

DECISION
FOR YOUTH

by Morris
Schreiber

Guidance Units
in Literature,
Series 2

THE NECKLACE
De Maupassant

ROADS OF DESTINY
O. Henry

DR. HEIDEGGER'S
EXPERIMENT
Nathaniel
Hawthorne

MAUD MULLER
John Greenleaf
Whittier

CONFESSIONAL
Percival Wilde

ALBERT SCHWEITZER:
GENIUS
OF THE JUNGLE
Joseph Gollomb

WALDEN
Henri David Thoreau
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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Guidance Units in Literature

Units in English

Series 2

DECISION FOR YOUTH

by

Morris Schreiber

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6071
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1st NARRATOR

...What you hear is the sound of the word decision.
...DECISION...a cutting away of doubt...From the
Latin "caedo," to cut..."de," away...and "--ion," the
act of ... THE ACT OF CUTTING AWAY...

DECISION...Cutting away...removing all doubt...MAKING
UP ONE'S MIND!

The deadwood has been cleared...Somebody has just
reached a DECISION!

2nd NARRATOR

--Presenting DECISION FOR YOUTH...a unit in English
for the Secondary Schools.

1st NARRATOR

Almost every moment of the day someone is called upon
to assess facts, weigh alternatives, make decisions...

...Sometimes they are small, personal decisions...

...A young lady decides which dress to wear to a party
...A young man considers which girl to invite to a
dance...

...As Youth matures and approaches adult status, it
faces important social decisions....

...Shall it fall in step with the crowd---adopting
group dress, manners, even group patterns of thought?

--Or shall it strike out against the tide, assert its
own individuality--each person's unique difference
from the rest?

...As Youth's horizons expand, it becomes more sensi-
tive to decisions involving the fate of multitudes...

3rd NARRATOR

Scientists decide whether a new vaccine is safe for
release to the public!

Statemen strive to achieve a decision on disarmament!

Labor and management decide on terms to end a crippling
strike!

1st NARRATOR

...Youth also finds that part of growing up is learning
how to accept unpleasant, painful decisions...

...A personnel officer rejects a young man for a posi-
tion...The college he had hoped to enter finds that
it cannot accept him.

...But joy, too, has its moments of decision...Here is
one, long familiar to all...

VOICE

Y' know what, Mary!...Think I'll go fishin' today!

1st NARRATOR

...Sometimes humorously, more often seriously...i

countless ways...in many literary forms, gifted writers have explored moments of great personal decision...In fiction and non-fiction--in stories, essays, poems, plays, and biographies - literary artists have examined crucial problems confronting men and women everywhere and chronicled the action they took...Here are some of their momentous decisions--and their implications for youth!

2nd NARRATOR

--One of the most popular forms of literature is the short story...At its best, the short story can excite, entertain, challenge, inform or teach the reader.

Often it involves him in the lives and problems of its imaginary characters so keenly that the reader laughs and weeps with them and hangs breathlessly on their fate...

To hold our interest the short story must present in brief some conflict or struggle between its characters or within a character himself--and show us the outcome of that struggle...Sometimes to solve his problem a character must make an important decision...The short story, thus, is a novel in miniature. It not only has the conflict; it also has the mood and atmosphere of the novel. But unlike the novel, it is designed to be read at one sitting. Hence it is usually a single, significant incident in the lives of its characters....

Yet in its themes and problems the short story has much in common with the novel. It examines human weakness and strength, kindness and selfishness, love, jealousy, tyranny, and many other aspects of people's character. In "The Necklace," by De Maupassant--a short story that has become a classic of world literature--the theme is restlessness, dissatisfaction, discontent with one's lot--and the tragic consequences of that discontent.

3rd NARRATOR

...The scene is Paris...in the latter part of the nineteenth century...The time, early evening in the modest home of M. Loisel, a clerk in the French Office of Education...Mme. Loisel, his wife, a pretty young woman, is awaiting her husband's arrival. She hears his step on the stair...A moment later he rings the bell...

MME. LOISEL

Good evening, my dear...Why, how excited you look! Some good news, I hope!

M. LOISEL

The very best!...Look! A special invitation from the Minister of Education himself! Here...Read it...

MME. LOISEL

The Minister of Public Instruction requests the honor of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Palace of the Ministry on Monday Evening, January 18th! ---Well, then!...What do you want me to do with it?

M. LOISEL

But, my dear, I thought you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had a hard time getting the invitation. The whole official world will be there...

MME. LOISEL

Indeed!...And what do you expect me to put on my back?

M. LOISEL

Why...why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It looks fine to me...

MME. LOISEL

It will never do... I have no dress good enough..and, therefore, I can't go to the ball...Go...Give your invitation to some colleague whose wife has more to wear than I....

M. LOISEL

Very well, Mathilde...How much would it cost, a suitable dress, one which you could also use on other occasions--something very simple?

MME. LOISEL

...I don't know exactly...but--I think I could manage it with 400 francs...

