

The story of an hour

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



“ The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin is an impressive literary piece which touches a reader’s feelings as well as mind. Although the story is really short, it is very rich and complete, and every word in it carries deep sense and a lot of meaning. The events take place in the 19 century in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Mallard. Speaking about the plot and suspense of « The Story of an Hour » we may define such its elements as the exposition, the narrative hook, crisis , the main climax, and the denouement.

The plot novel contains all these elements so we can speak of a closed plot structure.

In the beginning we find out that Mrs. Mallard is afflicted with heart trouble, and news about her husband’s death is brought to her “ as gently as possible”, the second sentence introduce characters to the readers “ It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing.

Her husband’s friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard’s name leading the list of “ killed. These sentences are the exposition of the story.

When Mrs. Mallard finds out about the death of her husband starts the complication in The Story “ She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister’s arms. ” The narrative hook marks the beginning of the collision mentioning some queer

changes in Mrs. Mallard's feelings: " There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it?

She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air". The rising action which adds complication to the story can be found in the part of the novel when " she was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips.

She said it over and over under her breath: " free, free, free! " The main climax is expressed by breaking the narrative in a fragmentary sentence " Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered... . " In the falling action we find out that " He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife. " The denouement indicates the moment when the doctors state Mrs.

Mallard's death - " When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills. " As for the conflict, it may be pointed out that it is mental or inner between freedom and grief The character of the story are Mrs. Mallard a young woman, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength, Richard her husband friend and Josephine . Mrs. Mallard is the protagonist, her character is dynamic and round as she is the one who goes through a change in one moment.

In the beginning, Louise is emotional about the death of her husband, Brently. However, Louise is emotional until she reflects on the death of her husband. Louise departs to her room and reflects on the situation. She sets her feelings aside and analyzes the circumstances. “ She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will...”. She realizes that she does not have to share her life, anymore. Louise is sad about Brently’s death but imagines her life without her husband “ Free! Body and soul free! ”.

Louise realizes she does not have to wait on her husband for anything. She can think for herself and say what is on her mind. The narrator describes her emotions in vibrant and powerful words. When Louise’s emotions are described regarding something she is thrilled about, the language becomes lively and rich with color and vibrant images. This stands in sharp contrast to the sections in which she seems indifferent or emotionally unattached. For instance “ And yet she loved him—sometimes.

Often she did not” which demonstrates emotional passivity, but as the short paragraph continues and her true emotions come to the forefront, the language comes alive along with her character. “ 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! ” It is important to notice not only the language comes to life with the use of words like “ mystery,” “ possession,” and “ impulse” but the very phrasing changing.

The initial thoughts in which she was indifferent are short tidy sentences, but as soon as she begins to feel an emotion, the sentences expand and the

whole of one massive thought about “ her being” becomes one very long sentence to stand in contrast to the previous one. When her emotions become overwhelming, so do the sentences and language. “ There would be no one to live for in those coming years; she would live for herself” begins the paragraph. There are no lively words, just a matter of fact, unemotional statement without the slightest hint of sadness.

In fact, almost as though she suddenly realizes again that she doesn't need to be sad—that marriage is an unhappy institution for her, she comes to life again through language and sentence structure 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. ” Phrases such as “ powerful will” and “ blind persistence” are much more descriptive and full of energy than any she uses to describe the fact that she had no one to live for. Her emotions goes from calm and passive to wild.

Through contrasting language and sentence structures to reveal the emotions of Louise, the reader is able to enter her wild mind just as easily if her every thought was described in an itemized list. The reader is forced focus on her inner-life, which depicts a sad portrait of marriage, indeed. The author doesn't tell a lot about Richards. Just only that he was a friend of Mr. Mallard. Josephine is a typical sister. She's extremely worried when it comes to exposing Louise's fragile heart to pressure and sudden shocks and surprises, which generally shows that she loves her sister wholeheartedly, and doesn't want something bad to happen to her.

But she doesn't understand that her sister was unhappy in marriage. Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. " Louise, open the door! I beg- open the door-you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door. " The story is written from the omniscient point of view. Therefore we know all thoughts and experiences of the main character. We can hear the authors voice through the inner monologue. " There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it?

She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air", " She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial", " No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window. 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.

