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The Architecture of Reversal: An Intrinsic Analysis of Plot Twist in Guy De Maupassant's *The Necklace* Film Script

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the intrinsic narrative architecture of the plot twist in the film script adaptation of Guy de Maupassant's The Necklace (La Parure) through a formalist–structuralist perspective. The study is derived from a qualitative descriptive analysis of the script as an autonomous narrative text, with particular attention to the organization of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution; the strategic withholding of information; and the retrospective effects produced by the final revelation. The empirical analysis shows that the script follows a recognizable classical five-stage plot while deliberately manipulating the distribution of information so that the revelation concerning the necklace becomes structurally disproportionate to the apparent scale of the preceding crisis. The exposition establishes the protagonist's dissatisfaction and aspiration for social recognition; the rising action converts aspiration into action through the invitation, preparation, borrowing of the necklace, and social performance; the climax turns the borrowed object into a source of irreversible material crisis; and the falling action prolongs hardship while stabilizing the audience's provisional interpretation. The final revelation that the necklace was an imitation then operates as peripeteia, transforming the resolution into a secondary interpretive climax. The article argues that the twist is not an ornamental surprise but the organizing mechanism that retrospectively integrates the entire plot, intensifies structural irony, and generates thematic resonance concerning appearance, social aspiration, material value, and human misjudgment.

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1. Introduction

Plot is not simply the inventory of things that happen in a narrative. It is an architecture of selection, sequence, delay, causality, and disclosure through which a text regulates what an audience is permitted to know and when that knowledge becomes meaningful. Classical poetics already places plot at the centre of narrative construction, while modern narratology has increasingly emphasized the distinction between events as they may be reconstructed in story and the particular order in which those events are presented in discourse (Aristotle, 1996; Chatman, 1978; Herman, 2009). In this sense, narrative form is inseparable from the management of expectation. A reader or viewer does not respond only to what happens; interpretation is also shaped by the temporal and informational conditions under which an event is encountered.

The plot twist is one of the clearest demonstrations of this principle. A genuine twist is more than an unexpected occurrence. It is a reversal or revelation that changes the interpretive status of information already encountered. The event at the end therefore acts backward upon

the beginning: what appeared sufficient, rational, tragic, or inevitable is re-evaluated because a previously unavailable piece of information changes the relationship among the events. Sternberg (2001) describes narrative interest in terms of temporal dynamics that include suspense, curiosity, and surprise, while Abbott (2021) treats narrative organization as a system in which later disclosures can reorganize the significance of earlier segments. From a formalist standpoint, the twist is consequently valuable because its force can be located in the internal organization of the text rather than in an external explanation of authorial intention.

Guy de Maupassant's The Necklace provides an especially concentrated instance of this narrative mechanism. The story is widely recognized for its ironic reversal: a woman who borrows what she believes to be an expensive necklace loses it, undergoes years of hardship to replace it, and only afterward learns that the original necklace was an imitation. The narrative's effect is not exhausted by the final fact itself. The revelation changes the perceived proportionality of the preceding events. The years of labour, the economic burden, and the transformation of the protagonist's life acquire a different meaning once the presumed value of the lost object is exposed as false. The underlying thesis analysis identifies precisely this structural phenomenon in the film-script version, treating the revelation as a central narrative device rather than as a detachable surprise ending.

The screenplay or film script is a particularly productive object for such an inquiry because it occupies a complex position between literary text and audiovisual blueprint. Although screenplays are designed for realization through performance and image, their written form contains scenes, action descriptions, dialogue, sequencing, temporal cues, and patterns of information distribution that can themselves be examined as textual structures. The thesis from which this article is extracted therefore treats The Necklace film script as an autonomous narrative text and deliberately excludes cinematography, editing, sound design, acting, audience interviews, and other extrinsic or production-oriented variables. This boundary is methodologically important because it permits the analysis to ask a precise question: how does the written organization of the narrative make the final revelation structurally effective?

Existing discussion of The Necklace has often privileged moral interpretation, irony, social aspiration, materialism, or character development. Such readings are valuable, but they can leave the mechanics of the reversal insufficiently specified. The present article instead asks how the plot is constructed before the revelation, where the reversal is positioned, what structural work it performs, and how the final disclosure changes the meaning of preceding narrative units. The article thus addresses three interrelated questions: (1) How is the plot of The Necklace film script organized through its intrinsic narrative stages? (2) How is the plot twist positioned and prepared within that structure? and (3) What structural and interpretive consequences follow from the revelation that the necklace was an imitation?

The contribution of the study lies in bringing together classical plot structure, structural narratology, and formalist analysis within a single close reading of the film script. The underlying textual analysis identifies a five-stage progression—exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution—and demonstrates that each stage is functionally necessary to the final reversal. The article develops that finding further by arguing that the twist should be understood as a form of retrospective structural integration: it does not cancel the previous narrative but reorganizes the relation among its parts. This argument is consistent with contemporary research showing that narrative structure influences attention, tension, and engagement. Empirical work has demonstrated that suspense, surprise, and curiosity can generate distinct forms of narrative tension, while experimental research on narrative structure indicates that the organization of events affects entertainment experience and cognitive processing (Bermejo-Berros et al., 2022; Huang & Grizzard, 2022).

