

SYNOPSIS

"The Awakening"

On the Gulf of Mexico at the summer enclave of Mme. Aline Lebrun, Edna Pontellier's family relaxes with the Ratignolles and other refined New Orleans vacationers. During the week, while 40-year-old Léonce Pontellier works at the brokerage, gambles, and visits his club, Edna, a 28-year-old mother of Etienne and Raoul, receives the attentions of 26-year-old Robert Lebrun, who intends to travel to Vera Cruz, Mexico, in the fall. One night, after Léonce falls asleep, Edna weeps from some unknown cause. She contrasts herself to Adèle Ratignolle; Edna concludes that, in contrast to Adèle, she is not a "mother-woman," a person who gives up self for family. Mme. Ratignolle, a Creole like Léonce, freely describes her pregnancies. Nonetheless, the two women become close friends.

Edna, deep into a stressful introspection, takes her ease in the sea and learns to swim. She recalls having crushes on three men during her girlhood in Kentucky. She married Léonce because he was a Creole and Catholic, both causes for rebellion against her Presbyterian upbringing. Mme. Ratignolle fears that Robert's attentions will inflame Edna's girlhood tendency for romance. On the evening of Saturday, August 28, the vacationers' entertainment includes piano music played by Mlle. Reisz, whose fervid performance causes Edna to weep. At Robert's urging, she goes for a swim and propels herself far into the gulf. Robert walks her to the cottage, where she sleeps in the hammock and ignores her husband's demand that she come to bed.

The next morning, Edna summons Robert to accompany her to worship services across the bay. On the crossing, she is aware that Robert flirts with Mariequita, a married Creole girl. Edna grows drowsy during the service and departs. Robert escorts her to Madame Antoine's, where Edna sleeps until late in the day. Two hours before sunset, Edna and Robert return across the bay in Tonie's sailboat.

That evening, Edna learns that Robert is departing that night at 10:00 P. M. for Mexico. She is angered by the suddenness of his going and insists that he write her, but he does not. Strangely awakened by her infatuation with Robert, she realizes that she could never give up her individuality, even for her children. The next week, Edna returns to Esplanade Street and begins to despair. Léonce scolds her for failing to keep her weekly visiting hours and for neglecting their friends, whom he considers essential to his business. The Pontelliers quarrel; he leaves in a huff; she removes her wedding band and stamps on it.

A change comes over Edna. She studies painting with Laidpore, abandons household management, mourns over Robert's neglect of her, and befuddles her husband, who asks Dr. Mandelet how to manage her moodiness. The doc-

tor encourages Léonce to give her time to return to normal. Meanwhile, Mlle. Reisz offers Edna one of Robert's letters. She recognizes in Edna a soulfulness and defiance against social custom.

Edna's father, a Kentucky colonel and Confederate veteran, arrives and makes a social splash among local friends. Edna surprises him by refusing to attend her sister's wedding; the colonel upbraids Léonce for being too lenient with his wife. Grandmother Pontellier takes the children to Iberville; Léonce travels on an extended business trip to New York. Edna exults in controlling her own life and moves into a small cottage around the corner. Alcée Arobin, a notorious rake, courts Edna, who allows him to pose for a sketch, but does not give in to his seductions. She hosts a lavish dinner party, which succeeds in stirring talk of her liberated lifestyle, and makes a happy visit to her sons in Iberville.

On a visit to Mlle. Reisz, Edna sits alone at the piano when Robert returns unannounced. He walks her to her cottage; she grows jealous of his relationship with a girl in Vera Cruz. They meet again in an out-of-the-way restaurant. Edna announces that she is no man's possession. They return and snuggle together. A message summons Edna to attend Mme. Ratignolle, who is in labor; Robert begs her not to leave. She sits with her friend, then returns to an empty house and a farewell note from Robert. Edna journeys to the summer resort and swims naked far into the gulf to the extent of her strength.

"Emancipation: A Life Fable"

An animal that was born in a cage awakens from his daily lolling to an open door. After numerous attempts, he forces himself into the open, drinks from a fetid pool, and never returns to the cage.

"At the 'Cadian Ball"

Bobinôt, who longs for the vampish Calixta, wants to attend a neighborhood dance. Alcée Laballière, a planter nearly ruined by a cyclone that devastates his 900 acres of rice, leaves before midnight to attend the ball. A family friend, Clarisse, observes his going. At the dance, he flirts with Calixta. A negro interrupts their intimacies on the balcony. Alcée, fearing a catastrophe at home, hurries to Clarisse, who lures him home out of love. After Alcée's departure, Calixta agrees to marry Bobinôt.

"Désirée's Baby"

Désirée, an abandoned orphan reared by Mme. Valmondé, marries Armand Aubigny and gives birth to a child with negroid features. Armand grows so angry that Désirée flees to the bayou and disappears. Armand burns the infant's clothes and bedding. Among his parents' letters, he discov-

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ers a note that proves that his own mother had been a slave.

"La Belle Zoraïde"

Manna-Loulou tells her mistress the story of the beautiful Zoraïde, who dismays her owner by choosing to marry Mézor, a slave who dances on Congo Square. The mistress forces Doctor Langlé to sell Mézor. Zoraïde, grieving for her love, gives birth to his child, whom the mistress takes away. Zoraïde grows distracted and believes that the bundle of rags she clutches is her child. She lives far into old age with her delusions.

"At Chênière Caminada"

Tonie Bocaze falls in love with Mademoiselle Claire Duvigné, who plays the organ at mass. He follows her about Grand Isle and offers the services of his boat. One day, when they return at dusk from a sail on the bay, she pays him with a silver chain. That January, weak with longing for Claire, Tonie encounters Mme. Labrun in New Orleans and learns that Claire died three weeks earlier from a cold. Tonie, relieved of the burden of wanting her, returns to normal.

"The Story of an Hour"

Josephine breaks the news to her sister Louise Mallard that Louise's husband Brently has died in a railroad disaster. Louise sinks into a reverie of joy that she is free of her marriage. Josephine is begging her to unlock the door when Brently returns home, thus disproving the news of his death. Louise collapses and dies of heart disease.

"Lilacs"

Madame Adrienne Farival, a former pupil, arrives at the convent with armfuls of lilacs and receives the welcome of Sister Agathe. For the fourth consecutive year, Adrienne brings her annual gift, this time a linen altar cloth. After a two-week visit, she returns to her singing career in Paris, where her manager, Henri, worries about her unexplained absence. On her next visit to the convent, Adrienne is stunned to have her gifts returned and receive a reproachful letter from the mother superior. The convent door is locked and the fallen lilacs swept from the portico.

"Athénaïse"

Cazeau resents his wife's extended visit to her family and realizes that their two-month marriage is a mistake. He goes to fetch her on the third day; she refuses to come home. Her brother Montéclin supports her decision, but Cazeau prevails and escorts her home. He resents her dependence on Montéclin. When Athénaïse flees again and settles in New Orleans, she meets Gouvernail, a newspaper editor who rents the room next to hers and develops an infatuation for her. When Athénaïse realizes that she is pregnant, she rushes back to Cazeau, who is content to have her home.

"A Pair of Silk Stockings"

Mrs. Sommers contemplates how to spend fifteen dollars, then goes to a lunch counter. She purchases black silk stockings for \$1.98, then buys magazines, shoes, gloves, and dinner at a restaurant, followed by a theater play. On

the cable car home, a man looks at her longingly.

