

Steve Goodwin

Ms. Schomer

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Mme. Loisel in “The Necklace”

In Guy De Maupassant’s “The Necklace” Mathilde Loisel is depicted as a miserable creature, an ungrateful wife and a superficial woman whose downfall is brought about by her vain pride. To begin with, Mme. Loisel is tortured by her working class status, miserably convinced she should have been born rich. In characterizing her, the author describes how Mathilde “suffered from the poverty of her dwelling, from the wretched look of the walls, from the worn out chairs, from the ugliness of the curtains” (929). Although all of her basic needs are met, Mathilde has fine tastes, longs for luxury and is entirely unsatisfied with her simple lifestyle. In addition, the heroine of the story is revealed to be an ungrateful wife, regardless of her husband’s earnest efforts to appease her. When M. Loisel reveals that they are invited to the ministry ball, “She looked at him with an irritated glance and said impatiently: ‘And what do you want me to put on my back?’” (930). Despite the fact that M. Loisel has gone to great troubles to acquire an invitation in order to please his wife, she is scornful and thinks only of how she has nothing to wear. Furthermore, Mathilde is thoroughly superficial, crippled by her desire to appear wealthier than she really is. She scoffs at her husband’s suggestion to adorn herself with fresh flowers, convinced that ““there’s nothing more humiliating than to look poor among other women who are rich”” (931). Mme. Loisel’s vanity compels her to create the impression that she is rich which ultimately leads to her downfall. Overall, Mathilde Loisel demonstrates misery, ingratitude and superficiality, negative qualities which bring about years of suffering. Like the fake diamond necklace, Mme. Loisel glitters beautifully the night of the ball, but in reality she is nothing more than paste.