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Film Script as an Autonomous Narrative Text

The status of the screenplay has long been complicated by its dual identity. On one hand, it is a production document: a practical instrument through which scenes, dialogue, action, locations, and other information are communicated to a filmmaking team. On the other hand, it is a written narrative whose organization can be read independently. The latter position is particularly relevant to intrinsic analysis because the screenplay already encodes relations among events before those events are embodied through performance. In a film script, scene order, dialogue progression, action descriptions, and the timing of disclosure provide textual evidence of narrative design.

From a narratological perspective, this distinction between story and discourse is fundamental. The sequence of events in the story-world is not identical to the order in which the discourse makes those events available (Chatman, 1978; Shklovsky, 1965). A screenplay is therefore amenable to close reading when the research question concerns plot construction, information flow, or narrative sequencing. Contemporary scholarship on screenwriting also emphasizes that the written screenplay can be understood as a site in which narrative decisions are negotiated and developed rather than merely a transparent technical document (Baker, 2016; Batty & McAulay, 2018; Ings, 2021; Macdonald, 2013; Price, 2013, 2017). Recent work likewise demonstrates that screenplay form can be studied through questions of narrative perspective, structural organization, and the relation between action and theme (Böhme & Batty, 2021; Neilan, 2022).

2.2 Intrinsic Narrative Structure

Formalist and structuralist criticism begins from the proposition that a literary text possesses an internal organization that can be investigated without reducing the text to biography, historical context, or psychological speculation. Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization emphasizes the ways formal devices alter habitual perception, while structuralism examines the relations among narrative units and the patterns through which meaning emerges (Shklovsky, 1965; Lévi-Strauss, 1963). In narratology, plot is consequently treated as a system rather than a mere chronology. The intrinsic tradition also includes the classical concern with character and plot (Forster, 1927), structural roles and actants (Greimas, 1983), and screenplay form as a textual object (Winston, 1973).

The analysis adopts this position by treating plot, character, setting, and conflict as interconnected intrinsic elements. Plot remains primary because it governs the distribution of actions and consequences, while character motivation, setting, and conflict contribute to the plausibility and escalation of those actions. Such an approach is compatible with the classical distinction between fabula and syuzhet: the narrative's effect depends not only on the events themselves but on how the discourse selects, orders, delays, and emphasizes them (Chatman, 1978; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002).

Classical plot theory provides a practical model for tracing this organization. Freytag's five-part movement—exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution—does not imply that every narrative must mechanically follow an identical shape. Rather, it offers an analytical vocabulary for identifying stages of narrative orientation, complication, intensification, consequence, and closure (Freytag, 1962). Recent studies of narrative structure similarly show that structural formulas can influence emotional responses and audience experience, even when narratives depart from strictly conventional arrangements (Huang & Grizzard, 2022).

2.3 Plot Twist, Peripeteia, and Retrospective Reinterpretation

The conceptual history of the plot twist can be traced to Aristotle's notion of peripeteia, or reversal. The significance of reversal lies in its structural relationship to what precedes it: a reversal is powerful when the new state of affairs emerges from the internal logic of the plot while changing the audience's understanding of that logic (Aristotle, 1996). Modern plot-twist theory extends this principle by emphasizing delayed revelation, information asymmetry, misdirection, and retrospective reinterpretation (Sternberg, 2001; Abbott, 2021).

A useful distinction is therefore necessary between surprise and twist. Surprise describes a momentary deviation from expectation; a plot twist has a broader structural reach because the revelation alters the interpretation of earlier events. In The Necklace, the revelation that the necklace was an imitation does not simply add one new fact. It changes the meaning of the borrowing, the loss, the replacement, the years of hardship, and the apparent proportionality between the object and the sacrifice. The revelation is therefore retroactive: its semantic consequences travel backward through the narrative.

This retrospective mechanism also explains why information control is central to twist construction. The narrative must first stabilize an interpretation sufficiently for the final revelation to disrupt it. If the truth were disclosed immediately, the subsequent hardship would lose the interpretive conditions necessary for reversal. Conversely, if the preceding narrative contained no causal preparation, the ending would risk becoming arbitrary rather than surprising-and-inevitable. Contemporary experimental research supports the broader importance of narrative organization for tension and engagement: stories structured around suspense, surprise, and curiosity produce measurable differences in narrative tension, while film studies show that knowledge of endings can alter the way audiences attend to narrative goals (Bermejo-Berros et al., 2022; Cohen et al., 2023).

2.4 Information Control, Surprise, and Narrative Engagement

Information control is the operational mechanism that links plot structure to audience expectation. The narrator or narrative discourse may restrict, delay, distribute, or foreground information, thereby creating a provisional model of the story in the audience's mind. Sternberg (2001) distinguishes among different temporal configurations of narrative interest, while Bordwell (2008) emphasizes the ways film narratives regulate access to story information. In a screenplay, this regulation can be encoded through what characters know, what they say, what action descriptions reveal, and what the sequence of scenes withholds.

