

Identify the following characters and images:

Gabriel Conroy, Freddy Malins, Gretta Conroy, Lily, Mary Jane Morkan, Julia Morkan, Kate Morkan, Ms. Molly Ivors, Mr. Browne, Mr D'Arcy, Michael Furey, snow falling in a churchyard, a horse-cart circling the statue of an English king

Reading Questions:

- Why has Lily nearly been run off her feet? What social event is keeping her so busy?
- Who hosts this Christmas party each year?
- We hear the location is on Usher's Island. What are the connotations of the word "Usher" and how does it connect to the title and themes of the work?
- Why are the Morkan sisters worried about Freddy Malins? i.e., in, what condition are they afraid he will show up?
- What does the Anglo-Irish term "screwed" refer to, unlike in American English?
- What social gaffe or embarrassing topic does Gabriel accidentally bring up while talking with Lily while joking with her about her love-life?
- Why does Gabriel claim he is giving Lily some money? What do you suppose his real motivation is for passing off the coin to her?
- Why is Gabriel worried about quoting lines from Robert Browning in his Christmas speech?
- When Mr Browne drinks some whiskey before the youngsters, what joking explanation does he give for his indulgence in the liquor?
- What dance are couples dancing in the parlor room?
- Mr Bartell D'Arcy is skilled at singing what musical part, the baritone, the tenor, the soprano, or the falsetto?
- When Miss Ivors shows up, what is fixed in the front of her collar? Why is she wearing such a device?
- What does Miss Ivors mean when she says, "I have a crow to pluck with you" to Gabriel? What is the American English equivalent of this phrase?
- What is the complaint Miss Ivors has about Gabriel? Why is she angry with Gabriel?
- What is the insult intended when she says, "I didn't think you were a West Briton."
- Where does Miss Ivors invite Gabriel for the summer? Why does she think Gretta in particular would like to travel there?
- Where does Gabriel prefer to vacation, and why does he want to go there?
- What does Miss Ivors again whisper in Gabriel's ear at the end of the dance?
- What is Gretta's reaction when she hears she and her husband have been invited out to the western parts of Ireland? What is Gabriel's reaction to her reaction?
- What is the ironic symbolism behind Aunt Julia singing "Arrayed for the Bridal"?
- When Miss Ivors leaves the party early, how does she say good-bye or good-night? What language is she using here, and how is it a political statement that matches her brooch?
- During dinner, the discussion begins to settle on monastic practices, including the rumor that certain orders of monks sleep in coffins. Why do they do this, according to Mary Jane? How does this connect with the themes and title of this short story? Mr Browne seems confused by all this. How is his religious background different from most of the guests?
- How does Gabriel kick off his speech? What is his theme here?
- Explain the political symbolism about Patrick Morkan's horse Johnny walking in endless circles around the statue of King Billy (English King William).

Passages for Identification: Be able to explain who wrote these passages, what work they come from, and briefly explain their significance, context, or importance in the work.

He stood still in the gloom of the hall, trying to catch the air that the voice was singing and gazing up at his wife. There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter, he would paint her in that attitude. . . . Distant Music, he would call the picture if he were a painter.

So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept. . . His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange, friendly pity for her entered his soul. He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael Furey had braved death.

Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead.

Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen, and farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

From <https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/study/301_Joyce_Death.html>