

THE AWAKENING

Chapter 12 — Narrator Script (Booth Ready)

by Kate Chopin · narrated by Mike Vendetti & Kathy Verduin

Edna Pontellier

Robert Lebrun

Mariequita

NARRATOR

★ BEAT — Early morning — Edna sends for Robert

Open quietly: Edna in the cool dawn, propelled by impulse rather than intention. The atmosphere is freshly awakened — a few early risers, the little sewing-machine girl, the procession toward the wharf already assembling. Edna's act of sending for Robert is unprecedented and she doesn't register its significance; keep that obliviousness exact. His face 'suffused with a quiet glow' is the chapter's first emotional charge — read it simply, without dwelling. The shared coffee at the kitchen window is an intimate, slightly illicit domestic scene; let it be warm and easy.

She slept but a few hours. They were troubled and feverish hours, disturbed with dreams that were intangible, that eluded her, leaving only an impression upon her half-awakened senses of something unattainable. She was up and dressed in the cool of the early morning. The air was invigorating and steadied somewhat her faculties. However, she was not seeking refreshment or help from any source, either external or from within. She

was blindly following whatever impulse moved her, as if she had placed herself in alien hands for direction, and freed her soul of responsibility.

Most of the people at that early hour were still in bed and asleep. A few, who intended to go over to the Chênierre [*shay-NYAIR*] for mass, were moving about. The lovers, who had laid their plans the night before, were already strolling toward the wharf. The lady in black, with her Sunday prayer-book, velvet and gold-clasped, and her Sunday silver beads, was following them at no great distance. Old Monsieur Farival [*fah-ree-VAHL*] was up, and was more than half inclined to do anything that suggested itself. He put on his big straw hat, and taking his umbrella from the stand in the hall, followed the lady in black, never overtaking her.

The little negro girl who worked Madame Lebrun [*luh-BRUHN*]'s sewing-machine was sweeping the galleries with long, absent-minded strokes of the broom. Edna sent her up into the house to awaken Robert.

EDNA PONTELLIER

Tell him I am going to the Chênriere. The boat is ready; tell him to hurry.

He had soon joined her. She had never sent for him before. She had never asked for him. She had never seemed to want him before. She did not appear conscious that she had done anything unusual in commanding his presence. He was apparently equally unconscious of anything extraordinary in the situation. But his face was suffused with a quiet glow when he met her.

They went together back to the kitchen to drink coffee. There was no time to wait for any nicety of service. They stood outside the window and the cook passed them their coffee and a roll, which they drank and ate from the window-sill. Edna said it tasted good. She had not thought of coffee nor of anything. He told her he had often noticed that she lacked forethought.

EDNA PONTELLIER

Wasn't it enough to think of going to the Chênriere and waking you up? Do I have to think of

everything?—as Léonce says when he's in a bad humor. I don't blame him; he'd never be in a bad humor if it weren't for me.

she laughed.

★ **BEAT — The procession to the wharf — Mariequita in the boat**

A vivid, lightly comic scene: the procession to the wharf as a curious tableau, and then the boat itself with its miniature social frictions — Beaufort quarreling with Mariequita because he can't quarrel with Monsieur Farival, the lovers seeing nothing, the lady in black counting beads for the third time. Mariequita is a sensuous, sly presence; her dialogue with Robert should be playful and quick, slightly scandalous. Edna observing her from head to foot is curious and untroubled — the same serene attention she gives everything this morning. Keep this beat light-footed; the poetry comes in the next beat.

They took a short cut across the sands. At a distance they could see the curious procession moving toward the wharf—the lovers, shoulder to shoulder, creeping; the lady in black, gaining steadily upon them; old Monsieur Farival, losing ground inch by inch, and a young barefooted Spanish girl, with a red kerchief on her head and a basket on her arm, bringing up the rear.

Robert knew the girl, and he talked to her a little in the boat. No one present understood what they said.

Her name was Mariequita [*mah-ree-eh-KEE-tah*]. She had a round, sly, piquant face and pretty black eyes. Her hands were small, and she kept them folded over the handle of her basket. Her feet were broad and coarse. She did not strive to hide them. Edna looked at her feet, and noticed the sand and slime between her brown toes.

Beaudelet [*boh-duh-LAY*] grumbled because Mariequita was there, taking up so much room. In reality he was annoyed at having old Monsieur Farival, who considered himself the better sailor of the two. But he would not quarrel with so old a man as Monsieur Farival, so he quarreled with Mariequita. The girl was deprecatory at one moment, appealing to Robert. She was saucy the next, moving her head up and down, making “eyes” at Robert and making “mouths” at Beaudelet.