Recent empirical research provides useful external support for this theoretical premise without replacing the intrinsic focus of the present study. Bermejo-Berros et al. (2022) experimentally compared audiovisual stories organized around suspense, surprise, and curiosity and found that narrative organization induced different forms of narrative tension. Huang and Grizzard (2022) similarly tested the effects of chronological and achronological presentation and reported that narrative structure influences entertainment-related responses. Cohen et al. (2023) demonstrated that narrative film structure captures attention in ways connected to viewers' processing of story goals. These studies concern audience response rather than textual structure, and therefore are not treated as data for the present analysis; they are used only to situate the thesis-derived findings within current interdisciplinary narrative research.

2.5 Research Gap

The literature reviewed in the underlying study reveals three gaps relevant to this article. First, discussions of The Necklace have frequently concentrated on irony, social class, morality, or character rather than on the precise structural mechanics of the final reversal.

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Second, studies of screenplay narrative have often focused on cinematic realization, screenwriting practice, or broader narrative systems rather than treating the written film script itself as the primary literary object. Third, plot-twist theory is often discussed abstractly, while detailed close readings that map a twist across the complete classical plot sequence remain comparatively limited. Earlier studies cited in the underlying corpus include discussions of Maupassant and The Necklace (Lubbock, 2019; Muecke, 2017), plot-oriented analyses (Rahmawati & Handayani, 2023), and the primary literary work itself (Maupassant, 2008).

The present article addresses these gaps by keeping the analytical object narrow and text-centred. It does not compare the film script with the original short story, investigate adaptation fidelity, or infer audience responses from external reception data. Instead, it reconstructs the internal sequence of the script as represented in the underlying thesis analysis and asks how the five plot stages cooperate to make the final revelation structurally consequential.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design grounded in intrinsic literary analysis and formalist–structuralist narratology. The primary corpus is the film script adaptation of Guy de Maupassant's The Necklace. The script is treated as an autonomous written narrative, and the analysis is restricted to textual evidence in the form of narrative events, dialogue, character actions, scene-related descriptions, and the sequencing of plot information. The research does not use questionnaires, interviews, audience reviews, or production data.

Data collection in the underlying study was documentary and text-centred. The script was read repeatedly, after which narrative units were identified and categorized according to the five stages of classical plot structure: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Particular attention was given to units that prepared the reversal, sustained misdirection, prolonged the consequences of the apparent loss, or delivered the final revelation. This procedure corresponds to the study's methodological principle that data selection must be theoretically relevant rather than random.

Data analysis proceeded in four related stages. First, narrative units were classified by structural position. Second, relationships among plot, character motivation, conflict, and setting were examined in order to identify causal and sequential patterns. Third, the plot twist was located according to criteria of delayed revelation, reversal, and retrospective reinterpretation. Fourth, the analysis evaluated the twist's structural functions, including retrospective integration, redefinition of causal logic, reconfiguration of the climax–resolution relationship, narrative closure through reinterpretation, and structural–thematic unity. This procedure follows the qualitative analytical logic described in the thesis and is consistent with established approaches to documentary and textual analysis (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2020). The methodological sensitivity to coding and category development is also consistent with Strauss and Corbin (1998), whose grounded-theory procedures are cited in the source study as a guide to theoretical sensitivity.

Because the original script text itself is not reproduced in the thesis analysis in a systematic quotation format, the empirical evidence reported in this article is presented as documented narrative events and structural units rather than as newly invented verbatim quotations. This is an important evidentiary limitation: the article preserves what the underlying analysis actually establishes and does not manufacture dialogue or scene quotations that are not present in the source material supplied for extraction.

The unit of interpretation is therefore the narrative event or sequence as reconstructed in the underlying analysis. The central empirical sequence consists of: (a) the protagonist's dissatisfaction and aspiration for social recognition; (b) the invitation to a prestigious social event; (c) preparation for social appearance and acquisition of the borrowed necklace; (d) the social success produced by the necklace; (e) discovery of the necklace's disappearance; (f) replacement of the necklace and prolonged hardship; and (g) the final disclosure that the original necklace was an imitation. These units are not treated as independent episodes. Their significance is evaluated through their structural relations.

Table 1
Empirical Narrative Units Identified in the Underlying Textual Analysis

Plot Stage	Empirical Narrative Unit	Primary Structural Function	Relation to Twist
Exposition	Dissatisfaction with modest life; aspiration for social recognition and material refinement.	Establishes character orientation, latent conflict, and the value system governing later choices.	Creates the interpretive frame in which appearance and social value become important.
Rising Action	Invitation to prestigious event; concern over appearance; acquisition/borrowing of ornate necklace; temporary social admiration.	Escalates conflict and converts aspiration into concrete action.	Builds misdirection and stabilizes the belief that the necklace has substantial value.
Climax	The borrowed necklace is discovered to be missing after the social event.	Creates irreversible crisis and maximizes causal stakes.	Creates the narrative vacuum that later revelation will fill and overturn.
Falling Action	Replacement of the necklace followed by prolonged labour, sacrifice, and hardship.	Consolidates the apparent meaning of the loss and delays revelation.	Deepens the apparent proportionality between suffering and the assumed value of the necklace.
Resolution / Twist	The necklace is revealed to have been an imitation.	Reverses interpretive understanding and closes the narrative through reinterpretation.	Reorganizes the significance of all preceding stages.

