

**Thesis Defense**

***The Yellow Wallpaper***

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Dedication

To the ones held captive by their own mind, struggling to find a voice in the midst of the roaring babel and hidden faces, this thesis and its artifact is for you.

### Acknowledgments

I am truly grateful for those who have provided insight into my writing, including Professor Nelson, Professor Dodson, Joey, and my mom. You have made me a better storyteller.

Abstract

The purpose of *The Yellow Wallpaper* screenplay is to shed light on the mental health issues many in our society face, namely schizophrenia and similar mental disorders. It will also address the reality of an unhealthy marital relationship. The overarching message of the screenplay is one of hope for those struggling with mental illness and for others who seek to care for these people.

## Artist Statement

**Impetus/Background**

“It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer” (Perkins-Gilman, 1). I first read *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins-Gilman in a Western Literature class while earning my B.A. Both the subject matter and style of writing intrigued me. Gilman tells the tale of a young married woman named Jane whose mental health is rapidly declining. While John, her husband and physician, tries to prescribe medication and a “rest cure,” Jane cannot seem to rid herself of this growing obsession with the yellow wallpaper in their bedroom. She even believes that there is a woman trapped behind the wallpaper trying to break free, which in many ways is similar to her own situation. The narrative appealed to my visual acuity, and after multiple readings, I decided that this short story would be striking to witness on screen. Thus, I resolved to adapt *The Yellow Wallpaper* into a screenplay.

*The Yellow Wallpaper* is somewhat autobiographical, as Gilman deeply struggled with postpartum psychosis after giving birth to her only child. The narrative is written in first person and supposedly describes some of the things Gilman endured, particularly in her patriarchal marriage. Published in 1892, “*The Yellow Wallpaper* explores the negative attitude towards women and the stigma surrounding mental health.” Further, Gilman designed the story to be “an early example of an empowered female voice that gives testimony to the horrors of the female condition” (Owl Eyes).

I began the writing process by analyzing the two main characters—Jane and John. After studying the husband and wife on their own terms, followed by the messiness of their

relationship with one another, I crafted an outline of the general story with specific plot points, paying careful attention to character arcs. Next, I began writing the script.

### **Vision for Screenplay**

Though Gilman's primary purpose for this story was to show an unhealthy, dictator-like marriage which stirred many feminists at the time to stand for female empowerment and women's rights, I decided pivot the focus regarding this screenplay, as I believe there are enough films exploring that idea. While staying true to the original story, I chose to center my attention not on the issue of female equality and empowerment but on mental health. In my research on mental illness, I was saddened to learn that "one in five U. S. adults experience mental illness each year." Related to this, "suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-34" (Nami). Because mental health is a growing concern that has not been addressed at length in the entertainment industry, I believe that now would be a wonderful opportunity to share this story with the film community.

Regardless of her marital situation or status as a woman, Jane suffers from severe mental complications: visual and auditory hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, etc. After researching the symptoms attributed to Jane in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, I found a tie between postpartum psychosis—what plagued Gilman—and schizophrenia, which is what Jane appears to suffer from. People who have previously been diagnosed with schizophrenia are more at risk for developing postpartum psychosis after giving birth (NHS). Schizophrenia is a mental disorder which impairs the way that people interpret reality. "Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning and can be disabling" (Mayo Clinic). It has the capability to disturb all



areas of a person's life, "including personal, family, social, educational, and occupational functioning." According to the World Health Organization, "Schizophrenia affects approximately 24 million people or 1 in 300 people worldwide" (WHO).

In the 1960s, many of the mental institutions in the United States were shut down. This de-institutionalization of mentally ill patients led to an increased number of homeless people who were left with an untreated mental disability (CalMatters). In my current work environment, I have personally witnessed many homeless who exhibit schizophrenic behaviors and other mental irregularities. One of the main reasons I chose to use this story involving mental illness for my term screenplay is because I do not believe schizophrenia is taken seriously enough in our society. Instead, the topic is 'taboo' and the people who suffer are often left untreated and unaided. They are ignored.

