

It's a whirling nightmare, in which, at its climax, Kipps screams

Voices And now it's your turn ... I have no story ... A foul day, Tomes ... Dead, don't y'know?... Have you ever heard of the Nine Lives Causeway? ... Stella. Scribble a note to ... Dead, don't y'know?... One minute it's as clear as a June day, the next ... Stella ... The Drablow papers, sir .. She could hardly do otherwise, living there ... Is there a family grave?... Behold. I show you a mystery ... I did not see a young woman ... Stella ... Dead, don't y'know ... Keckwick will come for you ... How did you get out!... I wouldn't have left you over the night ... Stella ... You will find no-one suitable ... a woman ... so I said once ... a woman ... not another living soul ... a woman in black ... Such things one must face ... a woman ... whistling ... a woman in black with a wasted face ... you are whistling in the dark ... you shouldn't go there Drablow!... alone, you shouldn't go there ... dead, don't y'know ... Stella!... alone ... But he is mine ... I ... Spider!... I think my heart will break ... Spider!... Come back!... he can never be yours!... a child ... Stella!... never ... Stella!... in hatred never a child ... he can never, never, never be yours!

Kipps (screaming) Stella!

A substantial Black-out. Then there is birdsong which gives way to the sound of a pleasure park — music, laughter, many voices — as a spot comes up on Kipps at the side of the stage

START
There is only the last thing left to tell. Within a few weeks Stella and I were married, and a little over a year later, Stella gave birth to our child, a son, whom we called Joseph Arthur Samuel, and Mr Samuel Daily was his godfather. I never thought of the past, I was filled with joy and contentment in my life. I was in a particularly peaceful, happy frame of mind one Sunday afternoon the following summer. We had gone to a large park, ten miles or so outside London. There was a festive, holiday air about the place, a lake, a bandstand, stalls selling ices and fruit. Families strolled in the sunshine, children tumbled on the grass. Stella and I walked happily, with young Joseph taking a few unsteady steps, holding on to our hands. One of the attractions on offer was a pony and trap on which rides could be taken, and little Joseph gestured to it excitedly.

We hear the pony and trap begin to draw away. There is a babble of conversation, and the strains of the band playing a jolly tune

So, because there was only room for two, Stella took Joseph and I stood, watching them bowl merrily down the ride. For a while they went out of sight away round a bend, and I began to look idly about me, at the other enjoyers of the afternoon. And then, quite suddenly, I saw her.

A spot illuminates the Woman in Black

The pony and trap draws nearer, we hear a child's laughter, the sound of the band, voices. The spot leaves Kipps and we watch the Woman in Black staring as if the trap is bearing towards her. Then, on a sudden movement from her, we hear the neighing of a startled horse, shouts from the driver, shouts of terror from the child, and then a horrifying crash

There is a second while the Woman in Black remains in the spot. Then she is gone

(As the spot slowly finds him) Our baby son had been thrown clear, clear against another tree. He lay crumpled on the grass below it, dead. And ten months later, Stella too, died from her terrible injuries. *(Pause)* I had seen the ghost of Jennet Humfrye, and she had had her revenge. You asked for my story, I have told it. Enough.

END

~~*Silence. Then Kipps crosses and switches on the workers. The Actor comes to him, and in silence shakes his hand*~~

~~Actor *(at length)* Thank you.~~

~~Kipps Thank you. *(Pause)* And is it done, d'you think? Will it now be laid to rest?~~

~~Actor I pray it will. I thank you for your trouble — your enthusiasm — and your effort. Your emotion just now — it was as if I watched myself.~~

~~Kipps I imagined my own child ...~~

~~Actor *(quickly)* Yes. *(He shudders involuntarily)* I pray that when we show it to our audience, at last it will be done with.~~

~~Kipps Who is she?~~

~~Actor I beg your pardon?~~

~~Kipps Your surprise. She is remarkable. Where did you find her?~~

~~Actor I'm afraid I don't understand.~~

~~Kipps Your surprise, Mr Kipps — the surprise you found for me.~~

~~*Pause*~~