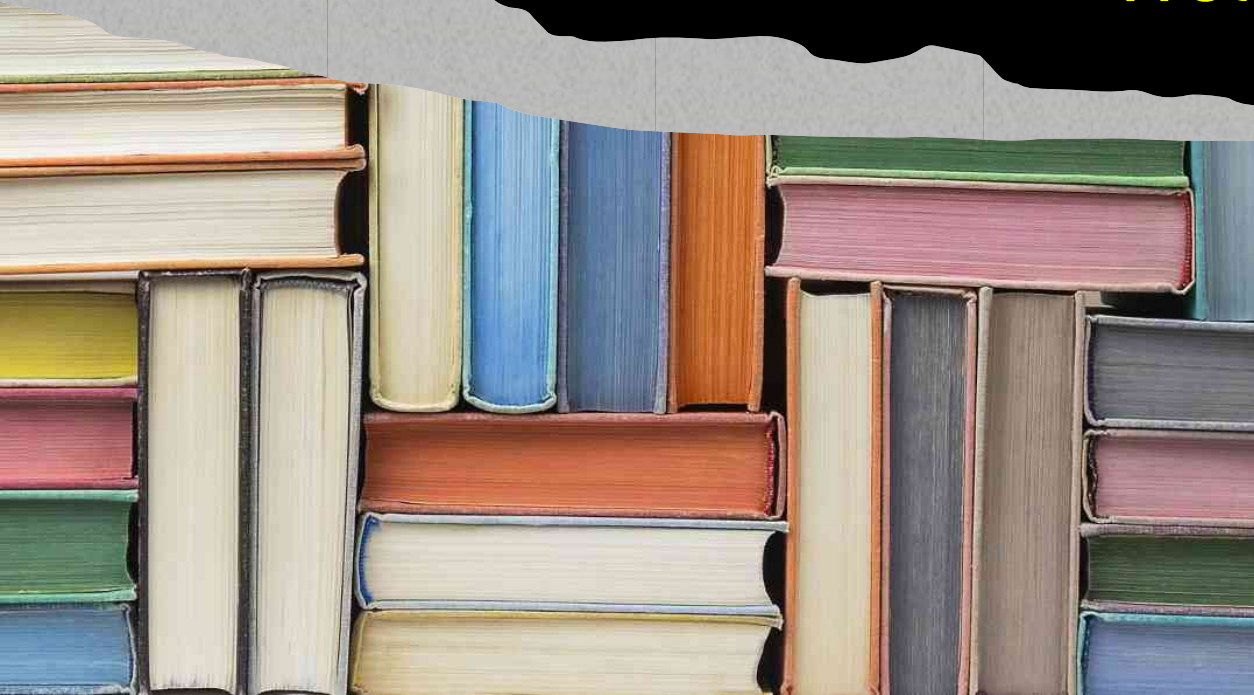


# On Page and Screen: Adaptations of Literature in Recent Film

Session 3: Nightbitch

Welcome



# Epigraph: Here Be Monsters

A myth is a kind of story told in public, which people pass on to one another. Myths wear an air of ancient wisdom, but that is part of their seductive charm. ... Myths offer a lens which can be used to see human identity in its social and cultural context - they can lock us up in stock reactions, bigotry and fear, but they are not immutable, and by unpicking them, the stories can lead to others. Managing monsters means preventing them from managing us. Myths convey values and expectations which are always evolving, always in the process of being formed, but - and this is fortunate - never set so hard they cannot be changed again ... .

**Marina Warner, 'Monstrous Mothers' (Reith Lectures: Managing Monsters, 1994)**

# Some topics we might discuss

Book and film:  
reactions

Part 1

Literary antecedents  
to *Nightbitch*

Part 2

Naming:  
becoming *Nightbitch*

Part 3

The split self

Part 4

Becoming animal:  
werewolves and  
were...huskies

Part 7

Being animal:  
hunting

Part 5

Wanda White

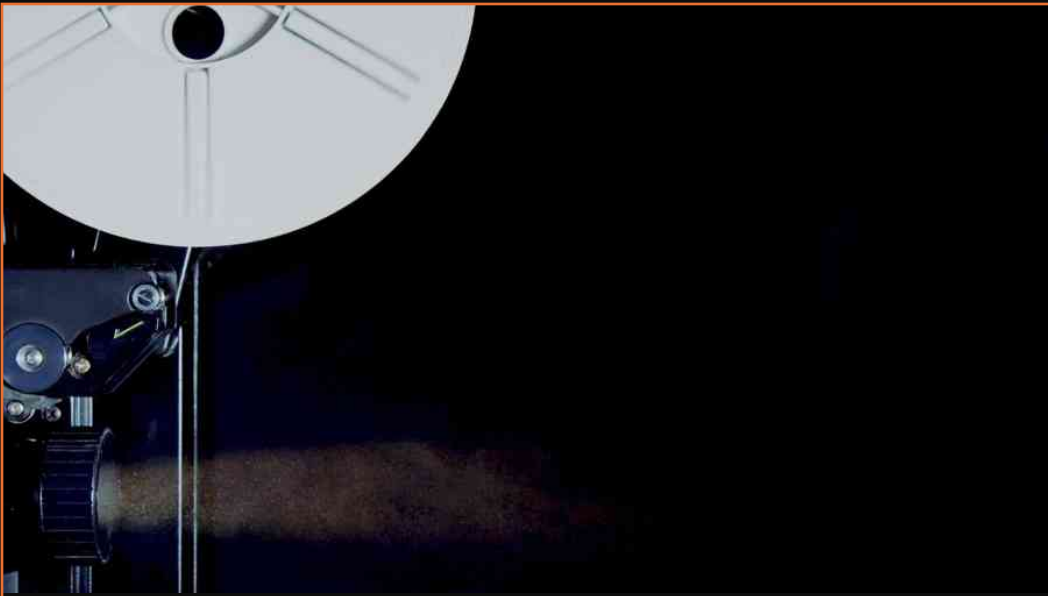
Part 6

Monsters and the  
monstrous

Part 8

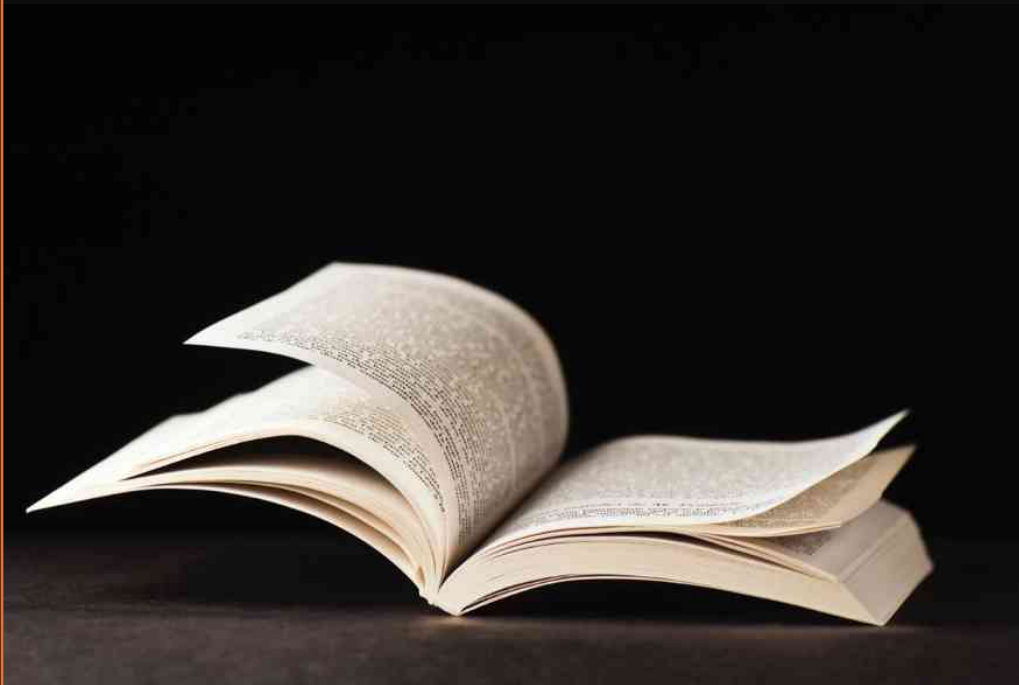
The endings

Part 9



# Book and film: reactions

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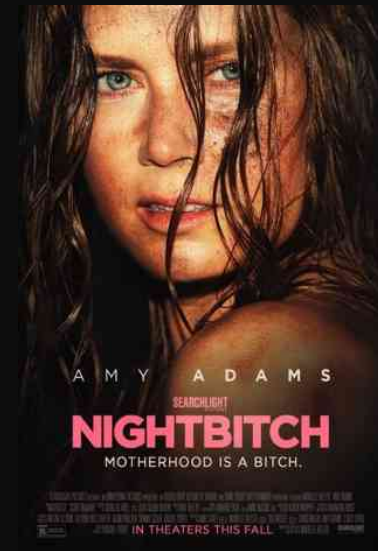
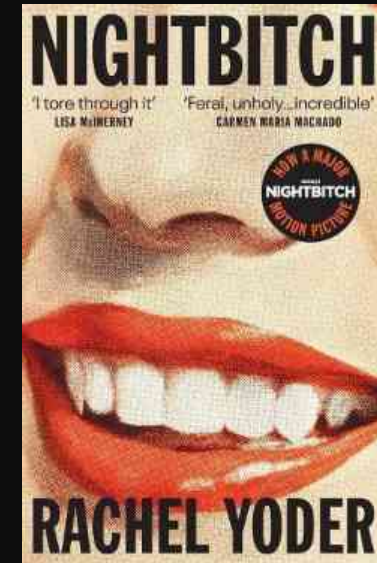


## Part 1



# What did you think of this week's book and film?

- What interested you about the book and/or film?
- What did the film do differently to the book?
- What is gained in the translation from book to film and what is lost?
- What, for you, were the main issues in the book/film?
- What do you think of the artistic choices made by Rachel Yoder and Marielle Heller?
- Were there any moments in book or film that struck you as particularly interesting?



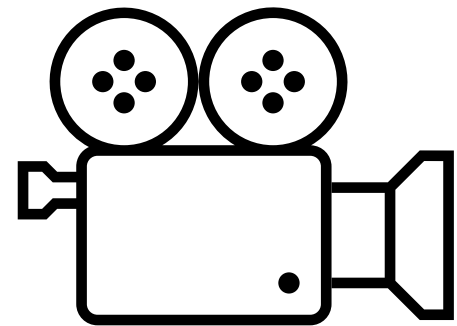
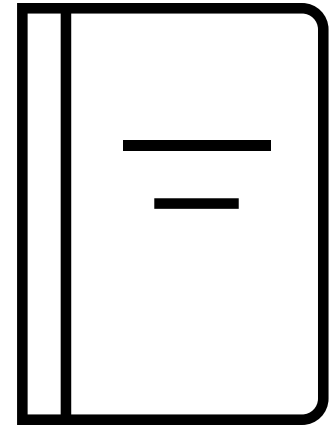


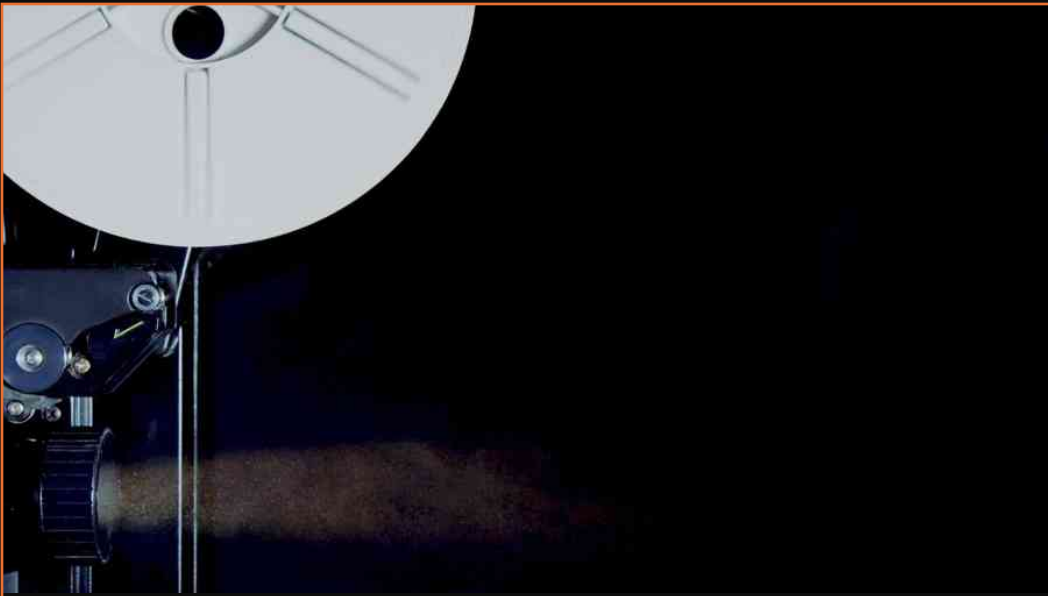
Does the 'mother'  
turn into a dog?