At the beginning of the screenplay, John's relationship with Jane is strained. It is clear that he wants to spend as little time with his wife as possible, partly because she embarrasses him. Jane struggles with various delusions and superstitions that John does not understand. He thinks she is making up stories because of her wild imagination, like a young schoolgirl. Because these fantasies do not subside and begin poisoning their social life, he rips her out of society and places her in a secluded home. While he does believe that rest will help calm her nervous disposition, he also just wants her "out of sight, out of mind."

Jane, on the other hand, continually worsens as her hallucinations become more and more dangerous and frightening. While she pleads with John to stay with her, as she finds comfort

when he is present, John refuses to take her illness seriously until he nearly loses her. At the very end, John realizes that his wife is truly suffering, and his attitude completely changes towards her. He begins taking the necessary steps to help her heal.

While Gilman wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper* in first person, allowing her primarily female audience to relate with the protagonist, I desire for my audience to see themselves in John. As it was difficult for him to understand his wife's struggles, it is difficult for the "normal" person to grasp the toll that a mental illness like schizophrenia can take on someone. What seems silly to us is catastrophic to them, as it affects every part of their lives. Like John, the tendency is to turn the other way. My goal, through John, is to show my audience that they need to step in and fight for these people, to love them and care for them.

This story is not just a showcase for mental illness, but it also spotlights a broken marriage. John struggles to serve Jane through her illness. She is not only his patient but his wife. *The Yellow Wallpaper* shows what it looks like when there is not a mutual level of respect and patience. Just when things have taken a turn for the better, near the end of the second act, Jane has an ultimate breakdown, where she sets the nursery on fire. After putting out the flames, John is overwhelmed with fury and leaves Jane for several days. The thin thread of their relationship finally broken, Jane is sent further down her delusional spiral with no one left to help her. Many couples have been in a similar situation, where "enough is enough," and one party decides to leave. This is not healthy for either husband or wife, and this is witnessed in Jane's decline and John's oblivion. The screenplay not only calls attention to this but asks its audience to ponder: What if he had listened to her when she expressed her struggles? What might have been different?

## Literary Context

A 2019 research study done by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention showed that “out of 4,502 characters in 100 top films from 2019, 1.5% experience a mental health condition,” and most of those characters were male. Many of these characters suffered some type of addiction, while only 18 films presented a character with a mood disorder (Shetty). These numbers indicate that mental disorders such as schizophrenia have potential to be shared anew. The subject has not been displayed ad nauseum, which allows for more audience intrigue.

The genre of *The Yellow Wallpaper* as a movie falls between psychological thriller and psychological horror. It deals with the psychology of the protagonist, yet there are aspects of unnatural and frightening themes, namely the ‘woman’ behind the wallpaper, which tilts the film into the horror realm. “The number of horror movies made each year has been growing steadily, but in the past two decades or so, there’s been a notable shift,” remarked Laura Rutkowski, writer for Virgin Media. Rutkowski believes that we are currently in a “golden age” of horror, as nearly 10% of all feature films fall within the genre (Rutkowski). As the genre grows, so will its audience. “Horror will always be extremely popular with audiences, and one of the most commercially successful and lucrative genres in cinema...” (Rutkowski).

## Significance as a Christian Scholar

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8). This is the mindset I have

when I approach any writing project, especially screenplays. Being a visual learner, I know that what I see has the capability to influence on what I think about.

Many Christians believe that “horror films” in general should not be viewed. After all, horror films are movies that focus on the dark and woeful aspects of life. “They deal with our most primal nature and its fears: our nightmares, our vulnerability, our alienation, our revulsions, our terror of the unknown, our fear of death and dismemberment, loss of identity, or fear of sexuality” (Dirks).

While I agree that most horror films do not leave their audience in a necessarily healthy or positive mindset after viewing, I do see a place for certain darker films like *The Yellow Wallpaper* in a Christian’s movie-watching experience. First, this screenplay is not meant to be scary for the sake of sending my audience home fearing that someone lives in their walls. Instead, I am trying to portray the reality of a woman suffering from a schizophrenia. For a good part of the film, the audience will question whether or not Jane is actually seeing these things or just hallucinating. This may scare viewers, as some of Jane’s delusions will be grotesque and frightening. I write these because I wish to stay true to the original text, and I want the audience to share in Jane’s experience as she, at first, is shocked and terrified by what she witnesses.