M. LOISEL

...All right...I...I will give you 400 francs... And try to have a pretty dress!..

3rd NARRATOR

Soon the dress was ready. But Mme. Loisel was still not satisfied. She kept complaining that she had no jewels to wear. Finally, at the suggestion of her husband, she went to see Mme. Forestier, a rich friend of hers, who was gracious enough to lend her a superb necklace of diamonds...

...At last the day of the great ball arrived. Mme. Loisel scored an overwhelming success. She was admired and praised by all. She was even noticed by the Minister of Education himself. Finally, the magnificent ball ended. The Loiseles left in a cab, arriving home about four in the morning. But as Mme. Loisel removed the wraps covering her shoulders before the mirror to see herself once more in all her glory, she suddenly uttered a cry. The necklace was gone! They sought everywhere for it, frantically, desperately...But all efforts proved fruitless...They were now in a frightening predicament. What should be done?

1st NARRATOR

...We have now reached the climax of the story, the highest point of the action towards which all previous events have been leading. The Loiseles must now make a crucial decision. Imagine that you are a trusted friend of the Loiseles and that M. Loisel has come to you seeking advice. He is considering two possible courses of action:

M. LOISEL

...Would it be better to go straight to Mme. Forestier, make a clean breast of everything, and

throw ourselves on her mercy or shall we say nothing of the loss, try to buy another necklace like it, and substitute it for the original?

1st NARRATOR

What would you advise him to do? You might wish to discuss your decision with other members of your class. STOP THE RECORD now AT THE BAND. After discussion, START THE RECORD at this point.

(BAND)

1st NARRATOR

We return you now to the story of "The Necklace," by Guy de Maupassant. Now here is the actual decision that the Loiseles reached.

M. LOISEL

We are in great trouble, Mathilde. You must write to your friend, Mme. Forestier, that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to turn round.

MME. LOISEL

...I will write as you say...

3rd NARRATOR

...After a long and arduous search, they found a necklace remarkably like the lost one. They purchased it for 36,000 francs, borrowing from friends, relatives, money lenders, mortgaging their very souls...When Mme. Loisel took back the necklace to her friend, Mme. Forestier greeted her chilly:

MME. FORESTIER

You should have returned it sooner, Mathilde. I might have needed it!

3rd NARRATOR

She did not open the case, as Mathilde had so much feared...

Mme. Loisel now came to know the horrible existence of the needy...They dismissed their servant, changed their lodgings, rented a garret under the roof... After ten years of cruel suffering and privation, the dreadful debt was paid.

Mme. Loisel looked old now--for she had become the woman of impoverished households, strong and hard and rough...But one Sunday, while taking a walk on the boulevard after a hard week, she suddenly saw a familiar face. It was a woman with a young child--none other than Mme. Forestier herself, still beautiful, still charming...Mme. Forestier, who had lent her the necklace that fateful night ten years before...Mme. Loisel decided to speak to her. Now that she had paid, she was at liberty to tell her all about it. She went up to her...At first, Mme. Forestier did not recognize her, so greatly had her old friend changed...Mathilde told her the whole story...Mme. Forestier listened in wide-eyed amazement...

MME. FORESTIER...

You say you lost the necklace!...But how can that be? You brought it back...

MME. LOISEL

I brought you back another just like it...And for this we have been ten years paying. You can understand that it was not easy for us--us who had nothing. But at last it is ended, and I am very glad.

MME. FORESTIER

You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?

MME. LOISEL

Yes...You never noticed it, then? They were very much alike.

MME. FORESTIER

...Oh, my poor, poor Mathilde!...Why, my necklace was paste! It was worth at most five hundred francs!...

3rd NARRATOR

--Ten years of suffering and privation--all because the Loiseles made the wrong decision! With the facts of the story in mind: What do you think the Loiseles' life would have been like if they had told Mme. Forestier about the loss of the necklace? For additional study material in reading and composition skills consult your booklet. SEE SECTION A, in the Appendix.

(BAND)

2nd NARRATOR

Two of those three shots represent Fate...one, a grim personal decision.. But in all three cases, the same man dies--and by the very same pistol...

Impossible, you say...

But it did happen--and in the most ironic way--in an unusual tale by one of America's masters of the short story, O. Henry, a work called "Roads of Destiny." To what extent does Fate control our destiny?...To what extent can Man decide his own? David Mignot, a young French poet of the late eighteenth century, felt himself to be master of his own fate. In a fit of anger after a quarrel with his sweetheart, he decided to seek his fortune in Paris...On the way he came to a crossroads, which branched out in three directions...

--He stood there, deliberating which path to take...

FIRST YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

...I am Lucie de Varennes, niece of the cruel Marquis de Beaupertuys...I am the girl David met when he took the turn to the left. When my uncle vengefully offered David my hand in marriage, he accepted--whether out of love or pity, I shall never know. If he had refused, he would not later have been provoked into challenging the Marquis to a duel with pistols... He would not then have met death at the Marquis' hands....

