

Denouement

Definition of Denouement

Denouement is derived from the French word *denoue*, which means “to untie.” Denouement is a literary device that can be defined as the [resolution](#) of the issue of a complicated plot in [fiction](#). The majority of examples of denouement show the resolution in the final part or chapter, often in an [epilogue](#).

Denouement is usually driven by the [climax](#). In mystery novels, however, the climax and denouement might occur simultaneously. In most of the other forms of literature, it is merely the end of the story.

Examples of Denouement in Literature

Denouement is a significant part of a literary piece, because it resolves the conflicts of the story, as shown in the following denouement examples.

Example #1: *Romeo and Juliet* (By William Shakespeare)

CAPULET:

“O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
This is my daughter’s jointure, for no more
Can I demand...”

MONTAGUE:

“But I can give thee more,
For I will raise her statue in pure gold,
That whiles Verona by that name is known...
As that of true and faithful Juliet...”

CAPULET:

“As rich shall Romeo’s by his lady’s lie,

Poor sacrifices of our enmity..."

PRINCE:

"A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head..."

The denouement occurs in the play when the Capulets and Montagues see their beloved children committing suicide at the tomb. The heads of the family realized that their bitter rivalry must end. Lord Capulet and Lord Montague agree to end their dispute to avoid further [tragedy](#) in the future.

Example #2: *The Great Gatsby* (By F. Scott Fitzgerald)

"‘They’re a rotten crowd,’ I shouted across the lawn. ‘You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together...’"

The denouement in *The Great Gatsby* happens when Nick decides to go back to Minnesota, to get away from the rich people engaged in all those things Nick thinks are part of the [moral](#) worthlessness in Gatsby’s life. All the people in Gatsby’s circle were unfaithful.

Example #3: *The Catcher in the Rye* (By J. D. Salinger)

"... That’s all I’m going to tell about. I could probably tell you what I did after I went home, and how I got sick and all, and what school I’m supposed to go to next fall, after I get out of here, but I don’t feel like it. I really don’t. That stuff doesn’t interest me too much right now... I mean how do you know what you’re going to do till you do it? The answer is, you don’t. I think I am, but how do I know? I swear it’s a stupid question..."

The denouement in this story occurs in the last part of the novel. Here, the [character](#) Holden is living in a psychiatric facility, from which he is recounting the story. He tells readers that, after the merry-go-round ride of Phoebe, he would go home to attend school and face his parents.

Example #4: *The Winter's Tale* (By William Shakespeare)

Gentleman:

“One that gives out himself Prince Florizel/
Son of Polixenes, with his princess, she
The fairest I have yet beheld, desires access...”

Leontes:

“What with him? he comes not
Like to his father’s greatness: his approach...”

Florizel:

“Most royal sir, from thence; from him, whose daughter
His tears proclaim’d his, parting with her: thence
A prosperous south-wind friendly, we have cross’d...”

Leontes:

“My lord, Is this the daughter of a king? ... His tears proclaim’d
his, parting with her: thence...”

Leontes:

“My lord, Is this the daughter of a king...”

In this excerpt from *The Winter's Tale*, the denouement occurs when Polixenes chases Florizel and Perdita to Sicily. After the true identity of Paulina is discovered, Polixenes and Leontes make up, and both families become happy. Leontes also reunites with the family and finds Hermoin alive.

Function of Denouement

The denouement is a final resolution or clarification in a literary work. It is used in different types of storytelling: novels, plays, movies, etc. In fact, it wraps up the whole story, and usually comes after a huge climax. When a heart-racing climax has created anxiety and excitement, denouement provides the [audience](#) a chance to breathe a sigh of relief. It places everything in proper order, and allows the central [theme](#) or sentiments of the movie or novel to resonate. Denouement is very important, as it

resolves the issues in the end. The whole story can be destroyed if the denouement is written poorly.