

# Martyrdom: "the necklace" essay sample



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## **Martyrdom: “ the Necklace” Essay Sample**

Guy De Maupassant’s story “ The Necklace,” has an abundance of symbolic factors, and though there are many meanings that can be inferred, there is one apparent allusion that is projected. The danger of martyrdom is evident in “ The Necklace,” along with the consequential fate of self-serving actions. Mathilde’s perception of herself as a martyr leads her to take selfish and self-serving actions which lead to extremely unfortunate circumstances.

Mathilde, middle class at best, does everything she can to make her life seem like one of privilege. This leads her to borrow the necklace, and ultimately lose the adornment along with her comfortable life. However, at the end of the story Monsier Loisel is the one who becomes the martyr while trying to protect and help his partner.

Mathilde’s view of herself as a martyr leads her to make selfish, and ultimately catastrophic, decisions. She and her husband live comfortably and are not deprived of anything essential to a fair quality of life, yet she still feels as if it is necessary to suffer through the mediocrity. Mathilde is unable, and unwilling, to accept and appreciate what she is fortunate to have, which includes a satisfactory home, warm meals, proper clothes, and an admirable and loving husband. She feels her physical attractiveness and charm are being wasted on a dull and inferior life. After Mathilde loses the necklace and spends the next ten years paying back the debt, she find herself behaving more like a martyr by undertaking the hard work with dedication and perseverance. She is not the beautiful woman she once was. In a sense she has truly fulfilled her role as a martyr by succumbing to a fate of unattractiveness.

However, once Madam Forestier reveals the necklace to be a fake Mathilde loses the one thing she has left, which is her own martyrdom. At the end of the story there is one true martyr. Monsier Loisel has sacrificed everything for his wife and his willingness to help her in any situation was proven. He gave up his wants, needs, and ultimately his health for her. It was his decision to give up his hunting trip for Mathilde's new dress. It was his suggestion that led Mathilde to borrow the necklace, and ultimately his decision to replace the necklace. Monsier Loisel cared for his wife a great deal which led him to make blind and foolish decisions. Because of her selfishness, Mathilde not only ruined her life, but also the life of the person she was closest to.

Martyrdom and suffering for a righteous cause is admirable, honorable, and can be considered a justified act by many. On the other hand, self-centered and miserly actions in the name of martyrdom, though saddening, can be attributed to human nature. Greed can be just as common a trait in some as love or compassion is in others. This story simply shows us that tormenting one's self because of selfishness and greed can have all too real consequences. Mathilde considered her own self a martyr throughout the story. However, in the end she no longer had an excuse to torment herself; in the end she did not even have her own anguish for comfort.