"Nég Créol"

Chicot, a black fishmonger with unpopular religious views, lives like a beggar and conducts a turbulent relationship with Mamzelle Aglaé. After she grows ill and dies during the night, he ignores gossip about her family connections, pays no attention to the passing funeral cortege, and concentrates on his work.

"Elizabeth Stock's One Story"

Among the effects of Elizabeth Stock, postmistress of Stonelift, is the story of a post card she delivers to Nathan Brightman, a wealthy businessman who is being summoned to a meeting with Collins in St. Louis. Brightman is grateful that she comes out on a stormy night to pass on the message. Later, the government discharges Elizabeth and hires a young Mr. Collins. Elizabeth has no hope for the future and no money to live on. She trusts in luck.

"The Storm"

While Bobinôt shelters his son Bibi during a storm, Bobinôt's wife Calixta allows her former lover, Alcée, to enter the house. They make love. Calixta welcomes her family back after the storm and cooks shrimp for them. Alcée, pleased at a reunion with Calixta, writes his wife Clarisse and suggests that she remain longer in Biloxi with the children. Clarisse is happy for a brief separation from her husband.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

One of the strong voices for the emancipation of women, Katherine "Kate" O'Flaherty Chopin (February 8, 1851-August 22, 1904), a reader and student of Guy de Maupassant, Walt Whitman, and Sarah Orne Jewett, and herself a pivotal figure in American and feminist literature, was born ahead of her time. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, she was the daughter of Eliza Faris O'Flaherty, a member of the French Creole *bourgeoisie*, and immigrant Thomas O'Flaherty, a merchant who invested in the Pacific Railroad and was killed in the collapse of a trestle over the Gasconade River on the train's initial run. A second tragedy took the life of her half-brother, a prisoner of the Union army during the Civil War and victim of typhoid fever. As a partaker of her mother's social prominence, Chopin lived well, but was brought up under a strict Catholic hand both at home and at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, from which she graduated in 1868. Her great grandmother, Madame Victoria Charleville, taught her French and piano and influenced her moral upbringing.

Regardless of the strictures on her freedom, Chopin absorbed the richly picaresque tales of Creole and Cajun St. Louis. After the traditional coming-out ceremonies, at age 20, she served as companion to a married opera star, who lived in New Orleans according to her whim, an uncommon independence in women of that era. A year later, the author married Oscar Chopin, a banker and cotton dealer who lived lavishly, treating his bride to a European honeymoon, attendance at the arts, and a home in New Orleans's American district, apart from the Chopin Creole ties. She lived a life free of domestication, patronized the opera and theater,

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strolled unchaperoned about the city, vacationed on Grand Isle, read widely, and smoked in public, a daring set of behaviors for women of the 1800s. The family's financial comfort ended in 1879, when Oscar Chopin's failed business forced him to settle on the family property on the Cane River in Natchitoches.

After Chopin's husband died of swamp fever in 1883, she continued working the cotton plantation near Cloutierville and reared her six children — Jean, Oscar, George, Frederick, Felix, and Lelia — but had to forego work after two years and move her family to St. Louis. At the suggestion of her family physician, Chopin, still recovering from the loss of her husband and close relatives, began reading the philosophers of the period — Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. She wrote verse, local sketches, children's stories, and short fiction and kept a regular Thursday salon, even though she had little time to herself or freedom from parental responsibility. Her first novel, *Bayou Folk*, sold immediately, but the second, *Young Dr. Gosse*, found no takers. At length, Chopin destroyed it and concentrated on shorter works. Published in collections and in *America*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Vogue*, *Youth's Companion*, *Criterion*, *St. Louis Dispatch*, *Harper's Young People*, and other periodicals, she derived much contentment from her career until 1899, when a public outcry against immorality arose over the sensuality and anti-Victorianism of *The Awakening*. She wrote another novel, *An Avocation and a Voice*, but ceased publishing her fiction at the turn of the century, ironically, only a year before the death of Queen Victoria. Chopin's death came after a demanding two-day jaunt to the World's Fair, when she succumbed to cerebral hemorrhage.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Although critical comment of the 1890s placed Chopin among pornographers and scurrilous exhibitionists and her royalties for *The Awakening* amounted to \$145 over a three-year period, she found favor with one major American critic, Edmund Wilson, who admired her frank recreation of male-female relationships and her lack of sentimentality. Within three decades, supporters lifted Chopin above the patronizing level of Creole local colorist on a par with George Washington Cable to a keen observer of psychological forces. After the push of the feminist movement in the 1960s, Chopin appeared regularly on the list of pro-feminist writers, including D. H. Lawrence, and is much lauded in Europe and Japan. Her handsome balconied home in Cloutierville, which has been turned into a bayou folk museum, is marked with a plaque honoring her achievements.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To define the feminist point of view
2. To comment on aspects of local color and language
3. To evaluate behaviors required of females
4. To discuss the effects of gender-based discrimination
5. To anticipate the consequences of choices
6. To typify social rituals and ceremonies

7. To note the varied emotional responses to boredom and despair
8. To express the interaction between setting and mood
9. To assess the author's objectivity
10. To express the various dialects and translations in standard English

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explain why Edna rebels against her father and husband as well as Alcée
2. To contrast Athénaïse and Zoraïde in terms of their losses
3. To detail how "At the 'Cadian Ball" connects to the action of "The Storm"
4. To contrast Mrs. Sommers, Edna, and Mme. Ratignolle in terms of luxuries and domestic hardship
5. To explain the death of Louise Mallard and the disappearance of Zoraïde
6. To credit Edna's integrity, loyalty, and creativity
7. To note the change that desire causes in Alcée Laballière, Alcée Arobin, Tonie, Mézor, Bobinôt, and Nég Créol
8. To recount the pleasurable images of water, sunset, lilac blossoms, fresh seafood, dance music, horse back riding, dressing up, and infants
9. To evaluate Edna's unhesitating response to confusion and impetus
10. To explain why Léonce enjoys different pastimes from the women at Grand Isle
11. To delineate the multilayered society of New Orleans and the tragedy of a black baby born to a white couple
12. To enumerate examples of refinement and courtesy, for instance, Robert's insistence on rest for Edna after leaving morning worship and Mlle. Reisz's sharing of personal letters with Edna

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in *The Awakening*. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. Mrs. Pontellier, though she had married a Creole, was not thoroughly at home in the society of Creoles; never before had she been thrown so intimately among them.

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(Chapter IV, p. 52)

(A cultural term referring to French, Spanish, and Portuguese settlers living among indigenous peoples in Latin and Central America, the West Indies, and the United States. The term evolved into a specific designation for French- or Spanish-speaking caucasians. Often misused as a synonym for metis, half-breed, quadroon, mulatto, or other slurs referring to miscegenation, the term refers to culture, language, and custom rather than race. To Edna, Creoles are more open about sex and anatomy than she has been accustomed to in Kentucky.)