Second, because this film will hopefully bring awareness to mental health, I want to encourage Christians not to turn the other way but step up and “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Viewers will see what turning the other way and ignoring the issue looks like, as John does for most of the film. This is not helpful to his wife nor their relationship.

Third, although Gilman most likely intended to rouse the sympathy of her female audience with the condescending and insensitive husband figure in her short story, my desire for

the screenplay is for the audience to walk away with the hope of redemption. Hope for Jane, that once she is finally heard, perhaps she can begin to heal. Hope for John, because he has learned to love his wife, even through the worst of times. Hope for their marriage and family, because all of us are flawed but never beyond hope.

## Critical Paper

***The Yellow Wallpaper Summary***

*The Yellow Wallpaper* screenplay tells the story of a young woman named Jane who battles mental health issues, namely schizophrenia. Jane is married to a physician John, and the two have a toddler son called 'Little John.' Having secured a private house in the woods and outside of society for his wife to rest and heal from what he deems to be a nervous disposition, John moves the family into seclusion for the summer.

As Jane becomes more accustomed to the creepy old house, she begins seeing and hearing ghostly things that send her into a panic. For example, behind the ugly yellow wallpaper which lines the couple's bedroom walls, Jane believes there to be a woman trying to claw her way into the bedroom, as she hears the woman scratching the paper at night. This sends Jane into a panic, and her mental condition rapidly declines as she is terrified of the bedroom. Jane confides her visions and fears to John, but he does not believe her. He concludes that she is either dreaming or creating silly fancies that are contributing to her already nervous disposition. When John won't listen and dismisses her anguish, Jane begins having flashbacks of the events that led him to move her to the summer house, which propels her into a deeper state of delirium. Jane soon begins to identify herself as the fictitious woman trapped behind the wallpaper, whom Jane fully believes is real.

After promptings from the nursemaid Mary that he take time off work, John agrees to stay home with his wife. This creates a significant change in Jane's disposition as she spends one-on-one time with her husband. She brims with joy, with a brighter outlook on her time at the

summer house, and Jane no longer sees the scary woman behind the wallpaper. Everything reverts to as they were when the young couple was first married.

One morning Jane awakens to the smell of a severe odor. The young couple and Mary try to locate the smell, but neither John nor Mary can detect anything out of the ordinary. Jane is plagued by the terrible aroma for days, nearly to the point of sickness. Though John tries to comfort her, he struggles to because he cannot smell the odor. Unable to retreat outside because of the torrential downpour, Jane writes in her diary about her lack of sleep because of the smell. She starts to believe that she is going mad, that the house is trying to suffocate her.

Unable to break free from the odor, Jane wakes up in the middle of the night and traces the scent to Little John's nursery. Jane decides that the only way to rid the house of the smell is to burn it out. After lighting several matches and dropping each onto the rug, Jane kindles a small fire. The smoke rouses John and he notices that Jane has left the bedroom. He sprints downstairs and notices that fire is spreading around the nursery. Little John wails in fright as Jane simply stands in the middle of the room, as if lost in a trance. Frantically, John quenches the fire and saves Jane and Little John.

All of the resentment, scars, and confusion that had been mended over the last several days shatter into a million pieces. John is furious with his wife and condemns her for putting herself and the baby in danger. He storms out, ordering Mary to keep an eye on Jane and lock down the house. John's sudden rage and absence sends Jane headlong into a state of mania. She becomes increasingly obsessed with the woman behind the wallpaper and her hallucinations continue with more regularity. Jane begins to physically resemble the woman she has witnessed

behind the wallpaper, creeping around the house, disheveled and unlike the woman she was at the start of the film.

Finally returning home, John is met by a petrified Mary, who warns him of Jane's behavior and shows him the material in Jane's diary. This gives him a glimpse into his wife's schizophrenic episodes. John realizes how serious her condition is, and he runs up to her bedroom door, which is locked. Jane, now entirely wrapped in her own thoughts, begins peeling back the wallpaper, trying to help the woman break free from her prison. She has officially lost all concept of reality. Jane strips the wallpaper and starts dancing and twirling about the room. She gazes outside where she witnesses multitudes of women hunched over, crawling across the property.