- What leads you to that answer?
- Is your answer the same for the book and the film?
- What are the consequences of thinking she does/doesn't for how we read (i.e. interpret) the book and film?
- Does it matter whether she does?

## A few of the differences between book and film

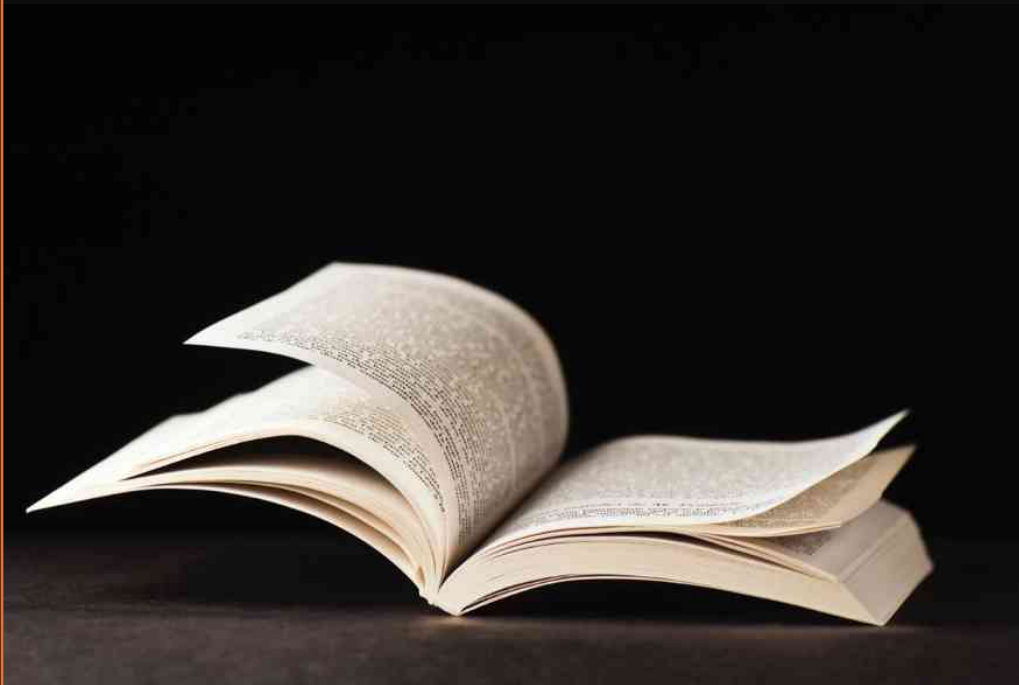
- The mother is a dog when she kills the cat in the film; in the book she's human
- Is the tone different between book and film? – e.g.
  - The comic tone seems lighter in the film.
  - The book is more openly disparaging of the art produced by the mother's professional acquaintances in the book (pp. 140-41)
- Various minor omissions in the film
  - E.g. Jen's pyramid selling scheme and marketing pitch (pp. 122-23) is absent from the film
- The ending:
  - Film: a comforting rumination on family and another
  - Book: Nightbitch's confrontational artistic performance becomes a phenomenon





# Literary antecedents to *Nightbitch*

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## Part 2



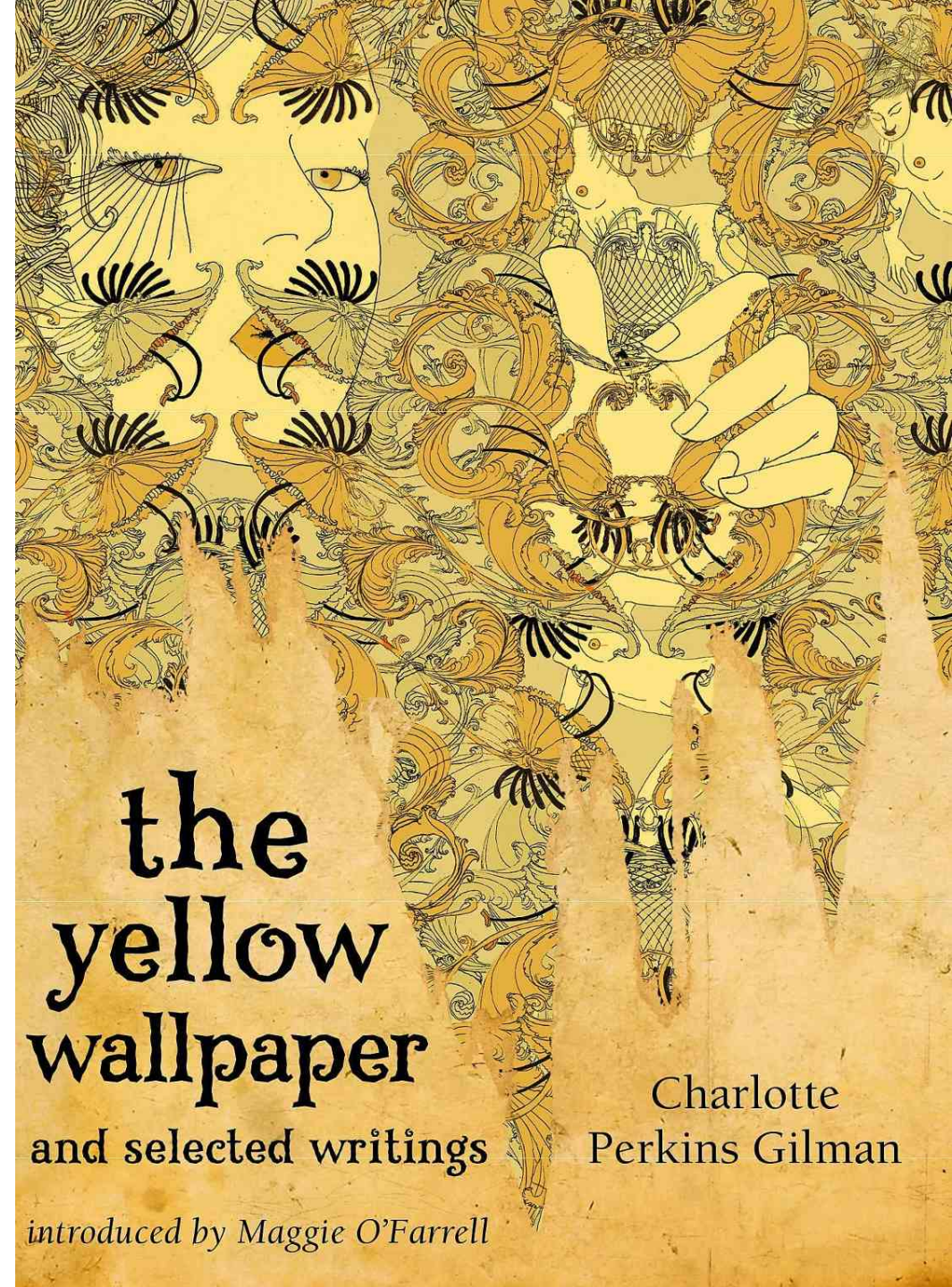
## Charlotte Perkins Gilman's interrogation of 'hysteria' in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'

Every night ... she stood at the mirror and pulled her lips back from her teeth, turned her head from side to side, then tilted her head from side to side, then tilted her head back and looked at her teeth from that bottom-up angle, searched the Internet on her phone for ... *humans with dog teeth* ... *witches* ... *real werewolves in history* ... *hysteria 19<sup>th</sup> century*, and then, since she wanted to, searched *rest cures* and *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and she reread *The Yellow Wallpaper*, which she had once read in college.

**Yoder, *Nightbitch*, p. 4**

The front pattern of the wallpaper [a 'florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus'] does move – and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it so. Sometimes I think there are many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

**Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892)**

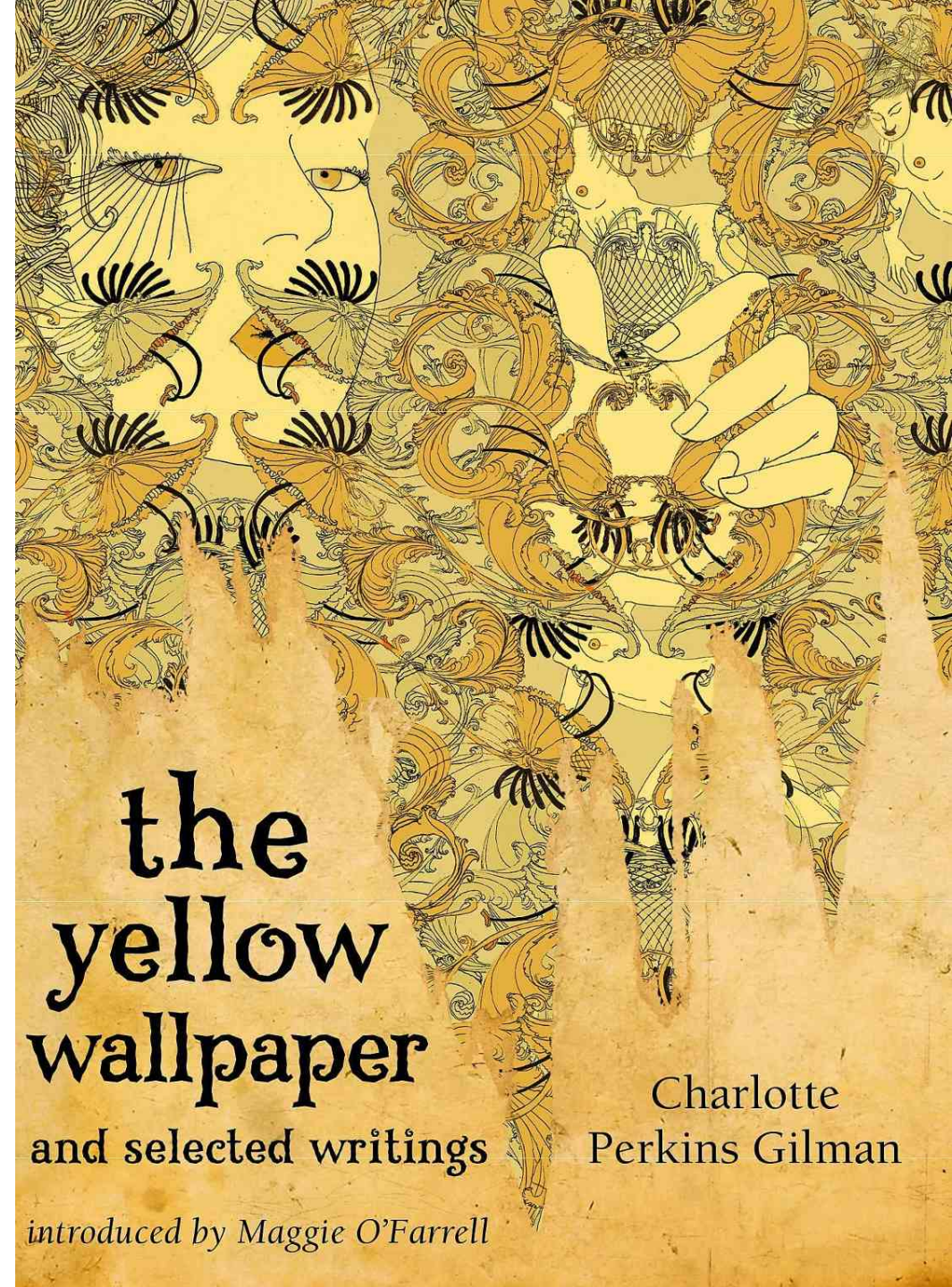




The mother's fears she'll experience the same fate as the protagonist of 'The Yellow Wallpaper'

No, certainly, she could in no way, not ever, reveal her transformation to the good man. Though he was a kind man, a reasonable man, she could not be sure of what he might say, what he might do, were she to show him the truest part of her true self. Would he force her to see a doctor or, worse, a psychiatrist? Would there be many orange bottles of prescription pills to dull her transformative jubilee or, worse, halt it altogether? Might he institutionalize her? Separate her from her child? Would she waste away in a bright white room, arms and legs tied to a chair, wearing a soft and downy robe, her eyes blankly staring out the window? Surely he would in no way be able to see how natural her transformation was, how healthy and restorative. Certainly he would not be able to see that their child was well cared for despite her canine propensities, despite their doggy games.

