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**HENRY JAMES**  
*DAISY MILLER*  
*and*  
*OTHER STORIES*



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Introduction by Katharine and Elizabeth Tate Complete and Unabridged

# *Daisy Miller*

AND OTHER STORIES

HENRY JAMES



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# Daisy

## AND OTHER STORIES



HENRY JAMES

### *Introduction*

Today's readers of *Daisy Miller*—especially young readers—may be due for a shock. How can they take seriously a story like this, about the ostracism of an American girl for the crime of going sightseeing with a man? (And, of course, without a chaperone.) But the story appeared in 1879. Since then, social change has been fast and phenomenal. In *her* time, Daisy *was* unconventional—so much so that the first editor who saw James's story rejected it as an "outrage," an affront to American girlhood.

For discriminating readers, it is worth noting that, within the story, there are various levels of opinion about Daisy. By Mrs. Costello, she is totally rejected. But then James pokes some malicious fun at that lady—in short, represents her as a ridiculous snob. Her nephew, Winterbourne, who provides the story with its point of view, is in a quandary. He is at moments charmed by Daisy. He finds his aunt, Mrs. Costello, too severe. Later, in Rome, he even tries to mitigate the first criticisms of the somewhat friendlier Mrs. Walker. Yet, towards the end,

the midnight scene of Daisy and Giovanelli in the Colosseum leaves Winterbourne no room for doubts about the young lady. "That once-questionable quantity *had* no shades—it was a mere black little blot."

Of course, Daisy herself calls Winterbourne "so stiff—it had always been her great word." In Daisy's final vindication, through Giovanelli, Winterbourne (significantly named) feels, no doubt, his own frosty narrowness, as well as the pathos of Daisy's defeated longing for his esteem. Undoubtedly James intended the reader to pass an unfavorable judgment upon Winterbourne. In the end, he is lost to the finer shades, the tenderer feelings which Daisy might have fostered. As he tells his aunt, he has "lived too long in foreign parts." In this summing up, we may imagine another American innocent doomed by the corruption of the Old World.

The last word on Daisy Miller should belong to James. In the story, he emphasizes her poor upbringing, her ignorance and her mother's, and he calls the girl "an inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence." Years later, in nostalgic retrospection, he referred to "my supposedly typical little figure" as "pure poetry." In the spirit of a poetic concept, Daisy, wistful and appealing, shines by comparison with Winterbourne and her other detractors.

Like *Daisy Miller*, *The Pupil* was first rejected by an American editor, a man who may have been sensitive to James's unfavorable picture of his compatriots abroad. An English magazine, Longman's, accepted the story and printed it in 1891. Some critics consider it "a masterpiece," or "among James's finest," yet it is relatively unfamiliar in the James canon. It treats of the theme of moral confusion or treachery, as seen by a child, a theme which, in more complex fashion, appears in *What Maisie Knew*, *The Awkward Age*, and *The Turn Of The Screw*.

In *The Pupil*, the Americans in Europe, the Moreen family, are very different from the Millers in one way, but similar in another. Like the Millers, the Moreens aspire to those finer things of life presumably attainable in Europe. But their aspirations and their outward semblance are far more sophisticated than Daisy's or her mother's. In fact, James pointedly calls Mr. Moreen "a man of the world," however ironic the designation may be. But in their financial resources the Moreens are far, far beneath the Millers. Living always beyond their means, the Moreens can barely keep ahead of their creditors, and, in the end, are practically thrown out on the street.

It is not so much their lack of money as their dishonesty which creates the dilemma of the tutor, Pemberton, "the point of view" provider of this story. Little Morgan Moreen, strange fruit of a strange pair, suffers from his parents' shoddy, roving life, somewhat as the young Henry James may have suffered from the James family's European wanderings. Morgan's need for rooted associations and secure loyalties helps to create his devotion to his tutor. And the tutor is reluctantly drawn into accepting the boy's dependence upon him. In a curious way, the child foresees Pemberton's dilemma, and seeks to protect him, saying that if he (Morgan) "did right," he "ought to dismiss" Pemberton, whom he considers "very young, fortunately." This odd reversal of roles, though momentary, is also momentous. It gives the measure of Morgan's unusual but believable precocity and his profound consciousness of the kind of life led by his relatives.

