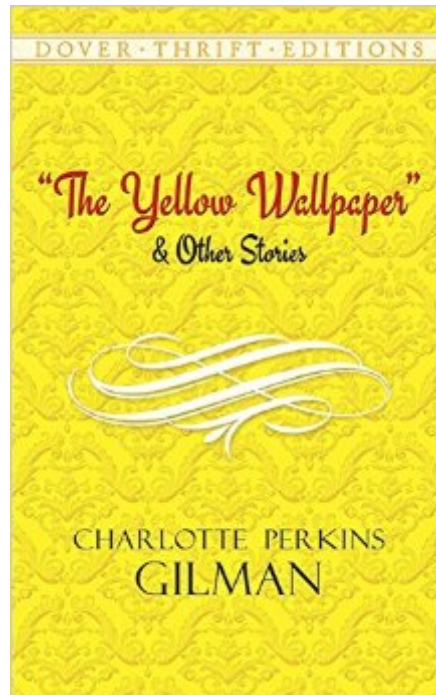


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The Yellow Wallpaper And Other Stories (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

Best known for the 1892 title story of this collection, a harrowing tale of a woman's descent into madness, Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote more than 200 other short stories. Seven of her finest are reprinted here. Written from a feminist perspective, often focusing on the inferior status accorded to women by society, the tales include "Turned," an ironic story with a startling twist, in which a husband seduces and impregnates a naïve servant; "Cottagette," concerning the romance of a young artist and a man who's apparently too good to be true; "Mr. Peebles' Heart," a liberating tale of a fiftyish shopkeeper whose sister-in-law, a doctor, persuades him to take a solo trip to Europe, with revivifying results; "The Yellow Wallpaper"; and three other outstanding stories. These charming tales are not only highly readable and full of humor and invention, but also offer ample food for thought about the social, economic, and personal relationship of men and women and how they might be improved.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (Feminist Press edition, 1973) One of the best things about this small volume is that there's good deal of biographical and context information in the back. The story itself, already creepy enough on its own, takes on added weight when tied in to various minor details in Gilman's life. The biographer notes at one point that of Gilman's many writings, the only ones to survive in print at the time were this story and a textbook, *Women and Economics*. While this is certainly an above-average piece of work, there are a number of things about it that make it easy to see why less gripping tales in Gilman's corpus might have fallen by the

wayside. The main annoyance of Gilman's writing style is the constant paragraph breaks, a longstanding (and, one wonders, is there any reason behind it besides tradition?) affectation of what we'll call euphemistically erotic novelists. Really, subtlety is a good thing. While we're at it, the story would be more effective with half, or less, the number of existing exclamation points. The only parallel I can think of these days, stylewise, is the chatter of vacuous fourteen-year-old girls mooning over the Backstreet Boys. It gets painful after a while. Annoyances of grammar aside, the story itself is quite a work. It purports to be the diary of a woman descending into madness thanks to, in essence, being treated like a woman in nineteenth-century America (the story itself dates from 1899). One wonders if H. P. Lovecraft didn't lift some of his descriptions of raw chaos from Gilman's descriptions of the wallpaper in the title, which is about the closest thing to raw chaos one is likely to find outside a straight horror story.

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