

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.



Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.



## EXPLANATION

- While Louis is joyfully reflecting on her bright future, her sister gets worried and implores her to open the door. She is anxious about her sister's physical weakness which might deteriorate at such a shocking news. Louis tells her to go away and asks her not to worry about her. She would not make herself ill. Meanwhile she remains busy enjoying the elixir of life through the open window. She utters a short prayer wishing her life might be long and knows that it was just the day before when she had shuddered that life might be long.
- Josephine's overprotective care interferes with Louis's physical and emotional freedom. She is not aware with Louis's liberated thought and hence worries too much about her physical weakness.
- Louis rises from her chain and comes out of the door with a stifled confidence and radiance. She knows the people surrounding her, would neither be able to understand her situation nor accept her in the new light of liberty. Louis eyes reflect a sense of triumph and she carries herself like goddess of Victory. Claspng her sister's waist, she descends down the stairs.
- As they descend down, they hear the sound of the key opening the front door. Suddenly, Brently Mallard, Louis's husband enters, completely unaware of any accident. He is amazed at Josephine's piercing cry and Richards's quick attempt to screen him from the view of his wife.



However, it is too late as his wife already seen him. When doctors examine Louise's cause of death, they ironically interpret the cause of her death to be excessive joy that she must have felt on seeing her husband alive — a socially considered and acceptable cause. Though the readers know that it is not the joy that has caused her death. She died because she suddenly loses relevance of the forbidden pleasure of freedom without having experienced it fully.