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

...I am the girl whom David met in Paris when he took the turn to the right, the girl who, David declared, had laughing gypsy eyes. I brought about David's downfall for I was really a spy against the King.

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...Because of me David was captured by the King's men, forced to dress in the King's clothes, and sent to his death in the royal chariot.

THIRD YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

.....You are both wrong. It was, I, Yvonne, the village girl to whom he came back, who was responsible for his death.

We had had a lovers' quarrel. David left, taking the main road to Paris. But he changed his mind and returned.

David was never really suited to be a shepherd. But even the great critic who read his poems saw no future for him as a poet. Even though the critic tried to soften the blow by saying there was room for both crows and nightingales in the world, David was desolate. He knew what the critic was trying to say--that there was not one nightingale note in his poetry.

When they found his body later, he lay dead by his own hand, a pistol he had bought in a firearms shop at his side. One of the townsfolk recognized the insignia on the pistol. It bore the crest of the Marquis de Beaupertuys...

2nd NARRATOR

In this imaginary meeting of the three women in David's life, a spotlight is thrown on his personality and character by what each woman says about him...

...Other people's opinions of a character often shed a great deal of light on him...But a character also stands sharply illumined by what he himself says and does...

...For more details of David's actions and adventures consult the original story...Then DISCUSS IN CLASS to what extent the young poet was master of his own fate.

For additional discussion and study material consult your booklet. SEE SECTION B, in the appendix...

(BAND)

2nd NARRATOR

David Mignot had no real choice...But had he been granted one, his decision--and the whole course of his life--might have been vastly different. Most of us are free to choose, yet still we sometimes make mistakes. Then we say to ourselves, "If we could recall this mistake or that decision, how much more wisely we would have acted."

3rd NARRATOR

...In another classic short story, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, called "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," a group of four elderly people do get a second chance. At the home of their doctor friend, they are permitted to taste water from a magic spring reputed to be Ponce de Leon's fabled Fountain of Youth and to grow young again. The four elderly people are Mr. Medbourne, a ruined merchant...Col. Killigrew, a life-long pleasure-seeker, now ill and infirm...Mr. Gascoigne, a forgotten politician...and the Widow Wycherley, once loved by them all, but now a faded old woman. We take you now to the climax of the story. The elderly people are about to drink the magic potion designed to restore them to youth... Before they do so, Dr. Heidegger utters some strong words of warning:

DR. HEIDEGGER

Before you drink, my respectable old friends, it would be well that, with the experience of a lifetime to direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for your guidance, in passing a second time through the perils of youth. Think what a sin and shame it would be, if, with your peculiar advantages, you should not become patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of the age!

3rd NARRATOR

...The doctor's four venerable friends made him no answer, except by a feeble and tremulous laugh; so very ridiculous was the idea that, knowing how closely repentance treads behind the steps of error, they should ever go astray again.

DR. HEIDEGGER

Drink then!..I rejoice that I have so well selected the subjects of my experiment.

3rd NARRATOR

With palsied hands, they raised the glasses to their lips...They drank off the water, and replaced their glasses on the table...--At this point we invite your opinion: How will the four old people conduct themselves now that they have swallowed the potion?

(BAND)

3rd NARRATOR

...What did happen was that under the influence of the drink the four old people acted in the same giddy, foolish, irresponsible way as they had in their youth...Furthermore, in their excitement, they overturned the magic water, spilling it all irretrievably...

In a few minutes they were old again and sitting staring at Dr. Heidegger as he spoke:

DR. HEIDEGGER

Yes, friends, ye are old again. And, lo, the Water of Youth is all lavished on the ground. Well, I bemoan it not; for if the fountain gushed at my very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it--no, though its delirium were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!

3rd NARRATOR

But the doctor's four friends had taught no such lesson to themselves. They resolved therewith to make a pilgrimage to Florida, and quaff at morning, noon, and night, from the Fountain of Youth...

If you had the opportunity to relive a part of your own life, which phase would you choose? Why? What changes would you make the second time? For additional discussion questions and study material, consult your booklet. See Section C in the appendix.

(BAND)

2nd NARRATOR

...Up to now, in each of the short stories we have studied, there have been important decisions to make, crises usually preceded by moments of great conflict.

But in each case the author has kept nothing from us as to the outcome of that conflict, has shown us exactly how it was resolved...But now we come to a story in which the author keeps the solution from us-- a story in which we, the readers, have to make the decision.

...The story is "The Lady, or the Tiger?" -- by one of America's noted humorists and story-tellers, Frank Stockton...In the events leading up to the climax, a barbaric king has been using the royal arena both as a place of sport and as a court of justice. He decides important cases by allowing defendants to choose which one of two doors they shall open. Behind one door lurks death in the form of a fierce tiger, which immediately falls upon its victim and devours him. Behind the other is a beautiful lady, whose hand in marriage the King stands ready to grant to the defendant--now proven innocent by this bizarre court of justice.

