

1.5 The Necklace

■ ■ ■ Warming up! ■ ■ ■

Talking about Myself

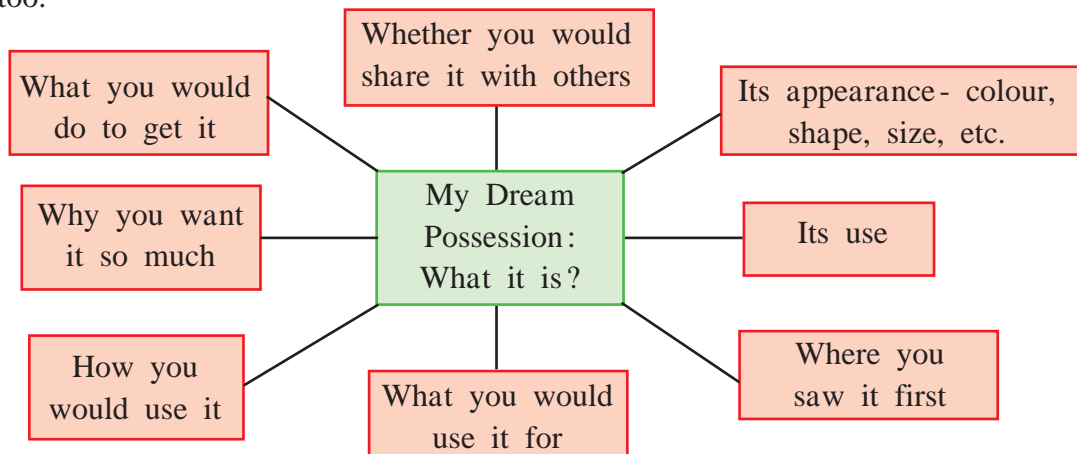
Write a few lines about yourself – your name, appearance, family, the place where you live, your school, your friends, neighbours, relatives, your likes, dislikes, hobbies, what you are good at, etc.

Now create an imaginary ‘persona’ for yourself. It can be quite different from your real self. Or, you may choose a fictional character – a character from a novel, story, etc. Write a few lines about this imaginary persona and **introduce yourself** in that role.

Real Self	Imaginary Persona
Hi, I am	Hi, I am
.....
.....
.....
.....
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My Dream Possession

Is there something that you would like to own more than anything else? Describe your dream possession with the help of the following points. You may add your own points, too.



The Necklace

Part I

- ◆ Why was Mathilde married to a 'minor official'?

Reflection:

Is anyone entitled to all luxuries of life due to reasons of birth or other innate qualities?

- ◆ Why did Mathilde weep with misery after visiting her schoolmate?
- ◆ What did the envelope hold?

M. stands for Monsieur and Mme stands for Madame, French terms of address (like Mr and Mrs in English).

Mathilde was a pretty and charming girl, born, as if by an error of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no means of becoming known, understood, loved or be wedded to an aristocrat; and so she let herself be married to a minor official at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly, because she had never been able to afford anything better. She suffered endlessly, feeling she was entitled to all the luxuries of life. She suffered because of her shabby, poorly furnished house. All these things, that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, tormented her and made her resentful. She dreamed of a grand, palatial mansion, with vast rooms and inviting smaller rooms, perfumed for afternoon chats with close friends.

Yet, she had no rich dresses, no jewels, nothing; and these were the only things she loved. She wanted so much to charm, to be envied, to be sought after.

She had a rich friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she avoided visiting, because afterwards she would weep with regret, despair and misery.

One evening her husband came home with an air of triumph, holding a large envelope in his hand. "Look," he said, "here's something for you."

She tore open the paper and drew out a card, on which was printed the words:

"The Minister of Education and Mme. Georges Rampouneau request the pleasure of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Ministry, on the evening of Monday, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table resentfully, and muttered, "What do you want me to do with that? And what do you expect me to wear if I go?"

He hadn't thought of that. He stammered, "Why,

the dress you go to the theatre in. It seems very nice to me ...”

He stopped, stunned, distressed to see his wife crying. He stuttered, “What’s the matter? Let’s see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost?”

She thought for a moment, computing the cost, and also wondering what amount she could ask for without an immediate refusal. At last she answered hesitantly, “I don’t know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred francs.”

He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount to buy a gun for a hunting summer, in the country near Nanterre, with a few friends. However, he said, “Very well, I can give you four hundred francs. But try and get a really beautiful dress.”

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, restless, anxious, though her dress was ready.

One evening her husband said to her, “What’s the matter? You’ve been acting strange these last three days.”

She replied: “I’m upset that I have no jewels, not a single stone to wear. I would rather not go to the party.”

“You could wear flowers,” he said, “They are very fashionable at this time of year.”

She was not convinced.

The next day she went to her friend’s house and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to her mirrored wardrobe, took out a large box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Madame Loisel:

“Choose, my dear.”

First Mathilde saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace. She tried on the jewellery in the mirror.

She kept asking, “You have nothing else?”

◆ Was the husband a considerate person? How do we know that?

◆ Why did Mathilde go to her friend’s house and tell her of her distress?

