

The Necklace

Answers to NCERT Questions

READ AND FIND OUT

1. What kind of a person is Mme Loisel—why is she always unhappy?

Ans: Mme Loisel is young, pretty, ordinary but discontented woman. She is of a humble background but dreams of riches and comforts. She is proud of her beauty and wants to be admired. Her meagre resources are not enough to satisfy her expensive cravings, making her angry all the time.

2. What kind of a person is her husband?

Ans: Her husband M Loisel, is an ordinary and average young man. A mere clerk by profession, he is still contented with his job. Also, he is a caring man as he is excited to show the dinner invitation to his wife.

3. What fresh problem now disturbs Mme Loisel?

Ans: After spending a fortune on a beautiful dress, Mme Loisel is faced with yet another disaster. She frets over the fact that she does not have a beautiful jewel to go with her dress. So, she asks her husband to pass on the invitation to someone else.

4. How is the problem solved?

Ans: Matilda Loisel's husband, M. Loisel comes to her rescue. First, he suggests her to wear fresh flowers. Matilda just mocked at the idea. Then he advises her to borrow some jewels from her rich friend, Mme Forestier. Thus, the problem is solved as Mme Forestier lends her a beautiful diamond necklace.

5. What do Mr. and Mme Loisel do next?

Ans: The Loisels leave no stone unturned. M. Loisel goes back and searches to the lost necklace. Then, he goes to the police and to the cab offices. Also, they put out an advertisement in the newspapers and offer a reward to anyone who finds the necklace. But all their efforts go in vain.

6. How do they replace the necklace?

Ans: After all other efforts fail, Loisels decide to buy a new identical necklace to replace the lost one. M. Loisel pooled eighteen thousand francs of his inheritance and borrowed the rest. Then the couple managed to buy the new necklace for thirty-six thousand francs and returned it to the rightful owner.

THINK ABOUT IT

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

Ans: It takes Loisels a decade to pay back the money they borrowed to buy the necklace. And it changed everything for them. They had to move to the poorest quarters of the city. With no maids or assistance, Matilda had to cook, clean, mend, sew, bargain with the grocer and butcher to save every sou just for mere survival. The husband had to work in the evening and night to pay their debt. In this way, the course of the Loisels' life changed due to the necklace.

2. What was the cause of Matilda's ruin? How could she have avoided it?

Ans: Matilda's pride and her materialistic aspirations coupled with her dishonesty paved the way for her ruin. She could have avoided it by learning to accept her current situation and being content with what she had.

3. What would have happened to Matilda, if she had confessed to her friend that she had lost her necklace?

Ans: Truth and honesty would have saved Matilda from her doom. If only she had been courageous enough to confess to her friend the truth of the necklace, she would have come to know that it was a fake one that cost a mere five hundred francs. She would not have spent her husband's entire inheritance and borrowed eighteen thousand francs to pay for its replacement. In fact, she would have saved herself and her husband from ten long years of crushing poverty, misery and back breaking labour.

4. If you were caught in a situation like this, how would you have dealt with it?

Ans: Foremost of all, I would have done my best not to become a victim of my own pride and aspirations. If I were caught in such a situation, I would have let the truth out and then faced the consequences. Honesty would have been the way out for me.

TALK ABOUT IT

1. The characters in this story speak in English. Do you think this is their language? What clues are there in the story about the language its characters must be speaking in?

Ans: Though the characters speak in English, it is not their language. Maupassant wrote the story in French and it was translated into English. Again, the very text throws up enough words in French to prove it otherwise. First, the very names of characters like Mme Loisel, Mme Forestier and the minister's name George Ramponneau indicate their French origin. Then the words for currency like 'Franc' and 'Sou' show the same.

Also, the shop's location at 'Palais Royal' and 'Champs Elysees' point out the French history of the characters and the story.

2. Honesty is the best Policy.

Ans: Honesty is definitely the best policy. Falsehood and hypocrisy seem very attractive and rewarding at first. But the path they tread on leads to nothing but misery, evil and utter gloom. Honesty, on the contrary, seems to be a difficult choice in pursuit of material happiness. However, it is the only choice for a life of contentment, peace and everlasting happiness.

3. We should be content with what life gives us.

Ans: Life is a great mystery. For every individual, this mystery of life comes wrapped in a unique package. For some, it is all riches, comfort, name and fame. For some, it is nothing but sheer hunger, poverty, anguish and an everyday quest for bare survival. One, however, must learn to live within one's means and be content with what one has. One may try to improve his lot by honest means, but eventually must be at peace with what one manages to have.