At the climax of the story a young man who has dared fall in love with the King's daughter is sent into the arena to face the terrible problem of the lady-- or the tiger. Which door shall he open?

The Princess knows... She has been able to buy the secret of what lies behind each door. As her lover stands weighing his decision, unnoticed by the crowd he catches her eye. At once he realizes that she knows. Eagerly, apprehensively, he awaits some signal from her.

...But the Princess, too, is facing a grim moment of decision...

PRINCESS

--If I save him and he leads the lady forth, his eyes sparkling with triumph, with the people shouting and the bells ringing joyously, what will my life be like without him? How can I stand to see the priest make them man and wife before my very eyes?

Would it not be better for him to die at once and go to wait for her in the blessed regions?...And yet, that awful tiger--those shrieks, that blood!

2nd NARRATOR

But even as she mused, she knew what her decision would be. It had been days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she moved her hand to the right. Was it a signal of death -- or salvation? The author himself leaves the issue in doubt. He writes: "The question of her decision is not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door--the lady, or the tiger?" Put yourself in the Princess' place...What decision would YOU have made at that critical moment?

For additional discussion questions and study material on this and the previous story consult your booklet. See Sections D in the appendix.

(BAND)

1st NARRATOR

Since life is full of decision, the poet, like other interpreters of human destiny is often called upon to weigh, to balance, and--to decide.

Sometimes it is a momentous personal decision; sometimes, an equally difficult one in the lives of imaginary characters, with deep implications for our own thinking and way of life...

In Shakespeare's powerful poetic dramas characters are frequently faced with momentous decisions:

Here is Brutus, deliberating whether to throw in his lot with the conspirators against Julius Caesar:

BRUTUS

"Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?"

1st NARRATOR

--Here is Macbeth, weighing his ambition against the perfidy of betrayal and murder:

MACBETH

"Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?
Come, let me clutch thee..."

1st NARRATOR

--Here is the irresolute Hamlet, after much hesitation and soul-searching, finally deciding to test his uncle:

HAMLET

"I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle; I'll observe his looks.
I'll tent him to the quick. If he but blench,
I know my course...The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king!"

1st NARRATOR

--And here is Prospero in "The Tempest" --Prospero, who has shaken heaven and earth, pondering whether the time has finally come to renounce his magic powers. He decides:

PROSPERO

"...But this rough magic
I here abjure...I'll break my staff
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book!"

1st NARRATOR

In Prospero's renunciation of his magic powers some students of Shakespeare profess to see personal decision--that of Shakespeare himself closing a brilliant and noble literary career by putting away his pen...Investigate this theory and decide for yourself whether factual evidence supports it...

(BAND)

2nd NARRATOR

...As we have seen, many of Shakespeare's characters faced crucial moments of decision...In "Maud Muller," a narrative poem by an American poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, we see a critical moment in the lives of two other imaginary characters, a wealthy young judge and a poor farm girl.

3rd NARRATOR

Stopping at Maud Muller's farmhouse on a hot summer day, the Judge asks for a drink from the cool country spring...He is charmed by the farm girl's gentle manner and her grace and beauty.

Before he rides off, he climbs to the top of the hill to look back, pondering whether to call upon the girl again. He weighs all the factors--family, name, his position in society--and he thinks:

VOICE

"Would she were mine, and I today
Like her, a harvester of hay;

"No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

"But low of cattle and song of birds,
And health and quiet and loving words.

3rd NARRATOR

The Judge reaches a decision. But it is cold logic, not love, that prevails. He feels that he has too much to lose by marriage to the farm girl. And so--

VOICE

"He wedded a wife of richest dower,
Who lived for fashion, as he for power."

3rd NARRATOR

Maud Muller, too, married within her station, to--

VOICE

-----a man unlearned and poor.
And many children played round her door."

1st NARRATOR

...Yet the Judge lives to regret his decision, for--

VOICE

"Oft when the wine in his glass was red,
He longed for the wayside well instead;

"And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms."

3rd NARRATOR

Maud Muller, now a household drudge, dreams of the Judge and of the happiness she might have had as his wife:

VOICE

"In the shade of the apple tree again,
She saw a rider draw his rein,

"And gazing down with timid grace
She felt his pleased eyes read her face."

VOICE

"Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls
Stretched away into stately halls;

"The weary wheel to a spinnet turned
The tallow candle an astral burned."

3rd NARRATOR

...Each spends long years dreaming fondly of the other... But all is futile now.

The poet closes with the famous lines:

VOICE

"For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: It might have been!"

3rd NARRATOR

How do these words summarize for us the basic tragedy of the poem? Think back to an event in your own life which involved an important decision...

Do you feel now that a different decision would have changed things for the better?

--After class discussion, consult your booklet for additional questions and study material. SEE SECTIONS E. AND F. in the appendix...

