mute disbelief. Then she turns and runs from the room.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Jennet bursts outside into the mist and starts to run toward the causeway.

The shouts and screams persist but, as she runs, they are suddenly drowned out by the dreadful sucking noise that Arthur heard before.

And then silence.

Jennet stops running. Her hands fall limply to her sides, her world ended. The blanket drops to the ground.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. NIGHT.

A copper BATHTUB. Lit by candle and firelight, the water in the tub appears inky black.

In it, we see the reflection of Jennet's anguished face. Then she's gone as, one after another, pale-coloured CLOTHES are thrown into the tub.

This isn't water. It's black dye. It bleeds into the mounds of fabric not yet submerged, darkness spreading as it seeps through the fibres, consuming what remains of the light.

A STICK plunges the pile deep below the surface.

A loud flood of liquid as the stick is used to haul some of the clothes up again. The wet clothes are deep black.

They are dropped back in. Violently, the stick pushes them down until they're gone from view. And in the swirling darkness of the surface we can once again see Jennet.

INT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

Fast but deliberate, Jennet's fingers push black fabric-covered BUTTONS through button-loops on a black CUFF.

Black BOOTLACES are crossed and pulled taut, and tied. The boots vanish as a billow of black crepe skirt drops.

A heavy JET EARRING is clipped into place.

A fearsome-looking HATPIN is pushed into a MOURNING BONNET.

Hands slip into black kid gloves.

Jennet looks at herself in a MIRROR. Grief in her eyes still, but now also cold rage, focus. A woman not so much dressed for mourning, but suited up for battle.

She reaches back for her bonnet's veil and draws it slowly over her face. Her monstrous rebirth is nearly complete.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY.

The young Mrs Drablow throws open the curtains in her bedroom, and - just as Arthur did - stumbles back in horror.

EXT. EEL-MARSH GRAVEYARD. DAY.

We see Mrs Drablow's POV as she moves through the graveyard, and hear her breathing.

We move around Nathaniel's angel statue - bright and new and un-chipped. We peek behind tomb stones, and finally head hurriedly down the not-yet-overgrown stone path that leads to the not-yet-ruined gate-keeper's cottage.

We can hear Mrs Drablow's breathing hasten as she follows the path around the side of the building, the one we saw Arthur take earlier.

EXT. GATE-KEEPER'S COTTAGE. DAY.

As we round the corner behind the cottage, we can see dark letters daubed on the wall. We can't see them well from this angle, but we know what they say.

Mrs Drablow's O.C. breathing becomes even faster as a murder of CROWS take flight from the tree behind her with a loud flurry.

We wheel around towards the tree and O.C. we hear Mrs Drablow SCREAM as we see: the remains of Jennet Humfrye, her eyes and lips eaten away by scavengers, a heart-stopping combination of gaping sockets and exposed teeth. One fearless crow still perched on her, pecking.

INT. DAILY'S CAR/MAINLAND. NIGHT.

Arthur and Daily drive on.

ARTHUR
And after her death... That's
when the sightings started?
(off Daily's look)
The superstitions.
(no reaction from Daily)
And the Drablows left for India.

Daily nods now. But something is still not making sense to Arthur, and he just can't put his finger on what it is.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
It's just that...

The car takes a right turn onto Jerome's street.

DAILY
 (interrupting)
 What in the name... Do you see
 that?

Grey smoke is billowing down the street towards them. They slow down, the smoke obscuring their view as drive on.

We can hear VOICES, COMMOTION, and a little way ahead, we can see FLAMES. Arthur peers into the smoke.

ARTHUR
 Oh god. Is that Jerome's place?

Daily brings the car to a stop, and the two get out.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

The two men walk through the cloud of smoke to find Mrs Jerome in her night clothes, hysterical, being held back by the post-mistress and Mrs Fisher.

Jerome's building is ON FIRE.

Gerald Hardy, PC Collins, Fisher and the other village men we met earlier fruitlessly throw PAILS OF WATER onto the blaze and run off to fetch more. Other BYSTANDERS look on.

MRS JEROME
 LUCY!!

Arthur's face reveals his horrible dawning realization.

He rushes towards the house and down the steps into the thick smoke choking from the burning cellar below.

INT/EXT. JEROME'S CELLAR. NIGHT.

Arthur fights his way through the smoke, a HANDKERCHIEF clamped over his mouth. He pulls open the cellar door.

Inside, the wood-beamed ceiling is on fire, fed by a tower of flames issuing from what seems to be a sizeable BONFIRE in the centre of the room.

Through the smoke and heat-haze, Arthur can just make out the pale girl, Jerome's daughter, motionless, in a corner.

ARTHUR
 Oh my god...

The girl watches as Arthur inches closer.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
 Don't be afraid... Come to me...

He reaches his hand out to her. The girl takes a single step forward, eyes still trained on Arthur.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

That's it, come on! Come to me!

