

# The Yellow Wallpaper

by

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adapted by Francis Booth

An ancestral hall for the summer  
A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate  
A haunted house!  
But that would be asking too much of fate

John laughs at me of course  
John is practical  
John is a physician  
He does not believe I am sick  
And what can one do?

Phosphates and tonics  
And journeys and air  
And exercise  
And forbidden to work  
Until I am well again

I will talk about the house  
The most beautiful place  
A delicious garden  
The place has been empty for years  
There is something strange  
I can feel it

He said I was to have perfect rest  
And all the air I could get

We took the nursery at the top of the house  
It is a big airy room  
The windows are barred for little children  
The paper is stripped off in great patches  
I never saw a worse paper in my life

The color is repellent, almost revolting  
A smoldering, unclean yellow  
Strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight  
No wonder the children hated it

John does not know how much I really suffer  
He knows there is no *reason* to suffer  
And that satisfies him  
Of course it is only nervousness  
I wish I could get well faster

The paper looks as if it knew  
The pattern lolls like a broken neck  
Two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down  
Up and down and sideways they crawl  
I can see a strange, provoking, formless figure  
That seems to skulk about  
Behind that silly and conspicuous front design

I cry at nothing  
And cry most of the time  
I am alone a good deal just now

I determine for the thousandth time  
I *will* follow that pointless pattern  
To some sort of conclusion  
This thing was not arranged on any laws  
Of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry  
Or anything else I ever heard of

I don't know why I should write this  
I don't want to  
I don't feel able  
The effort is getting greater than the relief

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me  
Or ever will  
The dim shapes get clearer every day  
The moon shines in all around just as the sun does  
The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern  
Just as if she wanted to get out

Dear John, he loves me very dearly  
And hates to have me sick  
He said I was his darling and his comfort  
And all he had

The color is hideous enough  
Unreliable enough, infuriating enough  
But the pattern is torturing  
It slaps you in the face  
Knocks you down and tramples upon you

It changes as the light changes  
That is why I watch it always.  
In twilight, candlelight, lamplight,  
And worst of all, moonlight  
It becomes bars  
And the woman behind it is as plain as can be

I don't want to leave now until I have found out  
There is a week more and I think that will be enough

I'm feeling ever so much better!  
I don't sleep much at night  
But I sleep a good deal in the daytime

It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper  
It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw  
Not beautiful ones like buttercups  
But foul, bad yellow things

The smell!  
It creeps all over the house  
Hovering in the dining room, skulking in the parlor  
Hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs  
It gets into my hair  
It is like the color of the paper! A yellow smell

I really have discovered something at last  
The front pattern *does* move  
And no wonder!  
The woman behind shakes it!  
She crawls around fast  
She is all the time trying to climb through

I think that woman gets out in the daytime  
I can see her out of every one of my windows  
I see her in that long shaded lane  
I see her in those dark grape arbors  
Creeping all around the garden  
Away off in the open country  
Creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind

Only two more days to get this paper off

I believe John is beginning to notice  
I don't like the look in his eyes  
He asked me all sorts of questions  
Pretended to be very loving and kind  
As if I couldn't see through him!

This is the last day, but it is enough

As soon as it was moonlight  
That poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern  
I ran to help her  
I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled  
Before morning I had peeled off yards of that paper  
It sticks horribly and the pattern enjoys it!  
All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes  
And waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision

I don't like to *look* out of the windows even  
There are so many of those creeping women  
And they creep so fast  
I wonder if they all came out of the wallpaper  
As I did?

I shall have to get back behind the pattern  
When it comes night  
And that is hard!  
It is so pleasant to be out in this great room  
And creep around as I please  
For outside you have to creep on the ground  
And everything is green instead of yellow

Why, there's John at the door!  
How he does call and pound!  
Now he's crying for an axe  
It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

I've got out at last, I said  
In spite of you  
And I've pulled off most of the paper  
So you can't put me back

