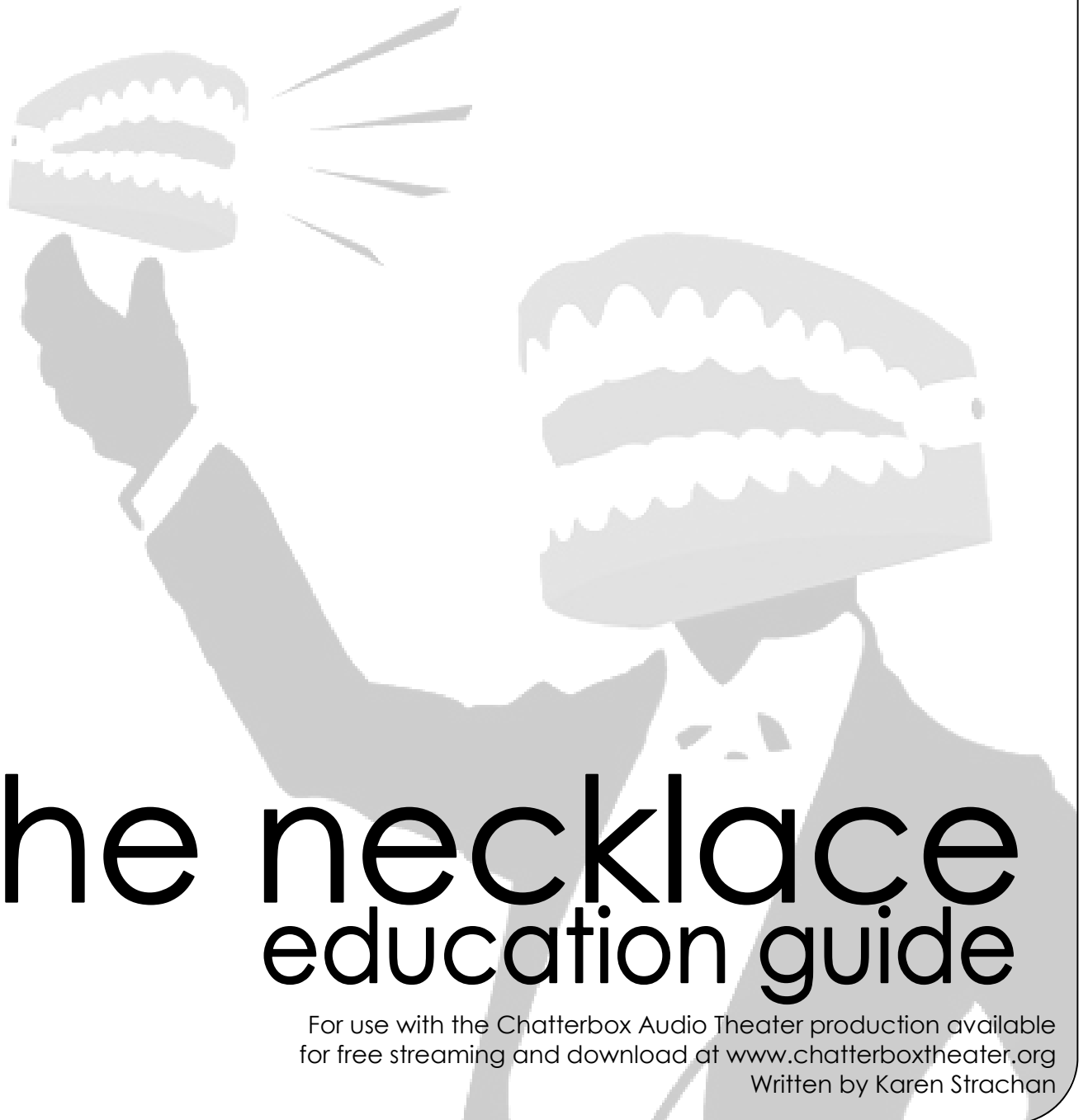


CHATTERBOX AUDIO THEATER

www.chatterboxtheater.org



the necklace education guide

For use with the Chatterbox Audio Theater production available
for free streaming and download at www.chatterboxtheater.org

