



The Necklace by Guy-De Maupassant Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

Short story is one of the important genres of English literature. In few pages reality of life has to be introduced by the short-story writer. Many writers give a glance of life, as actually it is. The necklace by famous short-story writer Guy de Maupassant is realistic short-story. We face human-nature, their desires, misery, misunderstanding, irony and life itself.

Guy de Maupassant unlike O'Henry is famous for surprise ending in his stories. He wrote what life is. He didn't describe fantasy or imagination. He wrote what he saw. Here we study short story "The Necklace" and its various themes in critical view.

KEYWORDS : Realism, Irony, Naturalism, Destiny

The story is simple. Maupassant told us very simply what happened with poor Mathilde. She lost the necklace at the ball which she had borrowed from her friend Madame Frostier, which she finally replaced it with a new one worth 36000 Francs. It took a period of 10 long years to overcome that debt. Tragedy of her destiny reveals after 10 long years, when she comes to know from Madame Frostier that the necklace was fake worth only 500 Francs.

Realist novel/story :-

Literary realism is the trend beginning with mid 19th century French literature in which authors writes toward depictions of contemporary life and society as it was or is. In the spirit of general realism authors, realist opted for depictions of everyday and banal activities and experiences, in stand of a romanticized or similarly stylized presentation.

Guy de Maupassant as a realist – described Mathilde Loisel and her husband's life and their irony in "The necklace". He didn't write any imaginations or any fantasy in Mathilde's life even no miracle happened in her life besides her one enjoyable night at ball. Guy simply represented what people were. In the opening lines of the story he wrote ;

"She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as though fate had blundered over her, into a family of artisans she had no marriage portion, no exception, no means of getting known, understood, loved and wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and she let herself be married off to a little clerk in the ministry of education".

Here from above lines, we come to know about protagonist Mathilde Loisel. She was beautiful and charming girl. She thought that destiny made mistake on her. She should have been brought up in wealthy family and deserved all luxuries of life like wealth and money. Maupassant gave realistic picture of life that destiny proved role in Mathilde's life as she was born in the artisans family, she longed for luxury. She married with an ordinary clerk. Generally, it's natural when a poor girl marries to a poor boy, besides some luck or miracle happens such as a prince or wealthy man being enchanted by Mathilde's beauty and gets married to her but no such miracle happened, yet Mathilde could not accept her fact.

"She suffered endlessly, feeling herself born for every delicacy and luxury. She suffered from the poorness of her house, from its mean walls, worn chairs and ugly curtains. All these things of which other women of her class would not even aware tormented and insulted her."

Maupassant gave real picture of her life. If any other woman were in place of Mathilde, could have lived life happily enough but in reality Mathilde was woman of desires and she was neither satisfied nor able to adjust with her life.. She had lovely husband who made every possible means to make her happy. She even felt sorry for her meal in which her husband found happiness. She became day-dreamer. In all her free time she was dreaming about wealthy and prosperous life. She had servant, good food, good house in comparison to others who were economically below than her, but she wanted more. She carved for ornaments and heavy clothes. She felt humiliated without it. Maupassant gave realistic picture of life of women like Mathilde who

were not satisfied with what they had. "She had no clothes, no jewels, nothing, and these were the only things she loved". In real life we experience that we are not satisfied with which we live. She refused to visit her wealthy friend Madame Frostier, because she suffered so keenly when she returned home.

One day her husband Monsieur told her that they were invited in the evening ball. He thought that this opportunity gave her pleasure but he was shocked when she wept and told him to give that invitation to those whose wives who were quite wealthy to attend the ball. She did not have ball dress or any jewel at all. She felt that it would be humiliating with a poor look in front of ministry people. Though her husband had tremendous troubles to get that invitation, she refused it. "He was heart broken". We realize that Mathilde was quite selfish woman. She didn't appreciate her husband's efforts to make her happy. She began to think of her clothes, jewels and her own appearance. She didn't think that her husband too was going to join the ball. He too had no clothes to suit at the ball. Though we are not introduced about him in such manners but we understand that it is natural. Mathilde accepted 400 Francs from her husband without even inquiring how he managed it & even didn't suggest anything about his appearance.

Monsieur was lovely husband who sacrificed his money to make his wife happy, the money which he saved to buy a gun. That was co-incident that Mathilde demanded exactly the same amount which was cost for gun.

Here we see that this sacrifice was not enough for Mathilde, She than wanted to wear jewel with her ball dress which was not in her possession. "She felt miserable at not having any jewels, not a single stone". Her husband suggested her to wear flowers but she replied: "there's nothing so humiliating as looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women". We are very much aware of the character of Mathilde in beginning of story. She was woman who believed in showing off. It was possible for her to join the ball with what she had, but she wanted to highlight herself. She could see what she dreamt. Finally she accepted her husband's suggestion to borrow jewels from her rich friend Madame Frostier. She rejected many jewels at her home as she wanted something extraordinary. It was enough for her if she chose simple jewellery as she had no jewellery of her own. But she chose diamond necklace, the only diamond necklace which "suddenly she discovered, in a black satin case, a superb diamond necklace; her heart began to beat covetously; her hands trembled as she lifted it. She fastened it round her neck, upon her high dress, and remained in ecstasy at sight of herself".