A doctor once encountered in a railway carriage spoke to James of an actual American family and their son who became, in James's imagination, the tribe of the Moreens. James envisioned the son as "a small boy, acute and precocious, afflicted with a heart of weak action, but beautifully intelligent, who saw (his parents') prowling, pre-

carious life exactly as it was, and measured and judged it, and measured and judged *them*, all round . . . presenting himself as an extraordinary little person."

In the story, Morgan glimpses, for one dazzling instant, the prospect of escaping from his family altogether. But the ecstasy of the very idea proves to be literally too much for him.

In the last story of the collection, "*Europe*," it is important to note the quotation marks of the title. This Europe is not a real one, but a view of what Europe means to four women leading quite isolated lives in New England. The mother, old Mrs. Rimmle, has been to Europe many years before, with her husband. Souvenirs of this trip fill the house and constitute the vicarious experience of "the girls," Mrs. Rimmle's aging daughters. It is the mother who is the keeper of this treasure. It is she who has something to tell. "The girls" themselves, safe in Brookbridge (Cambridge?), have seen painfully little of the world.

At the beginning of the story, two of the girls are at last about to leave for Europe. Maria is to remain at home with her mother. But "the poor Rimmles never, after all, 'went.' The old lady, at the eleventh hour, broke down . . . She had something in the nature . . . of a seizure," a Freudian one, a modern reader would immediately suppose.

As the story progresses, we and the narrator, an occasional visitor in Brookbridge, become more and more anxious to see the sisters take their trip. At the beginning, it sounds like an adventure, or, as they say, "an opportunity." As time passes, we view it more as an escape which we long to see them make before they become too old.

At last, one of the sisters, Jane, does break loose, and go to Europe. But her mother chooses, from then on, to think of her as dead.

Our sense of the old Mrs. Rimmle grows more sinister. The story-teller presents her as less and less a human being, until on the last page she is "the mummy" which opens "its" lips. A feeling of evil emanates from the old woman, a feeling which, if not supernatural, is certainly not natural. By now, she is a centenarian, hardly a living person, but a presence reigning over the household.