The lovers were all alone. They saw nothing, they heard nothing. The lady in black was counting her beads for the third time. Old Monsieur Farival talked incessantly of what he knew about handling a boat,

and of what Beaufort did not know on the same subject.

Edna liked it all. She looked Mariequita up and down, from her ugly brown toes to her pretty black eyes, and back again.

MARIEQUITA

Why does she look at me like that?

inquired the girl of Robert.

ROBERT LEBRUN

Maybe she thinks you are pretty. Shall I ask her?

MARIEQUITA

No. Is she your sweetheart?

ROBERT LEBRUN

She's a married lady, and has two children.

MARIEQUITA

Oh! well! Francisco ran away with Sylvano's wife, who had four children. They took all his money and one of the children and stole his boat.

ROBERT LEBRUN

Shut up!

MARIEQUITA

Does she understand?

ROBERT LEBRUN

Oh, hush!

MARIEQUITA

Are those two married over there—leaning on each other?

ROBERT LEBRUN

Of course not,

laughed Robert.

MARIEQUITA

Of course not,

echoed Mariequita, with a serious, confirmatory bob of the head.

★ **BEAT** — Cutting across the bay — dreams of treasure and freedom

This is the chapter's lyrical heart. The crossing of the bay releases something in Edna — the chain has snapped, she is drifting freely. Robert's plans accumulate warmly: Grande Terre, the lizards, the pirogue at moonrise, the pirate gold. Their exchange about the treasure is playful, tender, and quietly charged. 'We'd share it, and scatter it together' — Robert's face flushing — lands gently, not dramatically. Let the passage about Edna feeling 'borne away from some anchorage' carry its full weight — it is the chapter's thematic statement. End at the church steps, Mariequita walking away with her shrimps, the shadow of reproach in her eye.

The sun was high up and beginning to bite. The swift breeze seemed to Edna to bury the sting of it into the pores of her face and hands. Robert held his umbrella over her. As they went cutting sidewise through the water, the sails bellied taut, with the wind filling and overflowing them. Old Monsieur Farival laughed sardonically at something as he looked at the sails, and Beaufort swore at the old man under his breath.

Sailing across the bay to the Chênierre Caminada [*shay-NYAIR kah-mee-NAH-dah*], Edna felt 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. Robert spoke to her incessantly; he no longer noticed Mariequita. The girl had shrimps in her bamboo basket. They were covered with Spanish moss. She beat the moss down impatiently, and muttered to herself sullenly.

ROBERT LEBRUN

Let us go to Grande Terre to-morrow?

said Robert in a low voice.

EDNA PONTELLIER

What shall we do there?

ROBERT LEBRUN

Climb up the hill to the old fort and look at the little wriggling gold snakes, and watch the lizards sun themselves.

She gazed away toward Grande Terre and thought she would like to be alone there with Robert, in the sun, listening to the ocean's roar and watching the slimy lizards writhe in and out among the ruins of the old fort.

ROBERT LEBRUN

And the next day or the next we can sail to the Bayou Brulow,

he went on.

EDNA PONTELLIER

What shall we do there?

ROBERT LEBRUN

Anything—cast bait for fish.

EDNA PONTELLIER

No; we'll go back to Grande Terre. Let the fish alone.

ROBERT LEBRUN

We'll go wherever you like. I'll have Tonie come over and help me patch and trim my boat. We shall not need Beaufelet nor any one. Are you afraid of the pirogue?

EDNA PONTELLIER

Oh, no.

ROBERT LEBRUN

Then I'll take you some night in the pirogue when the moon shines. Maybe your Gulf spirit will whisper to you in which of these islands the treasures are hidden—direct you to the very spot, perhaps.

EDNA PONTELLIER

And in a day we should be rich! I'd give it all to you, the pirate gold and every bit of treasure we could dig up. I think you would know how to spend it. Pirate gold isn't a thing to be hoarded or utilized. It

is something to squander and throw to the four winds, for the fun of seeing the golden specks fly.

she laughed.

ROBERT LEBRUN

We'd share it, and scatter it together,

he said. His face flushed.

They all went together up to the quaint little Gothic church of Our Lady of Lourdes, gleaming all brown and yellow with paint in the sun's glare.

Only Beaufort remained behind, tinkering at his boat, and Mariequita walked away with her basket of shrimps, casting a look of childish ill humor and reproach at Robert from the corner of her eye.

— *END OF CHAPTER 12* —