

# 'THE STORY OF AN HOUR'

## by Kate Chopin

---

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliation



# 'THE STORY OF AN HOUR' by Kate Chopin

## Introduction

"The Story of an Hour" is one of the short stories written by Kate Chopin in 1884. It became an excellent illustration of the women's life and status in the society of that time. Moreover, the concepts of freedom, love, and marriage are represented from the new perspective. In spite of a short plot expressed in approximately 1000 words, the story presents numerous characters, themes, and symbols. The deep analysis of the plot and the tools the author incorporated in the story shows how Kate Chopin draws the reader's attention to the problems of the life and relationships using simple words. "The Story of an Hour" is the example of a brilliant usage of the literary tools to demonstrate the crucial points of life with the help of short story.

## Analysis

It is relevant to start with the main aspect of the structure used for the story, the concept of plot twist. The phenomenon of the plot twist is often used in short story to analyze the events or conditions from another perspective and provide a sufficiently new point of view (Pavel, 1985). The plot twist or unexpected turn appears only in the last sentence of the story though the author provides an ideal synchronic structure for the whole story from its beginning. It is necessary to admit that few more key aspects of the plot are presented in the first sentence of the story as we see the event, conditions, and can predict further actions. Thus, the unexpected final is even more emphatic by the precise structure of the story that strengthens the effect of the whole story.

Details in the text play an important role for understanding the writer's point

of view. The specialities in the descriptions of people and situations provide the strain aspect and involve the readers to share the feelings and emotions presented. The details in the description of Louise's appearance, the main character, help the reader to see and "feel" the woman. Chopin provides some comments together with the description; this way, she predicts the reader's judgment: "She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength" (Chopin, 1984). She makes the reader understand the young wife and sympathize with her. Further, Chopin described the internal state of the grieving wife using the description of the world outside: "Open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air" (Chopin, 1984).

The open square and open window are the symbols of a new life for Louise, new open way to the future. "Countless sparrows" and "patches of blue sky" represent the freedom and a lot of opportunities she can have after her husband's death. She starts to realize that she wanted that freedom, and now she "was waiting for it fearfully" (Chopin, 1984). The attributive symbols and epithets are provided by the writer to strengthen the effect of feeling the freedom: e.g., "feverish triumph in her eyes... like a goddess of Victory" (Chopin, 1984). In contrast, a heart trouble is a symbol of feelings toward the marriage and the status of a married woman. Marriage in the story is shown as a lack of freedom, even for happy couples who love each other. Louise was young and married, though she had heart troubles that is not usual for young women. The "heart trouble" is more of a metaphor for Louise's emotional state than a medical factor. Thus, we can consider the health issues as a result of the marriage and unhappy life. The same heart disease killed her after she lost her freedom and independence for the second time after she saw her husband alive; however, it was considered as "the joy that kills".

The word "free" can be presented as one of the characters of the story as well as the point of change in it. It appears to turn the tragic event to the welcomed joy. One more symbol to discuss from a different perspective of view is death. The news about the death of Louise's husband made her think about her own future. First, she imagines herself crying at the husband's body. She had not thought about her life without him till that day. However, then she tries to see her future. The word "free" appears to show the death as a possibility for the emancipation of both her husband and her. A person's death can be considered as a release from all the duties and debts of our life. It is also the freedom for those who were limited by person's existence and influence.

The society of the 19th century could not accept the female protagonist. "The Story of an Hour" raised a lot of disputes with regard to ethical standards and morality of that time. The marriage and family was the main institution, and a woman could exist only within it, either as a daughter or a wife and mother. The most unacceptable thing was the happiness of the woman because of the death of her husband and her wish to live "for herself" (Hicks, 1997). The key message of the story is that happiness is possible if you are free and not limited. Only equal rights and possibilities for both genders can provide this freedom in society. The story was discussed hundreds of times that made it even more popular. However, there is no doubts of great importance the story has for new understanding of the concepts of life, death, and marriage.



## Conclusion

"The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin is a brilliant example of social and literature work that provides important value for the future generations. The author could present the concepts of death, love, marriage, and freedom from a new perspective. The usage of plot twist, symbols, epithets, and metaphors has the effect of tension upon the reader and underlines the main message of the story. A lot of details within the short story help to provide the effect of "presence" for the reader and make the story unique.