



SUMMARY-

It is a fictional short story in the genre of realism. The author of this story was Guy de Maupassant. The story ended with a twist, also known as an ironic ending. This type of ending was a hallmark of Maupassant's style. The story took place in France several hundred years ago. The story tells that one must be satisfied and content with what one has. Also, one must not hide the truth. In this story, Matilda Loisel faces a very hard time as a result of her desires.

A lady, Matilda Loisel lived in a flat with his husband. He worked as a clerk for the Ministry of Education. They were not able to live a luxurious life. However, they were not poor, merely simple. However, Matilda's desire was to be rich. She felt irritated, disappointed and sad of not having a large house. Moreover, she desired to have good dresses, lots of jewelry which made her sad.

One day his husband brings her an invitation to a fancy party. It was an invitation to the ball. He thought his wife would be very excited about seeing the invitation letter. However, his wife, instead of being happy, threw away the invitation letter and started crying. She complained about not having a pretty dress to wear on such a great occasion. She wanted to seek admiration for everyone. Also, she wanted to be a success at the party. His gentle husband gave her four hundred francs to buy a pretty dress. He had saved the money to buy a rifle.

The week of the party approached. His wife seemed to be anxious again. She was upset as she felt that she didn't have any jewelry to wear with the dress. Her husband suggests her to ask the same from his friend Jeanne Forestier. Matilda went to her house and borrowed a sparkling necklace.

Matilda, along with his husband enjoyed a lot at the party. She was successful in seeking everyone's attention to her. Then, they headed for home during the odd hours in the morning. On reaching home, Matilda was surprised on not finding a necklace around her neck. They both felt that it might have fallen down in the cab which they took to reach home. Also, he searched on the streets they have come through.

Moreover, he approached the police, gave advertisement but all in vain. Her husband asked her to write a letter to her friend. She wrote that she had the clasp broken and is getting it repaired. Meanwhile, they were successful in searching for a similar necklace. However, it cost thirty-six thousand francs. His husband has inherited eighteen thousand francs from his father. However, they had to borrow the remaining money. They managed to buy the necklace through inherited and borrowed money.

But it took them a period of ten years to repay the borrowed amount. In these years, their lives have drastically changed. They moved to a smaller apartment, cleaned and cooked herself. Moreover, his husband did multiple jobs to repay the amount. Also, she looked like a strong woman of a poor

household. She looked very aged. One day she saw Miss Jeanne Forestier on the street. She decided to tell her the truth about the necklace. The latter was stunned by the rough appearance of the former. Moreover, on learning the truth of necklace, Jeanne Forestier told that it was a fake one. The worth of the same was no more than five hundred francs. The story tells us that one should not crave for luxuries. One must be satisfied and contented with what one has. Desires lead to unhappiness. Moreover, we should never hide the truth.

Character Analysis in The Necklace

Matilda Loisel: Matilda is a dissatisfied housewife who dreams of a life of glamour and wealth. She feels trapped in a middle-class life and longs to for the life of riches that she believes she deserves.

As a young, married woman, Madame Loisel is pretty and charming, but her vanity makes her feel entitled to more than what she has. In fact, because of her looks, she believes Fate has made a mistake, that she was destined for more. Envious of what others have and perpetually dissatisfied, she wants to be popular and admired in society in the ways attractive, rich women are. She thinks of little else but the trappings of wealth and shows scorn for all she does have in her basic but unadorned life. When her daydreams turn into a reality—an invitation to a ball given by her husband's superiors—she is noted as the prettiest woman there and admired as she has always hoped to be. But her dissatisfaction and vanity lead to her downfall, causing her to lose everything she has, including her youth, beauty, and modest way of life but at the same time causing her to grow, accept, and respect herself.

Monsieur Loisel: In contrast to Matilda's selfishness and greed, her husband demonstrates generosity and sacrifice. He is upset with his wife's dissatisfaction and works hard to secure tickets to the Ministry of Education ball to make her happy. When Matilda loses the necklace, Monsieur Loisel undergoes ten years of hard work and poverty in order to purchase a replacement.