Written by Karen Strachan



about chatterbox

Chatterbox Audio Theater was created in 2007 by four friends with a lot of creativity and ambition but very little money. Based in Memphis, TN, Chatterbox creates fully soundscaped audio works for free streaming or download. With rare exceptions, Chatterbox shows are recorded live, with manual sound effects and as little post-production editing as possible.

Chatterbox is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Every Chatterbox production is available for free streaming and download from iTunes or from the group's website, www.chatterboxtheater.org.

mission

Sparking imaginations through outstanding theatrical recordings.

contact

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Education Guide designed with help from Heather Klein, www.heatherkleindesign.com



about audio theater

Once known as **radio drama**, audio theater is the production of dramatic performances written and performed specifically for audiences to hear. It had its greatest popularity on radio, before television was introduced, during the period known as the “Golden Age of Radio.”

The development of audio theater began as early as the 1880s, when theatrical performances could be listened to over the telephone! In the next ten years, phonograph recordings were all the rage, and music and comedy acts—like those of the vaudeville stage—were recorded and sold all over the country.

Eventually, the comical “sight gags” that were a part of the hilarious appeal of live vaudeville performances had to be adapted into “sound gags” and “sound effects” for audiences at home listening to their radios or record players. By the 1920s, these techniques were improved upon—and the art form of audio theater was born.

As “radio drama,” it became the most popular form of mass entertainment from the 1920s through the 1940s, now referred to as the “Golden Age of Radio.” Classic shows such as *Amos ‘n’ Andy*, *The Shadow*, and *The Lone Ranger* kept people of all ages glued to their radios. Some of these shows ran for several decades.



Robert Arnold

about audio theater (continued)

Television sets began to pop up in American homes in the late 1930s and early 1940s. After WWII, the television started to replace the radio in most American homes as the main source of news and entertainment. By the 1960s, with a few special exceptions, radio networks began shutting down their radio drama productions altogether to make way for television shows, and instead focused on delivering news and popular music.

Since the days that television replaced the radio, audio theater has survived through the efforts of many individual theater groups like Chatterbox. Thanks to technological innovations such as computer software and the internet, audio theater is being resurrected online, and is proving a rapidly growing art form and source of entertainment.

Audio theater also is growing in another way as well. This sensory art form is gaining recognition in educational institutions around the world as an effective teaching method. Audio theater has been employed to teach subjects such as literature, theatre, and technology, but also unexpected fields such as history, social science, and ethics.

about the necklace

“The Necklace” is a short story by French writer Guy de Maupassant, first published in 1884 in the French newspaper *Le Gaulois*. A fable-like tale with a strong moral, it tells the story of Mathilde Loisel, the wife of a low-paid clerk who nevertheless dreams of wealth and prominence. Ultimately, these dreams— together with some unfortunate luck—lead to Mathilde’s ruin. The story’s vivid characters and surprising ending make it memorable and relevant even today.

summary

Mathilde Loisel is a beautiful and charming woman who dreams of a life of wealth and social popularity, but ends up marrying a low-paid, oblivious clerk. In an attempt to make her happy, Monsieur Loisel manages to secure an invitation to attend a ball for the Ministry of Education. This is the party of Mathilde’s dreams, but she refuses to go, weeping that she has nothing to wear. Her husband agrees to give her money for a new gown.

Mathilde buys a dress, but is still unhappy, lamenting that she has no jewelry to wear with it. The couple does not have much money, so Loisel suggests that Mathilde borrow some jewelry from her wealthy friend, Madame Forestier. Madame Forestier obliges without hesitation, encouraging Mathilde to borrow whatever she would like. After much deliberation, Mathilde picks out a stunning diamond necklace.

