



## The Use of Short Story as a Learning/Teaching Tool in ELT/EFL Classes: “The Necklace” By Guy De Maupassant<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to illustrate effective use of short stories in ELT/EFL classes. It is so clear that literature is an important and essential tool in language learning and teaching. Besides, using short story in ELT/EFL classes has some distinctive advantages compared to the other literary genres such as poetry, drama and novel. In this study, positive side of using short story in language learning and teaching classes is reinforced through the analysis of the short story “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant. The first reason for choosing “The Necklace” as an exemplary short story for such an analysis is that it has about 2890 words in total and can be read at one sitting. The second reason, as it has been further delineated in the study, is that it has almost all the aspects required for a traditional short story analysis. As a conclusion, it is put forward that the linguistic and literary analysis of the short story “The Necklace” in this paper suggests a good example of using the short story as a learning/teaching tool in ELT/EFL classes. And also, it has once more proved that language learning/teaching and literature is integrated all the time and will always walk together hand in hand.

**Key Words:** ELT, EFL, Short Story, The Necklace, Guy De Maupassant

### ELT (İngiliz Dili Eğitimi)/EFL (Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce) Sınıflarında Kısa Hikâyenin Bir Öğrenme/Öğretim Aracı Olarak Kullanılması: “The Neclace” By Guy De Maupassant

#### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı ELT (İngiliz Dili Eğitimi)/EFL (Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce) sınıflarında kısa hikâye kullanımının etkililiğini göstermektedir. Dil öğreniminde ve öğretiminde edebiyat tartışmasız önemli ve gerekli bir araçtır. Bununla birlikte ELT/ EFL sınıflarında kısa hikâye kullanımı şiir, tiyatro ve roman gibi edebi türlerle karşılaştırıldığında bazı ayırt edici avantajlara sahiptir. Bu çalışmada kısa hikâyenin dil öğreniminde ve öğretiminde sahip olduğu olumlu yan Guy de Maupassant’ın “The Necklace” adlı kısa hikâyesiyle desteklenmesidir. Bu çalışmadaki inceleme için “The Necklace” ın kısa hikâye örneği olarak seçilmesindeki birinci sebep, onun yaklaşık olarak 2890 kelimededen oluşması ve tek bir oturumda okunabilmesidir. İkinci sebep ise, çalışmada ortaya konduğu üzere, onun geleneksel bir kısa hikâye incelemesinde gerekli olan bütün özelliklere sahip olmasıdır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmada gerçekleştirilen “The Necklace” adlı kısa hikâyenin dilbilimsel ve edebi incelemesi, kısa hikâyenin ELT/EFL sınıflarında öğrenim ve öğretim aracı olarak kullanılmasına iyi bir örnek teşkil etmektedir. Ve ayrıca dil öğrenimi/öğretimi

<sup>1</sup> This paper is an extended version of the study *Using Short Stories as a Learning/Teaching Tool in ELT/EFL Classes: The Example of “The Neclace” By Guy De Maupassant* presented at 1st International Education Research and Teacher Education Congress-ERTE 2017. With this paper, it is aimed to share all results and discussions.

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*ile edebiyatın bir birine daima uyum sağladığını ve her zamanda birlikte el ele yürüyeceği bir kez daha kanıtlanmış olmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** ELT, EFL, Kısa Hikâye, The Necklace, Guy De Maupassant

## INTRODUCTION

Today, it is not a matter of question whether using literature in ELT/EFL classes is useful or not. Its story begins with inauguration of grammar-translation method in the beginning of 19th century, it was disregarded as a teaching tool for a long time in last two decades of the century though. The reason for this negligence was due to flourishing of direct and audio-lingual methods as well as the Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, the Silent Way, Total Physical Response, and the Natural Approach in seventies (Erkaya, 2005: 2). Neither of these methods prefers using literature in ELT/EFL classes since they are formed in a structural and linguistic base. As a result, literature was disregarded in curriculum as well. However, in 1980s, the wind began to flow in favour of using literature in ELT/EFL classes again. The main cause for this twist was that “the current use of literary works in ESL/EFL classes is to improve communicative competence and providing a springboard for the development of critical thinking and aesthetic appreciation and create students’ awareness on the culture and society of the relevant country” (Pardede, 2011: 15). Although literature has been a part of curriculum<sup>2</sup> since then, the method is very different from the one that grammar translation method used to implement. Today, as it will be further delineated in this paper, literature is mainly used for developing four skills in ELT/EFL.