Monsieur Loisel appears easygoing, if not glamorous or charismatic, and eager to please his wife. Realistic about what he can do within his means, he saves money for special purchases and shows generosity when, slightly reluctantly at first, he gives that money to his wife for a new dress. He never complains about his wife's dissatisfaction and seems to do what he can to make her happy. His attempt to do so, however, initiates the couple's downfall; in obtaining the invitation to the ball he unknowingly stimulates his wife's fantasies into actions. Monsieur Loisel's depth of character and quiet heroism emerge after Madame Loisel loses the necklace. He takes control of the situation, does what he can and thinks is right, and ends up losing everything. Yet he never complains or blames his wife for their great loss.

Madame Forestier: Madame Forestier is the wealthy friend of the Loisel's who lends Matilda the diamond necklace for the ball. She is generous to Matilda.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS-

Question 1.

Mme Loisel's disposition invites her doom. Comment in the context of the text you've read.
or

What kind of person is Matilda Loisel? Support your answer giving examples from the story "The Necklace".

Answer:

Mme Loisel belongs to a family of clerks. Her existence is quite average. They live on meagre income, enough for basic needs but not to fulfil aspirations. She gets married to a clerk and is so caught up with her dreams of wealth and pleasure that she is out of touch with the truths of her real life. In order to keep up appearances just to flatter her pride, she blows up four hundred francs on a gorgeous dress. And, not contented, she goes on borrowing a necklace from her friend. And, all of this is just to impress the wealthy and the rich with her beauty and glamour (even if on loan). No doubt, her pride is flattered and her wish of fine dining, expensive dresses and jewels satisfied but at a great price. Unfortunately, the necklace has lost and the couple has to cough up their entire inheritance and borrow as well to replace it. Repayment of the debt eats away the next ten years of their youth. They live poor. All the household chores and cares of a life of poverty visit them. Hence, her disposition invites her doom.

Question 2.

Mme Forestier proved to be a true friend. Elucidate.

Answer:

Mme Forestier turns out to be an interesting character. She plays a very vital role in the story. As a friend to Matilda, we find her to be really genuine as she helps Matilda in the hour of her need. When Mme Loisel needs to borrow jewels, she turns to Mme Forestier. Mme Forestier does not refuse. Displaying her generosity, she opens up the entire array of her jewels for Matilda to choose from. Also, she is considerate when Loiseles delay the return of the necklace. Surprisingly, at the end of the story, she concludes the entire narrative.

Without even a moment's hesitation, she reveals to Matilda that her necklace was just a fake. She is not at all worried in the light of the fact that she may have to return the necklace. It shows her honesty. Rather, she, like a true friend, feels bad for Matilda at her unnecessary suffering. We find her sympathizing with Mme Loisel. She is indeed a gem of a friend.

Question 3.

Do you think the story is aptly titled? Justify your answer.

Answer:

The whole narrative of the story 'The Necklace' revolves around a young woman Matilda, who in her foolish pride borrows a necklace inviting misery and sorrow for herself as well as for her husband. The 'necklace' has lost and the Loisel's fall into a tremendous debt. They spend the next ten years of their life in paying debt for the replacement of the lost necklace. Their entire life moves around impoverished everyday saga of misery and hunger and the necklace, in fact, changes the very course of their life. Also, it is against the back drop of the necklace that Matilda's pride and dishonesty are highlighted. At the same time, the necklace serves a twist at the end as it turns out to be a fake one. The story is, hence, most aptly titled as the necklace is, in fact, the leading character of this ironic tale of desire, the doom and the tragedy.

Question 4. 'The Necklace' reveals that vanity is an evil. It may bring joy for a short period but

ultimately it leads to ruin. If you were placed in a situation similar to that of Matilda, what would have you done? Write your views.

