



The Awakening and Selected Stories (Digireads.com Classic)

Kate Chopin

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"The Awakening" is the story of Edna Pontellier, an attractive twenty-eight year old woman who is a wife and mother of two sons living in the Creole south in the late 19th century. Edna finds herself trapped in her life as a wife and a mother and feels unable to express her passionate sensuality within the confines of her marriage. She seeks a spiritual and sexual awakening through an affair with a younger man during one summer while her husband is away. Liberated by this experience she sends her children away and is determined to live a more independent and self-determined life. However this new found independence also becomes her downfall as her actions are looked down upon by the members of her society in the late 19th century south. "The Awakening" is a classic modern example of the tragic hero. It illustrates the confines of late 19th century America for women and the beginning of an era of changing social attitudes towards the role of women in society. Chopin's novel was met with great criticism when it was first published and essentially ended her literary career. The reaction to its publication is indicative of the social attitude towards greater independence and freedom for women at the time. At the same time the novel was a harbinger of the greater independence that was soon to come for women in America. Also contained within this volume is a collection of eight shorter works by the author.

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