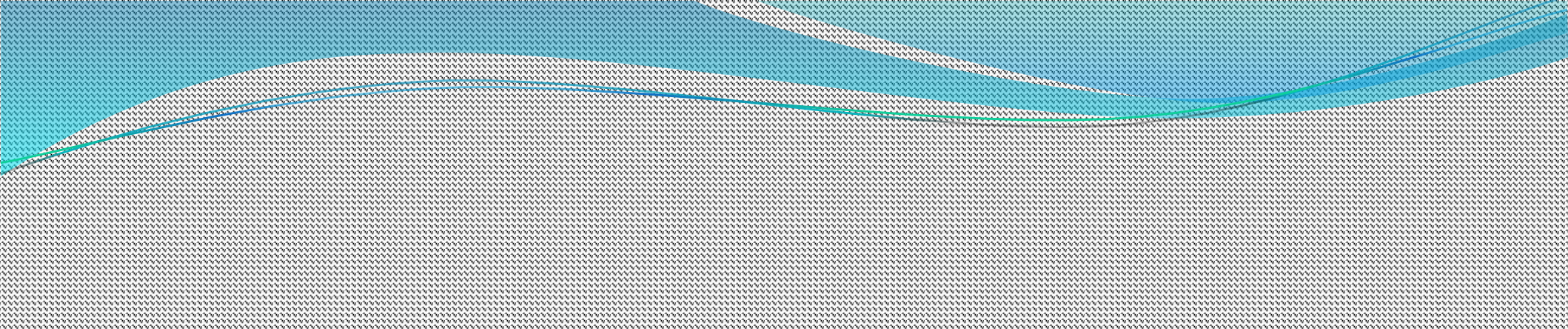
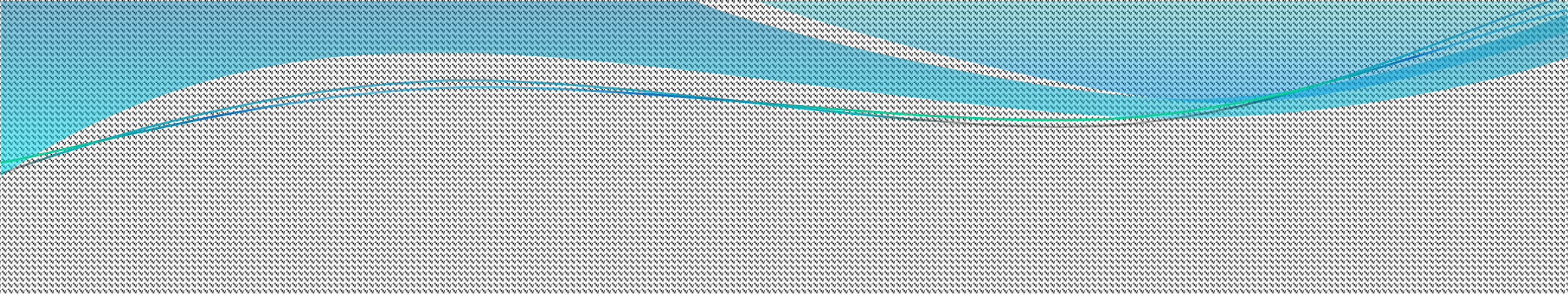


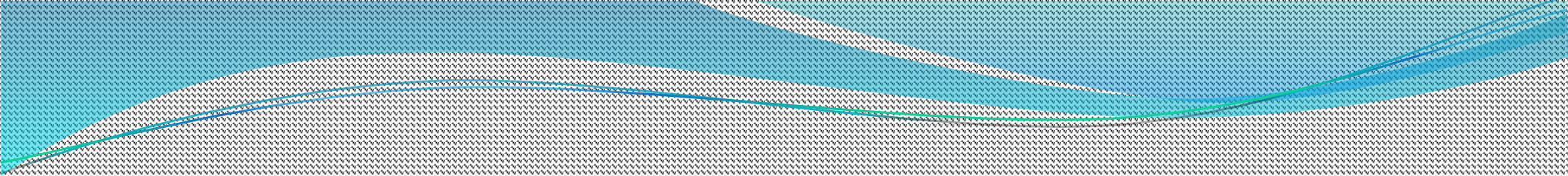
The Wife

Washington Irving

- “The Wife”: Crayon’s good friend Leslie married a woman who had no fortune but was beautiful, accomplished, and brought up fashionably. Leslie himself was rich and excited to be able to provide for Mary and give her everything she could desire. They seemed perfectly suited, for his romantic and serious personality complimented her lively optimism.

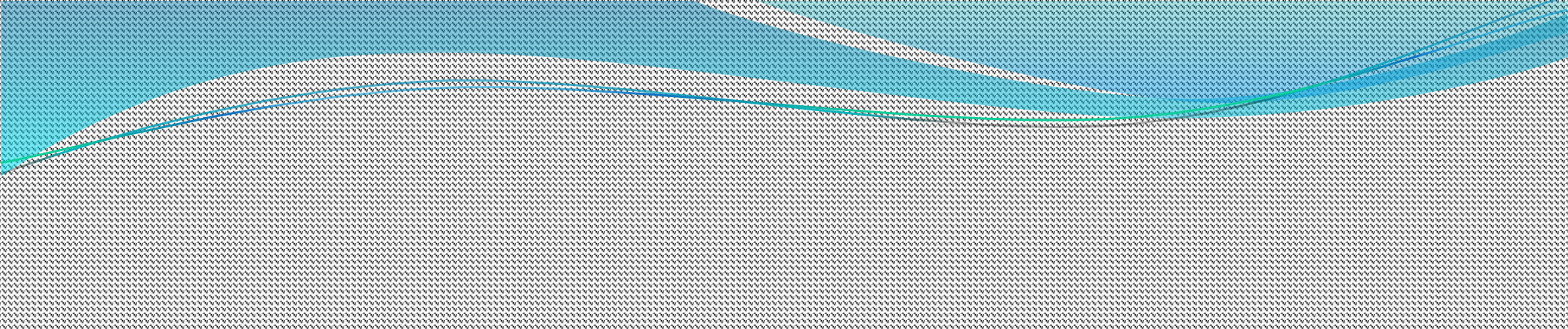
- 
- This story is instructive as a pure example of Victorianism,
 - Irving wrote to please genteel married women, the great majority of his readers.
 - He caters to their view of themselves, introducing his story with a quotation exalting “women’s love” and the bliss of domestic life.

