

Unit -13

lesson-3

The Story of an Hour

Kate Chopin

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralysed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all quiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window. She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quiet motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away of yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will - as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him - sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg, open the door - you'll make yourself ill. What are you doing Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease – of joy that kills.

1. What is Mrs. Mallard's first name?

- A) Mary
- B) Louise
- C) Jane
- D) Clara

✓ **Answer: B) Louise**

2. What is Mrs. Mallard suffering from?

- A) Blindness
- B) Depression
- C) Heart trouble
- D) Memory loss

✓ **Answer: C) Heart trouble**

3. Who brings the news of Brently Mallard's death?

- A) A neighbor
- B) A doctor
- C) Richards
- D) Josephine

✓ **Answer: D) Josephine**

4. Who is Richards?

- A) Mrs. Mallard's brother
- B) Brently's friend
- C) The newspaper editor
- D) The family doctor

✓ **Answer: B) Brently's friend**

5. How did Brently Mallard supposedly die?

- A) In a car crash
- B) In a train accident
- C) From illness

D) In a fire

✓ **Answer: B) In a train accident**

6. What was done before telling Louise the news?

A) A prayer was offered

B) A funeral was held

C) The news was confirmed by a second telegram

D) Nothing was done

✓ **Answer: C) The news was confirmed by a second telegram**

7. How did Louise react initially to the news?

A) She fainted

B) She laughed

C) She wept with wild abandonment

D) She was silent

✓ **Answer: C) She wept with wild abandonment**

8. Where did Louise go after hearing the news?

A) The kitchen

B) Her room

C) The garden

D) The church

✓ **Answer: B) Her room**

9. What does Louise see outside her window?

A) A funeral procession

B) The sunset

C) The tops of trees and blue sky

D) Snowfall

✓ **Answer: C) The tops of trees and blue sky**

10. What season is described outside the window?

- A) Autumn
- B) Winter
- C) Summer
- D) Spring

✓ Answer: D) Spring

11. What sound does she hear from the street?

- A) A wedding march
- B) A peddler crying his wares
- C) Church bells
- D) Car horns

✓ Answer: B) A peddler crying his wares

12. What birds are mentioned in the story?

- A) Crows
- B) Doves
- C) Sparrows
- D) Robins

✓ Answer: C) Sparrows

13. What color is the sky through the clouds?

- A) Black
- B) Red
- C) Blue
- D) Gray

✓ Answer: C) Blue

14. What phrase does Louise whisper?

- A) "He's gone."
- B) "Thank God."
- C) "Free, free, free!"
- D) "Why me?"

✓ Answer: C) "Free, free, free!"

15. What emotion replaces Louise's grief?

- A) Fear
- B) Anger
- C) Joy and freedom
- D) Confusion

✓ **Answer: C) Joy and freedom**

16. What does Louise realize about her future?

- A) She will be lonely
- B) She will remarry
- C) She is finally free
- D) She will die soon

✓ **Answer: C) She is finally free**

17. How does the author describe her realization of freedom?

- A) As selfish
- B) As monstrous joy
- C) As regretful
- D) As foolish

✓ **Answer: B) As monstrous joy**

18. How does she feel about her husband?

- A) She always hated him
- B) She never loved him
- C) She loved him sometimes
- D) She wished he had died earlier

✓ **Answer: C) She loved him sometimes**

19. What does Louise think about love?

- A) It is meaningless
- B) It is everything
- C) It is the answer to life

D) It cannot exist without freedom

✓ **Answer: A) It is meaningless**

20. What is symbolized by the open window?

A) Imprisonment

B) Her past

C) Freedom and a new life

D) Death

✓ **Answer: C) Freedom and a new life**

21. What does Louise begin to look forward to?

A) Her funeral

B) A long life of independence

C) Going to heaven

D) Reuniting with her husband

✓ **Answer: B) A long life of independence**

22. What does she breathe in through the window?

A) Dust

B) The elixir of life

C) Smoke

D) Poisonous air

✓ **Answer: B) The elixir of life**

23. What does Josephine do while Louise is in her room?

A) Makes tea

B) Cries loudly

C) Kneels at the door begging

D) Goes for help

✓ **Answer: C) Kneels at the door begging**

24. What is Louise's response to Josephine's plea?

- A) “Go away, I’m dying!”
- B) “I’m fine.”
- C) “I am not making myself ill.”
- D) “He’s alive.”