**Yoder, *Nightbitch*, p. 94**



## Virginia Woolf's exploration of restrictions on women's creativity in *A Room of One's Own*

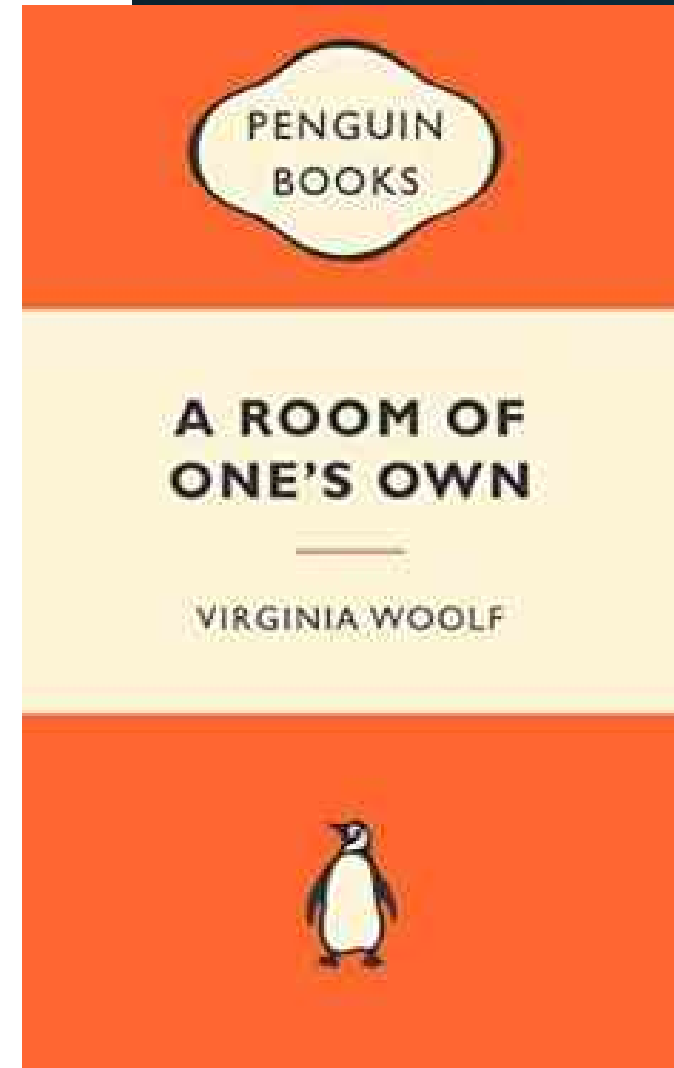
A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.

**Virginia Woolf, 'A Room of One's Own' (1929)**

Consider the guest room, which she now called her studio. The bed, unmade, with wrinkled covers that contained many books: the *Field Guide*, of course; a book on herb craft and the poison path; the book her grandmother had used to make her concoctions, but in English, found online at a rare-books site; a history of disruptive performance art; a book about textiles and costuming; an instructional seller's manual for herbs. ... On the walls: pictures of dancers contorted in the most wondrous of ways ... many pencil sketches that studied animals in motion – horse dog, cheetah, bear ... stills from extreme acts of art, including a woman giving birth in a storefront ... Closet door ajar, and, spilling from it spools of thread and beads and buttons and skeins of cloth. ...

She showed her son the closed, white door to the guest room and said seriously to him, Never go in here. You understand? This is where Mommy works ... .

**Yoder, *Nightbitch*, pp. 201-02**





## Revised fairytales and human-animal transformations in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*

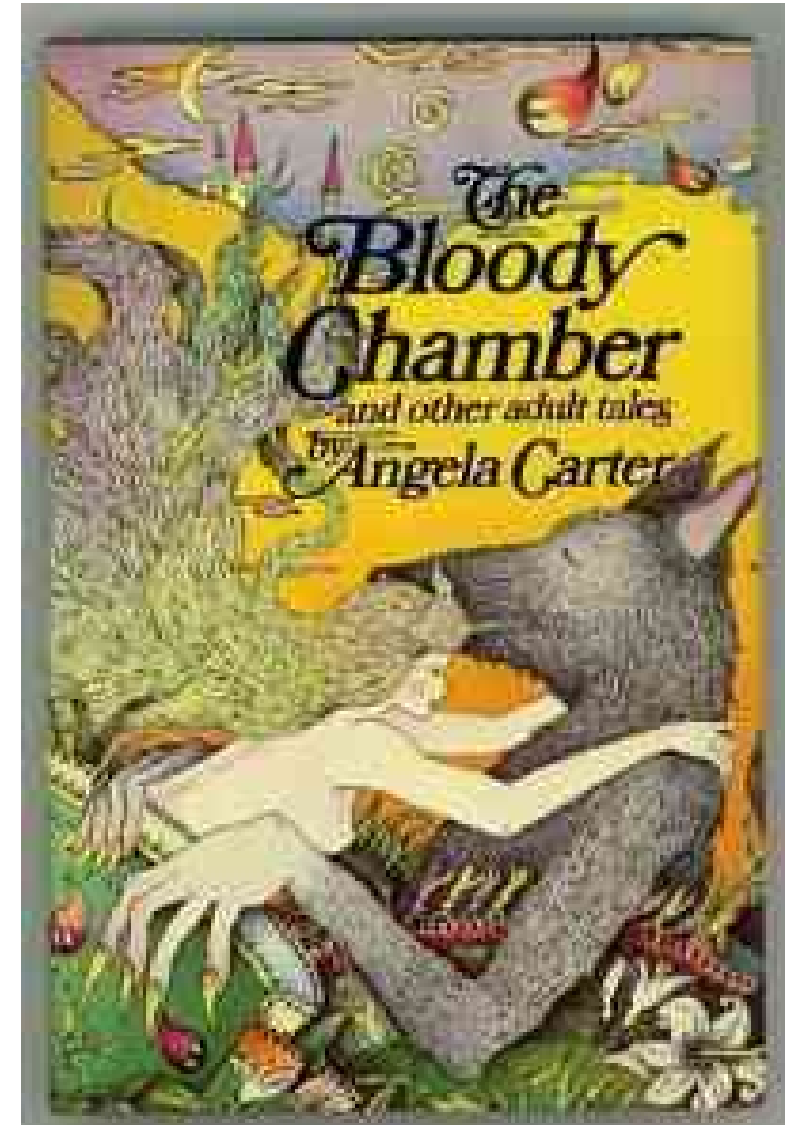
She found her grandmother was so sick she had taken to her bed and fallen into a fretful sleep, moaning and shaking so that the child guessed she had a fever. She felt the forehead, it burned. She shook out the cloth from her basket, to use it to make the old woman a cold compress, and the wolf's paw [which the girl had acquired defending herself from a wolf attack on the way to her grandmother] fell to the floor.

But it was no longer a wolf's paw. It was a hand, chopped off at the wrist, a hand toughened with work and freckled with old age. There was a wedding ring on the third finger and a wart on the index finger. By the wart, she knew it was her grandmother's hand.

**Angela Carter, 'The Werewolf,' in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979)**

Her eyes lit with fire, and she could feel the hair on her head growing, her mane expanding into a monstrous spectacle. The muscles in her haunches rolled. One thought came and then left as quickly: *you are an animal*. P. 74

**Yoder, *Nightbitch*, p. 74**

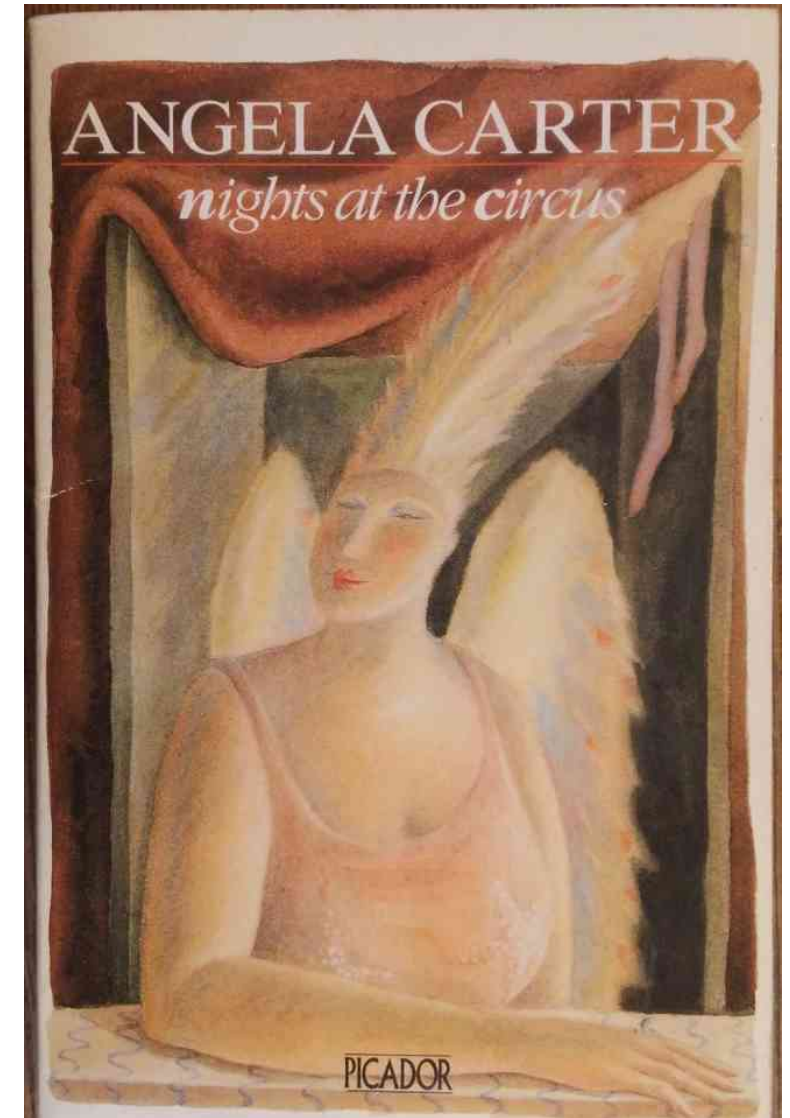


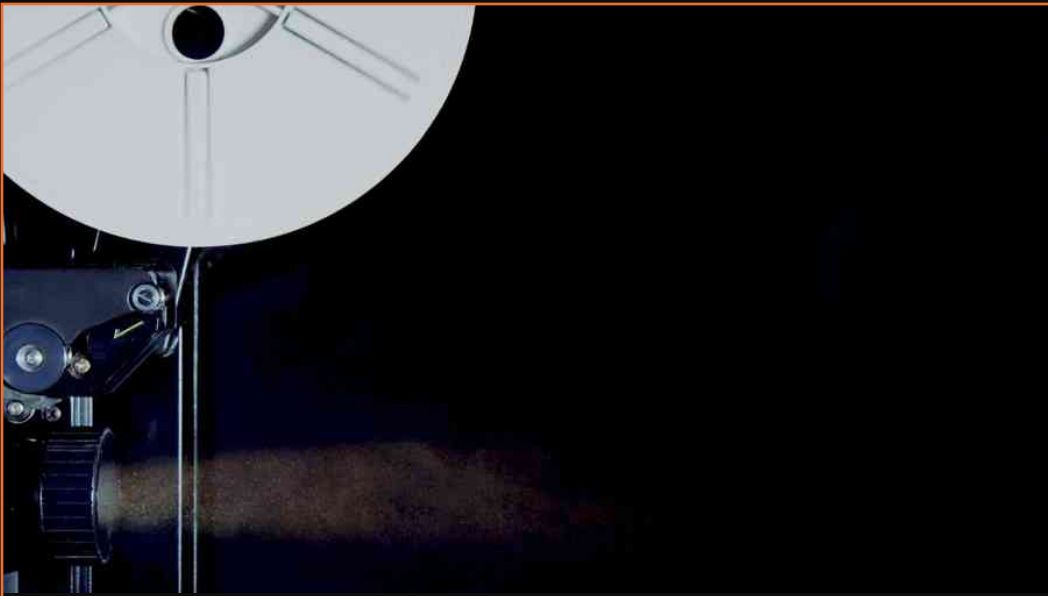


# Magical realism in novels like Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*

## Definition of magical realism (Encyclopaedia Britannica):

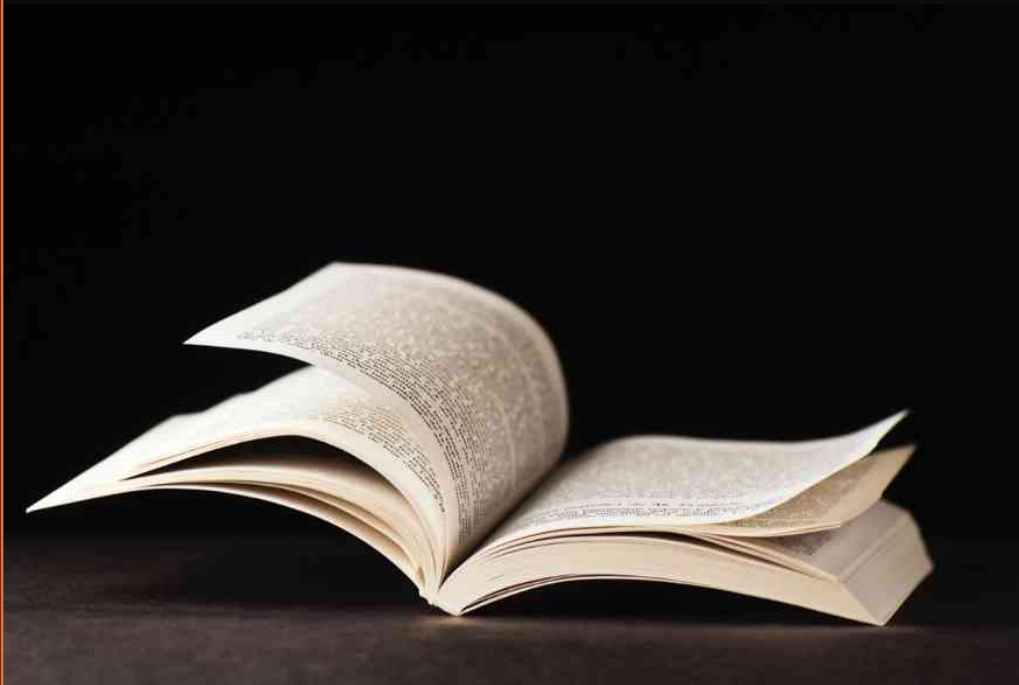
Narrative strategy characterized by the matter-of-fact inclusion of fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realist fiction





# Naming: becoming Nightbitch

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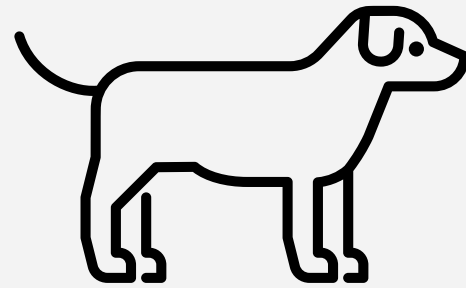
## Part 3

# Naming

When she had referred to herself as Nightbitch, she meant it as a good-natured self-deprecating joke – because that’s the sort of lady she was, a good sport, able to poke fun at herself, definitely not uptight, not wound really tight, not so freakishly tight that she couldn’t see the humor in a light-hearted not-meant-as-an-insult situation – but in the days following this new naming, she found the patch of coarse black hair sprouting from the base of her neck and was, like, *What the fuck*.