John is finally able to open the door, and at last, he sees what his wife has become. She is hideously contorted, creeping around the room, much like the woman behind the wallpaper, which Jane has consistently told him about, though he would not listen. John realizes that Jane cannot rid herself of this illness alone. He needs to be there for her to help her through it. He promises to never leave her, and the family departs from the summer house.

### **The Horror Genre**

“Horror is a genre of film and television whose purpose is to create feelings of fear, dread, disgust, and terror in the audience,” notes Jason Hellerman in his article *Defining the Horror Genre in Movies and TV* (Hellerman). The horror genre dates back all the way to 1896 with *Le Manoir du Diable*, created by French filmmaker Georges Méliès (Ferro). This film seems childish and downright silly compared to how far we have come digitally, not to mention what filmmakers are willing to do to scare audiences. Horror is now one of the most popular film



genres, and with directors like Jordan Peele and Robert Eggers who are adding their own artistic perspectives and twists on the genre, horror movies are gaining an even more widespread audience.

There are certain components that audience members have come to expect of horror films. These include jump scares, plot twists, a dark/dystopian tone, and elements such as “ghosts, extraterrestrials, vampires, werewolves, demons...gore, torture...monsters,” etc. according to Hellerman. Some of the elements of horror found in *The Yellow Wallpaper* include a dark overtone, jump-scares, Jane’s descent into madness, and the “woman in the wallpaper,” who is portrayed as a spindly, monster-like female figure.

Horror is full of subgenres, as different creatures or elements can be paired with a wide variety of settings and situations. There are four overarching areas of horror. These are monster-creatures, killers, paranormal activity, and psychological conditions. In the case of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, this script would fall under the psychological horror, as it deals with elements of phobia, madness, and paranoia (Hellerman).

One of the primary purposes of the psychological horror genre is to “tackle social problems and societal negligence. Psychological scary movies can be deep, they can be profound, and they have a lot more to say” (Hellerman). Some horror films that have attempted to accomplish this are *Get Out*, which confronts racism, and *Unsane*, which spotlights the alleged greediness of medical companies (Hellerman). The purpose of *The Yellow Wallpaper* is not simply to frighten my audience, but to bring awareness to some of the horrors endured by those who struggle with mental illness and prompt them to sympathize with these people.

## Christian Themes

While *The Yellow Wallpaper* will not be a “Christian movie,” like *War Room* or *Courageous*, I am writing it from a Christian worldview. Thus, it will contain Christian motifs. What makes a motif *Christian*? Just as Christians are supposed to imitate Christ, a Christian motif is a topic that mirrors a trait of Christ, such as listed those listed in Galatians 5:22—“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”—and others found throughout Scripture (BibleGateway). The Christian motifs in my screenplay include loving one’s neighbor, even those who suffer from mental disorders and other things we do not fully understand, as well as what a selfish, unhealthy relationship/marriage looks like.

This is not the first time Christian values have appeared in horror films. For example, in the recent *Quiet Place* movies, the importance of family and sacrifice were heavy themes whose effects rippled throughout both the first and second film. Lee, the father in *A Quiet Place Part I*, does everything in his power to keep his family safe, going so far as to sacrifice himself in order to protect his children. In *A Quiet Place Part II*, Evelyn and her two oldest children guard each other and their baby brother from the aliens which seek to kill them. Life is viewed as sacred and something that should be fought for, even when there does not always seem to be a light at the end of the tunnel.

Another horror film with evident Christian motifs is *The Village*, directed by M. Knight Shyamalan. *The Village* shares the story of an Amish-like community that lives apart from the outside world in the woods. It is believed that the perimeter of the village is haunted by dangerous creatures, and as long as the townspeople stay in their community, they will remain unharmed.

Ivy, the main character, becomes engaged to a man named Lucius. Because he is jealous of her relationship with Lucius, her mentally unstable brother stabs Lucius multiple times. As Lucius lies on his deathbed, fighting for life, Ivy realizes that in order to save him, she must leave the community to find “The Town”—the outside world—and retrieve the medicine her fiancé desperately needs to survive.