Closer now, Arthur can clearly see the source of the fire: the bed has been dragged to the centre of the room, other furniture has been piled on top of it, and all of it has been set alight. This was no accident. The girl did this.

Arthur struggles to take in what he is seeing. He looks back to the girl, meeting her calm, unemotional gaze.

As Arthur tries to comprehend this, the girl's eyes finally leave his and she looks to the opposite side of the room.

Arthur snaps his head round to see:

The Woman in Black. She gives the child a firm nod.

Arthur watches in mute horror as the girl nods back...

Then, slowly, purposefully, launches herself onto the pyre.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

NO!!

He runs forward but is beaten back by the heat and smoke. We share Arthur's dreadful POV as she's consumed by flames.

A beam crashes down from above and catches light. The ceiling is coming down.

Arthur turns and runs for the door.

EXT. JEROME'S OFFICE. DAY.

Daily helps Arthur up the stairs to safety, as Arthur gasps for air.

From inside, a colossal CRASH as the ceiling collapses.

They reach street level just in time to see Keckwick emerging from the front door of the burning building, dragging a semi-conscious Jerome.

A still-hysterical Mrs Jerome and several others rush over.

Mrs Fisher walks toward Arthur instead. She opens her mouth to speak, but before she can, Fisher seizes her arm and pulls her away.

Fisher says something to her that we can't hear above the noise, and she shouts something back that makes him angrily release her arm and walk away to Jerome's side.

She follows, but looks back at Arthur with sorrow.

Coming round, Jerome surveys the crowd groggily, but when his gaze finds Arthur, his expression hardens.

When he speaks, his voice is cracked and altered, rasping through scorched lungs.

JEROME

See what... you've... done?!

Mrs Jerome continues to scream.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur removes his blackened jacket and hangs it on the back of a chair, then - a thought - he digs into the inner pocket. He is relieved to find Edward's calendar undamaged.

It is open to the page marked "Thursday".

There is a knock at the door.

DAILY (O.S.)

Arthur?

Arthur opens the door to find Daily holding a cup of cocoa.

DAILY (CONT'D)

Just wanted to see if you were alright. Brought you this, too, if you want it.

Slightly embarrassed, Daily hands Arthur the cup. He takes it silently and sits down on the bed, still shell-shocked.

DAILY (CONT'D)

Always used to give Nicholas cocoa when things were bad.

(attempting levity)

I put some rum in yours, though.

Arthur puts the cup down loudly on the nightstand and explodes, unable to keep up this pretence at normality.

ARTHUR

She was there, Sam. The Woman in Black.

Daily bristles.

DAILY

For gods sake! You said yourself the girl started the fire. Being locked down there must have driven her out of her mind.

ARTHUR

No. I don't think she'd been down there that long... Just since I arrived. Threatening to disturb the status quo... Jerome was trying to keep her safe.

Daily's expression suggests that Arthur is onto something.

DAILY

God only knows what nonsense that madman believes.

ARTHUR

You heard what he said to me.

Daily stands up, distraught and irate.

DAILY

If you want to discuss old wives tales, Arthur, find yourself an old wife!

Arthur opens his mouth to protest, but Daily is already gone, storming out of the room, slamming the door behind him, leaving Arthur stunned and alone.

He lies on the bed, more confused and troubled than ever...

MONTAGE -

Queasy flash cuts as Arthur remembers:

- the nursery room at the Gifford Arms the with the old rocking horse hidden under it's sheet
- Gerald Hardy pulling his children away from the fence
- riding past the empty school with Keckwick. This time we linger on the deserted building, the rusted PADLOCK on the gates, the dilapidated SCHOOL SIGN overgrown with ivy.
- the market day crowd with it's weathered old faces and not a child in sight.
- the very young children at the window, barricaded indoors
- Jerome's daughter scuttling away from the cellar door
- Victoria Hardy and the other ghostly children lit by lightning in the storm.
- Daily showing him the school photograph.
- The row of graves in the churchyard. We now see clearly that all of them belong to children, and all share the same date of death - January 23rd 1872.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Arthur sits up bolt upright with a feverish gasp of breath.

EXT. DAILY'S HOUSE - GROUNDS. NIGHT.

Arthur stumbles through the grounds and enters the avenue of trees, the Dailys' mausoleum in his sights at the end of it, bone-white against the darkness.

EXT. DAILY'S MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Arthur runs to the engraved EPITAPH, his eyes darting to the last line where he finds exactly what he expected:

- JANUARY 23RD 1872.

Arthur runs his fingers over the letters, then turns urgently, ready to run back to the house...

...only to find Mrs Daily standing a few feet away in her nightclothes, watching him. Arthur reacts in shock.

MRS DAILY
I didn't mean to give you a
start, Mr Kipps.

Collecting himself now, Arthur faces her, determined.