Monsieur and Madame Loisel attend the ball, and Mathilde is the center of attention. Everyone notices her, and she dances until the early morning, bursting with happiness. Upon departing, the two end up hailing a run-down hackney cab.

When they arrive home, Mathilde is devastated to discover that she has lost the necklace. She and her husband search everywhere but cannot find it. The couple scours the city for a replacement, ultimately managing to find an exact match, which is valued at 40,000 francs. The jeweler agrees to sell it to them for 36,000. Loisel has some of the money but is forced to borrow the rest at exorbitant rates of interest.

Mathilde returns the replacement necklace to her friend, who does not notice the substitution. Thereafter, Monsieur and Madame Loisel fall into poverty, working night and day to repay their debt. After ten years, the debt is repaid. Mathilde, now worn and hardened, encounters Madame Forestier on the street and reveals the whole story. Shocked, Madame Forestier tells Mathilde that the necklace she lost at the ball was an imitation, worth next to nothing.

about the author

Henri René Albert Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893)



Guy de Maupassant was born near Dieppe, France to a prosperous bourgeois family. When Maupassant was eleven, his mother risked social disgrace to obtain legal separation from her husband, moving with her two sons to the village of Étretat. There, she became the most influential figure in young Maupassant's life – independent, well read, and fond of classical literature.

Soon after Maupassant's graduation from college in 1870, the Franco-Prussian War began, and Maupassant enlisted as a volunteer. He left Normandy in 1871 and would spend the next ten years in Paris as a clerk in the Navy Department.

During this time, Gustave Flaubert took Maupassant under his wing, guiding him through his debut in journalism and literature. Flaubert introduced Maupassant to Émile Zola and other prominent writers in the Naturalist and Realist schools, modes Maupassant would later become known for himself.

In 1878, Maupassant was transferred to the Ministry of Public Instruction and became a contributing editor for several leading newspapers. He devoted his spare time to writing, and in 1880 he published what is considered his first masterpiece, "Boule de Suif" ("Ball of Fat"), which was an immediate success.

The following decade was Maupassant's most prolific: he published his first novel and began producing two to four volumes or short stories annually. His talent and business acumen made him wealthy. Though he had many friends, he preferred solitude and meditation, and he traveled extensively.

Maupassant contracted syphilis in his early 20s, and the disease caused increased reclusiveness and paranoia in his later years. In 1892, he was committed to an asylum after a suicide attempt. He died there a year later at age 42, after penning his own epitaph: "I have coveted everything and taken pleasure in nothing."

In his lifetime, Guy de Maupassant authored 300 short stories, six novels, three travel books, and one volume of verse. He is known today as the father of the modern short story.

cast & crew

Role	Performer
Narrator (English version).....	Margaret McColley
Narrator (French version).....	Iris Laverdant
Mathilde.....	Laura Loth
Loisel.....	Alex Novikoff
Madame Forestier (English version).....	Iris Laverdant
Madame Forestier (French version).....	Margaret McColley
Musician.....	Katherine Whitfield
Sound Effects (English version).....	Iris Laverdant
Sound Effects (French version).....	Margaret McColley
Producer.....	Robert Arnold
Adaptation.....	Shira Malkin Karen Strachan
Directors.....	Shira Malkin Karen Strachan
Artist.....	Robert Arnold

characters

Mathilde Loisel

The wife of a low-level clerk. Mathilde is miserable with her social position and dreams of a high-society life. She is so focused on her sense of entitlement that she is oblivious to her husband's efforts to please her and to the relative luxury of the life she has. Her invitation to a ball is clouded by her embarrassment over the lack of a suitable gown; her purchase of a suitable gown is clouded by her embarrassment over the lack of complementary jewels; and her ecstatic evening at the ball is clouded by its end and a return to the life she resents. It is not until she loses Madame Forestier's necklace that an even harsher reality presents itself. Instead of confessing her mistake, Mathilde gives up every luxury she has to replace the borrowed treasure. Ten years later, when her beauty and her comfort are truly gone, Mathilde finds that all her suffering was for naught – the treasure she borrowed was not even real.

