

# Analysis of Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour"

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**Abstract:** Kate Chopin, an American author who lived in the 19th century, is responsible for the seminal piece of literature known as *The Story of an Hour*. Her short narrative "The Story of an Hour" gives a dramatic account of the many unexpected shifts in temperament that a woman goes through over the span of an hour. Chopin's story achieves a powerful ironic artistic effect thanks to Chopin's use of irony to bring to light the presence of women in America during the 19th century. In this article, the contrast between the readers' expectations and Mrs. Mallard's actual condition, as well as the contrast between Mrs. Mallard's actual circumstances and her spatial and emotional expression, will be used to highlight the artistic appeal of this novel.

**Keywords:** Irony; Contrasts; Expression

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## 1. Introduction

Author Kate Chopin, also known as Kate Chopin, is the pen name of the American author Kate Chopin, who is regarded as "one of the pioneers of feminist literature in the United States." Kate Chopin is also known as Kate Chopin. The United States of America is the place of Kate Chopin's birth. Since "The Story of an Hour" is a piece of writing with a strong feminist consciousness, its publication was never authorized from the very beginning due to the fact that it was forbidden. It was not until decades later, around the beginning of the feminist movement in the 1960s, that the article was given the value that critics felt it merited. Around this time, the essay received its due recognition.

*The Story of an Hour* follows the psychological growth of the story's protagonist, a lady named Louise Mallard, from the time she learns that her husband has died until the time she learns that he has only been dead for one hour. The novel's title refers to the amount of time that elapses between these two events. Within the course of just one hour, the main character, Mrs. Mallard, goes back to her room to feel the ecstasy after finding that her husband was murdered in a car accident. She then goes out of the room to feel the excitement, and eventually passes away from an unexpected heart attack. All of these events take place immediately after learning of her husband's death. "The Story of an Hour" paints a realistic picture of the numerous unexpected shifts in temperament that Mrs. Mallard experiences over the course of one hour. Mrs. Jones was devastated when she found out that her husband had been murdered in a vehicle accident. Not only does the use of sarcasm in the novel help to the powerful dramatic effect that is generated by the brief novel consisting of a thousand words, but it also creates the picture of a woman who is eager to flee the chains of marriage and pursue freedom. This is achieved by the fact that the novel is only a thousand words long.

## 2. Irony

### 2.1 The artistic characteristics of irony

Within the span of one hour, a woman's family dynamic completely shifts, although the author refers to this shift as a "dream."

In speaking or writing, irony is a kind of ironic tone or writing technique that cannot be understood from the words alone. In reality, its original meaning is the opposite of the meaning that can be understood literally, and it is typically necessary to understand its intention from the context and background. Irony is also known as irony.

### 2.2 Contrast between readers' expectations and Mrs. Mallard's actual situation

The fear that Mrs. Mallard will have an accident when she learns the sad news is actually superfluous. On the surface, Mrs. Ma cries and looks very sad at the news, but when we read it carefully, we find that the author's Mrs. Ma is not really sad.

The sister is still worried about her sister's health, but the sister thinks of the freedom of life in the open window, and with the

death of her husband, the possession she once had will be gone, and she thinks of the beautiful state of mind in which she will open the blueprint of a glorious life in the following years.

When the stormy grief subsided, she went to her room alone, without anyone following her.

The storm is superficially a description of her weeping, very strong and swift, but deep down it is a hint that her grief will come and go as fast as the storm, which is not only a hint of the psychological transformation of the characters below, but also an irony of the rapid change of the heroine's mood, beyond the normal human reaction.