The table should be read as an analytical condensation of the empirical structure established in the source thesis, not as a new quantitative coding scheme. Its purpose is to make visible the causal and informational progression that the detailed discussion develops below.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Classical Plot as a Preparatory Architecture

The first major finding is that the film script retains a recognizable classical plot architecture, but the architecture is used strategically rather than mechanically. The

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underlying analysis identifies exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution as distinct but interdependent phases. This matters because the plot twist depends on the audience first occupying a stable interpretive position. The narrative therefore does not begin with the reversal; it begins by constructing the assumptions that the reversal will later expose as incomplete.

The exposition establishes the protagonist's social and material dissatisfaction. In the source analysis, this dissatisfaction is represented not as a decorative character trait but as the initial condition from which later actions become plausible. Her desire for recognition, refinement, and a more prestigious social identity supplies the motivational logic of the plot. The exposition consequently performs two tasks at once. At the surface level, it introduces the protagonist and her circumstances. At the structural level, it establishes the value system through which subsequent events will be interpreted. The desire to appear socially elevated makes the later importance of the necklace intelligible before the audience knows the truth about the object.

This is precisely where intrinsic analysis becomes more productive than a purely thematic reading. If the exposition were treated only as evidence of vanity or materialism, its formal function could be underestimated. Its deeper structural role is to establish a code of value. The narrative teaches the audience, through the protagonist's orientation, that appearance is consequential. Once that code has been established, the necklace can operate as a concentrated object within the narrative system. It becomes not merely jewelry but a structural instrument through which social aspiration is converted into action.

The rising action then transforms this latent conflict into an increasingly constrained causal sequence. The invitation to a prestigious social event is identified in the underlying analysis as the catalyst. The invitation matters because it converts dissatisfaction from an internal condition into a practical problem: the protagonist must now produce an appearance that corresponds to the social environment she is about to enter. The subsequent concern over clothing and jewelry, the acquisition of the necklace, and the experience of admiration at the event form a chain of actions that progressively narrows the narrative's possible direction.

At this stage, the narrative's apparent logic is coherent. A woman who feels socially inadequate seeks an object that will temporarily bridge the gap between her actual status and desired appearance. The borrowed necklace appears to solve the problem. This temporary success is structurally important because it confirms the protagonist's assumptions. If the social event were unsuccessful, the narrative would not establish the same causal relationship between appearance and reward. Instead, the protagonist's momentary triumph strengthens the belief that the object possesses the social value she attributes to it.

The climax—the discovery that the necklace is missing—then transforms the same object from an instrument of aspiration into the source of irreversible crisis. This is a classical turning point because the narrative's direction changes decisively. Before the loss, the necklace promises temporary social elevation; after the loss, it becomes a debt-producing object whose presumed value governs the couple's future. The source analysis identifies this moment as the highest point of immediate narrative tension because the conflict becomes material, concrete, and apparently unavoidable.

Yet the most significant structural feature is that the climax is not the final twist. The distinction is essential. The loss of the necklace is a crisis, but it is not the ultimate reversal of meaning. The audience is encouraged to accept the apparent value of the necklace and therefore to understand the subsequent hardship as a tragic but proportionate consequence. The narrative thus creates a provisional causal model: aspiration leads to borrowing; borrowing leads to loss; loss leads to replacement; replacement leads to sacrifice. Only the final revelation exposes the assumption embedded within that chain.

4.2 Exposition: Encoding Desire as a Narrative Premise

The empirical evidence from the exposition indicates that the narrative's later reversal is prepared long before the necklace disappears. The protagonist's dissatisfaction with her modest surroundings and her longing for social recognition establish a perceptual framework in which external signs of status carry unusually high significance. In structural terms, this is a form of narrative coding. The audience learns what matters to the protagonist, and therefore learns how to interpret the necklace once it enters the plot.

The exposition is also important because it prevents the later catastrophe from appearing causally arbitrary. The protagonist's decision to borrow the necklace is not an isolated action inserted for the sake of plot mechanics. It is the foreseeable consequence of the motivational system already established. The source analysis explicitly connects the exposition to the protagonist's valuation of appearance and social worth. This connection means that the final twist can operate on character perception as well as event sequence. When the necklace is revealed to be an imitation, the audience does not merely learn that the object was false; it recognizes that the entire chain of decisions was built on an erroneous valuation.

The exposition therefore has a double temporal function. Prospectively, it prepares the audience to understand what the protagonist is likely to do. Retrospectively, after the twist, it becomes evidence of why the tragedy could happen at all. The protagonist's initial desire is reclassified from background characterization into a causal component of the reversal. In this respect, the twist validates the exposition rather than rendering it obsolete.

