

Good example of literature review on the story of an hour

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" is a short story that begins and ends with heartbreak. The story begins with the news that Mrs. Louise Mallard's husband, Mr. Brently Mallard has died. Mrs. Mallard, who suffers from heart trouble, reacts to this news rather unusually, unlike how a normal woman would, and secludes herself in her room. What follows are some vague descriptions and Mrs. Mallard's frequently joyful exclamations of finally being free and being able to live herself for herself. Naturally, this makes readers wonder whether Mrs. Mallard was even happy with her marriage. However, before they can reach a conclusion, the story ends with Mrs. Mallard's death upon seeing her husband, who did not die after all. Even though it is claimed that the joy of seeing her husband killed Mrs. Mallard, the narration and dialogues in the story imply that Mrs. Mallard was happy that her husband had died.

It is true that the personality of a woman and her opinion of her deceased husband may determine who she reacts to his death. If a woman did not think highly of her husband and her marriage was a happy one, then her reaction would probably be that of hysterical relief and a prolonged delight. In *The Story of an Hour*, Kate Chopin makes it apparent that Mrs. Mallard "did not hear the story [of her husband's death] as many women have heard the same." It seems that the "storm of grief" that should have been prolonged, just comes and goes, which foreshadows the fact that Mrs. Mallard was glad that her husband was dead. Even before Mrs. Mallard voices her delight over her husband's death, the third-person descriptions of the omniscient narrator make it quite apparent that Mrs. Mallard is not grieving, rather it is the opposite.

Once Mrs. Mallard has secluded herself in her room, the narrator's descriptions that follow create a feeling of calmness, comfort and peace. Mrs. Mallard is described as sitting “ with [her] head thrown back upon the cushion of [a] chair” just as a person who is relaxing or resting. A wife whose husband had just died would not just sink into an armchair and attempt to relax. She would not be able to stop her tears or herself from weeping, but Mrs. Mallard just sobs occasionally. The armchair itself is described as comfortable and roomy, which further suggests that, and she sank into it to seek comfort from “ physical exhaustion” rather than the mental trauma that she should have suffered after hearing the news of her husband’s death. Mrs. Mallard’s happiness becomes even more evident when the narrator states that Mrs. Mallard was striving to beat [that joy] back with her will.” The feeling that Mrs. Mallard is apparently trying to squelch causes her bosom to rise and fall “ tumultuously” and this is a sign that whatever she was feeling was causing her to become excited. Readers are saved the trouble of trying to deduce whatever it was that was “ coming to her” because the words “ free, free, free!” escape Mrs. Mallard’s lips. Obviously, it was “ monstrous joy” that held Mrs. Mallard and every inch of her body was relaxed because the “ intelligent thought” that had momentarily taken over Mrs. Mallard’s mind was the realization that she was now independent and free of her husband. Thereon, the narrator makes it even more apparent that Mrs. Mallard wants to “ live for herself” rather than living for her husband, as she apparently had been doing throughout her life after marriage. Thus, the death of her husband provided Mrs. Mallard the opportunity to be free, which obviously made her joyful.

Now, Mrs. Mallard keeps whispering, “ Free! Body and soul free!” Indeed she is glad to be free. At this moment, Mrs. Mallard is described to be “ drinking in a very elixir of life.” In other words, the news of her husband’s death breathed new life into her soul. Instead of realizing that her husband, her partner, her spouse would no longer be a part of her life, Mrs. Mallard’s thoughts drift away towards how her life would now be, now that she would not have to spend it with her husband. The coming days “ would be her own” and she would no longer have to share them with her husband. Apparently, in the past until her husband was alive, the thought that “ life might be long” had made her “ shudder” but now that her husband is dead, she prays for a longer life because now she actually wants to live and feels alive.

Even though “ The Story of an Hour” ends with Mrs. Mallard’s death, event this incident signifies the fact that she was happy that her husband was no longer alive. From the beginning of the story, readers are informed that Mrs. Mallard is “ afflicted with a heart trouble” and it is “ heart disease” that takes her life. The doctor’s claim that it was the overwhelming joy of seeing her husband, Mr. Bently, alive and well, that resulted in Mrs. Mallard’s death. As vague as the story and the conclusion is, all of the above evidence points to the fact that it was not joy, but shock that killed Mrs. Mallard. The realization that her husband was alive, that she would once again have to spend the remainder of her life with him, living for him, shattered her already weak heart. Thus, Mrs. Mallard was indeed happy that her husband had died and that happiness was short lived.

Work Cited

Chopin, Kate. "" The Story of An Hour"." Virginia Commonwealth University.

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