

The story of an hour



Korina BartlettKira WagesENG 10202/21/11The Story of An HourIn ??? The Story of an Hour,??? Kate Chopin suggests that Mrs.

Mallard is an intelligent woman who is in a loveless marriage. She is burdened by the age old view that when you marry, you lose who you are in every sense of the word. ??? The Story of an Hour??? illustrates the feministic view of the unrealistic expectations that society placed on women upon marriage in the nineteenth century. Women in the nineteenth century were expected to not have an identity distinct from that of their husband??™s. Mrs. Mallard was no exception.

Her life was built around that of her husband??™s. In ??? The Story of an Hour,??? Kate Chopin states that ??? there would be no powerful will bending her in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow creature.??? (Gwynn 73) This suggests that Mrs. Mallard was indeed a woman who was not supposed to have any other identity and no independent thoughts. She did not see life independently either. Her view of the world was that which was expected of her and was indeed her husband??™s.

Mrs. Mallard??™s happiness was dependant on that of her husband??™s. The author suggests that she is unhappy with her current life, but see??™s brightness without her husband. ??? Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own.

??? (Gwynn 73) Again, Chopin suggests that she does love her husband ??? sometimes,??? but her future feels bright with the news of his death. She

notices the beauty all around her, as if for the first time. It was as if a dark cloud covered her soul and now was lifted. She was seeing things anew.

Women of the nineteenth century, who were married, were fragile and lifeless to a degree. Mrs. Mallard has a heart trouble. ??? Great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband??™s death.

??? (Gwynn 71) Mrs. Mallard did not see herself as fragile and weak at all. She was initially shocked at the news of her husband??™s death, but then was able to deal with it all alone. ??? When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone.??? (Gwynn 72) She did not need anyone telling her how to feel or even what to feel.

She knew life would be hard, but again was able to see past it. She was a stronger woman than anyone gave her credit for. She was finally free for the first time, free of what society expected from her. In the end, it was not her heart disease that killed her; it was the realization that she was not free after all. Mrs.

Mallard was indeed burdened by the unbearable social expectations that were placed on her upon marriage. She lived a life of a stereotypical wife in the nineteenth century. She struggled with gender roles and autonomy and had little, if any, opportunities outside of her marriage. ??? The Story of an Hour??? illustrates the feministic view of the unrealistic expectations that society placed on women upon marriage in the nineteenth century. She was free, if only for an hour.

Works Cited Gwynn, R. S. Literature: A Pocket Anthology. Penguin Academics, 2009.