◆ What did Madame Forestier’s large box contain?

- ◆ Which sentences tell us that Mathilde greatly desired the necklace?

- ◆ Try to express the thoughts that must have passed through Mathilde's mind on seeing the necklace, in Mathilde's own words.

Think and answer:

- ◆ Why did Mathilde not notice the loss of her necklace earlier?

- rapturously : with great joy
- panic-stricken : with a sudden feeling of fear
- distraught : worried, disturbed

“Why, yes. But I don't know what you like.”

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her neck and stood lost in ecstasy as she looked at herself.

Then she asked anxiously, hesitating, “Would you lend me this, just this?”

“Why, yes, of course.”

She threw her arms around her friend's neck, rapturously, then fled with her treasure.

The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy.

She danced wildly, with passion, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty and success, floating in a cloud of happiness.

Mathilde and her husband left at about four o'clock in the morning. When they were finally in the street, they could not find a cab. They walked down toward the Seine, till they found one. They were dropped off at their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly, it was all over, for her.

In front of the mirror, she took a final look at herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace round her neck!

“What is the matter?” asked her husband.

She turned towards him, panic-stricken, “I have... I have... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace.”

He stood up, distraught, “What!... how! ...That's impossible!”



1. Read each of the following sentences aloud. Write who said it and to whom.

(a) "Look, here's something for you."	(e) "You have nothing else?"
(b) "Why, the dress you go to the theatre in!"	(f) "Would you lend me this, just this?"
(c) "I would rather not go to the party."	(g) "What ! ... how ! ... That's impossible! "
(d) "Choose, my dear."	

2. Write a few lines about what Mathilde had and what she dreamt about.

3. Write what you think about the following thoughts and actions of Mathilde.
 - (a) Mathilde was beautiful, and so she wanted to marry an aristocrat.
 - (b) Mathilde was sad because she did not get any luxuries.
 - (c) Mathilde felt that her house was shabby and poorly furnished.
 - (d) Mathilde wanted other people to envy her.
 - (e) Mathilde was not happy to see the invitation.
 - (f) Mathilde wanted a new dress for herself.
 - (g) Mathilde borrowed a diamond necklace from her friend and wore it to the party.
 - (h) Mathilde lost the necklace.



4. **Prepare a formal invitation** using the following format:

Mr and Mrs solicit the pleasure of your company on the occasion
 of the of their on (day), date

Venue Time

(Include other requests like *RSVP*, *No presents please*, etc. at the bottom.)

5. Read the following :

● The necklace	● an error	● all these things
● another woman	● one evening	● her husband.

In all these phrases we see some words used before the nouns.

They specify or make it clear what noun we are talking about. These words that are used at the beginning of a noun phrase are known as **determiners**.

Determiners include **articles** (a, an, the), **possessive pronouns** (my, our, your, her, etc.), **demonstratives** (words like this, that), **quantifiers** (much, many, etc.), **numerals**, etc.

Write your phrases using each of type of determiner.

Part II

- ◆ What efforts did Loisel make to find the necklace?

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. But they could not find it.

“Are you sure you still had it on when you left the hall?” he asked.

“Yes. I touched it in the hall at the Ministry.”

“But if you had lost it in the street we would have heard it fall. It must be in the cab.”

“Yes. That’s probably it. Did you take his number?”

“No.”

They stared at each other, stunned. At last Loisel put his clothes on again. “I’m going back,” he said, “Over the whole route we walked, and see if I can find it.”

He left. She remained in her ball dress all night, her mind blank. Her husband returned at about seven o’clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the police, to the newspapers to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere the tiniest glimmer of hope led him.

She waited all day, in despair at this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening, a hollow, pale figure; he had found nothing. “You must write to your friend,” he said, “tell her you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. It will give us time to look some more.”

She wrote as he dictated.

At the end of one week they had lost all hope. And Loisel, who suddenly looked aged, declared, “We must consider how to replace the jewel.”

And so, they went from jeweller to jeweller, looking for a necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, both sick with grief and anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which seemed to be exactly what they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six thousand.

Note the expressions:

- glimmer of hope
- sick with grief and anguish

◆ What is implied in

– ‘a hollow, pale figure’?

- cloak : a garment worn over other clothes. It has no sleeves and fastens at the neck.
- glimmer : faint, wavering light
- jewel : Here, it means the diamond necklace.

So they begged the jeweller not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement that he would take it back for thirty-four thousand francs if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

And he did borrow. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with every type of money-lender. Then he went to get the new necklace, and laid down on the jeweller's counter thirty-six thousand francs.



When Madame Loisel took the necklace back, Madame Forestier said coldly, "You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

From then on, Madame Loisel knew the horrible life of the very poor. But she played her part heroically. The dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know the drudgery of housework, the odious labours of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, the dirty linen, she carried the garbage down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath and dressed like a commoner. She had to bargain at markets, quarrel and face insults over every miserable sou.

Each month they had to pay some loans, renew others, get more time.

Her husband worked extra, every evening, doing accounts for a tradesman, and often, late into the night, he sat copying a manuscript at five sous a page.

