

"The Yellow Wallpaper"
Pre-Reading Notes**I. Charlotte Perkins Gilman**

- "The Yellow Wallpaper," first published in _____ in the *New England Magazine*, is largely considered Charlotte Perkins Gilman's best work of short fiction.
- The story is a first-person account of a young mother's mental deterioration and is based on Gilman's own experiences with _____ depression.
- Like Gilman, the unnamed protagonist of the story is advised, based on medical theories of the time, to abstain from any and all physical activity and _____ stimulation. She is not allowed to read, write, or even see her new baby.
- To carry out this treatment, the woman's husband takes her to a country house where she is kept in a former nursery decorated with _____ wallpaper.

II. Synopsis of the Story

- The narrator and her husband, John, are spending the _____ in a grand estate or guest house.
- The narrator is suffering from "nervous _____" or what we call "post-partum depression"
- John controls her. He is also a doctor, and he thinks she needs to relax. He discourages her from imagining, exercising, and _____ with people. He has her rest in the top floor of the guest house in a room with yellow wallpaper.
- The yellow wallpaper arouses the _____ of the narrator.
- Attempting to figure out the pattern of the wallpaper becomes her primary _____.
- She makes sure no one else finds out about her _____ with the wallpaper. She wants to be the only person to "figure it out".

- John mistakenly thinks the narrator has found tranquility, but actually the narrator thinks she has found a _____ on the wallpaper trying to get out of the _____.
- The narrator sees a woman who is shaking the _____ at night and creeping around during the day, when the woman is able to escape briefly. The narrator mentions that she, too, _____ around at times.

III. Characters

- John: Husband of the narrator, believes in the “rest-cure” for women suffering from hysteria, has the _____ century attitude that women were to behave _____.
- Jennie: The narrator’s sister-in-law, she takes care of the narrator’s home, represents the nineteenth-century view of the role of the woman as _____.
- Mary: The nanny to the narrator, she possibly is an allusion to the _____. Mary is the perfect mother-surrogate for the narrator, an idealized maternal figure whose only concern is her child. Like Jennie, she also symbolizes the happily domesticated woman.

IV. Woman in the Wallpaper

- She appears trapped within the bar-like pattern of the _____, and she shakes the pattern as she tries to _____ out (and eventually succeeds).
- She symbolizes female i_____ within the domestic sphere. Unable to break free from the room, like the narrator, the woman in the wallpaper has only the symbolic option of tending to the house, not of getting an intellectual job in the outside world.
- The woman's habit of "creeping" about suggests that she, and other early _____, must hide in the shadows for now while they plot their strategy, but soon will be able to stand tall.

V. Major Themes

- _____ and the yellow wallpaper
- Female imprisonment in the _____ sphere
- Sunlight as _____, moonlight as inhibiting
- Aesthetic changes through _____