ARTHUR
What happened to your son, Mrs
Daily? Your son, and the other
children.

MRS DAILY
An accident. On the marshes.

ARTHUR
An accident.

MRS DAILY
Yes...

ARTHUR
She was there tonight, Mrs Daily.
At Jerome's daughter's side.
(a beat)
You know who I mean, don't you.

Mrs Daily nods. A silence as she absorbs this. And then:

MRS DAILY
It was the day of her funeral. We
were all there.

EXT. EEL MARSH GRAVEYARD/GROUNDS. DAY.

The VILLAGERS of Crythin Gifford are in their mourning clothes, gathered at the side of an OPEN GRAVE. A VICAR reads from the book of common prayer.

VICAR
...to mourn the passing of Jennet
Humfrye...

We move along the mourners, including the YOUNG MR DAILY and Young Mrs Daily, Mrs Drablow and her HUSBAND, the Red Haired Man and his WIFE.

VICAR (CONT'D)
...he flee-eth as it were a
shadow, and never continueth in
one stay. In the midst of life we
are in death...

The mourners stand with their heads bowed, not noticing that the CHILDREN present - including Nicholas Daily and the Red-Haired Girl - are silently moving, as one, almost trance-like, away from the grave-side congregation.

VICAR (CONT'D)
...of whom may we seek for
succor, but of thee, o Lord, who
for our sins art justly
displeased?

Now, one by one, the adults notice first the departure of the children, and then react in wordless shock as they see:

At the edge of the marshes stands the unmistakable spectre of Jennet Humfrye, the woman in black.

The black-clad children move towards her en-masse.

Back at the grave-side the Vicar continues, unaware

VICAR (CONT'D)
...deliver us not into the bitter
pains of eternal death...

Disbelief and propriety has prevented any reaction until now, but the young Mrs Daily can fight her panic no more.

YOUNG MRS DAILY
Nicholas!!

The Vicar looks up in shock at the interruption, but then turns his gaze to the marshes, along with everyone else.

The group of children are now on the causeway, following the woman in black as she walks toward the mainland.

ARTHUR

For what?

MRS DAILY

Not listening to the others. Not staying away. Ten years without a tragedy, until he took over his father's business.

ARTHUR

...And tried to sell Eel Marsh.

MRS DAILY

Took buyers from all over the county. She was there, of course, as she always was. Then he believed. But it was too late. It's always too late.

ARTHUR

(dawning realisation)

They'd seen her. Just as I did.

MRS DAILY

If she's seen, she'll strike before the next sunset. Within weeks, they were all gone.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ATTIC ROOM. DAY

The scene we saw at the start: The three little girls climb onto the window seat and stand in the frame of the open window, silhouetted against the bright sky.

They jump.

EXT. DAILY'S MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

The puzzle pieces in Arthur's mind are falling into place.

ARTHUR

The Fishers' daughters.

Mrs Daily nods.

MRS DAILY

Keckwick's son... Jerome's own firstborn... Every child in Crythin Gifford that had escaped the first tragedy, or had been born since...

ARTHUR

They all died?

MRS DAILY
Oh it's far worse than that, Mr
Kipps.

Mrs Daily turns away, her breathing becoming uneven.

MRS DAILY (CONT'D)
She leads them to their demise...

INT. JEROME'S CELLAR. NIGHT.

The Woman in Black, through the flames and smoke, nodding to Jerome's daughter.

INT. GIFFORD ARMS - ATTIC ROOM. DAY

The Woman in Black, her back to us as the three little girls look up from their tea party to see her there.

EXT. HARDY FAMILY FRONT GARDEN. DAY.

Victoria Hardy crouches by a wooden WASH TUB as her brothers play nearby, oblivious.

She reaches for a TIN OF LYE. Looks up, as if for approval.

The Woman in Black stands over her.

Calmly, Victoria tilts her head back and brings the tin to her lips.

EXT. DAILY'S MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Mrs Daily continues.

MRS DAILY
And at the moment of passing, she
lures them away from the light.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

Arthur kneels on the ground holding Victoria Hardy. Bloody vomit stains her chin and the front of her dress.

She stares straight at him, even as her eyes take on the milky glaze of death.

ARTHUR
No! Someone, please! Please help!

But now we see that, unbeknownst to Arthur, the Woman in Black is standing right behind him, her hand extended.

EXT. DAILY'S MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Mrs Daily, her back still to Arthur, pats the mausoleum.

MRS DAILY
Nicholas's body lies within these
walls. But he's not here.

EXT. EEL MARSH ISLAND. NIGHT.

Lightning illuminates the wraithlike children on the marsh.
Close, and in horrible detail, as Arthur last saw them.

EXT. DAILY'S MAUSOLEUM. NIGHT.

Mrs Daily is still facing the mausoleum, panting fast now.
Arthur's breathing quickens too, in panic.

ARTHUR
She keeps them with her.

