Names: Hour: Date:

**Synthesis**

***The following poem is by the famous African American author, Paul Lawrence Dunbar. Read it, considering its thematic significance, and then answer the corresponding questions.***

***Mathilde Loisel is a complex character, insofar as the reality she lives versus the projected reality she desires. Compare and contrast her self-created persona to the thematic focus of wearing a “mask” as presented in the poem. How is the “mask” in the poem similar and different from the figurative “mask” that Mme. Loisel wears as she pretends to avoid a lifestyle beyond that which she can afford?***

**We Wear The Mask**

-Paul Lawrence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,

It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, -

This debt we pay to human guile;

With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,

And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,

In counting all our tears and sighs?

Nay, let them only see us, while

 We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries

To thee from tortured souls arise.

We sing, but oh the clay is vile

Beneath our feet, and long the mile;

But let the world dream otherwise,

 We wear the mask!

***Do the Loisels get what they deserve? Why or why not?***

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**Literary Term: Hubris**

***Hubris means to have excessive pride or self-confidence. In the story, both Mme. and Monsieur Loisel are affected by their individual hubris, because the object sought to give Mme. Loisel great joy is ultimately the source of their undoing. How is the hubris of BOTH characters revealed? In other words, how do we see excessive pride lead to their downfall?***

***Task 1: Read the laminated quote on your table. Determine what this quote tells us about Mme. Loisel. How can we characterize her based upon this quote? What does it tell us about her?***