



The Necklace
and Other Stories

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Adapted from the short stories by Guy de Maupassant

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The Necklace and Other Stories

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For Nathan

The Necklace and Other Stories

COLLECTION. This collection includes adaptations of three short stories by Guy de Maupassant. In “The Necklace,” Mathilde and her husband work extra jobs and live in extreme poverty for 10 years to pay for a diamond necklace, only to discover it is a fake. In “Julie Romain,” a young fan visits an elderly French actress who is mired in the nostalgia of an illusionary past. In “Humiliation,” a Parisian socialite recounts how she was cleverly duped by her personal maid.

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.



Guy de Maupassant
(1850-1893)

About the Story

Considered one of the fathers of the modern short story, Guy de Maupassant wrote more than 300 short stories as well as six novels and several travelogues and essays. Maupassant was born to a wealthy family in France and was greatly influenced by his mother's love for literature and by French realist and naturalist writers including Gustave Flaubert and Émile Zola. After college, Maupassant volunteered to serve in the Franco-Prussian War and then left the army to work as a clerk in the Ministry of Marine for ten years. "La Parure" ("The Necklace") is one of Maupassant's most famous short stories and first appeared in a Parisian newspaper in 1884 and was later included in Maupassant's 1885 short story collection *Tales of Day and Night*. In 1891 after suffering from syphilis for many years, Maupassant tried to commit suicide and was committed to an asylum, where he died two years later. Before his death, Maupassant penned his epitaph: "I have coveted everything and taken pleasure in nothing."

The Necklace

(1 M, 2 F)

MATHILDE LOISEL: Pretty, charming young woman who aspires to achieve a higher social status and is concerned with outward appearances; dresses plainly.

HENRI LOISEL: Mathilde's self-sacrificing husband who works as a clerk for the Ministry of Public Instruction; wears plain clothing.

JEANNE FORESTIER: Aristocratic, wealthy widow who had been Madame Loisel's schoolmate.

Julie Romain

(2 M, 2 F)

JULIE ROMAIN: 69, retired actress and former grand dame of French theatre; small in stature with white hair.

ROSALYN: 16, Julie's handmaid; slender but not pretty; wears a uniform.

BENJAMIN: Julie's servant; wears a uniform.

YOUNG MAN: A fan of Julie Romain from Calais.

Humiliation

(2 M, 3 F)

MARGUERITE: Parisian widow and socialite who has suffered a humiliating experience.

SIMONE: Marguerite's friend, a Parisian socialite.

YOUNG MARGUERITE: Marguerite as she appeared four years ago; wears a dressing gown and period undergarments.

ROSE: Marguerite's handmaid; played by a man dressed as a maid.

POLICE CAPTAIN: Superintendent of the Parisian police; male.

Setting

"The Necklace": Paris, 1875.

"Julie Romain": Cap Gris-Nez on the northern shore of France, mid-1800s.

"Humiliation": Paris, mid-1800s.

Set

"The Necklace": Occupying the major portion of the playing space is the Loisel apartment. The only set piece required is Madame Loisel's plain vanity with a chair, placed down center right and angled such that Madame Loisel faces down center when seated. Down left, further downstage from Madame Loisel's vanity, is a more ornate second vanity and chair, belonging to Madame Forestier, also angled to face down center. The actual mirrors in both vanities are removed, leaving only the frame, such that we can see both women as they are seated and staring into the "mirror." Apart from these two vanities and accompanying chairs, no other set pieces are required. The action can be played against black or neutral curtains.

"Julie Romain": The rear terrace of Julie Romain's antiquated villa, "Villa d'Antan." Furniture pieces include a garden bench, one or two chairs, a small table, and a potted shrub(s). USC is a set of French doors leading into the villa. Overall, the terrace has the air of a bygone era.

"Humiliation": Downstage right rests an upholstered bench, representative of the interior of a horse-drawn carriage. In flashback, Marguerite's small dressing table and chair are placed up left center.

Props

"The Necklace": Hair brush; gown for Mathilde, invitation; large jewelry box; assorted necklaces, bracelets, pendants; string of pearls; gold cross pendant; diamond necklace; black satin necklace case; formal attire for Henri; modest, everyday coat for Mathilde; small jewelry case; apron; wicker basket full of laundry; stack of papers; wooded bucket full of vegetables; ledger; pen; wash bucket; rag; worn head scarf.

