
The Necklace
Guy de Maupassant
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The Necklace

By Guy de Maupassant

CLASSIC SHORT STORY
ENGLISH READING PRACTICE

ENGLISH SHORT STORIES FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS

LEVEL 5 · C1

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About the Author

Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893)

Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893) was a celebrated French writer, novelist, and short-story author, widely regarded as one of the greatest masters of the short-story genre in world literature. Renowned for his realistic descriptions, psychological insight, and unexpected endings, he produced works that explored human nature, social inequality, ambition, vanity, and the contradictions of everyday life.

Henri René Albert Guy de Maupassant was born on August 5, 1850, at the Château de Miromesnil in Normandy, France. He spent much of his childhood in Normandy, a region whose landscapes, traditions, and inhabitants later became important sources of inspiration for his literary works. His parents separated when he was young, and he was raised largely by his mother, Laure Le Poittevin, who encouraged his interest in literature. Through his family connections, he also became acquainted with the celebrated French novelist Gustave Flaubert, who later played a significant role in his literary development.

During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, Maupassant served in the French army. The experience exposed him to the consequences of war and provided material for several of his later stories. After the war, he moved to Paris, where he worked as a civil servant, first in the Ministry of Marine and later in the Ministry of Public Instruction. Although he maintained a regular professional career for several years, his growing passion for writing gradually became his central ambition.

Maupassant received considerable literary guidance from Gustave Flaubert, who encouraged him to observe people carefully, develop a precise writing style, and avoid unnecessary exaggeration. Flaubert's influence helped shape Maupassant's commitment to literary realism. He became particularly skilled at portraying ordinary individuals whose lives were shaped by social expectations, financial pressures, personal desires, and moral weaknesses.

His literary breakthrough came in 1880 with the publication of *Boule de Suif* (*Ball of Fat*), a short story included in the collection *Les Soirées de Médan*. The work received widespread critical attention and established his reputation as a major literary talent. During the following decade, he became extraordinarily productive, publishing approximately three hundred short stories, six novels, travel books, and numerous articles.

Among his best-known works are *The Necklace* (1884), *Bel-Ami* (1885), *Pierre et Jean* (1887–1888), *The Horla* (1887), and *Une Vie* (*A Life*, 1883). His stories frequently examine the gap between appearance and reality, revealing how ambition, jealousy, greed, social pressure, and self-deception can influence human behaviour. He was especially admired for his ability to construct carefully controlled narratives that lead readers towards surprising and often deeply ironic conclusions.

One of the defining characteristics of Maupassant's writing is his ability to present complex human experiences through seemingly ordinary situations. Rather than relying on elaborate philosophical explanations, he often allows characters' decisions and their consequences to reveal the deeper meaning of a story. His restrained narrative style, vivid characterisation,

and sharp observations of society make his works both accessible and intellectually engaging.

Despite his remarkable literary success, Maupassant experienced serious physical and psychological difficulties during the later years of his life. His health deteriorated progressively, and in 1892 he suffered a severe mental health crisis. He spent the final period of his life in a private clinic in Paris, where he died on July 6, 1893, at the age of forty-two.

Today, Guy de Maupassant remains one of the most influential short-story writers in French literature. His works continue to be read and studied internationally because of their narrative precision, psychological depth, social criticism, and enduring relevance. His ability to expose the complexities of human nature through concise yet powerful storytelling has secured his place among the great masters of world literature.

About the Story

"The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant

The Necklace (La Parure) is a celebrated short story by the French writer Guy de Maupassant, first published in 1884. It is widely regarded as one of the finest examples of nineteenth-century literary realism and is particularly famous for its unexpected ending and powerful exploration of human vanity, social ambition, and the consequences of seemingly insignificant decisions. Through a relatively simple narrative, Maupassant examines the tension between outward appearance and inner reality, revealing how the desire for social recognition can profoundly shape an individual's life.