Ivy is blind. The journey would have been much easier for anyone else in the village, yet she is the only one to summon enough courage to head into the forest. Despite her disability and fear of monsters haunting the woods, she embarks on the journey because of the selfless love she has for her fiancé.

The overarching theme throughout the entire movie is “protecting innocence.” The audience slowly discovers that the town council has been lying to its people for years, pretending that there are monsters in the surrounding forest to keep the townspeople from leaving and tighten their control. They claim to do this in order to “protect innocence.” Cut off from the outside world, the villagers find themselves unable to get what they desperately need: medicine to save a life. While the councilmen believe that they are protecting the people, they are actually stifling the people who have become unable to make their own decisions.

In many ways, it seems as though some of our Christian circles have become like *The Village*, as we isolate ourselves from the unbelieving "outside world" in an attempt to “protect innocence.” Unlike *The Village*, however, Christians have the life-giving Medicine within our community: the gospel of Jesus Christ. Not only are we called to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31), but we are also called to GO (Matthew 28:19). Ivy portrays this idea as she fights her way through the forest and into the outside world.

The first major Christian theme in *The Yellow Wallpaper* is loving one's neighbor. For most of the film, John ignores Jane's serious condition, partially because he does not understand it. He assumes that she is creating foolish fantasies as a young child would. He believes her to be superstitious and out of touch with reality. Blaming her nervous disposition on these things, John refuses to see that what plagues Jane is a serious mental condition. Instead of coming alongside her from the start and seeking to understand what is going on so that he can figure out a way to help her, John leaves her in the summer house and expects her to work out her "problem" on her own.

Many instances in Scripture call us to love those around us. When Jesus is asked what the greatest commandment is in Matthew 22, He replies: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (BibleGateway, Matthew 22:37-39). This command to "love your neighbor" is found in many other instances in Scripture, such as Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22, Romans 13, James 2, John 15, and Galatians 5.

What does loving one's neighbor look like? One of the most articulate examples of this is found in Luke 10, in which Jesus shares the parable of the Good Samaritan:

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ (BibleGateway, Luke 10:30-37).

In much of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, John is portrayed as being unsympathetic towards his wife. For a brief part of Act II, John is persuaded by the nursemaid to spend some time at the summerhouse with Jane. During this phase, Jane’s condition improves. Part of the healing process for someone with schizophrenia is having someone to listen to them and simply being present with them. Staying connected and offering emotional support builds a foundation of trust and provides an avenue to encourage patients to take their medication (Healthline). Because John is present with his wife and becomes a support for her—listening to her reading poetry, taking walks, talking about life, enjoying picnics on the lawn—she is able to feel safe, supported, and loved.

Everything comes crashing down, however, when Jane puts herself and her son in danger by setting the nursery on fire, which leads to the second major theme in *The Yellow Wallpaper*: an unhealthy marriage. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 gives us a biblical definition of love: “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with

the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (BibleGateway). At the start of the film, John is not patient with his wife. He comes across as arrogant, a selfish husband who is always insisting on his own way.

John is embarrassed of his wife. Through periodic flashbacks, the audience learns that that is the primary reason behind their summer move. Instead of treating Jane like she is part of himself—“Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself”—John tries to separate himself from her in an effort to retain societal respect (BibleGateway, Ephesians 5:28).

His lack of selfless love and evident embarrassment of Jane only leads her into more distress. When John leaves for a prolonged period of time, Jane’s schizophrenic episodes become worse, and she is lost in her own world. She begins to think that *she* is the woman behind the wallpaper, trying to break free from the people that have locked her away. Upon John’s return, he realizes the extent of what is happening to his wife, and he begins to understand that what she needed from the beginning was recognition, a listening ear, and, above all, agape (selfless) love.

### **The Overarching Message**

The overarching message that I aspire to showcase in this screenplay is one of hope. Though all of us are flawed, we are never beyond hope. I desire for audience members to walk away with the hope of redemption, as it is found in both of my characters. There is hope for Jane, that once she is finally heard, perhaps she can begin to heal. As the family rides away from the summer house in the carriage, Jane looks out the window to see the woman behind the wallpaper peering at her from the forest. Instead of allowing herself to become entranced by the woman

and fall into another hallucinogenic episode, Jane closes her eyes. Now that John believes her, she knows she can start to move past her fears.