This pattern illustrates a broader formalist principle: narrative meaning can be generated by the relation between distant textual units. A sentence, scene, or character trait may appear to have one function when first encountered and another after the narrative has been completed. The source analysis repeatedly emphasizes this retrospective dimension, noting that the revelation compels reassessment of character motivation and causal logic. The exposition is therefore not merely the beginning of the story; it is one of the elements whose significance is completed by the ending.

4.3 Rising Action: Misdirection Through Causal Plausibility

The rising action provides the most sustained period of narrative misdirection. The invitation to the prestigious event is followed by concern over appearance, the acquisition of a borrowed necklace, and the experience of social success. Each step is causally plausible within the narrative world. The protagonist wants recognition; the event offers an opportunity; appropriate appearance becomes necessary; the necklace supplies the desired symbol; social admiration appears to confirm the strategy. Because each action follows logically from the previous one, the audience is encouraged to accept the underlying assumptions without continuously questioning them.

This is an important characteristic of an effective plot twist. Misdirection is not equivalent to random concealment. The narrative does not need to falsify every element; it needs to organize true and incomplete information in a way that supports a provisional interpretation. In The Necklace, the audience can accurately follow the protagonist's actions while still misunderstanding the value of the necklace. The misdirection therefore operates at the level of inference rather than simple factual deception.

The source analysis describes the rising action as a phase in which information crucial to the final revelation is concealed while tension increases. The narrative tempo accelerates because the protagonist moves from desire to preparation to social performance. At the same time, the causal chain becomes more extensive. The necklace is borrowed; it becomes part of the protagonist's successful appearance; it is subsequently lost. By the time the loss occurs,

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the object has accumulated narrative significance. It is no longer simply a piece of jewelry introduced for one scene; it has become the apparent explanation for the entire crisis.

This accumulation helps explain why the final revelation can be brief yet powerful. The narrative does not need a lengthy ending because the preceding structure has already invested the necklace with disproportionate semantic weight. The revelation can therefore occupy relatively little textual space while producing extensive interpretive consequences. The source analysis explicitly notes this economy of presentation: the final disclosure is concise, but its effect extends backward across the entire narrative.

Recent research on narrative structure helps contextualize this finding. Bermejo-Berros et al. (2022) show experimentally that narrative structures organized around suspense, surprise, and curiosity can induce narrative tension, while Huang and Grizzard (2022) demonstrate that structural organization affects entertainment experience. These studies do not prove the meaning of The Necklace, nor do they replace close reading. Rather, they support the broader proposition that the arrangement of information is consequential. The thesis-derived evidence shows how that principle operates internally in a specific narrative: the rising action produces a stable interpretation precisely because it makes each step appear causally reasonable.

4.4 Climax: The Loss as a False Resolution of Meaning

The discovery that the necklace is missing constitutes the immediate climax because it changes the narrative from aspiration to crisis. The protagonist's desire for social recognition has produced an object-based problem with apparently objective consequences. At this point, the narrative seems to have clarified its central conflict: a socially ambitious woman has lost an expensive necklace and must somehow compensate its owner. The apparent simplicity of this interpretation is precisely what allows the later twist to work.

The climax is therefore best understood as a false interpretive resolution even though it is a genuine structural climax. It resolves one question—what has happened to the necklace—while leaving another unresolved—what the necklace actually was. This distinction between event-level resolution and knowledge-level resolution is central to the narrative's design. The audience knows the object is lost, but does not know that its presumed value is false. The narrative can therefore continue to produce consequences under an incomplete model of reality.

The source analysis emphasizes that the loss creates a narrative vacuum. The audience must infer the seriousness of the situation from the presumed value of the necklace. The resulting assumptions determine how the falling action will be understood. If the necklace is genuinely valuable, the ensuing sacrifice is tragic but intelligible. If the necklace is not valuable, the same sacrifice becomes structurally ironic. The twist thus depends on the climax having already stabilized the first interpretation.

This mechanism illustrates why the plot twist should not be located exclusively at the final sentence. The final disclosure is the point of revelation, but the twist is a process distributed across the narrative. Its conditions are constructed in the exposition, intensified in the rising action, activated by the climax, prolonged through the falling action, and completed in the resolution. The twist is consequently a structural relation among stages rather than an isolated piece of information.

4.5 Falling Action: Prolonged Hardship as Interpretive Stabilization

The falling action is especially important because it is the longest and most consequential period of delayed revelation in the underlying analysis. After the necklace disappears, the characters replace it and enter a prolonged period of labour, sacrifice, and

hardship. At first glance, this stage may seem to be a conventional aftermath in which the consequences of the climax are simply narrated. Structurally, however, it performs a more complex function: it stabilizes the audience's provisional interpretation.

The longer the hardship continues, the more reasonable the presumed value of the necklace appears. The narrative repeatedly confirms that the replacement has generated serious consequences. The couple's suffering therefore becomes evidence, within the narrative logic, of the object's importance. This creates a powerful proportional illusion: great suffering appears to require a great cause. The final revelation breaks precisely this proportional relationship.