Additional Questions

Short Answer Questions (30-40 words)

1. What do you think, were the feelings of Madam Forestier when she came to know that Matilda returned her a diamond necklace in place of an artificial one?

Ans: Matilda borrowed a necklace from Madam Forestier to wear at a party. She lost it somewhere and in that place, returned a diamond necklace to her. She was unaware of the fact that it was an artificial one. Madam Forestier was shocked to know the whole story. Madam Forestier thought that the situation could have been avoided, if Matilda had dared to accept the truth and share it with Madam Forestier.

2. Madam Loisel was intoxicated with pleasure at the ball. Give three reasons to support your answer.

Ans: Madam Loisel was intoxicated with pleasure at the ball. She danced with enthusiasm. She received everyone's admiration and flattery. She looked the prettiest of all—elegant, gracious, smiling and full of joy.

3. How would you feel if you were in Matilda's place and had lost somebody's such a valuable possession?

Ans: Matilda borrowed a necklace from Madam Forestier to wear in a ball. She lost it the same night. She was too much upset at the incident and tried to find it everywhere in the fold of dress, in the cloak, in the pockets and everywhere. Even Mr. Loisel went to

search it in midnight. They even could not sleep all night. They went to the police and even to the cab-office and put an advertisement in the newspaper, offering a reward.

If I had been in Matilda's place, I would have done all the above for such a valuable possession.

4. What changes occurred in Mme Loisel after ten years?

Ans: Madam Loisel now knows the horrible life of necessity. She sent away her maid and learnt the odious work of the kitchen. She washed the dishes and the clothes on her own. She took down wastes to the street and brought up the water, stopping at each landing to breathe. They changed their lodging and rented some rooms in the attic.

She seemed old now and became strong and hard women. Her hair badly dressed, her skirts awry, her hands red and spoke in a loud voice.

5. Mme. Loisel lost the necklace that Mme. Forestier had lent her. If it had been you instead of, Loisel's place, what would have been your first and foremost step?

Ans: If I had been at Madam Loisel's place, firstly I would not have borrowed the necklace. I would have been satisfied with the assets that I possessed. Secondly, if I had borrowed and lost it, I would have told that to Madam Forestier. Then I would have known at that very time that it was not a real diamond but an artificial one. Then I would have been saved from being ruined as Madam Loisel's life had.

6. How was Mr Loisel able to arrange 36,000 francs?

Ans: Loisels possessed eighteen thousand francs, which his father had left. Rest of the money was borrowed from a whole race of lenders. He made ruinous promises for that, and to repay this debt, they had to change their lodgings. Madam Loisel had to do all the tedious jobs like washing, grocery shopping, and carrying water upstairs by herself.

7. Why did Mme Loisel go to visit her friend Mme Forestier?

Ans: Mme Loisel visited her friend Mme Forestier twice. First, she went to her house to borrow a diamond necklace for the ball which she lost the same day. Second, she visited her house to return the necklace that she had bought for 36,000 francs in compensation for the lost necklace.

8. Why did Madam Loisel leave the ball in hurry? What does it show about her character?

Ans: Madam Loisel left the ball in a hurry because her husband threw the modest wraps around her shoulders, whose poverty clashed with the elegance of the ball costume. She did not want to be noticed by the other woman who was wrapping

themselves in rich furs. It shows the hypocrisy and show-off life of Mme Loisel. It shows her dissatisfaction, anger and frustration with life.

9. How did M. Loisel and Madam Loisel manage to buy a diamond necklace to return it to Madam Forestier? What were the consequences?

Ans: Mr Loisel and Madam Loisel spent all their savings i.e. eighteen thousand francs, which his father had saved for him. Rest of the money they borrowed from usurers with ruinous promises. They had to arrange 36,000 francs for the new diamond necklace. All this ruined their life. Mme Loisel had to do all odd jobs to save money. They had to change their lodgings Mr Loisel had to work till late at night after office hours, putting the books of some merchant or to copy pages at five soups a page to earn extra money.

10. Why did Matilda change her lifestyle after the ball?

Ans: Matilda borrowed a necklace from her friend for the ball, but she lost it after it. It was a diamond necklace. It completely changed her course of life. She and her husband had to struggle hard to repay the debt taken to buy a new necklace.

11. What kind of a husband was M. Loisel? Discuss with reference to the chapter, 'The Necklace'.

Ans: M. Loisel was a simple and poor clerk. He made every effort and sacrifice to make his wife happy. He sacrificed his 400 francs that he had saved to buy a gun for himself in order to buy a new party dress for his wife. It proves that he was a loving husband.

