

The necklace

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



" We want what we can't have": This renowned adage has been the cold reply of many parents to their sobbing children as they walk out of the toy store. At the time, the heartbroken children might not fully grasp the words of their parents, but as they grow up they will understand that the well known adage holds true to its meaning. Almost everybody has experienced this feeling, whether it is as young children or as wise adults. Examples of this noted proverb is evident both in print and on screen. Now, since this is the case with most people around the world, it is not difficult to see how this byword applies to Guy de Maupassant's short story " The Necklace." Its protagonist, Mathilde Loisel, longing for a lavish lifestyle rather than her middle class way of life, falls under the spell of an priceless diamond. Dealing with her fate, some of Mathilde's strong character traits soon become apparent. Examining these attributes, we discover that Mathilde Loisel definitely has a negative personality. The first of many character traits of Mathilde Loisel that Maupassant makes evident in the " The Necklace" is greed. She longs for a better life, one in which all her wildest dreams are transformed into reality. This rapacity causes her to drift away from her lifestyle and come back wanting more than she has or can afford. The voraciousness that consumes her whole way of life is truly a sign of inner weakness, a weakness she has for wealth and beauty. She would get lost in her own little fantasy world where everything was just pristine and perfect, with things she knew she would never be able to afford. She would daydream of " silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestry, lit by tall bronze candelabra, and of the two great footmen in knee breeches..." (452, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Moreover, greed takes over Mathilde as she

opts for a new dress, telling her husband, " I don't know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs." (453, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). She even contemplated how much money she could squeeze out of her husband without " drawing on herself an immediate refusal" (453, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Her greed filled every aspect of her life and she ended up paying for it at the end. Another character trait of Mathilde is being unrealistic. Instead of focusing on the things in her own life and fulfilling her own obligations, she just stargazes about how her life could have been better if she lived a life of luxury. She constantly imagines a life filled with grandeur, of fine furnishings, and clothes. It is observable that she is not satisfied with her husband, and often dreams what life would have been like if she were married further up the social class. She yearns for a luxurious life that is highlighted with candlelight dinners, large rooms, and servants willing to meet her every need. Rather than trying to improve her lifestyle, she wastes her time imagining if she had taken a different path in life. She even wanted to go to parties and have " talks at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after..." (452, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Even as she had supper with her husband, she couldn't help but dream about " dainty dinners [and] of shining silverware..." (452, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Maupassant makes it obvious that Mathilde has an overactive imagination that unfortunately catches up to her in the long run. Without a doubt, one of Mathilde's more distinctive character traits is ingratitude. One would think that a person who was born and raised in a middle class society would be a little more grateful for the things in life. However, that is not the case with Mathilde. How stunning she looks and how

impressed others are remains utmost to her, and she is happy as long as she gets what she wants. She is also clearly oblivious to her husband's feelings. Without even a care for the lengths he might have gone to in order to get an invitation to the society ball, " she threw the invitation on the table with disdain, murmuring: ' What do you want me to do with that?'" (452, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Her lack of gratitude is also made clear as she wanders around her home whining and complaining about her life: She suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born for all the delicacies and all the luxuries. She suffered from poverty of her dwelling, from the wretched look of the walls, from the worn out chairs, from 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. (452, Maupassant, " The Necklace") Moreover, Mathilde is satiated with envy. The fact that other women walk around wearing fine clothes and own elegant houses greatly disturbs her. To Mathilde, this is just unacceptable. How can other people have uniformed butlers carrying fine china when she, Mathilde Loisel, doesn't even have a high place on the social ladder? Her envy even takes a toll on her friendship with Jeanne Forestier, which stretched back to convent school days. For once she wanted other women to feel that way about her: " She would so have liked to please, to be envied, to be charming, to be sought after" (452, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Her envy is blatant as she says to her husband, " Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I" (453, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). This clearly shows that in order to show her face somewhere, she either has to feel equal to or better than other people. The last character trait that Maupassant points out

is vanity. All Mathilde cares about is how others think of her. As she got the dress and the jewelry for the affair, she couldn't help but think about how stunning she would look. At the function, " she was prettier than them all, elegant, gracious, smiling, and crazy with joy" (454, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). She was truly living one of her fantasies: " She danced with intoxication, with passion, made drunk by pleasure, forgetting all, in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness composed of all this homage..."(454, Maupassant, " The Necklace"). Even though it was only for one fateful night, her vanity was evident to every partygoer. Maupassant makes it very easy to see the negative traits of Mathilde Loisel. He portrays her as a woman with many undesirable characteristics. These attributes eventually lead to her collapse. Ironically, the very woman whose life was highlighted by dreams of great wealth and beauty transforms into an aging woman with very little of either. Because of her negative traits, she was never able to fully enjoy the life she had. Moreover, she reached for the luxury, glitz, and glamour, but she reached too far and fell into a deeper state of poverty. It's also ironic how she was duped by a fake diamond, when she had always been dreaming of jewels and riches. Once one loses something important in life, it can be nearly impossible to get it back. Mathilde Loisel found this out the very hard way after she fell for the false promises of a glimmering rock. Works Cited