The source analysis identifies repetition, endurance, and gradual transformation as important features of the falling action. These features extend the temporal distance between the initial borrowing and the final revelation. The delay is not merely chronological. It increases the interpretive investment in the false assumption. The audience is not simply waiting for information; it is becoming increasingly committed to an explanation of the events that the ending will overturn.

This explains why the resolution can produce what the thesis calls cognitive dissonance. The audience has been trained to regard the hardship as meaningful in relation to the value of the necklace. Once that value is disclosed as false, the causal structure remains intact but its proportional meaning changes. The years of hardship did happen; the debt did exist; the suffering was real. What changes is the audience's understanding of why those events occurred and what they signify.

The falling action therefore performs the paradoxical task of decreasing immediate suspense while increasing the eventual force of surprise. Immediate tension may become less acute because the narrative appears to have settled into a hardship-and-repayment trajectory. Yet the structural conditions for the twist become stronger because the audience has more time to internalize the provisional explanation. The apparent slowing of the plot thus serves the acceleration of the ending's interpretive force.

4.6 Resolution: The Imitation Necklace as Peripeteia

The resolution is where the plot twist becomes explicit: the necklace is revealed to have been an imitation. In Aristotelian terms, this functions as peripeteia because the narrative's interpretive direction changes through a revelation that arises from the preceding plot rather than contradicting it (Aristotle, 1996). The crucial point is that the revelation does not erase the earlier events. It reclassifies them.

The difference between cancellation and reinterpretation is fundamental. If the twist revealed that the loss had never occurred, the previous narrative would simply be invalidated. That is not what happens. The necklace was lost; the replacement was purchased; the characters suffered; the debt was repaid. The new information concerns the presumed value of the original object. Because that value had governed the interpretation of every subsequent event, its correction changes the semantic relation among the events without denying their factual occurrence.

The source analysis identifies this retrospective integration as one of the twist's primary structural functions. The exposition establishes the protagonist's valuation of appearance; the rising action creates misdirection; the climax generates irreversible commitment; the falling action consolidates the assumed meaning; and the resolution reveals the false premise underlying that meaning. The twist therefore retrospectively confirms the functional necessity of the earlier stages.

The economy of the revelation is also significant. The source analysis notes that the disclosure occupies minimal textual space despite its extensive consequences. This is a formalist phenomenon: textual length does not determine structural importance. A short final

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disclosure can carry enormous semantic weight when the preceding narrative has prepared a large interpretive field. The resolution becomes a kind of interpretive key that unlocks the meaning of the whole narrative.

Recent work on narrative surprise and attention offers a useful comparative perspective. Cohen et al. (2023) found that narrative film can capture attention through the organization of story goals and that knowledge of a spoiler changes aspects of narrative processing. Becker et al. (2024), in a broader study of surprise and prediction error, further demonstrates that surprise is connected to the discrepancy between expectation and subsequent information. These findings should not be imported uncritically into literary interpretation, but they are consistent with the structural observation that the final revelation gains force because it violates a stabilized expectation. The source thesis also draws on McKee (1997) for screenplay structure and narrative craft, while the present article keeps those practical principles subordinate to the intrinsic textual evidence.

4.7 Structural Functions of the Plot Twist

The first structural function of the twist is retrospective integration. Before the revelation, the plot appears to consist of a sequence in which aspiration leads to loss and loss leads to prolonged suffering. The twist reveals that this chain was constructed around an incorrect assumption about value. Nevertheless, the chain remains coherent because the characters' actions were caused by what they believed. The revelation therefore does not destroy causality; it exposes the epistemic condition under which causality operated.

The second function is the regulation of narrative proportion. The source analysis observes a profound imbalance between the magnitude of the characters' sacrifice and the actual value of the necklace. This imbalance is central to the irony. In a conventional tragedy, consequences may appear proportionate to the cause. Here, the ending reveals that the perceived cause was radically misvalued. The structural disproportion becomes the mechanism through which irony emerges.

The third function is the transformation of the resolution into a secondary climax. The physical crisis occurs when the necklace disappears, but the interpretive crisis occurs when its true nature is revealed. The narrative therefore contains two different kinds of climax: an event-based climax and an epistemological climax. The first changes what the characters must do; the second changes what the audience understands. This dual structure helps explain why the ending feels larger than a conventional resolution.

The fourth function is closure through reinterpretation rather than reconciliation. The external problem of replacing the necklace has already been resolved before the final revelation. The twist consequently cannot function simply as another step toward practical equilibrium. Instead, it creates closure by exhausting the audience's previous explanation of the events. The narrative becomes complete because the final piece of information makes the preceding structure intelligible as a whole.

The fifth function is structural unity. Once the ending is known, each earlier stage appears to contribute to the final effect. The protagonist's dissatisfaction explains the desire for status; the invitation activates that desire; the necklace embodies the desired status; the loss creates crisis; the replacement creates prolonged sacrifice; and the revelation exposes the false valuation that made the entire chain possible. The ending therefore acts as a retrospective proof of structural economy: apparently separate elements are revealed as parts of one designed system.

