

The Necklace Literature Analysis

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"The Necklace" is a [short story written by Guy de Maupassant](#). The story revolves around Mathilde Loisel, who lives with her husband in a small flat in France. Hopeless in her poverty-stricken life, Mathilde believes that she is destined for more in life. Wishful to appear rich, Mathilde borrows a "diamond" necklace from her friend to attend a ball for which her husband had secured tickets. The years of struggle that follow the loss of the necklace and the revelation about its authenticity at the end give the readers an insight into the important messages imparted by the author. An analysis of this literary piece highlights various themes and literary techniques employed by the writer. It further describes the different aspects of characters that are significant to the story.

Themes

The most important themes of this story are deceptive appearances, love, greed, and the dangers of self-victimization.

Deceptive Appearances

The story addresses an important theme of the deceptiveness of appearances and gives the readers a message that, often, the reality is not what it seems; rather, there are things obscured from what the eyes can see. This is evident through the example of Mathilde, who attended the ball in a dress bought from her husband's savings and wore a necklace borrowed from her friend. At a glance, she seemed the epitome of grace and grandeur, and no one could see past her appearance into her less privileged background. She deceives people by creating an illusion of being rich. Similarly, Madame Forestier's necklace appeared to be made of diamonds; however, it was an imitation. Mathilde was deceived by its sparkle, just like she deceived everyone through her appearance.

Love

The theme of love is evident in the character of Mathilde's husband. Through his actions, he depicted affection for his wife. He gave up his savings to buy a dress for her. When she was upset at not owning any suitable jewellery, he offered to buy her flowers and later suggested that she borrow them from her friend. He searched for the necklace all night long and put everything at stake so that Mathilde could return it. He struggled for a decade to pay for the selfish wish of his wife.

Greed

Greed is another prominent theme that is evident in Mathilde's character as she yearns for a life of luxury. Her greed ultimately leads her to lose her existing wealth and status.

Self-Victimization

Mathilde perceives herself as a victim of fate. Due to her vanity, she believes that she deserves all the riches and thinks that she is living a life beneath her. This victim-playing attitude leads to self-serving acts, and she fails to acknowledge any blessings that she has in her life.

Literary Techniques

Authors employ various methods to add depth and convey underlying messages to the readers. These literary devices enhance the story and enable the writers to develop the theme. The two important literary techniques used by the author in "The Necklace" are symbolism and irony. The portrayal of an action or object beyond its literal meaning is symbolism, while irony is an alternative outcome to what is expected.

Symbolism

The most important symbol in this story is the necklace itself. It symbolizes all that Mathilde desires and does not have. It is a figurative representation of the material possessions which Mathilde is drawn as narrated in the story, "suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire." It represents the glitz and glamour, the wealth and status that Mathilde believes herself to be worthy of. The loss of the necklace is also symbolic of the uncertainty of material possessions. It depicts a loss of all Mathilde yearned for and could not have. The fact that the diamond necklace was a fake also signifies the façade of richness that Mathilde created for the party. Another example of symbolism is the coat that Mathilde wears at the end of the party, as it signifies the return to reality. She wears it unwillingly, showing her continued reluctance to return to her small flat and shabby clothes.

Irony

The ending of the story is based on a horrible irony that the necklace the Loisels spent years to pay for was, in reality, a worthless piece of jewellery. Another ironic element of the story is the disappearance of Mathilde's beauty. For her, it was her most valued asset, and she lost it as a result of the circumstances that followed her selfish desires.

Characterization

The main character of this story is Mathilde Loisel, and the plot revolves around her. Other characters include Mr. Loisel and Madame Forestier. The details of each of these characters are central to the underlying themes. The story starts with a direct characterization of the protagonist, and the reader gets an insight into Mathilde's lively dream world. She has a deep desire for luxuries such as Oriental tapestries, good food, and fancy parties. She thinks she was meant for high society. This characterization brings the reader into her world with a feeling that she is understood immediately. Her husband, on the other hand, works long and hard. He strives to get an invitation for his wife and gives up his savings so she can buy a fancy dress (Maupassant, 1884). Through these details about the two characters, the plot and the underlying themes of greed and love are effectively established by the writer.

References

Maupassant, G. d. (1884). *The Necklace (La parure)*. Paris: Le Gaulois.