12. Why was Matilda sad after the ball?

Ans: Matilda was sad after the ball because she had lost the diamond necklace which she had borrowed from her friend Mme. Forestier. She had to pay a very heavy price for it.

13. How had Mme Loisel's all sacrifices been in vain?

Ans: Mme. Loisel's sacrifices proved to be all in vain as Mme Forestier, when she met her after ten years, told her that the necklace was of fake diamonds worth only 500 francs. Poor Loisels had wasted their 10 years to repay the loss of a fake necklace.

14. What did the Loisels do to replace the necklace?

Ans: They had to save every single penny in order to repay the huge loan they had taken for the diamond necklace. Mrs Loisel sent away all the maids and did all the household work by herself. They changed their lodging and shifted to a cheaper rented room.

15. What were the reasons for Matilda's unhappiness?

Ans: Matilda was a pretty young lady but belonged to a poor family. She was married to a petty clerk. Her poverty and lack of recognition made her angry and unhappy.

Long Answer Questions (100-150 words)

1. Matilda proved a roaring success due to Mme Forestier lending her the necklace. How would you attain the stature of being generous?

Ans: Matilda got the invitation to attend a ball at the minister's residence. But she did not have a good dress and jewellery to wear for the occasion. Her husband bought her a new dress with all his savings, and she borrowed a diamond necklace from her friend to match her dress to wear on the occasion. On the day of the ball, Mme Loisel was looked the prettiest of all elegant, gracious, smiling and full of joy. All the men noticed her, asked her name and wanted to be presented. She danced with enthusiasm, intoxicated with pleasure, thinking of nothing but all this admiration, all these because of Mme Forestier lending her the necklace. She was so generous that she offered all her jewellery without any hesitation. She did not even check the necklace returned by Mme Loisel. Later on, she told her that it was not a real diamond necklace but an artificial one.

2. Matilda realised that one little act of negligence can lead to total ruin. How would you prefer to be guided to move on in life?

Ans: Matilda lost the necklace that she borrowed from Mme Forestier. She had to buy a new necklace for thirty-six thousand francs which ruined all her savings. She had to change her lodgings and do all odd jobs like washing, cleaning and shopping grocery while her husband had to do extra work of copying after his office time. She lost all her charisma and beauty. Now, she realised that one little act of negligence can lead to total ruin. We will prefer to move on in life according to the situation. If we had committed any mistake, we have to pay for it. And we should pay it bravely. There is no harm in doing any household jobs or in earning extra money after office time. If we can live in a big house, we should learn to live in a small one too with the demand of time.

3. Loisel wished to keep his wife in good humour. Which values of Matilda impress him?

Ans: Loisel wished to keep his wife in good humour. Mme Loisel was a beautiful and delicate woman. She was fond of all riches and luxuries. She thought she deserved all these and thought that it is an error of destiny that she is born in a poor family and married to a mere clerk in the office of the Board of Education. Matilda's beauty and style impressed Loisel. He tried his best to keep her happy. She was fond of parties and balls. That's why, when Loisel got an invitation of ball of minister's residence, he was happy for his wife. He bought her a new dress for the ball, with the money he had saved

to buy a hunting gun for himself. He loved her so much that he bought the new diamond necklace to replace the lost one for thirty-six thousand francs which lost all his savings and compelled him to do extra jobs after office time. He did all these things because he loved his beautiful wife very much and wanted to keep her happy.

4. The story 'The Necklace' teaches us many lessons which form the crux of human values. Discuss.

Ans: The story 'The Necklace' teaches us many lessons which form the crux of human values. The very first thing it teaches us is the need to be content in life. Matilda, though born into a family of clerks and married to a petty clerk with the Board of Education, remains unhappy. She suffers from the feeling that she is born for all delicacies and luxuries, but has to live miserably in 'poverty'. So when she has to attend the office party with her husband, she asks him for money to get a new dress. Her husband sacrifices the money he has saved to buy a gun to get her the dress. Then also, she is not content. She feels that she could look still more beautiful with a jewel. She thus, borrows a necklace from her friend, thinking that it is made of diamonds. At the party, she remains elegant, gracious, smiling and absolutely happy. She was thus, the prettiest of all. But this vanity is short-lived and is the beginning of all troubles in her life. She loses the necklace and she gets a new diamond necklace as its replacement by borrowing heavily. Subsequently, she is pushed to live in poverty as she slogs for ten years to save money to pay back the huge debt. Then the horrible reality frightens her. She realises how her false pride has taken away her otherwise happy contented life. The story thus, discusses the negative effects of pride and vanity, and stresses the importance of being satisfied with what one has.