Finally, the twist forms a bridge between narrative form and thematic resonance. The underlying study remains formally oriented and does not make social critique its primary analytical method. Nevertheless, the structural organization inevitably produces thematic

implications concerning appearance, material value, aspiration, and misjudgment. These themes are not added from outside the text; they emerge because the plot is organized around a discrepancy between perceived and actual value. The formal mechanism therefore generates thematic resonance without requiring the analysis to abandon its intrinsic focus.

4.8 Narrative Impact: Retrospective Reinterpretation and Cognitive Dissonance

The most immediate narrative impact of the twist is retrospective reinterpretation. The audience must mentally revisit the earlier stages of the plot under a revised understanding of the necklace. The protagonist's decision to borrow it becomes more consequential because it was motivated by a false valuation. The loss becomes more tragic because the object was not what the characters believed. The replacement becomes more disproportionate because the years of hardship were responses to a mistaken assumption. Thus, the twist changes the interpretive status of multiple earlier events simultaneously.

This retrospective process also produces cognitive dissonance at the narrative level. The audience is required to hold two representations of the same sequence: the provisional interpretation formed before the revelation and the revised interpretation formed afterward. The two representations cannot be completely reconciled because they assign different significance to the same events. Yet they remain connected because the second is generated from the first. The tension between them is a major source of the story's enduring effect.

The source analysis describes this impact as cognitive, interpretive, and structural. The cognitive dimension concerns the need to reconstruct the story. The interpretive dimension concerns the change in the meaning assigned to characters and actions. The structural dimension concerns the recognition that the twist has unified the entire sequence. These dimensions should be distinguished analytically even though they operate simultaneously.

The empirical evidence from the script also suggests that the twist changes the centre of narrative attention. Before the final disclosure, the central problem appears to be material loss and repayment. After the disclosure, the central problem becomes knowledge: what did the characters believe, why did they believe it, and what were the consequences of that belief? The narrative therefore shifts from an action problem to an epistemological problem without adding a new storyline. The shift is produced entirely by the revaluation of existing information.

This is one reason the twist should be regarded as a central organizing device rather than an ornamental ending. An ornamental surprise can be removed without substantially damaging the architecture of the story. The ending of The Necklace cannot be removed without altering the significance of the preceding structure. Without the revelation, the narrative remains a story of loss and hardship. With the revelation, the same events become a structurally ironic system organized around misrecognition.

4.9 Predictability and Surprise: Why the Twist Does Not Feel Arbitrary

An effective reversal must balance predictability and surprise. If the ending is completely predictable, it loses much of its disruptive force. If it is completely unsupported, it may appear arbitrary. The source analysis concludes that The Necklace maintains this balance through strategic information control. The narrative gives the audience enough causal information to understand the characters' actions while withholding the decisive information about the necklace's actual value.

The plot is therefore predictable at the level of action but surprising at the level of interpretation. It is possible to understand why the protagonist borrows the necklace, why she loses it, why the couple replaces it, and why they suffer without knowing that the necklace is false. This separation between causal intelligibility and epistemic incompleteness is one of the narrative's strongest structural achievements.

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The distinction also clarifies the relation between suspense and surprise. Suspense can arise when an audience knows a danger that a character does not yet recognize; surprise occurs when the audience's own expectation is suddenly overturned. In The Necklace, the falling action relies on the stabilization of the audience's assumption about the object's value, allowing the final disclosure to produce surprise after a long period of apparently coherent consequence. Contemporary experimental research on suspense, surprise, and curiosity supports the idea that these are distinguishable modes of narrative tension (Bermejo-Berros et al., 2022).

The film-script form strengthens this mechanism because the written sequence can regulate the release of information through scene order and dialogue. The source analysis identifies the final revelation as being delivered through dialogue rather than through an elaborate action sequence. This economy is structurally appropriate because the twist is epistemological: the decisive change is not something that happens to the characters physically but something they—and the audience—come to know.

4.10 Structural–Thematic Integration

The formalist–structuralist framework does not require thematic meaning to be ignored; rather, it asks that thematic implications be traced to formal organization. In The Necklace, the thematic resonance of material value, social aspiration, appearance, and misjudgment is inseparable from the plot's structure because the ending converts the presumed value of the necklace into a false premise. The theme is therefore produced through the architecture of revelation.

The protagonist's aspiration is structurally necessary because it makes the necklace desirable. The necklace's desirability is structurally necessary because it makes its loss consequential. The presumed value is structurally necessary because it makes replacement appear reasonable. The prolonged hardship is structurally necessary because it intensifies the discrepancy exposed by the twist. Each thematic implication is thus supported by a sequence of formal relations.

This is consistent with the thesis finding that structural and thematic integration confirms the usefulness of the formalist–structuralist approach. The narrative does not need to state an explicit moral proposition for the audience to perceive the instability of social appearance or material value. The structure demonstrates that instability. A symbol of social elevation becomes the cause of social decline; an object believed to possess high monetary value turns out to be an imitation; and a long period of sacrifice is retrospectively revealed as disproportionate.