✓ **Answer: C) “I am not making myself ill.”**

25. How does Louise feel about living for herself?

- A) Ashamed
- B) Uncertain
- C) Triumphant
- D) Disappointed

✓ **Answer: C) Triumphant**

26. What word describes her face when she leaves the room?

- A) Confused
- B) Triumphant
- C) Ashamed
- D) Pale

✓ **Answer: B) Triumphant**

27. How does she walk down the stairs?

- A) Slowly
- B) Like a prisoner
- C) Like a goddess of Victory
- D) With her head down

✓ **Answer: C) Like a goddess of Victory**

28. Who enters at the end of the story?

- A) A police officer
- B) The doctor
- C) Brently Mallard
- D) A nurse

✓ **Answer: C) Brently Mallard**

29. What was Brently unaware of?

- A) The accident
- B) The telegram
- C) The fact that he was dead
- D) The railroad disaster

✓ **Answer: D) The railroad disaster**

30. What happened to Brently in the train accident?

- A) He survived
- B) He died
- C) He lost a leg
- D) He saved others

✓ **Answer: A) He survived**

31. What does Richards try to do at the end?

- A) Explain the mistake
- B) Block Brently from entering
- C) Catch Louise
- D) Call a doctor

✓ **Answer: B) Block Brently from entering**

32. How does the story end?

- A) Louise faints
- B) Louise runs away
- C) Louise dies
- D) Louise screams

✓ **Answer: C) Louise dies**

33. What do the doctors say caused her death?

- A) Grief
- B) Joy that kills
- C) Shock

D) Heart attack

✓ **Answer: B) Joy that kills**

34. What is ironic about the doctors' conclusion?

A) She died from sadness

B) She wasn't really dead

C) She died of freedom, not joy

D) She was poisoned

✓ **Answer: C) She died of freedom, not joy**

35. What is the genre of the story?

A) Biography

B) Tragedy

C) Science fiction

D) Satire

✓ **Answer: B) Tragedy**

36. What literary device is most evident in the ending of the story?

A) Allegory

B) Metaphor

C) Irony

D) Alliteration

✓ **Answer: C) Irony**

37. What is the main conflict in the story?

A) Between Louise and her sister

B) Between Louise and society's expectations

C) Between Brently and Richards

D) Between Louise and Brently

✓ **Answer: B) Between Louise and society's expectations**

38. What does the "comfortable, roomy armchair" symbolize?

- A) Sadness
- B) Weakness
- C) Physical illness
- D) Emotional rest and freedom

✓ **Answer: D) Emotional rest and freedom**

39. What does Louise mean when she says she is “free”?

- A) She can now travel
- B) She is free from social responsibilities
- C) She is free from her marriage and male dominance
- D) She will remarry

✓ **Answer: C) She is free from her marriage and male dominance**

40. What kind of relationship did Louise have with her husband?

- A) Completely loving and equal
- B) Abusive and controlling
- C) Sometimes loving, but emotionally restricting
- D) Distant and indifferent

✓ **Answer: C) Sometimes loving, but emotionally restricting**

41. What is the most significant internal change Louise experiences?

- A) From hope to despair
- B) From guilt to regret
- C) From grief to joyful independence
- D) From fear to anxiety

✓ **Answer: C) From grief to joyful independence**

42. The “notes of a distant song” symbolize:

- A) A funeral march
- B) A spiritual calling
- C) A new beginning and hope
- D) Her husband's return

✓ **Answer: C) A new beginning and hope**

43. Why is the story titled “*The Story of an Hour*”?

- A) The events happen in one hour
- B) It refers to a train schedule
- C) The main character’s life lasted one hour
- D) The mourning lasted for an hour

