

The Tone of “The Story of an Hour”

Alexander S. Peak

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“The Story of an Hour” was written to convey the message that neither love nor freedom is truly understood or appreciated until it has been lost. The tone of the story, which was written by Kate Chopin, is saturated with irony. Louis Mallard, the lead character in the story, loses her husband, just to realize that she never loved him to begin with. In doing so, she gains a sense of freedom from her late husband, a freedom that she *does* love; it gives her ephemeral life some meaning. The tone, which begins with hints of sadness, ascends to a state of glee. “Free! Body and soul free!” Then, irony strikes. She discovers that her husband, of whom she does *not* love, is actually still alive, and that she is not free after all. Her life suddenly loses meaning and, coincidentally, she suddenly, to a heart attack, loses her life. The story thus ends, following the reintroduction of Louis’s husband, Brently Mallard, with the tone having descended back into the dreary depression with which it began.