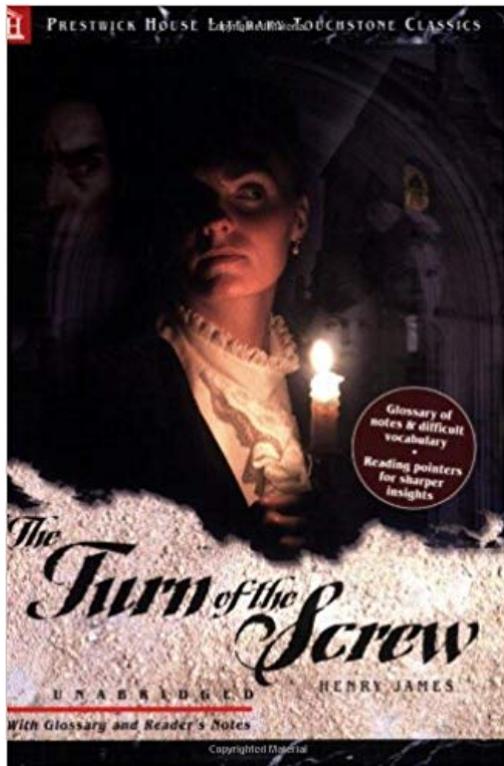


The Turn of the Screw - Literary Touchstone Classic by Henry James



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This Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classic includes a glossary and reader's notes to help the modern reader more fully appreciate the rich complexity of James' language, images, and symbols. Before there was Alfred Hitchcock, there was Henry James, and before Psycho, there was The Turn of the Screw. Why is the young governess the only one who can see the ghosts? Are her young charges haunted or evil? Or is the governess herself mad? The book that claims to start out as a Christmas Eve ghost story quickly becomes a tale of psychological horror as the governess struggles-and ultimately fails-to protect the children from the "corruption" that only she can conceive of...but cannot name. Richly wrought in Late-Victorian prose, Henry James' most famous novel is both hauntingly beautiful and a shocking glimpse into the ultimate source of evil...the human mind.



Reviews of the **The Turn of the Screw - Literary Touchstone**

Classic *by* Henry James

Zyangup

A young governess is hired to care for a young girl named Flora and her brother, Miles. Miles has been expelled from a prestigious school and never explains why he has been sent home. Over time, the governess who is the narrator along with the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose believe that the children are in contact and being controlled by the evil Peter Quint, a former resident and Miss Jessel, their former governess. The children have a sweet demeanor but at times their cunning ways are apparent. Will they be successful in extricating the children from these dark forces? Read Henry James' popular *The Turn of the Screw* and see how things pan out!

Lynnak

This book is a tough read. It is very Baroque despite being late 19th century. The prose is heavily ornamented with many asides and qualifications. It explores every avenue of a particular thread of thought.

The story is a woman's narrative of her haunted surroundings and her duty to protect the children she is to care for. While some author's would focus on scenery or character, this story focuses, obsessively so, on the narrator's thoughts, examinations, and speculations - almost akin to Poe.

The story told is ultimately satisfying and rewarding. I would guess the book would lend itself well to a second reading because it is complex in its ambiguities and subtleties.

Black_Hawk_Down.

A classic novella still praised to this day-- a Gothic mystery and ghost-story that probes the psyche with eerie undertones, many of which are sexual. You will enjoy this if you like authors like Mary Shelley, or films like Nicole Kidman's, "The Others". The book is still read and studied to this day while being enjoyable and creepy, a must-read for fans of horror and feminist theory. It is not a difficult read; the concepts and the mystery is what makes it difficult, and as the reader, you are the sleuth. This novella plays with the psyche (quite Freudian) and will end differently depending on how the reader perceives the characters. -- The book came very fast and was in great condition; just as advertised, and I plan to add it to my library-- also a good price.

Bukelv

I once worked as a tutor, at my university's tutoring center, and in one of the numerous moments of leisure I enjoyed (the majority of the student population seemed to be unaware of the center's existence, which makes sense when one considers that it was located in the library basement), I overheard a conversation between two students, a guy and a girl, who had been taking an English class titled Special Topics: Conrad and James. "Why doesn't he get to the point?" the girl was complaining. I began to listen to the conversation in medias res, but I did not need to hear more to know that she was not talking about Conrad. I think they were discussing *The Portrait of a Lady*, which I've yet to read. As most enthusiasts of English literature know, James is famous for an exhaustive, convoluted style that is not everyone's cup of tea. In the middle of his career, James' style offers the lover of great prose a nearly physical pleasure; towards the end of the author's life, it degenerated almost into self-parody. At least that is the consensus. A friend of mine said, referring to *The Golden Bowl* (1904), that it is often difficult to figure out what is going on, assuming that something is going on at all.

Published in serial form two years after the original *Daisy Miller*, *Washington Square* (1880) is a novella that belongs to the decade in which Henry James published such highly regarded works as *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Bostonians*, *The Author of Beltraffio*, *The Aspern Papers*, and *The Lesson of the Master*. It is a love story of sorts, related in the beautiful, ornate prose that

characterizes James' most satisfactory works.

The reader follows the fate of Catherine Sloper, who falls in love with Morris Townsend. The conflict: Catherine is a good girl who will inherit a reasonable sum from her mother and an even larger one from her still-living father, while Morris lives off his sister and has been known to squander what little money he had. Behind the two central figures stand Catherine's father, Dr. Sloper, who is convinced that Morris is only after the money, and his sister, Catherine's Aunt Lavinia Penniman, who has not only a taste but a hunger for romance. Catherine is caught between obedience to her father and a sincere attraction to Morris. The reader wonders whether Dr. Sloper is correct, whether Morris really is mercenary.

As is known, critics have bestowed upon Henry James the enviable title of Heir of Jane Austen, and *Washington Square* offers much justification. The style is precise and exquisite, and the novella focuses on the struggle between emotion and convention. Like Austen, James proves that it is possible to tell a good story without resorting to lurid subject matter, without sensationalism. The action is not outward, but psychological and emotional. Could the story have been told in half the number of pages, or less? Probably. But then it wouldn't have been a Henry James story, and the reader would have been deprived of the elegant style that is almost a character in itself in this author's works.

Although it is generally catalogued as a novel, the rubric of novella fits *Washington Square* more comfortably. I wrote my dissertation on this neglected and elusive genre, but I won't bore you with the details. In a nutshell, if the short story is governed by the literary device of revelation and the concept of development characterizes the novel proper, the novella focuses on a situation that is presented and reexamined. This is exactly what happens in *Washington Square*, and that's all one can say without giving away too much.

I have yet to read James' novels. I am curious to see how a master of the short story and especially of the novella spins a longer yarn. If I had to compare *Washington Square* to any of the works I've read by James, my choice would be *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903), that story about the fear of one's future. I also thought, as I was reading, of other stories that play with the theme of possible or actual ulterior motives: *The Aspern Papers* and *The Lesson of the Master*. I'll simply say that *Washington Square* is a bit less ambiguous than other Henry James stories.

I recommend *Washington Square* to both James enthusiasts and neophytes. The former will be delighted; the latter will be able to establish whether they want to give the author a second chance or not. Personally, I would describe this novella as one of the most gratifying examples of the immensely gratifying art of Henry James.

My next Henry James will be *In the Cage*.

Thanks for reading, and enjoy the book!

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