

Charlotte
Perkins Gilman

PENGUIN CLASSICS

The Yellow
Wall-Paper

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Contains: The Yellow Wallpaper, The Rocking Chair, Old Water

'The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.'

Written with barely controlled fury after she was confined to her room for 'nerves' and forbidden to write, Gilman's pioneering feminist horror story scandalized nineteenth-century readers with its portrayal of a woman who loses her mind because she has literally nothing to do.

The Yellow Wall-Paper Details

Date : Published February 26th 2015 by Penguin Classics (first published October 1911)

ISBN :

Author : Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Format : Paperback 55 pages

Genre : Classics, Short Stories, Horror, Fiction, Feminism, Literature, 19th Century, American



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From Reader Review The Yellow Wall-Paper for online ebook

Jane says

Woah, that was surreal.

I think The Yellow Wall-Paper was my least favourite, and that's probably because I had unrealistic expectations. While it didn't literally hypnotise me like I'd half expected it would, it was still an extremely compelling short story and it left me shook. They all did.

The Rocking Chair was my favourite. Ironically, I have the least to say about that. It speaks for itself really.

Old Water was different to the others, and initially I wasn't that impressed. And then the ending happened. *Definitely* want to read more of Gilman's work after this.

Nie says

Trois courtes nouvelles autour du féminisme et/ou des fantômes. Intéressant à lire, surtout la première (éponyme), le style m'a plu et beaucoup de choses sont transmises en une trentaine de pages!

Blair says

The famous short story 'The Yellow Wall-Paper' I've read before: of my own accord a while ago, and again more recently as part of a course I was studying. Reading it again when I bought this volume - part of the Penguin Little Black Classics series - made me see things in it that I'd missed the first time and even the second. Not doing a close reading of it was actually beneficial, and I got more of a sense of the gothic elements and satire contained within it.

This edition also contains two more short stories by Gilman. 'The Rocking-Chair' is more of a straightforward ghost story than the psychological horror of 'The Yellow Wall-Paper', although it has a little bit of that, with a strong focus on a sinister object that also gives the story its name. While it doesn't feel anywhere near as *significant* as the more famous story, I really enjoyed it. 'Old Water' is a comedy which I liked less, but it has a very strong ending.

Holly says

Really creepy story, unnerving and sinister. I'm going to have read this again to understand it all fully. Read for A Level English Literature (but I wanted to read this anyway so alls good)

Lola says

A haunting classic.

Emily Turner says

This selection of short stories are very well written, I love the authors use of language and the themes are quite daunting. This is my second time reading The Yellow Wallpaper. It's about a woman who falls deeper into madness as she is imprisoned in her house, she is suffering post-natal depression and is married to a controlling psychiatrist, who is also a masochist. She discusses the colour and patterns of the yellow wallpaper on the wall throughout the story and she finds it repulsive, she sees the figure of a woman behind the pattern shaking it as if trapped behind bars so she starts secretly tearing the paper off the wall.. ?

Ron says

I am surprised at how terrifying this story is! It creeped me right out!

Saya says

Read for the challenge of:
"Read a book about a mental illness."

I will never know how to review classics. Is it really okay to review something that couldn't have been anything to you if you hadn't studied it? I mean, I finished this book thinking that it was good. It was haunting and relatable (which is slightly sad) but I couldn't fully appreciate it until I've read analysis on it. The ending was most peculiar. I support the minority's opinion because I find it to be incredibly clever, and I'd like to think that's what I read.

raquel boggins says

3.5 ★★★: an interesting collection of three ghost and feminist short stories

«I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy-store.»

Review in English | Reseña en español (abajo)

Read for the Reading Women Challenge (2) A book about a woman with a mental illness

This edition holds three stories: The Yellow Wall-Paper (3 ★★★), The Rocking-Chair (4 ★★★★) and Old Water (3 ★★★).

I probably went into this with unrealistic high expectations but I'd been hearing only good things about The Yellow Wallpaper and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. While it didn't literally hypnotise me as I'd expected it would, it was still an extremely compelling short story and it left me shook. I think the most interesting aspect is its semi-autobiographical sense –Charlotte Perkins had suffered years of depression and she was forbidden to touch pen, pencil, or brush, and was allowed only two hours of mental stimulation a day–. Among the three stories, this was the least I liked, but it's an intriguing illustration of the attitudes towards mental health and the treatment of women in the 19th century.

My favourite was The Rocking-Chair even though I don't usually like horror stories; and Old Water had a really strong ending.

P. S. I'm not English, so if you see any mistakes let me know so I can correct them, please

Cumple el reto de Reading Women (2) Un libro sobre una mujer con una enfermedad mental

Esta edición contiene tres historias cortas: El Papel Pintado Amarillo (3*), La Mecedora (4*) y Agua Vieja (3*).

Probablemente me acerqué a este libro con expectativas poco realistas y demasiado altas, pero solo había escuchado cosas buenas sobre El Papel Pintado Amarillo y Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Si bien, literalmente, no me hipnotizó como esperaba, sí fue un cuento muy convincente y hubo pasajes que me dejaron un tanto aterrada. Creo que el aspecto más interesante es su sentido semi-autobiográfico: Charlotte Perkins había sufrido años de depresión y le prohibieron coger la pluma, el lápiz o el pincel, y solo se le permitían dos horas de estimulación mental por día. De las tres historias, esta fue la que menos me gustó, pero es una ilustración intrigante de las actitudes hacia la salud mental y el tratamiento de las mujeres en el siglo XIX.

