

Kate Chopin. From The Awakening, Chapter 3

It was eleven o'clock that night when Mr. Pontellier returned from Klein's hotel. He was in an excellent humor, in high spirits, and very talkative. His entrance awoke his wife [Edna], who was in bed and fast asleep when he came in. He talked to her while he undressed, telling her anecdotes and bits of news and gossip that he had gathered during the day. From his trousers pockets he took a fistful of crumpled bank notes and a good deal of silver coin, which he piled on the bureau indiscriminately with keys, knife, handkerchief, and whatever else happened to be in his pockets. She was overcome with sleep, and answered him with little half utterances.

He thought it very discouraging that his wife, who was the sole object of his existence, evinced so little interest in things which concerned him, and valued so little his conversation.

Mr. Pontellier had forgotten the bonbons and peanuts for the boys. Notwithstanding he loved them very much, and went into the adjoining room where they slept to take a look at them and make sure that they were resting comfortably. The result of his investigation was far from satisfactory. He turned and shifted the youngsters about in bed. One of them began to kick and talk about a basket full of crabs.

Mr. Pontellier returned to his wife with the information that Raoul had a high fever and needed looking after. Then he lit a cigar and went and sat near the open door to smoke it.

Mrs. Pontellier was quite sure Raoul had no fever. He had gone to bed perfectly well, she said, and nothing had ailed him all day. Mr. Pontellier was too well acquainted with fever symptoms to be mistaken. He assured her the child was consuming at that moment in the next room.

He reproached his wife with her inattention, her habitual neglect of the children. If it was not a mother's place to look after children, whose on earth was it? He himself had his hands full with his brokerage business. He could not be in two places at once; making a living for his family on the street, and staying at home to see that no harm befell them. He talked in a monotonous, insistent way.

Define Each Word

anecdote: _____

utterance: _____

evinced: _____

ail: _____

reproach: _____

Write the Correct Word from the Vocabulary

1. Whatever _____ Maurice last night subsided by the morning, because he was able to wake up and go to school.
2. Elizabeth was considered kind-hearted; she would not _____ a reproachful word against her worst enemy.
3. After _____ the player for allowing a goal, the coach sulked sullenly at the end of the bench.
4. Chris’s amusing _____ about his clumsy attempt at asking Monica out on a date evoked laughter from his friends.
5. Jack’s willingness to help his co-workers write the report clearly _____ his collaborative work ethic.

Comprehension and Discussion: Answer Each Question in Complete Sentences

1. Why does Mr. Pontellier reproach Mrs. Pontellier [Edna]? Does she believe that the reproach is warranted? Why?

2. How would you describe Mr. Pontellier’s attitude toward his wife and children? Why?