"Julie Romain": Book of poetry, locket, hand bell, calling card; gown with panniers and a powdered wig for Rosalind; a white satin suit and a hat with an ostrich plume for Benjamin.

"Humiliation": Letter, pen, small traveling bag, dress and hat for Young Marguerite.

Sound Effects

"The Necklace": Viennese waltz music; deep chime.

"Julie Romain": Scene d'Amour from Romeo and Juliet.

"Humiliation": Horse hooves.

*“There’s nothing
more humiliating
than to look poor
among other women
who are rich.”*

—Mathilde

The Necklace

(AT RISE: Paris, 1875. Mme. Jeanne Forestier is seated at her vanity gazing into the mirror. She is brushing her hair. She puts her brush down.)

MME. FORESTIER: *(To audience.)* In total, it was one of the most remarkable experiences of my life. We had been sociable enough with one another back in our schoolgirl days and might even have become true friends had not fate intervened. For she had let herself be married off to one of those little clerks in the Ministry of Education. Charming and pretty though she was, she suffered endlessly, feeling herself born for a life of luxury but settling instead for one of simplicity and unhappiness. However, an opportunity arose one evening over ten years ago when her husband presented her with a large envelope containing a printed card.

(Lights cross fade to Mme. Loisel, who is seated at her vanity DCR. She is dressed in an evening gown and is holding an invitation.)

MME. LOISEL: *(Reads.)* "The Minister of Education requests the pleasure of the company of Monsieur and Madame Henri Loisel at the Ministry on the evening of Monday, January the 18th." *(Stares at herself in the mirror for several moments.)*

LOISEL: *(Offstage SL, calls.)* Mathilde? Mathilde, my dear? Did you get it? *(Enters SL.)* Did you find your dress? *(Sees her at the vanity wearing her new dress.)* Ah, yes, you did! Rise, my dear. *(Takes her hand and she stands.)* Let me look at you. *(She models her gown for him.)* It is beautiful. *(Kisses her on the forehead.)* You are beautiful. *(Notices his wife's anxiety and unease.)* But what is the matter?

MME. LOISEL: Henri, I look like a church mouse.

LOISEL: What?

MME. LOISEL: I would almost rather not go.

LOISEL: Not go? Darling, this is a great occasion. I had tremendous trouble getting hold of the invitation. Everyone wants one. It's very select, and very few go to the clerks.

MME. LOISEL: Then give your invitation to some friend of yours whose wife will be turned out better than I.

LOISEL: But what of the dress? And what of the 400 francs I sacrificed for my new gun and my hunting trip next summer?

MME. LOISEL: For that, my dear, I am sorry. But I cannot attend the party.

LOISEL: Cannot attend? What are you talking about? You look beautiful in that dress.

MME. LOISEL: Oh, the dress is satisfactory. But, Henri, don't you see? No one shall pay me any attention at all. I'm utterly miserable at not having a single piece of jewelry—not one stone—to wear.

LOISEL: What?

MME. LOISEL: I shall be passed over without a second glance from anyone there.

LOISEL: Wear flowers. They're very smart this time of year. For ten francs, you can get two or three magnificent roses.

(Mme. Loisel briefly ponders this.)

MME. LOISEL: No. There's nothing so humiliating as looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women.

LOISEL: How silly you are! Go and see your friend, Madame Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels.

MME. LOISEL: Jeanne? But I haven't seen her in years!

LOISEL: But you were friends, weren't you, back in your schoolgirl days? You surely know her well enough for that! And heaven knows, she has an abundance of precious stones.

MME. LOISEL: (*Excited.*) You are right! I never thought of that. (*Embraces Henri.*) Oh, thank you, my dear. I shall call upon her tomorrow.

(*Mme. Loisel crosses to Mme. Forestier as the lights cross fade.*)

MME. FORESTIER: (*To audience.*) And so she did, arriving the next day and even going so far as to wear the actual gown she would be wearing to the ball just to make sure the jewels would match. She quickly told me of her troubles, the words spilling out of her as a torrent. (*Rises. To Mme. Loisel.*) Oh, you poor dear. But, of course, you may borrow whatever you like. Here, sit you down. I'm sure we shall find something suitable in no time. (*Mme. Forestier produces a large jewelry box and opens it for Mme. Loisel. Mme. Loisel begins her search, trying on several necklaces, bracelets, pendants, etc. To audience.*) She seemed quite overwhelmed, rather like a child on Christmas morning. (*To Mme. Loisel, reacting to a particular piece Mme. Loisel has tried on.*) From Geneva, when Louis and I traveled to Switzerland the summer before he passed.

