## Kipps: from self-confident young lawyer to haunted middle-aged narrator

**Events that cause the transformation of Kipps' character**

As a young lawyer of barely 23, Kipps is assigned the task of winding up Alice Drablow's estate after her funeral: 'principally, you're going to go through Mrs Drablow's documents…' (p. 30).

First encounter with the ghost of Jennet Humfrye at Alice Drablow's funeral is innocuous and she simply appears to be a sickly mourner with 'some terrible wasting disease' (p. 49).

Kipps is so rooted in the affairs of the material world that he fails to recognise the ghostly nature of the unresponsive 'row of pale, solemn' children. (p. 51)

His first conscious encounter with the supernatural happens later that same day when he visits Eel Marsh House for the first time and is confronted by the malevolent spirit of Jennet Humfrye: 'the sudden appearance of the woman and the dreadfulness of her expression began to fill me with fear.' (p. 65)

Kipps rapidly develops an expanded awareness: 'I knew now that I had entered some hitherto unimagined — indeed, unbelieved-in — realm of consciousness…' (p. 81).

However, although now open to the reality of the supernatural, Kipps is still innocent of the true nature of evil which does not require a motive to inflict harm: 'And I doubt if the woman in black can have any animosity towards me.' (p. 90)

Although a courageous protagonist, Kipps comes to understand the full reality of fear when he stays overnight at Eel Marsh House: 'my fear reached a new height, until for a minute I thought I would die of it, was dying, for I could not conceive of a man's being able to endure such shocks and starts and remain alive…' (p. 117)

As a result of his terrifying experiences at Eel Marsh House, the previously physically energetic and emotionally strong Kipps falls ill: 'The worst of it all was not the physical illness, the aching, the tiredness, the fever, but the mental turmoil I passed through. The woman in black seemed to haunt me, even here, to sit on the end of my bed…' (p. 152)

The immediate impact of these experiences is to break Kipps free of his former shallow snobbishness and to make him value a person's humanity: 'The only regret I had at leaving the place was a genuine sadness at parting company with Mr and Mrs Samuel Daily…" (p. 154). Even Kipps' initial encounters with the supernatural at Eel Marsh House had forced him to reappraise his London snobbery when he says of the lowly Keckwick that 'I began to think again about the extraordinary generosity of Keckwick…' (p. 82)

When the indiscriminate nature of the spectral Jennet Humfrye's revenge also takes Kipps' own young wife and infant child, he finally learns the true nature of evil — that it has no boundaries and requires no justifications or reasons for its actions. As a result, he has to write this account in order to help him 'banish an old ghost that continues its hauntings…' (p. 22)

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