I think I’m turning into a dog, she said to her husband when he arrived home after a week away for work. He laughed and she didn’t.

p. 3



# Jen's party (and Jens' party)

So – this is Jen, Jen said, turning to her right and gesturing to a mother who offered a little wave.

Also Jen, she added, touching the next mother's shoulder.

Jen! she said again, putting her arm around yet another mommy. She laughed, and the other Jens laughed, too.

What are the chances? Nightbitch said, smiling and trying to appear nonjudgmental of the name Jen.

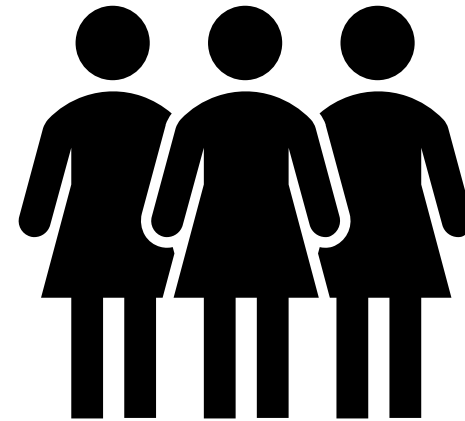
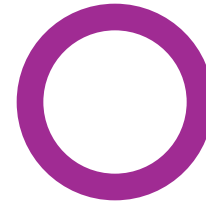
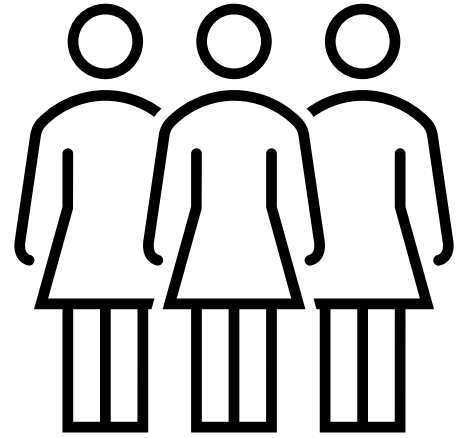
I mean, is everyone here named Jen? Nightbitch asked.

Ha, ha, the second Jen said in lieu of actual laughter.

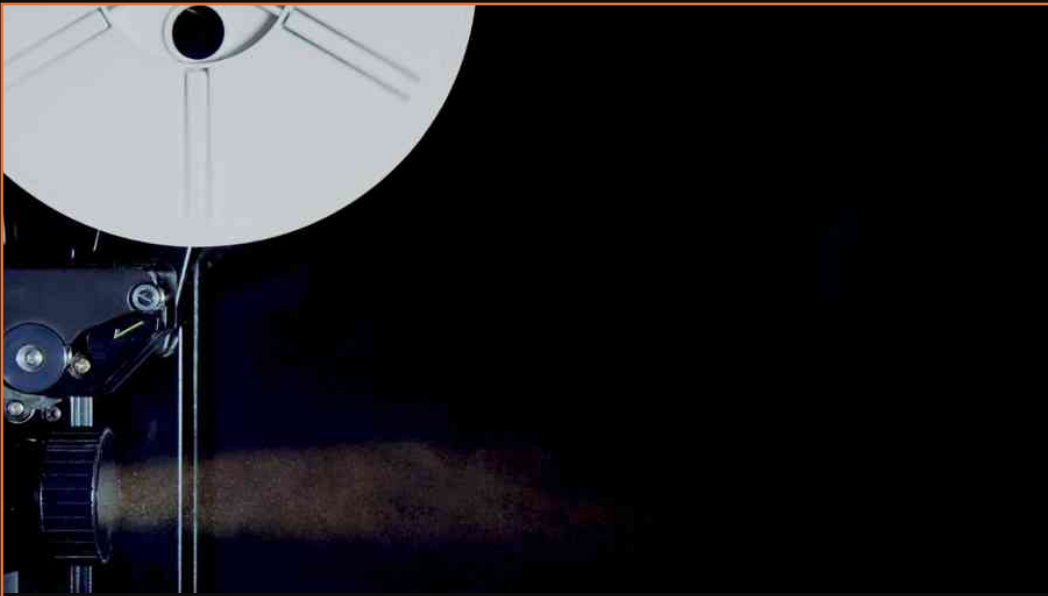
Let's have a drink, the original Jen replied, wandering off toward the refreshment table.

Let's have five! another Jen yelled, her words swallowed up by laughter and chatter, by the boppy notes of eighties hits wafting in the background.

Nightbitch, a bit reluctant to be fully assimilated into the multi-Jen universe yet nevertheless fascinated by it, followed Jen to the refreshment table.

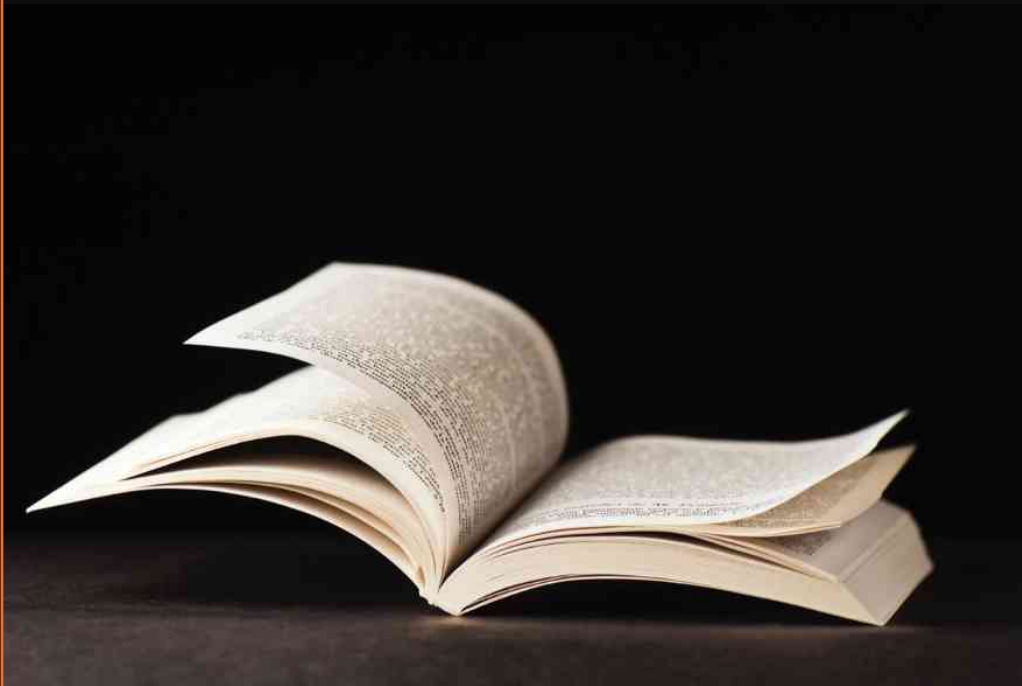






# The split self

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## Part 4

# The split self

She went to the meat counter and bought three thick rib-eye steaks. ... She asked for more: two pounds of ground chuck. On second thought, make it three. A half-dozen bratwursts. What about the stew meat? It looked delicious. How about a pound of that. And look at that top-round roast. ... And some premade kabobs for good measure, for vegetables, because that was healthy, she said, getting hold of herself.

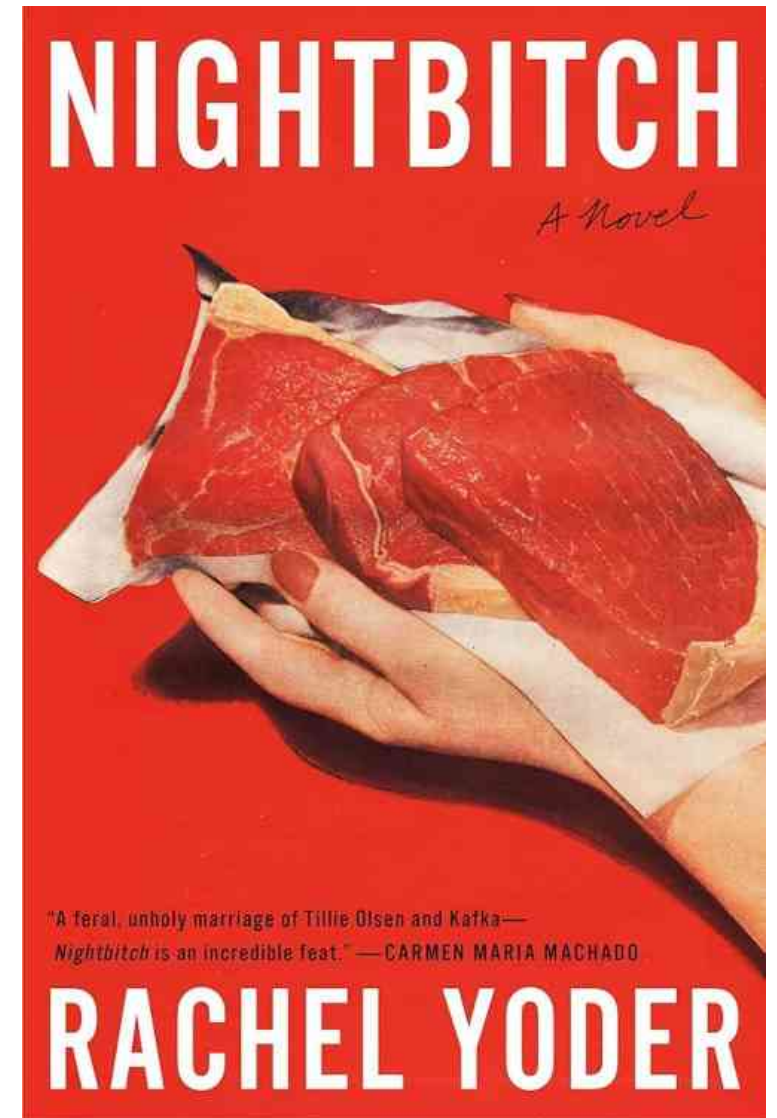
Yes, vegetables were very civilized. Dogs wouldn't buy vegetables.


Listen to what you're saying, **she said to herself**.

Stop it, **another self said**. Stop talking to yourself.