2. Never would Edna Pontellier forget the shock with which she heard Madame Ratignolle relating to old Monsieur Farival the harrowing story of one of her *accouchements*, withholding no intimate detail. (Chapter IV, p. 53)
(Ironically, when English-speaking people reach for euphemisms to avoid shocking listeners with blunt terms, they often use the French equivalent, as with accouchement for pregnancy. Other examples of French euphemisms are enceinte (pregnant), dishabillé (undressed), and demi-monde (prostitutes), none of which was an acceptable term in polite society during the 1890s.)
3. But the beginning of things, of a world especially, is necessarily vague, tangled, chaotic, and exceedingly disturbing. How few of us ever emerge from such beginning! How many souls perish in its tumult! (Chapter VI, p. 57)
(At 28, Madame Pontellier is entering a period of emotional turbulence, a disaffection for the staid, predictable New Orleans scene as she has lived it, and an adventurous urge to try new arrangements and experiences. In contrast to her mental unrest is "the voice of the sea," which Chopin relates to an inner truth which is "seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation." The author is certain that the pulse of the waves "speaks to the soul." The sensual embrace of waters on a bather becomes, "sensuous, enfolding," suggesting a lover's embrace.)
4. Would you like a cup of bouillon? Shall I stir you a toddy? Let me mix you a toddy with a drop of Angostura. (Chapter VIII, p. 65)
(Ironically, Robert mixes a bit of refreshment for Adèle Ratignolle. He mixes a cocktail with a drop of bitters, a natural ingredient meant to encourage the body's own healing secretions. The symbol bodes ill for the final scenes in which Mme. Ratignolle's summons to Edna ends Robert's hopes for a consummation of their romance. Herself bitter in her domestic cage of one pregnancy every two years, Adèle expresses bitterness at the illusion of being abandoned by Dr. Mandélet, her husband, and the midwife at the moment when Edna arrives to coax her through labor.)
5. He could not explain; he could not tell her that he had penetrated her mood and understood. (Chapter X, p. 76)
(Joking about a ghost arising from the Gulf to overwhelm her, Robert teases Edna, yet realizes that he has perceived her need for spiritual freedom. The clumsy use of the phallic "penetrated" pairs with Léonce's finishing his cigar. Ironically, at the intense moment when Edna feels the initial "throbbings of desire," both men treat her less like a love object and more like a child by being overly solicitous for her health and comfort as she lies in the hammock, a suspended state that suggests the suspension of old, outworn mores and a free-floating release from stress and responsibility.)
6. A youth, a mild-faced Acadian, was drawing water from the cistern, which was nothing more than a rusty buoy, with an opening on one side, sunk in the ground. (Chapter XIII, p. 83)
(Ejected from Acadia in Canada in 1755, French-speaking Cadians or Cajuns were forcefully resettled over a period of 35 years in English colonies to the south, eventually making Louisiana a permanent home. Mixed racially and culturally with Indians, Spanish, Portuguese, and Africans, Cajun society formed a curious blend of peoples and lifestyles in an already diverse Mississippi seaport. Their influence on cooking, entertainment, and hospitality is still felt in Louisiana.)
7. The lovers were profiting by the general conversation on Mexico to speak in whispers of matters which they rightly considered were interesting to no one but themselves. The lady in black had once received a pair of prayer-beads of curious workmanship from Mexico, with very special indulgence attached to them, but she had never been able to ascertain whether the indulgence extended outside the Mexican border. (Chapter XV, pp. 90-91)
(The awkward symbolism of the reclusive lovers and the equally singular lady in black accompanies the beachgoers each time they approach the Barataria Bay. As emblems of Edna's two states of mind, they suggest the immaturity and vulnerability of a romance budding to fruition and the zealot's dolorous dedication to holy vows, which suggests Edna's concerns for home, sons, and husband. The built-in jest about an indulgence extending beyond a border indicates Edna's temptation to jettison the bonds of matrimony and carry self-indulgence to the extreme — or at least to New Orleans.)
8. Why, my dear, I should think you'd understand by this time that people don't do such things; we've got to observe *les convenances* if we ever expect to get on and keep up with the procession. (Chapter XVII, p. 101)
(Léonce, a hypocritical stickler for observing the social demands of New Orleans society, pushes off on Edna the job of placating visitors or explaining to them her absence on Tuesdays, the day she usually receives callers. To the stack of "ladies' visiting cards," he comments that Belthrop is important to him because "his business is worth a good, round sum to me." He rejects Mrs. Highcamp and encourages social niceties to

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Madame Laforcé, who "came all the way from Carrolton.")

9. She felt like some new-born creature, opening its eyes in a familiar world that it had never known.
(Chapter XXXIX, p. 175)
(*Edna Pontellier is often compared to the Botticelli painting of Venus arising from the sea. Nude with twining hair and strategically placed hands concealing her modesty, the figure is a companion piece to an equally delightful drawing of Primavera, the Italian word for spring. The succeeding line moves the imagery from Greek mythology to the Bible and Eve by comparing the wavelets to snakes curling about her ankles.*)
10. She heard the barking of an old dog that was chained to the sycamore tree. The spurs of the calvary officer clanged as he walked across the porch. There was the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks filled the air.
(Chapter XXXIX, p. 176)
(*The final sense impressions that strike Edna — possibly before she drowns — again suggest the passing of an era. The old dog represents male domination; and the cavalry spurs suggest the clank of her father's former curmudgeonly influence on her girlhood. Overwhelming these two negative images are "the hum of bees, and the musky odor of pinks," both feminine sense impressions. The bees, a productive colony of insects, are, like the pinks or perennial dianthus, an enduring natural symbol.*)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1 - 4 Literal Level

1. What setting opens and closes *The Awakening*?
(*Madame Aline Lebrun, with the assistance of her sons Robert and Victor, operates a seaside retreat on the Barataria Bay, which faces the Gulf of Mexico. Her summer cottages house middle-class New Orleans individuals and families who let their children play in the sand and who enjoy sailing, dining, walking, sightseeing, evening entertainment, and swimming. The moral tone of Madame Lebrun's establishment is refined, even somewhat prim. Swimmers approach the water in bath-houses, which allow privacy for sunbathing, dressing, and entering the sea. Because fathers of families settle their families for month-long vacations, they often return to town on the rockaway, a carriage that transports them to their jobs. In the ensuing weekdays, Madame Lebrun's establishment resembles a colony virtually devoid of men, except for the two Lebrun brothers and workers such as Tonie, who ferries travelers to Grand Isle.*)
2. How do the Pontelliers live in New Orleans?
(*Léonce Pontellier, a brokerage agent and entrepreneur, supplies his family with an imposing residence on Esplanade Street decked with the best of china and silver, draperies, furniture, and objets d'arts. Their lives intertwine obligatory entertaining and receiving Tuesday guests with Léonce's expectation of expanded business from his social connections. The Pontellier children, ages four and five, remain in the care of a quadroon to allow Edna freedom from domestic responsibility. A cook provides the meals. The running of the household falls upon Edna, who is expected to see that the overall social impression is wholesome and in keeping with current standards and tastes.*)
3. How does Edna determine that she needs a change?
(*A growing ennui with marriage and discontent with self needles at 28-year-old Edna during the summer vacation. In August, she awakens in tears and cries out her despair without giving it a name. To offset the possessiveness and brusque departures of a husband twelve years her senior, she enjoys sending Robert to fetch for her, to escort her to church, and to follow in her shadow like a personal attendant. At length, she thinks of him as a potential lover and allows herself wisps of fantasy to flesh out her hidden desires.*
At the end of August, the shock of Robert's hasty departure to Mexico intensifies Edna's need to break free of social constraint and to develop a schedule of activities that utilize her artistic creativity, physical needs, and independence. By moving from a home paid for by Léonce, she takes stock of what she owns and admires her acquisitions as milestones in the forthcoming break with the past. The sudden interest of Alcée Arobin proves that she is still appealing to men and that her disaffection with six years of married life can give place to a renewed dalliance with suitors.)
4. How do events change Edna's plans?
(*After Léonce learns that Edna has taken separate quarters and abandoned her motherhood role to grandmother Pontellier, he makes demands, writes angry letters to Edna, sulks at his club, and asks the advice of Dr. Mandelet about Edna's sudden moodiness. The doctor suggests that Edna be allowed to act out the discontent that fuels her new personality. For a time, she is happy with New Orleans and her life as a painter. She visits Etienne and Raoul and discovers them happy in bucolic Iberville.*
The idyll is shortlived. The scenario crumbles on the evening that Robert claims her as a lover and implores her to remain in her cottage. She chooses to answer a call to Adèle's bedside to help her friend cope with childbirth. The traumatic, emotionally exhausting event breaks Edna's resolve to divorce herself of womanly duties. Eager to reunite with Robert and the quiet of her cottage, she enters an empty house and reads a joyless farewell note. The realization that she has lost a potential lover forces her back to the waters where she swam during the summer. In the February cold, six months after she, both figurative and literally, learned to swim, she strips away her clothing and casts aside her bathing suit before plunging into the gulf and churning far out to sea, presumably to her death.)

