**MAUPASSANT:** Ah, here comes Monsieur Loisel. Madame wishes he were royalty or a wealthy man. He is neither, but tonight, he does have a gift.

**LOISEL:** Dear Matilda, have I got a surprise for you!

**MATILDA:** What’s this?

**LOISEL:** An invitation to the Ambassador’s Ball. I went to a great deal of trouble to get it.

**MATILDA** (*angry*): What would I want with this?

**LOISEL:** But this is such a big event!

**MATILDA:** What do you think I own that I can wear to such a fancy affair?

**LOISEL:** Why, how about that dress you wear to the theater? It’s pretty enough!

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**MAUPASSANT:** Oh, hello there. Or should I say, bonjour [bohn-ŽOOR]. After all, we are in Paris. The year is 1875. And this is the home of Madame Matilda Loisel, a young lady as charming as she is discontent. Here she comes now.

**MATILDA** (*distressed*): Marie-Claire?!

**MAID:** Oui [hwee], Madame?

**MATILDA:** Marie-Claire, do try to straighten up before the master gets home. Everything looks so shabby!

**MAID:** But, Madame, you have such a beautiful home.

**MATILDA:** Nothing but faded wallpaper and dilapidated furniture. How it tortures me to live here!

**MAUPASSANT:** As I was saying, Madame is charming. She also has rich tastes.

**MATILDA:** Make it better, Marie-Claire!

**MAID:** Madame?

**MATILDA:** Dust, Marie-Claire! Straighten! Fluff!

**MAID:** Yes, Madame. Right away.
The Necklace

MATILDA: The dress I wear to the theater?! Are you mad?
LOISEL: Please don’t cry, Matilda. What’s wrong?
MATILDA: Nothing. Only I can’t go. Give the invitation to someone whose wife is better dressed than I.
LOISEL: Don’t be sad. How much would a new gown cost?
MATILDA: Well, I don’t know exactly. I should think 400 francs ought to do it.
LOISEL: Very well. I will give you 400 francs. Do try to get a dress you’ll be happy with.
MAUPASSANT: Poor Loisel. He looks a little pale.

**Scene 2**

MARCEL: Wait a minute!
MAUPASSANT: This is Marcel, the chimney sweep. Marcel, if Marie-Claire knew you were traipsing around the house covered in soot, she’d walk up with her dust mop.
MARCEL: Dust mop, shmust mop. Now listen, you mean to tell me that Monsieur Loisel is going to empty his savings account and work overtime just so Matilda can buy a new dress?
MAUPASSANT: We’re already in Scene 2, Marcel, so I suspect he already has.
MARCEL: Does he honestly think a new dress will make her happy?
MAUPASSANT: Why wouldn’t it?
MARCEL: Because she—
MAUPASSANT: Shh. Tais-toi [tay-twah], Marcel. They’re coming.
MAID: Oh my, Madame, you look simply beautiful.
LOISEL: Stunning, my dear.

Like Matilda, Maupassant was a social climber. His success as a writer propelled him into Paris’s high society—where he got ideas for many of his stories, including this one!

Ravishing!

MATILDA: Something’s not right.
MAID: Madame?
LOISEL: Not right? What could be wrong?
MATILDA (crying): Oh, no. Oh, no! What am I to do?
LOISEL: What is it, Matilda?
MATILDA: I haven’t any jewelry. I shall look so poor!
LOISEL: You can wear some flowers!
MATILDA: How embarrassing it would be to appear so shabby amidst such opulent women. No, I can’t go.

**Scene 3**

MATILDA (to herself): I do hope Madame Forestier takes pity on me.
LOISEL: Call on your friend, Madame Forestier! She will certainly lend you some jewels.
MATILDA: C’est vrai [seh vray]! I hadn’t thought of that. We must go at once!

**Scene 4**

MARCEL: So she’s going to the ball?
MAUPASSANT: She’s already there. MARCEL: Wow, look at that! Wealth, power, beauty—it’s all here, isn’t it? But how did I get here?
MAUPASSANT: You’re not here. You’re merely telling the story.
MARCEL: I am? Really? Well, then, so Matilda arrives at the ball.