Recent scholarship on narrative structure likewise indicates that formal organization can shape the experience and interpretation of stories. Studies of film narrative and screenplay structure demonstrate that structural decisions can influence tension, attention, character perspective, and thematic development (Cohen et al., 2023; Neilan, 2022). The present study adds a text-specific observation: in The Necklace, the final reversal is the point at which structural design and thematic resonance become inseparable.

4.11 The Twist as the Organizing Principle of the Whole Narrative

Taken together, the empirical findings support a stronger proposition than the simple claim that *The Necklace* contains a surprise ending. The twist organizes the narrative retrospectively. Its existence explains why the exposition must establish a particular value system, why the rising action must create a convincing experience of social success, why the climax must produce an apparently serious loss, and why the falling action must prolong the

consequences before the revelation. The ending is therefore not merely one stage among others; it is the stage that completes the function of the others.

This claim also modifies the way the classical plot model should be understood. The five stages are not simply sequential containers. They form a network of dependencies. The exposition creates the motivational premise; the rising action converts that premise into action; the climax converts action into crisis; the falling action converts crisis into prolonged consequence; and the resolution converts consequence into reinterpretation. The narrative's unity is thus both forward-moving and backward-working.

The twist is particularly powerful because it combines temporal directions. Prospectively, the narrative moves toward the discovery of the lost necklace and its consequences. Retrospectively, the final revelation moves backward, altering the meaning of everything that preceded it. The result is a two-directional narrative architecture. Chronology remains linear, but interpretation is not. This is why the thesis identifies the script as linear in event sequence yet complex in meaning production.

The distinction has implications for literary and film-script pedagogy. Students often identify a plot twist simply by naming the surprising event. A more rigorous intrinsic method would require them to demonstrate what the event changes, which earlier units are reinterpreted, how information was controlled, and why the revelation remains causally coherent. The Necklace offers a particularly clear case because the twist can be mapped across the entire plot rather than confined to its final disclosure.

The same principle has relevance for screenwriting analysis. Contemporary scholarship continues to examine screenplay structure, narrative perspective, and unconventional form, demonstrating that screenplays can be studied as complex narrative objects rather than only as production documents (Böhme & Batty, 2021; Bentham, 2022; Neilan, 2022). The present analysis suggests that plot-twist construction can likewise be evaluated through the relation among setup, escalation, crisis, delay, and revelation.

Most importantly, the article's findings remain grounded in the empirical narrative units identified in the source analysis. The argument does not depend on external assumptions about Maupassant's biography, historical context, audience psychology, or cinematic execution. It depends on the internal sequence documented in the underlying textual analysis: aspiration, invitation, preparation, necklace, social success, loss, replacement, prolonged hardship, and revelation. The coherence of that sequence is what makes the final reversal structurally demonstrable.

5. Conclusion

This article has examined the plot twist in Guy de Maupassant's *The Necklace* film script as an intrinsic structural phenomenon rather than as an isolated surprise ending. The analysis demonstrates that the script follows a classical five-stage plot while strategically manipulating information within that structure. The exposition establishes the protagonist's dissatisfaction and desire for social recognition; the rising action converts that desire into concrete decisions surrounding the prestigious event and the borrowed necklace; the climax transforms the necklace into the source of irreversible crisis; the falling action prolongs hardship and stabilizes the audience's provisional interpretation; and the resolution reveals that the necklace was an imitation.

The central finding is that the plot twist functions as the organizing mechanism of the narrative. Its significance lies in retrospective integration. The final revelation does not cancel earlier events but changes their interpretive status. The protagonist's aspirations, the necklace's symbolic importance, the loss, the replacement, and the prolonged hardship remain factual components of the narrative, but their causal and thematic significance is reorganized once the necklace's true nature is known.

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The twist also creates a secondary interpretive climax. The physical climax concerns the loss of the necklace, whereas the final revelation produces an epistemological reversal concerning what the characters and audience believed about that object. This dual structure explains the narrative's economy: the final disclosure is textually brief because the preceding stages have already accumulated the interpretive material necessary for its effect.

From a formalist–structuralist perspective, the case demonstrates that narrative meaning emerges from relations among parts rather than from isolated events. The plot twist produces structural irony, regulates narrative proportion, reinforces unity, and generates thematic resonance concerning appearance, aspiration, material value, and human misjudgment. These implications emerge from the organization of the narrative itself rather than from an external moral framework.

The study also confirms the methodological value of treating the film script as an autonomous narrative text. Because the analysis is based on textual sequencing, dialogue, narrative events, and information distribution, it can identify structural mechanisms without depending on cinematography, editing, performance, or audience surveys. The article therefore contributes a focused model for intrinsic analysis of plot twists in screenplays and related narrative forms.

A final methodological caution should be noted. The underlying thesis analysis did not provide a systematic transcript of verbatim script quotations, and therefore this article deliberately reports empirical evidence as documented narrative events rather than inventing quotations. Future research could extend the present work by incorporating scene-by-scene coding of the complete screenplay, comparing the script with Maupassant's original short story, or empirically testing how different levels of disclosure affect readers' or viewers' interpretations. Such extensions would complement, rather than replace, the intrinsic structural findings established here.

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