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LIT 2000
Introduction to Literature
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1. After reading “The Necklace,” by Maupassant, I felt exactly the same as after reading *Candide*, by Voltaire. I felt as if the author still owed me an explanation on why he gave up on the story. “It’s not over yet!” I wanted to scream. Then I realized that it wasn’t the story ending that upset me, but the fact the author almost seemed to enjoy punishing the characters, as if they deserved their fate. As you’ve probably realized, I didn’t like Maupassant’s “The Necklace,” as well as Voltaire’s *Candide*.

In the “Necklace,” I had the feeling that the author didn’t like the main character, expecting me to blame her for her vanity. On the contrary, I felt sorry for her, mainly because she was living in a time and society where she didn’t have many rights. Of course, she should have focused more on reading and trying to discover herself, rather than daydreaming about becoming rich--but aren’t we all lost without good guidance and support?

Now, returning to *Candide*, I felt as if the author—through his main character—gave up believing in the human spirit. It didn’t feel like the main character suddenly became altruistic and tried to accept the facts of life—no! It felt like he surrendered altogether, giving up his faith in the human race, with the definite believe that Evil will always win.

Another thing that I didn’t like about Voltaire’s story it was the fact that, although the story was interesting, it was full of unpleasant moments, and I often felt like giving up reading the book. I would

have liked an ending where the characters would not have lost their spirit, despite all the difficulties that they had encountered.

Regardless, I will always try to read books that enlighten and challenge my spirit and beliefs. Even the ones that I don't like deserved to be read, for it will help me to better understand and appreciate all the nuances of the wonderful world of literature.

2. I don't accept the arguments where Matilde is classified as spoiled. How can a person—born poor—be classified as spoiled? Wanting more, yes; aspiring to a better status, yes; not wanting to easily surrender to her fate assigned by a selfish society where women have no rights, yes—but not spoiled.

I admire her from this point of view. It was a pity that she didn't know how to fight for her rights, nor did she understand them as we, women, do today.

I also don't agree with people who do not like all the good books, or stories, regardless if they're classified as drama, adventure, comedy, and so forth. You may dislike the subject, the quality of writing, but don't refuse yourself the richness and complexity of literature.

I liked the second description though. It seemed unbiased and open minded.

3. My mother is always trying to tell me what to do. When I don't seem to listen, she tries to make me feel guilty, either by telling me that I don't love her as much as I love my father, or by telling me that when I will have kids of my own, I will understand what it means to be a mother.

My mother loves me very much. She is always there for me, ready to help me if I'm in trouble and worrying about me when I'm away. When I don't call home for more than a month, she is worried sick and can't sleep at night. I tried to tell her not to worry so much, but she always does, no matter what I say. I know that I can count on her, anytime.

In the first paragraph I focused on the negative points of most of mothers. Almost any reader can relate to some of those remarks. Unlike the first paragraph, in the second one, I've emphasized only positive things about my mother's character, making her look more like a hero. Who wouldn't like such a mother?

It wouldn't be fair for a reader to hate a character without knowing all the sides of the story, and especially if the author was biased or not when he wrote the book. In fact, I would think that it's rather impossible for an author not to be biased, since writing a book on a subject tends to be pretty subjective. Readers should always try to search for their own clues and develop their own opinions on and about a subject/character.