MRS DAILY
(her voice strange now)
Out on the marshes. Between
worlds.

ARTHUR
Mrs Daily...

Arthur gently - nervously - lays his hand on her shoulder.
She turns sharply and we see: her eyes have rolled back.
Her hands in stiff claws. She's having another "episode".

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Mrs Daily!

She bends and begins to scabble on the ground. Then she
triumphantly, maniacally rises holding a piece of FLINT.

Arthur reaches out and tries to calm her, but she struggles
free and begins to scribble and scratch crazily with the
flint on the side of the mausoleum.

He turns and runs into the avenue of trees, shouting ahead.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Mr Daily! Sam!

EXT. DAILY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

As Arthur nears the house, he is met by Mr Daily and the
Butler, both in nightshirts, already running towards him.

ARTHUR
Sam!

EXT. DAILY'S MAUSOLEUM. DAWN.

Mr Daily struggles to hold his wife while the Butler attempts to administer medication. Arthur stands back awkwardly, wanting to help too, but having to dodge Mrs Daily's flailing arms and legs.

Finally, the butler gives her a slug of the medication, and she relaxes into Daily's arms. He lifts her up and begins to stagger down the avenue of trees, towards the house.

Arthur follows behind them. Silence now, just the birds beginning to sing as the sky lightens a little behind the trees.

Arthur turns to look back at the mausoleum. He stops, paralysed by what he sees:

On the side of the mausoleum, clearly visible now in the growing light, is the word FRIDAY. And drawn above it in a childlike style: a man, a child, a train.

A perfect replica of the final page of Edward's calendar.

INT. DAILY'S HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. DAWN.

Arthur knocks urgently on the door to Mrs Daily's bedroom, agitated, desperate.

ARTHUR

Sam... I must speak with you.

INT/EXT. DAILY'S CAR/COUNTRY LANES. DAWN.

There's a purposeful air to proceedings as Arthur and Daily drive fast down the lane that leads to Jerome's street.

Arthur has his pocket watch open in his hand.

ARTHUR

As long as the telegram reaches my house no later than half past nine... They'll not leave before then, I'm sure.

DAILY

And the post office opens at half past eight, so providing there are no delays at the London end -

Arthur's anger has been simmering beneath his fear; hearing Daily's undisguised concern brings it to a sudden boil.

ARTHUR

How could you do it, Sam? Knowing I had a son!

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
How could you take me to Eel
Marsh if there was even a small
part of you that feared the
stories were true?

DAILY
I never believed.

ARTHUR
You didn't want to. There's a
difference.

They turn into Jerome's street.

DAILY
I can know that Nicholas is in a
better place, waiting for us to
one day be reunited. Or that he
is lost. Which would you choose?

ARTHUR
Forgive me, Sam, but... my son is
alive! How could I chance that by
letting him come here, I might
condemn him to death?

Daily doesn't reply. His attention is on something outside.
He stops the car, and his head slumps against the window.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Sam?

Now Arthur sees it too. He reacts in utter defeat.

EXT. POST OFFICE. DAY.

The Post office, located right next to Jerome's office, has
been entirely gutted in last night's fire.

INT. DAILY'S CAR. DAY.

The two men sit in the stationary car. Now what?

DAILY
The next village is more than an
hour away.

Arthur looks down at his watch. First at the clock face,
and then at Stella's portrait. He stares at it, the
reminder of his first loss almost too much to bear in the
face of the unthinkable prospect of another.

Daily just stares straight ahead. The grimmest of silences.

And then Arthur's expression changes: he's had an idea.

ARTHUR

We can't stop Edward... So we must stop her... If we can reunite Jennet Humfrye with her son, perhaps she'll finally be at peace.

(off his silence)

I'm not asking you to change your beliefs. I'm talking about a proper burial.

DAILY

Arthur, if every man-jack before us failed to recover his body, how in god's name do you think we'll now succeed?

ARTHUR

Because you have something that the others never did.

EXT. DAILY'S CAR/NINE LIVES CAUSEWAY. DAY.

The car has stopped, its engine idling, and Arthur is tying a length of ROPE to the rear bumper. He tugs at it to test the strength of his knot, then gives Daily - still seated in the drivers seat - a nod.

Now, holding the loose end of the rope in one hand, Arthur gingerly steps first one foot, then the other, off the causeway and onto the marsh.

Immediately, he begins to sink. Panicking, he leaps back onto the causeway.

Determined, he steps off again and this time begins to run, his feet in contact with the ground as briefly as possible.

Bar a couple of dicey moments, he successfully reaches the large wooden cross.

Even as he clings to it, however, he begins to sink. He waves to Daily, putting on a brave face.

Daily waves back, but can't hide his anxiety.

Arthur is now knee deep in the marsh, and we realise that he is deliberately allowing himself to be drawn down.