### 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to the advantages stated above, Collie & Slater (1991) suggest that using literature in ELT/EFL classes provides some crucial benefits in language teaching: “authentic material, cultural enrichment, language advancement, and personal growth” (qtd in Pardede, 2011: 15). It is authentic because it is written in a natural way that it is a work of art produced in native language. As literature is produced in a native language of its speakers, it has the cultural motives and values in it. Learners of a language also learn the culture that produces it. Since literature is a product of a native language, it is a great pool of linguistic and grammatic patterns. Although some students can acquire the grammatical and linguistic structures well, they may fail in practice of it. At this point, literature is a two folded tool that motives and exemplifies the use of grammatical structures of the target language (Kaya, 2014: 41). Therefore, using literature in language teaching leads not only to the cultural enrichment but also to the personal growth for the learners of it. As key points, Lindsay Clandfield (2011) sums up the reasons for using literature in the classroom as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> See for supporters of using literature in the curriculum: Lazar (1993), Cook (1994), and Shanahan (1997)

- Literature is authentic material. It is good to expose learners to this source of unmodified language in the classroom because the skills they acquire in dealing with difficult or unknown language can be used outside the class.
- Literature encourages interaction. Literary texts are often rich in multiple layers of meaning, and can be effectively mined for discussions and sharing feelings or opinions.
- Literature expands language awareness. Asking learners to examine sophisticated or non standard examples of language (which can occur in literary texts) makes them more aware of the norms of language use.
- Literature educates the whole person. By examining values in literary texts, teachers encourage learners to develop attitudes towards them. These values and attitudes relate to the world outside the classroom.
- Literature is motivating. Literature holds high status in many cultures and countries. For this reason, students can feel a real sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature. Also, literature is often more interesting than the texts found in coursebooks.

As a result, using literature in ELT/EFL classes has an indisputable role which enables “students to understand the language better by providing them with real world experiences, relationships between society and people where the target language is spoken, even if they are fictions” (Pardede, 2011: 17). On the other hand, the focal point for this paper is the use of short story in particular as a literary genre.

### **1.1. Short Story in ELT/EFL Classes**

If the use of literature in English Language Teaching is prominent in general, using short story is essential among the other literary genres in particular. Using short story in ELT/EFL classes has some distinctive advantages compared to the other literary genres such as poetry, drama and novel. To illustrate, it is difficult to grasp the figurative language of poetry for the students who are not very interested in it. It is not always possible to act out the texts of plays read in the classroom and it requires too long time to read out and discuss the whole novel in a class for three hours a week. Different from the other genres, the shortness and succinctness is a must for a short story since Edgar Allen Poe, one of the most important American short story theorists, defined the short story as: “the prose tale” as a narrative which can be read at one sitting of from half an hour to two hours, and is limited to “a certain unique or single effect” to which every detail is subordinate (qtd in Abrams, 1999: 286). So, the readable duration at one sitting puts the short story most preferable one among the other literary genres because as stated above, sometimes over crowded and time limited classes do not allow reading a whole novel, acting out a full play and scrutinizing the figurative language of poem in the classroom. In contrast to these disadvantaged positions of other genres, Collie and Slater list four advantages of using short story in ELT/EFL classes:

First, short stories are practical as their length is long enough to cover entirely in one or two class sessions. Second, short stories are not complicated for students to work with on their own. Third, short stories have a variety of choice for different interests and tastes. Finally, short stories can be used with

all levels (beginner to advance), all ages (young learners to adults) and all classes (morning, afternoon, or evening classes) (qtd in Pardede, 2011: 17-8).

