

Dear Kate Chopin,

I've read your book, *The Awakening*, twice, not voluntarily, however, but because my schoolwork made it necessary. To be perfectly honest, I was not interested in reading it a second time, but I didn't realize that doing so would make me aware of the details I had missed. I would have never seen the inner struggle of Edna because my first reading was quick and effortless. I was forced to journal my fall readings, paying particular attention to breaking down quotes to try to find their true meanings. It was through this process that I came upon the qualities of Edna that are similar to myself. My ambitions are not as strong as hers, for I will never turn to suicide as a solution for anything. But she proves to be a liberator of women's rights, fighting for what she believes in and doing things with the intentions to please herself before anybody else. She realizes that who she's been all along is not the person she really is. Breaking away from the stereotypical housewife qualities society has set for her, she does what she wants without feeling consequence.

During the summer between my junior and senior year in high school, I feel like I mentally renewed myself, as Edna did. My changes are not as extreme as hers, but they were made to solely benefit me. Obtaining my license and having my own car for the first time, I also acquired a feeling of independence. I took it upon myself to do what I want, when I want. Like Edna, I discovered my own independence. She made the decision to distance herself from her family, and act based on her feelings. She followed her heart throughout the whole book, associating herself with other men and different friends, even if the awaiting consequences were unaccepted and could hurt her in the long run.

My actions did not involve infidelity or anything of the sort, but I did distance myself from home. I made an effort to spend the least amount of time possible there. It wasn't because I had problems with my home life, but because I wanted to live for myself. I like being alone and having the ability to control what I do. I'm the person who determines when and where I go. I talk to the friends I want to talk to, and I made it clear that I wasn't obligated to make plans with someone just because they called me. The consequences of my actions caused many arguments, but in the end my friends realized that I am my own person. I do not have to live to please anybody but myself.

Your character of Edna made me realize that acting this way is okay. As a person, I already know who I was, but I learned that I needed to act for myself by breaking away from the rules other people set for me. My friends expected me to call them every day, let them know where I was going and what I was doing, and got angry when I didn't invite them places. My actions over the summer did not follow the rules. I hung out with new people, made plans the way I wanted to, and ended up having an eventful summer vacation for myself. Edna did the same then when she moved out of her mansion, sent her kids away, had relations with other men, and changed her whole emotional being. She did things out of the ordinary but loved every minute of it. She was liberated by her independence and self-discovery. I thank you for sparking this realization for me. I saw myself as independent before my reading of *The Awakening*, but my view of Edna's actions toward the people she's been around her whole life prompted my own special "awakening." My friends and I are still very close, but we now have the understanding that we are totally different people who can only control our own lives. I take pride in the fact that I am an ambitious young woman, with the intentions to follow my heart and act to better myself. I care about others, but I do not let anyone hold me back anymore.

Sincerely,

*Jessica Simpson*