MME. LOISEL: Oh! I couldn't.

MME. FORESTIER: Of course, you can! For what other purpose are precious stones?

MME. LOISEL: But mightn't you wear them yourself?

MME. FORESTIER: (*Smiles.*) Ah, my dear Mathilde. It has been some time since I've appeared at any of the balls. Not since Louis and I attended the inaugural ceremony three years ago.

(*Mme. Loisel returns the piece to the jewelry box.*)

MME. LOISEL: No, I simply cannot.

(*Mme. Forestier takes out a string of pearls and hands them to Mme. Loisel.*)

MME. FORESTIER: Try these, then. They should go nicely with your dress.

(Mme Forestier places the strand of pearls around Mme. Loisel's neck. Mme. Loisel sighs with pleasure.)

MME. LOISEL: Is there anything else?

MME. FORESTIER: Try this...a Venetian cross in gold and gems from our second trip to Italy. *(Mme. Forestier again helps Mme. Loisel with the necklace. Mme. Loisel reacts with more gasps of admiration.)* One of my favorite pieces.

MME. LOISEL: It's beautiful.

MME. FORESTIER: Yes, yes, it is. But not so well matched with the neckline of your gown.

MME. LOISEL: Have you anything else?

MME. FORESTIER: Of course. *(Pulls open a vanity drawer.)* Just look. I can't say what sort of thing you'll like best.

(Mme. Forestier removes the Venetian cross and returns it to its place. Mme. Loisel looks through the drawer and takes out a black satin case. She opens it and gasps lightly. Mme. Forestier silently extracts the necklace from the case and places it around Mme. Loisel's neck.)

MME. LOISEL: *(Excited.)* It is this. Can you lend it to me...this alone?

MME. FORESTIER: Yes, Mathilde, of course. *(Mme. Loisel embraces her warmly and crosses back to the center area where she is met by her husband, who is now wearing formal attire. A Viennese waltz begins to play softly as the Loisels start to dance. They dance throughout the following. To audience.)* I suppose my curiosity got the better of me. I reasoned, also, that perhaps it was time that I did enter back into the human race. And so I attended the ball, after all. My old schoolgirl friend was a great success. She was the prettiest woman present—elegant, graceful, smiling, and quite above herself

with happiness. She was even noticed by the Minister himself, who inquired of me about the radiant belle of the ball. (*Loisels' actions mirror the following narration. Unseen by the audience, at some point before returning home, the necklace is removed.*) Finally, at four in the morning when the musicians stopped their playing and the couples their waltzing, Monsieur and Madame Loisel took their leave. The glowing triumph of her victorious evening immediately began to fade as Louis helped Mathilde with her modest, everyday coat, violently at odds with the elegance of her gown.

(Loisels leave the ball and arrive home. Still wearing her coat, Mme. Loisel crosses to her vanity. She stares into the mirror. Loisel approaches and removes her coat.)

LOISEL: You were radiant, my dear. (*Loisel puts the coat away while Mme. Loisel continues gazing into the mirror. Suddenly, her hand goes to her neck and she cries out.*) Whatever is the matter?

MME. LOISEL: (*Shocked.*) I...I...Madame Forestier's necklace! I haven't got it!

LOISEL: What? Impossible! You couldn't have lost it! (*The two begin an increasingly frantic search, looking in coat pockets and dress pleats.*) Are you sure you still had it when you left the ballroom?

MME LOISEL: Yes, I remember fingering it in the entrance hall.

LOISEL: But if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it fall.

MME LOISEL: That's right. So it must be in the cab. Did you take the number?

LOISEL: No. Did you happen to notice it?

MME LOISEL: No.

(Pause.)

LOISEL: I'm going to go back the way we came and see if I can't find it.

MME LOISEL: Yes.

LOISEL: While I'm gone, you must draft a note to your friend. Tell her you've broken the clasp of her necklace and are getting it mended. That will give us time to work out what we'll have to do.

(Loisel exits USL. Mme. Loisel stands and faces the vanity once more. Her fingers go to her throat. She begins unbuttoning her ball gown as she exits SR, where she changes into her everyday clothes. Lights cross fade to Mme. Forestier's. Note: During the following, Mme. Loisel's vanity is struck.)