One more and also the most stated advantage of using short story in language teaching classes is that it helps the students/learners to improve their four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Besides, according to Collie and Slater “If selected and exploited appropriately, short stories enrich the courses and learners can enhance an advance level of the target language. A literary text provides a vivid idea about syntactic structure which clarifies the written form of grammatical structures” (qtd in Kaya, 2014: 42). As it is clear, the use of short story in language learning classes has a useful and positive effect on four language skills. It develops students’ writing and speaking skills, knowledge of vocabulary and competence of grammar structures in the target language. Additionally, Erkaya puts emphasis on the effect of reading short stories in ELT/EFL classes, for the improvement of students’ critical thinking and communicative skills: “when students read, they interact with the text. By interacting with the text, they interpret what they read. By interpreting what they read, they can work toward speaking English more creatively” (Erkaya, 2005: 5). Therefore, short story as a literary genre has a beneficial and undisputable effect on improving all four language skills. However, the selecting of short story is an another aspect that should be paid attention as the follows.

### **1.2. Choosing A Short Story**

As supporter of the ideas discussed and clarified above, choosing the correct story is also a crucial point for using short stories in ELT/EFL classes. As different from its application by Grammar Translation Method in the past, the recent use of short story in ELT/EFL classes, as stated above, is mainly towards improving four language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking. Hence, if an improper story is selected for classroom which does not suit and conform students’ expectations and linguistic competence, it will demotivate the students/learners against the story and then they will probably reject to read it. Hence, when choosing a short story for ELT/EFL classes, students’ language competence levels, age/group interests, motivation and readiness for learning should be taken into consideration for a successful use of a short story in ELT/EFL classes. The length of the text is the most important point in choosing a short story because if the story is too long to read in one or two class hours, students – particularly the beginners- will get bored and feel discouraged to handle it. However, “if it has a single plot, a simple setting and a few characters, it will be easier for the students to read and grasp the main idea” (Kaya,2014: 42-43). Besides, Hill states that there are three more crucial points in choosing texts: “(1) the needs and abilities of the students; (2) the linguistic and stylistic level of the text; (3) the amount of background information required for a true appreciation of the material” (qtd in Pardede, 2011: 18). One more important criteria for choosing a story is that its lexical and grammatical structure should be proper to the level of the students/learners: “The short-stories with archaic, slang, foreign words, and allusions, having sentences imitating the speech of a particular locality or ignorant people or foreigners should be avoided if the text is intended for students below intermediate level” (Pardede, 2011: 18). Besides, according

to McKay, the texts prepared for young adults is more preferable for classroom use in general because:

- a) the theme of such literature deals with the problem of personal growth and development.
- b) most literature for young adults tends to be relatively short, and the characters usually limited to a small cast of characters with a young adult as the central character.
- c) most importantly, from an ESL perspective, many of the books tend to be stylistically less complex." (qtd in Zahra, 2016: 15).

As a result, it can be asserted that a text in a proper length, in accordance with needs and language competence of the students is the most preferable one for choosing a short story text. After that, in the following parts of this study, the short story "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupasant will be discussed as a model use of short story analysis in ELT/EFL classes.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In this part of the present study, the short story "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupasant will be analysed under two headings; linguistic analysis and literary analysis. As a model and sample, the analysis conducted in this paper is set for the levels from pre-intermediate to advanced. For this purpose, the focal skill is reading because it is integrated with the other three skills at the same time. Besides, the reason why "The Necklace" is chosen as a short story for an analysis such as in this one is its proper length –it can be read at one sitting, its simple plot –it deals with only one subject, its clear figurative language –metaphors and symbols can be understood easily, and its simple vocabulary and grammar structure. So, while linguistic analysis mainly contributes to students' competence of grammar forms and knowledge of vocabulary, literary analysis focuses on the elements of fiction in a short story and the critical thinking that this structural scrutiny is going to lead.

### 2.1. Linguistic Analysis

To warm-up the students towards the short story "The Necklace" –that is the one, most of students may probably come across for the first time, the questions below can be asked as pre-reading activity:

- What is the meaning of 'necklace'?
- What does the title "The Necklace" imply?