There is hope for John, because he has learned to love his wife, even through the worst of times. I desire for audience members to see some of their own faults in John. In some ways, John is a portrayal of how many in our society treat those with mental health issues: turning the other way, either out of ignorance or embarrassment. John's last words to Jane in the film are: "I'm here, Jane. I'm not going to leave you anymore." John has recognized his faults and is committed to supporting his wife. He takes the first steps in restoring their marriage relationship and his wife's mental health. It is never too late to take a stand for those who do not have a voice. "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" (BibleGateway, Proverbs 31:8).

### **Why *The Yellow Wallpaper* Is Important**

What is a story? "A story or narrative is a connected series of events told through words (written or spoken), imagery (still and moving), body language, performance, music, or any other form of communication" (Literary Terms).

God is the ultimate Creator of stories, as He is the Author of creation. The Bible is the grand story of redemption in Christ, connected through a myriad of stories of multiple genres, all pointing to their Author. Every story man creates, whether through book or film, can be ultimately tied to *The Story*, that is, the story of the Bible. For example, I do not believe I am being heretical in saying that every film, from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* to *A Quiet Place* to *Schindler's List*, has the ability to emulate stories found in the Bible. According to G. K. Chesterton,

The story of a Christ is very common in legend and literature. So is the story of two lovers parted by Fate. So is the story of two friends killing each other for a woman. But will it seriously be maintained that, because these two stories are common as legends, therefore, no two friends were ever separated by love or no two lovers by circumstances? It is tolerably plain, surely, that these two stories are common because the situation is an intensely probably and human one, because our nature is so built as to make them almost inevitable (Cothran, 33).

Perhaps this is why, as we sit in the theater, we clench our fists as the bad guy prevails and rejoice when the good guy ultimately triumphs. This is why movies that showcase redemption are consistently winning at the box office. It is engraved in us to hope for these things.

If there was a creature destined to find his ultimate satisfaction in the story of One, born of a virgin, Who would come back from the dead, would we not expect that that creature would yearn for the thing for which he was built—for redemption and fulfillment—and shape this longing into story? If so, then what sense does it make to use these stories as evidence against the truth of such events (Cothran, 33).

That is why it is important for *The Yellow Wallpaper* to showcase the message of hope. We were created to hope, even for things we do not yet fully comprehend; “For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (BibleGateway, Romans 8:24-25). I hope this film challenges its audience.



## Description of Screenplay Sections

**Act I**

The first image viewers see on screen will be a craggy wall laden with faded yellow wallpaper. The wallpaper is ancient, with spots of orange decay and bronze mold. The pattern is ambiguous and so distorted in places that we cannot make out what it *should* look like. Flowers? Lines? Faces? Whatever it is, it feels repellant and unclean.

Viewers will meet the family as they arrive at the summer house. Jane will have an outburst at dinner, showing her strained relationship with John. The first major turning point, or the event that launches the story forward, happens one night when Jane awakens to see a woman behind the wallpaper, trying to break free. This sends Jane into a spiral of terror, self-doubt, and confusion.

**Act II**

John takes off work to spend time with his wife, which helps her improve. She no longer sits and stares at the wallpaper as she keeps away from the room. Her mood shifts from depressed melancholy to cerebral happiness. Her relationship with John begins to heal...until a sinister smell takes over the house and only Jane can smell it.

One night, Jane sets the nursery on fire, which breaks into the midpoint climax. John is furious and leave the house. Jane is left to her own schizophrenic episodes, which become drastically worse because of John's absence. The woman behind the wallpaper grows into Jane's obsession.

**Act III**

When John finally returns home, he realizes how bad his wife's mental health is as she has locked herself in the bedroom and is tearing the wallpaper from the walls. When he is able to get into the room, he finds what his wife has become in his absence—the scared, tormented woman behind the wallpaper. John comforts his wife and promises never to leave her. The family leave the summer house.

## Annotated Bibliography

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