He begins to flounder in the mud, clutching the rope, plunging his free hand beneath the surface and scrabbling urgently to feel for any sign of the pony trap.

Lower and lower Arthur goes, at a frightening speed - thigh-deep, waist-deep, chest deep - fighting to stay calm, feeling around for anything solid beneath him.

Finally, his face lights up.

ARTHUR

Sam! I feel it! It's beneath my feet!

Arthur's arms and shoulders vanish into the mud. He tips his head back, taking a few last deep breaths.

And finally, Arthur's head disappears from view.

INT. DAILY'S CAR. DAY.

From behind the wheel, Daily looks back over his shoulder, watching, desperate.

After a short time that still feels too long, he turns back, shifts the gear-stick and begins to drive.

WHINES of straining protest issue from the engine.

EXT. DAILY'S CAR/NINE LIVES CAUSEWAY. DAY.

The engine continues to whine as the rope becomes taut.

At last, Arthur emerges from the marsh, coated entirely in mud, clinging to the rope, choking for breath.

Suddenly, he begins to sink again.

ARTHUR

Keep driving!

Even from this distance the noise from the engine is loud, and clearly not healthy. But the car continues to creep forward, although we sense it can barely take the strain.

Finally, the other end of the rope emerges from the mud, and we see a KNOT, tied around the brace of A TRAP.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Don't stop!

The wheels on the automobile begin to spin, losing traction as the weight becomes too much...

But with another burst of acceleration, the front end of the trap rises from the marsh. A nightmarish contraption, rotted and skeletal, silhouetted against the wide open sky.

Arthur - and, back behind the wheel, Daily - stare at it in horror and awe.

Arthur clambers on to it, leans in, and shouts at Daily to continue, but now the wheels are just grinding fruitlessly.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Can you go any further?

DAILY
The pedal is on the floor! I
don't think she can take any more
weight!

But there is one last burst of acceleration...

The trap rises again... And, inches from Arthur, a HUMAN HEAD emerges from the marsh surface! It is alarmingly well-preserved by the conditions in the marsh, almost mummified beneath the layer of mud.

Arthur startles, but composes himself and calls to Daily.

ARTHUR
I think I've found Keckwick
Senior...

The wheels continue to spin, the engine howls and clanks and white smoke begins to billow from beneath the bonnet.

DAILY
I can't hear you! The engine is
overheating!

ARTHUR
Turn it off! And apply the brake!

Daily complies.

There is silence now on the marsh. Arthur plunges his arms into the mud, feeling urgently for any sign of the boy.

Presently, we realise that the trap is beginning to sink back into the marsh, and the car is slowly being dragged backwards by its weight.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I said apply the brake!

DAILY
I have! You're going to have to
hurry!

We intercut between the car rolling slowly backwards and Arthur's efforts on the sinking trap until finally, with little time to spare, Arthur grasps something beneath the surface...

With effort, he hauls out the remains of Jennet's son.

Besides his stillness, the boy looks much like the mud-covered child we saw in the house, and Arthur struggles to fight his fear as he gently holds the little body.

The car continues to drift backwards, closer and closer to the marsh, pulled by the weight of the sinking trap.

Cradling the boy with one arm, Arthur hauls his way along the rope, back towards the safety of the causeway.

He takes a heavy, muddy step out of the marshes and onto the road just in time to turn back and see...

The trap, sinking back into the marsh. Without a trace.

The rope slack again, the car comes to a stop and Daily climbs out. He recoils at the sight of the child.

Arthur looks down at the boy in his arms, then looks up at Daily, tears in his eyes. For a while, neither man speaks.

A light mist is beginning to descend. Daily looks around.

DAILY (CONT'D)

There's a fret brewing. Best get off the causeway while we can.

ARTHUR

We should get him indoors in any case. Clean him up.

DAILY

You could do with a bit of spit and polish yourself.

Both men try to smile at Daily's attempt at jocularitas, but find it to be nearly impossible.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. DAY.

The boy wrapped in his coat, Arthur mounts the stairs followed by Daily, who carries Arthur's spare CLOTHES.

ARTHUR

You'd best start digging the plot. We need to be at the station in an hour. Do you have my clothes?

Arthur turns to get them, but Daily is no longer following.

He has stopped, shoulders slumped, arms limp by his side. He's staring at the school photograph on the wall.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Sam?

Daily looks over, and hands him the clothes.

Almost immediately, he looks back to the picture again before finally, reluctantly tearing himself away.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM. DAY.

Arthur - now clean, and wearing his clean clothes, his hair wet - holds the boy in his arms beside a BATH full of water.

He tips the boy back into the water, their position a poignant visual reminder of Arthur's more boisterous earlier play with his own son.

Gently, Arthur uses a WASHCLOTH to sponge the mud from the child's hair and face.

The boy's eyes are closed, and as the mud washes away, it becomes apparent just how well the conditions in the marsh have kept him preserved over the years.

