Name_____ Period_____ AP Literature _____/5 pts.

Annotation Practice: *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

1. Read this excerpt once through to get a general feel for its contents.
2. Read the excerpt again, using markers, colored pencils or highlighters to mark each of the following in a distinct color (there may be some overlap of colors):
    a. mark **sensory details & descriptions** (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)
    b. mark any **figures of speech** you run across (simile, metaphor, personification, comparisons, etc.)
    c. mark anything that reminds you of something else **(allusions, resemblances to other ideas, etc.)**
3. Answer the following questions thoughtfully:
    a. How do the **sensory details** you found underscore the **mood** of this excerpt?

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b. Did you find any **patterns, juxtapositions, or repetitions**? How do they impact the reader's **perception** of this excerpt?

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c. What **overall impression** do you get of this contract being signed? Why do you think you get that impression, based on your annotations?

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Excerpt from *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

"I flew around like mad to get ready, and before forty-eight hours I was crossing the Channel to show myself to my employers, and sign the contract. In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre. Prejudice no doubt. I had no difficulty in finding the Company's offices. It was the biggest thing in the town, and everybody I met was full of it. They were going to run an over-sea empire, and make no end of coin by trade.

"A narrow and deserted street in deep shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting right and left, immense double doors standing ponderously ajar. I slipped through one of these cracks, went up a swept and ungarnished staircase, as arid as a desert, and opened the first door I came to. Two women, one fat and the other slim, sat on straw-bottomed chairs, knitting black wool. The slim one got up and walked straight at me -- still knitting with down-cast eyes -- and only just as I began to think of getting out of her way, as you would for a somnambulist, stood still, and looked up. Her dress was as plain as an umbrella-cover, and she turned round without a word and preceded me into a waiting-room. I gave my name, and looked about. Deal table in the middle, plain chairs all round the walls, on one end a large shining map, marked with all the colours of a rainbow. There was a vast amount of red -- good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there, a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and, on the East Coast, a purple patch, to show where the jolly pioneers of progress drink the jolly lager-beer.

However, I wasn't going into any of these. I was going into the yellow. Dead in the centre. And the river was there -- fascinating -- deadly -- like a snake. Ough! A door opened, a white-haired secretarial head, but wearing a compassionate expression, appeared, and a skinny forefinger beckoned me into the sanctuary. Its light was dim, and a heavy writing-desk squatted in the middle. From behind that structure came out an impression of pale plumpness in a frock-coat. The great man himself. He was five feet six, I should judge, and had his grip on the handle-end of ever so many millions.

He shook hands, I fancy, murmured vaguely, was satisfied with my French. BON VOYAGE.

"In about forty-five seconds I found myself again in the waiting-room with the compassionate secretary, who, full of desolation and sympathy, made me sign some document. I believe I undertook amongst other things not to disclose any trade secrets. Well, I am not going to.

"I began to feel slightly uneasy. You know I am not used to such ceremonies, and there was something ominous in the atmosphere. It was just as though I had been let into some conspiracy -- I don't know -- something not quite right; and I was glad to get out. In the outer room the two women knitted black wool feverishly. People were arriving, and the younger one was walking back and forth introducing them. The old one sat on her chair. Her flat cloth slippers were propped up on a foot-warmer, and a cat reposed on her lap. She wore a starched white affair on her head, had a wart on one cheek, and silver-rimmed spectacles hung on the tip of her nose. She glanced at me above the glasses. The swift and indifferent placidity of that look troubled me. Two youths with foolish and cheery countenances were being piloted over, and she threw at them the same quick glance of unconcerned wisdom. She seemed to know all about them and about me, too. An eerie feeling came over me. She seemed uncanny and fateful. Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. *AVE!* Old knitter of black wool. *MORITURI TE SALUTANT*. Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again -- not half, by a long way.