

The Mourners

Three women filed slowly past the coffin.

One of them was plain and quite ordinary. She paused for a moment and looked at the dead man inside, tears welling up in her eyes.

The second, a harlot well past her prime, simply peered down silently at the man, her face smeared with pasty cosmetics.

The last, an old peasant woman wearing a black shawl and a matching black scarf on her head, kept a respectful distance and genuflected three times.

These were the only people who came to mourn him that day. He was a stranger to all of them.