The story is set in nineteenth-century Paris and centres on Mathilde Loisel, a beautiful young woman born into a modest family and married to a minor government clerk. Although her circumstances are relatively comfortable, she feels deeply dissatisfied with her ordinary existence. Convinced that she deserves a life of luxury, elegance, and admiration, Mathilde constantly imagines herself surrounded by expensive possessions, magnificent interiors, and influential people. Her dissatisfaction is not caused by extreme poverty but by the painful contrast between the life she possesses and the privileged existence she believes she ought to have.

Mathilde's husband, Monsieur Loisel, is a modest and devoted man who takes pleasure in simple comforts. When he obtains an invitation to an exclusive ball at the Ministry of Public Instruction, he expects his wife to be delighted. Instead, Mathilde becomes distressed because she believes she has nothing suitable to wear. In an effort to make her happy, her husband sacrifices his savings to purchase an elegant dress. However, Mathilde remains dissatisfied because she has no jewellery to complement it.

Following her husband's suggestion, she visits her wealthy friend, Madame Forestier, and borrows a magnificent diamond necklace. On the evening of the ball, Mathilde experiences the admiration and social recognition she has long desired. She becomes the centre of attention, attracting the interest of influential guests and even the minister himself. For a few unforgettable hours, she feels that she has finally entered the world of elegance and distinction she has always imagined.

The apparent happiness of the evening, however, is destroyed when Mathilde discovers that the necklace has disappeared. Unable to find it, she and her husband decide to purchase an identical replacement rather than reveal the loss to Madame Forestier. The replacement costs thirty-six thousand francs, forcing Monsieur Loisel to borrow a substantial amount of money and accept financially ruinous obligations. Their decision transforms their lives completely.

Over the following ten years, the Loisels endure extraordinary hardship to repay their debts. They dismiss their servant, move into a small attic apartment, and abandon the modest comforts they once enjoyed. Mathilde performs exhausting domestic tasks, while her husband works additional hours in the evenings and late at night. Their former way of life disappears, and the once-beautiful young woman gradually becomes physically worn by years of poverty and labour.

After finally repaying every debt, Mathilde unexpectedly encounters Madame Forestier on the Champs-Élysées. She decides to reveal the truth about the lost necklace and the ten years of suffering it has caused. To her astonishment, Madame Forestier explains that the original necklace was imitation jewellery, worth no more than five hundred francs. This revelation transforms the entire story into a devastating example of dramatic irony: the Loisels sacrificed ten years of their lives to replace an object that had never possessed the value they imagined.

One of the central themes of The Necklace is the destructive power of vanity and excessive concern with social status. Mathilde's desire to appear wealthy and distinguished prevents her from appreciating the genuine affection and modest security already present in her life. Her tragedy arises not simply from losing the necklace but from the decision to conceal the truth, a choice that leads to years of unnecessary suffering.

Another important theme is the contrast between appearance and reality. Throughout the narrative, expensive clothing, jewellery, and luxurious surroundings are associated with social prestige and personal happiness. Yet the final revelation exposes the fragility of these assumptions. The necklace appears valuable but is essentially worthless, while the seemingly ordinary life Mathilde rejects contains forms of security and contentment that she fails to recognise.

Maupassant also explores social inequality and the pressures created by class distinctions. Mathilde's dissatisfaction reflects a society in which wealth, appearance, and social position strongly influence how individuals are perceived. Her longing to belong to a higher social class illustrates the psychological burden of comparing one's circumstances with an idealised version of someone else's life.

The story's title carries symbolic significance. The necklace represents not only material wealth and social distinction but also illusion, deception, and the potentially devastating consequences of appearances. Its apparent value becomes the foundation of a decade of hardship, demonstrating how easily people can mistake outward beauty for genuine worth.

