

Use of allegory to represent deception in the jewelry short story

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Guy De Maupassant's short story, *The Jewelry* is not only a realistic fiction, but truly questions the nature of deception, whether it is always beneficial to know the truth, and whether if living with lies actually contributes to people's happiness. It was written in 1883 and explained human ideologies.

Maupassant's story cleverly uses allegory to represent the character's greed and decisiveness. By using symbolic meanings, this story is much more than a sad love tale. If you're looking for a short story that would keep you on the edge of your seat, this is it.

We are introduced with the two characters Mr. Lantin and Mrs. Lantin. Mrs. Lantin was not only a man's dream woman, but also a master of deception. As a man who is blinded by such perfection, Mr. Lantin would do everything in his power to keep her, for she has made him the happiest husband possible. Mr. Lantin is a man who seems to take everything at face value, and pays dearly for it in terms of his emotional life towards the end of the story. In the beginning of the story, these characters seem like an ordinary couple during the 19th century. Maupassant has made it clear that Mr. Lantin is in love with Mrs. Lantin through scenarios where he expressed his feeling for her. Once that was established, the story's theme has shifted once Mrs. Lantin has died from a severe cough. While reading this, I was surprised to find out this will not be a typical love story, and couldn't wait to read on more.

What really shocked me is what happened next. It took some time for Mr. Lantin to settle down after his wife's death. He was very upset for quite a while to lose his beloved perfect wife. It was time to move on, and he began

selling her things for money to pay for the rent. Now, it was mentioned earlier that he bought her jewelry that wasn't expensive, since they weren't a wealthy couple. Mr. Lantin knew the jewelry wasn't worth much, but he decided to sell it anyway. This is where I completely was stunned because I was not expecting what was about to happen next. They say that a good story is one with an unexpected plot twist, well this short story definitely was a seat grabber!

Mr. Lantin has shamelessly went to the jeweler, hoping to get the best price for his dead wife's pearls. To his disbelief, the jeweler tells Mr. Lantin that the necklace is worth between 12 to 15 thousand francs(a lot of money).

Maupassant has completely flipped the theme of the story from a sad love story to a philosophical story induced in symbolism and depth. I don't remember if I was even sitting in a chair at that point because I just realized the poor man has been deceived all his life, as well as myself as the reader. Although Mr. Lantin is not poor anymore, he realizes that his wife lived another life since she was able to afford those pearls. The reason behind where she got the pearls was never uncovered, but that's what makes the story interesting. The audience decides where she might have gotten the pearls from.

If the story itself is not enough to get you to love the twist of the plot, the imagery of symbolism would surely do it. symbolism in literature is effective because it gives the reader a visual picture of what the writer is trying to convey, especially to express another deeper meaning. Maupassant artistically picks out words that helps visualize the story, creating a clear

understanding of who the characters are and how their traits relate to their personalities. For example, Mrs. Lantins fond taste of the theatre coincides with her liking of living a false reality. Understanding how materialistic things pertained to the character's personality, this makes the play filled with meaning and depth. It's both genius and intriguing.

Maupassant didn't stop there. After finding out the shocking news, he added some irony towards the end of the short story. Mr. Lantin decides to remarry, this time to a woman who made him completely miserable. This is the ultimate irony of "The Jewelry", when the audience discovers the fate of the narrator. Authors typically use irony to get the audience to stop for a second and emphasize what the central idea really is. I remember reading this part and just pausing for a second and asking myself, "Just why did he do that?". Then it became obvious, that although he married a woman who he was miserable with, Mr. Lantin was living an authentic life, rather than a deceived one. He might not be happy, but at least his sadness is authentic, which is the irony of life. It goes back to the meaning of "Ignorance is bliss", and really got me thinking. This makes Maupassant's story just so much more meaningful and certainly interesting.

The best aspect of this story would probably be its philosophical meaning. Life is constantly filled with contradictions, which is something everyone experiences of a subconscious level. I find it amazing how Maupassant was able to include this idea into such a simple short story. According to House of Cards Beau Willimon, American playwright and screenwriter, "The most important element in a good story is conflict. It's seeing two opposing forces

collide with one another.” Maupassant has cleverly used the famous philosopher Kierkegaard points on the role of irony to self individualism and applied it to the main characters of this short story. He was able to talk about the conflict of philosophical irony and how important authenticity is to the individual, creating one of my favorite short stories ever.

After reading many short stories, I found Maupassant’s usage of tone to be unique and very well chosen. As psychologist Alex Lickerman puts it, “ Our tone tells the truth even when our words don’t, even when we’re unaware of that truth ourselves”. This is in fact, true for short stories as well. In this case, Maupassant presented the tone by describing his characters personalities in a detached manner, but also sympathetic. While he presents the emotions of Mrs. Lantin, he hid the emotions of Mr. Lantin. I believe this was to show the complexity of his feelings after realizing he’s been living a false reality, and by ending the ironic ending, to understand the need of authenticity that Mr. Lantin craved. I also believe it was meant for the audience to figure it out for themselves. As I see it, the short story is so deep it cannot even be described in words. Maupassant did a great job as writing about the complexity of the ethical world itself.

Throughout the short story, the plot of the story had a great build up as well. It introduced the characters and their personalities in the beginning. Then, Maupassant used the characters to foreshadow Mr. Lantins downfall. The entire story flowed beautiful, and I still remember the story so vividly as if I only read it yesterday. It’s rich with real literature, from symbolic meanings and allegorical representations. The short story overall was very enjoyable

and exciting to read. If you truly enjoy a great narrative, this story will leave you talking for weeks!