In this pre-reading activity, students are encouraged to talk about the title of the story. The meaning and significance of "necklace" may be introduced by stating that necklace is an invaluable garment made of jewels and worn around neck. It is so precious that it makes a woman so beautiful. And also you can buy and sell it whenever you want". After making the students achieve the significance of 'necklace' as a valuable and expensive stone, they may be led to read it once or twice themselves. When the students have finished reading the text on their own, it is better to read the whole story aloud with the class. At this point, if there are voluntary students, they are

allowed to read it aloud once more. After that, as Kaya suggests, certain adjectives or adverbs (for 'The Necklace': shabby, worn out, ugly, poor VS vast, antique, exquisite, priceless, charming, perfumed) can be studied. Also, some dialogues and conversations may help students to discover and practice certain grammatical structures; direct-indirect speech, if clauses or tenses and etc. And to reinforce linguistic and grammar competency of the students, the questions below can be asked them doing by their own:

- Change the 'Direct Statements' into 'Indirect Sentences,
- Find the past participles and underline them,
- Rewrite three/four sentences using 'If' (Kaya, 2014: 43).

When the students finish doing the mechanical exercises above, the teacher may let the volunteer ones do them on the board. Then, the teacher may correct the grammatical and spelling mistakes when it is necessary. In addition to these linguistic and grammatical activities above, the students may change the adjectives and adverbs and re-write the dialogues between Madame and Monsieur Loisel and then read out their own version or act out them as a role play. The excerpt below may be a sample exercise for the students re-writing or acting out it on their own:

One evening her husband came home with a blissful (exultant) air, holding a large envelope in his hand. "Here's something for you," he said. She tore the paper fast (swiftly) and drew out an invitation (printed) card on which were these words: "The Minister of Education and Madame Ramponneau request the pleasure of the company of Monsieur and Madame Loisel at the Ministry on the evening of Monday, January the 18th." Instead of being charmed (delighted), as her husband hoped, she flung the invitation crabbily (petulantly) across the table, mumbling (murmuring): "What do you want me to do with this?" "Why, darling, I thought you'd be excited (pleased). You never go out, and this is a great chance (occasion). I had immensurable (tremendous) trouble to get it. Every one wants one; it's very exclusive (select), and very selected (few) go to the clerks. You'll see all the really famous (big) people there.

## 2.2. Literary Analysis

Having completed the linguistic exercises above, the teacher may lead the students towards the elements of short story that are 'Plot', 'Setting', 'Character', 'Point of view' and 'Theme'. First of all, the teacher introduces the elements of short story briefly one by one as following: Plot is the pattern of events that occur in a story. Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action and Resolution are the elements of plot<sup>3</sup>. As the students have already read the short story "The Necklace" once or twice so far, they can be asked to state their opinions related to each section of the plot. After students stated their own ideas about the plot of "The Necklace", the teacher may support them to delineate the further details as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> See Abrams, 1999:224-228.

**Exposition:** Introducing Mathilde Loisel in her apartment. She is described as extremely unhappy and dissatisfied with her social status.

**Rising Action:** Madame Loisel gets an invitation to the party, which is brought by Monsieur Loisel.

**Climax:** Mathilde refuses to attend the party without a suitable dress. Loisel gives money to her wife to buy a dress. But she doesn't have any jewellery. So, she borrows a necklace from her friend. Madame Loisel dances all night being extremely happy.

**Falling Action:** Later at home she realizes that she lost the necklace. Madame and Monsieur Loisel borrow money to buy a new necklace to replace the previous one.

**Resolution:** The Loisels live in poverty to pay their debt. After 10 years, they finish their debt and then Madame Loisel confesses all to Madame Forestier who reveals that the necklace is imitation.

Having discussed the elements of plot with the students, the teacher may introduce the setting of "The Necklace" by asking questions about private and public scenes that story unfolds:

- Can you describe the general setting of "The Necklace"?
- How many different places can you describe as the setting of main events that occur in the story?

After eliciting student's ideas about the general setting of the story, the teacher may state there are three kinds of different places that the story takes place in the short story "The Necklace". The first one is The Loisels' apartment which is shabby and dull. The second place is Madame Frostier's house. It has a large closet (wardrobe) with mirrored doors and the third one is 'The Ministerial Mansion' where the ball is held. Then, it may be stated that these three places are symbolic. As the first one represents the poor life standart that The Loisels lead at present. The second and third ones represent the glories way of life that rich and high rang people lead. Although Madame Loisel leads the first poor life, she envies the rich and wants to be a member of a high quality life. That leads her catastrophic end which is ironic at the same time. Having discussed the significance of the places as the setting of the story, it is time to think more about the characters of "The Necklace". So, some questions related to the characters of the story can be asked as the follows:

- Who is the main character of the story? Why? Can you define his/her personality?
- Can you define the minor, flat and round characters of the story?

