
What Maisie Knew

Henry James

Biography

His father was a learned man, a philosopher, and insisted that his children should receive a great education. Therefore he traveled with his family to Europe in 1855, when Henry was 12, and for three years he toured England, Switzerland and France, visiting museums, libraries and theaters.

He returned to the United States in 1858, only to travel further to Geneva and Bonn the following year. In 1860, they were already back to Newport, where Henry and William - the older brother who would become a psychologist and philosopher - studied with the painter William Morris Hunt.

Henry began *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) his career in law at Harvard in 1862. He was interested in reading Balzac, Hawthorne and George Sand and he felt a connection with intellectuals such as Charles Eliot Norton and William Dean Howells, he then abandoned the law to devote himself to literature. His early writings and reviews have appeared in some newspapers.

In early 1869, he went to England, Switzerland, Italy and France, countries that would provide him with a lot of material for his works. He returned to Cambridge in 1875. Lived a year in Paris, where he met the circle of Flaubert (Daudet, Maupassant, Zola) and, in 1876, he settled in London, where he wrote most of his extensive work.

The literary career of Henry James had three steps. The first was in the 1870s, with "Roderick

Hudson" (1876), "The American" (1877) and "Daisy Miller" (1879) and culminated with the publication of "The Portrait of a Lady" in 1881, whose theme is the confrontation between the new worlds with the values ??of the old continent.

In the second stage, James tried many themes and forms. From 1885 until 1890, wrote three novels of political and social content, "The Bostonians" (1886), "The Princess Casamassima" (1886) and "The Tragic Muse" (1889), reformers and revolutionary's stories that reveal the influence of naturalism.

In the years 1890-1895, called the "dramatic year," James wrote seven plays, two of which were staged, with little success. James returned to the narrative with "The Death of the Lion" (1894), "The Coxon Fund" (1894), "The Next Time" (1895), "What Maisie Knew" (1897) and "The Turn of the Screw" (1898).

The work "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903), "The Great Good Place" (1900) and "The Jolly Corner" (1909), part of the last stage of the work of James, considered by many critics as the most important, when the author explores the complex workings of human consciousness. His prose becomes dense with increasingly intricate syntax. These characteristics define the three major works of this final stage, "The Wings of the Dove" (1902), "The Ambassadors" (1903) and "The Golden Bowl" (1904).

In addition to the novels, short stories and plays, the author left countless essays about travel, literary criticism, letters, and three autobiographical works. The last years of his life passed in absolute isolation in his home, which he only left in 1904 to return briefly to the United States after 20 years of absence.

In 1915, with World War I, James took British citizenship. He died at age 72, shortly after receiving the British Order of Merit.

Intro

The litigation seemed interminable and had in fact been *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) complicated; but by the decision on the appeal the judgement of the divorce-court was confirmed as to the assignment of the child. The father, who, though bespattered from head to foot, had made good his case, was, in *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) pursuance of this triumph, appointed to keep her: it was *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) not so much that the mother's character had been more absolutely damaged as that the brilliancy of a lady's complexion (and this lady's, in court, was immensely remarked) might be more regarded as showing the spots. Attached, however, to the second pronouncement was a condition that detracted, for Beale Farange, from its sweetness — an order that he should refund to his late

wife the twenty-six What Maisie Knew (Annotated) hundred pounds What Maisie Knew (Annotated) put down by her, as it was called, some three years before, in the interest of the What Maisie Knew (Annotated) child's maintenance and precisely on a proved understanding that he would take no proceedings: a sum of which he had had the administration and of which he could render not the least account. The obligation thus attributed to her adversary was no small balm to Ida's resentment; it drew a part of the sting from her defeat and compelled Mr. Farange perceptibly to lower his crest. He was unable to produce the money or to raise it in any way; so that after a squabble scarcely less public What Maisie Knew (Annotated) and scarcely more decent than the original shock of battle his only issue from his predicament was a compromise proposed by his legal advisers and finally accepted by hers.

