

Reading reflection: “the story of an hour”

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Reading Reflection: " The Story of an Hour" ENG125: Introduction to Literature Instructor: Olabisi Adenekan April 28, 2012 Reading Reflection: " The Story of an Hour" " The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin gives an adverse view of marriage by presenting the reader with a woman who is clearly over whelmed with feelings of joy that her husband has passed away. This is set forth by the use of language in " The Story of an Hour" in which Kate Chopin uses to describe Louise's emotions when she toggles between shock and joy at her chance for newfound freedom. The narrator of " The Story of an Hour" relates what she sees in simple text, however when Louise's emotions are being described, the words seem more vibrant and powerful. To some this may suggest that Louise has a deep inner-life that is not connected to the outside world of her husband or her friends. The fact that she retreats to her room to discover her feelings are important shows just that. When the world outside of her bedroom window is being described it is very minimal, but the world that exists inside of her mind is lively and well described by the narrator. The window outside of her room is alive and vibrant like her mind, while everything about her physically is shut off. With the use of certain words to describe the inner-world of detail and life, there are also times in the story when ironic or playful uses of some phrases or images to convey Louise's happiness. Hidden inside the " The Story of an Hour" is the message that marriage is constraining in many ways. The fact that she dies at the end of " heart disease" can be taken as metaphor for the " disease" of marriage. Much like an illness, she cannot feel free unless the source, which in this case is her husband, is no longer present. The mere fact that it only affects her heart as opposed to any other portion of her body

shows that her grief from this "disease" comes from somewhere inside of her, and has nothing to do with her external being. For example, in "The Story of an Hour" it has been made crystal clear that her husband loves Louise; when his face is being described as "the face that had never looked saves with love upon her" (Chopin 1894). Louise's feelings of love in return are scarcely described and it is made clear that she does not feel the same. The narrator also shows this in one of the quotes from "Story of an Hour", "And yet she loved him-sometimes. Often she did not." (Chopin 1894). When the narrator uses this simple and direct language to describe the things Louise is not emotional about, this would indicate that she does not have any strong feelings towards her husband. As the thesis statement for this essay on "The Story of an Hour" makes clear, the use of language helps establish the understanding of Louise's character. When it comes to Louise's emotions, the words "come to life" when it is describing something that she is excited about, the words becomes lively and rich with color and vibrant images are used. This can be compared in sharp contrast to the parts of the story in which Louise seems indifferent or unattached emotionally. For example, looking at the above citation which begins with the very simple statement, "And yet she loved him-sometimes. Often she did not" which can be construed as emotional passivity, but as the short paragraph continues and her true emotions come forth; the language becomes lively along with Louise's character. The line above is then followed by, "What did it matter! What could love the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being?" (Chopin 1894). You can see that not only has the

story come to life by using words such as "mystery," "possession," and "impulse" but the phrasing has also changed. The first emotions that are portrayed in these quotes from the story are that Kate Chopin was very passive when it came to the short tidy sentences. However, as soon as Kate begins to feel any emotion, you can see that the sentences start to expand and the whole of one massive thought about "her being" becomes one very long sentence that stands in contrast to the one before it. While you are reading the story, you will notice that this happens again just a few paragraphs before this instance. When Kate is speaking in one of the quotes about the strain and crippling "disease" of marriage her emotions become overwhelming, so does the sentence and her language. "There would be no one to live for in those coming years; she would live for herself" begins the paragraph. In this sentence there are no lively words, just a matter of fact, non-emotional sentence that has no hint of sadness in it. It seems as though all of a sudden she comes to realize that she doesn't need to be sad. To her marriage is an "unhappy institution" and then is when she begins to come to life again. The use of language and also the structure of the sentences as seen in a meaningful passage such as, "There will be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow creature." (Chopin 1894). When using phrases like "powerful will" and "blind persistence" they add a lot more description and energy opposed to any that she would use to describe the fact that she had no one to live for. Also, to some it may seem as though this statement is made in one breath, and then it leads back to the short sentence of "And yet she loved him-sometimes"(Chopin 1894). The

reader then becomes aware of the contrasts between the emotionless and manic emotions of Louise. When it comes to the language and her emotions, it is interesting when Louise's feelings are being described as a "monstrous joy" because this does match her feelings and her strong emotions. To go from a calm and passive nature to a wild and almost uninhibited nature is the only way the reader can distinguish between what means the most to Louise. The passages describing this joy that is monstrous not only because it seems to overwhelm her, but because she knows that she should not feel the joy she does when it comes to her husband's death. Again, the reader is able to see the disconnection between the outside world and her inner self. With Louise's emotions are being described as monstrous, she herself is being described from the outside much differently. Louise is "young with a fair, calm face" and she also has "two white slender hands." With the use of these descriptions, the reader may believe that she is a gentle woman who is composed and quite, while inside her thoughts move with "sudden, wild abandonment." Using contrasting language and the structure of the sentence to show the emotions that Louise is feeling, we as the readers are able to enter her mind with ease. We as the reader are also forced to ignore the outside world, because its description is plain and lacks definition, which leads the readers to focus on her inner-life that shows a very sad picture of marriage. References Chopin, K. (1894). The Story of an Hour. Retrieved from <https://content.ashford.edu/books/AUENG125.10.2/sections/h2.1>