

The **WOMAN** in the **WALL**

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story Cramer & Jones

A brief description of the seven scenes:

MONDAY The Walling-in Ceremony

Night

The bells toll midnight; the beginning of our first "DAY". A bricked-up cell is opened and the body of the previous anchoress is taken out. A priest and choir perform the Ceremony that accompanies MARIANNA to this cell where she will voluntarily spend the rest of her life. She takes her vow to live in this cell, with one window cut into the church and another giving her a view of the 14th century world outside. Here, she will live, studying and praying: the outward actions of an inward exploration. The cell is bricked shut.

In the cell

later the same night

MARIANNA sings, "If I am dead to life, what am I alive to?" In her cell, we see a desk, a bed, and a large cabinet that says Cabinet of Virtue. MARIANNA reflects on how she came to be here. She succeeds in bringing her fear under the control of her reason and thereby elicits the appearance of the Virtue PRUDENTIA. She tells MARIANNA how to manage her new state and then returns to the Cabinet of Virtue.

TUESDAY Talking to the townspeople

Day

On this Tuesday, some time has passed and MARIANNA is sought after for advice. To her small window come three YOUNG GIRLS and several PEASANTS. A SOLDIER brings a heartfelt question about duty and MARIANNA's response calls up the Virtue JUSTICE who sings of "Finding What Is Your Own" and then takes his place in the Cabinet of Virtue.

WEDNESDAY She hears the life of the things around her

Night

Night time through the cell's window: the inner journey at this point has come into unknown territory as MARIANNA talks to a spider, noticing that it does not consider itself a prisoner. She hears the voices of the dead on the cart as the driver calls out, "Bring out your dead!" MARIANNA hears even the faint song of the stars, and asks them, "Are you coming near, or are you going away?" She is frightened by the sudden appearance of the WITCH and she then falls into a disturbed sleep during which the Virtue TEMPERANCE enters the dark cell, holds the sleeping MARIANNA's hand and tells her how to give what is needed. TEMPERANCE enters the Cabinet.

THURSDAY The King's question

Day

Years have passed. A festival atmosphere has grown up around MARIANNA's cell. The questioners answer each other. Two priests bring a book of rules for anchorites. She tells them it is late for them to be instructing her how to do what she has been doing for so long. The KING comes to her for advice, which she easily gives him. He is so pleased with her answer he lets her know he has the power to release her from her vow and take her to his palace where she will be able to give counsel to the world. He asks for her to consider this offer. No Virtue appears.

FRIDAY The dark night

Night

The dark night of elemental struggle begins. MARIANNA hears the dead clearly now, telling how they would have lived had they the chance. THE WITCH is chased and caught by the SOLDIER who ties her to a stake to be burned. As she burns, MARIANNA can take no more: She sweeps, she hides under the bed, she kills the spider, she tries to climb out of her cell. No Virtue appears.

SATURDAY Marianna's response

Day

MARIANNA wakes up in her bed still confused in the aftermath of her dark night of the soul. She either cannot hear or cannot understand the people at her window who call to her. The KING returns for her answer to his offer. He and MARIANNA sing a duet of how satisfying a life could be in the palace: A garden of earthly delights. By the end of this duet, she has regained her equilibrium and is ready with her response to his invitation. She tells him that, even though she would reach a great number as an advisor in his court, she will, by following her own lights and remaining where she is, become connected to everything. The Virtue FORTITUDE joins her. At this point, a "critical mass" of Virtue has been reached; the Cabinet of Virtue is thrown open and the four virtues, PRUDENTIA, JUSTICE, TEMPERANCE, and FORTITUDE sing together which calls down the three Heavenly Virtues of FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE.

SUNDAY Connecting

Night into dawn

MARIANNA is alone in the cell. She treats it with love as though it were her own body. The music of the Seven Virtues expands - the walls of the cell vanish - the people and the KING take their places in the music. The dead climb toward heaven. The stars add their voices. MARIANNA is connected to all with golden cords like rays of light.

These seven days cover seventeen years.