Answer:

‘The necklace’, through the example of Matilda conveys a chore truth that one must value what he has and cherish. His blessings rather than chase illusions in the form of material possessions, because if one lacks contentment then there is no end to the chase.

Matilda should have valued the love of her husband rather than grumble about her unfulfilled aspirations. And to look beautiful, one does not need to borrow expensive jewels; it is the goodness of a person and the way one conducts, makes one beautiful.

Question 5.

‘Contentment is a great wealth.’ Explain with reference to Matilda—the main character of this story.

Answer:

There is no doubt in saying that man’s final goal should be contentment. Human beings can never be happy if they have unlimited desires and wants. This is shown by the character Matilda who was never happy with what she had but always desired for more and more which led her to ruin. Man should find happiness in what he has, rather than running after what he does not have. It could be the cause of his unhappiness and sorrow.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS-

Q1) What kind of a person is Mme Loisel — why is she always unhappy?

Ans) Mme Loisel is a very unhappy and unsatisfied person. She is not happy with her married life, her house or for that matter anything in her life. She always keeps on dreaming about how her life would have been if she were born in a rich house, married in a rich house and had lots of money to buy things. She is a greedy woman and always keeps on thinking of having more and more things.

Q2) What kind of a person is her husband?

Ans) Her husband is a very caring and a loving man. He is not greedy as he stays happy with whatever he has. He appreciates the little things that life has given him and does not want to see his wife unhappy for which he sacrifices his own needs.

Q3) What fresh problem now disturbs Mme Loisel?

Ans) Mme Loisel’s husband agrees to buy her a dress worth 400 francs and sacrifices his own requirement of buying a gun but Mme. Loisel, being a greedy woman starts acting strangely and demands jewellery to wear or else she will not go to the party.

Q4) How is the problem solved?

Ans) When she does not agree to wear flowers to the party, her husband suggests her to approach her friend Mme Forestier who is a rich lady and would lend her jewellery to wear at the party.

Q5) What do M. and Mme Loisel do next?

Ans) M and Mme. Loisel make a lot of efforts after they realize that they have lost the necklace. They try to remember the cab number so that they can check there, M. loisel goes to the tracks where she could have dropped it, reports at the police station and cab offices. He also gives an

advertisement in the newspaper saying that the person who returns it will be rewarded but nothing works. So they finally decide to replace the necklace by buying a necklace similar to the one they have lost.

Q6) How do they replace the necklace?

Ans) They buy a necklace from a shop for 36000 francs. They themselves have only 18000 francs so they borrow the rest of the money by making up false stories and taking loans from a lot of lenders.

EXTRA QUESTIONS-

1. The course of the Loiseles' life changed due to the necklace. Comment.

Answer:

The course of the Loisel's life changed due to the necklace. After replacing the lost necklace with a new one, they had to repay all the money that they had borrowed to buy the new necklace. They sent away the maid and changed their lodgings. They rented some rooms in an attic. Matilda learnt the odious work of a kitchen. She washed the dishes, soiled linen, their clothes and dishcloths. She took down the refuse to the street each morning and brought up the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath. She went to the grocer's, the butcher's, and the fruiter's, with her basket on her arm, shopping, haggling to save her money. Loisel worked in the evenings, putting the books of some merchants in order. At night, he did copying at five sous a page. This lasted for ten years, and at the end of the said period, they were able to repay their lenders.

Question 3:

2. What would have happened to Matilda if she had confessed to her friend that she had lost her necklace?

Answer:

If Matilda would have confessed to her friend that she had lost her necklace, she might have been in lesser trouble than what she faced after having replaced the necklace. Her friend would definitely have been angry with her. Most probably, she would have asked Matilda to replace it. She would have given her the details from where she had bought the necklace and how much it had cost her. Matilda would thus have known that the jewels in the necklace were not real diamonds. It would have cost her a far lesser amount to replace it. Matilda would thus have saved herself and her husband all the trouble they went through.