

# The story of an hour: a literary analysis



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The Story of an Hour is the story of women being drained of their power, their strength, and their will.

This short literary masterpiece took its form for every woman who has lost their power and will ever since they were tied with marriage and because of an inner sense of serving their husbands. Mrs. Mallard, the main character of the story, was one of these women. She was a wife living for her husband, bending her will in a “ blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. ” Upon the death of her husband, she briefly felt sorrow for a loss of someone dear.

Her sorrow was immediately changed into a dark kind of joy upon realizing she was free from an obligation to live her life for her husband. This realization went well with how Chopin described the surroundings of Mrs. Mallard as she sat by the open window. The mere contrast of her cheerful description of the environment and the mournful event happening with Mrs.

Mallard was a surprise in the beginning. In Chopin’s words, Mrs. Mallard sat in a “ comfortable, roomy armchair” where she could see “ the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. ” This description was the opposite of what our main character was feeling. But as you move forward in the story, the reader will realize that Chopin’s description was the abstraction of what Mrs. Mallard soon realized.

It was the hidden joy of being free from a husband and a belief of living and working for her. Her realization about her freedom was “ the notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. ” The story was short enough to catch

a reader's attention. With its use of general statements and not getting into details, the readers are left to guess what the reasons of some events and scenarios are. For example, the cause of Mrs. Mallard's heart attack.

Was that because of repressing her thoughts and emotions about being a wife? Did she have it since birth? Another vague detail is the description behind Mrs. Mallard's husband. How is she repressed as a wife? How does her husband assert his authority as the head of the house? Why does Mrs. Mallard felt that she bent her will according to what he wants? These are some questions a reader would ask upon reading the story. The only description the reader came across about the husband was when he came back from the long trip.

He was, in Chopin's words, " a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. " The heart attack of Mrs. Mallard can be considered as a symbolism of her weakness, of losing her spirit upon bending her will and neglecting what she wants for her husband. The heart attack can be interpreted as a cause of the repression of emotions Mrs.

Mallard did in order to cope with what's going on inside her. Her weakness was actually a vital factor in the story. It carried out the character of Mrs. Mallard as a housewife who had no freedom.

Her weakness because of the heart attack made the readers picture a woman who was caged in a house where she can't do what she wants in order to make her husband happy, an obligation that she and others thought appropriate for a wife. This characteristic gave life to another personality, a hidden one, about Mrs. Mallard. She had this desire to be free and this desire

turned against her in the end. Her desire for being free and the joy she felt despite the loss of a husband became important here.

Mrs. Mallard's death in the end was justified in the sense that she was happy for her freedom and not thinking about her husband. Over all, the short story of Kate Chopin took a feminist theme on a bent belief of people about wives living under the shadow of their husbands. With this belief, women are sapped of their own power. They are bending their will and forgetting their individuality for the sake of living a life serving a husband.

Women can live a life of domesticity but they should not live their life behind a man. Kate Chopin may have written this as a message for everyone that women, despite being wives, should live their lives thinking of what they want, too.