

The Woman in Black

Chapter 9 – In the Nursery

References to the weather

TIME	QUOTE	COMMENT
Morning – at the village	‘The fine clear weather still held, there was sunshine and blue skies again’	Kipps has recovered from his illness and is ready to return to Eel Marsh House. The weather symbolises the start of a new day, a new beginning, where all is positive and hopeful without a cloud in the sky, both literally and metaphorically. The weather helps to create a sense of optimism.
Later on the same morning as he cycles across the causeway to Eel Marsh House	‘The sun was high in the sky, the water glistening, everywhere was light, light and space and brightness, the very air seemed somehow purified and more exhilarating.’	The weather is now glorious – the good morning has developed into a beautiful sunny day and the weather enhances the surroundings, lending them an air of benign beauty. Not only is the weather beautiful Kipps also feels that it is beneficial to his well-being and health. The sense of optimism and hopefulness is built up another layer.
Lunchtime, after he has made himself at home at Eel Marsh House.	‘The marshes un-shadowed still and quietly beautiful in the winter sunlight’	The scene remains serene, even at the house, further lulling the reader, and the narrator into a false sense of security. The metaphor ‘un-shadowed still’ refers to the lack of clouds creating shadows on the landscape and also the lack of any hint of any evil shadows lurking around the place.
On his first walk around the grounds after reading the papers	‘The air was crisp and fresh’	Summoning up the perfect winter’s day for a stroll outside with the dog.
On his return from the walk	‘The air was turning much colder, the sky losing its light as the sun declined’	This is in the preamble to the night when he first hears the sound of the rocking chair. The cold and dark engulfing the house literally and metaphorically.
When he is woken by the sound of the rocking chair	‘the wind did not moan through the casement’	When he is woken up the weather is very still and quiet. This is to accentuate the sound of the rocking chair in the silence of the night.
The morning after hearing the rocking chair	‘The first thing I noticed on the following morning was a change in the weather..the air had a dampness in it and that was rather colder..I could hardly see the division between land and water, water and sky, all was	There is a big contrast here with previous descriptions. The house is now shrouded in mist and mystery. A sense of the unknown pervades everything. The fog suggests that something malevolent is lurking, hidden by the weather. It also reflects Kipps’ state of mind – the previous day was all clearness and clarity whereas now there is

	uniform grey, with thick cloud lying low across the marsh and drizzle’.	doubt and confusion. The weather has gone from creating an atmosphere of optimism to one of oppression.
Later the same day when her returns to the house	‘Looking out I saw that the cloud and drizzle had thickened, so that I could scarcely see...’	Again Hill is building up the dreary and depressing nature of the weather as the atmosphere of the story darkens towards the final scene in the nursery.
He goes outside with the dog	‘At once the dampness clung to my face and to my clothes like a fine web’	The feelings of darkness pervade everything and the weather now clings to him. A complete stark contrast to the day before and a reminder of the unpredictable nature of the weather in this particular location.
He hears the noise of the rocking chair and goes to fetch an axe to break down the door and is distracted by the sound of a pony and trap at the front of the house.	‘There was still a mist and drizzling dampness in the air..it was pitch dark, there was neither moonlight or any stars visible’	Complete blackness is created here by the lack of moon or stars and the presence of the mist shrouding everything and hiding the exact location of the sound. Nature is conspiring with the supernatural to hide the unexplained. He is prevented from seeing by the weather and at first is uncertain as to whether the noise is real or imagined. In ghost stories the weather is typically used to hide the reality of a sound of event – setting up reasonable doubt in the mind of the reader.