She felt gratitude of her friend. "The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was the prettiest woman present, elegant, graceful, smiling and quite above herself with happiness. All the men stared at her, inquired her name, and asked to be introduced to her. All the Under-Secretaries of State were eager to waltz with her. The Minister noticed her". Finally her dream was getting fulfilled. For only one night but she got what she craved for. Her beauty had been noticed even by Minister. "She danced madly, ecstatically, drunk with pleasure, with no thought for anything triumph of her beauty, in the

pride of her success, in a cloud of happiness made up of this universal homage and admiration of the desires she had aroused of the completeness heart". We can understand that all her desires were what about she fulfilled all her feelings. She wanted to be the center character of party and she had been. She didn't think about her husband. He was, "since midnight her husband had been doing in a deserted little room, in company with three other men whose wives were having a good time." Her husband gave her freedom to enjoy the party. After finishing the ball, her husband gave her garment to be protected from cold but Mathilde was aware of their poverty and knew that her wracks ugliness clashed with other women fur. So that she didn't listen to her husband for fetching cab and rapidly disced the staircase. She was already shivering but wasn't ready for humiliation as per her own thinking. For show-off and for her fake personality which she had been falsely made. She was poor in reality but was showing off falsely. Because of shame she had to hurry home and when she reached, Alas! "The necklace was no longer round her neck." She told about it to her husband. He searched it everywhere but found nothing. "He went to the police-station, to the newspaper, to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere that a ray of hope impelled him." Mathilde too had searched the necklace in home and in her clothes. We are astonished that Monsieur gave advertisements in newspapers but Madame Frostier didn't read it, even she wasn't aware of Mathilde's lost borrowed necklace. Even no one told her about it. Perhaps she had read another newspaper. Police too didn't search it. After all the efforts had gone in vain they replaced the diamonds in 36000/- Francs. Loisel possessed eight-thousand Francs left him by his father and the rest he intended to borrow. He had done three jobs to pay off. They got rid of their servants, Mathilde herself did her hateful duties of the kitchen. She did washing, cleaning, drying, fetching water and all types of other household duties. "Every month notes to be paid off, other renewed, time gained." Her husband without any faults paid off and this life of struggle lasted ten years" Ten years were quite long time Mathilde Loisel looked old now. She had faced so many struggles in life. Much struggle and economic bad condition made her strong, hard, coarse women of household. Her hair, hands, cloths, voice were badly damaged. She lost her grace and beauty. Than she hadn't any exclusion for her day-dreams, she would be what the poor women were! She than understood that without beauty and grace she did not deserve what she want. Her dreams had been shattered. But sometimes when her husband was at the office, she sat down by the window and of the ball at which she had been so beautiful and so much admired. At last all in her life she had enjoyed at least one night of which she had dreamt about.

This story is alike Flaubert's madano Brovery Madame Boverly had loving doctor husband , and one daughter. but she was not satisfied with her life. She rushed after wealth and show off. She had no satisfaction and committed adultery too. Her end was miserable as she committed suicide. Here in comparison to Madame Boverly, Mathilde was no so harsh as she had, but she is in many ways alike her.

"What would have happened if she had never lost those jewels? Who knows? Who knows? How strange life is, how fckly! How little is needed to ruin or to save!"

In above paragraph it is the subject to imagination that what would be the life if she had not lost the necklace? Were fate of destiny decided another plan for her? Who knows? Mostly the things of imag-

ination are not discussed. One Sunday after ten years later she met Madame Frostier who didn't even recognize her and said her that her condition was that so because of her account. Alas! Madame Frostier revealed the secret!..

"Oh my poor Mathilde! But mine was imitation. It was worth at the very most five hundred Francs!"

Oxford English dictionary says, "A condition of affairs or events of a character opposite to what was or might naturally be, expected a contradictory outcome of events as if in mockery of, the promise and fitness of things".

Knowing that fact what Mathilde Loisel had said or what she had done we don't know. As a realist Maussapant didn't say anything to us. If Madame Frostier returned her cash for what Mathilde had done, What about her husband, we don't know. She had shock? Or grief or agony or what types of feeling she faced we didn't know all such thing are bound to imagination.

Realism or naturalism in the arts is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions, implausible exotic and supernatural elements.

Here, the fake necklace represented fake identity of people though Madame Frostier was enough rich to buy real diamond but as an experienced lady, she had bought imitative diamond, and did not even tell Mathilde about this reality. Mathilde too didn't tell her about losing and replacing diamond. She believed in reality of necklace thinking that a rich lady like Madame Frostier had nothing but real jewels as well as Frostier wanted to continue her frame of richness in the eyes of Mathilde. Even when Mathilde gave her replacing diamond she didn't even check it. Perhaps she might have thought that poor woman like Mathilde did not have the ability to buy even fake jewels. All the sacrifices of Loisel couple had gone in vain. Moreover loving husband like Moiseur suffered without any fault. If Mathilde had an idea of fake jewel, she could buy it too like clothes, but she believed that all rich people had real jewels which was her misunderstanding.

Here Loisel Mahilde had good house, job, even servant too but she had not satisfaction. She didn't even know the fact that "All that glitters is not gold." They had their accentor's asset of 18000 Francs so they could live better life, more comfortable life. Mathildes over expectation led her life miserable. She should have told the fact of lost necklace to Madame Frostier but her martyrdom led her to misery perhaps her worse destiny played great role in her life. The time which passes never recovers, is the real fact of our life. Otherwise who knows what would have happened, if Mathilde hadn't lost the necklace? But we are left alone after reading this short story. All the characters of this story acted like ordinary person and foolishly represented themselves, gain nothing. Especially in Mathilde and her husband's case, it was totally loss. If Mathilde had been given money or true diamond necklace returned by Frostier, she and her husband might have found back their property. But Mathilde couldn't regain her beauty, grace and neither her ten years nor her husband too. Both the women represented mask of fake personality. They appeared more than what they were in others eyes. This is how the world is as Maupassant represents.

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