And this life lasted ten years. At the end of ten years they had paid off everything, even the interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. Often, she brooded over the past – What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed for one to be ruined or saved!

One Sunday, as she was walking in the Champs Élysées suddenly she saw Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

- ◆ What was the arrangement with the jeweller?
Do you think it was fair?

Discuss :

- ◆ Why did Madame Forestier speak coldly to Mathilde?
- ◆ What is meant by 'the horrible life of the very poor'?
- ◆ What contrast is implied by the use of the word 'still' in 'still young, still beautiful, still charming'?

- ruinous : leading to a heavy loss, ruin
- sou : French coin of low value used in the past
- garret : a small, uncomfortable room at the top of the house.
- brooded : thought sadly, unhappily

- ◆ Why did Mathilde decide to speak to her friend?

Discuss :

- ◆ Who do you think was responsible for Mathilde's misery? Was it her friend, she herself, her husband or the circumstances?

- familiarly : showing closeness, familiarity

Madame Loisel felt emotional. Should she speak to her? Yes, of course. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her, "Good morning, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be addressed so familiarly by this common woman, did not recognise her. She stammered:

"But—Madame—I don't know. You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry, "Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you've changed! ..."

"Yes, I have had some hard times since I last saw you, and many miseries ... and all because of you! ..."

"Me? How can that be?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the Ministry party?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. It wasn't easy for us, we had very little. But at last it is over, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier was stunned.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes; you didn't notice then? They were very similar."

And she smiled with proud and innocent pleasure.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Mine was an imitation! It was worth five hundred francs at most! ..."

– Adapted from 'The Necklace' by Guy de Maupassant

1. Complete the following table.

No.	Utterance	Who said it	To whom	When
(a)	I touched it in the hall at the ministry.	.....	.....	.....
(b)	It will give us time to look some more.	.....	.....	.....
(c)	I might have needed it.	.....	.....	.....
(d)	You must have made a mistake.	.....	.....	.....
(e)	Well, I lost it.	.....	.....	.....
(f)	Mine was an imitation.	.....	.....	.....

2. **Write what you think** about the following thoughts and actions of Mathilde :

- (a) Mathilde despaired over the loss of her necklace.
- (b) Mathilde wrote a note to her friend as dictated by her husband.
- (c) Mathilde and her husband decided to replace the necklace.
- (d) Mathilde returned the diamond necklace to her friend.
- (e) Mathilde did not tell her friend about the loss and replacement.
- (f) Mathilde worked very very hard to pay the debt.
- (g) Mathilde and her husband paid off the debt in ten years.
- (h) Mathilde told her friend about the lost necklace.

3. Form pairs. Discuss how 'Part II' of the story could have been different. Write your storyline in the form of bullets showing the main events.

4. Imagine what must have happened after Mathilde's friend discovered that the diamonds were real. Do you think she would return the necklace to Mathilde? Would that make Mathilde happy?



5. Discuss the following and write about each in your own words in 5-6 lines.

- (a) What would you do, if something like this happens to you?
- (b) What opinion do you form about Mathilde's husband from her story?
- (c) Which events in the story (Part I and Part II) changed Mathilde's life?

6. Read, recall and remember. Read the table of verb forms given below.

base	-s form	past tense	present participle	past participle
give	gives	gave	giving	given
draw	draws	drew	drawing	drawn
eat	eats	ate	eating	eaten
show	shows	showed	showing	shown
take	takes	took	taking	taken
say	says	said	saying	said
come	comes	came	coming	come
go	goes	went	going	gone

- The **base form** is used as an **infinitive** : You may *go*. She will *go*;
in **orders** : *Go* home; and in the **simple present tense** : I *go* to school. We *go* home. Do you *go* there every day? The children/They *go* up, etc.
 - Note that we use the '**-s form**' with 'he', 'she', 'it', **third person singular subjects** to show the **simple present**.
 - The **past tense form** has '**-ed**' at the end. But many commonly used verbs have different past tense forms. Examples : *came, went, spoke*.
 - The '**-ing**' form is known as the **present participle**. It is used with forms of 'be' to show **continuous action** - Examples : I *am eating*. You *were eating*. She *was eating*. It is also used in certain constructions like : He sat *copying* a manuscript.
 - The **past participle** used with forms of 'have' shows **completed action** - Examples : I *have eaten*. They *have come*, etc.
It is also used in certain constructions like 'They looked at each other, *stunned!*'
It is also used in **passive** constructions.
- (a) **Make a table of verb forms for your own reference.** Try to arrange the verbs in alphabetical order. Keep adding new verbs to your table from time to time. When you write, **check your work to see whether you have used the correct verb form.**
- (b) List at least 10 verbs, the last letter of which is doubled in the present participle.
Example : put-putting
- (c) List at least 10 verbs, the last letter of which is doubled in the past participle.
Example : write-written
- (d) List at least 10 verbs, the last letter of which is doubled in the past tense form. Example : sob-sobbed.

7. **Read** : 'The Gift of the Magi' by O. Henry.

