

The Piece of String by Guy de Maupassant Short Story Project by Plaz, Dan W., Emma M., DJ, Chelsea M., and Dijana I. - 3/6/2006

Reenactment Outline (Plaz) If you want to follow along (Grammar not perfect)

(everyone wondering around the room miming shopping and doing business; Houlbrequé drops wallet, [not near Malandain's store] Paumelle comes around and picks it up looking at it, and squinting at the ID card, then puts it in his pocket;

Hauchecorne steps out and argues w/ Maitre Malandain, harness maker, silently for a bit, then bends over slowly and picks up the string, puts in his pocket and hobbles back into crowd

Everyone continues miming doing business for a few seconds then

Hauchecorne enters Jourdain's tavern (host never shown) with 2 tavern guests. They sit down and start to mime eating, and mime conversing

Drum beating heard and town crier talks (for the first time in the play, someone talks)

"Be it known to the inhabitants of Goderville and in general to all persons present at the market that there has been lost this morning on the Beuzeville road, between nine and ten o'clock, a black leather pocketbook containing five hundred francs and business papers. You are requested to return it to the mayor's office at once or to Maitre Fortune Houlbrequé, of Manneville. There will be twenty francs reward."

3 people in tavern start talking about accusation (out loud this time) and whether Fortune will get his wallet back

Town crier returns: "Is Maitre Hauchecorne, of Breaute, here?"

Maitre Hauchecorne answered: "Here I am, here I am."

And he and the crier walk to the Mayor's office

The mayor was waiting for him, seated in a chair. He was the notary of the place, a tall, grave man of pompous speech.

"Maitre Hauchecorne," said he, "this morning on the Beuzeville road, you were seen to pick up the pocketbook lost by Maitre Houlbrequé, of Manneville."

The countryman looked at the mayor in amazement frightened already at this suspicion which rested on him, he knew not why.

"I--I picked up that pocketbook?"

"Yes, YOU."

"I swear I don't even know anything about it."

"You were seen."

"I was seen--I? Who saw me?"

"M. Malandain, the harness-maker."

Then the old man remembered, understood, and, reddening with anger, said: "Ah! he saw me, did he, the rascal? He saw me picking up this string here, M'sieu le Maire." And fumbling at the bottom of his pocket, he pulled out of it the little end of string.

But the mayor incredulously shook his head: "You will not make me believe, Maitre Hauchecorne, that M. Malandain, who is a man whose word can be relied on, has mistaken this string for a pocketbook."

The peasant, furious, raised his hand and spat on the ground beside him as if to attest his good faith, repeating: "For all that, it is God's truth, M'sieu le Maire. There! On my soul's salvation, I repeat it."

The mayor continued: "After you picked up the object in question, you even looked about for some time in the mud to see if a piece of money had not dropped out of it."

The good man was choking with indignation and fear. "How can they tell--how can they tell such lies as that to slander an honest man! How can they? Search me!"

Plaz turns his pockets inside out

mayor: "Ok. Leave, I see we are getting nowhere. I will investigate and see you tomorrow."

Two tavern patrons: "Did you hear, Hauchecorne stole the wallet"... (and continue ad-libbing)

Then Marius Paumelle walks to the mayor and hands in the wallet

Patrons continue talking " Hauchecorne stole the wallet"... (and ab-libbing)

Hauchecorne walks to them and tries to explain that it wasn't him who stole it

Patrons continue and other townspeople join in " Hauchecorne stole the wallet"...

Hauchecorne goes to each one and tries to convince his innocence

Hauchecorne gives up, lies down and dies

Point of View (Dan W.)

When you read a story, you must realize that the point of view that the story is written in can help you learn more about the story. It can also create more excitement, and create more mystery while you read. Both "The Necklace", and "The Piece of String" stories, are written in a **Third Person Limited** perspective. This means that the narrator is an outsider who sees into the mind of one of the characters. This is a major factor in determining how the stories make you feel about themselves, and how interesting the stories are. In a third-person view story, the reader can see the story itself from different points of view, and not just one. He or she can learn more, and know more than the individual characters themselves. In a first-person view story, the reader sees from the point of view of the narrator, so he/she may see more dialog including feels, thoughts, and ideas. In a third-person view, the reader will see more facts, such as what all of the other characters do. However, they will not see as many of the inner-feelings or thoughts of the characters, unless it is third-person omniscient. In addition, a third-person view is often more easy to figure out if it is a mystery, or similar plot structure, because the reader learns more facts from concrete reading, then having to think about whats going on in a story. In a first-person view, it is harder to figure out, generally, the plot details and story, because the reader only gains the facts of what the narrator knows. The reader must then think abstractly and ponder the possible outcomes. They can never be as sure because they may be missing outside information. Finally, third-person story can be written in different ways, but may not be as exciting as a first-person viewpoint. This is specifically because the reader may gain more information, and know about things before they happen, which can make the story seem less climactic. In a first-person view, the reader doesn't expect certain things to happen until they actually do, making the story more interesting, and thrilling. However a third-person limited point of view, covers both bases and provides the best of both worlds. The thoughts and feelings of one of the characters are made known, letting the reader build a relationship with one of the characters. Also the benefits of third-person are also evident, letting the reader know what is going on in the rest of the story. We think that is why the author chooses to use a third-person limited viewpoint for this story. It is the best of both worlds.

