
The Awakening by Kate Chopin: Edna's Finding Her Identity and Independence

"I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children, but I wouldn't give myself," Edna admits. Unfortunately for Edna, she struggles all throughout her short lived life trying to balance her family and love life. However, in the novel, *The Awakening*, by Kate Chopin, Edna Pontellier, the protagonist, struggles to conform to social norms and to finding her identity which leads to problems with her family, love life and self-authorization. Edna ultimately pays the price as she is trying to discover her identity leading to complications with her family and marriage.

During her marriage, she is dissatisfied with her role as a mother and wife. Edna finally comes to the realization that she doesn't need to be dependent on anyone and she is in control of her own freedom. Edna starts to stray away from her role as a mother and wife and starts focusing more on her painting skills. When visiting Madame Reisz, Edna tells Madame about her new career choice and Madame comments, "The artist must possess the courageous soul. The soul that dares and defies". By choosing to become an artist, Edna begins the process of finding her identity and independence. She then starts to become more of her own person by choosing what to do with her own time instead of listening to her husband's commands. Leonce, Edna's husband, notices her evolving and changing which starts to irritate him. He doesn't like how she gives up certain practices like receiving visitors since it hurts his business and relationships for work. Leonce also does not understand why Edna is disobeying him because he thinks as his wife, she should take care of the family and tend to his needs. However, she believes she is not fit for the role as a mother-women which leads to her pulling away from her family because she realizes she can't fulfill the expectations as a mother or wife. Also she sees the mother-women lifestyle through Adele and understands that's not part of her identity. To Edna, the life Adele lives is unappealing and colorless. As Edna faces complications finding her identity, her family and love life struggle, too. Obeying to the social norms generates a trapped feeling within Edna creating struggles involving her family and love life. Edna eventually grows tired of always complying to her husband and finally snaps saying, "Don't speak to me like that again; I shall not answer you".

Edna rejects the role of a mother-women by disobeying the social norms and unlike her husband doesn't care how society perceives her. She notices this action when she writes a letter to Mr. Pontellier telling him she is moving out and his response is to post an ad in the newspaper saying they're going on a vacation. This action gives her another reason as to why she should leave her husband and continue talking to Robert and Alcee. Even though society

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

would scold Edna for cheating on her husband, she doesn't regret her choices and continues to defy social norms. Also as a mother, Edna doesn't play a perfect one since she doesn't put her children's needs first. Eventually, Edna leaves her family because she also feels like she can't help her children and offer them what they need. While struggling to obey social norms, Edna creates problems within her family and in her marriage.

As Edna searches for her identity, she establishes important relationships that help Edna with her self-authorization. Edna develops a relationship with Mademoiselle Reisz after meeting her and slowly Madame Reisz inspires Edna over time. Often times Edna would visit Madame Reisz who would help her increase her artistic skills and help her push through her problems with Robert. Even though Edna loves Robert, Madame Reisz shows Edna how she doesn't need to be dependent on a man and can live happily without a husband. Madame Reisz inspires her to keep ignoring society's expectations and to live by her passions through her actions and advice. Another relationship that influences Edna is Adele who is a foil of Mademoiselle Reisz. Compared to Madame Reisz, Adele is a wife and mother who takes care of her family's needs and fulfills her husband's demands. When Edna witnesses these characteristics about Adele, she realizes that this mother-women life was not something she wanted to live in. This type of life to Edna is too perfect and restricts her from being able to do what she wants. When Edna tells Adele that she can't devote her life to obeying her husband and sacrificing her life to her children, Adele can't understand why Edna thinks this and has a hard time processing it. Between these two women, Edna is able to be steered towards the right path of who she wants to be in the future and what she wants her life to be like.

Throughout Edna's journey, "Mrs. Pontellier begins to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her". Although she lives a short lived life, Mrs. Pontellier is able to pick her own fate and future. For a very short time, Edna escapes the problems she lived with from being a mother and wife and is able to defy society's norms.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)