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The Yellow Wallpaper

Charlotte Perkins Gilman · *1892 · Gilman's English*

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. John is a physician, and perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1892, Project Gutenberg #1952. For grades 10–12. Gravity. A short, complete story. Do not make a spectacle of the last pages.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read The Yellow Wallpaper as Gilman opens it—ordinary people, ancestral halls for the summer, a husband who is a physician—and then follow, with gravity, a confinement that must not be turned into a spectacle?

"It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A"

Opening

It is very seldom, she writes, that mere ordinary people like John and herself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate: she would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity, but that would be asking too much of fate. John is a physician, and perhaps—she would not say it to a living soul, but this is dead paper—that is one reason she does not get well faster. He does not believe she is sick. Teach that opening, for grades 10–12, with gravity. The short 1892 story, Project Gutenberg #1952, complete as hosted, will become a record of confinement and of a yellow wallpaper. Do not make a spectacle of the last pages, and do not replace her English with a later slogan only. Quote her.

KEY CHARACTERS

The narrator
Who writes of ancestral halls for the summer, and of not getting well, on dead paper

John
Her husband, a physician, who does not believe she is sick

The colonial mansion, and the yellow wallpaper
The house of the summer, which the later pages will not let go

HOW TO BEGIN THIS STORY

> *"It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A"*
> Opening

> *"perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see"*
> Opening

Grades 10–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Ancestral Halls for the Summer

OPENING

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. The story begins as a summer let, not as a thesis.

- Keep "mere ordinary people" and "ancestral halls."
- 10–12. Gravity.
- Quote Gilman, 1892.
- A short, complete story.

> *"It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A"*
> Opening

02

A Colonial Mansion

OPENING

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. She names the house, and then takes the romance back.

- Keep "hereditary estate," "haunted house," and "asking too much of fate."
- 10–12.
- The wallpaper is not yet this first look.
- Quote this English.

> *"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"*
> Opening

03

John Is a Physician

OPENING

John is a physician, and perhaps—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster. The husband is named as a doctor, and the page as a relief.

- If you quote the parenthesis, keep it exact, including the dashes as printed. A shorter quote may stop at "John is a physician."
- 10–12. Gravity.
- He does not believe she is sick; if you teach that, quote it.
- No spectacle.

> *"John is a physician, and perhaps—(I would not say"*
> Opening

04

I Do Not Get Well Faster

OPENING

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? The story is already about not being believed.

- Keep "do not get well faster," and, if you go on, "he does not believe I am sick."
- 10–12. Gravity.
- Do not treat this as a later case-history only.
- Quote her.

> *"perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see"*
> Opening

05

A Short 1892 Story, with Gravity

THE EDITION

Project Gutenberg #1952 is The Yellow Wallpaper, 1892, complete as hosted, a short story. For grades 10–12. Gravity throughout. The later pages of confinement and the wallpaper must not be made a spectacle. Quote Gilman, not a later slogan only, and not a film.

- Name 1892, and a short complete story.
- Gravity; no spectacle of the close.
- A woman writing on dead paper, in her English.
- 10–12.

> *"It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer. A"*
> Opening

A summer house, and a letting

A physician who does not believe

Dead paper, as a relief

Confinement, told with gravity

A short, complete story

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. "It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer." A colonial mansion; she will not quite call it haunted.
2. John is a physician; she does not get well faster; he does not believe she is sick. Keep her words.
3. A short, complete 1892 story, PG #1952, for grades 10–12. Gravity. Do not make a spectacle of the last pages.
4. Quote Gilman, not a later slogan only, and not a film.

Quotations are verbatim from the Gilman's English, Project Gutenberg #1952, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/the-yellow-wallpaper/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.