**Irony, Symbolism, Flashback, and Foreshadow**

First things first: get to know these basic definitions of irony so to properly understand it:

* + Irony - The difference between what someone would reasonably expect to happen and what actually does.
  + Situational Irony - When one's efforts produces the opposite results of what was expected
    - *Romeo and Juliet* Example: Romeo's attempt to establish peace between Mercutio and Tybalt leads to Mercutio's death and an escalation of the family war.
    - Historical Example: [Surrendering guards at the Bastille](http://www.helium.com/items/1085676-bastille-day-history) still managed to kill 98 citizens.
  + Verbal Irony - A contrast between what is said and what is actually meant (ie sarcasm)
    - *Romeo and Juliet* Example: After Romeo kills Tybalt and is banished, Juliet tells her mother how she wishes she could go to Romeo that evening. Her mom thinks Juliet wants to find Romeo and kill him. What she really means is she wants to go to him and enjoy intimate marital relations.
    - Literary Example: Prometheus says to Zeus, "You are as kind as you are wise." Zeus thinks it's a compliment. Because Prometheus doesn't think Zeus is wise, it's actually an insult.
  + Dramatic Irony - When the audience knows things the characters do not. This is the contrast between what the character thinks to be true and what we (the reader) know to be true.  Sometimes as we read we are placed in the position of knowing more than what one character knows.  Because we know something the character does not, we read to discover how the character will react when he or she learns the truth of the situation.  Think:  soap operas!
    - *Romeo and Juliet* Example: We know Juliet has taken a sleeping potion. Everyone else, except Friar Lawrence, thinks she is dead.
    - *Romeo and Juliet* Example: We know Juliet has married Romeo. The Capulets and Paris do not.
    - Literature Example: In Horton Hears a Who, we know that Horton really is talking to little people on a bubble, but everyone else thinks he's crazy.

Kate Chopin's "**Story of an Hour**" - First her husband's dead, which makes her sad but happy. Then her husband's alive, which kills her. All this takes place in an hour (you may have figured that out from the title).

In Guy de Maupussant's “**The Necklace**” a women becomes bored with her own life and covets the life of the wealthy. When finally given her chance to mingle among those she envies she feels inadequate in dress and appearance. She asks of her wealthy friend a favor, to borrow a piece of jewelry that would help her fit in. She chooses a beautiful diamond necklace. Unfortunately the necklace is lost. This women works for years and years to buy an identical necklace, only to find out the one she borrowed was a fake.   
The irony is found in the fact that borrowing the necklace was what she hoped would help her into the life she coveted, yet it was also what put her into a life of poverty.

**SYMBOLISM**   
A character, an action, a setting, or an object representing something else can be a symbol.  Most often, the symbol in a story is an object that represents its owner’s character or situation, or both.  For example, a secluded, near-empty apartment might represent the alienation and emotional emptiness of the tenant.  Symbols are usually recognizable by the amount of emphasis they receive.  Objects intended to be viewed as symbolic may be described in detail, be included in the title, be referred to frequently, or emphasized at the beginning or ending of the story.  When we recognize a symbol and understand its meaning or meanings we see more clearly what the writer chose to emphasize.

**FLASHBACK**:  This is a writers’ technique in which the author interrupts the plot of the story to recreate an incident of an earlier time (goes back in time; like giving the reader a memory).  This device is often used to provide additional information to the reader.

**FORESHADOWING**: This is a writers’ technique in which the author provides clues or hints as to what is going to happen later in the story.  It’s like the music in a scary movie when we know that something bad is about to happen.