Having discussed the questions with the students above, the teacher may suggest some important aspects related to the characters of the story as: The characters of a story are perhaps the most important elements of a story<sup>4</sup>. In a story, generally the main character or the hero/heroine is introduced first and then the setting and the plot

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<sup>4</sup> See Abrams, 1999:32-34, Perrine,1974:67-71.

respectively. Hence, when we begin to read a story, we search for the main character/s initially. The characters of a story are generally classified as main, minor, flat and round characters. The main character is the hero/heroine of a story. The minor/sub characters have the less importance than the main character/s. The flat character is the one who does not change from the beginning to the ending of the story. The round character is complex and many-sided. Then, the teacher promotes the students to identify the people in the story as the types of characters stated above: In "The Necklace", Madame Loisel is the main character of the story. In other words, the plot of the story turns around her. She envies the life of rich, though she is a poor one. As the plot of the story unfolds, she pays back her desire to lead a rich life by living a wretched life for ten years. So, Madame Loisel is a round character at the same time, as for her life and character evolves as the story unfolds. Monsieur Loisel and Madame Forestier are the other two characters of "The Necklace". They are both minor and flat characters since they have no change from the beginning to the ending of the story. After discussing the characters as the above, the teacher may suggest 'Point of view' and 'Theme' as the subsequent elements to be discussed. The teacher may state that Point of view "signifies the way a story gets told" (Abrams, 1999: 231) or in other words the focal point of who tells the story. Here, the question "–Who tells the story of "The Necklace" " can be asked to the students in order to deliniate the narrator of the story. After a while discussing the narrator/who tells the story, the teacher may introduce general types of points of views in a short story. There are generally three kinds of points of views which are Third-person points of view, First-person points of view and Second-person points of view<sup>5</sup>. At this point, the teacher supports the students to find out the point of view of the story. Then, it is revealed out that the point of view of "The Necklace" is the third person. The teacher further encourages the students to think about and tell the significance of the third person narration. It can be suggested that the third person narrator has the advantage of knowing everything about the characters and plot of the story. Having discussed enough about the point of view of the story, the theme of the story can be introduced by the teacher with the following questions:

- What is the theme of the short story "The Necklace"?
- Do you think people should be happy with what they have?
- Do you think people should pay for what they greed all the time?

After eliciting the ideas of the students about the questions above, the teacher may suggest that the theme of a story is the controlling idea or the central insight. In order to deliniate the theme "we must ask what its central purpose is" (Perrine, 1974: 102). At this point, the students can be divided into two groups. The first group supports the idea that people should be happy with what they have. And the second group supports the idea that people should pay for what they greed. Therefore, through the end of the class, students may have a debate on the theme of the story. As

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<sup>5</sup> See Abrams, 1999:231-236, Perrine,1974:174-180.



it is so clear, the debate is a well-structured speaking activity at the same time. The teacher should encourage all the members of each group of students to tell what they think and support their ideas with more examples from the story and real life as well.

### CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it is put forward that the linguistic and literary analysis of the short story "The Necklace" in this paper suggest a good example of using the short story as a learning/teaching tool in ELT/EFL classes. Besides, the present study is not only compatible with the previous ones focused on short story in ELT/EFL classes but also supports them with a unique exemplification. In the present study, there have been two kinds of analysis carried out related to the short story "The Necklace". First of all, the linguistic analysis develops the students' grammatical competence and supports their achievements in four language skills as well. Then, the literary analysis provides the students with the ability of critical thinking about the text that they have come across for the first time. As a result, the short story "The Necklace" as a literary genre encourages students to overcome the difficulties of a reading an authentic piece of literature. On the other hand, there are some basic reasons for suggesting "The Necklace" as a sample text for using short story in ELT/EFL classes. Firstly, it can be read at one sitting (it is not too long). Secondly, it hasn't got complex grammatical structures (there are not long and complex sentences). Thirdly, it has a simple lexical level (it doesn't require advanced knowledge of vocabulary). Besides, the short story analysis conducted in this paper is set for students from pre-intermediate to advanced levels. So, as it has been demonstrated clearly in this study, "The Necklace" as a short story is a new unique example of using and studying short stories in ELT/EFL classes. Besides, if the sample short story analysis suggested above used in English language learning classes, it would further encourage students/learners to study more short stories in their future language learning lives. Last of all, the present study also reinforces the idea that language learning and literature is integrated and will always walk together.

