

IOC Practice #1

From Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," originally published in 1894.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.

Name_____

Guiding Questions:

How does the narrator's point of view influence the reader's understanding of the text?

What is a main idea or theme in this passage, and how has it been developed?

Self Assessment & Reflection

As you discussed the text, how well did you meet the following criterion? Using the IB rubric for the IOC, reflect on your practice commentary with your partner. Score yourself and answer the reflection questions below.

Criterion A: Knowledge & understanding of the text

- Did you show knowledge and understanding of the text?
- Did you use textual evidence to support your comments?

Score yourself: (1-10, 10 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Criterion B: Understanding of the use and effects of literary features

- Did you discuss the literary features used in the text?
- Did you discuss how the literary features contributed to the text's meaning?
- Did you discuss how the literary features affected readers?

Score yourself: (1-10, 10 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Criterion C: Organization

- How well organized was your commentary?
- Were your main points easy to identify and follow?

Score yourself: (1-5, 5 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5

Name_____

Criterion D: Language

- How clear, varied, and accurate was the language you used?
- Did you apply vocabulary terms we discussed in class to talk about the text?
- Did you use a formal tone to discuss the text?

Score yourself: (1-5, 5 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5

Reflection Questions:

1. To what extent did this activity help prepare you for the IOC?
2. Based on the practice commentary, which criterion do you feel is your strongest?
3. Which criterion do you feel you need the most improvement?
4. What is one thing you will do differently next time?