(BAND)

2nd NARRATOR

Like the short narrative poem or the short story, the one-act play is concise and concentrated. The author must blend character study, story outline, and atmosphere skillfully to produce a unified work, convey a single impression...

Whereas a full-length play often covers years, even a life time, the one-act play is far more limited in scope and time.

Hence, to achieve its effect and to maintain interest the one-act play must start promptly, arrest the attention of the audience as quickly as possible, and move forward at a strong pace...

Because of these limitations of time and space the playwright cannot give us the full-length character portrait we usually obtain in the novel or longer play.

Hence, the writer of the one-act play must usually content himself with briefer glimpses into the heart of a character, with developing one or two significant phases of personality.

1st NARRATOR

The town that knew and respected Robert Baldwin, faithful employee in the bank headed by John Gresham, regarded him as above deceit or temptation.

Baldwin, too, prided himself on his honesty and integrity. But one day, when the bank was on the verge of failure and its president faced trial for embezzlement, grave temptation came Baldwin's way.

The play is "Confessional," a one-act work by Percival Wilde. We take you now to the Baldwin home, where wife and son have just learned that the bank president had offered their father a \$10,000 bribe not to testify against him.

Up to the disclosure of the bribe, the family has sided with the father in his insistence that he must tell the truth about Gresham. But when they learn how much money is involved, they quickly

change their attitude. They try to persuade Baldwin that he has been underpaid at the bank, that the money is thus rightfully his, and that he should not testify against an old friend.

We see that Baldwin, too, despite his protestations of honesty has already begun to weaken. He is faced with a grim decision: Shall he accept the money and perjure himself...or remain true to his convictions?

As you listen to the following scene from the play, ask yourself: Why did Baldwin decide as he did?

MARTHA BALDWIN (MOTHER)

...A hundred thousand would mean a great deal to us, Robert. If you don't find a position soon, our son will have to support us.

JOHN BALDWIN (SON)

...On thirty dollars a week, Dad. That won't go very far...

MARTHA

It's not fair to John...

JOHN

...Oh, don't bother about me.. Look here, governor, you've said nothing to the papers...If you say nothing more tomorrow, what does it amount to but sticking to your friend? It's the square thing to do--he'd do as much for you.

BALDWIN

...You--you want me to take this money?... Say 'Yes,' one of you...Or 'No.' ...I couldn't go into partnership with Gresham...

MARTHA

...Why not?

BALDWIN

People wouldn't trust him.

JOHN

Then you could go into business with someone else, Dad. A hundred thousand is a lot of money.

BALDWIN

...God knows I never thought this day would come. I know--I know no matter how you try to excuse it --I know that if I take this money I do a dishonorable thing. And you know it!.. You, and you. Both of you! Come admit it!

JOHN

...Nobody'll ever hear of it.

BALDWIN

But amongst ourselves, John!..Whatever we are to the world, let us be honest with each other, the three of us!.. Well? --Shams!..Liars!.. Hypocrites! ...Thieves!.. And I no better than either of you!.. We have seen our souls naked, and they smell to Almighty Heaven!... Well, why don't you answer me?

1st NARRATOR

Why did Baldwin decide to refuse the money?

...DISCUSS THIS QUESTION IN CLASS--and then return to the record to learn Baldwin's real reasons for his decision.

(BAND)

BALDWIN

...You can look into my eyes now, my son, can't you?

JOHN

Dad...Why did you refuse? Wasn't it because you were afraid of what we'd say?

BALDWIN

...Yes, John...

JOHN

Well, nobody will ever know it.

BALDWIN

Except the three of us.

JOHN

Yes--Father...

1st NARRATOR

...Ironically, after Baldwin has revealed his true nature to his family, Marshall, the administrator reorganizing the bank, arrives with some startling news:

MARSHALL

...Baldwin, if you feel like coming around to the Third National some time this week, you'll find a position waiting for you.

BALDWIN

...Do you mean that, Mr. Marshall?

MARSHALL

I wouldn't say it if I didn't!...---Baldwin, I was in to see Mr. Gresham this afternoon. He told me about the offer he had made you. But he knew that no amount of money would make you do something you thought wrong...Baldwin, he paid you the supreme compliment: rather than go to trial with you against him, he confessed.

BALDWIN

Confessed!

MARSHALL

Told the whole story...Mrs. Baldwin, I can only say to you what every man will be saying tomorrow: how highly I honor and respect your husband! How sincerely--

MRS. BALDWIN (MARTHA)

Please! Please! ...Can't you see he's crying?

1st NARRATOR

Although Marshall believes that Baldwin is crying with relief, we, the audience, know differently...If this play were to be enacted on the stage for which it was originally written, we, the audience, would be getting a private glimpse into the home and hearts of the Baldwins. For, according to one stage theory, one wall of the four that bound their house has been lifted so that we can see what is really happening... And now, with the facts of the story in mind, THROUGH CLASS DISCUSSION see whether you can answer the question: What was the real cause of Robert Baldwin's tears at the end of the play?