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Questions 5 - 8 Interpretive Level

5. What foreign terms impinge on the stories?

(Much of Chopin's writing contains French, patois, and Latin, an understanding of which is essential to meaning. A few terms—*trainée*, *bouillon*, *neglige*, and *peignoir*, reflect French terms that have been assimilated into English. Others require translation:

à jeudi until Thursday

à point exactly right

accouchements pregnancies

Ah! si tu savais/Ce que tes yeux me disent Ah, if you knew/what your eyes tell me

Ah, c'est vous, Calixta? Comment ca va, mon enfant?

Ah, is it you, Calixta? How are things going, my child?

Allez vous-en! Go away!

Au revoir Goodbye

bénitiers containers of holy water

Blagueur—farceur—gros bête va! Trickster—fool—terrible beast go away!

Bon chien tient de race A good dog holds to the race

Bon Dieu Good God

Bon Dieu Seigneur Dear Lord God

bonne maid

Bonté Divine! Heavenly goodness!

bourgeois middle class

brave homme brave man

C'est Espagnol, ça That one there is Spanish

C'est pas Chrétien, tenez! It isn't Christian, believe me!

café chantant cafe singer

café-au-lait coffee with milk

Ces maudits gens du raiderode The cursed railroad people

chambres garnies furnished rooms

chouffleur cauliflower

cochon de lait! milk-fed pig

corbeille basinette

coup d'état revolution

court bouillon fragrant broth

Credo in unum Deum patrem omnipotentem I believe in one God, the father almighty

des 'tites cousines little female cousins

des esprits forts strong spirited

désolé saddened

Dieu sait God knows

eau de Lourdes water from Lourdes

Elle est morte She is dead

en bon ami as a good friend

en bonne ménagère with proper control

enragée insane

Espèce de lionèse; prends ça, et ça! Lioness, take that and that!

faut de la patience! butor, va! one must have patience! Fool, go away!

filé powdered sassafras leaves used as a thickener for soup

friandises niceties

grand esprit great spirit

grigris black magic

hein Eh? Isn't that right?

J'vous réponds I reply to you

la belle dame the beautiful lady

la folle the crazy one

la maison grise the gray house

la nuit blanche a clear night

là-bas au Cathédral over there at the Cathedral

le bal est fini the ball is over

le parc aux petits children's park

les convenances the social conventions

ma chère my dear

Ma foi! My faith

ma mère my mother

ma reine my queen

Mais ce n'est pas mal! Elle s'y connaît, elle a de la force, oui. But this is not bad. She knows how, she has talent, yes.

mais si but if

Malheureuse! Wretchedness

marais marsh

marron glacé glazed chestnut

mo l' aime toi I love you

mulatresse dark-skinned woman

nom de guerre pseudonym

panache style

par exemple for example

parbleu Indeed!

parterre flower garden

pas d' sucre No sugar?

Passez! Adieu! Proceed! Farewell!

patés spicy spreads

pauvre ti chou poor little cabbage

pension guest house

planté là planted there

porte cochère covered entranceway

porte-monnaie change purse

poudre de riz rice powder

Quartier Français French Quarter

régime rule

Sacré-Coeur Sacred Heart

soirée musicale evening musical entertainment

souffrante suffering one

Tcha va b'en; et vous, mam'zelle? Not bad; and you, miss?

tête montée snobbery

Tiens! Voilà que Madame Ratignolle est jalouse! There! See how jealous Mrs. Ratignolle is!

Tiens! tu vas les garder comme tu as jadis fait. Je ne veux plus de ce train là, moi! There, you are going to guard them as you did previously. I want no more of this business!

tignon hair formed into a roll or bun

tisanes herb teas

vendeuse de café coffee seller

volante loose

Vous pas bézouin tisane Have you no herb tea?

Vous pas veux mo cri gagni docteur? Don't you want me to get the doctor?)

6. How do the other stories reflect the style of *The Awakening*?

(Kate Chopin's collected stories echo with similar statements of theme, setting, and motif. In the cloying patri-

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archy of the 1890s, women, whether white, black, or of mixed race, must demand their rights and satisfactions. This theme recurs in "Désirée's Baby," a dark-toned account of a woman spurned because her offspring appeared too negroid to suit the father. Similarly, the unidentified beast in "Emancipation: A Life Fable" makes its exit from the unlocked cage, but, like Edna and Désirée, not without paying the price of emancipation in torn flesh and thirst for pure water.

In other stories, women grasp the love of their lives or reject marriages of convenience. Zoraïde, central figure in "La Belle Zoraïde," loses touch with reality by clinging to the vision of her beloved, spirited Mézor, who is sold into bondage further north because he is too dark-skinned, too African for her. Athénaïse, whose story carries her to the family home and her brother's protection and to New Orleans in the quest for identity, determines that marriage to Cazeau is a sensible choice after she learns that she is pregnant. In "A Pair of Silk Stockings," Mrs. Sommers, the possessor of \$15 to spend as she likes, must discover what her soul needs by trying on and buying the delights she has been missing. Louise, the protagonist of "The Story of an Hour," breathes a single hour free of domestic tyranny before dying from the shock of her husband's safe return from a train accident.

Other stories reuse Chopin's themes in different settings. In "Nég Créol," Chicot's mechanical, mindless work in the fish market and his friendship with eccentrics distances him from real values, family, and consolation; likewise, in "Elizabeth Stock's One Story," the protagonist clings to a professionalism that fails her when a young man supplants her in an obvious political firing of a deserving postal worker. "Lilacs," the revelation of motivation in a woman driven to atone for her degraded life, suggests that Edna is not the only woman to insist on an unfettered hour to act on inner drives or to exorcise unseen demons. The least connected of the collection is "At Chênrière Caminada," the study of the male point of view in an unrequited and socially impossible match between a simple island boatman and the object of his love, the spoiled and self-absorbed Mlle. Claire Duvigné.

Perhaps the most satisfying of plots are the paired studies of motivation and consequence in "At the 'Cadian Ball'" and "The Storm: A Sequel to 'The 'Cadian Ball.'" Showcasing a fiery Creole and a more refined young woman of prominence and gentility, the stories counterpose Calixta and Clarisse. The first represents the Dionysian spirit, free of inhibitions and willing to bargain for whatever she can get. The contemplative, disciplined Clarisse, the goddaughter of a moneyed household, is not too proud to declare her love for the wandering Alcée and suffers the consequences of a marriage built on her husband's waywardness and carnal satisfaction. Although Clarisse and her family exist outside the pale just as Bobinôt and Bibi sit out the storm, both seem content with the leavings on the fringe of their mismatching to strong-willed spouses.)

