

The Yellow wallpaper – Part 1

It is very **seldom** that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a **haunted** house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate! Still I will proudly declare that there is something **queer** about it. Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long unrented?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage. John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he **scoffs** openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures. John is a physician, and PERHAPS—PERHAPS that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see he does not believe I am sick! And what can one do? If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad. So I will let it alone and talk about the house. There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the **heirs** and coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years. There is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

We took the nursery at the top of the house. It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine **galore**. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls. The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is **stripped** off—the paper—in great **patches** all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it KNEW what a vicious influence it had! There is a recurrent **spot** where the pattern **lolls** like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down. I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of **blank** walls and **plain** furniture than most children could find in a toy store.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will. Behind that outside pattern the **dim** shapes get clearer every day. It is always the same shape, only very numerous. And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so. But I tried it last night. It was moonlight. John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wall-paper till I felt creepy.

The faint **figure** behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out. I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper DID move, and when I came back John was awake. "What is it, little girl?" he said. "Don't go walking about like that—you'll get cold." I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away. "Why darling!" said he, "our **lease** will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.

The Yellow Wall Paper, Charlotte Perkin Gilman, 1892

Seldom: rare – **haunted**: hanté – **queer**: bizarre

scoffs : se moquer

heirs: héritiers

galore : en abondance – **stripped off**: arrachés au mur – **patches** : morceau

spot : endroit – **loll** : pendre **blank**: vide – **plain** : uni, simple

dim: vague, sombre

figure: silhouette

lease : bail, location