

blunder

A mistake or clumsy error

dowry

Property or money promised to the husband by the bride and her family

adorned

Wearing fine and expensive jewels or clothing; looking the part of someone who is wealthy

caste

The social and economic group that a person is born into

keenness

Showing a sense of eagerness, enthusiasm, and excitement; intelligence

hierarchy

The order of power, status, or importance

lofty

Of high rank or importance; fancy

dames

Another word for ladies

delicacy

A fine, delicious food, usually hard to come by

dwelling

The place where a person lives

abraded

Scraped away, eroded and worn down by friction

indignant

Showing feelings of anger and annoyance at being treated unfairly

humble

Not proud, simple

desolated

A feeling of emptiness; bleak and depressing

vestibules

A small room or area right inside the front door of a house or building

tapestries

Pieces of decorated cloth used as decorative wall hangings

breeches

short pants

bric-a-brac

Objects of sentimental value; knick knacks, trinkets

coquettish

Behaving playfully; flirting

intimate

To be emotionally close with someone

sought after

Looked for or desired

tureen

a big covered dish used to serve soup

repasts

food taken in; a meal; eating on one occasion

comrade

A friend

chagrin

A feeling of humiliation and embarrassment

astonished

Surprised, shocked

disconsolate

Unable to make happy; unable to make feel better; too sad to comfort

frugal

To not spend a lot of money; to be very careful about spending money

ardor

To have passion or enthusiasm for someone or something

promissory notes

A written document that promises repayment of a debt

usurers

Someone who lends money to people at very high rates of interest

odious

Very unpleasant and disgusting

sou

A very small amount of money

naïve

Innocent; not knowing much about life

Mathilde Loisel

The main character of the story, she is poor and self-conscious about status; she longs for a rich and glamorous life

Monsieur Loisel

Matilde's husband; he is a simple clerk in the Department of Education; he tries to make his wife happy despite his low income and social status

Jeanne Forester

Friend of Matilde, who is of higher social status; she lends Matilde the diamond necklace