MME FORESTIER: Two days later, I received the post.

(As Mme. Forestier reads the letter, Mme. Loisel's voice is heard.)

MME. LOISEL: *(Voiceover.)* "My Dear Madame Forestier: I wish to extend to you my deep gratitude for the loan of the necklace. It was very kind of you. I felt very much the lady at the ball. May I also remark that you yourself looked quite elegant and your presence was a most welcome sight, both for myself and for many others as well. Sadly, the evening was marred by an unfortunate incident toward its conclusion. As Henri and I climbed the stairs to our quarters, the clasp of the precious necklace came apart, apparently broken. Of course, we shall have it repaired at once and returned to you immediately thereafter. I regret very much to inform you of this accident and trust that you will accept my deepest apology."

(Mme. Forestier gazes into her vanity, one hand going to her neck, the other clutching the letter. Lights cross fade back to the Loisels' home. Monsieur Loisel enters SL, wearing everyday clothes and carrying a small jewelry case.)

LOISEL: Mathilde?

(Mme. Loisel spies the jewelry case in his hand.)

MME. LOISEL: You've found one?

(Loisel hands the case to his wife.)

LOISEL: Forty-thousand francs.

(Mme. Loisel opens the case to look at the necklace.)

MME. LOISEL: Forty-thousand.

LOISEL: Fortunate I went to the Palais Royale as a last resort.

MME. LOISEL: Henri, what if she opens the case? What if she notices the substitution?

LOISEL: We must hope that she doesn't. It looks exactly like the original, at least as best I remember.

MME. LOISEL: But what would she think? What would she say? Would she not take us for common thieves?

LOISEL: How could she charge us with thievery after what we've been through?

[END OF FREEVIEW]

*“One cannot
both be
and have been.”*

—Julie Romain

Julie Romain

(AT RISE: *Cap Gris-Nez, on the northern shore of France, mid-1800s. The back terrace of a dilapidated villa. The Scene d'Amour from Hector Berlioz' Romeo et Juliette is heard. Julie Romain, an elderly grande dame of the French theatre, is seated on a garden bench reading from a book of poetry. She wears a locket around her neck. After a few moments, she seems to hear something in the distance. She rises in place and gazes out. Unable to see anything, she rings a bell resting on a small table. Music fades. Rosalyn, her handmaid, enters through the French doors and approaches Julie.*)

ROSALYN: *(To Julie, curtsyng.)* Madame.

JULIE: Rosalyn, I have seen something down by the shore.

ROSALYN: Shall I send Benjamin to check on it?

JULIE: Please.

ROSALYN: Yes, Madame.

(Rosalyn exits. Julie sits on the bench and resumes reading. A few moments pass. She looks up again, staring in the same direction as previously. She leans back, closes her eyes, and remembers.)

JULIE: *(From Romeo and Juliet.)* As Juliet, recites.)

“How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,

And the place death, considering who thou art,

If any of my kinsmen find thee here.”

(Benjamin, Julie's seroant, enters through the French doors and approaches his mistress.)

BENJAMIN: Madame, it is a young man walking upon the shore. He seemed most interested in the chalet. I visited with him, and he asked me to present you his card.

(Benjamin hands the calling card to Julie, who reads it. Benjamin glances back toward the French doors.)

JULIE: He is here now?

BENJAMIN: In the foyer.

JULIE: Send him in.

BENJAMIN: *(Bowing.)* Yes, Madame. *(Exits. Julie studies the Young Man's card. Benjamin re-enters followed by the Young Man.)* Madame.

JULIE: Thank you, Benjamin.

(Benjamin exits. Young Man tentatively crosses a few steps DS until he is on the same plane as Julie. He stares at her a few moments. She has not looked at him.)

YOUNG MAN: It is you. *(Julie turns to face him for the first time.)* Julie Romain.

JULIE: You recognize me then?

YOUNG MAN: The greatest actress of the French stage? Yes, Madame. I recognize you.

JULIE: Thank you, Monsieur. It is very kind of the young men of today to remember the women of yesterday. Be seated.

(Young Man sits in a chair off to one side.)

YOUNG MAN: Thank you for receiving me.

JULIE: I do not have a great number of visitors. What brought you here and for what reason?