Maupassant's narrative technique is characterised by realism, economical storytelling, psychological observation, and dramatic irony. He presents the events in a straightforward chronological sequence, allowing the consequences of the characters' decisions to unfold naturally. Rather than explicitly explaining the moral of the story, he leaves readers to recognise the irony and draw their own conclusions. The final revelation is particularly effective because it forces readers to reconsider the entire narrative from a completely different perspective.

For advanced English learners, The Necklace offers an excellent opportunity to develop sophisticated reading and analytical skills. Its vocabulary includes literary expressions, descriptive language, and terms associated with social class, wealth, emotional suffering, and financial hardship. The story also provides valuable material for examining narrative perspective, character development, symbolism, irony, and the relationship between appearance and reality.

Ultimately, The Necklace is far more than a story about a lost piece of jewellery. It is a penetrating examination of human ambition, self-deception, social expectations, and the unpredictable consequences of personal choices. Its unforgettable ending reminds readers that the pursuit of an imagined ideal can sometimes cause them to overlook the value of what they already possess.

The Necklace

by Guy de Maupassant

The girl was one of those pretty and charming young creatures who sometimes are born, as if by a slip of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a little clerk of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was unhappy as if she had really fallen from a higher station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank, for beauty, grace and charm take the place of family and birth. Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

Mathilde suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born to enjoy all delicacies and all luxuries. She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the bareness of the walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugliness of the curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tortured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework aroused in her despairing regrets and bewildering dreams. She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove. She thought of long reception halls hung with ancient silk, of the dainty cabinets containing priceless curiosities and of the little coquettish perfumed reception rooms made for chatting at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after, whom all women envy and whose attention they all desire.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a tablecloth in use three days, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup tureen and declared with a delighted air, "Ah, the good soup! I don't know anything better than that," she thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry that peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvellous plates and of the whispered gallantries to which you listen with a sphinxlike smile while you are eating the pink meat of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no gowns, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but that. She felt made for that. She would have liked so much to please, to be envied, to be charming, to be sought after.

She had a friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, and whom she did not like to go to see any more because she felt so sad when she came home.

But one evening her husband reached home with a triumphant air and holding a large envelope in his hand.

"There," said he, "there is something for you."

She tore the paper quickly and drew out a printed card which bore these words:

> *The Minister of Public Instruction and Madame Georges Ramponneau request the honor of M. and Madame Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th.*

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table crossly, muttering:

"What do you wish me to do with that?"

“Why, my dear, I thought you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had great trouble to get it. Every one wants to go; it is very select, and they are not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole official world will be there.”

She looked at him with an irritated glance and said impatiently:

“And what do you wish me to put on my back?”

He had not thought of that. He stammered:

“Why, the gown you go to the theatre in. It looks very well to me.”

He stopped, distracted, seeing that his wife was weeping. Two great tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes toward the corners of her mouth.

“What’s the matter? What’s the matter?” he answered.

By a violent effort she conquered her grief and replied in a calm voice, while she wiped her wet cheeks:

“Nothing. Only I have no gown, and, therefore, I can’t go to this ball. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I am.”

He was in despair. He resumed:

“Come, let us see, Mathilde. How much would it cost, a suitable gown, which you could use on other occasions—something very simple?”

She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could ask without drawing on herself an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

Finally she replied hesitating:

“I don’t know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs.”

He grew a little pale, because he was laying aside just that amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends who went to shoot larks there of a Sunday.

But he said:

“Very well. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty gown.”

The day of the ball drew near and Madame Loisel seemed sad, uneasy, anxious. Her frock was ready, however. Her husband said to her one evening:

“What is the matter? Come, you have seemed very queer these last three days.”

And she answered:

“It annoys me not to have a single piece of jewelry, not a single ornament, nothing to put on. I shall look poverty-stricken. I would almost rather not go at all.”

“You might wear natural flowers,” said her husband. “They’re very stylish at this time of year. For ten francs you can get two or three magnificent roses.”

She was not convinced.

“No; there’s nothing more humiliating than to look poor among other women who are rich.”