(BAND)

1st NARRATOR

Robert Baldwin, the bank clerk in "Confessional," worked faithfully for many years, with nothing to disturb the peace and order of his days until the bank was abruptly threatened with closing.

But sometimes, a man will continue in a fixed, placid routine, day after day, deviating not the slightest from his regular, orderly way of life until for no apparent reason one day---

---But that is the surprise ending of a penetrating and witty essay by Simeon Strunsky, a great newspaper man, and for years the brilliant anonymous writer of Topics of the Times.

3rd NARRATOR

In an essay a writer states his opinion on a variety of subjects. Hardly any subject is beyond his sphere--love, friendship, loyalty, the meaning of dreams, reverie by a campfire, the symbolism of doors, etc. Anything and everything offer food for speculation.

...John P. Wesley, in business at 634 East 26 St., as a jobber in tools and hardware, was descending the stairs to the downtown platform of the subway at Twenty-eighth Street when it occurred to him suddenly how odd it was that he should be going home. His grip tightened on the hand rail and he stopped short in his tracks, his eyes fixed on the ground in pained perplexity...

--Suddenly, he wanted to run amuck, to board a northbound train without any destination in mind, and to keep on as far as his heart desired...

John P. Wesley, whose life had so long been fixed in dull routine, is about to make a momentous decision...

--Can you anticipate the outcome? Will Wesley yield to his wild impulse to run off and thus break the habits of a lifetime? DISCUSS THE QUESTION IN CLASS. Put your opinions in writing. Then resume the playing of the record...and check to see how accurately you have predicted the outcome.

(BAND)

Wesley not only yields to the sudden impulse to go past his regular stop. He also neglects to lose himself in the evening paper, his usual slavish custom. Instead, he looks at the people around him and sees them for the first time, as it were, as colorful, interesting human beings. He even breaks through the frosty reserve of twenty years and speaks to a stranger! But, alas for daring and adventure!...John Wesley is too much of a slave to habit. After going twelve miles past his stop, he decides to return home--as suddenly as he had left.

....Although he is two hours late, he finds his wife waiting for him at the station...

They walked home side by side without speaking. But once or twice she turned and caught him staring at her with a peculiar mixture of wonder and unaccustomed tenderness. Finally, he broke out:

WESLEY

It's good to see you again...

WIFE

It's good to have you back, dear...

WESLEY

But you really look remarkably well.

WIFE

I rested this afternoon...

WESLEY

That's what you should do every day... --- Say, look at that old maple tree!..It hasn't changed a bit!

WIFE

No...

WESLEY

And the girls are well?

WIFE

Oh, yes...

WESLEY

I can hardly wait to see them... You know, I guess I'm getting old, Alice...

3rd NARRATOR

...Jennie and her sister were waiting for them on the porch. They wondered why Father's kiss fell so warmly on their cheeks. He kissed them twice, which was very unusual; but being discreet young women they asked no questions. After dinner Wesley went out to look at the lawn.

The title of this warmly human little essay is "Romance." -- How does this title describe Wesley's sudden decision and its aftermath?

For additional questions and study material on this and the previous selection see your booklet-- Sections G and H, in the appendix.

(BAND)

2nd NARRATOR

...The rebellion of businessman John P. Wesley against his lot was sudden, momentarily pleasant -- and short...No one but himself and his wife knew of it. It left no impression on society.

Sometimes, however, the decision to change one's lot can be of shattering impact--can have tremendous importance not only for one's family but also for the world.

Let us now consider two men who lived a century apart: One, at the peak of his career, financially and socially secure and professionally esteemed, abandoned all for love of humanity. The other, a rebel against society, fled from the company of men.

The first was Albert Schweitzer, philosopher, theologian, musician, and linguist--who at the age of thirty was already the dean of the Theological College of the University of Strasbourg in France.

...In the excellent biography, "Albert Schweitzer: Genius of the Jungle," Joseph Gollomb, chronicler of his life, tells why Dr. Schweitzer made the great decision: To start a new career at 30, to enter medical school as a freshman, and to spend seven, back-breaking years preparing for a career in medicine.

A medical career not in high society, but among the poor, as the founder of a hospital in Lambarene in French Equatorial Africa, a steaming, primitive jungle. Here the hospital had to be built brick by brick under the most terrible conditions.

But let Dr. Schweitzer himself tell why he chose the career to aid suffering humanity. Shortly before his 75th birthday he received great financial help and encouragement to continue his great work:

DR. SCHWEITZER

How wonderful have been the experiences vouchsafed me all these years!.. When I first went to Africa, I prepared to make three sacrifices. To abandon the organ, to renounce the academic teaching activities to which I had given my heart, and to lose my financial independence, relying for the rest of life on the help of friends.

These three sacrifices I had begun to make, and only my intimate friends knew what they cost me.

But now there has happened to me what happened to Abraham when he was prepared to sacrifice his son. I, like him, have been spared the sacrifice.