Arthur stares at him with a mixture of sadness and fear.

Besides his bronzed, leathery skin, he looks like any regular little boy, asleep. We linger on his face, and may fearfully wonder if his eyes will open. But he remains motionless.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY

Arthur carries the boy - wrapped entirely in a clean sheet, face covered - into the room and lays him on the bed.

ARTHUR
(to the boy, whispering)
Nearly time now.

Suddenly, from downstairs, there is a loud BANG - the sound of the front door being flung open.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(calling downstairs)
Sam?

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. DAY.

Arthur scrambles down the stairs and is shocked to see Daily sitting at the foot of the stairs, his back to him.

Something is clearly wrong. Arthur slows and steps toward him with some trepidation.

ARTHUR
Sam?

Still Daily doesn't turn round.

Arthur touches his shoulder and finally Daily looks up at him. His face is wet with tears.

EXT. EEL MARSH ISLAND. DAY.

The fret is thick now out here, visibility low, as the two men crunch down the gravel drive, Arthur following Daily.

In the distance, we faintly hear children's voices.

Daily stops at the edge of the causeway, and the two men stand silently side by side.

Out on the marshes, we can see the faintly silhouetted forms of the spectral children in the mist.

Arthur touches Daily's shoulder.

ARTHUR

Perhaps... When she is at rest.
Maybe then. Maybe when she has
her boy, she can let them go.

Daily nods, wipes his eyes angrily. He forces a smile.

DAILY

Well... What the hell are we
waiting for? I'll finish digging,
you fetch the child.

EXT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL. DAY

Arthur steps inside, shivering from the chill of the mist, and shuts the door behind him. Almost instantly, he hears, from upstairs, the sound of the rocking chair.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALL. DAY.

The sound is louder up here, its dull heartbeat rhythm striking fear into Arthur. He glances at the closed door to the nursery, but heads directly for the bedroom.

As he gets closer, he stops and reacts in dismay.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY.

The bed is empty. The child has gone.

Arthur sits down heavily on the bed, filled with rising fear. The sound of the rocking chair continues.

His expression turns of one of total dread as he sees:

Stretched across the small section of hallway floor visible through the open doorway is a long, thin SHADOW. Without limbs or form, but undoubtedly belonging to something alive. There's something deeply disquieting about the way it undulates, then stops. Undulates, then stops.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - UPPER HALLWAY. DAY

Arthur steps into the hall, dreading what he'll find.

At the far end of the corridor, the end opposite the nursery, stands a small figure shrouded in a sheet. Motionless. And then slowly twisting and writhing.

Still again, then moving. A small hand paws at the inside of the sheet.

The sound of the rocking chair slows.

Arthur looks to the nursery door, then back to the child.

ARTHUR
Go to her.

The shrouded child writhes again, and begins to move towards Arthur.

The sound of the rocking chair slows, almost to a stop.

The handle of the nursery door turns from inside.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(toward the nursery)
He's here! I want to help you!

Arthur backs up against the wall and watches as the shrouded child shuffles strangely down the hallway, a horrible deformed stiffness to his movements.

Arthur jumps as - BANG - the nursery door is flung open. But there's no one in the doorway.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
I don't mean any harm! I want you
to be together! Take him!

He turns back to the boy, only to see:

He's gone. In this direction, the hallway is now empty.

Arthur wheels back round in the other direction...

The Woman in Black! Somehow, impossibly, she is now right behind him, lunging at him!

At this close distance, we can see through her veil, revealing her face in all its terrible eyeless, lipless, teeth-baring glory as she SCREAMS in anger.

In abject terror, Arthur breaks away. The stairway blocked by the woman, he takes the only escape route now open to him: he throws himself over the balustrade.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - STAIRCASE. DAY.

Arthur lands on the stairs, falls down the remaining steps.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL. DAY.

...And lands at the foot of the stairs in the hall, unconscious.

We fade to black.

INT. EEL MARSH HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL. DAY.

From Arthur's POV, we see Daily's worried face.

DAILY

Arthur! What happened?

Arthur comes round groggily, sits up.

ARTHUR

She was here! And the boy has gone! Looking for him and never finding him - that's what your wife said. Jennet's in her own purgatory. They can't be together.

DAILY

But... we have to try! We don't have much time left!

ARTHUR

I said he's gone, Sam! The boy's gone!

Daily looks at him, perplexed, then looks upstairs. Arthur follows his gaze.

Through the open door of the bedroom, we can see that the shrouded body is now back on the bed.

EXT. EEL MARSH GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Arthur and Daily stand in the mist before Jennet Humfrye's headstone, Arthur cradling the shrouded body of her son.

At the foot of the headstone there is now an OPEN GRAVE. Beside it, a pile of DIRT and a discarded SPADE.

As we follow Arthur's gaze into the hole, we see that Jennet's CASKET is visible.

