

Grand Isle (chapters 1-XVI)

1. How is Léonce Pontellier characterized by his observation of his sun-burned wife? (3/2)
2. In what ways are Edna Pontellier and Adèle Ratignolle character foils? (12/8)
3. Why might Chopin choose to personify the sea with a "seductive" voice? (18/12)
4. Discuss the symbolic effect of Madame Ratignolle's all-white attire. (21/14)
5. Edna felt as a young girl that she "must walk on forever, without coming to the end" of the tall grass. Then she admits feeling this summer "as if I were walking through the green meadow again . . ." What is the significance of this memory? How might it serve as foreshadowing? (24/16)
6. Contrast the effects of Madame Ratignolle's and Mademoiselle Reisz's piano playing on the resort guests. What does Edna's reaction indicate about her sense of awareness? (36-39/24-26)
7. Why does Madame Pontellier need to be alone after her first successful swim? How is this evening a turning point for Edna? (42-43/28-29)
8. Why is Edna fascinated with Mariequita? What might the Spanish girl represent to her? (50/33)
9. As she sails across the bay with Robert and Mariequita to the *Cheniere Caminada*, Edna feels "as if she were being borne away from some anchorage which had held her fast, whose chains had been loosening - had snapped the night before when the mystic spirit was abroad, leaving her free to drift whithersoever she chose to set her sails." What theme is evident in Chopin's diction? (52/34)
10. Edna proclaims, "I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself." Is this a paradox, or does her vow make sense? Explain. (72/47)

Esplanade Street (chapters XVII-XXXI)

11. How does the setting of the Pontellier's New Orleans home compare with that of Grand Isle? How does the house contribute to Mr. Pontellier's attitude towards his wife? (75/49-50)
12. In what way does Edna behave like a child after Léonce admonishes her for neglecting societal conventions? Why might Chopin have chosen to characterize her this way? (77-78/50-51)
13. After visiting Madame Ratignolle and observing her comfortable marriage, Edna pities Adèle's "colorless existence." Is Edna's opinion justified? Why or why not? (86/56)
14. How has Edna's view towards her artistic ability changed since her "dabbling" at Grand Isle? What might be the reason for this change? (87/57)
15. Compare Mademoiselle Reisz's apartment to Mrs. Pontellier's house on Esplanade Street. How does the comparison serve to characterize the two women? (90-91/59-60)
16. Dr. Mandelet compares Edna to "some beautiful, sleek animal waking up in the sun." Discuss the figurative language. What type of "awakening" is referred to here and in the title? (107/70)
17. When Mrs. Pontellier finally has the house to herself, she sits in the library and reads Emerson. What might be Chopin's purpose in Edna reading this particular author, who wrote "On Self-Reliance?" (112/73)
18. After dinner at the Highcamps' home, Edna returns home and raids the pantry. How is her "hunger" symbolic? (115/75)
19. Why does Edna continue to visit Mademoiselle Reisz if she finds the pianist "offensive"?

Does Edna actually dislike the woman or is she fearful of what the artist represents?
(120/78)

20. Describe the atmosphere of the dinner party Edna hosts. How is color significant in this scene? (132-136/86-89)

Pigeon House (chapters XXXII-XXXVIII)

21. How is Edna's move into the pigeon house symbolic as well as physical? What does it represent in the development of her self-awareness? (143/93)
22. How might Edna's relationship with her two boys be characterized? Why does she leave them in Iberville if she is "again alone" without them? (145-146/94-95)
23. Is Madame Ratignolle justified in her comparison of Edna to a child who acts "without a certain amount of reflection which is necessary in this life"? Is Adèle only referring to societal expectations? Or should Edna reflect on other considerations? Discuss. (147/96)
24. Why, when Edna admits she has been thinking of their time at Grand Isle, does Robert say, "Mrs. Pontellier, you are cruel"? Is Edna cruel, or is she naive? Discuss. (154/100).
25. Why does it seem to Edna that Robert "seemed nearer to her off there in Mexico"? What does this realization indicate about Edna's sense of reality? (158/103).
26. How might a psychiatrist diagnose Mrs. Pontellier, who feels "no despondency" but also "no hope"? What is the nature of the internal conflict which has led her to this point? (161/105)
27. Describe the irony in Robert's desire to make Edna his wife. (165-166/107-109)
28. Analyze the meaning behind Adèle's, "Think of the children, Edna. Oh think of the children! Remember them!" What is the significance of uttering this to Edna after childbirth? (170/111)
29. Does Dr. Mandelet appear to understand what Edna is feeling? Is her refusal to talk to him a mistake? Defend your answer (171/111)
30. Robert's note reads, "I love you. Good- by—because I love you." What is the reason behind the note's contradiction? (172/112)

Grand Isle (chapter XXXIX)

31. What is the real reason Mrs. Pontellier sends Victor and Mariequita on errands away from the shore? How does this lend insight into her state of mind? (174-175/113-114)
32. Consider Chopin's diction in "The children appeared before her like antagonists who had overcome her; who had overpowered and sought to drag her into the soul's slavery for the rest of her days. But she knew a way to elude them." How does the author use word-choice and imagery to illustrate Edna's thoughts? (176/115)
33. Edna remembers clearly her vow to Adèle that "she would give up the unessential, but she would never sacrifice herself for her children." Yet, is she sacrificing herself for her children? What is the "unessential?" Explain. (176/115)
34. What is the significance of the broken-winged bird circling down to the water? How does this symbol relate to a previous warning by Mademoiselle Reisz? (176/116)
35. Why are Edna's last thoughts centered on her childhood and the long, green grass? How has she come full circle since her last trip to Grand Isle? (178/116)