**The Story of an Hour Summary**

Kate Chopin's book *The Story of an Hour* gives an account of a 19th-century woman in a traditional Victorian marriage faced with the choices of what women should be or act as provided by chances in life. The protagonist, Louise Mallard, challenges the thought of being controlled by a patriarchal and chooses to charter a future alone with freedom from the control of her deceased husband (Geriguis, 2020). In the story, Mrs. Louise Mallard, the wife to Brently Mallard, is sickly with a heart condition and is at home when her sister, Josephine, and Richards, a writer and Brently's friend visit to inform her that her husband has succumbed after a railroad accident (Geriguis, 2020). They go together as a precaution to avoid breaking the news in a manner that may aggravate her heart condition. The news strikes Louise into grief, and she runs to her room, where she locks and weeps. However, like an epiphany, Louise processes the situation. She realizes that her husband's death is a terrible and wonderful outcome, as she will be free, peaceful, and happy by getting the opportunity to live by herself (Geriguis, 2020). Josephine, concerned about her heart condition, tries to coax her to get out of her room, and when she obliges, something astonishing happens. The front door opens, and Mr. Brently, who had not been killed in the accident, after all, appears; Louise collapses and dies from the shock, which the doctor claims were a shock of overjoy for seeing his live husband, but the reader sees it as a result of a disappointment for the loss of the freedom she had envisioned (Yazgı, 2020). Unlike in the 21st century, where women enjoy some rights and freedom, in the 19th century, women experienced immense conflict between freedom and repression in relationships, and marriage was used as a control tool difficult to escape.

**Conflict Between Freedom and Repression**

 Women in the 19th century were victims of a social construct, patriarchy, and chauvinism, which led to repression. Repression occurs when someone's feelings, thoughts, freedom, and desires are restrained (Hussein, 2021). One may be constrained psychologically and physically. Society may also choose to repress individuals that think outside of what is acceptable by the majority. In the 19th century, women were expected to be submissive, passive, and gentle, which is not what women desired, as depicted by Louise's life, who underwent social repression. This is observed when the news of her husband's supposed death makes her feel free (Yazgı, 2020). Unlike Louise, Brently could travel the world and engage in other activities outside while the wife was confined to staying home by virtue of being a woman (Paudel, 2019). Societal beliefs unequally shape the contrast between freedom for men and women. The news of Brently's death gives Louise the thought of claiming some' masculine' freedom. Freedom is such a significant aspect in any human's life, and we see this from the death of Louise, which was not majorly caused by the husband's return but by the realization of losing the perceived freedom again.

**Marriage as a Control Tool**

Traditionally, marriage was a symbol of status and a means of controlling women, while men contributed to building society by acquiring positions in leadership and control. Men were free to hold jobs, explore the world, and make decisions, while women had to be stay-at-home wives (Wang, 2022). Louise Mallard's marriage followed the same case, which made her feel trapped, and she admitted to only loving her husband at times and felt the injustice by sticking to the relationship (Hu, 2022). The end of oppressive and controlling marriages is bitter separations or even death, as the outcome in Louise's case.

**Conclusion**

The *Story of an Hour* paints a clear picture of the value of respecting women as valuable halves in marriage and as individuals deserving freedom and support to engage in whatever activities they desire. Despite the story depicting the 19th-century ideals of a woman, some parties in the current society still champion women's rights and equality, meaning there is still the need to enlighten the community of human rights and statutes such as the 19th Amendment. The paradox ending, where Louise experiences hope of a better life in the time of grief, and she collapses and dies when expected to be joyous of her husband's return, shows the counterintuitive nature of the desire for freedom and autonomy.

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