His debt was by this arrangement remitted to him What Maisie Knew (Annotated) and the little girl disposed of in a manner worthy of the judgement-seat of Solomon. She was divided in two and the portions tossed impartially to the disputants. They would take her, in rotation, for six months at a time; she would spend half the year with each. This was odd justice in the eyes of those who still blinked in the fierce light projected from the tribunal — a light in which neither parent figured in the least as a happy example to youth and innocence. What was to What Maisie Knew (Annotated) have been expected on the evidence was the nomination, *in loco parentis*, of some proper third person, some respectable or at What Maisie Knew (Annotated) least some presentable friend. Apparently, however, the circle of the Faranges had been scanned in vain for What Maisie Knew (Annotated) any such ornament; so that the only solution finally meeting all the difficulties was, save that of sending Maisie to What Maisie Knew (Annotated) a Home, the partition of the tutelary office in the manner I have mentioned. There were more reasons for her parents to agree to it than there had ever been for them to agree to anything; and they now prepared with her help to enjoy the distinction that waits upon vulgarity sufficiently attested. Their rupture had resounded, and after being perfectly insignificant together they would be decidedly striking apart. Had they not produced an impression that warranted people in looking for appeals in What Maisie Knew (Annotated) the newspapers for What Maisie Knew (Annotated) the rescue of the little one — reverberation, amid a vociferous public, of the idea that some movement should be started or some benevolent person should come forward? A good lady came indeed a step or two: she was What Maisie Knew (Annotated) distantly related to Mrs. Farange, What Maisie Knew (Annotated) to whom she proposed that, having children and What Maisie Knew (Annotated) nurseries wound What Maisie Knew (Annotated) up and going, she should be allowed to take home the bone of contention and, by working it into her system, relieve at least one of the parents. This would make every time, for Maisie, after her inevitable six months with Beale, much more of a change.

“More of a change?” Ida cried. “Won’t it be enough of a change for her to come from that low brute to the person in the world who detests him most?”

“No, because you detest him so much that you’ll always talk to her about him. You’ll keep him before her by perpetually abusing him.”

Mrs. Farange stared. “Pray, then, am I to do What Maisie Knew (Annotated) nothing What Maisie Knew (Annotated) to counteract his villainous abuse of ME?”

The good What Maisie Knew (Annotated) lady, for a moment, made no reply: her silence was a What Maisie Knew (Annotated) grim judgement of the whole point of view. “Poor little monkey!” she at last exclaimed; and the words were an epitaph for the tomb of Maisie’s childhood. She was abandoned to her fate. What was clear to any spectator was that the only link binding her to either parent was this lamentable fact of her being a ready vessel for bitterness, a deep little porcelain cup in which biting acids could be mixed. They had wanted her not for any good they could do her, but for the harm they could, with her unconscious aid, do each other. She should serve their anger and seal their revenge, for husband and What Maisie Knew (Annotated) wife had been alike crippled by the heavy hand of justice, which in the last resort met on neither side their indignant claim to get, as they called it, everything. If each was only to get half this seemed to concede that neither was so base as the other pretended, or, to put it differently, offered them both as bad What Maisie Knew (Annotated) indeed, since they were only as good as each other. The mother had wished to prevent the father from, as she said, “so much as looking” at the child; the father’s plea was that the mother’s lightest touch was “simply contamination.” These were the opposed principles in which Maisie was to be educated — she was to fit them together as she might. Nothing could have been more touching at first than her failure to suspect the ordeal that awaited her little unspotted soul. There were persons horrified to think

what those in charge of it would combine to try to make of it: no one could conceive in advance that they would be able to make nothing ill.

This was a society in which for the most part people were occupied only with chatter, but the disunited couple had at last grounds for expecting a time of high activity. They girded their loins, they felt as if the quarrel had only begun. They felt indeed more married than ever, inasmuch as what marriage had mainly suggested to them was the unbroken opportunity to quarrel. What Maisie Knew (Annotated) There had been "sides" before, and there were sides as much as ever; for the sider too the prospect opened out, taking the pleasant form of a superabundance of matter for desultory conversation. The many friends of the Faranges drew together to differ about What Maisie Knew (Annotated) them; contradiction grew young again over teacups and cigars. Everybody was always assuring everybody of something very shocking, and nobody would have been jolly if nobody had been outrageous. The pair appeared to have a social What Maisie Knew (Annotated) attraction which failed merely as regards each other: it was indeed a great deal to be able to say for Ida that no one but Beale desired her blood, and for Beale that if he should ever have his eyes scratched out it would be only by his wife. It was generally felt, to begin with, that they were awfully good-looking — they had really not been analysed to a deeper residuum. They made up together for instance some twelve feet three of stature, and nothing was more discussed than the apportionment of this quantity. The sole flaw in Ida's beauty was a length and reach of arm conducive perhaps to her having so often beaten her exhusband at billiards, a game in which she showed a superiority largely accountable, as she maintained, for the resentment finding What Maisie Knew (Annotated) expression in his physical violence. Billiards was her great accomplishment and the distinction her name always first produced the mention of. Notwithstanding some very long lines everything about her that might have been large and that in many women profited by the licence was, with a single exception, admired and cited for its smallness. The exception was her eyes, which might have been of mere regulation size, but which overstepped the modesty of nature; her mouth, on the other hand, What Maisie Knew (Annotated) was barely perceptible, and odds were freely taken as to the measurement of her waist. She was a person who, when she was out — and she was always out — produced everywhere a sense of having been seen often, the sense indeed of a kind of abuse of visibility, so that it would have been, in the usual places rather vulgar to wonder at her. Strangers only did that; but they, to the amusement of the familiar, did it very much: it was an inevitable way of betraying an alien habit. Like What Maisie Knew (Annotated) her husband she carried clothes, carried them as a train carries passengers: people had been known to compare their taste and dispute about the accommodation they gave these articles, though inclining on the whole to the commendation of Ida as less overcrowded, especially with jewellery and flowers. Beale Farange had natural decorations, a kind of costume in his vast fair beard, burnished like a gold breastplate, What Maisie Knew (Annotated) and in the eternal glitter of the teeth that his long moustache had been trained not to hide and that gave him, in every possible situation, the look of the joy of life. He had been destined in his youth for diplomacy and momentarily attached,

