

- The Necklace Summary

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"The Necklace" is a short story by Guy de Maupassant that explores themes of appearance versus reality and the consequences of materialism. The story revolves around Matilda Loisel, a woman born into a poor family but who dreams of a luxurious life filled with elegant dresses, fine dinners, and beautiful jewelry. She is married to a modest clerk and feels deeply dissatisfied with her social status.

One day, her husband brings home an invitation to a grand ball at the Minister's house. Matilda is upset because she has no suitable dress or jewelry to wear. Her husband sacrifices his savings to buy her a dress, but she still feels incomplete without jewelry. She borrows a diamond necklace from her friend, Mrs. Forestier, and attends the ball, where she is admired by all.

After the event, Matilda discovers the necklace is missing. Unable to find it, the Loisels decide to replace it with an expensive replica, borrowing money and living in poverty for ten years to repay the debt. Eventually, Matilda meets Mrs. Forestier again and learns that the original necklace was fake and worth very little.

Key Elements

- **The Necklace:** Symbolizes Matilda's desire for wealth and social status, representing the illusions of materialism.
- **Appearance vs Reality:** The story contrasts the outward appearance of wealth with the harsh reality of poverty.

- **Consequences of Deception:** The Loisels' decision to replace the necklace leads to years of hardship.

Important Quotes

- "She was one of those pretty and charming girls who are born, as if through an error of destiny, into a family of clerks."
- "She danced madly, ecstatically, drunk with pleasure, with no thought for anything, in the triumph of her beauty, in the pride of her success, in a kind of happy cloud composed of all the adulation, admiration, and desire she had aroused."
- "Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you say that the necklace was a fake?"

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Who is the author of "The Necklace"?
- Why was Matilda unhappy with her life?
- What did Matilda borrow from Mrs. Forestier?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the significance of the necklace in the story.
- Describe the changes in Matilda's life after losing the necklace.
- What is the irony at the end of the story?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze the theme of appearance versus reality in "The Necklace" with examples.
- Discuss how Maupassant uses symbolism to convey the story's message.
- Write a character sketch of Matilda Loisel.

Answer Key

Level 1 – Easy

- Guy de Maupassant is the author.
- Matilda was unhappy because she was born poor and dreamed of a luxurious life.
- She borrowed a diamond necklace.

Level 2 – Moderate

- The necklace symbolizes Matilda's desire for wealth and social status, representing the illusions of materialism.
- After losing the necklace, Matilda and her husband live in poverty for ten years to repay the debt for the replacement necklace.
- The irony is that the original necklace was fake and worth very little, so their suffering was unnecessary.

Level 3 – Challenging

- The story contrasts the outward appearance of wealth (the necklace and Matilda's look at the ball) with the harsh reality of poverty (their life after replacing the necklace). For example, Matilda appears rich at the ball but is actually poor.
- Maupassant uses the necklace as a symbol of false value and materialism, showing how chasing appearances can lead to ruin.
- Matilda is a beautiful but dissatisfied woman who longs for a luxurious life. She is vain and proud but also hardworking and enduring when faced with hardship.

Quick Reference

- **Author:** Guy de Maupassant
- **Main Character:** Matilda Loisel
- **Setting:** Late 19th century France
- **Theme:** Appearance vs Reality, Materialism, Consequences of Deception

- **Symbol:** The Necklace

Glossary

- **Dainty:** Delicious or delicate in appearance.
- **Exasperated:** Intensely irritated and frustrated.
- **Desperation:** A state of hopelessness.
- **Francs:** Monetary unit of France and Switzerland.
- **Scruffy:** Shabby, untidy, or dirty in appearance.

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