7. How do details enliven the telling of Chopin's stories?
(Mixed in with strong theme and a driving spirit of eman-

ipation for women are memorable vignettes among Chopin's more dramatic scenarios. There are vivid moments, such as the garnet aperitif so dazzling that Miss Mayblount chooses to look rather than sip. There are private pleasures, for example, coffee at Catiche's hideaway, hot fried sunfish, and a night in the hammock beneath a white shawl. Grandeur touches put Mlle. Reisz in the command of the piano as well as of Robert's letters and reveal the unforeseen beauties of organ music to accompany mass at an unostentatious island worship service. Personal eccentricities picture Mlle. Reisz wearing a faded clutch of fake violets until the evening of the dinner party, when Edna rewards her faithful friendship with a fresh bunch.

To smooth the harsh jangle of the vocal viragoes—the Virginia Woodhulls and Susan B. Anthonys of her day, Chopin grants grace to her characters at all levels, even the voiceless quadron and Félicité. Edna, for all her self-centered stirrings, obeys the inclination to travel to Iberville and hug the boys. Adèle thinks first of Edna when she lacks for trust and strength and clutches at her friend while leaning into the birth pangs. Adrienne lets a spring fragrance determine the day of her annual pilgrimage and the week of letting go, which she strews with lilacs and gifts to the convent. In every instance, a pictorial quality focuses and frames each female character and settles her among the gallery of women whom Chopin has depicted as real.)

8. What sympathy does Chopin offer male characters?
(Chopin's understanding of women's need to stretch and reach beyond the confines of a predetermined fate extends to men as well. She offers some sympathy to the brash, possessive Léonce, whose confusion takes him to a trusted medical adviser for consultation. Chicot, the lowly scaler of fish, has his own sphere to guard after he loses his old friend. Tonie, adrift in an impossible yearning for Claire Duvigné, touches bottom in a safe harbor and returns to his mother for consolation, just as Robert eludes the complications of an affair with Edna out of respect for her position and his inability to fill her need.

Overall, Kate Chopin is humane toward her characters. Dr. Mandelet, long past the time when he can shoulder a full-time practice, appears to care for Edna for humanitarian reasons rather than any desire to advance his standing as a professional. The dull, faithful Ratignolle prepares a palliative to ease his wife's labor. Even the chilling final scene of "Désirée's Baby" leaves room for Armand's coming to knowledge through loss and through reacquaintance with family heritage. The least admired character, Alcée Arobin, a sleazy rake who pushes Edna toward an unwanted seduction, retains a gentility and respect for the amenities expected between ladies and gentlemen. Chopin appears to place people back in their respective niches with the hope that each can take comfort in whatever idiosyncracies they have developed as defenses against solitude or alienation. She optimistically concludes, "So the storm passed and every one was happy.")

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Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Why is Kate Chopin admired as a *fin de siècle* realist? (*The wafled jessamine of New Orleans never overtakes the hurt and disappointment of human interaction in Chopin's fiction. Like realist Jack London, she recognizes the savagery that can be unleashed in the human animal. Like Theodore Dreiser, she understands that the machinery of social intercourse can grind in its imperturbable clockworks the few who venture too far and fall into untenable positions. Like Charlotte Brontë, Chopin recognizes that compromise exacts a penalty, sometimes more than a character bargains for or is capable of enduring.*)

At the end of *The Awakening*, the reader, like Edna, must accept the end of the dance, le fin de bal, which restores aching feet to shoes and kitchen workers to brooms and soapy pails. For her moment of contentment in the pigeon house, Edna has earned independence through sacrifice. She has lost her sons, the security of a well-to-do husband, and the joys of friends and admirers. Her fantasies have proven false, but along the way, she learned to navigate in a new milieu. If the great dinner party, the right to make her own social calendar, a quiet meal at Catiche's, an afternoon to paint in reflected light, and the whispered declaration from Robert fulfilled a spot that had cried out for sustenance, she did not die hungry.)

10. How does Chopin differ from other feminist writers? (*Chopin's tentative probings into feminism and psychological fiction are at times awkward and blatantly over-freighted with symbol, for example, the hot fire that blazes as Edna reaches for one of Robert's letters to Mlle. Reisz. The strength of Chopin's depiction of a female awakening to passion is the true ring of New Orleans society, its faults and its fashions, as well as the knowledge that fathers like the colonel can love too well the little girls they attempt to rear. Chopin, like Toni Morrison, Edith Wharton, Amy Tan, Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel, and Jean Rhys, succeeds in the study of interior scenarios which characters conceal from outsiders. Chopin's willingness to test the waters of social approbation by lending validity and honor to Edna's yearnings and to dignify Zoraïde's madness as well as Calixta's carnality indicate that the author understood the role of realist. To present verisimilitude at a time of political and social ambiguity in sexual roles indicates that Chopin was, in her own right, a freedom fighter. Like Edna, she found the buoyancy of her medium and swam out as far as she dared.*)

Questions 11 and 12 Creative Level

11. Read aloud George Washington Cable's "Jean-ah Poquelin," one of the collected stories of Ellen Gilchrist, or a scene from a novel by Shirley Ann Grau. Determine what qualities typify a local colorist and what qualities elevate literature to a classic. What do you predict will happen to Chopin's reputation in future generations? Will she be considered realist, feminist, or local colorist?

12. Create a genealogy for the interrelated families of the collected stories. Include minor characters, notably the colonel, Etienne, Raoul, Janet, and Margaret. Link Calixta with Alcée, Clarisse, Madame Laballière, and Bobinôt and Bibi.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Business and Economics

1. Explain why Léonce's interest in business connections for the brokerage firm, investments, and attractive possessions translates into his ownership of a wife and home. Why is he eager for people to believe that he is expanding and remodeling his home on Esplanade Street?
2. Discuss the importance of summer trade to Mme. Aline Lebrun and Tonie. Contrast their seasonal work with the sources of income for the quadroon nanny, Claire Duvigné, Mlle. Reisz, Félicitié, Zoraïde, Bobinôt, Nég Créol, Dr. Mandelet, the mother superior, Gouvernail, Mrs. Mallard, Calixta, and Laidpore.
3. What does a separate income mean to a woman who wants to direct her own life? What assets does Edna call her own? What does she owe to Léonce? To her father? To Robert? Why are Athénaïse and Zoraïde more dependent on males? Who provides for Adrienne? For Sylvie?

Geography

1. Make an oral report on direct routes from Grand Isle to Grand Terre and to the *Quartier Français*. How far does Robert travel from Grand Isle to Vera Cruz? How far does Léonce travel from New Orleans to New York? How far is Alcée from his wife and family in Biloxi? What is the distance from Cloutierville to the *Quartier Français*? How far does the *corbeille* travel for Désirée's baby?
2. Discuss the exact meaning of these terms: bayou, gulf, bay, and river. To what types of water is the pirogue appropriate? Where would the lateen sail work best? Characterize the social significance of travel by horse, pony, lugger, rockaway, rigolet, cable car, train, or coupé. What might have happened to Désirée and her child without transportation in the bayou?

