



Activity reading



1 Tune in

What title or message do you think the artist of this statue had in mind? Does it attract people's attention? Why?/Why not? Discuss in small groups and share your ideas in class.



2 Discuss and make your point

The number of people living alone is increasing. But the so-called 'singles' have changed compared to the former 'bachelors'. What's the advantage of living alone? What do these statements tell us about the singles' life? Discuss in groups.

- 1 Singles regard their friends as their family.
- 2 The main problem for singles is to find a fellow single to go on holiday with.
- 3 In cases of desperation, single women team up together to go to health farms.
- 4 No female single is ever content with the direction of her career.
- 5 Godchildren are the most fashionable accessory for singles.
- 6 Female singles constantly and secretly wonder if they will ever marry.

3 Discuss and write

The following questions give you some hints about the story. What do you expect to happen? What other questions enter your mind? With a partner, write down some more and share your ideas in class.

- 1 How did Mrs Mallard react to the bad news?
- 2 To what extent did the time of the year reflect her feelings?
- 3 What kind of life had she had until then?
- 4 What did she imagine life to be like in the future?
- 5 Could you describe Mrs Mallard and her husband?
- 6 Why might the story also be called 'The Dream of an Hour'?

Now read these extracts and answer the questions above as far as possible.

The Story of an Hour

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all slightly trembling with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. (...) The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves. (...) But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off on one of those patches of blue sky.

(...)

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes.

(...)

But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.



There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature.

(...)

She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

4 Listen and react

Listen to the beginning of the story with books closed. Then, try to answer the questions 1-6 and your own questions from task 3 again. Finally, read the whole story.