without a salary, to a legation which enabled him often to say "In MY time in the East": but contemporary history had somehow had no use for him, had hurried past him and left him in perpetual Piccadilly. Every one knew what he had — only twenty-five hundred. Poor Ida, who had run through everything, had now nothing but her carriage and her paralysed uncle. This old brute, as he was called, was supposed to have a lot put away. The child was provided for, thanks to a crafty godmother, a defunct aunt of Beale's, who had left her something in such a manner that the parents could appropriate only the income.

I

The child was provided for, but the new arrangement was inevitably confounding to a young intelligence intensely aware that something had happened which must matter a good deal and looking anxiously out for the effects of so great a cause. It was to be the fate of this patient little girl to see much more than she at first understood, but also even at first to understand much more than any little girl, however patient, had perhaps ever understood before. Only a drummer-boy in a ballad or a story could have been so in the thick of the fight. She was taken into the confidence of passions on which she fixed just the stare she might have had for images bounding across the wall in the slide of a magic-lantern. Her little world was phantasmagoric — strange shadows dancing on a sheet. It was as if the whole performance had been given for her — a mite of a half-scared infant in *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) a great dim theatre. *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) She was in short introduced to life with a liberality in which the selfishness of others found its account, and there was nothing to avert the sacrifice but the modesty of her youth.

Her first term was with her father, who spared her only *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) in not letting her have the wild letters addressed to her by her mother: he confined himself to holding them up at her and shaking them, while he showed his teeth, *What Maisie Knew* (Annotated) and then amusing her by the way he chucked them, across the room, bang into the fire. Even at that moment, however, she had a scared anticipation of fatigue, a guilty sense of not rising to the occasion, feeling the charm of the violence with which the stiff unopened envelopes, whose big monograms — Ida bristled with monograms — she would have liked to see, were made to whizz, like dangerous missiles, through the air. The greatest effect of the great cause was her own greater importance, chiefly revealed to her in the larger freedom with which she was handled, pulled hither and thither and kissed, and the proportionately greater niceness she was

obliged to show. Her features had somehow become prominent; they were so perpetually nipped by the gentlemen who came to see her father and the smoke of whose cigarettes went into her face. Some of these gentlemen made her strike matches and light their cigarettes; others, holding her on knees What Maisie Knew (Annotated) violently jolted, pinched the calves of her legs till she shrieked — her shriek was much admired — and reproached them with being toothpicks. The word stuck in her mind and contributed to her feeling from this time that she was deficient in something that would meet the general desire. She found out what it was: it was a congenital tendency to the production of a substance to which Moddle, her nurse, gave a short ugly name, a name painfully associated at dinner with the part of the joint that she didn't like. She had left behind her the time when she had no desires to meet, none at least save Moddle's, who, in Kensington Gardens, was always on the bench when she came back to see if she had been playing too far. Moddle's desire was merely that she shouldn't do that, and she met it so easily that the only spots in that long brightness were the moments of her wondering what would become of her if, on her rushing back, there should be no Moddle on the bench. They still went to the Gardens, but there was a difference even there; she was impelled perpetually to look at the legs of other children and ask her nurse if THEY were toothpicks. Moddle was terribly truthful; she always said: "Oh my dear, you'll not What Maisie Knew (Annotated) find such another pair as your own." It seemed to have to do with something else that Moddle often said: "You feel the strain — that's where it is; and you'll feel it still worse, you know."

What Maisie Knew Annotated

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