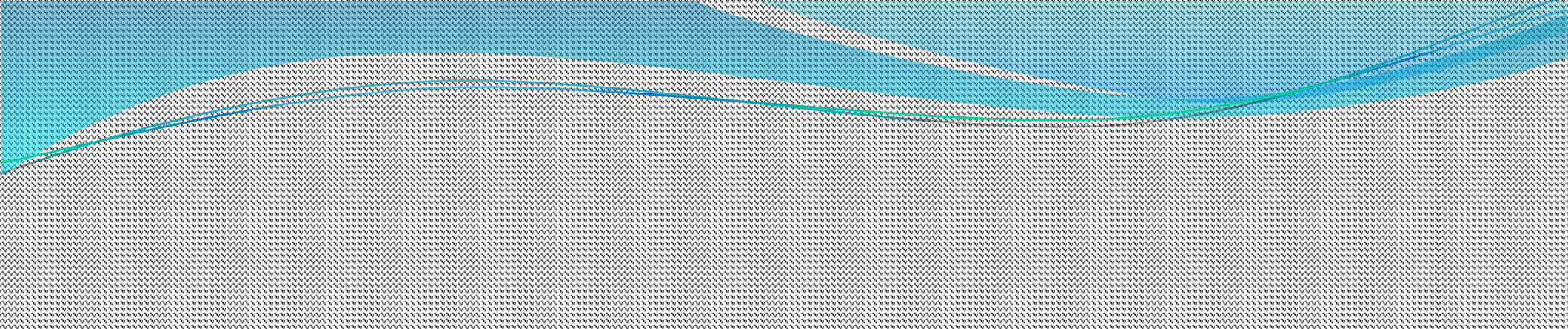
- 
- The second paragraph expresses the perspective of an ideal Victorian husband:
 - The Victorian husband was expected to be a strong provider outside the home, chivalric and attentive to his wife inside.

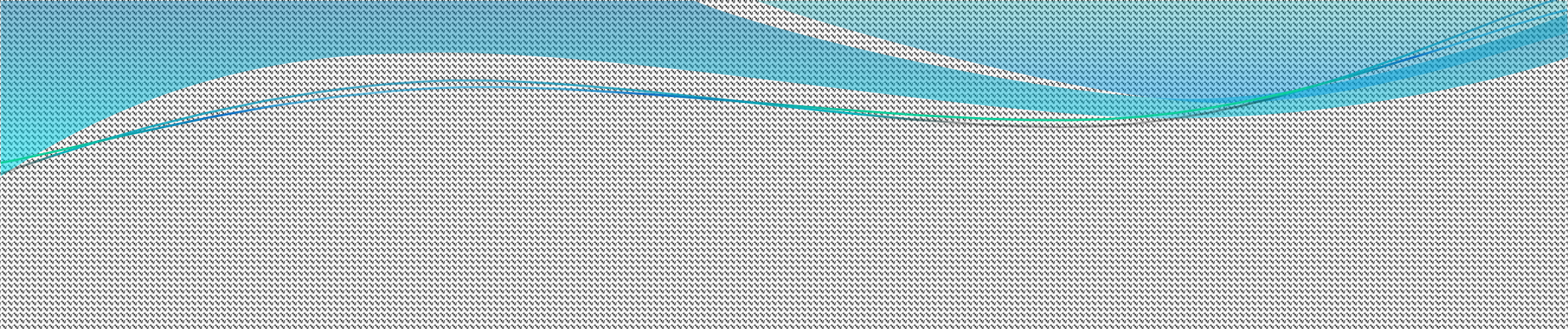
- 
- A few months into their marriage, his fortunes reversed and he was reduced to near poverty. He tried to hide it from her for her protection.

George Crayon says he must tell his wife—his lies will only distance her, whereas if he tells her he can have her sympathy.

- Leslie is not so sure, but he tells her. Fortunately, Crayon was right. After they move to a humble cottage in the country, Mary makes the very most of it and turns it and their new lifestyle into a paradise for Leslie.

- 
- The couple move out of the city into a small cottage “humble enough in its appearance for the most pastoral poet, and yet it had a pleasing rural look.”
 - This lovely cottage in the country is the American Dream, for most people. Most readers would love to live in a place like that.

- 
- Leslie feels ashamed that his wife has been “reduced to this paltry situation—to be caged in a miserable cottage.
 - Ironically, he sounds like a modern Feminist complaining about housewives being caged at home.

- 
- That is the lesson the husband learns, that he should give the highest priority to his wife and the spiritual and domestic values she represents.

Characters

- Leslie,
 - Mary
- George Crayon

What it's about?

- “As the vine which has long twined it’s graceful foliage around the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs”
Thunderbolt = Trouble/Crisis
Oak = Man
- Vine = Woman

Themes

- Perceptions of ability of women vs reality
During time period:
Women=feeble-minded
In 1800s second-class citizens.
Women's interests: home and family.
Not encouraged to obtain education or pursue a professional career.