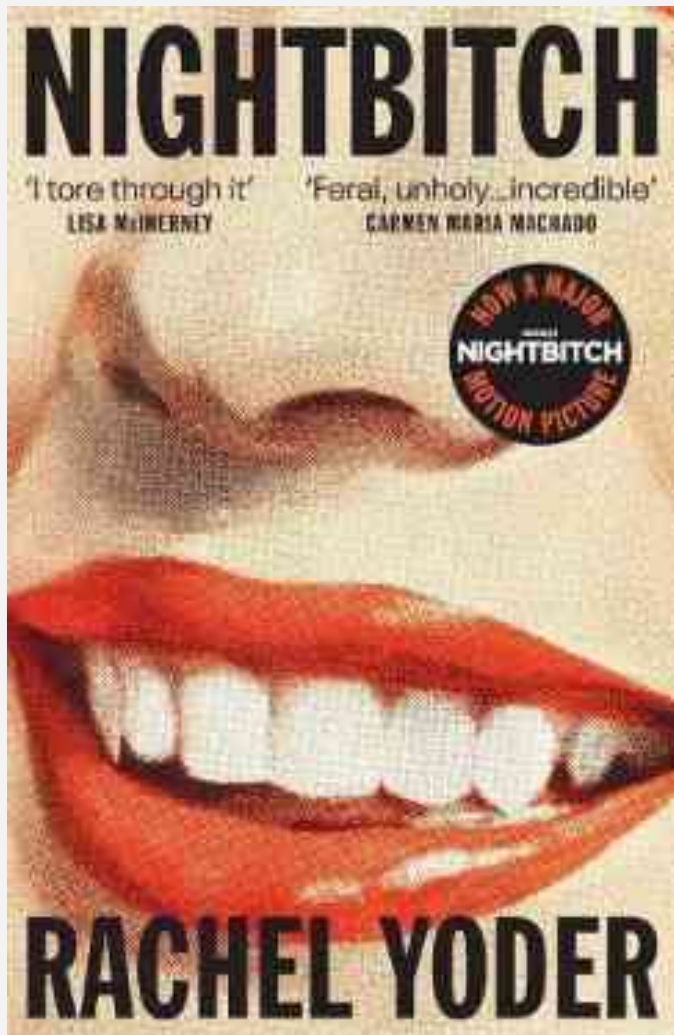
Shit, she thought.

pp. 51-52





Happiness is  
a choice ... ?



Sally – single, cute, young, happy, blonde Sal – waved and nearly skipped toward her with glee.

Hey, how's it going!? she asked, hugging the mother and ruffling the boy's hair. I haven't seen you in *forever*. **Do you love being home with this guy?** I bet it's so fun.

...

**She wanted to tell the girl:** It's complicated. I am now a person I never imagined I would be, and I don't know how to square that. I would like to be content, but instead I am stuck inside a prison of my own creation, where I torment myself endlessly, until I am left binge-eating Fig Newtons at midnight to keep from crying. I feel as though societal norms, gendered expectations, and the infuriating bluntness of biology have forced me to become this person even though I'm having a hard time parsing how, precisely, I arrived at this place. I am angry all the time. I would one day like to direct my own artwork toward a critique of these modern-day systems that articulates all this, but my brain no longer functions as it did before the baby, and I am really dumb now. I am afraid I will never be smart or happy or thin again. I am afraid I might be turning into a dog.

**Instead, she said,** smiling, I love it. I love being a mom.

**pp. 52-53**

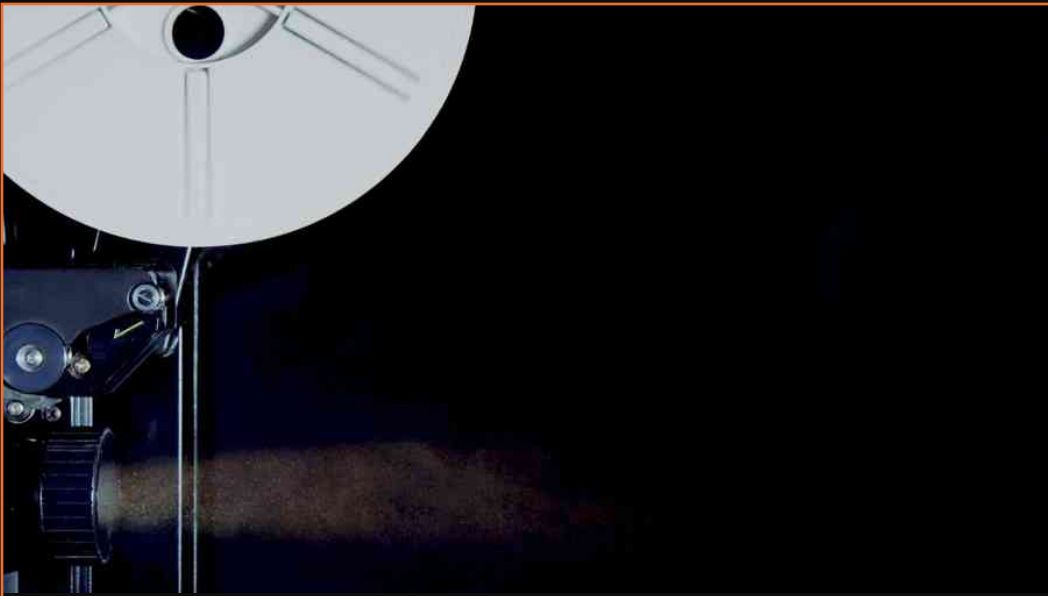




## The extraordinary and the everyday

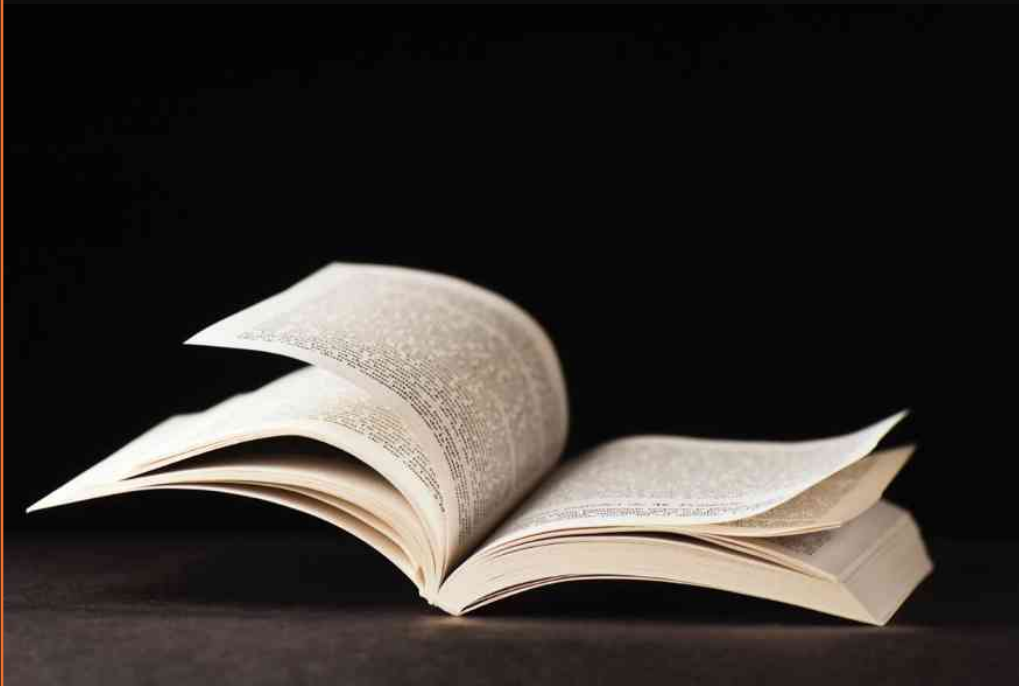
She wanted to know how a person – after spending the night romping through the neighborhood, shitting and killing and howling – how that same person might rise just days after to take her child to something as quotidian as story time at the public library.

**p. 101**



# Becoming animal: werewolves and were...huskies

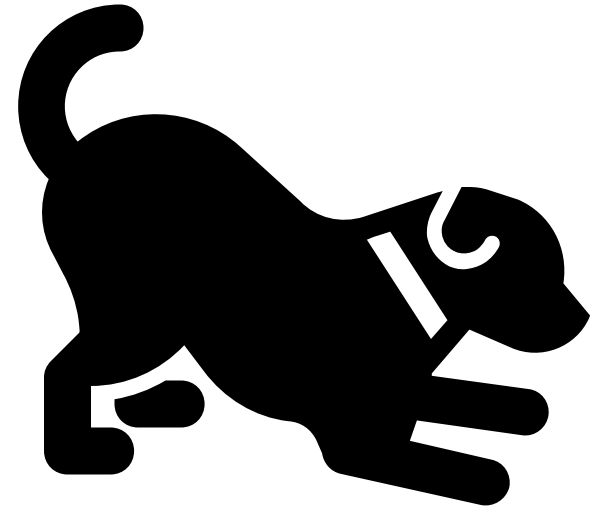
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## Part 7

# Doggieness

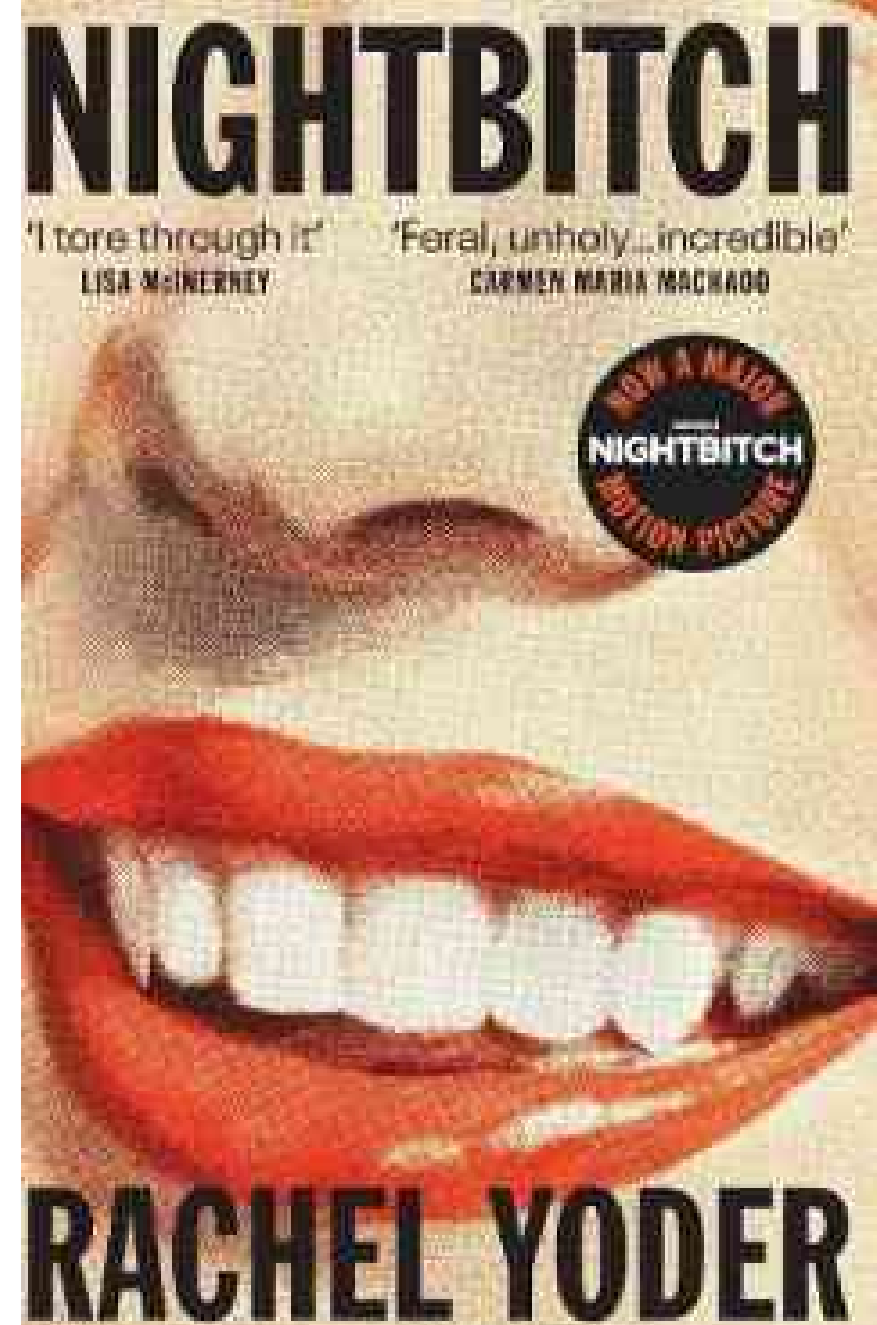
- The mother would let out a **bark** of laughter ... [p. 49]
- Shoo! she shouted with a flip of her wrists. Go home! She insisted, and they moved toward the street, casting their big sad eyes back to her on the porch. You evil beasts, she scolded, go. And then, without thought, she tilted her head back and **howled** from the cavern in her chest where everything was, the crushing anger and joy of that morning, the wealth of golden sunlight, how she hadn't slept a whole night in two-plus years, her loneliness, her ugly desires, how silky her son's blond curls were – all of that came out of her in one giant sound. [p. 62]
- I know you, she **growled** at the canine trio ....



