

A fiction essay
analyzing the
character of louise on
"the story of an hour"
by ka...

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A fiction essay analyzing the character of Louise on “ The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin 1894 Essay Sample

People often find themselves in situations that seem to be complicated. They may be happy or sad but cannot really tell the reason why they are either happy or sad. A person may be sad because an unpleasant situation has occurred. However, paradoxically the same person may be happy later on because of the same situation that had caused him or her sadness. That is the situation that is explained in the story “ The Story of an Hour” written by Kate Chopin in 1894. It is about Louise, the protagonist in the story, who is initially shocked on hearing that Blently, her husband, is dead. She is initially unhappy (Ann, C & Samuel, C., p. 174). However, she feels happy that she will be independent on her own without her husband for the rest of her life. When it happens that her husband had not died as supposed, she dies of what her doctor terms “ happiness”. Therefore, the feeling of happiness depicted in this story is ambiguous.

Louise Mallard is the protagonist in the story. She is a dramatic woman who is unpredictable. She feels sadness over the death of her husband but derives joy from it. She remains calm when she realizes that her husband’s death meant her independence. That would be a rather odd feeling given that she had lost her husband. For instance, she says, “ What did it matter! What could love, the unresolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!” (Charters & Samuel, p 174).

She has a heart problem. It is for this reason that her sister, Josephine, must take a lot of care when revealing the bad news to her. The bad news is that her husband had died in a railroad disaster. She is an emotional woman. When the bad news is finally revealed to her, she goes upstairs where she stays alone. She cries uncontrollably. She mourns. She is aware that that is how any woman would feel after all following death of their husbands. She recalls how her husband's hands were tender and always looked at her lovingly. She knows she loved her husband. Nevertheless, she puts these thoughts aside because she knew they did not matter anymore when her husband had died.

However, unlike many other women would do, Louse Mallard does not feel numb in her situation. She thinks about her future life of independence and feels elated. She feels happy as she anticipates future days of total independence. Her heart trouble is used as a symbol. The author uses it to signify how Louise had suffered long years of oppression while in the marriage. Therefore, when she thinks of her newfound freedom, her heart races and her body feels warmth. She spreads her arms open. That is also symbolical to show that she was ready to welcome her new life. " Body and soul free!" (p. 174) are words that she repeats severally to show how she anticipated to have her new freedom. She even prays for a long life.

When Brently, her husband, shows up, her " heart trouble" becomes worse. It happens shockingly to her. She was in the processes of ushering her sister and her husband's friend, Richards, out so that she could be left alone when her husband came in. The " heart trouble" kills her. Ironically, the doctor

says that she dies of joy. Louise had prepared herself how to live an independent life which she thought would be full of joy following the death of Brently, her husband. When her husband shows up, that joyful life becomes suddenly lost. It is the shock and disappointment that kills her and not joy.

To sum up, Louise is faced with a situation that causes her more trouble in her life. She reveals that her marriage is not a happy one. Her character is inconsiderate. She views marriage as the one which denied her freedom. She feels sad and cries over her husband's death. However, she realizes that she should rather be happy because she has the freedom of living alone in her future. In a twist of events, her anticipated long future life filled with freedom and joy is cut short when she learns that her husband was alive. She dies of shock that is ironically taken to be joy on realizing that her husband had not died in the railroad tragedy.

Reference

Charters, Ann, and Samuel B. Charters. *Literature and Its Writers: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997. Print.