

The story of an hour by louise mallard analysis

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After discovering the death of her husband Brently, Louise Mallard is filled with grief and sorrow. Louise out of instinct, stumbles upstairs to her bedroom and sits down to be alone and cry. However what soon awaits her is an open window. Louise peers out of the window and feels the cool blowing wind, fresh air, the foreseeing scents, and the calming sounds. From the open window itself, Louise experiences a sense of freedom and immediately stops her sobbing.

Kate Chopin herself even says: “ She was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.” (Chopin #222). Kate Chopin represents the window as a picture of freedom and opportunity that she could experience after her husband’s death. Louise ponders a new life from merely looking out of the window and at the same time feels a sense of elation from looking at the sky. Louise then mutters “ Free! Free! Free!” (Chopin #222).

Through the open window Louise could see a clear, bright view into the distance as well as Louise’s own bright future. Unfortunately, these happy emotions and feelings do not fulfill her expectations- as it washappinessthat ended her life. In a sense, Louise could even be happy, because she thought she was a burden to her husband, thus feeling relieved that she did not cause him any more burden. Mrs. Mallard also felt happy in the fact that she may have loved him, but the excitement for the future was too overwhelming, leading her to gleam in happiness just after losing her husband (which is not a normal thing to do).

Moreover, Louise felt she was always being held back and never truly felt that she was allowed to become independent and free. In context, Mrs.

Mallard had a special kind of hatred towards her husband. Not a real hatred, but a hatred towards how Brently treated her; In a way which she never felt completely free. Louise's heart troubles reflect a lot on her freedom as well.

The heart troubles that impact Louise both physically and emotionally represent the confusion towards her marriage as well as the unhappiness she had for the lack of freedom. The fact that Louise has a weak heart made it difficult and threatening for her sister, Josephine, to convey the message of her husband's death to her. A person with a weak heart after all, would not deal well with such sudden heart-breaking news. In the end however, excitement was the factor that ended her life.

Not because of her sadness and shock of her husband's death, but rather the excitement of independence and freedom which stirred her heart tremendously. Louise herself even whispered, "Free! Body and Soul free!" (Chopin #222) The story of an Hour could very well be considered as an ironic story. Mrs. Mallard is portrayed as a wife that loves her husband, but at the same time happy by his sudden disappearance.

In the beginning of the story, Mrs. Mallard's hope for her "future" life was completely ironic too, because it was when she died that Kate Chopin described Louise's death of "a joy that kills" (Chopin #223). But we, as a reader, know that it was obviously not the joy that killed her- it was the excitement for the future that awaited her.

All of that however stopped her heart when she discovers that her husband is still alive. What Louise Mallard wanted the most was freedom, and when

she saw that small glimpse of freedom through the open window, she could not go back to living under her husband's control. Ultimately in the end dying in a state of complete shock and misery.

Work Cited

- Chopin, Kate. "The Story of an Hour." Reading and Writing from Literature. John E. Schwiebert. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. 221-223. Print.