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In a short story that was at first rejected by his publishers, Roald Dahl mixes dark humour with some irony to create a masterful tale. Mary Maloney is a dutiful wife, always happy to see her husband, Patrick, when he gets home from work. When he arrives one Thursday he seems out of sorts. When, after much prodding, he reveals that he wants to end their marriage, Mary appears outwardly calm, but is boiling inside. Not only does this news shock her, but it also means that they won't be going out for their weekly meal. While Patrick stares out the window, Mary slams a frozen leg of lamb against the back of his head. After putting the lamb on to cook and making her way to the grocery store, Mary returns and alerts the authorities of finding her husband's body. With police detectives rushing over, they begin to look for clues that might help them solve this crime. All the while, Mary stays quiet, watching the chaos and minding the oven. A wonderful piece of writing that can be read in a few minutes, Dahl shows why he is top of his genre. Recommended to all those who love a little murder and irony over a cuppa!  
  
I have long enjoyed the work of Roald Dahl, no matter what the topic. His ability to entertain the reader knows no boundaries and the ideas that appear in his stories seem endless. While a short piece, Dahl is able to capture the reader's attention in the opening sentences, focussing attention on Mary Maloney and her duties as a wife (of the time). As she waits for her husband, she can see that there is something wrong, though has yet to put her finger on the source. While there is no time for backstory or real character development, Dahl does give the reader some insight with her actions as they relate to the murder of her husband. While others grace the pages of this story, there is little the reader gleans from them, keeping all the attention on the protagonist. Dahl weaves this short story together effectively, including the police procedural aspect to this brief piece of writing. Irony flows through the dialogue and the brief narrative, keeping the reader wondering where things will go and how Dahl will tie them off. Brilliantly executed, to say the least!  
Kudos, Mr. Dahl, for a sensational piece. I am so very glad to have been steered in the direction of a free publication. My Dahl reading continues!



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I've always liked Dahl's humorously dark storytelling since childhood and have grown to appreciate many of his tales for adults.  
  
Most of his short stories were adapted for TV under the title 'Tales of the Unexpected' and this title perfectly encapsulates that.  
  
As Mary Maloney reacts to the shocking news that her husband Patrick has just announced by killing him, clearly the senior policeman's work has rubbed of on his wife as she is about to cook up the most devious of schemes.  
  
Short and to the point, this is a perfect starting point for those that only know Dahl's children's books.

Mary is a loving wife and mother-to-be (so it seems) who savagely murders her husband with the leg of a lamb she was going to feed him for dinner after learning that he was planning to leave her. Her deceased husband Patrick who worked as a police officer attracts a lot of attention from his fellow officers who come to investigate the crime scene as soon as they learn about the incident. Mary, using her cunning wits and deceptive adorableness plays them all like a fiddle while hiding the truth of the crime (literally) right under their noses.  
  
A very comedic horror story about how fast a person can snap or reveal their true colors when someone brings inconvenience into their life. The way Mary is introduced makes you think that her marriage is perfect and that she's the epitome of a perfect wife, but the moment her husband claims he's going to leave her, she snaps and reveals how violent and mentally unstable she is. This hints that there are probably some underlying issues that made Patrick want to leave her in the first place. There's a big difference between how people describe themselves and how they actually are. The gap between Mary's bubbly personality with how cold-blooded and disconnected from reality she's portrayed to be is chilling.  
  
I wish the story was longer than just a few pages. If it was novella length and went more in depth about Mary's life and what she's really like beneath the sweet surface, it would make for a great psychological thriller.  
  
My rating: 3.5/5