Arthur hands the child to Daily and jumps down into the darkness of the grave.

EXT. OPEN GRAVE. DAY.

Straddling the casket, Arthur pries open its lid.

Inside we see JENNET'S REMAINS - just bones now, and shreds of her tattered black mourning gown and veil.

Daily hands the boy down to Arthur, who places the child gently into the coffin beside his mother.

One last look, then he replaces the coffin lid.

EXT. EEL MARSH GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Arthur and Daily stand by the now re-filled plot, their devastating task complete.

Silence now, besides the wind in the trees and the strange calls of the marsh birds. Arthur bows his head.

ARTHUR

May you rest in peace at last,
Nathaniel.

(pointed)

And you, Jennet. You most
especially.

Daily nods in agreement. Pats Arthur awkwardly on the back. Arthur acknowledges him with a grateful smile.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

The fret's starting to clear. We
should get to the station.

EXT. STATION - PLATFORM 1. DAY.

The SHRIEK of a train whistle as Arthur stands on the station platform watching the London train pull in.

As the train grinds to a stop and PASSENGERS begin to spill out, Arthur scans the platform urgently.

Finally, not far away, he spots Nanny, standing beside two SUITCASES, carrying Edward.

He runs to them and takes Edward into his arms, hugging him close, flooded with love and relief.

ARTHUR

My darling, darling boy.

A dawning sense that something is wrong, but it takes him a moment to notice the concerned expression on Nanny's face.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

What is it?

NANNY

He... On the journey - he got worse. I can't wake him up... We need... Is there a doctor in Crythin Gifford?

Arthur gently moves Edward away to take a better look.

The child is asleep, his lips colourless and his skin pale, with a sheen of sweat. He looks desperately unwell.

ARTHUR

(rising panic)

No! Not here! He shouldn't be here! We need to get away from Crythin Gifford. If we can just get away, he'll be fine!

Arthur hurries towards the BRIDGE that leads to the opposite platform. Nanny dashes after him.

NANNY

I don't understand! Where are we -

ARTHUR

The other platform! The train returning to London arrives in five minutes!

Nanny looks back at the abandoned suitcases, then runs on.

EXT. RAILWAY BRIDGE. DAY.

Arthur sprints across the bridge, whispering to the limp child.

ARTHUR

It's alright. We're going home.

Nanny stays in close pursuit, out of breath. She follows Arthur down the steps and onto the opposite platform.

EXT. STATION - PLATFORM 2. DAY.

Arthur stands on the platform, cradling Edward, looking urgently into the distance for any sign of their train.

He touches the back of his hand to the boy's forehead, tries to suppress his panic at its temperature.

He loosens the boy's collar, fans him.

Nanny finally catches up to Arthur, breathless.

NANNY

How is he?

ARTHUR
Hot. Burning up.

He looks at his pocket-watch.

NANNY
Will I buy some tickets and have
a porter fetch the bags over?

In his turmoil, this hadn't occurred to Arthur. He nods.
Fishes some COINS from his pocket and hands them to her.
She dashes back to the bridge. Arthur whispers to Edward.

ARTHUR
Daddy's going to take you away
from here. You're going to be
fine.

The train whistle SHRIEKS again and STEAM billows and
drifts as the train begins to pull out of the station.

Through the windows of the departing train, we see rhythmic
flashed images of the now-empty platform opposite,
interrupted by the gleaming bodywork of the carriages:

Platform - carriage - platform - carriage - platform -
carriage...

Through the next window that flashes past, however, we see
that the platform opposite is no longer empty. The familiar
flock of spectral children stand huddled together.
(Including now the burned figure of Jerome's daughter).

Carriage - children - carriage - children...

Arthur squeezes his eyes shut and hugs Edward close to him,
willing this nightmare away. He shouts his protest over the
HISSING and CLANKING of the departing train.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
NO!

Arthur keeps his eyes closed, clutching Edward tightly as
the sound of the train recedes into the distance.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(muttering, mantra-like)
Not here. They're not here.

Silence now in the empty station, but for Arthur's fevered
muttering.

And then, from the bridge, the echoing FOOTFALLS of a
woman's light step.

It could be Nanny. But Arthur knows it's not. Despite
himself, he opens his eyes and looks up.

The Woman in Black stops on the middle of the bridge and raises her hand.

Arthur looks down. Edward's eyes open and, with a quick, deliberate turn of his head, the boy looks to the bridge.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Edward...

The Woman in Black is holding her hand out.

Edward, now fully awake, pushes Arthur's arms and wriggles energetically from his grasp.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

No!

Edward - all trace of fatigue and illness vanished - begins to move fast away from Arthur and toward the bridge.

Arthur lunges forward and grabs the back of the child's coat. Edward just shrugs the coat off and keeps moving.

Arthur throws the coat to the ground and begins to sprint after him. His far-longer legs mean that he's quickly able to catch up. He snatches Edward back into his arms and presses him to his chest..

