

The Yellow Wallpaper

Written by

Tom Dickinson

Based on

'The Yellow Wallpaper'

by

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

OVER BLACK:

Soft, uneven footsteps on old floorboards.

A faint SCRATCHING - persistent - like a fingernail caught in a splinter.

Silence. Then: A single drawn-out breath. A woman's voice - trembling. Barely a whisper.

FADE IN:

INT. YELLOW ROOM - NIGHT

THE WALLPAPER.

A sprawling, flamboyant pattern - wild, oppressive, committing every artistic sin.

Its color is sickly, almost revolting. A yellow like nicotine-stained teeth.

A whisper seeps in - broken, disembodied - as if snipped into pieces:

WOMEN'S VOICE (O.S.)

...round...
...and round...
...the lady creeps...

Motes of dust drift in the lamplight. The wallpaper seems to throb.

WOMEN'S VOICE (O.S.)

...in the dark...
...she never sleeps...

The wallpaper's snaking patterns shifts. Twisting. Curling. Bending and breaking like it wants to escape itself.

WOMEN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...eyes are wide...
...hands are cold...
(beat)
...trapped inside...
...her story told...

CLOSE on a jagged tear in the wallpaper - curled like dead skin. The camera lingers - too long. As if it something might crawl out.

WOMEN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...twist and turn...
 ...and turn again...
 ...until the walls no longer...
 (finding the words)
 ...bend...

The SILENCES warps, a distant board CREAKS - The old bones of the house settling, or maybe her spine shifting in anticipation.

WOMEN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (fading)
 ...where she goes...
 ...no one can tell...

ABRUPT CUT TO:

CHARLOTTE (30s) - center of the room, completely still.

A candle stub flickers beside her. Its glow licks at the wallpaper behind her

Her wide, unblinking eyes are glazed, consumed by the chaotic patterns. Her head tilts slightly, lips part, as though listening-or about to speak.

CHARLOTTE
 ...the yellow room becomes her
 cell.

The candlelight trembles-

The tear in the wallpaper widens-

A low GROAN in the timber frame-

A half-sound that might be laughter-

A breath caught in Charlotte's throat.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

The Yellow Wallpaper

In the darkness, the distant rumble of carriage wheels and the soft clop of hooves emerges, gradually replacing the silence.

EXT. ISOLATED VICTORIAN MANSION - DAY

A grand colonial mansion rises from untamed fields. Mist rolls over the overgrown grass. Everything feels too still.

A carriage clatters up the overgrown drive.

JOHN (late 30s) steps down, setting luggage onto the gravel with measured efficiency, almost clinical.

CHARLOTTE (30s) hesitates on the carriage step. One hand grips the doorframe, reluctant to *step into* this new land. She glances toward the second story-barred windows.

The silence swallows distant birdcalls.

JOHN

Charlotte. Come along now.

Charlotte steps down reluctantly, the carriage wheels clattering off behind them.

CHARLOTTE

It's just... quieter than I imagined.

John glances back, his tone brisk, dismissive.

JOHN

It's an escape. A respite. It'll be good for you, dear. Exactly what i'd prescribe to any of my patients.

INT. MANSION FOYER - DAY

A heavy door GROANS open. Dust motes swirl in weak daylight. FOOTSTEPS ECHO as John leads Charlotte inside.

Charlotte runs a fingertip along the banister, collecting a film of dust. She glances about: vacant rooms beyond shut doors, heavy curtains blocking sun, the subtle creak of settling timbers.

JOHN

Jennie will arrive tomorrow to keep things tidy, and in the meantime, you're to rest. Dr. Mitchell was most clear—no exertion, no writing. Just peace. The rest cure requires absolute stillness.

CHARLOTTE

(quietly)

How did you find this place?

John avoids her eyes, adjusting his cuffs.

JOHN

Through a colleague. A summer lease. Very private. It has all we need.

He moves on, not inviting further questions. Charlotte lingers, unsettled, her reflection faint in a dusty mirror.

INT. NURSERY ROOM - DAY

The door creaks open, revealing the nursery. It is dominated by a familiar yellow wallpaper. Its sprawling patterns twist in every direction, jagged and chaotic.

Bars on the windows cast shadowed lines across the walls.

Charlotte freezes in the doorway.

John steps past her, his shoes clicking softly on the wooden floor, placing the bags beside a nailed-down bed.

Charlotte steps forward, her hand hovering near the wallpaper. As her finger grazes a torn edge, a tiny flake peels off—dry and brittle—catching under her nail.

CHARLOTTE

(soft, brittle)

This room feels... off. Surely, there's another I might take?

John strides to the window, drawing the curtains wide. Light floods in, revealing every imperfection of the wallpaper. The torn edges seem to gape like wounds.

JOHN

Off? Nonsense, my dear. It's the sunniest room in the house. Airy. Spacious. Ideal for recovery.

Her eyes dart across the grotesque patterns. She notices marks along the baseboards—scratches, as if someone tried to tear the paper down.

CHARLOTTE
It's... hideous.

A faint SCRATCHING sound emerges from within the wall. Charlottes's breath hitches. She leans in, trying to place the sound, but it vanishes into silence.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
(uneasy)
Someone tried to tear it down. Look at these marks...

John glances back, his tone growing brisk.

JOHN
Children, most likely. It was a nursery once. You'll hardly notice it after a day or two.

Charlotte stands there, fingers curling slightly, eyes darting across the wallpaper's grotesque patterns. She wants to protest, to ask more, but her voice comes out strained:

CHARLOTTE
(almost a whisper)
I'm not sure I can sleep in here.

John crosses to her, placing a firm hand on her shoulder. His smile is calm, practiced, yet there's an edge to it.

JOHN
You will grow used to it. You always do. Dr. Mitchell's instructions are clear: quiet and solitude. No writing, no work. Soon, Jennie will be here to assist.

He kisses her forehead—mechanical, not tender—and makes for the door.

Charlotte doesn't move, her eyes trapped on the wallpaper that seems to watch her back.

John's footsteps fade.

CLICK—the door latches shut.

For a moment, Charlotte stands alone, surrounded by a silence that seems to hum, and the wallpaper mocks her