

Guy de Maupassant's "The Jewelry": Summary, Literary Elements, and Character Analysis Essay

In "The Jewelry", Guy de Maupassant attempts to develop irony using the lives of urban people, especially due to the decline of morals in the society (Bloom 22). Set in Paris, Maupassant's story revolves around the life of Mr. Latin, a chief clerk at the French Ministry of Interior and his wife, a Mrs. Latin.

However, the actual name of the wife remains unknown to the reader throughout the story. At the beginning, the reader is introduced to the first meeting between Mr. Latin and his wife, which took place at the house of a superintendent. Latin immediately falls in love with the young and innocent women. This short story focuses more on Character and irony than it does to other literary techniques.

The quote: According to Maupassant, the girl first appears "...very ideal of a pure and good woman to whom every young man can entrust" (Maupassant *The Jewelry* 634). This quote is one of the most important indications of the wife's character, and is actually an irony because the woman was not pure but a prostitute in disguise.

After the marriage, the couple's first six years are full of happiness and mutual understanding. However, the wife has a passion for "fake" jewelry and "fake" theatres. Despite this, the wife is a good housekeeper, neat and decent. These characteristics provide Mr. Latin with a luxurious life.

In their sixth year of marriage, the wife went out to the opera one cold night, but later came "back home freezing" (Maupassant *The Jewelry* 635). She got a bad cough and within one week, she died from pneumonia. Mr. Latin's was unable to touch or change anything owned by his late wife because they reminded him of her and her love for him.

Due to inability to meet the domestic, Mr. Latin decides to sell his wife's jewels, but he is surprised to realize that they were genuine and worth thousands of Francs. The reader concludes that she must have been an immoral woman who was ready to betray his husband to get a decent lifestyle. Mr. Latin decides to sell every jewel owned by the late wife, quits his job and uses the money to fund his life.

"The Jewelry" by Guy de Maupassant Literary Elements and Character Analysis

From this story, it is clear that Maupassant focuses on character and irony. First, the character of Mrs. Latin is questionable. While she presents as a decent and loving wife, the author provides the reader with a clue that she must have been cheating on the husband. She is possessed with the love for jewelry, decent lifestyle and entertainment.

After her death, the husband realizes that his little salary could not support such a life, which prompts him to sell the jewelries. In the jeweler's store, Mr. Latin realizes that the wife must have had another source of income, yet she was not open to him. He realizes that she must have been practicing prostitution, something that could have made her love going out at night.

The character of Mr. Latin is also questionable. For instance, despite spending six years with his wife, he had completely failed to realize or even suspect the other side of his wife. He had not even thought how much the wife was spending to keep the house and purchase her jewelries. In fact, he is presented as a very insensitive but humble person. It would be unrealistic of him to put much trust on his wife.

Apart from character, the story emphasizes more on irony. It is ironic that the wife is first presented as a decent and innocent young woman, whose looks would attract any young man. This is ironic because Maupassant later exposes the other side of her life, which makes the reader suspect that she must have been a prostitute.

Secondly, it is ironic that she lives with a low-income earner, yet she has a high income she keeps as a secret. It is also ironic for the young woman to have massive sources of income, yet she looks simple and innocent, and even uses the benefits of her immorality to please his husband. Finally, it is ironic for Mr. Latin to live with her for six years and fail to note her other side of life.

Comparisons between “The Jewelry” and “The necklace”

Although these two stories are quite different, they are both revolving around the lives of women who are possessed with the love for material things and specifically jewels.

The theme of possession of characters, especially women, is quite similar. The two stories further provide an insight into the ability of women to influence their husbands in an urban setting (Jackson 61). While Mrs. Latin is able to cheat on her husband for more than six years just to obtain jewels and live a decent life, Madame Loisel influences her husband to spend almost every cent on her makeup (Roberts 53).

Finally, the two stories revolve around how women in an urban setting take any risk to find happiness in their lives. Madame Loisel goes out borrowing large sums of money to spend on her necklace and makeup (Maupassant *The Necklace* 47). In her part, Mrs. Latin takes the risk of cheating on his husband to obtain a decent life and jewels.

Works Cited

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