2nd NARRATOR

...The other man, a rebel against society, was Henry

David Thoreau, an American of French descent. After graduation from Harvard in 1837, he tried his hand at various trades. He taught school, worked in a pencil factory, and was employed as a surveyor.

Thoreau felt that the modern world made too many demands on man...that life was too artificial and complex...and that ordinary man worked too hard and had too little time to live fully. Believing like his good friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, that man should develop inner strength and self-reliance, Thoreau came to an important decision: to try living away from civilization.

...In his journal, "Walden," he kept a record of the two years he lived alone and close to Nature at Walden Pond, not far from Concord, Massachusetts.

Here in excerpts from his famous diary are the basic reasons for his decision--to cast off his ties with civilization.

VOICE

A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.

3rd NARRATOR

Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes.

1st NARRATOR

As if you could kill time, without injuring eternity.

2nd NARRATOR

Our life is frittered away with detail...Simplify, simplify...

3rd NARRATOR

Every man is the builder of a temple called his body...

1st NARRATOR

What a man thinks of himself is that which determines or indicates his fate.

2nd NARRATOR

I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.

3rd NARRATOR

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not when I came to die, to discover that I had not lived.

VOICE

If the day and night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs--is more elastic, more starry, more immortal--that is your success.

2nd NARRATOR

Do you believe in Thoreau's "Carpe Diem" philosophy--that is, making the most of every golden moment--as the key to success?

Which of Thoreau's comments and observations above do you feel has some personal significance for you?

Was Thoreau's decision to forsake civilization for the two years that he did a wise one? Why? You may wish to discuss these questions in class... For additional questions and study material on this and the previous selection, consult your booklet, SECTIONS I AND J, in the appendix.

(BAND)

1st NARRATOR

Since literature so often mirrors life, a study of literary characters, their conflicts, and decisions can offer us much in the way of guidance.

In the works we have studied many important personal decisions were reached by the characters involved. Bearing in mind the situations in which these characters -- real or fictional -- found themselves, which of their decisions had the most personal significance for you?

3rd NARRATOR

DECISION. --A debate with destiny. Youth, standing at the threshold of life, faces particularly grave decisions. It must survey varied fields and the opportunities that lie open to it. It must weigh its talents against its limitations. It must assess the difficulties--the long hard task of preparation--the striving towards perfection. And it must then decide whether it is willing to meet the challenge. For as Brutus affirmed to Cassius on the Plains of Philippi, when the enemy stood poised without--

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries...
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures."

A P P E N D I X

Building Reading and Composition Skills
--Questions for Discussion and Research

SECTION A. --"THE NECKLACE"

1. As a story unfolds, weak characters, under the pressure of misfortune or tragedy, sometimes develop or reveal unexpected strength.

What serious flaw of character did Mathilde Loisel reveal at the opening of the story of "The Necklace?" How did she meet the challenge when faced by the loss of the necklace?

2. In the form of a brief dialogue characterize Mathilde Loisel as she might have appeared to--

- two of her neighbors
- her husband's business associates
- Mme. Forestier and her husband

3. Draw up a personality "balance sheet" for Monsieur Loisel as he appears at the start of the story. What are his assets? What are his weaknesses? How do the events of the story affect the balance?

4. Imagine that you are Mathilde Loisel. Assume that Mme. Forestier has offered to compensate you at the close of the story for the difference in cost between that of the imitation necklace and the valuable one with which you replaced it.

Describe your reactions to her offer.

SECTION B. --"ROADS OF DESTINY"

1. Speaking of the role of Fate in human life, Shakespeare, in the play "Julius Caesar," has Cassius declare to Brutus:

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars
But in ourselves that we are underlings."

Apply this statement to the theme of "Roads of Destiny." To what extent did "the stars" affect David Mignot's fate? To what extent was he personally capable of shaping his own life?

2. Assume that you are the curator of a French museum into whose possession the unusual pistol of the Marquis de Beaupertuys has fallen. You are interested in determining the history of the weapon.

Retell the story of "Roads of Destiny" through the record of your investigations.

3. Compare the original narrative version of "Roads of Destiny" by O. Henry with the dramatic adaptation in this script.

What changes have been made in the method of presenting the story?

SECTION C. --"DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT"

1. Investigate the historic aspects of the search for a "Fountain of Youth" as illustrated by the quest of the Spanish explorer, Ponce de Leon. Report on your research to the class.

2. Compare this story with the Greek myth of Aurora and Tithonus, to whom Zeus granted everlasting life but upon whom he neglected to bestow eternal youth. What was Tithonus' fate?

3. "Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made..."

asserts "Rabbi Ben Ezra" in Browning's poem of that title.

What advice is offered in these lines to seekers after "eternal youth"?

4. In his novel "Lost Horizon" James Hilton creates the world of "Shangri-la," a place where people never grow old. Yet even those who have lived in "Shangri-la" are not immune to the encroachment of old age.