✓ **Answer: A) The events happen in one hour**

44. What emotion does Louise experience that surprises even herself?

- A) Deep hatred
- B) Passion
- C) Joy at her husband’s death
- D) Regret

✓ **Answer: C) Joy at her husband’s death**

45. Why does Richards try to shield Brently from Louise?

- A) He’s angry at him
- B) He wants to surprise her
- C) He fears the shock might harm her
- D) He wants to talk to him first

✓ **Answer: C) He fears the shock might harm her**

46. What role does Josephine play in the story?

- A) She spreads gossip
- B) She brings the telegram
- C) She tries to protect Louise
- D) She argues with Richards

✓ **Answer: C) She tries to protect Louise**

47. What is Louise's whispered word a sign of?

- A) Weakness
- B) Madness
- C) Awakening and independence

D) Confusion

✓ **Answer: C) Awakening and independence**

48. What does Louise think about marriage in general?

A) It is full of love and joy

B) It is meaningless

C) It's a bond that limits freedom

D) It is necessary for survival

✓ **Answer: C) It's a bond that limits freedom**

49. Why is Brently Mallard's entrance so shocking?

A) He is wounded

B) He was thought to be dead

C) He brings divorce papers

D) He has remarried

✓ **Answer: B) He was thought to be dead**

50. What is the ultimate theme of the story?

A) Death is unpredictable

B) Grief always leads to madness

C) Female liberation and societal expectations

D) Marriage is sacred

✓ **Answer: C) Female liberation and societal expectations**

1. Why was special care taken to break the news of Mr. Mallard's death to Mrs. Mallard?
2. How does Mrs. Mallard initially react to the news of her husband's death?
3. Why does Mrs. Mallard retreat to her room alone after hearing the news?
4. What does the open window symbolize in the story?
5. How does the setting outside the window contrast with Mrs. Mallard's grief?
6. What physical condition is Mrs. Mallard suffering from?
7. What effect does the description of nature have on the reader's understanding of Mrs. Mallard's emotions?

8. What change occurs in Mrs. Mallard's feelings as she sits in the armchair?
9. What does Mrs. Mallard whisper repeatedly, and what does it signify?
10. How does Chopin use imagery to depict the transformation in Mrs. Mallard's emotions?
11. What realization makes Mrs. Mallard feel a sense of freedom?
12. How does Mrs. Mallard feel about her husband?
13. How does the story portray marriage as an institution?
14. What does Mrs. Mallard envision for her future?
15. How is Mrs. Mallard's reaction different from societal expectations of widows?
16. Why is the phrase "free, free, free" significant?
17. What is the irony in the way Mrs. Mallard views her husband's death?
18. What does Mrs. Mallard mean by "a kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime"?
19. How is Mrs. Mallard's self-assertion shown as central to the story?
20. Why does Josephine beg Louise to open the door?
21. What is the "elixir of life" that Mrs. Mallard drinks in?
22. How does the author highlight the difference between appearance and reality?
23. What role does Richards play in the story?
24. What is the symbolic meaning of the "narrow aisles of pain" (metaphorically, if present)?
25. Why is Mrs. Mallard described as having a "goddess of Victory" look?
26. What is the significance of spring imagery in the story?
27. How is Louise's reaction to her husband's death an example of situational irony?
28. Why is the ending of the story considered ironic?
29. How does Chopin challenge the traditional view of love and marriage?
30. What message does the story convey about personal freedom?
31. How is Mrs. Mallard's death interpreted by the doctors?
32. Why is the doctor's conclusion ironic?
33. How is the title "The Story of an Hour" significant?

34. How does time function as a literary device in the story?
35. What is the tone of the story?
36. What literary techniques does Chopin use to reflect Louise's emotional transformation?
37. What does the line "a clear and exalted perception" imply about Mrs. Mallard's mental state?
38. How does the story reflect feminist themes?
39. What is the implication of the statement: "She would live for herself"?
40. What role does social expectation play in Mrs. Mallard's realization?
41. How is Mrs. Mallard's identity shaped by her role as a wife?
42. Why is the story still relevant today?
43. How does the story explore the theme of identity?
44. What does the "vacant stare" and later "keen and bright" eyes suggest?
45. What is the contrast between how Mrs. Mallard views her husband and how others perceive their marriage?
46. How does the story use contrast between public and private emotions?
47. What deeper truth about life and death does the story suggest?
48. How does the use of sensory language enhance the narrative?
49. Why might Louise pray that life would be long?
50. What lesson can readers take from the ending of the story?

