

'The Awakening' Act II, Scene 2 Soliloquy

Edna— late 20's

EDNA

I stayed for mid-day dinner that afternoon, despite a nearly overpowering desire to depart and wander the streets in search of a quiet shady spot to be alone, with only my thoughts and a ripe bit of fruit as my company. But I stayed and rather enjoyed the meal. As to be expected, the conversation was excellent.... Adele was keenly interested in everything her husband had to say, laying down her fork the better to listen, chiming in, taking the words out of his mouth. The Ratignolles understand each other perfectly.... If ever the fusion of two human beings into one has been accomplished on this sphere it is surely in their union.

The little glimpse of domestic harmony which had been offered me, gave me no regret, no longing. I am not fitted for such condition of life, and I cannot apologize for seeing nothing in it but an appalling and hopeless ennui. But I am moved by a kind of commiseration for Adele—a pity for that kind of colorless existence which never uplifts its possessor beyond the region of blind contentment, in which no moment of anguish ever visits her soul, in which she would never have the taste of life's..... Delirium. Funny. I feel as though I have little control over my thoughts these days. They run gleefully across my mind like little criminals.... Happy little criminals who've just been turned loose on the world. (laughs at the image)

There are days when I am very happy, though I don't know why. Happy to be alive and breathing, when my being seems to be one with the sunlight, the color, the odors, the luxuriant warmth of some perfect Southern day. It is during such a day when I like to wander alone in strange and unfamiliar places. I've discovered many a sunny, sleepy corner, fashioned to dream in.

And there are days when I am unhappy, though I don't know why—when it does not seem worthwhile to be glad or sorry, to be alive or dead; when life appears to be a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms struggling blindly toward inevitable annihilation. I cannot even paint on such a day, nor weave fancies to stir my pulse and warm my blood.

I have tried to forget him. I fully realize the inutility in remembering.... But it is too late for that now. The thought of

him is like an obsession, relentlessly pressing itself upon me. It is not that I dwell upon details of our acquaintance, or recall in any special or peculiar way his personality; it is his being, his existence, which dominates my thought, fading sometimes, and teasing me, as if it would simply melt into the mist of the forgotten, reviving again with an intensity which fills me with an incomprehensible longing....

Blackout; End Scene