

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 7: THE NECKLACE



THE NECKLACE

~Summary~

-by Guy De Maupassant

Matilda Loisel and her Unhappiness –

Matilda Loisel, a middle class lady, desperately wished she were wealthy. She was very pretty and charming but had the bad luck to be born into a family of clerks and married to another clerk, M Loisel. Her husband worked as a clerk in the office of the Board of Education. Matilda was simple but she was unhappy. She was so convinced that she's meant to be rich that she detested her real life and spent all day dreaming and despairing about the fabulous life that she was not having.

M Loisel Brings an Invitation

One day, M Loisel brought an invitation to a fancy ball (party) organised by his boss, the Minister of Education. M Loisel thought that her wife would be delighted to read the invitation but she was not delighted to see the invitation. She told her husband that she did not have a good dress to wear to that occasion and asked him to give the invitation to his friend. Her husband M Loisel, told her that she could buy a new dress. He had saved four hundred francs to buy a gun to join some hunting parties. He said that he would give that money to her for buying a new dress.

Matilda Gets Necklace from Mme Forestier

Matilda brought a new dress but she was not happy. Her husband asked the reason of her sadness. She said that she would not go for the ball as she did not have jewellery to wear with the dress. He replied that she should wear some natural flowers, but she was not convinced. Then he advised her to borrow it from her friend, Mme Forestier. Next day, she went to her friend's house and borrowed a necklace for the ball.

Matilda at the Day of Ball

The night of the ball arrived and Matilda was happy at the occasion. She looked very beautiful in the dress. Everyone liked her and she was absolutely thrilled. She and her husband did not leave until 4 am. Then they caught a cab and returned home.

The Necklace was Lost

When she returned home and was changing her dress, Matilda wanted to see her beauty in final view before the mirror. Suddenly, she noticed that the necklace was not around her neck. She was shocked to see that her necklace had got lost. She cried out and informed her husband that she had lost the necklace. Her husband searched for the necklace on every place, where they went last night. He went to the police and the cab offices. He also put an advertisement in the newspapers, but the necklace was not found. So he advised her wife to write a letter to her friend telling her that she needed some time to get the necklace repaired.

Matilda Replace the Necklace

At last, Matilda decided to replace the necklace with a necklace that looked similar to it. Her husband gave her 18000 francs which his father had left for him. He took a loan of the remaining amount and purchased a diamond necklace for 36000 francs. She returned the necklace to her friend. Buying the necklace bought the Loisel in poverty. They lost their house, their maid, their comfortable lifestyle and on top of it all, Matilda lost her good-looking face.

The Truth Revealed Out

After ten years, all the debts were finally paid. One day Matilda was walking in the Champs-Elysees and saw Mme Forestier. She was looking charming and beautiful as she had looked ten years before. Now all the debts were paid off, Matilda decided to tell the story to Mme Forestier about her necklace. At this, Mme Forestier informed her that it was a fake necklace and the cost of it was only five hundred francs.

Conclusion of The Necklace

In the chapter – The Necklace focuses that one should be content and satisfied with their belongings and not crave for expensive items that are not within their economical capabilities. Extreme desire for lavish items leads to unhappiness and loss of peace of mind.

NCERT SOLUTION

Questions (Page No. 1)

(READ AND FIND OUT)

Question 1: What kind of a person is Mme Loisel — why is she always unhappy?

Answer: Mme Loisel was a young and pretty woman who led a simple yet unhappy life. She came from a poor family but always dreamt of riches and luxuries of life. She was always unhappy as she knew her dreams could never be fulfilled. She was aware that her meagre resources weren't enough to satisfy her expensive desires and all this made her unhappy and angry on her condition.

Question 2: What kind of a person is her husband?

Answer: Matilda's husband Monsieur Loisel was an ordinary and simple-hearted young man. He was a small clerk in the office of the Board of Education, but he was contented with his job. With great excitement, he brought a dinner invitation of a grand party for his wife. However poor he might be, he was a caring husband as he gave four hundred francs to his dear wife to buy a pretty dress for the party.

Questions (Page No. 41)

(READ AND FIND OUT)

Read and Find Out (Page 41)

Question 1: What fresh problem now disturbs Mme Loisel?

Answer: After spending four hundred francs in buying a beautiful dress, Mme Loisel was bothered by yet another fresh problem. She brooded over the fact that she did not have a beautiful jewel to pair with her pretty dress. Hearing this, her husband suggested her to wear some natural flowers as jewellery, but she refused stating that there was nothing more humiliating than to have a shabby air in the midst of rich women.

Question 2: How is the problem solved?

Answer: Mme Loisel's husband, Monsieur Loisel initially suggested her to wear some natural flowers as jewellery, but she refused the idea. Then, he advised her to request and borrow some jewels from her rich friend, Mme Forestier. Matilda uttered a cry of joy as she liked this wonderful idea. The next day she took herself to her friend's house and picked a superb necklace of diamonds that matched with her beautiful attire. Hence, her husband's timely suggestion solved her problem.

