

The Story of an Hour

Literary Analysis

Irony is a type of contradiction. A contradiction is something that is the opposite of what it should be. There are three kinds of irony in literature:

- **Verbal irony** is when a character says something that is different from what he or she means.
- **Situational irony** occurs when something happens that contradicts what the reader expects.
- **Dramatic irony** means the reader or audience knows something that a character does not know.

Writers sometimes use irony to develop a story's theme. **Theme** is the author's message or comment on life. For example, a writer might use irony to express the theme that people's outward appearances may not accurately reflect their inner realities. As you read, watch for different kinds of irony in "The Story of an Hour." Think about ways in which the examples of irony you find help develop the story's theme.

Reading Strategy

Kate Chopin wrote "The Story of an Hour" in the late 1800s. Reading a work of literature written in the distant past can be difficult. To deepen your understanding of events in the story and Chopin's message, consider what you know about the time period. Then, as you read, **relate the work to major themes and issues of the era**. Use the chart to record your ideas.

Detail	Related Issue of the Era