

Word meanings:-

strayed - moved off the correct track  
of her own accord - voluntarily

obscure - unknown, uncertain

corbeille - a grateful-looking basket of fruits or flowers

portly - fat, overweight

mais si - but yes

cochon de lait - piglet

suffused - spread gradually

imperious - dominating and arrogant

exacting - demanding (here, in terms of quality and quantity of work from his servants)

disquieting - causing anxiety or worry

averted - turned away

peignoir - women's light dressing gown

listlessly - without any enthusiasm

clammy - damp and unpleasant

gaze riveted - looking intently

despairingly - without any hope

unwonted - unusual

gleam - shine

bayou - a marshy part of a waterbody

furbishings - furnishings

espousal - engagement

pall - cloth spread over the coffin