“How stupid you are!” her husband cried. “Go look up your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You’re intimate enough with her to do that.”

She uttered a cry of joy:

“True! I never thought of it.”

The next day she went to her friend and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to a wardrobe with a mirror, took out a large jewel box, brought it back, opened it and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

She saw first some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian gold cross set with precious stones, of admirable workmanship. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitated and could not make up her mind to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"Haven't you any more?"

"Why, yes. Look further; I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart throbbed with an immoderate desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it round her throat, outside her high-necked waist, and was lost in ecstasy at her reflection in the mirror.

Then she asked, hesitating, filled with anxious doubt:

"Will you lend me this, only this?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

She threw her arms round her friend's neck, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The night of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel was a great success. She was prettier than any other woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling and wild with joy. All the men looked at her, asked her name, sought to be introduced. All the attaches of the Cabinet wished to waltz with her. She was remarked by the minister himself.

She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness comprised of all this homage, admiration, these awakened desires and of that sense of triumph which is so sweet to woman's heart.

She left the ball about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were enjoying the ball.

He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, the modest wraps of common life, the poverty of which contrasted with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wished to escape so as not to be remarked by the other women, who were enveloping themselves in costly furs.

Loisel held her back, saying: "Wait a bit. You will catch cold outside. I will call a cab."

But she did not listen to him and rapidly descended the stairs. When they reached the street they could not find a carriage and began to look for one, shouting after the cabmen passing at a distance.

They went toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those ancient night cabs which, as though they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day, are never seen round Paris until after dark.

It took them to their dwelling in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly they mounted the stairs to their flat. All was ended for her. As to him, he reflected that he must be at the ministry at ten o'clock that morning.

She removed her wraps before the glass so as to see herself once more in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace around her neck!

“What is the matter with you?” demanded her husband, already half undressed.

She turned distractedly toward him.

“I have—I have—I’ve lost Madame Forestier’s necklace,” she cried.

He stood up, bewildered.

“What!—how? Impossible!”

They looked among the folds of her skirt, of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere, but did not find it.

“You’re sure you had it on when you left the ball?” he asked.

“Yes, I felt it in the vestibule of the minister’s house.”

“But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab.”

“Yes, probably. Did you take his number?”

“No. And you—didn’t you notice it?”

“No.”

They looked, thunderstruck, at each other. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

“I shall go back on foot,” said he, “over the whole route, to see whether I can find it.”

He went out. She sat waiting on a chair in her ball dress, without strength to go to bed, overwhelmed, without any fire, without a thought.

Her husband returned about seven o’clock. He had found nothing.

He went to police headquarters, to the newspaper offices to offer a reward; he went to the cab companies—everywhere, in fact, whither he was urged by the least spark of hope.

She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity.

Loisel returned at night with a hollow, pale face. He had discovered nothing.

“You must write to your friend,” said he, “that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to turn round.”

She wrote at his dictation.

At the end of a week they had lost all hope. Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

“We must consider how to replace that ornament.”

The next day they took the box that had contained it and went to the jeweler whose name was found within. He consulted his books.

“It was not I, madame, who sold that necklace; I must simply have furnished the case.”

Then they went from jeweler to jeweler, searching for a necklace like the other, trying to recall it, both sick with chagrin and grief.

They found, in a shop at the Palais Royal, a string of diamonds that seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days yet. And they made a bargain that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs, in case they should find the lost necklace before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers and all the race of lenders. He compromised all the rest of his life, risked signing a note without even knowing

whether he could meet it; and, frightened by the trouble yet to come, by the black misery that was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, laying upon the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took back the necklace Madame Forestier said to her with a chilly manner:

"You should have returned it sooner; I might have needed it."

She did not open the case, as her friend had so much feared. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken Madame Loisel for a thief?