Arthur looks up at the Woman in Black and doesn't look away from her as he begins to walk towards the edge of the platform.

We follow him as, with calm determination, he jumps down onto the track.

He fixes his gaze ahead and begins to walk down the track.

From somewhere O.C., we faintly hear a woman SCREAM.

It's Nanny. Back on platform two, she stands watching, confused and hysterical, an equally horrified PORTER standing by her side.

NANNY

Mr Kipps!

PORTER

Sir! Sir!

But their voices are soon drowned out by the incrementally louder sound of the approaching train to London.

Arthur keeps walking, clutching Edward tightly to him. The sounds of the train and the shouting muted. Peace now, the everyday world far away.

A smile spreads across Arthur's face - a smile of triumph and defiance. He looks up at the Woman in Black again and shakes his head at her slowly.

ARTHUR

He's mine. He can never be yours.

Without warning, the sound returns to a normal level again - a piercing WHISTLE, the thunder of WHEELS, a METALLIC SCREECH of brakes.

A STEAM TRAIN is coming toward us at speed, upon us in a second. But only for a moment.

INT. TRAIN DRIVER'S CAB. DAY.

Inside, at the front of the train, the deafening noise level sustains as the TRAIN DRIVER, his face a mask of pure panic, wrestles the BRAKE LEVER with both hands.

EXT. STATION. DAY.

Silence. As jarring in its suddenness as any noise.

Arthur stands in front of the now stationary train, still holding Edward. Both unharmed. The train just feet away.

Edward looks around, and finally up at Arthur, who smiles.

EDWARD

Daddy?

ARTHUR

Yes, my darling?

EDWARD

Who's that lady?

Edward's little finger points over toward platform one.

Slowly, and with a sense of dread, Arthur follows Edward's gaze... And we watch as Arthur's expression of fear melts away, replaced by a moist-eyed smile.

ARTHUR

That... is your Mummy.

Arthur begins to walk towards platform one. OS, as we watch Arthur's face, we hear a soft woman's voice. Stella's voice.

STELLA (O.S.)

Hello, angel.

Back on platform two we see...

Nanny, the porter, the train driver and a STATION MASTER crowded at the edge of the platform, reacting in horror.

But the lips of the living move soundlessly, unheard by Arthur, or by us.

Arthur looks away again and begins to walk towards a set of maintenance steps that lead to platform one.

EDWARD

Do you have to go to work again?

ARTHUR

No.

EDWARD

So you can stay with me?

ARTHUR

Always.

Edward smiles and nestles into Arthur's neck as they mount the steps.

The closer they get to the platform, the more strongly they are bathed in a soft WHITE LIGHT.

Though we don't see it directly, it becomes clear that this light is pouring through the archway that once opened onto the street outside the station, but which now leads to some powerful, otherworldly light-source.

On the platform, the light dazzling him, Arthur hesitates. Edward wriggles impatiently.

EDWARD

Come on, Daddy! Mummy's waiting!

Arthur carefully sets him down on the platform.

ARTHUR

Go to her. I'll follow. There's something I need to do.

Edward smiles at him and trots happily away.

Arthur watches him go, then looks back over his shoulder.

On the bridge, the Woman in Black claws off her veil and opens her mouth in a soundless scream of dissent.

Arthur turns away from her, then crouches down to child-height and holds out his hand.

Further down the platform, the dead children wait. Lost.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(fatherly, coaxing)
Come with me... Come on.

Slowly, they begin to move towards him, and the light.

The Woman in Black, still screaming silently, moves down the stairs of the bridge and onto the platform, her arms reaching out in protest.

But when she gets close enough for the light to fall on her, she begins to shrink back, afraid of getting too near. She clutches at the side of the station building, as if to stop herself being drawn any closer. Instead, she can only watch helplessly...

Like a kindly teacher, Arthur ushers each child past him. Victoria Hardy. Jerome's daughter. Nicholas Daily - his hair and clothes wet - pauses and looks up at Arthur.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Nicholas? Nicholas Daily?

The boy nods.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Thank you for the pictures. You
knew I'd be here, didn't you?

He nods again, and gives Arthur a small smile as he walks on towards the light.

The three Fisher girls, holding hands sweetly, are the last to vanish into the whiteness. Alone on the platform now, Arthur looks back one last time at the Woman in Black.

A beat. And then, in a moment of humane forgiveness, he holds out his hand to her. An invitation to walk into the light and be free, an end to all of this.

She cocks her head a moment, as if considering it, then, with a malevolent look on her face, she turns her back on Arthur and walks away.

Arthur watches her go. Then he walks towards the light.

We follow him, seeing for the first time the burning whiteness beyond the archway.

Arthur moves into it, his form becoming less distinct the further away he walks, until, finally, he disappears from sight.

FADE TO WHITE.