

Analysis of Setting in "The Story of an Hour"

The concrete aspects of setting that are then analyzed and interpreted are highlighted

Kate Chopin uses setting and the imagery of the setting to communicate "The Story of an Hour's" theme of freedom, independence, and a new life. The story starts in **a room** is not specified but it is understood that its public because people are gathered there, it can be the **living room or even the kitchen**. In that **room**, Josephine reveals to her sister that her husband is dead and the reaction is rather expected. Unlike the **public room, her bedroom**, a private scenario, symbolizes a place of confinement because that is where the reader finds out of her internal thoughts. After Mrs. Mallard finds out that her husband's dead, she cries and goes to **her room**. Being in a **closed room** is a representation of Mrs. Mallard feeling trapped in a dull marriage, but the **open window** which she stares out of is like an opportunity - a way out. Then what she sees through the window symbolizes a new beginning and her desire to start living for her. It is an opening to a new life, filled with new possibilities. **The house** represents her old life and **everything outside the window** represents how good her life could be. Her looking out **the window** represents her longing for freedom, because she can only watch and imagine what it's like to be free. From her **room**, she looks out the **window** and "she could see in the **open square** before her **house** the **tops of trees** that were all aquiver with **the spring** life." In many instances, Chopin uses imagery that has to do with the **sky** and openness to symbolize freedom: "There she stood, facing the open window" (par 3). Chopin continues the theme of openness when she describes the **front of her house as an "open square"** (par 4). Below her in the, "open square," are multiple motifs of spring—giving us an impression of new life. **She smells the rain, sees the commerce, and hears a song and the birds**. She also uses the **imagery of sky** to describe the new feeling of freedom that comes with the death of the main character's husband: "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" (par 5). Chopin also uses the imagery of a fresh and new spring season to signify the main character's new life: "the **tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life**" (par 4). Instead of mourning the loss of her husband, Mrs. Mallard "was drinking in a very elixir of life through that **open window**." The **window** she was looking through represented the "procession of years to come." She sees the abundance of life through her window, a release from **the jail of the room** that she's in and into her opportunity of life.