**AMBASSADOR:** And who is this elegant young lady?
LOISEL: Call on your friend, Madame Forestier! She will certainly lend you some jewels.
MATILDA: C’est vrai [seh vray]! I hadn’t thought of that. We must go at once!

MAUPASSANT: Matilda and a case full of jewels! This could take a while, so allow me to advance the story. It seems nothing in the case will satisfy Matilda’s tastes—until she discovers the necklace. Her heart skips a beat. Her hands tremble.

MATILDA: Would you lend me this diamond necklace? Only this?
FORESTIER: Certainly! Now go enjoy the ball.

AMBASSADOR: Matilda spends the evening in a cloud of happiness. It is four in the morning before Loisel can convince her to leave.
MATILDA: We must hurry out before someone sees my coat.
LOISEL: No one will notice your coat, Matilda.

MAUPASSANT gained instant fame. It was a hit! Maupassant first published this story in a French newspaper in 1884. The Necklace was first published in a French newspaper in 1884. It was a hit! Maupassant gained instant fame.
MATILDA: It’s old and unfashionable. Please, let’s hurry.
LOISEL: At least let me call a cab. It’s chilly out.
MATILDA: But we’ll be noticed. We can walk down the street. A cab will happen by sooner or later.
LOISEL: Very well, if only to keep appearances.

MATILDA: It’s chilly out.
LOISEL: At least let me call a cab. Please, let’s hurry.
MATILDA: It’s old and unfashionable.

SCENE 5

LOISEL: I don’t see what the big deal is. She goes to the ball. She has a great time. End of story.

SCENE 6

MATILDA: The necklace . . . it’s gone!
FORESTIER: Do I know you?
MATILDA: It’s me, Matilda Loisel.
FORESTIER: My poor Matilda! How you’ve changed.
MATILDA: It’s nearly identical. We must have it!
FORESTIER: Loisel swallows hard and braves the question.

Today, Maupassant is best known for his dazzling short stories (he penned more than 300!), which often explore human weaknesses. What “weaknesses” does he explore in The Necklace?

MATILDA: Surely you can see we’re desperate.
JEWELER: Very well. I will accept thirty-six thousand.
MAUPASSANT: They can’t begin to afford thirty-six thousand francs. So they borrow the money and then spend 10 years paying it back. They have to fire the maid.
MARCEL: Not Marie-Claire! Oh, how I love that old woman!
MAUPASSANT: They move to a truly shabby one-room apartment. Loisel gets a second job at night. Matilda takes in work as a washerwoman.
MARCEL: They go on like that for 10 years?
MAUPASSANT: What else can they do? Not long after making the final payment on their debt, Matilda bumps into Madame Forestier on the street.
MATILDA: Madame Forestier, good morning.
FORESTIER: Do you know you?
MATILDA: It’s me, Matilda Loisel.
FORESTIER: My poor Matilda! How you’ve changed.
MAUPASSANT: It’s true. Ten years of hardship and exhausting work has made Matilda haggard.
MATILDA: I’ve had some toilsome hardship and exhausting work has made Matilda haggard.
FORESTIER: Because of me?
Whatever do you mean?
MATILDA: Do you recall the diamond necklace you lent me? Well, I lost it.
FORESTIER: But you returned it to me.
MATILDA: I returned another exactly like it. It has taken us 10 years to pay for it. You can understand how hard it’s been for us to live in poverty for so long, but it is finally finished and I am decently content.
FORESTIER: You bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?
MATILDA: Yes. They were exactly alike.
FORESTIER: Oh, my poor Matilda.
MATILDA: It’s me, Matilda Loisel.
FORESTIER: My poor Matilda! How you’ve changed.
MATILDA: It’s nearly identical. We must have it!
FORESTIER: Loisel swallows hard and braves the question.

A Lesson for Us All
At the end of the play, Marcel and Maupassant agree that Matilda learned a hard lesson—and that it is a lesson for everyone. This lesson is the moral of the story. Write a paragraph explaining what the moral of the story is and how it applies to Matilda.