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## APPENDIX

### The Necklace BY Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as if by an error of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of becoming known, understood, loved or wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and so she let herself be married to a minor official at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy. Women don't belong to a caste or class; their beauty, grace, and natural charm take the place of birth and family. Natural delicacy, instinctive elegance and a quick wit determine their place in society, and make the daughters of commoners the equals of the very finest ladies.

She suffered endlessly, feeling she was entitled to all the delicacies and luxuries of life. She suffered because of the poorness of her house as she looked at the dirty walls, the worn-out chairs and the ugly curtains. All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, tormented her and made her resentful. The sight of the little Brenton girl who did her housework filled her with terrible regrets and hopeless fantasies. She dreamed of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestries, lit from above by torches in bronze holders, while two tall footmen in knee-length breeches napped in huge armchairs, sleepy from the stove's oppressive warmth. She

dreamed of vast living rooms furnished in rare old silks, elegant furniture loaded with priceless ornaments, and inviting smaller rooms, perfumed, made for afternoon chats with close friends - famous, sought after men, who all women envy and desire.

When she sat down to dinner at a round table covered with a three-day-old cloth opposite her husband who, lifting the lid off the soup, shouted excitedly, "Ah! Beef stew! What could be better," she dreamed of fine dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestries which peopled the walls with figures from another time and strange birds in fairy forests; she dreamed of delicious dishes served on wonderful plates, of whispered gallantries listened to with an inscrutable smile as one ate the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing; and these were the only things she loved. She felt she was made for them alone. She wanted so much to charm, to be envied, to be desired and sought after.

She had a rich friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she no longer wanted to visit because she suffered so much when she came home. For whole days afterwards she would weep with sorrow, regret, despair and misery.

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One evening her husband came home with an air of triumph, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Look," he said, "here's something for you."

She tore open the paper and drew out a card, on which was printed the words:

"The Minister of Education and Mme. Georges Rampouneau request the pleasure of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Ministry, on the evening of Monday January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table resentfully, and muttered:

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

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go out, and it will be such a lovely occasion! I had awful trouble getting it. Every one wants to go; it is very exclusive, and they're not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole ministry will be there."

She stared at him angrily, and said, impatiently:

"And what do you expect me to wear if I go?"

He hadn't thought of that. He stammered:

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It seems very nice to me ..."

He stopped, stunned, distressed to see his wife crying. Two large tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. He stuttered:

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

With great effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, as she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to a friend whose wife has better clothes than I do."

He was distraught, but tried again:

"Let's see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost, one which you could use again on other occasions, something very simple?"

She thought for a moment, computing the cost, and also wondering what amount she could ask for without an immediate refusal and an alarmed exclamation from the thrifty clerk.

At last she answered hesitantly:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred *francs*."

He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a hunting trip the following summer, in the country near Nanterre, with a few friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

However, he said:

"Very well, I can give you four hundred *francs*. But try and get a really beautiful dress."

\*

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, restless, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

"What's the matter? You've been acting strange these last three days."

She replied: "I'm upset that I have no jewels, not a single stone to wear. I will look cheap. I would almost rather not go to the party."

"You could wear flowers, " he said, "They are very fashionable at this time of year. For ten *francs* you could get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there is nothing more humiliating than looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go and see your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough for that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"Of course. I had not thought of that."

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

Madame Forestier went to her mirrored wardrobe, took out a large box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a gold Venetian cross set with precious stones, of exquisite craftsmanship. She tried on the jewelry in the mirror, hesitated, could not bear to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. But I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her neck, over her high-necked dress, and stood lost in ecstasy as she looked at herself.

Then she asked anxiously, hesitating:

"Would you lend me this, just this?"

"Why, yes, of course."

