

The Necklace Answers Key

Name _____ Date _____

"THE NECKLACE"
- Guy de Maupassant

DIRECTIONS: Answer all of the following questions as specifically and as thoroughly as you can. Note the page number(s) of where you found the answer for future reference. Write your responses in complete sentences.

1. Why did Mrs. Loisel decide to marry her husband, a clerk in the office of the Board of Education? Use direct evidence from the text to support your response.
2. Why did Mrs. Loisel suffer? List two (2) reasons.
3. What kind of life did Mrs. Loisel desire? Use direct evidence from the text to support your response.
4. To whom do Mrs. Loisel and her husband get invited?
5. How does Mrs. Loisel react when she opens the invitation? Use direct evidence from the text to support your response.
6. What sacrifice does Mrs. Loisel's husband make to please Mrs. Loisel?
7. Why does Mrs. Loisel borrow the diamond necklace from her friend Mrs. Forestier? Explain. Use direct evidence from the text to support your response.
8. How does Mrs. Loisel react when she sees the diamond necklace?
9. Why was Mrs. Loisel a "great success" at the ball?

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The Necklace Answers Key is a pivotal resource for understanding one of the most significant short stories in French literature, "La Parure," written by Guy de Maupassant. The story revolves around the themes of vanity, materialism, and the harsh realities of life. It tells the tale of Madame Mathilde Loisel, a woman who longs for a life of luxury but faces the consequences of her aspirations. This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the story, exploring its characters, themes, symbolism, and providing answers to common questions related to the text.

Overview of "The Necklace"

"The Necklace," published in 1884, is a story that captures the essence of social class and the quest for a higher status. The protagonist, Madame Loisel, is characterized by her desire for wealth and social recognition, which ultimately leads to her downfall. The story is set in Paris, a city that symbolizes both grandeur and hardship during the late 19th century.

Plot Summary

The plot of "The Necklace" can be summarized in the following key points:

1. **Introduction of Madame Loisel:** Mathilde Loisel is introduced as a beautiful woman who feels she was born for a life of luxury. Despite her

middle-class status and a loving husband, she remains discontented.

2. The Invitation: Her husband, Monsieur Loisel, surprises her with an invitation to a prestigious ball, hoping to make her happy. Instead of being excited, Mathilde laments her lack of elegant clothing and jewelry.

3. Borrowing the Necklace: To satisfy her desire for a glamorous appearance, Mathilde borrows a stunning diamond necklace from her wealthy friend, Madame Forestier.

4. The Ball: At the ball, Mathilde is the center of attention, reveling in her moment of glory. However, her happiness is short-lived.

5. The Loss of the Necklace: After the event, Mathilde discovers that she has lost the borrowed necklace. In a panic, she and her husband search for it but are unable to find it.

6. The Consequences: To replace the necklace, the Loisels go into severe debt, spending the next ten years repaying loans and living in poverty.

7. The Twist Ending: After a decade of hard work and sacrifice, Mathilde encounters Madame Forestier and confesses the truth about the necklace. Madame Forestier reveals that the original necklace was a fake, worth only a fraction of what the Loisels had spent to replace it.

Characters Analysis

Understanding the characters in "The Necklace" is crucial to grasping the story's themes.

Madame Mathilde Loisel

- Characteristics: Mathilde is portrayed as beautiful, charming, and yet deeply dissatisfied with her life. Her desire for luxury blinds her to the blessings she has.
- Role in the Story: As the protagonist, her actions and desires drive the plot. Her vanity and materialism lead to her downfall.

Monsieur Loisel

- Characteristics: Mathilde's husband is supportive, practical, and content with their modest lifestyle. He represents the working-class ethos.
- Role in the Story: His willingness to please Mathilde highlights the contrast between their aspirations and reality. His sacrifices ultimately lead to their misfortune.

Madame Forestier

- Characteristics: Madame Forestier is wealthy and generous, providing Mathilde with the necklace that symbolizes her dreams.
- Role in the Story: She serves as a catalyst for Mathilde's downfall and represents the disparity between social classes.