Thereafter Madame Loisel knew the horrible existence of the needy. She bore her part, however, with sudden heroism. That dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know what heavy housework meant and the odious cares of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her dainty fingers and rosy nails on greasy pots and pans. She washed the soiled linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning and carried up the water, stopping for breath at every landing. And dressed like a woman of the people, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher, a basket on her arm, bargaining, meeting with impertinence, defending her miserable money, sou by sou.

Every month they had to meet some notes, renew others, obtain more time.

Her husband worked evenings, making up a tradesman's accounts, and late at night he often copied manuscript for five sous a page.

This life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid everything, everything, with the rates of usury and the accumulations of the compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households—strong and hard and rough. With frowsy hair, skirts askew and red hands, she talked loud while washing the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and she thought of that gay evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? who knows? How strange and changeful is life! How small a thing is needed to make or ruin us!

But one Sunday, having gone to take a walk in the Champs Elysees to refresh herself after the labors of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman who was leading a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt moved. Should she speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all about it. Why not?

She went up.

"Good-day, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be familiarly addressed by this plain good-wife, did not recognize her at all and stammered:

"But—madame!—I do not know—You must have mistaken."

"No. I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

“Oh, my poor Mathilde! How you are changed!”

“Yes, I have had a pretty hard life, since I last saw you, and great poverty—and that because of you!”

“Of me! How so?”

“Do you remember that diamond necklace you lent me to wear at the ministerial ball?”

“Yes. Well?”

“Well, I lost it.”

“What do you mean? You brought it back.”

“I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it was not easy for us, for us who had nothing. At last it is ended, and I am very glad.”

Madame Forestier had stopped.

“You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?”

“Yes. You never noticed it, then! They were very similar.”

And she smiled with a joy that was at once proud and ingenuous.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took her hands.

“Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, my necklace was paste! It was worth at most only five hundred francs!”

THE END

VOCABULARY LIST

1. Dowry /ˈdaʊri/ — money, property, or goods that a woman traditionally brings to her marriage.

Example: “She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man; so she let herself be married to a little clerk of the Ministry of Public Instruction.”

2. Ingenuity /ˌɪndʒəˈnjuːəti/ — the ability to think creatively and find clever solutions to difficult problems.

Example: “Natural ingenuity, instinct for what is elegant, a supple mind are their sole hierarchy, and often make of women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.”

3. Antechambers /ˈæntitʃeɪmbəz/ — small rooms or waiting areas leading into a larger or more important room.

Example: “She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove.”

4. Candelabra /ˌkændəˈlɑːbrə/ — decorative holders with several branches for candles or lights.

Example: “She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove.”

5. Shabby /ˈʃæbi/ — worn out, old, or in poor condition, often suggesting a lack of money or care.

Example: “She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the bareness of the walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugliness of the curtains.”

6. Distressed /dɪˈstrest/ — experiencing severe anxiety, sadness, or emotional suffering.

Example: “She was distressed at the poverty of her dwelling, at the bareness of the walls, at the shabby chairs, the ugliness of the curtains.”

7. Delicacies /ˈdelɪkəsiz/ — especially fine, luxurious, or carefully prepared food and other pleasures.

Example: “Mathilde suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born to enjoy all delicacies and all luxuries.”

8. Oppressive /əˈpresɪv/ — unpleasantly heavy, intense, or difficult to endure; causing discomfort or distress.

Example: “She thought of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, illumined by tall bronze candelabra, and of two great footmen in knee breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the oppressive heat of the stove.”

9. Economical /ˌiːkəˈnɒmɪkəl/ — careful about spending money; avoiding unnecessary expenditure.

Example: “She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could ask without drawing on herself an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.”

10. Immoderate /ɪˈmɒdərət/ — excessive or beyond reasonable limits; lacking restraint.

Example: “Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart throbbed with an immoderate desire.”

11. Ecstasy /ˈekstəsi/ — an overwhelming feeling of intense happiness, excitement, or delight.

Example: “She fastened it round her throat, outside her high-necked waist, and was lost in ecstasy at her reflection in the mirror.”

