

“The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

Open-Book Test

Short Answer Write your responses to the questions in this section on the lines provided.

1. At the time “The Story of an Hour” was written—in the late nineteenth century—it was considered so shocking that several publishers rejected it. Why do you think the story seemed so shocking in its day?

2. In “The Story of an Hour,” after Mrs. Mallard hears the news of her husband’s death, she looks out the window and observes the scene outside. What is ironic about the kinds of sights she sees? How do they contrast with the news she received?

3. In “The Story of an Hour,” after Mrs. Mallard’s fit of weeping upon hearing the news of her husband’s death, she retreats to her room. There, she begins to experience a different kind of emotional response. What is that response? What kind of irony does it exemplify?

4. In “The Story of an Hour,” as Mrs. Mallard retreats to her room, she prefers to remain alone. Why does she refuse her sister’s offer to keep her company?

5. Toward the end of “The Story of an Hour,” Josephine says to Louise that by staying alone in her room, “you will make yourself ill.” This statement is an example of which kind of irony? Explain your answer.

6. There are several uses of irony in "The Story of an Hour." Using the chart below, list one example of verbal irony (words that suggest the opposite of their usual meaning), dramatic irony (when the reader or audience is aware of something that a character does not know), and situational irony (where the outcome is not what the reader would expect).

Verbal Irony	Dramatic Irony	Situational Irony

7. At the end of "The Story of an Hour," we read that the doctors attribute Louise's death to a heart attack caused by "the joy that kills." What can the reader conclude that the doctors assume about Louise when they pronounce her dead? What was Louise really feeling at the moment of her death?

8. Chopin chose the title of this story carefully. Does the title "The Story of an Hour" seem appropriate or inappropriate to you? Why or why not?

9. The double surprise of the ending of "The Story of an Hour"—the return of the supposedly dead husband and the sudden death of Louise—is an example of what kind of irony? Explain your answer.

10. If someone accused you of trying to forestall the inevitable, would he be implying that you are welcoming or avoiding your fate? Why? Base your answer on the meaning of *forestall* as it is used in "The Story of an Hour."