Themes in "The Necklace"

Several key themes emerge from the narrative of "The Necklace":

1. Vanity and Materialism

- Mathilde's obsession with wealth and status leads her to borrow the necklace, showcasing the dangers of valuing material possessions over genuine happiness.

2. The Illusion of Wealth

- The story illustrates how appearances can be deceiving. Mathilde believes that owning luxurious items will bring her happiness, but her pursuit only leads to despair.

3. Social Class and Status

- Maupassant critiques the rigid social hierarchy of his time. Mathilde's longing for a higher social status reflects the struggles of those trapped in the middle class.

4. The Consequences of Choices

- The narrative serves as a cautionary tale about the repercussions of one's decisions. Mathilde's choice to borrow the necklace leads to a decade of hardship.

Symbolism in "The Necklace"

The necklace itself is a powerful symbol within the story, representing more

than just material wealth:

1. The Necklace as a Symbol of Desire

- The necklace embodies Mathilde's dreams of a luxurious life. Its loss signifies the shattering of her illusions.

2. The Contrast Between Real and Fake

- The revelation that the necklace is a fake suggests that true value lies not in material possessions but in the intangible aspects of life, such as love and contentment.

Key Questions and Answers

To further enhance understanding, here are some common questions regarding "The Necklace," along with their answers:

1. What does the necklace symbolize?

The necklace symbolizes Mathilde's aspirations and the societal pressure to conform to materialistic ideals. It represents both her desires and the illusion of wealth that ultimately leads to her downfall.

2. How does Mathilde's character evolve throughout the story?

Mathilde evolves from a vain and discontented woman to one who understands the value of hard work and sacrifice. However, her transformation is tragic, as it comes too late.

3. What is the significance of the ending?

The twist ending serves as a powerful commentary on the futility of Mathilde's sacrifices and the arbitrary nature of social status. It highlights the irony of her situation, where her desire for wealth ultimately results in her poverty.

4. How does Maupassant critique social class in the story?

Maupassant critiques social class by illustrating the struggles of the middle class and the lengths individuals go to in order to achieve acceptance in higher social circles. Through Mathilde's experience, he reveals the emptiness of material pursuits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Necklace* serves as an essential tool for engaging with Guy de Maupassant's timeless tale of ambition, deceit, and the harsh realities of life. The story resonates with readers due to its exploration of human desires and the societal constructs surrounding wealth and status. Through the character of Madame Mathilde Loisel, Maupassant warns against the dangers of vanity and the relentless pursuit of material possessions, reminding us that true happiness often lies in appreciating what we already have.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'The Necklace'?

The main theme of 'The Necklace' is the dangers of vanity and the pursuit of wealth, illustrating how superficial desires can lead to tragic consequences.

Who is the protagonist in 'The Necklace'?

The protagonist of 'The Necklace' is Mathilde Loisel, a woman who dreams of a luxurious life but struggles with her modest lifestyle.

What is the significance of the necklace in the story?

The necklace symbolizes wealth and social status, but it ultimately represents the illusion of materialism and the irony of Mathilde's fate.

How does Mathilde's character change throughout 'The Necklace'?

Mathilde's character changes from a dissatisfied and vain woman to someone who endures hardship and learns the value of hard work and humility.

What is the twist ending of 'The Necklace'?

The twist ending reveals that the necklace Mathilde borrowed was actually a fake, highlighting the irony of her years of hardship over something that was not valuable.

What literary devices are used in 'The Necklace'?

The story employs irony, symbolism, and foreshadowing to enhance its themes and create a compelling narrative.

How does the setting influence the story in 'The Necklace'?

The setting of 19th-century Paris reflects the class distinctions and societal pressures that influence Mathilde's desires and decisions.

What does 'The Necklace' suggest about social class?

The story suggests that social class can dictate one's happiness and self-worth, and it critiques the societal values that prioritize appearances over reality.

What lesson can readers learn from 'The Necklace'?

Readers can learn that the pursuit of material wealth and social status can lead to unforeseen consequences, and that true happiness comes from appreciating what one has.

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