Social Studies and Religion

1. Explain why Mme. Ratignolle's condition in the final scenes is never named. Why do Edna and her peers abstain from intimate details of pregnancy? Why does Chopin imply that Athénaïse is pregnant and that Adéle is in labor but refrain from using explicit terms? How does a similar reticence to discuss anatomy and sexuality impair description in "The Storm"?
2. Discuss the class differences of the white, negro, quadroon, mulatto, Creole, French immigrant, and Cadian. With which groups does Edna feel more comfortable? To what group did Mme. Aubigny belong? Why did she conceal her background from Alcée?

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What racial characteristics and behaviors does Chopin assign to Calixta? To Tonie? To Nég Créol? To Mézor?

3. Why does religion play so small a role in Edna's family life? How was her style of worship different when she lived in Kentucky? How does this indifference to religion amplify the meanings of "Lilacs," "At Chênrière Caminada," and "Nég Créol"?
4. Fit Chopin's stories into the history of female liberation. When were slaves freed? When did women petition for the vote? When did they receive the vote? How might the Civil War have freed women from male domination?

Psychology

1. List qualities that Edna shares with her father. Why does she precipitate a family squabble by avoiding Janet's wedding? How is Athénaïse like her brother? Why does Cazeau despise his brother-in-law?
2. Lead a panel discussion of male-female relationships in *The Awakening*. What is the difference between Edna's relationship with her father and with Léonce? In what ways does her husband patronize her and discount her talents, opinions, and feelings? Contrast Edna's situation with that of Dr. Langlé and Mézor, Mother Superior and Sister Agathe, Félicitié and Cazeau, or Henri and Adrienne.
3. Discuss in a short speech how success at swimming frees Edna from the social and marital ties that bind her free spirit. Why does she strip naked before setting out into the bay? What other activities give her self-confidence? What additional activities might you suggest to help overcome depression and ennui?
4. Contrast Edna and Léonce in terms of age and interests. Why is Edna closer to Robert in outlook and behavior?
5. Why is Tonie relieved when Claire Duvigné dies? In what way had love enslaved his soul? Why does his mother worry about him?

Mathematics

List bits of information that give a clear picture of Edna's six years as Léonce's wife. When were Raoul and Etienne born? How old was Edna when she left Kentucky? How long was she motherless? What span of time does the novel cover? What symbolic meaning does Chopin give the waning of summer and the onset of fall and winter?

Science and Health

1. Write an essay on signs of depression, despair, ennui, and emotional unrest. Explain why Edna's accomplishments fail to satisfy her yearnings. What does the scene at the Ratignolle house indicate about Edna's inner strife with the role of mother and homemaker? What precipitates Louise Mallard's death? Why does Zoraïde reject her own toddler?

2. List natural aspects of New Orleans and the Gulf of Mexico that would appeal to a painter, dancer, sculptor, actor, singer, or pianist. How does the blend of cultural and racial opposites intensify human relations? Which short stories suggest that this blend also influences music, poetry, oral tradition, handicrafts, song, worship, and dance?

Language and Literature

1. Apply definitions of feminism and womanhood as the terms apply to the behavior of Zoraïde, Edna, Mme. Ratignolle, Mlle. Reisz, Mme. Lebrun, Claire Duvigné, Calixta, Clarisse, Félicitié, Sylvie, Louise Mallard, Mrs. Sommers, Manna Loulou, and Mamzelle Aglaé. How do such fictional rebellions anticipate modern womanhood? Why does Mlle. Reisz encourage Edna to have courage, to be strong, and to grasp Robert's love? Why does Edna choose suicide as a conclusion to her emancipation? Why does Athénaïse return to her husband? Why does Mrs. Sommers reward herself with extravagances when she could apply the money to her needy children?
2. Discuss the sense impressions that influence Chopin's shorter stories, for example, the sounds of dancers, the smell and taste of food, the sway of trees in a storm, the whimper of a woman mourning her dead child, the fragrance of lilacs, the crinkle of a newspaper or letter, the tap of shoes on the sidewalk, the smooth texture of kid gloves, the taste of fresh shrimp, and the anger of a man burning his baby's basinette.
3. Explain the difference between French and patois. Why do these language barriers isolate people into social castes or in low-paying jobs? Why do isolated people hesitate to travel to metropolitan areas?
4. Locate euphemisms, which are pleasant ways to say unpleasant things. For instance, "And when he possessed her, they seemed to swoon together at the very borderland of life's mystery" and "She recalled faintly an ecstasy of pain, the heavy odor of chloroform, a stupor which had deadened sensation, and an awakening to find a little new life to which she had given being, added to the great unnumbered multitude of souls that come and go."

Art

1. Typify the sights and emotions that move Edna to paint. What does she expect of herself when she completes a drawing? How do sales of her works influence her feeling of independence?
2. Compose a calligraphied menu and place card for each member of the dinner party at Edna's house. Create business or calling cards for major characters, especially Madame Aline Lebrun, Dr. Mandelet, Gouvernail, and Alcée Arobin.
3. Select scenes from Chopin's stories that suggest post

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cards, especially the 'Cadian ball, organ music at mass, horseback riding at midnight, and dancing at Congo Square. Contrast with scenes that reflect somber or reflective moods, such as Tonie's sailboat crossing the bay and Claire paying him for the passage with a silver chain.

Music, Video, Journalism

1. Discuss the types of dance that influence Chopin's stories. Name musicians who have produced emotional, erotic music, especially Ravel's *Bolero* and Debussy's *L'Après Midi d'un Faun*. Select a pair of melodies to contrast Edna's interest in Alcée, Victor, Léonce, and Robert. What type of music would describe Edna's relationship with her sisters? Her father? Her sons? Her dinner guests?
2. Write a newspaper article about the critics' immediate condemnation of Kate Chopin's novel *The Awakening*. Why did critical opinion take thirty years to "awaken"? What do current critics read in Chopin's works that early prudish commentary overlooks or ignores?
3. Examine the sensuality in a number of movies, such as *The Age of Innocence*, *The Bostonians*, *Isadora*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Ryan's Daughter*, *Dances with Wolves*, *Agnes of God*, *Daughters of the Dust*, *Band of Angels*, *Heat and Dust*, *Phaedra*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Out of Africa*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Orlando*, *The House of the Spirits*, and *Raintree County*. Which captures the honest emotion that Edna tries to convey to readers?