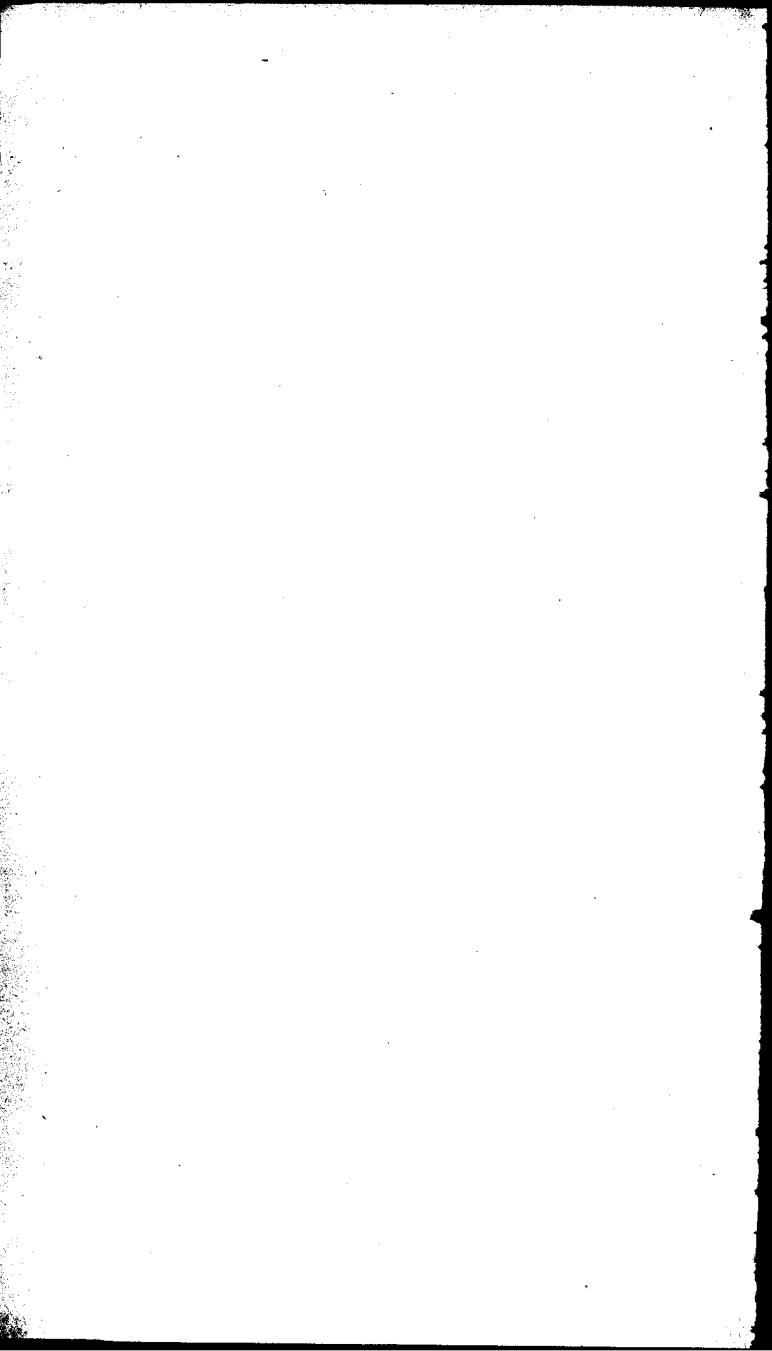
The tacit revolt of another daughter, Becky, has consisted of her financing the adventurous Jane, who apparently was disinherited by the old lady. But for Becky, the price of even tacit revolt is high. She and her sister Maria seem to age excessively, until all at once they look as old as their mother. When Becky has withered away, there is a final glimpse of the beldame, "the wonderful witch," as James calls her, with the much-enduring Maria, the last of the three sisters. By a curious twist, the old lady refuses to believe that Becky has died, but pronounces instead the verdict that Becky has gone "to Europe." Not Europe itself, but the idea of Europe seems to have helped promote a kind of total family disaster.

In its quiet and controlled despair, the story resembles some of Chekov's. It is, indeed, vintage James, open-ended, and hence perhaps a greater achievement than the previous two, with their neater conclusions. Ease and naturalness mark the narrator's tone; it seems we have heard a simple village chronicle, but it has become a story of marvelous suggestiveness and tragic overtones which linger hauntingly in the reader's mind.

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## DAISY MILLER

### 1. *Les Trois Couronnes*

At the little town of Vevay, in Switzerland, there is a particularly comfortable hotel. There are, indeed, many hotels; for the entertainment of tourists is the business of the place, which, as many travellers will remember, is seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake—a lake that it behooves every tourist to visit. The shore of the lake presents an unbroken array of establishments of this order, of every category, from the “grand hotel” of the newest fashion, with a chalk-white front, a hundred balconies, and a dozen flags flying from its roof, to the little Swiss *pension* of an elder day, with its name inscribed in German-looking lettering upon a pink or yellow wall, and an awkward summer-house in the angle of the garden. One of the hotels at Vevay, however, is famous, even classical, being distinguished from any of its upstart neighbors by an air both of luxury and of maturity. In this region, in the month of June, American travellers are extremely numerous; it may be said, indeed, that Vevay assumes at this period some of the characteristics of an American watering-place. There are sights and sounds which evoke a vision, an echo, of Newport and Saratoga. There is a flitting hither and thither of “stylish” young girls, a rustling of muslin flounces, a rattle of dance-music in the morning hours, a sound of high-pitched voices at all times. You receive an impression of these things at the excellent inn of the Trois