5. 'Matilda's craving for a bubble reputation was the cause of her ruin.' Draw a conclusion as to how she could have avoided the misfortune that dawned upon her.

Ans: Matilda grows restless and unhappy when her husband shows her the invitation to the official party. What fills her mind is how she can present herself, be the prettiest and most attractive at the party. Already she is frivolous, feeling herself to be born for all delicacies and luxuries of life. Now, this party gives her the opportunity to realise her dreams — at any cost — to show off. Her vanity and false pride blind her, as she decides to flaunt her husband's money to get a new dress for the party. Then she also decides to borrow a necklace to add to her beauty. She is unaware that whatever reputation she would gain from these would be short-lived. If only her husband had stopped her from buying the new dress or borrowing the necklace, they both would have led a smooth life. The efforts they both take to buy that small time happiness had really cost them a considerable time of their life. Matilda should not have yielded to temptations. She should have weighed the pros and cons of borrowing a jewel from a friend. The jewel may or may not be 'diamond' — the need to keep it safe and returning it in good condition is a greater responsibility which a person of Matilda's mindset could hardly handle. A sense of false pride and vanity were uppermost in Matilda's mind. She

was dissatisfied with her way of life, and even one night of splendour was welcome. If she had been content with her life and lived within her means without falling for false and temporary 'riches' could have avoided the misfortune that dawned upon her and her husband on losing the jewel.

6. "Oh! My poor Matilda! Mine was false". Confession saves you from a lot of trouble and sense of guilt. Justify the statement.

Ans: Matilda's friend Mme Forestier meets her after a long time, nearly a gap of ten years. Perhaps it was destined to. She does not recognise Matilda — old, hard and crude with dishevelled hair and skirts awry. She is astonished to see Matilda in this pathetic condition. Matilda tells her the reason for this — the loss of the original necklace and the misery that followed after replacing the necklace. Mme Forestier could only sympathise with Matilda, for the necklace she had lent to Matilda was not of original diamonds. She could have told this clearly to Matilda while giving it to her. Perhaps, Mme Forestier thought she should not dampen Matilda's spirits by revealing the truth. But what the loss of it brought to Matilda was irreversible. Matilda on her part should have revealed the loss of the necklace to her friend. If it had been of real diamonds, then she could have asked for some time to replace it. Matilda could have thus, taken her friend into confidence, but the silent suffering had really taken its toll on her life. If Matilda had only taken courage and been honest to her friend, she would still have been living comfortably, thus, justifying the statement given above. Her own senseless attitude led to her ruin.

7. 'The Necklace' reveals that vanity is evil. It may bring joy for a short period but ultimately it leads to ruin. If you were placed in a situation similar to that of Matilda, what would you have done? Write your views.

Ans: It is true that vanity is evil. It may bring joy for a short period but ultimately it leads to ruin. Matilda, to get a little pleasure and to show her vanity, borrowed a diamond necklace to wear at the minister's party. She lost it. Mr Loisel, her husband took a big loan to replace it. For ten years, both of them worked hard to repay the loan. Poor Matilda had to sacrifice her comfort, youth, softness and beauty. She became a crude, hard, poor lady with rough hair and hands. Later, the irony was Mrs Forestier told her that it was a false diamond necklace only for 500 francs. If I were placed in such a situation, I would have told my friend the truth. I would have told her that I felt extremely sorry for losing it and would have assured her that I would replace it, only she should tell me where to get it from and how much it would cost.

8. Write a character sketch of Matilda.

Ans: Matilda was exceptionally pretty. By virtue of her good looks, she felt that she was born for all delicacies and luxuries. She wished to be admired and loved and to be married to some rich or renowned person. But she was unlucky. She was born into a family of clerks. Since she had no dowry, she agreed to marry a petty clerk. She was always grumbling. She dreamt of lavish parties and rich dresses and jewels. Her

dreamy, ambitious and vain nature pushed her into trouble. She paid a heavy price for her foolish desires. She borrowed a necklace to wear at a ball. She was intoxicated with joy and success. But the necklace was lost. That ruined her physically. She became a crude, hard shabby woman of a poor family. But she was brave and honest. She worked hard ungrudgingly to pay off her loan.

Self-Assessment Test

Short Answer Questions

1. Why do you think that M. Loisel was a loving husband?
 2. Why did Matilda marry a petty clerk?
 3. Why was Matilda sad even after she got the dress?
 4. How did Matilda react on seeing the invitation?
 5. What did Matilda borrow from her friend and why?
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Long Answer Questions

1. Give a character sketch of M. Loisel, Matilda's husband.
2. What is the theme of the story, 'The Necklace'.
3. How did Matilda bring misery upon herself and her husband?