Monsieur Loisel

A clerk at the Ministry of Education who is content with his life and his status in it. Monsieur Loisel is practical, taking his station and its consequential financial limitations as facts of life. Though he does not always understand his wife's displeasure (and indeed is surprised by it), he goes out of his way to appease her. He goes to great lengths to procure an invitation to the ball, indulgently gives her the money to buy a new dress, and even dozes patiently in the corner while she enjoys herself at the event. When the borrowed necklace is lost, Loisel forgoes sleep to search for it and orchestrates the plans, loans, and mortgages necessary to buy a replacement, effectively derailing his own future to atone for his wife's mistake.

Madame Forestier

Mathilde's friend from school. Young, beautiful, and wealthy, she is the model of the life Mathilde wishes she has. Madame Forestier is content with her station and is oblivious to Mathilde's suffering. She thinks little of Mathilde borrowing or returning her jewelry. In fact, until she encounters a broken Mathilde at the story's end, Madame Forestier is unaware of the full implications of Mathilde's suffering or her own role in it.

Narrator

The story's third-person objective voice, which often speaks on behalf of the subjective characters of the story. A blend of detachment and sympathy, the narrator sets the tone for the character's emotional arcs as well as the story's fable-like quality.

themes, motifs, and symbols

Literary works often use **themes** (unifying or dominant ideas), **motifs** (recurring subjects, ideas, or other patterns), and **symbols** (an object or image used to represent a larger idea). Below are just a few examples and suggestions of these literary devices to explore in your classroom discussions.

THEME: Entitlement

Much of “The Necklace” is driven by Mathilde’s sense of entitlement. The plot escalates and unravels because of Mathilde’s unwavering conviction that she was born for a life of refinement that eludes her only by a cruel error of fate. She believes that luxury is owed to her, that she deserves it. She consequentially feels resentment and regret for what she does not have. Mathilde will not settle for anything less than the most elegant and expensive. After pursuing what she does not have but feels she deserves, Mathilde ultimately must sacrifice everything she *does* have to pay for something that was only borrowed—and was not even real.

MOTIF: Deceptive appearances

Juxtapositions of reality and appearance can be found throughout the story, and this disconnect is ultimately what causes the main characters’ downfall. Mathilde’s vision of finery is so focused on appearances that she does not recognize the low value of the necklace. Mathilde’s appearance at the ball is that of a mysterious, important person, when in fact she is not known because she is beneath the societal class of such events and has never been invited. Likewise, when Mathilde appears to her friend after ten years of struggle, she is unrecognizable to (and initially unseen by) someone she knows well.

SYMBOL: The necklace

Maupassant uses the necklace as a symbol of both wealth and poverty, misunderstanding and clarity. Mathilde searches through an entire box of jewels to find a symbol of the affluence she so desires. In her blind fixation on the necklace’s beauty, she overvalues its worth, eventually sending her husband and herself into poverty in an effort to replace it. The necklace is at its most valuable at the party, where it helps elevate Mathilde to the level of

themes, motifs, and symbols (continued)

attention and admiration she so desires. It is then lost in a rickety, shabby hackney cab, which—along with Mathilde's commonplace coat—serves as a shameful reminder of the life Mathilde actually lives. When she explains the loss, substitution, and trials to Madame Forestier, Mathilde is proud of her success at finding a replacement. But Madame Forestier reveals the truth, making clear the futility of Mathilde's prideful quest to join a world to which she does not belong.

