THE NECKLACE

She was one of those pretty, young ladies , born as if through an error of destiny , into a family of clerks . She had no dowry , no hopes , no means of becoming known , loved and married by a man either rich or distinguished ; and she allowed herself to marry a petty clerk in the office of the Board of education . She was simple , but she was unhappy .

She suffered incessantly , feeling herself born for all delicacies and luxuries . She suffered from poverty of her apartment , the shabby walls and the worn chairs . All these things tortured and angered her.

When she seated herself for dinner opposite her husband who uncovered the tureen with a delighted air saying , “ Oh “ the good potpie, I know nothing better than that .. “ she would think of elegant dinners, of shining silver ; she thought of the exquisite food served in marvelous dishes . She had neither frocks nor jewels , nothing . And she loved only those things .

She had a rich friend , a schoolmate at the convert , who she did not like to visit --- she suffered so much when she returned . She wept for whole days from despair and disappointment .

One evening her husband returned elated bearing in his hand a large envelope .

“ Here . “ he said , “ here is something for you. “

She quickly drew out a printed card on which were inscribed these words .

Instead of being delighted as her husband had hoped , she threw the invitation spitefully upon the table murmuring . “ What do you suppose I want with you ? “

“ But , may dearie , I thought it would make you happy . You never go out , and this is an occasion , and a fine one, Everybody wishes one , and it is very select ; not many are given to employees. You will see the whole official world there . “

She looked at him with an irritated eye and declared impatiently , “ What do you suppose I have to were to such a thing as that ?

He had not thought of that ; he stammered . “ Why the dress you were when we go to the theatre . It seems very pretty to me … “ He silent stupefied , in dismay , at the sight of his wife weeping . He stammered , “ What is the matter ? What is the matter ?

By a violent effort , she had controlled her vexation and responded in a calm voice , wiping her moist cheeks , “ Nothing . Only I have no dress and consequently I cannot go to this affair . Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better fitted out than I .

He was grieved , but answered , “Let us see , Matilda . How much would a suitable costume cost , something that would serve for other occasions ., something very simple ?

She reflected for some seconds thinking of a sum that she could ask for without bringing with it an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk . Finally she said , in a hesitating voice . I cannot tell exactly , but it seems to me that four hundred francs ought to cover it .

He turned a little pale, for he had saved just this sum to buy a gun that he might be able to join some hunting parties the next summers , with some friends who went to shoot larks on Sunday . Nevertheless , he answered , “ Very well . I will give you for hundred francs . But try to have a pretty dress.

The day of the ball approached and Mme Loisel seemed sad , disturbed , anxious . Nevertheless, her dress was nearly ready . Her husband said to her one evening , what is the matter with you ? You have acted strangely for two or three days .

And she responded , I am vexed not to have a jewel , nothing to adorn myself with . I shall have such a poverty – stricken look . I would prefer not to go to this party.

He replied , “ You can were some natural flowers . In this season they look very chic, “

She was not convinced . “ No “ , she replied , “ there is nothing more humiliating than to have a shabby air in the midst of rich women .

Then her husband cried out ,