Couronnes, and are transported in fancy to the Ocean House or to Congress Hall. But at the Trois Couronnes, it must be added, there are other features that are much at variance with these suggestions: neat German waiters, who look like secretaries of legation; Russian princesses sitting in the garden; little Polish boys walking about, held by the hand, with their governors; a view of the sunny crest of the Dent du Midi and the picturesque towers of the Castle of Chillon.

I hardly know whether it was the analogies or the differences that were uppermost in the mind of a young American, who, two or three years ago, sat in the garden of the Trois Couronnes, looking about him, rather idly, at some of the graceful objects I have mentioned. It was a beautiful summer morning, and in whatever fashion the young American looked at things they must have seemed to him charming. He had come from Geneva the day before by the little steamer to see his aunt, who was staying at the hotel—Geneva having been for a long time his place of residence. But his aunt had a headache—his aunt had almost always a headache—and now she was shut up in her room, smelling camphor, so that he was at liberty to wander about. He was some seven-and-twenty years of age. When his friends spoke of him, they usually said that he "was at Geneva studying"; when his enemies spoke of him, they said—but, after all, he had no enemies; he was an extremely amiable fellow, and universally liked. What I should say is, simply, that when certain persons spoke of him they affirmed that the reason of his spending so much time at Geneva was that he was extremely devoted to a lady who lived there—a foreign lady—a person older than himself. Very few Americans—indeed, I think none—had ever seen this lady, about whom there were some singular stories. But Winterbourne had an old attachment for the little metropolis of Calvinism; he had been put to school there as a boy, and he had afterwards gone to college there—

circumstances which had led to his forming a great many youthful friendships. Many of these he had kept, and they were a source of great satisfaction to him.

After knocking at his aunt's door, and learning that she was indisposed, he had taken a walk about the town, and then he had come in to his breakfast. He had now finished his breakfast; but he was drinking a small cup of coffee, which had been served to him on a little table in the garden by one of the waiters who looked like an attaché. At last he finished his coffee and lit a cigarette. Presently a small boy came walking along the path—an urchin of nine or ten. The child, who was diminutive for his years, had an aged expression of countenance: a pale complexion, and sharp little features. He was dressed in knickerbockers, with red stockings, which displayed his poor little spindle-shanks; he also wore a brilliant red cravat. He carried in his hand a long alpenstock, the sharp point of which he thrust into everything that he approached—the flower-beds, the garden-benches, the trains of the ladies' dresses. In front of Winterbourne he paused, looking at him with a pair of bright, penetrating little eyes.

"Will you give me a lump of sugar?" he asked, in a sharp, hard little voice—a voice immature, and yet, somehow, not young.

Winterbourne glanced at the small table near him, on which his coffee-service rested, and saw that several morsels of sugar remained. "Yes, you may take one," he answered; "but I don't think sugar is good for little boys."

This little boy stepped forward and carefully selected three of the coveted fragments, two of which he buried in the pocket of his knickerbockers, depositing the other as promptly in another place. He poked his alpenstock, lance-fashion, into Winterbourne's bench, and tried to crack the lump of sugar with his teeth.

"Oh, blazes; it's har-r-d!" he exclaimed, pronouncing the adjective in a peculiar manner.

Winterbourne had immediately perceived that he might have the honor of claiming him as a fellow-countryman. "Take care you don't hurt your teeth," he said, paternally.

"I haven't got any teeth to hurt. They have all come out. I have only got seven teeth. My mother counted them last night, and one came out right afterwards. She said she'd slap me if any more came out. I can't help it. It's this old Europe. It's the climate that makes them come out. In America they didn't come out. It's these hotels."

Winterbourne was much amused. "If you eat three lumps of sugar, your mother will certainly slap you," he said.