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List moments in Edna's 28th year when she is independent, entertained, uplifted, gratified, and optimistic. Include learning to swim in the Barataria Bay and renting her "pigeon house."
2. Make a list of scenes that stress dominance, for example, the colonel's insistence that Léonce control Edna, Alcée's rejection of his wife and child, Léonce's dismay that Edna is no longer home on Tuesdays, Athénaïse's dependence on Montéclin, the sale of Mézor, the firing of Elizabeth Stock, and Alcée's insistence that Clarisse stay longer in Biloxi.
3. Compose advertisements for businesses. Mention Mme. Lebrun's summer cottages, Mlle. Reisz's piano lessons, Chicot's fish market, Sylvie's boarding house, Pontellier's brokerage house, Edna's studio, Tonie's ferry service, Catiche's coffee, Ratignolle's apothecary, and the sale of silk stockings, magazines, and kid gloves.
4. Explain how these events illuminate Edna's decision to live to please herself: the departure of the beast from the cage, Désirée's walk to the bayou, Athénaïse's departure from Cazeau's bed, Zoraïde's choice of Mézor, Mrs. Sommers's attendance at the theater, Calixta's liaison with Alcée, and Clarisse's late-night ride to the 'Cadian ball.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Compose a scene in which Robert and Edna make peace with their failed love affair. Comment on Edna's determination to return to Grand Isle. Give clues to her intentions to swim out to the extent of her strength. Add insights into Edna's flirtations with Victor and Alcée.
2. Read Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Compose the outline for a short speech comparing Nora to Edna or Athénaïse. How do these women express the suffocation of domesticated life and middle class expectations? Which woman is more daring? Which earns the reader's respect for integrity?
3. Contrast the settings of Grand Isle and New Orleans. Why is the day more regulated during vacation and less restricted at Edna's home and cottage? Which setting encourages artistic expression? Intimacy? Visits? Motherhood? Despair? Friendship?
4. Lead a discussion of types of women in Chopin's shorter stories. Discuss the innocence of Désirée, the allure of Calixta, the vulnerability of Zoraïde, and the eccentricity of Mamzelle Aglaé.
5. Read aloud passages from *The Awakening* that capture a single positive feeling, especially love, delight, pleasure, comfort, or welcome. Add details that explain how Edna draws both men and women to her, yet remains aloof and emotionally isolated. Conclude your reading with the banquet. Evaluate the effort. Was it a success or a failure for Edna? For her guests? For society?
6. Comment on Chopin's emphasis on details, particularly female dress, shawls, parasols, jewelry, flowers, fragrance, prayer books, hair, voice, mannerisms, and shoes. How does she elevate poor women, nuns, slaves, and servants such as Sister Agathe, Félicité, Clarisse, Désirée, and Elizabeth Stock to equal significance with the lavishly dressed and pampered wealthy class?
7. Suggest a way for Léonce Pontellier to learn more about his wife and her inner turbulence. Name activities that might help their drifting relationship, for example, a shared vacation without servants, making plans for the boys, or helping Edna establish a studio where she can work without being disturbed. What might a priest say about their loss of commitment to their marriage vows? How does Cazeau's response to his wife's defection contrast with Léonce's demands and concerns for appearances?
8. Create a New Orleans funeral to honor Edna. Write small speeches the following might make in her memory: old Mme. Pontellier, Mlle. Reisz, Mme. Ratignolle, Dr. Mandelet, Alcée Arobin, Mrs. Highcamp, Laidpore, Catiche, Victor Lebrun, Madame Lebrun, Janet, Margaret, and Robert.
9. Write a theme explaining the significance of the title. Why does Edna claim that she could give up her life for

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her children but not her self? Clarify the difference between life and self. How does "A Pair of Silk Stockings" illuminate the value of nourishing the soul?

- Using examples from the collected stories, define or locate the following terms and place names: 'Cadian [pronounced kay' juhn], Creole, *bourgeois*, patois, rigolet, rockaway, levee, bath-house, banquette, gumbo, pirogue, lateen sail, Barataria Bay, Vera Cruz, Grand Isle, Grand Terre, and Biloxi. Discuss why a passing knowledge of the territory and languages of New Orleans is useful to a reader of Chopin's work.

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"If It Might Be" in *America* (1889)
At Fault (1890)
Bayou Folk (1894)
A Night in Acadie (1897)
The Awakening (1899)
The Complete Works of Kate Chopin (1969)
Kate Chopin: The Awakening and Other Stories (1970)
The Storm and Other Stories, with the Awakening (1974)
A Kate Chopin Miscellany (1979)

RELATED READING

Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*
Maya Angelou's *Now Sheba Sings the Song*
George Washington Cable's *The Grandissimes, Creole Days*, and "Bras Coupée"
James Clavell's *Tai Pan*
Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*
Gustav Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*
E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*
Shirley Ann Grau's *The Condor Passes*
Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler*
Randall Jarrell's "The Woman at the Washington Zoo"
James Joyce's "The Dead"
D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*
Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*
Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife*
Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*
Robert Waller's *The Bridges of Madison County*
Eudora Welty's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall"
Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*
Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*
William Butler Yeats's "Leda and the Swan"

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VOCABULARY TEST

Underline a word in parentheses to complete each of the following sentences.

1. The (candor, acme, breach, nuance) of bliss, which would have been a marriage with the tragedian, was not for her in this world.
2. And his suggestions on the question of dress — which too often assumes the nature of a problem — were of (torpid, commodious, inestimable, desultory) value to his father-in-law.
3. She slept but a few hours. They were troubled and feverish hours, disturbed with dreams that were (intangible, rebuking, consuming, repulsive), that eluded her, leaving only an impression upon her half-awakened senses of something unattainable.
4. She had a round, sly, (confirmatory, reproached, flurried, piquant) face and pretty black eyes.
5. A youth, mild-faced Acadian, was drawing water from the (curé, peignoir, lorgnette, cistern).
6. Victor Lebrun, who happened to be in the city, bent upon relaxation, had accepted [the invitation] with (ennui, alacrity, ménage, subterfuge).
7. Take some of the (gumbo, pompano, cress, marais) with your chop; it's so biting and crisp.
8. A (rockaway, lugger, lateen, bath-house) that had come out of the lake was moving with slow, lazy motion down the bayou.
9. She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the (layette, live-oak, corbeille, Sacré-Coeur) branches.
10. It was not just — such (diffusion, partiality, beneficence, rejoinder)! The Holy Mother had reason to be jealous and to complain.
11. A good many persons of the (pension, patés, accouchements, nougat) had gone over to the Chêniere Caminade in Beaufort's lugger to hear mass.
12. Two of them clung about her white skirts, the third she took from its nurse and with a thousand (endearments, propensities, indulgences, poignancies) bore it along in her own fond, encircling arms.
13. After finishing her dinner she went to her room, having instructed the boy to tell any callers that she was (procured, indisposed, garnie, impromptu).
14. It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman at the head of a household, and the mother of children, to spend in an (atelier, anomaly, antecedent, eiderdown) days which would be better employed contriving for the comfort of her family.
15. He told some amusing plantation experiences, recollections of old Iberville and his youth, when he hunted 'possum in company with some friendly ducky; thrashed the pecan trees, shot the (toddy, patois, grosbec, Bamboula), and roamed the woods and fields in mischievous idleness.

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (20 points)

Name the characters described below.

- _____ 1. keeps a boarding house where Athénaïse rooms next to Gouvernail.
- _____ 2. rides to the dance to summon Alcée.
- _____ 3. mixes a red liquid in the pharmacy.
- _____ 4. cares for Etienne and Raoul in Iberville.
- _____ 5. returns to scaling fish and ignores the funeral.
- _____ 6. leaves a key for Mme. Pontellier.
- _____ 7. weeps for Adrienne.
- _____ 8. welcomes his pregnant wife back home.
- _____ 9. visits Edna before Janet's wedding.
- _____ 10. ferries Mlle. Duvigné across the bay.

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

Complete each of the following lines with a term.

1. Robert proposes taking Edna to Grand Terre in a _____.
2. The heel of Edna's boot makes no mark on the _____.
3. Zoraïde carries a bundle of _____, which she calls her child.
4. The _____ for Alcée's baby comes from Paris.
5. Edna refers to her cottage as the _____-house.
6. After Alcée leaves the dance, Calixta proposes to _____.
7. Robert resents the _____ of Alcée in Edna's cottage.
8. After her long swim, Edna chooses to spend the night lying in a _____.
9. Edna travels to _____ to visit Raoul and Etienne at their grandmother's house.
10. Mlle. Reisz doubts that Edna is her true friend, but shares Robert's _____ with her.