Answer:

1. Special care was taken because Mrs. Mallard had heart trouble, and a sudden shock might cause her death. This shows how fragile she is both physically and emotionally. It also builds tension for the story's ending.
2. Mrs. Mallard reacts by weeping uncontrollably, showing her immediate sorrow. However, this grief quickly shifts as she begins to process deeper emotions. Her reaction is complex, not just simple mourning.
3. She retreats to her room to be alone because she needs time to understand her feelings. This solitude allows her to experience her true emotions without judgment. It symbolizes a private emotional awakening.

4. The open window symbolizes the freedom and new possibilities awaiting her. It contrasts with the confinement she felt in her marriage. It represents hope and a fresh start.
5. The lively spring setting contrasts with her initial grief, suggesting renewal and life beyond death. The natural beauty symbolizes her inner transformation. This contrast highlights the story's irony.
6. Mrs. Mallard suffers from heart trouble, which foreshadows the tragic ending. Her physical weakness parallels her emotional vulnerability. This condition heightens the story's dramatic tension.
7. The description of nature reflects Louise's growing sense of freedom and hope. The fresh air, singing birds, and blue sky mirror her emotional rebirth. It creates a hopeful atmosphere in the narrative.
8. As she sits in the armchair, her grief turns to joy and relief. She begins to see her life differently, imagining a future without constraint. This change marks a major emotional shift.
9. She whispers "Free, free, free!" repeatedly, expressing her joy at newfound independence. This repetition emphasizes how important freedom is to her. It shows her breaking free from marital oppression.
10. Chopin uses imagery like the blue sky, singing birds, and fresh air to show Louise's emotional renewal. These images symbolize life, hope, and freedom. They help readers feel her transformation.
11. Louise realizes she is no longer bound by her husband's will. She understands she can now live for herself and make her own choices. This realization fills her with hope and excitement.
12. Louise feels a mix of love and resentment toward her husband. She acknowledges that she loved him sometimes but also felt confined. This complexity shows marriage isn't always simple or purely loving.
13. The story portrays marriage as limiting, even when love is present. It suggests that marriage can suppress a woman's independence. This challenges traditional romantic ideals.
14. She envisions a future where she lives for herself, free from control. She imagines years of happiness and self-determination. This vision represents her emotional liberation.
15. Louise's reaction differs from societal expectations because she finds joy rather than sorrow. Widows are expected to mourn, but she celebrates her freedom. This breaks social norms.

16. The phrase “free, free, free” marks the climax of Louise’s emotional awakening. It highlights how important freedom is to her identity. It is a powerful declaration of independence.
17. The irony lies in her joy at her husband’s death, which normally would cause grief. Her happiness surprises readers and reveals hidden feelings. It exposes the oppressive nature of her marriage.
18. Louise believes that whether kind or cruel, the husband’s control is still a form of imprisonment. She sees both intentions as equally restrictive. This critiques the loss of personal autonomy in marriage.
19. Louise’s self-assertion is central to the story as it shows her reclaiming her identity. Her joy is about discovering herself, not just her husband’s death. This moment highlights female empowerment.
20. Josephine begs Louise to open the door out of concern for her health. She fears that Louise might harm herself if she remains isolated. Josephine represents social care but lacks insight into Louise’s feelings.
21. The “elixir of life” symbolizes the invigorating feeling of freedom Louise experiences. She breathes in hope and vitality for the first time. This metaphor highlights her emotional rebirth.
22. The story shows a difference between outward appearances and inner reality. People expect Louise to be devastated, but she feels relief and joy. This contrast challenges assumptions about grief.
23. Richards is Brently’s friend who brings the news of the accident. He acts as a messenger who initiates the story’s conflict. His role shows the spread of information and its impact.
24. The “narrow aisles of pain” metaphorically represent life’s inevitable suffering. Everyone must face personal hardships alone. It contrasts with the “halls of pleasure” where people gather socially.
25. Describing Louise as a “goddess of Victory” shows her triumph over oppression. It reflects her newfound strength and confidence. This imagery elevates her emotional state.
26. Spring imagery symbolizes renewal and hope, mirroring Louise’s awakening. It suggests new beginnings and life beyond sorrow. This sets an optimistic tone for her transformation.
27. Louise’s reaction is situational irony because society expects grief, but she feels joy. This reversal surprises readers and reveals deeper emotional truths. It challenges traditional expectations.

