**The Necklace Characters**

The main characters in "The Necklace" are Mathilde Loisel, Monsieur Loisel, and Madame Forestier.

* **Mathilde Loisel** dreams of being rich and is self-conscious about her middle-class status. She borrows Madame Forestier's necklace to wear to a ball but loses it, then spends the next decade working to pay off the replacement, sacrificing her beauty and youth.
* **Monsieur Loisel** is Mathilde's husband and a government clerk. He procures the invitation to the ball for Mathilde and helps to work off the debt for the necklace.
* **Madame Forestier** is Mathilde's wealthy friend. She lends Mathilde the necklace and later pityingly reveals that it was a fake.

**Direct Characterization of Madame Loisel**

Direct characterization occurs when the reader is told what a character is like or a speaker or narrator describes what he or she thinks about a character. In "The Necklace", Madame Loisel is a "very pretty", charming, young woman.

In the first paragraph of the story, she was directly described as:

*The girl was one of those pretty and charming young creatures who sometimes are born, as if by a slip of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no way of being known, understood, loved, married by any rich and distinguished man.*

*She dressed plainly, because she could not dress well,*

She is described at the end of the story as:

*Mine. Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households--strong and hard and rough. With frowzy hair, skirts askew and red hands, she talked loud while washing the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and she thought of that gay evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so feted.*

**Indirect Characterization of Madame Loisel**

Indirect characterization occurs when a reader must infer what a character is like. In this case, the text provides clues through the character’s words, thoughts, or actions or through other characters’ words, thoughts, or actions, but there is no evaluation or explanation from a narrator. To provide an indirect characterization infer about the characters speech (What does the character say? How does the character speak?), thoughts (What is revealed through the character’s private thoughts and feelings?), effect on others (How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?), actions (What does the character do? How does the character behave?), and looks (What does the character look like? How does the character dress?).

Indirectly, she is described as:

**Speech:** We know she complained endlessly about her situation, whined to her husband, was partially rude to him and dismissed any attention he had towards her.

**Thoughts:** She continuously dreams of bigger and better things. She imagines her humble dinner table as an opulent table where people eat trout and truffles rather than soup. She feels indebted to her friend and is willing to work to pay back the necklace, and she submits to a life of poverty.

**Effects:** She is like a nemesis to her husband, who had to endure 10 years of hard work and sacrifice, already after having sacrificed 400 francs to purchase a dress for her for this one ball. She has ruined their lives with her ambition.

**Actions:** Madame Loisel through her actions showed that her sense of shame was too high. However, she set herself lose in the dance floor showing the reader the inner desperation she had to experience a life of luxury.

**Looks:** She aged incredibly, looked worn out and provincial, lower than what she would've deemed as "low" and petty, catty, and disillusioned with life.