"She's got to give me some candy, then," rejoined his young interlocutor. "I can't get any candy here—any American candy. American candy's the best candy."

"And are American little boys the best little boys?" asked Winterbourne.

"I don't know. I'm an American boy," said the child.

"I see you are one of the best!" laughed Winterbourne.

"Are you an American man?" pursued this vivacious infant. And then, on Winterbourne's affirmative reply—"American men are the best!" he declared.

His companion thanked him for the compliment; and the child, who had now got astride his alpenstock, stood looking about him, while he attacked a second lump of sugar. Winterbourne wondered if he himself had been like this in his infancy, for he had been brought to Europe at about this age.

"Here comes my sister!" cried the child, in a moment. "She's an American girl."

Winterbourne looked along the path and saw a beautiful young lady advancing. "American girls are the best girls!" he said, cheerfully, to his young companion.

"My sister ain't the best!" the child declared. "She's always blowing at me."

"I imagine that is your fault, not hers," said Winterbourne. The young lady meanwhile had drawn near. She was dressed in white muslin, with a hundred frills and flounces, and knots of pale-colored ribbon. She was bareheaded; but she balanced in her hand a large parasol, with a deep border of embroidery; and she was strikingly, admirably pretty. "How pretty they are!" thought Winterbourne, straightening himself in his seat, as if he were prepared to rise.

The young lady paused in front of his bench, near the parapet of the garden, which overlooked the lake. The little boy had now converted his alpenstock into a vaulting-pole, by the aid of which he was springing about in the gravel, and kicking it up a little.

"Randolph," said the young lady, "what are you doing?"

"I'm going up the Alps," replied Randolph. "This is the way!" And he gave another little jump, scattering the pebbles about Winterbourne's ears.

"That's the way they come down," said Winterbourne.

"He's an American man!" cried Randolph, in his hard little voice.

The young lady gave no heed to this announcement, but looked straight at her brother. "Well, I guess you had better be quiet," she simply observed.

It seemed to Winterbourne that he had been in a manner presented. He got up and stepped slowly towards the young girl, throwing away his cigarette. "This little boy and I have made acquaintance," he said, with great civility. In Geneva, as he had been perfectly aware, a young man was not at liberty to speak to a young unmarried lady except under certain rarely occurring conditions; but here at Vevay, what conditions could be better than these?—a pretty American girl coming and standing in front of you in a garden. This pretty American girl, however, on hearing Winterbourne's observation, simply glanced at him; she then turned her head



and looked over the parapet, at the lake and the opposite mountains. He wondered whether he had gone too far; but he decided that he must advance farther, rather than retreat. While he was thinking of something else to say, the young lady turned to the little boy again.

"I should like to know where you got that pole?" she said.

"I bought it," responded Randolph.

"You don't mean to say you're going to take it to Italy?"

"Yes, I am going to take it to Italy," the child declared.

The young girl glanced over the front of her dress, and smoothed out a knot or two of ribbon. Then she rested her eyes upon the prospect again. "Well, I guess you had better leave it somewhere," she said, after a moment.

"Are you going to Italy?" Winterbourne inquired, in a tone of great respect.

The young lady glanced at him again. "Yes, sir," she replied. And she said nothing more.

"Are you—a—going over the Simplon?" Winterbourne pursued, a little embarrassed.

"I don't know," she said. "I suppose it's some mountain. Randolph, what mountain are we going over?"

"Going where?" the child demanded.

"To Italy," Winterbourne explained.

"I don't know," said Randolph. "I don't want to go to Italy. I want to go to America."

"Oh, Italy is a beautiful place!" rejoined the young man.

"Can you get candy there?" Randolph loudly inquired.

"I hope not," said his sister. "I guess you have had enough candy, and mother thinks so, too."

"I haven't had any for ever so long—for a hundred weeks!" cried the boy, still jumping about.

The young lady inspected her flounces and smoothed