Questions (Page No. 42)

(READ AND FIND OUT)

Question 1: What do M. and Mme Loisel do next?

Answer: When the Loisels realised that the necklace went missing, they left no stone unturned and tried their best to locate the lost jewel, but couldn't find it. Monsieur Loisel even went back to the streets through which they returned home, in case it had accidentally fallen on the road. When he couldn't find anything, he went to the police and cab offices and also put up an advertisement in the newspapers offering a reward to anyone who found the necklace. Soon after, he asked his wife to write a letter to her friend, Mme Forestier stating that the clasp of the necklace had broken and would return it once repaired. This would give them some more time to find the necklace. However, all their efforts went in vain. Eventually, they bought a new diamond necklace to replace the lost one.

Question 2: How do they replace the necklace?

Answer: After all their efforts went in vain, M. and Mme Loisel decided to buy a fresh new identical necklace to replace the lost necklace. M. Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs of his inheritance and borrowed the rest of the money from usurers and the whole race of lenders by making ruinous promises. When they borrowed enough money, the couple went to the merchant and bought a new necklace for thirty six thousand francs and returned it to the rightful Owner, Mme Forestier.

Questions (Page No. 46)

(THINK ABOUT IT)

Question 1: The course of the Loisels' life changed due to the necklace. Comment.

Answer: The Loisels' life took a major turn due to the necklace. It took them ten years to repay the loan that they had borrowed to buy the necklace. Their life turned upside down and everything changed for them to repay the debt. They changed their lodgings, sent away the maid and rented some rooms in an attic. Matilda did all the tedious work of the kitchen, washed dirty linen, bargained with the grocer and butcher to save every single sou for mere survival. Her husband worked until late evenings and took up odd jobs to repay their debt. The couple led a miserable life to sustain themselves and repay the frightful debt for buying the expensive jewel.

Question 2: What was the cause of Matilda's ruin? How could she have avoided it?

Answer: Matilda's materialistic aspirations and dissatisfaction was the ultimate cause of her ruin. She was always unhappy about her financial status and wished to be born in the midst of

riches and luxuries of life. She could have easily avoided her ruin by accepting her current situation and being content with her simple life with her loving husband.

Question 3: What would have happened to Matilda if she had confessed to her friend that she had lost her necklace?

Answer: If Matilda could have courageously confessed to her friend, Mme Forestier about the loss of the necklace, she could have saved herself from her doom. Her friend would have certainly got angry for the loss, but at least she would have come to know that it was a fake necklace that cost five hundred francs only. Had she known the real value of the necklace before, she would not have spent her husband's entire inheritance and borrowed eighteen thousand francs to buy a replacement for the lost necklace. Besides, she could have saved herself and her husband from ten long years of suffering, misery, crushing poverty and all the trouble that they had to face to repay the frightful debt.

Question 4: If you were caught in a situation like this, how would you have dealt with it?

Answer: If I had been caught in a similar situation, I would have tried my best not to become a victim of greed and unrealistic aspirations. Had I lost a friend's necklace, I would have revealed the truth about the loss and be ready to face the consequences. I would have maintained honesty to come out of the problem and that would have definitely paved a way out for me.

Questions (Page No. 46)

(TALK ABOUT IT)

Question 1: The characters in this story speak in English. Do you think this is their language? What clues are there in the story about the language its characters must be speaking in?

Answer: Although the characters in the story speak in English, it was probably not their language. Guy De Maupassant, the writer wrote the story in French and it was later translated into English. There are ample pointers in the text that indicate the French origin of the characters such as the salutations used before the surnames of characters such 'Monsieur and Mme Loisel', 'Mme Forestier' and 'George Ramponneau', the minister's name. Besides, the words used to denote currency such as 'Franc' and 'Sou'. Then, the location of the shop was at 'Palais Royal' and 'Champs Elysees' that point out the French origin and history of the characters in the story.

Question 2: Honesty is the best policy.

Answer: Honesty is indeed the best policy. We all know that hypocrisy and pride seem very rewarding and attractive initially. But, a person who follows the path of falsehood is likely to lead a life of misery, suffering and utter gloom. On the contrary, an honest person might face difficulties in life at the beginning but it ultimately gives him/her all the happiness that he/she

rightfully deserves. Therefore, honesty is the ultimate choice to lead a life of contentment, harmony and eternal happiness.

Question 3: We should be content with what life gives us.

Answer: Yes, we should be at peace and contented with what life gives us. Every person in this world is born in different conditions and his/her entire life package is a great mystery. Some people are born with all riches, luxury, name and fame. On the other hand, there are some who are born in suffering and crushing poverty which makes it difficult for them to survive. Hence, there is a famous adage which says, "Cut your coat according to your cloth". This means that one must learn to live within one's capacity and be content with what one has. A person can try to improve his/her financial position through honest means and eventually can be happy with how he/she manages his/her life peacefully.

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