28. The ending is ironic because Louise dies from shock when her husband returns alive. Her brief freedom is cruelly taken away. This twist emphasizes the story's themes of repression.
29. Chopin challenges traditional views by showing marriage as restrictive, not always loving. She suggests that marriage can limit a woman's freedom. This offers a feminist critique.
30. The story conveys that personal freedom is essential for happiness. Without freedom, life feels like imprisonment. Louise's death symbolizes the dangers of losing autonomy.
31. The doctors believe Louise died of "joy that kills." They misinterpret her death as caused by happiness. This misunderstanding adds to the story's irony.
32. The irony is that she likely died from despair, not joy. Society fails to understand her true feelings. This reveals the limits of medical and social perceptions.
33. The title highlights how much can change in a brief moment. It underscores the suddenness of emotional transformation. It also reflects life's unpredictability.
34. Time intensifies the story's emotional impact by compressing events into one hour. This shows how quickly life and feelings can change. It makes the story more powerful.
35. The tone shifts from sorrow to hope, then to tragedy. This mirrors Louise's emotional journey. It engages the reader in her complex feelings.
36. Chopin uses imagery, irony, and symbolism to show Louise's change. These techniques make her emotions vivid and relatable. They deepen the story's themes.
37. "A clear and exalted perception" implies Louise's mental clarity and awareness. She understands her situation deeply. This moment marks her intellectual awakening.
38. The story reflects feminist themes by highlighting female oppression. It critiques marriage's limiting role. Louise's desire for freedom is a feminist statement.
39. "She would live for herself" shows Louise's assertion of independence. It marks a break from traditional gender roles. She claims ownership of her life.
40. Social expectations had suppressed Louise's desires. Once free, she feels hopeful and alive. Society's control over women is a central issue.
41. Louise's identity is tied to being a wife, but she rediscovers herself when alone. Her selfhood was hidden under marital roles. This reveals the conflict between self and social roles.
42. The story remains relevant because it explores universal themes like freedom and identity. Gender roles and autonomy are still important today. It continues to resonate.

43. It explores identity by showing how social roles can hide true selfhood. Louise's solitude reveals her authentic feelings. The story questions imposed identities.
44. The "vacant stare" shows numbness after hearing the news. Later, "keen and bright" eyes show awakening and awareness. This marks her emotional shift.
45. Others perceive the marriage as loving, but Louise feels confined. This difference shows how appearances can be deceptive. It highlights the story's complexity.
46. Publicly, Louise must appear grieving; privately, she feels joy. The contrast shows the divide between social roles and personal emotions. It critiques societal expectations.
47. The story suggests that life and death are intertwined with joy and sorrow. Happiness can be fleeting, and pain is inevitable. This adds philosophical depth.
48. Sensory language like sights, sounds, and smells immerses readers in Louise's experience. It makes her emotional awakening vivid and relatable. This enhances the story's impact.
49. Louise prays for a long life because she wants to enjoy her freedom. Her hope contrasts with her earlier fear of life's length. It shows how freedom renews her desire to live.
50. The story teaches that freedom is vital for true happiness. Losing freedom can be fatal emotionally or physically. It's a powerful comment on autonomy and identity.

Fill in the blanks

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's (a) _____. **It was her sister Josephine who told her in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half (b) _____.** Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad (c) _____ was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a (d) _____ inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild (e) _____, in her sister's arms.

answer

- (a) death
- (b) concealment
- (c) disaster
- (d) paralysed
- (e) abandonment