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Part III: True or False (30 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

1. ____ After learning that Edna is planning a lavish dinner party and a move from Esplanade Street, Léonce demands that she come to New York.
2. ____ Adèle reminds Edna that she owes an obligation to her two sons.
3. ____ The black child born to Désirée proves that she was once a slave.
4. ____ The animal that leaves the cage finds the pool polluted and returns to the safety of confinement.
5. ____ Madame Lebrun admits that Victor is joining Montel in Vera Cruz.
6. ____ By ending her Tuesday visits, Edna signals to upper-class society that she is uninterested in their customs.
7. ____ The maid insists on picking up the broken glass and returns the ring to Edna.
8. ____ The train takes Athénaïse from home to New Orleans, where she rooms with Sylvie until she can earn rent money.
9. ____ Arobin contends that Edna is overtaxing herself by studying with Laidpor and painting portraits.
10. ____ Edna is jealous of the Mexican girl who embroidered the pouch.
11. ____ Mlle. Duvigné provides the unexpected organ music at mass.
12. ____ The lovers and the woman in black follow Robert and Edna to Chênière Caminada on the Baratavia Bay ferry.
13. ____ Robert and Tonie both court Mariequita, who comes to the 'Cadian Ball unescorted.
14. ____ Léonce Pontellier is more concerned with advancing in the business world than in keeping friends.
15. ____ Edna awakens to needs and longings that are foreign to her normal daily activities.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

In a paragraph, discuss the significance of two of the following passages.

1. He understood a thousand times better than she herself understood it that he was acting as substitute for Montéclin. Bitter as the conviction was, he accepted it. He was patient; he could wait. He hoped some day to hold her with a lover's arms. That she was married made no particle of difference to Gouvernail.
2. All the morning Janie had been escorting a procession of street Arabs up and down the stairs to view the remains. One of them — a little girl, who had had her face washed and had made a species of toilet for the occasion — refused to be dragged away. She stayed seated as if at an entertainment, fascinated alternately by the long still figure of Mamzelle Aglaé, the mumbling lips of Purgatory Mary, and the silver candlesticks.
3. Doctor Langlé, who was a widower, had long wanted to marry Madame Delarivière, and he would willingly have walked on all fours at noon through the Place d'Armes if she wanted him to. Naturally he lost no time in disposing of le beau Mézor, who was sold away into Georgia, or the Carolinas, or one of those distant countries far away, where he would no longer hear his Creole tongue spoken, nor dance Calinda, nor hold la belle Zoraïde in his arms.
4. Within the precincts of her home she felt like one who has entered and lingered within the portals of some forbidden temple in which a thousand muffled voices bade her begone. Whatever was her own in the house, everything which she had acquired aside from her husband's bounty, she caused to be transported to the other house, supplying simple and meager deficiencies from her own resources.

THE AWAKENING AND SELECTED STORIES

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identifying Terms (20 points)

Select terms from the list below to fit each description that follows. You will have answers left over when you finish:

accouchement	Congo Square	pigeon house	racing
bath-house	corbeille	pirogue	Sacré-Coeur
brokerage	Grand Isle	pouch	silk stockings
chambre garnie	lateen sail	Quartier Français	train

- _____ 1. bed burned in Alcée's fire
- _____ 2. place where Edna and Adèle rest on pillows
- _____ 3. conveyance for Tonie and Adrienne
- _____ 4. cottage where Edna paints
- _____ 5. the colonel's main interest
- _____ 6. object embroidered by the Mexican girl
- _____ 7. Athénaïse's temporary lodging
- _____ 8. site of Mézor's Bamboula
- _____ 9. Mrs. Sommers's first purchase
- _____ 10. Brently's supposed killer

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. With whom does Robert meet in Mexico?
- _____ 2. Who sends sweets to Edna and her sons?
- _____ 3. Who was left at the Valmondé gateway?
- _____ 4. With what does Claire Duvigné pay passage?
- _____ 5. Who urges Léonce to have patience with Edna's moods?
- _____ 6. What couple cannot bear to be parted and walk together in the evenings?
- _____ 7. Whose album contains a picture of Robert as a baby?
- _____ 8. Who hates "shocks and surprises"?
- _____ 9. For whom does the colonel buy a wedding gift?
- _____ 10. What color drink begins Edna's dinner party?
- _____ 11. Who believes that Edna is "in trouble"?
- _____ 12. Who is Mme. Laballière's goddaughter?
- _____ 13. Who is sold to Georgia or the Carolinas?
- _____ 14. Who tries to control Adrienne's career?
- _____ 15. Whose job does young Collins take?

THE AWAKENING AND SELECTED STORIES

Part III: Selecting Details (20 points)

Place an X beside any statement that is true of Edna:

- 1. plays a Chopin Impromptu for diners.
- 2. responds to Adèle's need of a friend during childbirth.
- 3. swims naked in late winter.
- 4. looks old-fashioned with violets pinned to her hair.
- 5. studies with Laidpore.
- 6. reunites with Robert in Mlle. Reisz's apartment.
- 7. agrees that Arobin's name is too closely tied to scandal.
- 8. excludes Mrs. Highcamp from Tuesday visitations.
- 9. admits to Mlle. Reisz her love for Robert.
- 10. sings "Ah! si tu savais!"

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Explain Chopin's concepts of freedom and self-gratification.
- 2. Discuss where and how Athénaïse can be herself.
- 3. Describe the social life of New Orleans in the 1890s.
- 4. Justify the decisions of Désirée, Mrs. Sommers, and Edna.

THE AWAKENING AND SELECTED STORIES

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. acme | 9. live-oak |
| 2. inestimable | 10. partiality |
| 3. intangible | 11. pension |
| 4. piquant | 12. endearments |
| 5. cistern | 13. indisposed |
| 6. alacrity | 14. atelier |
| 7. cress | 15. grosbec |
| 8. lugger | |

COMPRHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Sylvie | 6. Mlle. Reisz |
| 2. Clarisse | 7. Sister Agathe |
| 3. Ratignolle | 8. Cazeau |
| 4. old Mme. Pontelier | 9. her father |
| 5. Nég Créol | 10. Tonie |

Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. pirogue | 6. Bobinôt |
| 2. ring | 7. photograph |
| 3. rags | 8. hammock |
| 4. <i>corbeille</i> | 9. Iberville |
| 5. pigeon | 10. letter |

Part III: True or False (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T | 11. T |
| 2. T | 7. T | 12. F |
| 3. F | 8. F | 13. F |
| 4. F | 9. F | 14. T |
| 5. F | 10. T | 15. T |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identifying Terms

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>corbeille</i> | 6. pouch |
| 2. bath-house | 7. <i>chambre garnie</i> |
| 3. lateen sailing | 8. Congo Square |
| 4. pigeon house | 9. silk stockings |
| 5. racing | 10. train |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Montel | 9. Janet |
| 2. Léonce | 10. garnet |
| 3. Désirée | 11. Dr. Mandelet |
| 4. silver chain | 12. Clarisse |
| 5. Dr. Mondelet | 13. Mézor |
| 6. Ratignolles | 14. Henri |
| 7. Mme. Lebrun | 15. Elizabeth Stock |
| 8. Edna | |

Part III: Selecting Details (20 points)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. | 6. X |
| 2. X | 7. |
| 3. X | 8. |
| 4. | 9. X |
| 5. X | 10. |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

TEACHER'S NOTES

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