



# The Necklace and Other Stories: Maupassant for Modern Times

*Guy de Maupassant*

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**From the best-selling translator of Némirovsky's *Suite Française* comes this bold new translation that reinterprets Guy de Maupassant's best works for a new generation.**

A Parisian civil servant turned protégé of Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant is considered not only one of the greatest short story writers in all of French literature but also a pioneer of psychological realism and modernism who helped define the form. Credited with influencing the likes of Chekhov, Maugham, Babel, and O. Henry, Maupassant had, at the time of his death at the age of forty-two, written six novels and some three hundred short stories. Yet in English, Maupassant has, curiously, remained unappreciated by modern readers due to outdated translations that render his prose in an archaic, literal style.

In this bold new translation, Sandra Smith—the celebrated translator of Irene Nemirovsky's *Suite Française*—brings us twenty-eight of Maupassant's essential stories and two novellas in lyrical yet accessible language that brings Maupassant into vibrant English. In addition to her sparkling translation, Smith also imposes a structure that captures the full range of Maupassant's work. Dividing the collection into three sections that reflect his predominant themes—nineteenth-century French society, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, and the supernatural—Smith creates "an arrangement suggesting a culture of relation, of structure, of completion" (Richard Howard).

In "Tales of French Life," we see Maupassant explore the broad swath of French society, not just examining the lives of the affluent as was customary for writers in his day. In the title story of the collection, "The Necklace," Maupassant crafts a devastating portrait of misplaced ambition and ruin in the emerging middle class.

The stories in "Tales of War" emerge from Maupassant's own experiences in the devastating Franco-Prussian War and create a portrait of that disastrous conflict that few modern readers have ever encountered. This section features Maupassant's most famous novella, "Boule de Suif."

The last section, "Tales of the Supernatural," delves into the occult and the bizarre. While certain critics may attribute some of these stories and morbid fascination as the product of the author's fevered mind and possible hallucinations induced by late-stage syphilis, they echo the gothic horror of Poe as well as anticipate the eerie fiction of H. P. Lovecraft.

The result takes readers from marriage, family, and the quotidian details of life to the disasters of war and nationalism, then to the gothic and beyond, allowing us to appreciate Maupassant in an idiom that matches our own times. *The Necklace and Other Stories* enables us to appreciate Maupassant as the progenitor of the modern short story and as a writer vastly ahead of his time.

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