

Step 3: Write précis paragraph, highlight it, and underline academic words.

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English

Richard Matheson's Use of Conflict & Complication

In the short story "Button, Button," Richard Matheson complicates the conflict to enhance suspense. For example, the initial conflict is complicated when the husband reveals he thinks pushing the button is "immoral" while his wife shares a differing opinion "I think it's intriguing" (18-19). Initially, the conflict was whether or not the couple should push the button, but Matheson adds the complication because it heightens the conflict. Matheson uses this building conflict to create suspense, which intrigues the reader. As the story progresses, the characters' positions become clearer as Arthur questions his wife's desire to push the button and "Murder someone?" which Norma downplays by answering "If you don't even know the person?" (21). The conflict is heightened as Arthur lets his wife know that he considers the act of pushing the button murder, while she is clearly 'disgusted' by such a radical assessment because she doesn't see herself as a murderer. The initial conflict of whether or not the button should be pushed is enhanced by the added complication because their decisions could ruin their marriage.

Writing