

A pair of silk stocking

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"A Pair of Silk Stockings" was written by Kate Chopin in April of 1896 and later published in 1897. Known for including in her stories local color from the Louisiana area, Chopin is also celebrated for exploring themes that reflect the role of women in society. In "A Pair of Silk Stockings," she portrays the quiet struggle of a woman searching for a balance between family life and personal satisfaction. The story's main character is Mrs. Sommers, a wife and mother. Her family is very poor, and she is trying to pick up a few items of clothing for her children. On this particular day, she is tired and worn out as she goes about her errands. She is an expert at finding bargains and saving money, always looking for a good sale, but she finds a pair of silk stockings that she desires for herself. They feel nice against her skin, and the store has several in her size and in various colors. She buys them and immediately puts them on. Instead of continuing with her errands and heading toward the bargain bins as she normally does, Mrs. Sommers gets fitted for gloves, something she has not done for some time. After getting gloves, she is hungry, and treats herself to lunch at a nearby restaurant. Later she goes to the theater, sitting among the elegantly dressed women and men crowding the theater. Each time she does something for herself, she becomes more comfortable with herself. Consequently, she dreads going home more and more with each activity. The story ends with Mrs. Sommers sitting in a cable car, wishing that it would continue traveling forever. Throughout "A Pair of Silk Stockings," Chopin beautifully portrays a woman caught between different roles. Mrs. Sommers does not want to abandon her family, but she also does not want to abandon her personal identity while fulfilling the role of wife and mother. The story's

ambiguous ending suggests that the struggle is one that continues to be encountered by women.