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# Two Gallants

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# *Themes, Symbol and Epiphany*



# Themes

## The desire for escape

- Lenehan wishes to escape his life of schemes, but he cannot take action to do.

## Betrayal

- Lenehan and Corley both suspect each other of cheating and scheming, though they join forces to swindle innocent housemaids out of their livelihoods.

# Themes

## Money and Poverty

- TWO GALLANTS is dominated by the theme of money and poverty and shows the attitudes and the lack of a real richness of life.

## Isolation

- The problem of how he could pass the hours until he met Corley again troubled him.
- Lenehan is without family, reliable friends and his future whether financial or personal is growing ever darker. He lives in Dublin, a city without hope.

# Symbol

## Food

- Joyce would have us believe, his sole enjoyment a pathetic meal of peas and ginger beer: “he ate his food greedily and found it so good?” Lenehan’s quiet meal of peas and ginger beer allows him to dwell on his self-absorbed life, so lacking in meaningful relationships and security.

# Epiphany

- Characters in Dubliner experience both great and small revelations in their everyday lives, moments that Joyce himself referred to as “epiphanies.” Rather, these epiphanies allow characters to better understand their particular circumstances, usually rife with sadness and routine, which they then return to with resignation and frustration.

The main epiphany comes at the very end after Corley has carried out his last deed. We suspect that he is probably seducing a young lady into sex yet when we see him receive a gold coin from her, we realize that Joyce is completely uninterested in letting any aspect of this low-class Dublin society escape from his criticism.

The female is revealed to be just as lascivious and deprived as the two young men in that she rewards him for sex rather than the other way around

# Character





# Characters

## Corley

- An ugly, unscrupulous man carrying on a relationship with a "slavey" or housemaid. He plans to get her into bed and con her out of some money while he's at it.

## Lenehan

- Corley's ugly sidekick. He spends much of the story alone reflecting on the unreliability of friendship and love, as well as his own lack of a future.

## the slavey

- Corley's girl and victim, who supposedly makes her living as a "slavey," or house servant. Given that she is able to give Corley a guinea, she is probably also a prostitute.



# Summary



# Summary

Lenehan and Corley, two men whose occupations are suspiciously vague, walk through the streets of central Dublin after a day of drinking in a bar. Corley dominates the conversation, chatting about his latest romantic interest, a maid who works at a wealthy home and with whom he has a date that evening. He brags about the cigarettes and cigars the maid pilfers for him from the house and how he has expertly managed to avoid giving her his name. Lenehan listens patiently, occasionally offering a question or a clichéd response. As the men talk, they reveal a plan they've hatched to convince the maid to procure money from her employer's house. Lenehan repeatedly asks Corley if he thinks she is right for their business, which launches Corley into a short lecture on the utility of a good maid, or "slavey." Unlike other women who insist on being compensated, Corley explains, slaveys pitch in. He pauses wistfully to recall one of his former lovers who now works as a prostitute, and Lenehan teases that Corley, who seems to excel in pimping, must have encouraged such a profession.

# Summary

The men resume discussing their plan, and Corley confirms that the maid will turn up as promised. They pass a harpist playing a mournful song about Irish legends, then approach the appointed corner where the maid is waiting. She is a young, ruddy-cheeked woman, dressed oddly with a sailor hat and tattered boa. Lenehan, impressed with Corley's taste, leers at her. Corley appears disgruntled, suspecting Lenehan of trying to squeeze him out of the plan. But as he leaves Lenehan to greet his date, he promises to walk past so Lenehan can look at her again. The men agree to meet later that night at a corner by the maid's house. Lenehan watches as Corley and the maid walk off, and he takes another intense look before positioning himself so he can watch the couple pass once more.

# Summary

Finally alone, Lenehan aimlessly wanders through Dublin to pass the time. Not wishing to speak with anyone, Lenehan continues to walk until he stops into a bar for a quick meal of peas and ginger beer. Over his food, he sadly contemplates his life: instead of just scraping by, he wishes instead for a steady job and stable home life. Lenehan leaves the bar and, after running into some friends in the street, makes his way to meet Corley. Lenehan nervously smokes a cigarette, worrying that Corley has cut him out of the plan, before he spots Corley and the maid. He stealthily walks behind the couple until they stop at a posh residence, where the maid runs inside through the servant's entrance. In a moment, she emerges from the front door, meets Corley, and then runs back inside. Corley leaves. Lenehan runs after him, but Corley ignores his calls. Eventually, Corley stops and shows Lenehan a gold coin, a sign that the plan was successful.

# Analysis



# Analysis

ironic



because Corley and Lenehan are anything but fine, chivalrous men. Instead, they make an unpleasant practice of duping maids into stealing from their employers.

# Analysis

Both men lead dissolute lives and have few prospects, and nothing but easy money gives them hope.

The meanderings of the story ultimately lead to the gold coin, suggesting that for both of these men, the coin is their ultimate reward and desire.



# Analysis

Even though Lenehan and Corley use betrayal to make money, both men are anxious about treachery.



Corley orchestrates his encounter with the maid defensively, allowing Lenehan only distant glimpses of the maid for fear of competition. Similarly, Lenehan pesters Corley about his choice of victim, worried that the plan will fall flat and leave him penniless yet again.

# Analysis

Betrayal reappears throughout *Dubliners* and always recalls Ireland's political scandal in which the politician Parnell, according to his loyal followers, was abandoned by the Irish government and many voters when news of his affair leaked into the press.

# Analysis

Traditional national images connect Lenehan' s and Corley' s desperate and shallow lives with Ireland itself.

For example, the harp, a traditional symbol of Ireland, appears in "Two Gallants." Outside a wealthy Anglo-Protestant gentleman' s club, the men pass a harpist who is playing on a feminized, bare, and "weary" instrument. The harpist' s melodies later follow Lenehan and pace his steps. While Corley gallivants with his maid, Lenehan acts as the harpist, tapping his hands to the notes as he walks through Dublin.

# Analysis

This ambiguous connection between Lenehan and the harp is typical of Joyce's national references. Joyce both leaves the inferences open to his readers and continually complicates them. When Lenehan later enjoys the meager feast of peas and ginger beer and reflects on his directionless life, for example, his meal reflects the colors of the Irish flag. Such associations link the maligned life to an image of the country, but with no conclusive sense of cause and effect, and no potential for solution.

Thank you for listening