entry points for teachers

1. Guy de Maupassant
2. 19th Century France / La Belle Époque
3. Literary Realism
4. Appearance vs. reality
5. Character creation and description
6. Short story format
7. Audio theater
8. Narrative theater
9. Music in a story
10. Sound effects in a story

curriculum connections

English/Language Arts

1. Literary forms: short story
2. Stories with morals
3. Rhythmic nature of language found in the play
4. Recurring themes
5. Observation
6. Compare and contrast
7. Cause and effect
8. Outcomes, conclusions
9. Figurative Language
10. Make predictions about stories
11. Draw, dictate, or write stories that include settings, characters, problem/solution situations, a series of events, and a sense of sequence
12. Participate in group discussions
13. Express personal opinions about the play/story
14. After reading or hearing the play/story, identify the main idea, describe main characters, re-enact or map major plot elements, draw conclusions, and make inferences
15. Dramatize or re-enact story events
16. Describe the plot, characters, and setting in the play
17. Explain a speaker's message and purpose
18. Speak to express an opinion, persuade, or entertain

Social Studies

1. Show how societies develop expectations for appearance and behavior
2. Show how social perceptions affect thoughts and behavior of individuals
3. Show how social customs are similar and different
4. Explain and respect the diversity of people and their experiences

Science

1. Report on the technical process of recording and reproducing sound
2. Examine the psychological connection between experience and behavior

shorter activities

1. Write short, original narratives that include characters, settings, and a sequence of events.
2. Write about a real-life experience when something wasn't what you thought.
3. Describe an occasion when you lost something that you had borrowed from a friend.
4. Discuss the advantages and dangers of financial credit and loans.
5. Adapt a familiar story into play form.

longer activities

1. Students will write letters about the play to specific people, depending on the content of your class. Some examples: Write a letter to Madame Forestier explaining what happened to her necklace.
2. Give students some commonplace object, and have them study it for 30 seconds. Then remove the object and have them draw a picture of the object from memory. After completion, return the object and have them compare and discuss. (As a supplemental activity, after students study the object, have them describe it to a partner, who will then draw it.)
3. The students will create alternate versions of Mathilde's story. What would have happened if she had not lost the necklace? What would have happened if she had confessed to Madame Forestier that she had lost the necklace?
4. The students will write original stories based on the themes and motifs of "The Necklace," incorporating strong symbols and the consequences of entitlement.

vocabulary

Antechamber. A chamber or room that serves as a waiting room and entrance to a larger room or an apartment. *"She dreamed of silent antechambers hung with oriental tapestries..." (1:34)*

Caste. Any class or group of society sharing common cultural features. *"Women have neither caste nor class and, if they are not of noble birth, they can still use their beauty, grace, and charm as calling cards." (00:47)*

Disconcerted. Bewildered or confused, as by something unexpected. *"The words died in his throat. He was totally disconcerted, dismayed by the sight of his wife, who had begun to cry." (4:27)*

Grouse. Any of numerous gallinaceous birds of the subfamily Tetraoninae. *"...and ate the rosy flesh of a trout or the delicate wings of a grouse." (2:54)*

Guile. Insidious cunning in attaining a goal; crafty or artful deception; duplicity. *"A women's natural guile, her instinctive elegance, and her talent for repartee are her only marks of rank, so that a poor girl with no lineage may easily be on the level with the highest lady in the land." (00:58)*

Hackney cab. A four-wheeled carriage having six seats and drawn by two horses. *"At last, they found one of those age-old hackney cabs, which only emerge in Paris after dark, as if ashamed to parade their poverty in the full light of day." (10:09)*

Tureen. A large, deep, covered dish for serving soup, stew, or other foods. *"... opposite her husband who always lifted the lid of the soup-tureen and declared delightedly 'Ah! Beef stew! Splendid! There's nothing I like better than a nice stew.'" (2:18)*

Usurer. A person who lends money and charges interest, especially at an excessive or unlawful rate; moneylender. *"He signed promissory notes, agreed to pay exorbitant rates of interest, did business with usurers and the whole tribe of moneylenders." (13:44)*

Definitions from www.dictionary.com.