YOUNG MAN: I am from Calais. I came to attend an engagement party for a friend of mine who lives a short distance from here. The hour wore on, and I grew tired of the activity. I ventured out along the beach, walking further than I realized. I came upon your villa and began to wonder what poet or fairy should inhabit such a place that seemed to spring from gardens such as these.

JULIE: Benjamin approached you?

YOUNG MAN: One of your workmen?

JULIE: My workman, yes.

YOUNG MAN: I asked him the name of the proprietor. He replied that it belonged to the famous Julie Romain, the great actress. Oh, Madame, no woman has been more applauded...or more loved.

JULIE: *(Reflectively.)* Loved. Yes.

YOUNG MAN: It was the house that attracted me. But then, when I found out that its inhabitant...well, I prayed that you would receive me.

JULIE: How dramatic you are. I like that. I assure you, sir, your visit provides me the greater pleasure, as any sort of call is most unusual. When your card was handed to me, with the gracious compliment it carried, I was as startled as if someone had announced an old friend who had been gone these 20 years. I have been forgotten, truly forgotten. No one remembers me now, nor will anyone think of me until the day of my death. Then all the papers will talk for three days of Julie Romain, relating anecdotes and details of my life, reviving memories and scandals, and praising me greatly. Then all will be over with me. *(Pause.)* And it will not be so very long now.

YOUNG MAN: How beautiful life must have been for you.

JULIE: Yes, beautiful and sweet. It is for that reason that I regret it so much. But it is not possible to be and to have been at the same time.

[END OF FREEVIEW]

*“One is always flattered
by the love of a man,
whoever he may be.”*

—Marguerite

Humiliation

(AT RISE: *Paris, mid-19th century. The rich interior of a horse-drawn carriage. Simone, a Parisian socialite, is greeting her friend Marguerite, who has just entered the carriage.*)

SIMONE: Marguerite, my dear one.

MARGUERITE: Good evening, Simone.

(They kiss each other on the cheek.)

SIMONE: *(To Coachman.)* The Palais Royale, Nicholas. And be discrete. *(Note: The sound of the horse hooves is heard until indicated otherwise.)* How lovely you are looking, Marguerite.

MARGUERITE: Well, when a woman ventures forth in Parisian society in the early hours of the evening, she should make every effort to present some sense of fashionable decorum, especially for such a frivolous occasion as this.

SIMONE: Frivolous?

MARGUERITE: How I allowed myself to be persuaded to attend a night of deceptions carried out by some trickster baffles the imagination. From Blois, no less, of all places.

SIMONE: You are correct there, ma chérie. Jean Robert-Houdin does come from Blois—not such a bad village, really. But he is certainly no trickster.

MARGUERITE: No? What, then?

SIMONE: He is an illusionist of the highest order and you'd know that, too, if you didn't keep yourself so isolated all the time.

MARGUERITE: Isolated? Didn't I just accompany you to the Flower Carnival at Cannes?

SIMONE: Cannes again! That was two months ago!

MARGUERITE: You would be venturing out every week, then? Every day, I suppose?

SIMONE: Of course not. Nor would I shut myself off for days—no, weeks—on end.

MARGUERITE: No, you'd rather throw away your money watching some cheap huckster conjure up magical visions.

SIMONE: I've told you, Marguerite, Jean Robert-Houdin is no huckster. He is an extremely skilled illusionist who has lured enormous crowds throughout France.

MARGUERITE: Humph! You are right there, Simone. "Lured" is the right word.

SIMONE: And he's got a new deception they say. "The Marvelous Orange Tree," which my cousin Eloise says is quite astounding.

MARGUERITE: Indeed. Well, suffice it to say that this is not the first time your silly cousin has been deceived.

SIMONE: Marguerite! Really, let's not quarrel on such a delightful evening. (*Looking out the window.*) How good everything seems. Don't you think so?

MARGUERITE: Yes, Simone. It is good. (*Pause.*) But there is always something lacking.

SIMONE: What is it? For my part, I feel perfectly happy. I don't need anything else.

MARGUERITE: Yes, you do. You are not thinking of it. No matter how contented we may be physically, we always long for something more...for the inside.

SIMONE: You are speaking of the affairs of the heart?

MARGUERITE: I have said as much, then.

SIMONE: A little love?

MARGUERITE: Yes, Simone...love. Life without that seems to me unbearable. I need to be loved, if only by a dog. Despite my being a widow and your never having married, we are all alike, Simone, no matter what you may say.