Setting (Emma M.)

The setting in the short story called "The Piece Of String" is a small town with a country flavor. It has long roads and a public square. The setting in this short story is much different then in "The Necklace." "The Necklace" mostly took place inside homes and buildings such as the protagonist's flat, then her home it the attic, the friend's house, and the Ministry ball. In the short story, "The Piece Of String," the story mostly took place outside in a town called, Goderville. The characters in this story went many places in Goderville. They went to the Mayor's Office and to the public square, and many other places like the Maitre Jourdain's tavern. The setting in this story and in "The Necklace" is very different. One is more urban and the other is more rural. However, both stories are set in the past. "The Piece Of String" is much different then "The Necklace."

Theme (DJ)

In the story "The Piece of String" there are a lot of things you can say for what the theme is. The one that fits it the best would have to be you never can be innocent once accused, you will always be thought of as guilty. When Maitre Hauchecome is accused of stealing the wallet because he was seen picking up the string everyone thought that he was a theft. After being accused a theft no one ever looked at him the same

even after the wallet was returned by another man. This theme relates to the theme of "The Necklace" because they both have to do with trust in people. "The Necklace's" theme is don't hide things from your friends it'll all just come out worse. In both stories the theme has to do with trusting people.

Plot (Chelsea M.)

The plot of "The Piece of String" goes as follows. Maitre Hauchecome of Breauté is an unfortunate fellow, his poverty raking in most of his worries. The characters are introduced during the exposition. When walking into town one day he comes upon a piece of string. He ganders at why the piece of string is on the ground, what is its purpose? He picks it up and continues on. But he notices a man in a window observing his peculiar behavior. The man is Maitre Malandain the harness maker, and Mauchecome's only enemy. The two make blistering eye contact, but then go about their ways during the rising action. Next, we find ourselves in the town tavern, Hauchecome is called into the Mayor's office for inquiry. Early there was an announcement made for the loss of a black wallet containing 500 francs and business papers. Of course these two events are closely tied for poor Hauchecome is accused of stealing the wallet. He pleads and argues for his innocence for someone must have seen him pick something up, and it was only a piece of string! That person happened to be Maitre Maladain, the evil man turning Hauchecome in for a crime he had not committed. This is the climax of the story. Hauchecome is determined, and travels to the outskirts of town to retrace his steps in search of the wallet. To his pleasure he discovers the news of the wallet being returned. He returns back to town to celebrate and divulge his innocence only to find that still no one believes his guilt has been absolved. This is the falling action. Later on Hauchecome dies a "guilty" man still beseeching his innocence to anyone who will listen. This is the resolution. The plot of "The Piece of String" and the plot of "The Necklace" are closely related, for they both have very unfortunate endings. In "The Necklace" we find that all 10 years of hard sweat and grit is for nothing, and in "The Piece of String" Maitre Hauchecome's innocence is never returned even though he earned it.

Character (Dijana I.)

The characters that are in "The Piece of String" and "The Necklace," both by Guy de Maupassant, are very alike and yet very similar in certain aspects as well. The main character in "The Piece of String," Maitre Hauchecome, resembles Madame Loisel from "The Necklace" in a number of ways. Both are the **protagonist** of the story. Maitre Hauchecome was accused of stealing a pocketbook from someone and Madame Loisel lost her friend's expensive diamond necklace. In both cases, the characters do not have an item they should have had in their possession or accused of having. Nevertheless, Maitre Hauchecome is angered when he realizes that nobody believes him for not having the missing item with him, while Madame Loisel feels deep distress and anxiety about losing her item. Maitre Hauchecome also somewhat acts like Monsieur Loisel because he appears to be a caring, gentle, poor man who tries to please people. The characters reacted to their situations differently. In "The Piece of String," Maitre Fortune Houlbrequé resembles Madame Forestier in "The Necklace" because Maitre Fortune Houlbrequé lost a pocketbook and Madame Forestier's friend lost her diamond necklace; both characters were missing an item. Also, Maitre Malandain from "The Piece of String" and Monsieur Loisel from "The Necklace" are characters who are quite different; Maitre Malandain told people that Maitre Hauchecome was guilty of the crime against him; he didn't want to help him at all. Monsieur Loisel bent over backwards to help find the diamond necklace her wife lost and even helped to pay for the replacement. As you can tell, there are many differences and similarities between the two short stories.