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ENG 1103

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Title

In "The Necklace," Guy Maupassant narrates how Mathilde and Loise find out the hard way that it does not pay to tell a lie. On the other hand, in "The Gift of the Magi," O. Henry brings us the story of Jim and Della who sacrifice all they own to buy each other a present. While Mathilde is unhappy and does not have an appreciation for what she has, Jim and Della sacrifice their only belongings to make one to the other happy. Both stories demonstrate that in the end, items are worthless.

Many people think that being rich is synonymous of happiness. In the first story, the authors describe how the Loise’s have to face a hard time of their lives just because Mathilde lost her friend’s necklace and they have to replace it with a new one. “I have—I have—I’ve lost Mme. Forestier’s necklace”, (De Maupassant, p.4) this quote is the beginning of their nightmare because if Mathilde had confessed the truth to her friend from the beginning, she would not have had to spend 10 years of her life paying the money that she and her husband borrowed to replace the necklace. However, in the second story, Jim and Della have different worries. They are poor but madly in love with each other and want to see themselves happy. They sell their valuable possessions for buying each other gift they want or love.

The two stories are the representation of the love of possessions. However, the definition of love is different in both storied. For instance in the story of Mathilde and Loisel, the girl had the love for worldly things, and on the other hand, Jim and Della had such pure love for each other that they sacrificed their valuable possessions just for the sake of each other's love. The love of Della is different than Mathilde’s, as it is narrated “Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him,” (Henry, p.2) This quote shows how Della is so in love with Jim that she spent hours thinking about his happiness, whereas Della is the wife who is not in love with her husband, unrealistically wishes for the things which are not manageable by his husband. Mathilde fanaticizes life until it hits her hard in the face. She pretends to be something she is not, and this struggles made her obsessed over Madam Forestier and her costume jewel (Abushihab, p.112).

Moreover, the two stories are separately exploring the means of sacrifice. Love is all about sacrifice, but if the sacrifice is just made by one side, then it is not considered as true love. Just in the story ‘ the necklace,' Loisel sacrifices a lot for his wife's unruly desires, and in return, Mathilde’s feelings are not of gratitude, in fact, pride takes over her. As depicted in this quotation, "She danced madly, ecstatically, drunk with pleasure… in the pride of her success… of the completeness of a victory so dear to her feminine heart,” (De Maupassant, p.3) This shows how scheming took her to that place and now she is proud to be there regardless of the struggles which took her to that place. She doesn’t want to remember anything except the feeling of happiness and pride at that moment.

Consequently, the main theme of both stories differs significantly from each other, one shows the love for self and worldly things, i.e., in ‘the necklace,' whereas in ‘the gift of magi' it shows the true love for each other. Although people perceive the richness as equivalent to happiness, these stories describe how both couples are striving for being happy with riches or possessions of this world. But the end shows that the key to happiness is to stay content and grateful for whatever little you have our own.

Work Cited

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