**Writer**

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|  | **Susan Hill** |
| Born | In Scarborough beside the North Sea on 5 February 1942 |
| Family | Father Harrie A. Cole, mother Doris Freeland and two sisters: Harriette Cole (19 years younger) and Stephanie Hill. |
| Short life story | She said about her birth: “*I was born beside the North Sea, in Scarborough, Yorkshire one bitterly cold winter during WWII, when the snow was deep and the waves were crashing onto the cliffs not far away.”***[[1]](#footnote-1)**  She lived in Scarborough until she was 16. She attended Scarborough Convet Grammar School. After a while (in 1958), her family moved to Conventry. She attended a girls’ grammar school Barr’s Hill. She took A-levels in English, French, History and Latin. After that she got her English degree at King’s College London. In her first year of University she wrote her first novel, The Enclosure. The Daily Mail said in their review that the novel was too highly sexed for a girl still in education. In an interview Susan Hill said that her first two books are the worst, but she needed them to better writing.  In 1975 she married the Shakespeare scholar Stanley Wells. They have two daughters, Jessica and Clemency. She had another daughter Imogen, bet she died at early ages. |
| Study | * Scarborough Convent Grammar School * Barr’s Hill * King’s College London |
| Message from books |  |
| Features | Susan Hill said that the sea and the surrounding area of sea, will always feature in her books. Mostly she writes in gothic style.  She thinks it is important to set a good atmosphere and that it needed to be good described. |
| Topic book | Death |
| Period features | Most of the books are written in the 20th century. |
| Main characters | In the book there is mostly a main character with some other characters. There are not much people involved in the story. |

Was it reflected in the books I read?

Yes, it was. I made it regarding to the books I read and information found on the Internet.

**Books**

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|  | **In the springtime of the year** | **The woman in black** |
| **Genre** | Roman | Ghost story. |
| **Time** | In the 20th century. | Beginning of the 20th century. |
| **Telling Time** | The story takes more than a year before it ends. | The story itself takes a week. In the beginning the writer starts telling about Arthur Kipps, what only take some hours. |
| **Place** | The story is set at the cottage of Ruth Bryce. | Cryntin Gifford near by the sea at the house Eel Marsh House. Susan Hill describes the setting very detailed. |
| **Building** | The story starts with Ruth Bryce who is happily together with Ben Bryce. After that story is written how Ruth Bryce get through her grief. | The story starts with Arthur Kipss at old age and he told us why he had written the story. He is looking back to his awful incident in the house Eel Marsh House. After that the story starts and there are not any flashbacks or flash-forwards in the story itself. |
| **Narrative perspective** | First person , Ruth Bryce | First person, Arthur Kipps |
| **Main character** | Ruth Bryce | Arthur Kipps |
| **Characters** | * Ben Bryce * Jo Bryce * Alice Bryce * Arthur Bryce * Dora Bryce * Potter * Godmother Fry * Family Ratheman | * The woman in black 🡪   Jennet Humfrye   * Mrs. Alice Drablow * Stella * Keckwick * Samuel Daily * Mr. Bently * Mr. Jerome |
| **Theme** | Death, grief, pattern, marriage, losing someone, | Death, revenge, betray, isolation, fear, supernatural, madness, exploration, trauma |
| **Good part** | The feelings that you have when you lose somebody. It is not easy to let go someone, but somehow you need to do it. | Tension in the book kept you reading. I really wanted to know how the story ends. Arthur starts with a “mission”, he has to sort out the papers of Mrs. Alice Drablow. |
| **Bad part** | I did not like to read about how Ruth Bryce thinks. In the beginning it was interesting to read, but after a while it bored me. At the end, she could accept the death. I think that everybody need it to do. When you always think about somebody, how sad it is, your live does not go on. | I do not think there is any... |
| **Explanation title** | The title: “In the springtime of the year” referese to the time Ben Bryce was killed by a tree. It was the first day of Spring. Spring is the time that nature is going to “live/grow” again. | The title: “The woman in black” is chosen because Arthur Kipps sees a ghostly woman in black clothes. The story is about that woman. |
| **Symbolism** | * Pattern * Nature | * Pony-trap * Innocent death * Nature |
| **Message** | Death is a part of life. People die at early ages. Thereby she tries to tell us that you must look beyond your own grief when someone has died. You must share your mourning, you can't deal with it by yourself. | “I set out to write a ghost story in the classic 19th-century tradition, a full-length one.”  She did not want to spread a message, but she wanted to “entertain” us. |
| Reason why written | *“She was young, successful and in love. She remembers her fiancé, David Lepine, the young organist at Coventry Cathedral, as "a genius". Then, in 1972, quite suddenly, Lepine died of a coronary, a heart attack. Her world fell apart, she struggled on with some short stories, and only began to put herself back together again with* In the Springtime of the Year*, a powerful novel about grief which, she says, "had to be written".”[[2]](#footnote-2)* |  |