She threw her arms around her friend's neck, embraced her rapturously, then fled with her treasure.

\*

The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men stared at her, asked her name, tried to be introduced. All the cabinet officials wanted to waltz with her. The minister noticed her.

She danced wildly, with passion, drunk on pleasure, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness, made up of all this respect, all this admiration, all these awakened desires, of that sense of triumph that is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She left at about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been dozing since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a good time.

He threw over her shoulders the clothes he had brought for her to go outside in, the modest clothes of an ordinary life, whose poverty contrasted sharply with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to run away, so she wouldn't be noticed by the other women who were wrapping themselves in expensive furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a moment, you'll catch a cold outside. I'll go and find a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and ran down the stairs. When they were finally in the street, they could not find a cab, and began to look for one, shouting at the cabmen they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those old night cabs that one sees in Paris only after dark, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day.

They were dropped off at their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly walked up the steps to their apartment. It was all over, for her. And he was remembering that he had to be back at his office at ten o'clock.

In front of the mirror, she took off the clothes around her shoulders, taking a final look at herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace round her neck!

"What is the matter?" asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him, panic-stricken.

"I have ... I have ... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distraught.

"What! ... how! ... That's impossible!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. But they could not find it.

"Are you sure you still had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes. I touched it in the hall at the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street we would have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. That's probably it. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you, didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They stared at each other, stunned. At last Loisel put his clothes on again.

"I'm going back," he said, "over the whole route we walked, see if I can find it."

He left. She remained in her ball dress all evening, without the strength to go to bed, sitting on a chair, with no fire, her mind blank.

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

He went to the police, to the newspapers to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere the tiniest glimmer of hope led him.

She waited all day, in the same state of blank despair from before this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening, a hollow, pale figure; he had found nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "tell her you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. It will give us time to look some more."

She wrote as he dictated.

\*

At the end of one week they had lost all hope.

And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must consider how to replace the jewel."

The next day they took the box which had held it, and went to the jeweler whose name they found inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold the necklace; I must simply have supplied the case."

And so they went from jeweler to jeweler, looking for an necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, both sick with grief and anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which seemed to be exactly what they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand *francs*. They could have it for thirty-six thousand.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement that he would take it back for thirty-four thousand *francs* if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

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

And he did borrow, asking for a thousand *francs* from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with usurers, with every type of money-lender. He compromised the rest of his life, risked signing notes without knowing if he could ever honor them, and, terrified by the anguish still to come, by the black misery about to fall on him, by the prospect of every physical privation and every moral torture he was about to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, and laid down on the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand *francs*.

When Madame Loisel took the necklace back, Madame Forestier said coldly:

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

To the relief of her friend, she did not open the case. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she have taken her friend for a thief?

\*

From then on, Madame Loisel knew the horrible life of the very poor. But she played her part heroically. The dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know the drudgery of housework, the odious labors of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, staining her rosy nails on greasy pots and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she hung to dry on a line; she carried the garbage down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath. And, dressed like a commoner, she went to the fruiterer's, the grocer's, the butcher's, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, fighting over every miserable *sou*.

Each month they had to pay some notes, renew others, get more time.

Her husband worked every evening, doing accounts for a tradesman, and often, late into the night, he sat copying a manuscript at five *sous* a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid off everything, everything, at usurer's rates and with the accumulations of compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become strong, hard and rough like all women of impoverished households. With hair half combed, with skirts awry, and reddened hands, she talked loudly as she washed the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and thought of that evening at the ball so long ago, when 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 life is, how fickle! How little is needed for one to be ruined or saved!

\*

One Sunday, as she was walking in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after the week's work, suddenly she saw a woman walking with a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt emotional. Should she speak to her? Yes, of course. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be addressed so familiarly by this common woman, did not recognize her. She stammered:

"But - madame - I don't know. You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you've changed! ..."



"Yes, I have had some hard times since I last saw you, and many miseries ... and all because of you! ..."

"Me? How can that be?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the Ministry party?"

"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. It wasn't easy for us, we had very little. But at last it is over, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier was stunned.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes; you didn't notice then? They were very similar."

And she smiled with proud and innocent pleasure.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Mine was an imitation! It was worth five hundred *francs* at most! ..."