

**Guy de Maupassant. From "The Necklace"**

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

Mathilde suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born to enjoy all delicacies and all luxuries. She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the bareness of the walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugliness of the curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tortured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework aroused in her despairing regrets and bewildering dreams. She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove. She thought of long reception halls hung with ancient silk, of the dainty cabinets containing priceless curiosities and of the little coquettish perfumed reception rooms made for chatting at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after, whom all women envy and whose attention they all desire.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a tablecloth in use three days, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup tureen and declared with a delighted air, "Ah, the good soup! I don't know anything better than that," she thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry that peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvelous plates and of the whispered gallantries to which you listen with a sphinx-like smile while you are eating the pink meat of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no gowns, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but that. She felt made for that. She would have liked so much to please, to be envied, to be charming, and to be sought after.

**Define Each Word**

ingenuity: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

supple: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

sole: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

oppressive: \_\_\_\_\_

coquette: \_\_\_\_\_

**Write the Correct Word from the Vocabulary**

1. When her cousin and niece died, Margaret became the \_\_\_\_\_ heir to the Brandeis fortune.
2. NASA scientists exhibited exceptional \_\_\_\_\_ when they designed a strong, yet flexible and lightweight spacesuit.
3. During her freshman year, Marie was labeled a \_\_\_\_\_; she considered that label unfair because she believed that she was merely being playful and mildly flirtatious.
4. Josh Hamilton’s strong, yet quick and \_\_\_\_\_ wrists help make him a great baseball player.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ heat of the afternoon sun caused the African violets to wilt.

**Comprehension and Discussion: Answer Each Question in Complete Sentences**

1. Why does Mathilde suffer “ceaselessly”?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you know anyone like Mathilde? If so, describe this person. How do you think this person makes those around him or her feel? Is this person usually happy?  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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