She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. The tone of the story shifts from emotional gloomy to ironically and melancholy tone The story comes off as subtly cruel in that Louise's reaction to the death of her husband. She comprehends the news only later, and author shows us little by little how she comes to realize it and what helps her to understand it. She goes to her room, and " there stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank" (788). Reading these words, the readers suddenly realize that something turns the story to a more positive, reassuring way.

What makes us, readers, to think so? Here we see two things, which make us to feel that way “ a comfortable, roomy armchair” as a symbol of security and comfort in spite of her husband’s death, and “ the open window”, which here symbolizes connection to the world, to life. The next, fifth paragraph, emphasizes these ideas even more and carries more details and fresh elements of the new, positive turn of the story. Through the open window she can see “ the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. ” “ The delicious breath of rain was in the air. “ countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves” (788). All these parts of this paragraph show us that Mrs. Mallard gets in touch with life, starts to hear sounds and to smell scents which she didn’t feel before. Why? What happened? Does she really start to notice it all only after her husband’s death? Yes, and the author gives us even more details, emphasizing it, not yet giving the answer why she starts to feel this way. However, a careful reader understands the deep sense of the words about “ patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds... “.

These words didn’t appear in the story with no reason. All these details make us to feel the growth of Mrs. Mallard’s excitement and make us to understand the sign of the meaning of the blue sky a symbol of freedom and future life. In paragraph eight, Mrs. Mallard, “ young, with a fair, calm face”, is sitting in the armchair with a “ dull stare in her eyes”, which “ indicated a suspension of intelligent thought. ” (789). Reading these lines, the readers understand that something is going on in Mrs. Mallard’s head; something is changing everything in her mind. What is it? Mrs.

Mallard still doesn't realize it, " but she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air" (789). We understand, that her soul starts to fill with happiness of freedom; freedom, which is in everything in sounds and beautiful trees around, in blue sky and in songs of the birds. However, for one moment she gets afraid to allow herself to be happy about her freedom " she was striving to beat it back with her will" (789). This shows us that Mrs. Mallard is a " product" of her time and has to be dependent on society rules.

She realizes that society would determine her thoughts of freedom inappropriate, but she can't stop herself to feel that way. A calm soul is necessary for a human being and is more important than society standards. Feeling happy she just proves this thought. However, " she knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death" (789) but it's just a reaction, which society expects her to have. What can compare to " a long procession of years that would belong to her absolutely" (789)! Here the author finally opens a reason why Mrs. Mallard feels this way about her husband's death. There would 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" (789). These words show the picture of Mrs. Mallard's family life. She was unhappy with her husband; she couldn't have her own opinion and couldn't show her own will, that's why she is happy to be free! Back then society didn't accept a divorced woman, but it accepted widows, and we realize that being a widow it is the only way for Mrs. Mallard to get free. " Free! Body and soul free! " (789). We read these words and share with Mrs.

Mallard her feelings, her excitement and hopes. At this point Mrs. Mallard's sister Josephine is looking ridiculous, with her words " Louise, open the door! you will make yourself ill. " (789) Because practically, Mrs. Mallard, who is a woman, who had numerous years under her husband's will, finally gets an absolutely freedom, a miraculous freedom, which she even didn't hope to get the day before. However, her sister is far from understanding it. Expecting " spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own" (790), Mrs. Mallard goes out of the room as a " goddess of Victory". 790) From the first look, this point of the story seems as the highest culminating moment of the whole story, and here is the irony. The author prepared the main strong culmination right in the end, in three final paragraphs. Mrs. Mallard's husband opens " the front door with a latchkey" (790). He enters " composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella" (790). He is carrying it " composedly", because he doesn't even know about the accident and that his name is on the list of those who died. Even more ironical here are " Josephine's piercing cry" and " Richards' quick motion to screen" (790) Brently Mallard from his wife's eyes.

Mrs. Mallard dies " of joy that kills" (790). These words carry the absolutely opposite meaning, than they read. We understand, that the doctors are wrong, thinking that she dies from happiness of seeing her husband again. She chooses rather to die than to live again under her husband's will, especially after experiencing freedom, even just for one hour. This hour in a comfortable armchair in front of the open window made her feel happy and free, made her to understand the sense of her being, and it was the only real hour of her life.