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The Necklace

Guy de Maupassant (1850 - 1893)

Read by: Bob Neufeld Language: English Length: 21 minutes Style: Solo

Genre: Fiction, Short Stories

Product Formats and Options				
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Madame Mathilda Loisel, the protagonist of *The Necklace*, aspires to the life of an aristocrat. Born into a family of clerks, she is married to a low-paid but kindly clerk who tries to make her happy. When he obtains an invitation to a fancy dress ball from the Ministry of Education, she refuses to go, having nothing to wear and no jewelry. She acts on her husband's suggestion to borrow a diamond necklace from her friend Madame Jeanne Forestier. She has a splendid at the ball but discovers when she gets home that she has lost the necklace. Unable to find it the couple decides to buy a replacement, which of course is far beyond their means. They use an inheritance from his father to pay half the cost and borrow heavily to cover the rest. Naturally, they are reduced to impoverished circumstances for 10 years when, by

chance, Madame meets her friend Jeanne on the street, who hardly recognize her in her shabby clothes and unkempt mien. Madame Loisel tells her friend about the loss and replacement of the necklace and explains her ragged appearance is result of the hard times she has endured. Her friend confides that the original was indeed a fake and worth a pittance at best. *The Necklace* is a classic example of de Maupassant's hallmark gift for ironic surprise endings, has been adapted for film, television, and the stage, and has inspired similar works by no less than Henry James, Somerset Maugham, and others.

Guy de Maupassant (August 5, 1850 – July 6, 1893) was a French writer considered one of the fathers of the short story. He wrote over 300 stories as well as six novels, three travel books and a book of poems. A protégé of Flaubert, he was a naturalist, depicting human life and social forces with an economy of style, clever plots, and surprise denouements. He was born into a prosperous family in Normandy. His mother separated from his father when he was eleven and he lived with his mother in the seaside town of Etretat. The Franco-Prussian War broke out soon after he finished college. He enlisted in 1871 and moved to Paris, where he served as a clerk in the Navy for ten years. He had been introduced to Flaubert while in junior high, and in Paris Flaubert took him under his wing and guided his literary efforts. Boule de Suif was a huge success upon publication in 1880. He followed with "Deux Amis", "Mother Savage" and "Mademoiselle Fifi". He was methodical and prolific, producing two to four collections a year during the 1880's, and had a practical business acumen that made him a wealthy man. He avoided the limelight, preferring to travel, often cruising on his yacht, the Bel-Ami. He later became reclusive and obsessed with self-preservation and a fear of death, likely due to syphilis, which he had contracted in his youth. He was committed to an asylum after a suicide attempt in 1892 and died the following year.