- a. Why? Support your answer with details from the novel.
- b. Compare the concept of eternal youth in "Lost Horizon"

with that found in "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment."

SECTION D. -- "THE LADY, OR THE TIGER?"

1. At the climax of the story, the Princess' suitor, standing before the two doors, is faced with a frightening dilemma. He looks to her for guidance and salvation.

Yet the Princess herself is confronted with a "Hobson's choice." Explain.

2. A person is sometimes said to be "on the horns" of a dilemma. What does this mean? Can you cite an important event in your own life when you were in a dilemma? How did you resolve it?

3. In "The Lady, or the Tiger?" Frank Stockton, the author, reports the actual inner thoughts of the Princess as she muses on the problem facing her. This method of writing is called "the stream-of-consciousness" technique.

Imagine that in the privacy of his royal chambers the King is engaged in a soliloquy, i.e., thinking aloud about the fate of the young suitor.

Write a brief soliloquy recording some of these thoughts.

SECTION E. -- DECISIONS CONFRONTING CHARACTERS IN SHAKESPEARE

1. Of the four Shakespearean characters represented in this section--Brutus, Macbeth, Hamlet, Prospero--which, do you feel, was faced with the most difficult decision? Why?

2. Which of the decisions faced by the four characters above were forced upon them by their own mistakes or weaknesses? Which, by outside circumstances beyond their control?

3. What other important Shakespearean characters are confronted with crucial challenges? How do they meet them?

SECTION F. -- "MAUD MULLER"

1. Discuss the pro's and con's of the judge's position as they might have appeared to--

- members of his family who had learned about the matter...
- a close and trusted friend of his whom he had consulted...
- the judge himself.

2. Do you believe the judge made the right decision? Give reasons for your answer. Cite supporting details and lines from the poem.

3. Assume that Maud Muller had kept a diary of the important events in her life depicted in the poem. In chronological order make the entries in such a diary, showing her reactions to the coming of the judge and his departure.

SECTION G. -- "CONFESSIONAL"

1. What is the strict or literal meaning of the word "confessional"?

What is its "figurative" or implied meaning in the play?

2. In terms of what each character in the play reveals about himself or herself during the course of the action, why is "Confessional" a highly appropriate choice for the title of the work?

Can you suggest an alternative title? Support your answer.

3. Although the character Gresham never appears in the play, we learn a great deal about him from the comments of the other characters.

In what light does each member of the Baldwin family view him?

4. To justify their attempt to influence the father to accept the bribe his wife and children indulge in "rationalizing."

Explain the meaning of this term, substantiating your answer with details from the story.

SECTION H. -- "ROMANCE"

1. Starting with John P. Wesley's morning trip to his office in Manhattan, reconstruct the events of an average day in his life.

2. Yielding to an impulse to go past his regular stop, Wesley also does something else that is unusual: "He looks at the people around him, seeing them for the first time as colorful, interesting human beings."

Write a description of some of these fellow passengers as they appeared to Wesley, looking at them with sudden new vision.

3. Was Wesley glad to be home? Quote lines from the text to support your answer.

SECTION I. -- "ALBERT SCHWEITZER, GENIUS OF THE JUNGLE"

1. Compare and contrast the decision of Dr. Schweitzer to leave friends, family, and position to start an exacting new career in the jungles of Africa with that of the fictional character Strickland in Somerset Maugham's novel "The Moon and Sixpence." On what famous artist is "Strickland" said to be based?

2. Report on the medical achievements of Dr. Schweitzer as recorded in this biography and in other works about him.

What do you regard as his greatest contribution to humanity?

3. Explain the meaning of Dr. Schweitzer's statement: "I, like Abraham, have been spared the sacrifice."

SECTION J--"WALDEN"

1. Though Thoreau and Dr. Schweitzer embarked on radically opposite ways of life, each really sought self-fulfillment.

Explain the meaning of this statement.

2. Was Thoreau justified in secluding himself from the company of men? Support your answer.

3. Explain the meaning of the following lines from Thoreau:

- a. "I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude."
- b. "Our life is frittered away with detail. Simplify, simplify."
- c. "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone."

--How do these utterances reflect his basic attitude towards life? Do you agree with his opinions? Give reasons for your answer.

4. On a map of New England locate the area in which Thoreau made his home during the years chronicled in "Walden."

5. Thoreau has been regarded both in his own times and ours as a rebel against society. Do you agree with this characterization? Support your answer.

-- C R E D I T S --

Script....Written by Morris Schreiber

Cast-----THE UNIVERSITY PLAYERS

Patricia Gardner
Lillian Gell
Lillian Schreiber

Albert Ackel
Kenneth Buckridge
Wallace House
Morris Schreiber

Directed by Wallace House

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mr. Morris Schreiber, author and narrator of THE ANATOMY OF LANGUAGE, is a New York City school principal and college lecturer in English. He has taught or supervised classes in English on all levels of the system for more than twenty years.

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(Grosset & Dunlap)

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