

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

"The Yellow Wallpaper" | Background

Directions: The best way to remember authors is to act as though they are people that you know in real life. Try to remember the basics, but also random facts about each author. In the long run, it is the random things that we retain. This is an autobiographical overview of Charlotte Perkins Gilman.



Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

This is a story about a feminist, a sociologist, a writer, and a lecturer in a time frame when women were suppressed from many stances allotting power and public voice. Charlotte was born in Connecticut to Mary and Frederic Perkins. She was the eldest, followed by a brother. Her father abandoned the family early on. Therefore, she was raised by a collection of aunts (one of which was the writer, Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Needless to say, from a young age, Charlotte observed the independence that women in her family were capable of. Her mother was unaffectionate and discouraged reading to shield her children from the powerful emotions experienced through reading... Yet, we can probably see where this is going. Tell someone they cannot have something and they want it even more. Charlotte's father, later in life, made contact with Charlotte, giving her a list of books he felt she must read. Plot summary so far: young girl abandoned by father, unaffectionate mother, independent (outspoken) aunts, and a girl with a love of reading... Do you see where this is going?

Charlotte befriended mostly males growing up. She referred to herself as a tomboy by nature. She was naturally intelligent, but an all around subpar student. She moved through seven different public schools before fifteen, when she stopped studying. When she was eighteen, she returned to school on some money that her still absent father provided. She became an artist for a time being.

This guy named Charles liked her when she was 24. She turned him down the first time due to a gut feeling, but caved the second time. They had a daughter together. After the birth, she experienced post-partum depression. Side Note: Doctors did not know about post-partum depression at that time. Ahead of her time in many ways, Charlotte divorced Charles four years after being married. Charlotte left the East Coast and headed to California with her daughter. She became an active participant in Women's Rights. Fun Fact: She was also a saleswoman who sold bars of soap. It was during this time in her life that she wrote "The Yellow Wallpaper."

Her ex-husband married one of her good friends. So, Charlotte sent her daughter to live with her ex-husband and good friend who married him. Logical, right? Then, after her mother's death, Charlotte returned to the East Coast. She became romantically involved with her first cousin, Houghton Gilman, who was a Wall Street attorney. They lived together for a while in New York. Then, for a while, they lived in Connecticut... But, he died from unexpected cerebral hemorrhages. So, her daughter had since moved back to California. She went back to Cali. She ended up getting breast cancer. Instead of suffering, she decided to commit suicide (via drug overdose). Thus concludes one story of Charlotte Perkins Gilman. However, her works live on across the world today.