The ending of the novel once again exceeds the reader's horizon of expectation, and the twists and turns of the plot constitute an irony. When Mrs. Mallard opens the door of her room at the repeated request of her sister and walks downstairs as a "goddess of victory," Mr. Mallard returns. Richard tries to block Mrs. Mallard's view of her husband, but it is too late. The novel does not describe Mrs. Mallard's face and movements when she saw her husband, but only gives the ending: the doctor came and said that she died of a heart attack - a death of "unbearable pleasure". In the reader's view, the doctor's diagnosis and the real cause of Mrs. Mallard's death also constitute an irony: the doctor uses the discourse of a patriarchal society to diagnose the cause of Mrs. Mallard's death, believing that she died of ecstasy at the sight of her husband's return. But in fact, Mrs. Mallard dies because she cannot bear to be deprived of her freedom. Here, Chopin once again makes a powerful mockery of the discourse of patriarchal society.

### **2.3 Contrasts in spatial and emotional expression**

When Marauder finally gets back to her room by herself, there is a significant amount of text devoted to describing the view outside her window. In this section of the story, the tone of the novel is inconsistent with Mrs. Mallard's words and behavior, which results in an ironic impact due to the stark contrast between the two elements.

She is able to observe the treetops in front of the house gently swaying due to the energy of the early spring, and she can smell the perfume of the rain in the air. A businessperson was working hard to sell his items in the street below. He was giving it his all. While in actual life people are slow to react when they are grieving and have no time to care about the people and scenes around them, Mrs. Madera, after crying, focuses her attention on the "fragrance" and "song" which represent beauty and hope. In contrast, people in real life have no time to care about the people and scenes around them. People in real life are slow to react while they are grieving and have little time to worry about the people and scenes around them because they are consumed by their own emotions. As a result of this strange difference, it would appear that Mrs. Ma is not experiencing the grief that is supposed to be felt by a marriage upon the death of one of the partners in the relationship.

### **3. Conclusion**

Chopin's double ironic approach to Mrs. Ma's emotion and psychology, which ranges from the fear of suppressing "freedom" to "freedom is more important than love," creates a stark contrast between Mrs. Ma's mourning and crying when she hears that her husband has died, and the suppressed fear of seeing the beautiful scenery outside the window. Throughout the entire text, Chopin uses this double ironic approach to explore Mrs. Ma's emotions and psychology. The contrast between Mrs. Ma's mourning and crying when she heard that her husband had passed away, her suppressed emotions when she saw the beautiful scenery outside the window, her fear when she suppressed "freedom", and finally her call for freedom, in a perverse way, Mrs. Ma's emotions began to fluctuate with her inner "desire", and even awakened the long-lost "cry" in her heart. In a peculiar manner, Mrs. Ma's feelings are influenced by her internal "desire," which can even reawaken the "cry" that had been dormant in her heart for a very long time.

Chopin's double ironic approach to Mrs. Ma's feelings and psychology is present throughout the entirety of the story. This creates a stark contrast between the fear of repressing "freedom" and the importance of "freedom over love," as well as Mrs. Ma's reversal from mourning and crying when she learns of her husband's death to the repressed fear of seeing the beautiful scenery outside the window. Chopin's use of irony throughout the story is brilliant. The contrast between Mrs. Ma's mourning and crying when she heard that her husband had passed away, her suppressed emotions when she saw the beautiful scenery outside the window, her fear when she suppressed "freedom", and finally her call for freedom, in a perverse way, Mrs. Ma's emotions began to fluctuate with her inner "desire", and even awakened the long-lost "cry" in her heart. In a strange manner, Mrs. Ma's feelings are inconsistent with her inner "desire," and they even cause the long-dormant "cry" in her heart to be reawakened..

The plot of "The Story of an Hour" has many twists and turns, each of which exceeds the reader's expectations and creates a dramatic effect. Chopin uses situational irony to construct the plot, which on the one hand gives people the feeling that life is full of fate and things going against their wishes; [5] on the other hand, it also highlights where the theme of the work lies: marriage is a

shackle for women to pursue freedom in the 19th century, women's freedom has to be paid for by the death of men, and the pursuit of freedom is nothing but an unrealizable dream for women.

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