

Interior

Oil on canvas
81.3 cm × 114.3 cm
(32 in × 45 in)

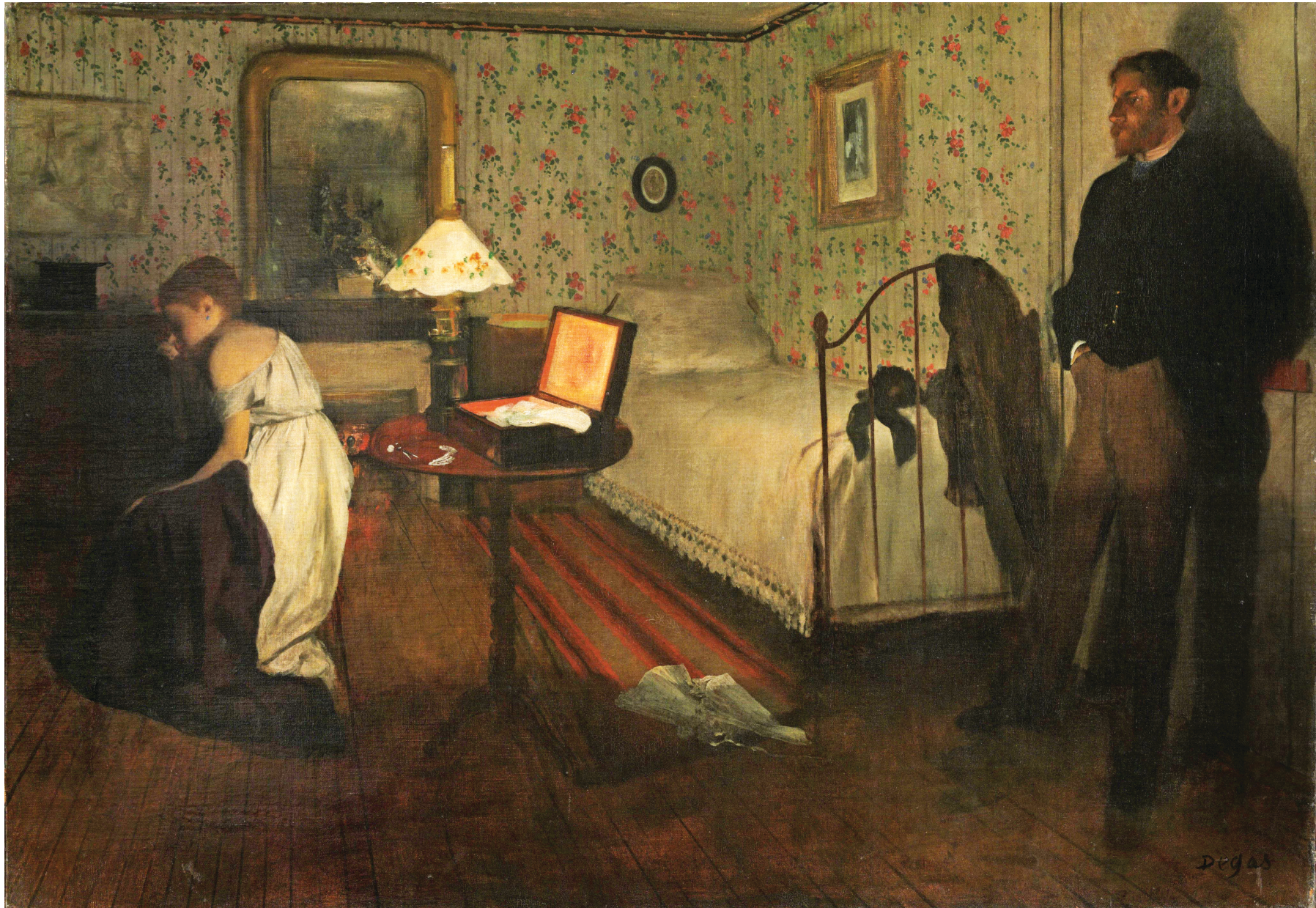
1868-1869

Technically exceptional, this is likely Degas's most disturbing and inscrutable painting. A young woman, illuminated by a table lamp, sits in a single bedroom, her white dress having slipped from her shoulder. Other items of clothing are strewn around the room, where a man in deep shadow stands against the door. The contrasting light effects are a significant factor in the painting's overall sense of menace.

Various literary works have been suggested as sources for the depicted scene. Perhaps the most compelling is Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1867), which recounts the tale of Thérèse and her lover Laurent. They murder Thérèse's husband, Camille, and are subsequently so consumed by guilt that they turn against each other. Scholars have also pointed out the symbolism of elements such as the open chest on the table, which may represent lost virginity.

Furthering the interpretive difficulty is that the painting has also been called *The Rape*, though not by Degas; he referred to it simply as 'my genre picture'. No doubt, as is common with Degas's imagery, *Interior* is purposely multifold in meaning.











*'Art is not what you see, but
what you make others see.'*

- Edgar Degas

