

Kate Chopin “The Story of an Hour”

1. Originally the story was titled “The Dream of an Hour”— how does this title differ in meaning?
2. What is the conflict in this story?
3. If this is, in a sense, a story about a symbolic journey, where does Mrs. Mallard “travel”?
4. What is the significance in the name “Mallard”?
5. What is the significance of the armchair and the open window?
6. At the closure of the scene does Mrs. Mallard fully retain a disconnect from herself and the outside world?

Charlotte Gilman “The Yellow Wallpaper”

1. What techniques does Gilman use to increase a sense of uneasiness in the opening sections of the story? How does the full setting of the house contribute to the protagonist’s “sickness”?
3. What was your first reaction to paragraph 31 (p. 558) when the protagonist describes her room? How does Gilman increase a sense of suspense with the description of the room? How does the room function within the story? What is relevant regarding the bars on the window and rings embedded in the walls?
4. What characteristics portray John, the husband? Do you think his actions are from lack of perception, or a lack of love? Compare ¶ 41 (p. 559) and 124 (p. 563).
5. Why does Gilman center the narrator’s focus on the wallpaper itself? —why not concentrate on other imprisoning aspects of the room?
6. What is pertinent about the time-period she spends in the attic room? What time of year is it when the story draws to a close?
7. What mannerisms of Gilman’s protagonist mirror Poe’s protagonist in “The Tell-Tale Heart”?