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| **Agreements** | **Differences** |
| The sea   * In the springtime of the year:   Ruth took Jo to the sea to “celebrate” the beautiful day.   * The woman in black:   The Eel Marsh House stands on an island. The house is only accessible when the tide is low. | The sea   * In the springtime of the year:   The sea shows a pretty side.   * The woman in black:   The sea ensures that the house is accessible or inaccessible. |
| Death   * In the springtime of the year:   Ben Bryce dies. Later in the story, the child of Mrs. and Mr. Ratheman died.   * The woman in black:   In the storyline, Stella and the child of Arthur and Stella died. Before the story starts the child of Jennet Humfrye, Jennet Humfrye and Mrs. Alice Drablow died. | Tension   * In the springtime of the year:   In this book, there was not much tension. It was written how Ruth Bryce feels and how she got through.   * The woman in back:   There was way more tension in the book. You kept reading and reading, because I wanted to know who the woman in black was and what it was about the nursery. |
| One storyline  Both stories have one storyline and it was written in first person. | Ghost   * In the springtime of the year:   In this book there wasn’t a ghost   * The woman in black:   There was a ghost who hunted Arthur Kipps. |
| Less characters  Both stories have a few characters. About seven characters are involved in the stories. | Revenge   * In the springtime of the year:   There was no revenge in this book. At first, Ruth was upset about the death of Ben. In the end, she could accept it and did somehow now that it was meant to be.   * The woman in black:   The ghost, the women in black, wanted to have revenge. Her son was killed and she couldn’t accept it. That is why she will kill children who pass by her. |
| Dog in the story  Both stories have a dog in the story. In “In the springtime of the year” the dog has less involvement than the dog in “The woman in black”. | Genre   * In the springtime of the year:   This book was a roman.   * The woman in black:   It was a ghost-story. |
| Storyline  There was one storyline, with one main character. This made the books less complicated. |  |

Book preference: I do like “The woman in black” more, because there is more activity in the story. Arthur went to Cryntin Gifford and asked some people if they know something about Mrs. Alice Drablow. All of them look away. They didn’t want to talk about her. This makes me curious to whom she is. Why does everybody loath her?

When Arthur was in Eel Marsh House, he heard a rocking chair rocking. He wanted to go to the chair, but the door was locked. How could the chair rocking? And why was the door locked?

It kept you reading, because you want to know how and why?

**Link with movie from The woman in Black:**

The movie and the book are generally the same. It goes about Arthur Kipps who needed to sort out the papers of Mrs. Alice Darblow. A woman in black is roaming around the house. The inhabitants of the village Cryntin Gifford are afraid of that woman. However, Arthur wanted to know what happened in that house, why the woman in black is haunting. In the end, the child and wife of Arthur died, because the woman in black took revenge. The story line is the same, but some details are different such as:

**Begin**

* Book

The book starts with the old man sitting in his chair near by the Christmas three.

* Movie

The movie starts with Arthur receiving instructions from his employer to go to Eel Mrsh House, Crything Gifford. Arthur needs to sort out the affairs of recently deceased Alice Darblow.

**Funeral**

* Book

Arthur goes to the funeral of Mrs Drablow with Mr Jerome. There alone, but a woman in black slips in and sits at the back of the church. After the funeral, the woman in black slips directly away.

* Movie

The funeral scene isn’t in the film. Arthur visit Mr. Jerome who said the best option was to go home. Arthur stays and went to the house.

**The pony trap accident**

* Book

In the book, Arthur heard a pony trap sound, but that was all. He decided that he shouldn’t involve the police.

* Movie

When Arthur arrived at Eel Marsh House, he hears a pony trap sound. He moves down to the Nine-Lives Causeway as he hears the sounds of a pony and trap plunging into the marshes and a child screaming for help. Arthur sees flashes of the accident in his mind as the mist swells in around him. The scene reaches its climax as Keckwick appears through the mist and takes him back to the town. He reported the story to the police, but they didn’t take it seriously.

**End**

* Book

In the book the ultimate catastrophe comes in the park one day, when Arthur’s wife Stella and their baby boy are riding in a pony and trap. Arthur then sees the Woman in Black standing beneath a tree. The pony galloped away and crashed into a three. The child died immediately and Stella died of her injuries ten months later.

* Movie

For Arthur Radcliffe, the end comes more suddenly. Despite having been warned by the ghost children that his son will die on a train, he thinks it’s perfectly safe to ask the nanny to buy some tickets for an immediate return trip to London. Then he decides to let his son wander around on the platform. Oh yes, the Woman in Black lures him onto the track as another train immediately appears. Arthur jumps on the rails.

1. Susan Hill – **About Susan Hill**

   <http://www.susanhill.org.uk/susan_hill_autobiography> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Robert McCrum(16 January 2011) – **Susan Hill: 'I was never good at anything else'**

   <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jan/16/susan-hill-interview-kind-man> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)