# Searching the internet ...

On Monday morning, she did what any totally and completely normal person would do who had recently transformed into a dog and sat on the toilet with the lid down, searching the Internet as she listened to her husband and son move about the house. She started with *werewolf facts* and *real monsters*, then moved on to *shapeshifting* and *shapeshifting Native American*, then *skinwalkers* and *Navajo witches*. She read and read, but what she wanted to find was a mother who turned into a dog – a regular domesticated dog capable of being a pet, even – and so she kept on, with *mother myth* and *madre perro* (thinking somehow the Spanish would produce more desired results), *hormonal extremes hair* and *postnatal hair abundance*, *humans killing animals with their mouths*, and then, because it occurred to her, *cannibals* and *headhunters*, and it was at this point she knew she had wandered too far astray and stopped altogether.

p. 100



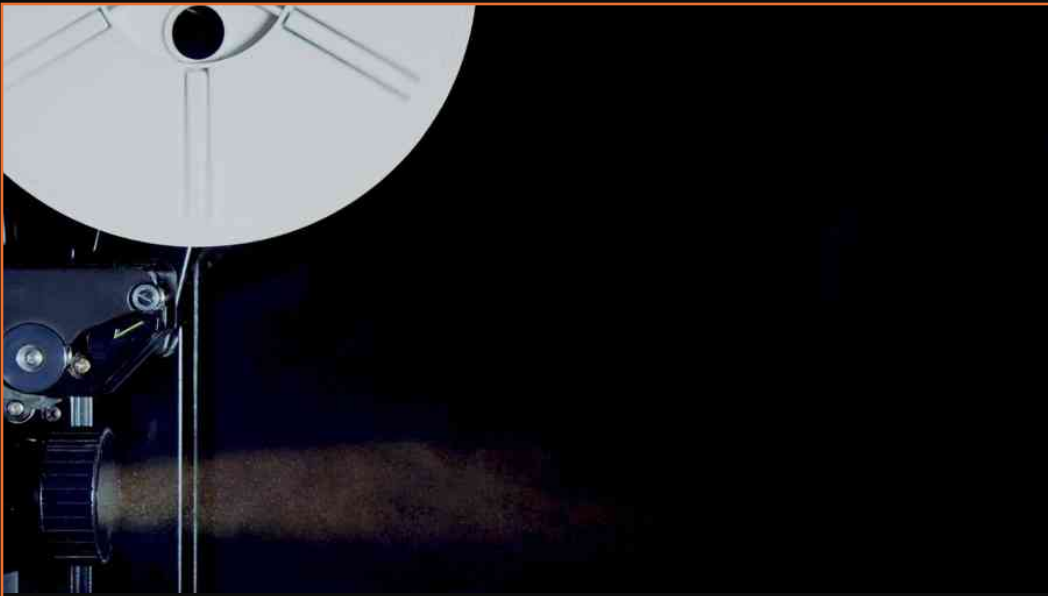




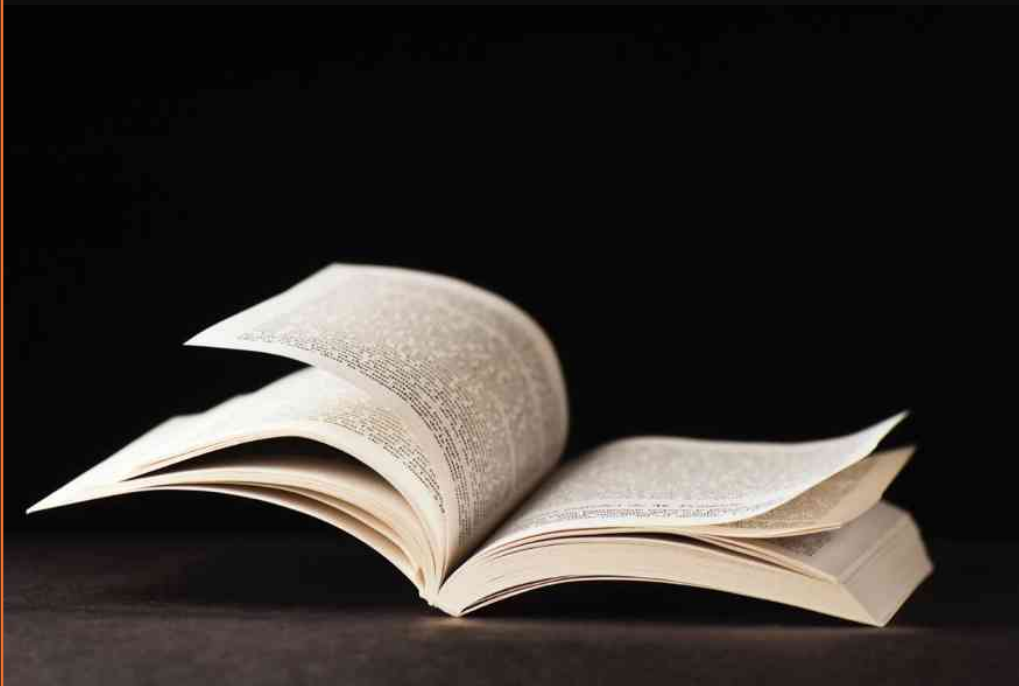
How does Nightbitch extend, or differ from, other representations of humans turning into animals in films and folklore?

# The Company of Wolves (Neil Jordan, 1984) based on Angela Carter's short story





# Being animal: hunting



## Part 5

# Hunting (excerpt 1 of 2)

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She froze beyond stillness when she glimpsed the rabbit by a cottonwood tree. The hair on the back of her neck rose, and she bared her teeth. She lifted one arm and set it down, then raised the other.

...

She surged after the animal, crashed into the bushes and ripped through weeds, to trap its hind leg before it could disappear into a copse of briars.

She clamped her teeth around its neck, and the small animal breathed inside her mouth. She slung it violently back and forth. Her eyes blazed, and she threw it to the ground to see if it would move, then picked it back up and shook it again.

The musk of its fear!

The warmth of its blood!

The give of its skull as she crushed it between her teeth!

She carried the dead animal in her mouth back through the night, the neighborhood, until she was behind her house, in the farthest corner of the lawn, digging a shallow hole in which to bury the creature, her treasure, her prize.



# Hunting (excerpt 2 of 2)

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She couldn't have known that what she had needed all along – more than medical attention or psychotherapy, more than choosing happiness or adjusting her attitude – was to sink her sharp teeth into something living and blood and feel its essence drain away until it was simply a rotting and unmoving thing.

Not iron deficiency or episode. Nothing 'wrong' with her. Just one night. One night of violence was what she needed. One night to not care what anyone thought, to shit where she pleased, to not be needed by any living thing, and to be only a body in motion in the dark, a shadow, a ghost of herself, who listened only to the mandates of her body.

Exhausted, she curled up in the grass to sleep.

**pp. 91-92**



# Hunting (excerpt 3 of 3)

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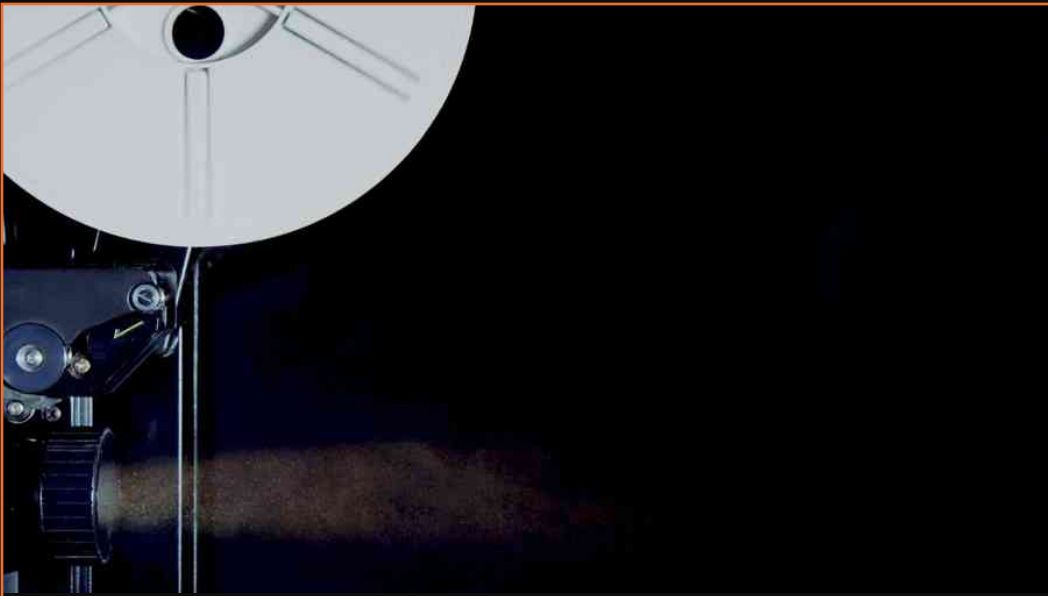
Naked and damp with dew, curled into herself, she awoke the next morning after her midnight escapade with an overwhelming sense of well-being unknown to the mother – or, should we say, to Nightbitch. ...

Her body felt strong and alive, and she was not chilled even though she was naked. She was awake in a way she had not been since her child was born, maybe even before, not groggy, not grumpy, but enthusiastic and, she imagined, completely capable of going on an early-morning jog, though she had never done this in her life.

...

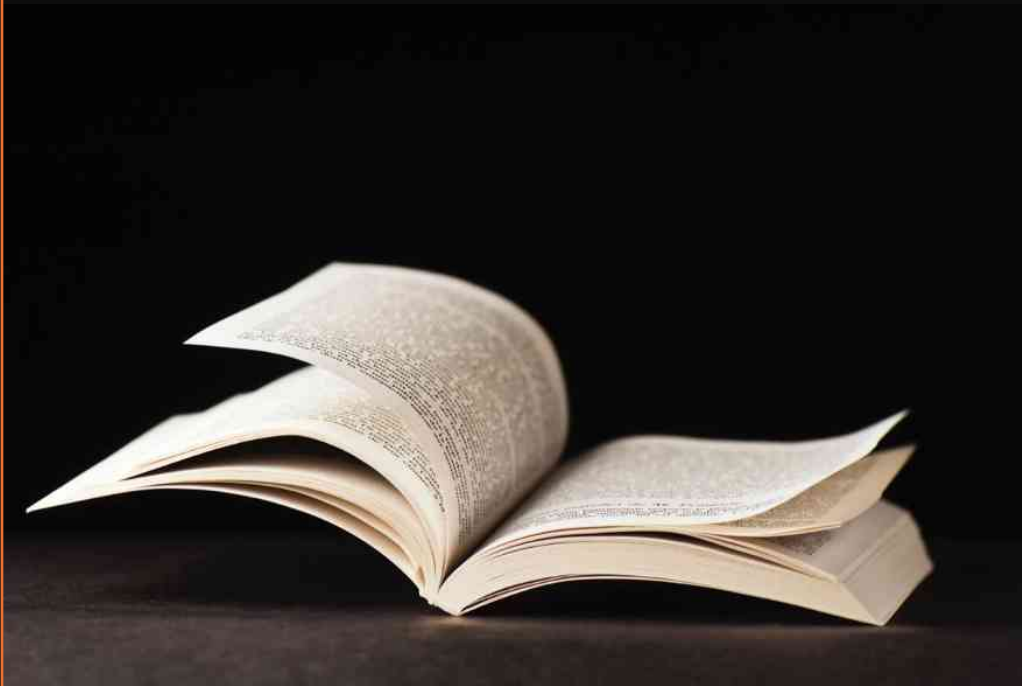
She scuttled to the side door, covering herself, and let herself in, feeling as Eve must have that first morning out of the garden, but, honestly, what a relief. To understand yourself anew. No longer to linger in the *what ifs*. To now know the truth.

**p. 92**



# Wanda White

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## Part 6

# What Wanda means to the mother

She dug through the pile of storybooks beside the bed until she uncovered, by the faint glow of the nightlight, her *Field Guide*, which she flipped open despite her exhaustion, for Wanda White always seemed to have the precise passage to soothe the mother's soul.

Wanda. Wanda. How she yearned to meet Wanda, to weep into her powdery-smelling chest and have this older woman stroke her hair as her own mother never had. To be babied inside the softness and warmth of a cardiganed embrace. A morsel of tenderness ... Oh, dear Wanda.

**p. 64**







# The role of the unbelievable

‘After all,’ the mother read, her night vision honed more now than ever, ‘what is more unbelievable than pushing a small human from a small hole between your legs, or having a masked, robed stranger slice open your belly and pull from it a mewling, bloodied babe? Both are absolutely preposterous propositions, not able to be believed and yet undeniable in the presence of the child, a factual reality.’

...  
As if the book itself was her most cherished friend.  
As if its pages knew her heart. She kept reading.

*... the unbelievable is not only credible but essential, and has a very real place in the world. I will go so far as to attest that the unbelievable is another way of knowing, an organizing principle that does not run in contradiction to but, rather, in communion with the organizing paradigms of science. The unbelievable, while perhaps not communicating straightforward truths, can communicate deeper truths if a person is willing to be patient, to listen, to contemplate.*

**p. 65**

The  
birdwomen  
of Peru





# The role of art



## [Email to Wanda White:]

All this is to say, what should a woman fight for? Given her limited resources, limited time and energy and inspiration, what is worth fighting for? Is it art? In the grand scheme of things, it sometimes seems so pointless, even selfish. To force one's point of view on the world – who really needs it, especially when a child needs a mother so immediately?