Mi relato favorito ha sido La Mecedora, aunque no me suelen gustar las historias de terror; y Agua Vieja me sorprendió por su final.

Inyourpants says

Three short stories. The first one although it has a strong message about woman losing her mind while her husband patronize her the whole time, I feel like it would benefit a lot from editing. The other two are even worse. Interesting ideas just poorly executed in my opinion.

Melody (theliteraryowl) says

More like 4.5/5 stars.

Here are my quick reviews for the three short stories:

- The Yellow Wall-Paper: 5/5 stars. I'm completely stunned, I didn't really know what to expect from this one, everyone and their mother have read it and enjoyed it but I didn't really know where I'd stand. Well, it

turns out that I absolutely loved Charlotte Perkins Gilman's writing style. I absolutely loved the portrayal of mental illness and the themes of female repression/silence in this one. Also, I didn't really understand the ending at first but now that I think of it, it's actually pretty powerful in it's way.

- The Rocking-Chair 3/5 stars. I'm actually quite generous with my writing because again, I loved the writing style and how Charlotte Perkins Gilman weaves her tale. From the little I've read of her, she's pretty talented when it comes to short stories and in this sense this one didn't disappoint. However, being told from the perspective of two men I have to admit that I didn't give a damn about it. I'm sorry, call me a misandrist if you will but, most of the times I find that I don't really enjoy stories told from a male perspective. That is not always true, but it was the case for this one, unfortunately.
- Old Water: 5/5 stars. Probably my favorite out of the three, even tho I absolutely loved The Yellow Wall-Paper. I was afraid of not enjoying it, mostly for the same reasons I didn't enjoy The Rocking Chair, there's an all knowing Poet and well, he rather annoyed me, but I enjoyed the story anyway, mainly because of Ellen. And Perkins Gilman's storytelling, obviously. Also, the ending was .. well, I won't say anything, all I'll say is that I was on the edge of my seat. So yeah I really liked this one. I'll always favor stories with independent female characters/female characters who have agency. And this one was really good.

Clarissa says

Penguin Little Black Classics are brilliant introductions to an author's writing.

This one holds three stories; The Yellow Wallpaper (5*), The Rocking-Chair (5*) and Old Water (4*).

The Yellow-Wallpaper is a feminist story of imprisonment and madness which is disturbing, and horrifying. The repetitive nature of the protagonist's constant observing of the 'almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow', a wallpaper so hideous 'one of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin' takes the reader deeper and deeper into the protagonist's ever increasing madness. As a reader you can understand the dislike of the wallpaper just as much as the protagonist but as the constant observing increases you find yourself thoroughly engrossed and obsessing over the details.

The Rocking-Chair is a thoroughly haunting tale which starts off with two young newspaper men who are filled with curiosity when they observe a golden haired girl sat by an open window in a rocking chair. Coincidentally this house is a lodgings which they are actually in search of so, of course they take up rooms there. The rocking chair itself is a violent, monstrous thing in terms of design but also, at times it is said to 'walk' to convenient places where it then inflicts injuries. The recurrent sightings of the golden haired girl over a short time creates a rift between the two men. Jealousy starts to thrive when one of the men is seen to have been in apparent constant communication with the female presence despite him having no recollection.

Old Water is about Mr Pendexter; a poet who over a short period of time becomes infatuated with Mrs Osgood's daughter Ellen. Her mother hopes that she finds happiness with Mr. Pendexter. Ellen is athletic and very practical and finds Mr Pendexter to be quite the opposite which she constantly puts under scrutiny much to her Mother's dismay. He is far too whimsical and unrealistic to be taken seriously. Ellen has no real feelings that she wishes to reciprocate with the poet. Rejection is difficult to deal with but Mr Pendexter descends into a madness and a rage which almost ends in disastrous consequences for both Ellen and the poet.

Charlotte's writing is impeccable and makes all three of these short stories highly compelling.

Julie Boulanger says

Dire de ce texte (publié en 1892) qu'il fait le récit d'une dépression nerveuse, c'est omettre le principal: la lucidité implacable de l'auteure.

« John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage. »

Difficile de ne pas tomber complètement en admiration devant ce lyrisme tragicomique mené vers la perfection.

Une des descriptions centrales du récit rivalise - surpassé peut-être même - la célèbre description de la pension Vauquer par Balzac:

« [...] I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in the following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide - plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long. »

Comment, par ailleurs, ne pas désespérer quand on se rappelle que pendant ce temps se publiaient dans la littérature québécoise des œuvres comme *Angéline de Montbrun* (1882)?

Tony says

One of the most unsettling stories I've read in a while.

Has a lot to say about mental health and how women's mental health is ignored by men and the institutions they dominate but does so subtly in a lean, creepy short story.

Cate says

Charlotte and I would have gotten along well, I think.