12. Rapture /ˈræptʃə/ — a state of intense pleasure, happiness, or emotional excitement.

Example: “She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness comprised of all this homage, admiration, these awakened desires and of that sense of triumph which is so sweet to woman's heart.”

13. Homage /ˈhɒmɪdʒ/ — deep respect, admiration, or public recognition shown towards someone.

Example: “She danced with rapture, with passion, intoxicated by pleasure, forgetting all in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness comprised of all this homage, admiration, these awakened desires and of that sense of triumph which is so sweet to woman's heart.”

14. Vestibule /ˈvestɪbjuːl/ — an entrance hall or small area leading into the main part of a building.

Example: “Yes, I felt it in the vestibule of the minister's house.”

15. Calamity /kəˈlæməti/ — a serious and often unexpected event that causes great damage, suffering, or distress.

Example: “She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity.”

16. Chagrin /ˈʃægrɪn/ — a feeling of distress, disappointment, or embarrassment caused by failure or an unpleasant discovery.

Example: “They found, in a shop at the Palais Royal, a string of diamonds that seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost.”

17. Usurers /ˈjuːʒərəz/ — people who lend money at excessively high rates of interest.

Example: “He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there.”

18. Privations /praɪˈveɪʃənz/ — severe hardships resulting from a lack of basic necessities or comforts.

Example: “He compromised all the rest of his life, risked signing a note without even knowing whether he could meet it; and, frightened by the trouble yet to come, by the black misery that was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and moral tortures that he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, laying upon the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand francs.”

19. Ingenuous /ɪnˈdʒenjuəs/ — innocent, sincere, and free from deliberate deception or pretence.

Example: “And she smiled with a joy that was at once proud and ingenuous.”

20. Accumulations /əˌkjuːmjəˈleɪʃənz/ — amounts or quantities that have gradually increased or built up over time.

Example: “At the end of ten years they had paid everything, everything, with the rates of usury and the accumulations of the compound interest.”

READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions: Answer the following questions based on the story.

1. Why does Mathilde Loisel feel dissatisfied with her modest lifestyle, despite having a husband who genuinely cares for her?

2. How do Mathilde's dreams of wealth, luxury, and social recognition reveal her attitudes towards social class and personal happiness?

3. In what ways does Monsieur Loisel's attitude towards life contrast with his wife's expectations and ambitions?

4. Why does Mathilde react with disappointment rather than excitement when her husband presents her with an invitation to the ministerial ball?

5. Why does Monsieur Loisel sacrifice his savings to buy Mathilde a new dress, and what does this decision reveal about his character?

6. Why does Mathilde remain dissatisfied even after receiving an elegant dress, and what does her reaction suggest about the nature of her desires?

7. How does Madame Forestier's willingness to lend Mathilde the diamond necklace influence the subsequent events of the story?

8. Why does Mathilde experience such overwhelming happiness and confidence at the ball, and what does this temporary transformation reveal about her sense of identity?

9. How does the contrast between Mathilde's glamorous appearance at the ball and her modest circumstances at home reinforce one of the story's central themes?

10. Why does Mathilde feel ashamed of her ordinary wraps after the ball, and how does this reaction reflect her obsession with social status?

11. What circumstances lead Mathilde and her husband to discover that the necklace is missing, and why do they initially suspect that it may have been lost in the carriage?

12. Why do the Loisels decide to replace the missing necklace without immediately informing Madame Forestier, and what are the possible consequences of their decision?

13. How does Monsieur Loisel demonstrate his commitment and sense of responsibility while attempting to replace the necklace?

14. In what ways does the couple's decision to purchase a replacement necklace transform their financial situation and everyday lives?

15. How does Mathilde's personality and physical appearance change during the ten years of hardship, and what do these changes suggest about the consequences of her earlier choices?

16. Why does Mathilde eventually decide to tell Madame Forestier the truth about the lost necklace, and what does this decision reveal about her feelings after repaying the debt?