I don't have any answers other than that art seems essential, as essential as mothering. In order to be a self, it is essential. I should perhaps cease being a person without it.

Is that enough of a reason, that it matters to me?

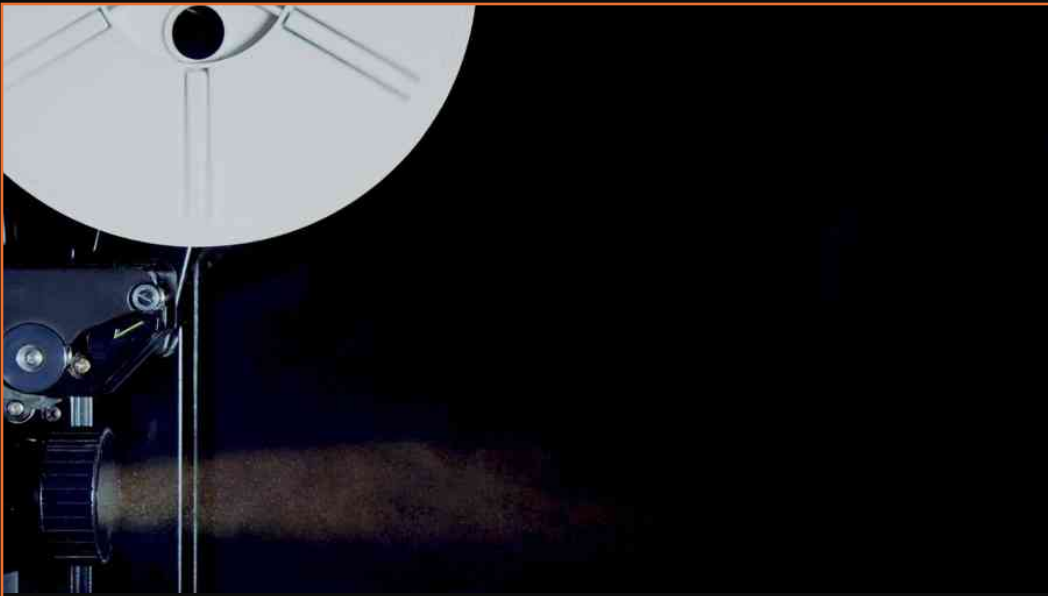
**pp. 82-83**

# Emails to Wanda White: talking to God

Why, it was sort of like talking to God, wasn't it? These letters closer to prayer than correspondence. You just wrote them and then pressed send and they floated away into the electronic ether, off into the mystery of the Internet, because who really, truly understood how it actually worked anyway? And we might say that Nightbitch, during this time in her life, became quite religious, each morning rising to see if there was a response, and each night sitting down at her cluttered desk – moving the sewing machine to the side for a time – to write another missive to Wanda White, a person whom she believed in yet had no evidence of, save for the tattered book on her nightstand and single contact page on a university website. **[pp. 200-01]**

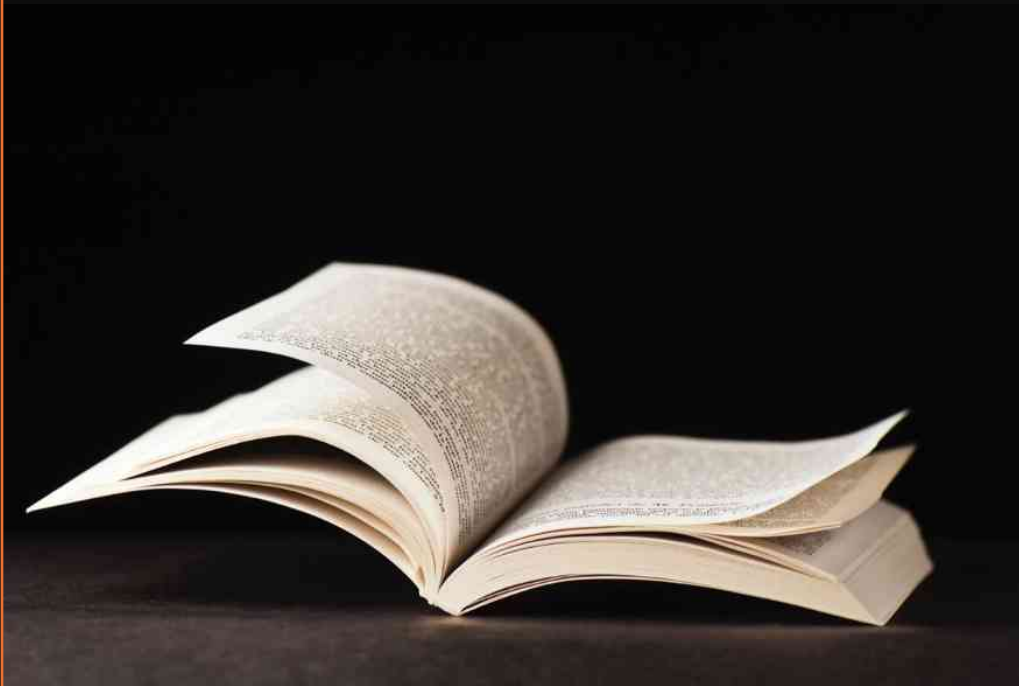
Wanda White is not a person. Wanda White is a place at which a person finally arrives. **[p. 231]**





# Monsters and the monstrous

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## Part 8

**At times, Nightbitch tries to control what's happening to her by devoting herself to self-improvement ...**

She would really lean into *setting goals* and *achieving outcomes*. She would get *back on track* in a real way, no matter what. She would now take a deep, cleansing breath and set her sights on *being sensible*, as her mother had once, had always, commanded.

**p. 170**





## ... but even an 'excruciating self-help exercise' can't suppress her true self (pp. 177-78)

[I]n a continuing effort to *make headway* and *turn over a new leaf*, Nightbitch sat at her son's tiny plastic table ... and wrote TEN THINGS I WANT TO DO BEFORE I DIE, all in caps ...

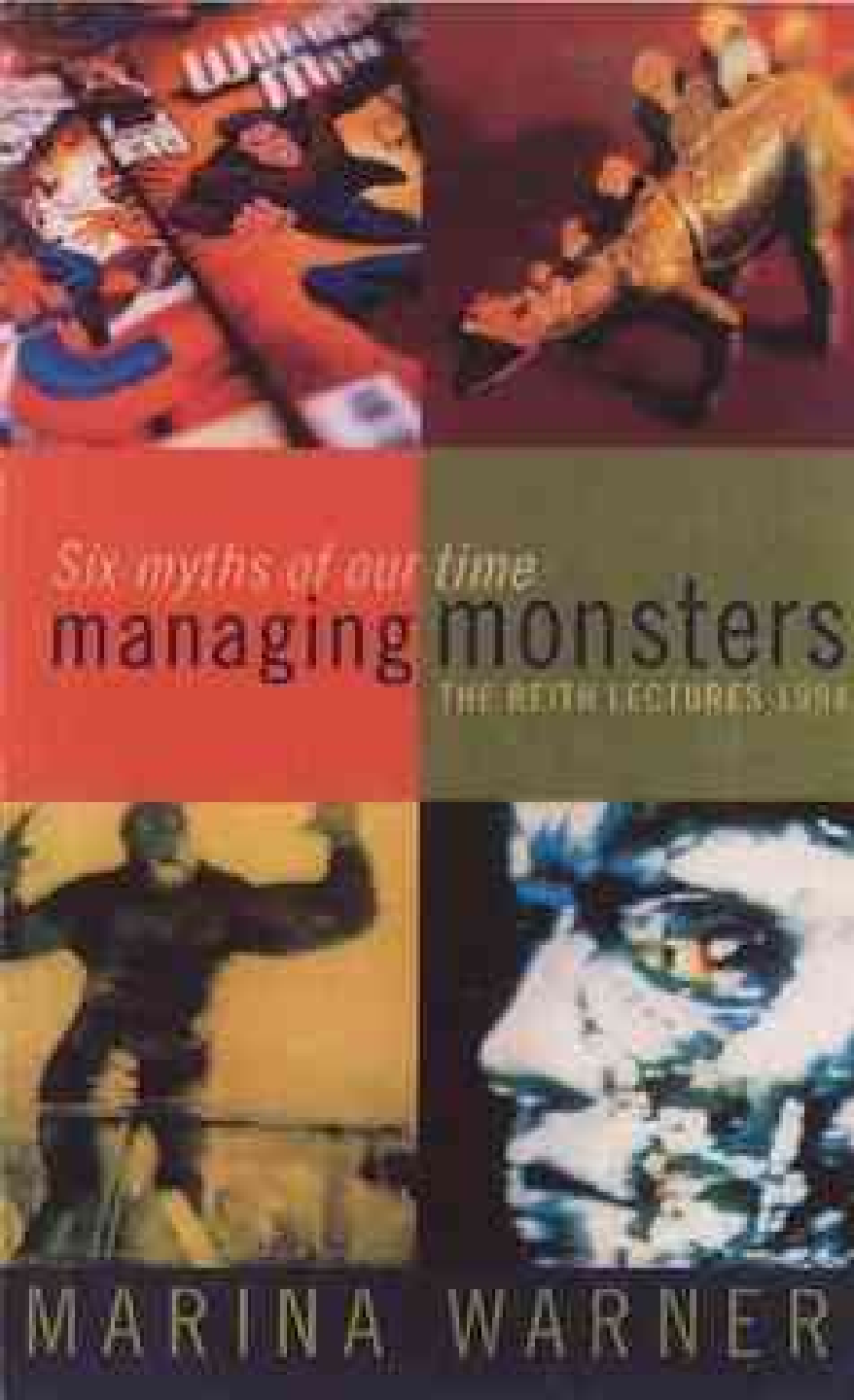
- I want to run naked through a meadow and catch a rabbit and snap its neck and then rip its throat open and drink the warm blood from the wound'
- I want to tell the truth
- I want to hump legs
- I want to chase horses around a barnyard and make them whinny and kick up the dust
- I want to be in a church choir and wear a robe but instead of singing I just howl all my hymn notes loud as I can
- I want to never brush my hair ever again
- I want to wear the same linen dress for a year
- I want to stink!
- I want to run and run into the cornfields all the way to stream and then follow it to the ocean – I'm sorry, but I'm not coming back – and I want to have very, very passionate sex with a stranger and I want to sit on a fully decorated cake without underwear and I want to perform a large anonymous act of extreme vandalism and **I want to be an artist and a woman and a mother I mean a monster I want to be a monster.**



# Being monstrous

And certainly her wishes had been affected by what she had read of the WereMothers earlier. ... For Nightbitch, there truly was something so enticing and exhilarating at the thought of rejecting all established society for something remote and magical, for a community suited particularly and only to the community's needs. Was being free to do what you need and be who you wanted – truly free – *monstrous*? If so, it was not a wrong kind of monstrous, but a beautiful one. A Way of being to celebrate rather than run from.

**pp. 178-79**



## Marina Warner, 'Monstrous Mothers' (Reith Lectures: Managing Monsters, BBC Jan. 1994)

- The she-monster is hardly a new phenomenon. The idea of a female untamed nature which must be leashed or else will wreak havoc closely reflects mythological heroes' struggles against monsters. Greek myth alone offers a host - of Ceres, Harpies, Sirens, Moirae. Associated with fate and death in various ways ... birds of prey are their closest kin ... and they seize as in the word raptor. But seizure also describes the effect of the passions on the body; inner forces ... personified in Homer and the tragedies as feminine, snatch and grab the interior of the human creature and take possession. Ungoverned energy in the female always raises the issue of motherhood; fear that the natural bond excludes men and eludes their control courses through ancient myth, which applies various remedies.
- In the folklore of the past, classical and medieval, the female beast ... was also sometimes cunning and purposely concealed her true nature: the Sirens lured men with their deceitful songs, and later tempted fierce anchorites in the desert, approaching St Anthony for instance, with honeyed words, hiding their diabolical nether parts under sumptuous dresses. Male beasts, as in Beauty and the Beast, or male devils, as in the temptations of St Anthony, don't possess the same degree of duplicity; you can tell you're dealing with the devil on the whole.

# Witches

Nightbitch dug through her bag, looking for nothing, just to have a task with which to be occupied, for how could she say what her project was? Something to do with dogs? Magic? Or not magic, exactly, but power? Feminine power, finally wielded, for wasn't that what all those witches in Colonial America had been burned for, all the folk-medicine practitioners, the midwives? Too much power makes a woman dangerous, and that was her project: creation and power.