SIMONE: No, Marguerite, we are not. I had rather not be loved at all than to be loved by no one of importance. Do you think, for instance, that it would be pleasant to be loved by...by...by my coachman?

MARGUERITE: (*Smiles.*) Let me assure you, my friend, that it is very amusing to be loved by a domestic. It has happened to me three times. They roll their eyes in such a funny manner, it's enough to make one die of laughter! Naturally, the more in love they are, the more severe one must be with them. Then, one day, for some reason, you dismiss them because if anyone should notice it, you would appear so ridiculous.

SIMONE: Well, I'm afraid my coachman's heart would not satisfy. Tell me how you first noticed that they loved you.

MARGUERITE: I noticed it the same way that I do with other men. They become so stupid.

SIMONE: But others do not appear so stupid to me when they are in love.

MARGUERITE: They are idiots, my dear, unable to talk, to answer, to understand anything.

SIMONE: But how did you feel when you were loved by a servant? Were you...moved? Flattered?

MARGUERITE: Moved? No. Flattered? Yes...a little. One is always flattered by the love of a man, whoever he may be.

SIMONE: Oh, Margot!

MARGUERITE: Yes, indeed, my dear! For instance, I shall tell you of a peculiar incident that happened to me. You will see how curious and complex our emotions can be in such cases, to the point of playing tricks upon our very souls.

SIMONE: Marguerite! I am most curious.

MARGUERITE: About four years ago, several months after Louis had passed, I found myself without a maid. I had tried five or six—one right after the other—but to no avail. I was about ready to give up in despair when I saw an advertisement in a newspaper of a young girl knowing how to cook, embroider, and even dress hair, who was looking for a position and who could furnish the best of references. Besides all these accomplishments, she could speak English. (*Lights come up USL center on Young Marguerite USL. It is four years ago. She wears a dressing gown with her hair up. She sits*

at a small dressing table, composing a letter.) I wrote to the given address, and the next day, the person in question presented herself. She was tall and slender, very pale, and shy looking. (*Rose enters SL, carrying a small traveling bag. Note: As Marguerite continues, Rose and Young Marguerite enact the scene being described.*) She had beautiful dark eyes and a charming complexion. She pleased me immediately. I asked for her certificates. She gave me one in English, for she came, as she said, from Lady Rymwell's, where she had been for ten years. The certificate showed that the young girl had left of her own free will in order to return to France, and the only thing which they had had to find fault in her during her long period of service was a little French coquettishness. (*Simone chuckles.*) This prudish English phrase even made me smile, and I immediately engaged this maid. (*Rose crosses upstage of Young Marguerite and begins to dress her hair.*) Her name was Rose. At the end of a month, I would have been helpless without her. She was a treasure, a pearl, a phenomenon. She could dress my hair with infinite taste. She could trim a hat better than most hat makers, and she could even make my dresses. (*Young Marguerite rises, and Rose helps her remove her dressing gown to reveal period undergarments. Rose helps Young Marguerite into her dress.*) She dressed me rapidly and with a surprisingly light touch. I never felt her fingers on my skin. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as contact with a servant's hand. I soon became excessively lazy. It was so pleasant to be dressed from head to foot and from lingerie to gloves by this tall, timid girl, always blushing a little and never saying a word. After my bath, she would rub and massage me while I dozed a little on my couch. I almost considered her more of a friend than a servant.

(Rose has finished dressing Young Marguerite, including her hat. Young Marguerite pats Rose's hand in gratitude and exits SR. Lights fade out USL center. Rose exits SL. Pause.)

SIMONE: But what is so peculiar with that? Many of us grow fond of our servants.

MARGUERITE: Patience, my dear. I am not yet finished.

SIMONE: Go on, then. We are nearly at the Palais.

MARGUERITE: Several weeks passed when one morning the concierge asked, mysteriously, to speak to me. I was surprised. He was a good, faithful man, an old soldier, one of my husband's former orderlies. He seemed to be embarrassed by what he had to say to me, finally mumbling that the police captain was downstairs.

SIMONE: (*Anxiously.*) Police?

MARGUERITE: Indeed. Of course, the police are useful, but I hate them. I have never thought it a noble profession.

SIMONE: But why was he there? Had there been a burglary?

MARGUERITE: The concierge said the captain was claiming that a criminal was in the house.

SIMONE: A criminal!

[END OF FREEVIEW]