17. How does Madame Forestier's final revelation completely change the reader's understanding of the events that have taken place throughout the story?

18. Why is the difference between the necklace's perceived value and its actual value central to the story's dramatic irony?

19. How does Maupassant use the contrast between appearance and reality to criticise materialism, vanity, and the pursuit of social prestige?

20. What broader message does the story communicate about ambition, honesty, personal responsibility, and the unforeseen consequences of human decisions?

GRAMMAR EXERCISES

Instructions: Choose the one correct answer (A, B, C, or D).

1. Before Mathilde left for the ministerial ball, she _____ the borrowed necklace around her neck.

A) has fastened
B) had fastened
C) will fasten
D) is fastening

2. If Mathilde _____ Madame Forestier about the loss immediately, the couple might have avoided years of unnecessary hardship.

A) informs
B) had informed
C) would inform
D) has informed

3. No sooner _____ the necklace than Mathilde began admiring herself in the mirror.

A) she had put on
B) had she put on
C) did she put on
D) she puts on

4. Despite _____ exhausted after the ball, Monsieur Loisel immediately went out to search for the missing necklace.

A) feel
B) felt
C) feeling
D) to feel

5. The lawyer insisted that the employee _____ the document before it was sent to the client.

A) examines
B) examined
C) examine
D) has examined

6. The necklace, _____ by Madame Forestier, appeared to be made of genuine diamonds.

A) lending
B) lent
C) having lent
D) was lending

7. By the time the Loisels had finished repaying their debts, they _____ through ten years of severe financial hardship.

A) had been living
B) have been living
C) will have lived
D) are living

8. Mathilde behaved as though she _____ a wealthy aristocrat, although she was actually the wife of a modest clerk.

A) is
B) were
C) has been
D) will be

9. Not until the couple had purchased a replacement necklace _____ the full extent of their financial difficulties.

A) they realised
B) did they realise
C) they had realised
D) do they realise

10. Monsieur Loisel worked late into the night _____ additional money to repay their debts.

A) earn
B) earning
C) to earn
D) earned

11. _____ by the necklace's apparent beauty, Mathilde failed to consider its actual value.

A) Fascinating
B) Fascinated
C) Having fascinated
D) To fascinate

12. It was the unexpected revelation about the necklace's true value _____ transformed the meaning of the entire story.

A) who
B) whom
C) that
D) whose

13. If the original necklace had been genuine, the Loisels _____ such an enormous financial sacrifice to replace it.

A) would not have made
B) will not make
C) would not make
D) had not made

14. Little _____ that the necklace she had borrowed was worth only five hundred francs.

A) Mathilde knew
B) did Mathilde know
C) Mathilde had known
D) had Mathilde knew

15. Madame Forestier asked Mathilde why she _____ the necklace so late.

A) returns
B) has returned
C) had returned
D) will return

16. Yesterday, the Loisels _____ money from several lenders to purchase a replacement necklace.

A) borrow
B) borrowed
C) have borrowed
D) had borrow

17. Mathilde would not have suffered such severe consequences if she _____ to tell her friend the truth about the missing necklace.

A) chooses
B) chose
C) had chosen
D) would choose

18. People can become dissatisfied with their lives _____ they constantly compare themselves with others.

A) unless
B) if
C) despite
D) whereas

19. Had Madame Forestier examined the necklace when Mathilde returned it, she _____ the substitution immediately.

A) would discover
B) had discovered

C) would have discovered
D) will discover

20. By the time Mathilde finally revealed the truth, the original necklace _____ to be imitation jewellery.

A) proves
B) has proved
C) had proved
D) will prove

ANSWER KEY

1-B, 2-B, 3-B, 4-C, 5-C, 6-B, 7-A, 8-B, 9-B, 10-C, 11-B, 12-C, 13-A, 14-B, 15-C, 16-B, 17-C, 18-B, 19-C, 20-C