**p. 184**



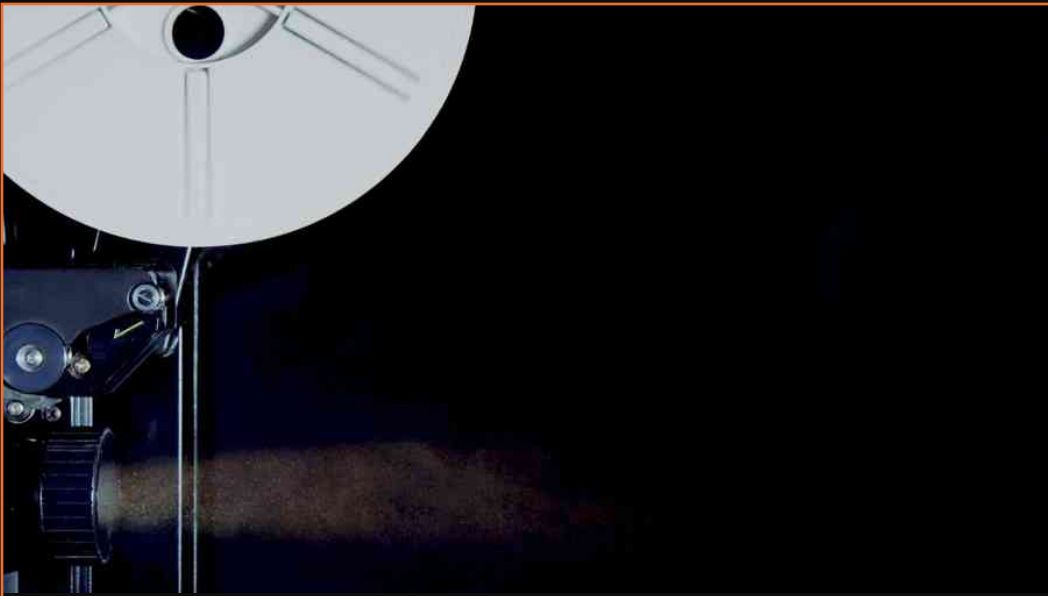
Bill Nye, 'Opening of the Witch Hunting Season,' History of the United States (1894)



At times she terrified herself, wondering if she was a god, if being a mother was one way of being a god. Of course she couldn't strike anyone down with a lightning bolt, but she could bring a person into being using little more than a handful of clay. Way less, in fact. How were mothers even a thing? How had they not been outlawed? They were divine, beyond horrifying.

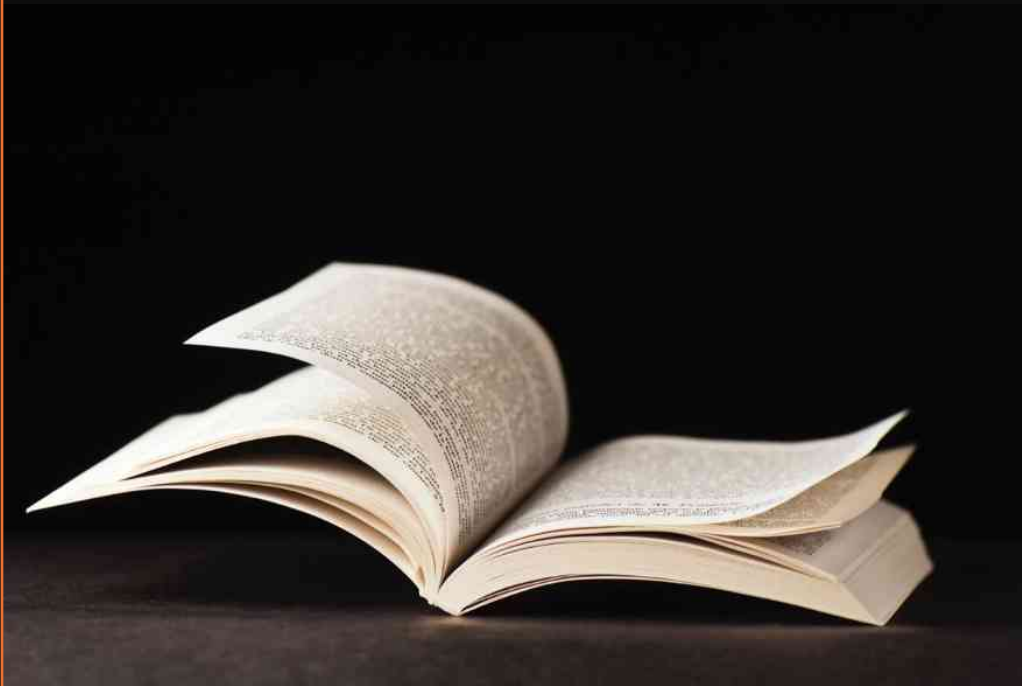
**p. 196**





# The endings

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## Part 9



## The film's penultimate (but concluding) scene

### [Mother's voiceover:]

There are times when I look at my son and I cannot tell where he begins and I end. He is that much a part of me. We are part of one another. This must be what it is to be an animal. Beneath the moon, we pile inside our warm cave, becoming one creature to save our warmth. This is how it's always been and how it will continue to be.

[Broadly equivalent to pp. 230-31 in the book.]

## **Book ending: the show (excerpt 1 of 4: performing Nightbitch)**

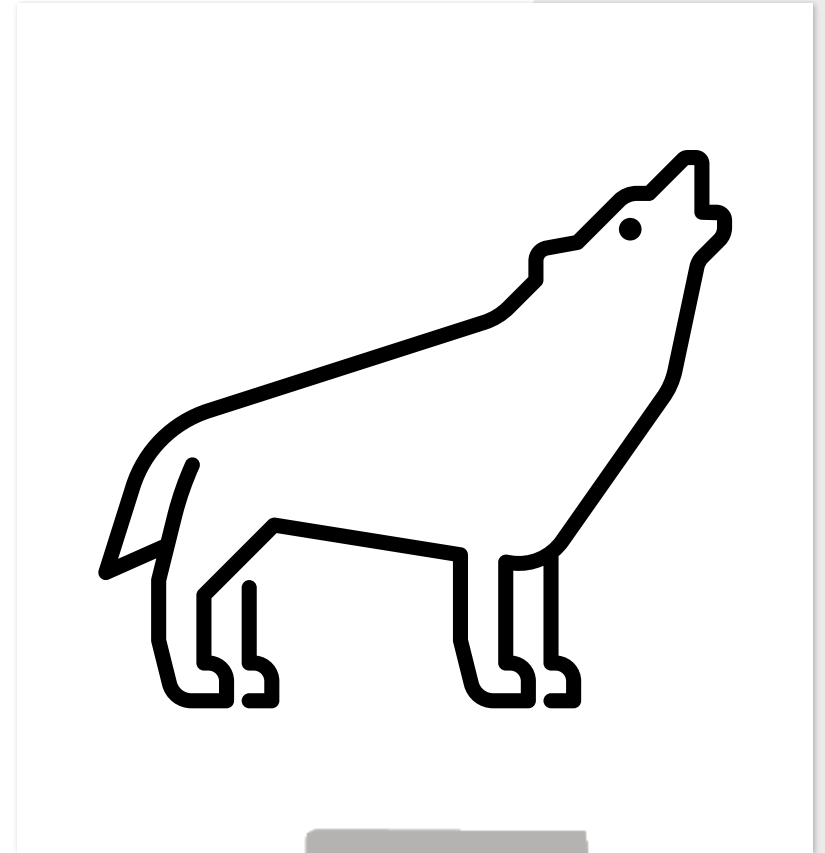
The squeak and pull of the curtain ropes. A darkness, and then a small light. She smells every single person in the room.

There, on a stage, in the dark. A pelt of hair bristles down her back. She turns her closed eyes toward the ceiling and inhales deeply. The hairs on her face move gently within an unseen draft.

Here she stands, naked. Her hair hangs in her eyes and over her face. Her open palms face the audience.

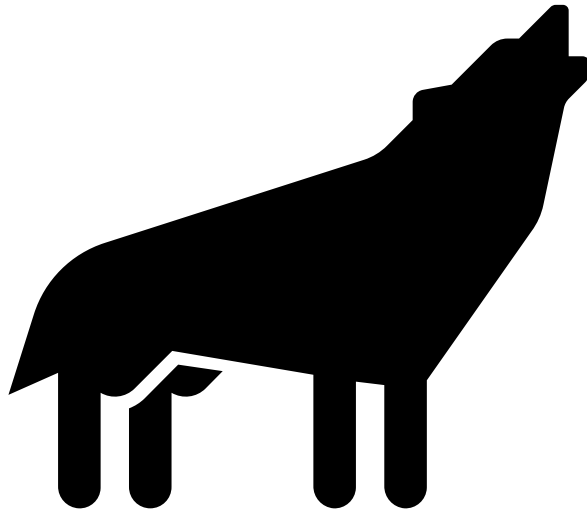
She begins the performance as she has begun every performance, by opening the space within her chest, then opening her mouth, opening a single perfect channel between heart and voice and letting out a long, high howl that echoes throughout the room.

Someone gasps as the lights rise a bit more. She opens her eyes but sees no one. She falls to her hands, then lopez across the stage. She turns to snarl at the audience. Someone laughs. Someone stifles a scream.





## Book ending: the show (excerpt 2 of 4: the soprano)



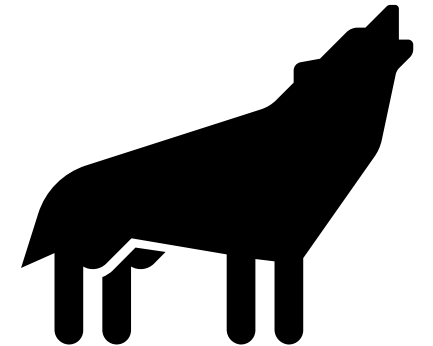
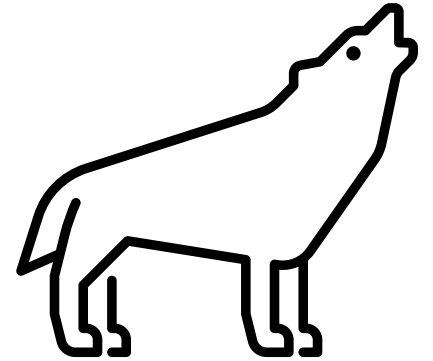
Music begins to soar in the background, as if from a long-forgotten childhood dream, or nightmare. Violins swell. The trumpets herald the beginning of something, though what precisely the audience cannot yet be sure. ... On a stage somewhere far away, a soprano presses her palms to her chest and opens her mouth to release a river of song, winding and glorious, full of grief, full of love. She sings in German, or a language that sounds like German, it's hard to tell, what is that she's saying? The audience imagines this singing woman, her heaving breast, her ropes of braided hair. They imagine her, most peculiarly, on a dark lawn, unspooling her song in the night. She is barefoot and the supple grass threads her toes. She sings beneath a tree with wide branches in which hens roost. She wears a simple cotton farm dress. Each and every person sees this same woman in their mind's eye, and each and every person wonders who she is, what her song means, marvels at the chickens in the trees. This is just the first of many tricks of Nightbitch's performance.

# Book ending: the show (excerpt 3 of 4: becoming animal)

Nightbitch paces on the stage, the music surges in the background, the audience grows uneasy. But of course what makes them the most uneasy is the artist herself. She is what they have come to see. She is why they have handed over their hard-earned dollars, to witness such a spectacle, because, well, what *is* it, exactly? Is this real? Or is it all a ruse? And what exactly is even in question? Surely this woman exists, but what about her hair? Once could imagine reasonably that the hair on her head is her very own, but what of the hair on her back? Her arms? Her feet?

Most unsettling is the way that Nightbitch moves, on all fours, with animal fluidity. It is the sort of thing they have only ever seen before in horror movies or, if they are not horror fans, in their most glorious nightmares. How does a person move the way this woman does? Surely she must be trained in dance or some pioneering modern movement practice? Certainly she must have practiced for hours to get the movement just right, this carnal pacing, this instinctual awareness, the way she tips her head to smell the air, the way she lopes forward toward the audience, then spins with lightness and bounds back into the shadows?

pp. 232-33



[The audience all] agree that [the strange arrival of the rabbits onstage] had not been some enchantment, that there must be a reasonable explanation for such bunnies, since none of them are yet ready to embrace what, deep down, they feel was very true: that the bunnies had *arrived* onstage, and not in any customary way.

...

Nightbitch stalks the bunnies now hidden in the shadows, the hunt itself strangely lovely, intoxicating, even the moment she pounces and takes a creature in her mouth. The theater now is quiet, dead quiet, and she lays the unmoving animal on the stage and then looks at the audience. She growls, and they grow uneasy. It seems she is now stalking them. A few folks at the back rise slowly and edge from the room. A moment of stillness, and then pandemonium breaks out as Nightbitch springs from the stage and the audience members burst from their seats to scream and scatter.

Some audience members will report that it was then that they were chased into an inexplicable forest area, so thick with leaves and vines that it was hard to decipher whether this was something the artist herself had constructed or in fact a space-time anomaly that had emerged just for the performance, only to disappear that night. During the unspecified event, as it came to be known, they came upon a den of WereMothers, who took them in and gave them delicious soup.

**pp. 233-37**

## **Book ending: the show (excerpt 4 of 4: the rabbit hunt)**



# Next week: other kinds of performance

He glimpsed himself on a giant TV screen – an erect, elaborately costumed, expressionless figure, walking as if in a trance. Who was this puppet, this hollow man?

**Robert Harris, *Conclave* (2016)**

