

Following after joy as
depicted in eveline, a
story by james joyce



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In the short story *Eveline*, James Joyce portrays a young woman trying to gain her own happiness without walking in the fatal footsteps of her mother. In exchange for the abusive life with her father, Eveline is faced with the chance at happiness, fleeing to Buenos Ayres with a sailor chap. Being deprived of the love and affection she needed, Eveline lacks the courage and strength to find her own happiness. Knowing she is following the same path as her mother, Eveline fears happiness in her own life.

Eveline fears being enthralled as her mother was. Then she would be married-she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been Eveline's mother was not respected because she was female, not because she was married and had children. Eveline hopes to veer away from the female status in society, and earn respect but her weaknesses hold her back. As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spells on the very quick her being-that life of common places sacrifices closing in final craziness. Eveline sees that having respect is hopeless, because she sees her mother within her self. Eveline wants to be like her mother, even though it's going to hold her back, from happiness and respect. With all the aspects Eveline feels respect is unattainable.

Eveline, a woman who wants only to please her family, is unhappy with her life, however she promised her mother she would keep the family together. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the very promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. Eveline struggles to keep the family together, although her father is an alcoholic and abuses her. She finds comfort in the simple task of

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dusting her house everyday. Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Eveline feels that her life is being cut short by the hardships she faces. Doing her chores gives her a sense of bliss. As prosaic as her life is, Eveline is struck with the promise she made to her mother.

Furthermore, Eveline feels her life has been one disappointment after another, yet she can't seem to break away from the sadness it brings. It was a hard, hard life-but now that she was about to leave it, she did not find it a wholly undesirable life. The hardness in her life, to the point where it's nothing more than a routine of comfort desensitized her. Her life is all she has even known and fear holds her back from discovering the unknown possibilities. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition. Eveline has a complete change of life within reach capable of finding her own happiness, yet she turns away. She realizes her family needs her, and in fear of losing her security with them, she sacrifices her own happiness. Eveline will always be unhappy because she let go of the stability she feels around her family.

In the end, Eveline fears being like her mother and sadly this fear holds her from finding happiness in her life. Eveline feels captured in her life of abuse. Somehow she finds the little comfort she needs by doing daily chores. The promise to hold the family together and the fear of venturing out of routine captures Eveline in her saddening world. She will never find happiness because she fears change therefore she had already followed in her mother's footsteps.