

Chapter Review

- "The Necklace" is a short story by the French writer Guy de Maupassant. It is about vanity and its price.
- Mathilde Loisel is a pretty woman, born into a family of clerks. She is always unhappy because she feels she was born for luxury. Her husband is a small clerk at the Board of Education.
- One day M. Loisel brings an invitation to a ball at the Minister's house. Mathilde cries that she has nothing to wear. He gives her four hundred francs, saved to buy a gun, for a dress.
- She still has no jewels. Her husband suggests flowers, but she refuses. She borrows a diamond necklace from her rich friend Mme Forestier.
- At the ball she is the most beautiful woman and is greatly admired. On returning home she finds that the necklace is lost.
- They search everywhere, advertise and search the cabs, but fail. After a week, they buy a similar necklace for thirty-six thousand francs, using eighteen thousand from the husband's inheritance and borrowing the rest at ruinous rates, and return it to Mme Forestier.
- For ten years, they live in poverty to repay the debt. They dismiss the maid, rent an attic, and Mathilde does all the housework. M. Loisel works extra jobs at night.
- After ten years she meets Mme Forestier, now unrecognisable and aged. She tells her the truth. Mme Forestier is shocked and says her necklace was only an imitation worth at most five hundred francs.
- The story ends with irony: the Loisels ruined their lives for a worthless necklace.

Key Terms

Vanity – Excessive pride in one's looks or things.

Clerk – A person who does office work.

Usurer – A moneylender charging high interest.

Sou – A small French coin.

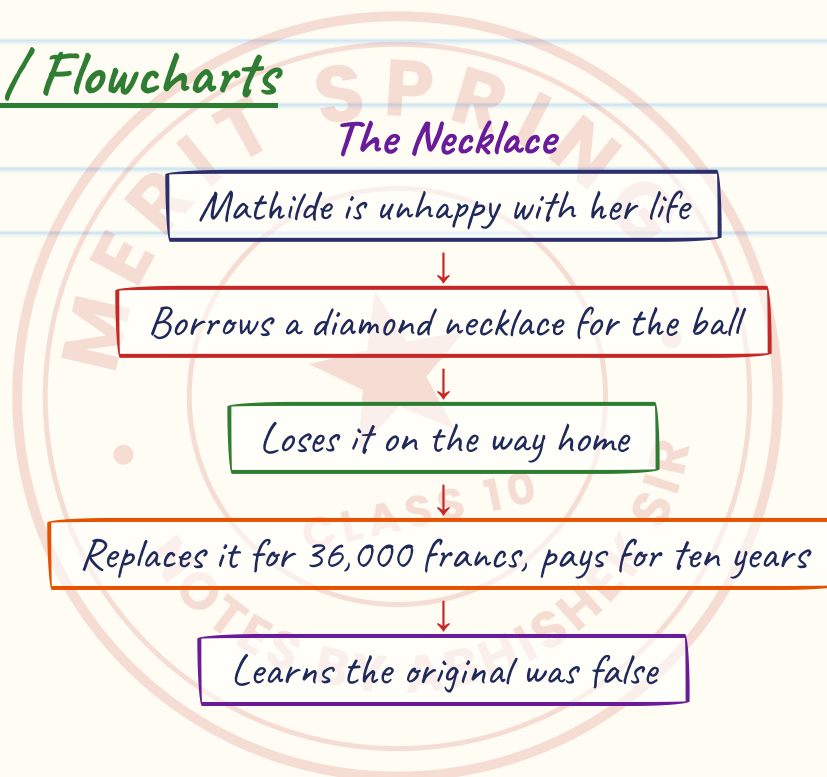
Imitation – A copy, not the real thing.

Ruinous – Causing total ruin.

Attic – A room under the roof.

Discontent – Being unhappy with what one has.

Diagrams / Flowcharts



Mathilde Before and After

Before

- Pretty, vain, discontented
- Dreams of luxury
- Hates her simple home

After

- Rough, aged, hard-working
- Poor, but proud of paying
- Learns the cost of vanity

About the Author

- Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) was a French writer, a master of the short story, famous for his twist endings.

Theme / Message

- Vanity and false pride lead to ruin. Be content with what you have.
- Honesty is the best policy: had Mathilde told the truth, she would have saved ten years of suffering.
- Irony: the loss of a false necklace made them lose their own beauty and youth.

Clues to French Setting

- Names with 'Monsieur' and 'Mme', coins like francs and sous, and places like Palais Royal and Champs Elysees show the characters spoke French. The English is a translation.

Textbook Exercise Questions

Q.1 What kind of person is Mme Loisel? Why is she always unhappy?

Ans. She is pretty but vain. She came from a poor family but dreams of luxury, and is unhappy because her means cannot satisfy her desires.

Q.2 What kind of person is her husband?

Ans. M. Loisel is an ordinary, simple-hearted, loving clerk. He is content with his job and gives her money for a dress.

Q.3 What fresh problem now disturbs Mme Loisel? How is it solved?

Ans. She has no jewels to match her dress. Her husband suggests natural flowers, but she refuses; then he suggests borrowing jewels from her friend Mme Forestier, who lends a diamond necklace.

Q.4 What do the Loisels do when the necklace is lost?

Ans. They search the road, go to the police and cab offices, advertise a reward, and write to Mme Forestier that the clasp is broken. At last they buy a new necklace.

Q.5 How do they replace the necklace?

Ans. M. Loisel used eighteen thousand francs from his inheritance and borrowed the rest from moneylenders. They bought one for thirty-six thousand francs.

Q.6 The course of the Loisels' life changed due to the necklace. Comment.

Ans. It took ten years to repay the debt. They dismissed the maid, moved to an attic, Mathilde did housework and he did extra jobs. Their life became miserable.

Q.7 What was the cause of Matilda's ruin? How could she avoid it?

Ans. Her materialistic desires and discontent. She could have been content with her simple life with her loving husband, and told the truth to her friend.

Q.8 What would have happened if she had confessed to her friend?

Ans. Mme Forestier would have told her the necklace was imitation worth five hundred francs, and they would have saved their money and ten hard years.

Q.9 Honesty is the best policy. We should be content with what life gives us.

Ans. An honest person may face difficulties at first but finally gets peace. Contentment brings happiness; as the saying goes, 'Cut your coat according to your cloth.'

Board Exam Questions (Important)

Q.1 Write a character sketch of Mathilde Loisel. (100 words)

Ans. Mathilde is beautiful but vain, proud and discontented. She wants luxuries which she cannot afford. Her borrowed necklace leads to her ruin. She shows courage in paying the debt for ten years, but she loses her beauty. She could have been happy if she had been honest and content.

Q.2 Why is the ending of the story ironical?

Ans. They spent ten years of hardship to replace a necklace that was worth only five hundred francs. A false thing cost them everything.

Q.3 Reference to context: "What would have happened if I had not lost the necklace?" Why does Mathilde say this?

Ans. It shows how one small event changed her life. She realises that life is full of changes, and a small thing can make or ruin us.

Q.4 Value-based: What does the story teach about borrowing and show-off?

Ans. We should not live beyond our means or try to impress others. Honesty and contentment save us from trouble.