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JAMESIAN WOMEN: A READERS THEATRE  
ADAPTATION FROM SELECTED  
NOVELS OF HENRY JAMES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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August, 1975

Wicker, Patricia, Jamesian Women: A Readers Theatre Adaptation from Selected Novels of Henry James. Master of Science (Speech Communication and Drama). August, 1975, 173 pp., bibliography, 50 titles.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the power image of Henry James's female protagonists through a Readers Theatre adaptation of his novels, Daisy Miller, The Wings of the Dove, and The Portrait of a Lady. Chapter I includes an introduction and defines the purpose of the thesis. Chapter II briefly examines biographical information on James. Chapter III includes the analysis of the three selected novels in relation to preparation of a performance based script for Readers Theatre. In the Appendix is the Readers Theatre script with the inclusive transition and introductory material.

The illustration of a typical Jamesian woman reveals a philosophic view of the human possibilities in freedom, power, and the destructive elements that limit an independent spirit.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

According to his leading biographer, Leon Edel, Henry James had an extraordinary affinity for the "mystery" of the feminine mind. The ability to place so many women in psychological struggles of morality and decision seems to be inherent in James's major works.<sup>1</sup> James wrote during the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth. He was successful with his novels that dealt with an international theme. The women of his fiction became "the American girls whose free spirits bring them into some sort of trouble with the world of fact which world is usually represented by Europe and Europeans."<sup>2</sup>

The observation of life and the living became paramount to James. He was intensely interested in writing about the "consciousness" within people which controlled the process and direction of their lives.<sup>3</sup> His fictional characters have shown that James was interested more in the relationships and communication of the minds of his characters than he was in overt actions that propelled and directed a plot.<sup>4</sup> An awareness of consciousness involved a sense and "sensibility" of moral values according to James. He spent his entire career of literary criticism and fiction writing emphasizing the importance of this moral "sensibility."<sup>5</sup>

What might have seemed unusual to many readers was James's choice of "feminine protagonists" as heroines of the American tradition of freedom set against the passivity of European tradition. The typical American and Jamesian woman was a woman of strength, individualism, and a "power figure" in his novels.<sup>6</sup> F. W. Dupee has theorized in the same manner as Edel that James had "an exceptional identification with the feminine mind, which had probably originated in his childhood relation to his mother."<sup>7</sup> This is not an uncommon theory in the modern annals of psychological study. Dupee reports:

Except that the powers that finally distinguished him, the eloquence and energy and subtlety, belong rather to undifferentiated genius than to either sex, James might be called the great feminine novelist of a feminine age in letters. In any case he was able, without being at all doctrinaire about it, to imagine women, not as a distinct species with peculiar problems, as they had nearly always been presented by novelists, but as typical of human possibilities in general. In their relatively greater freedom from material pressures they figured for him the pleasures and responsibilities of freedom in whatever sex or condition of society.<sup>8</sup>

James's father was never associated with "business or industry."<sup>9</sup> The father's inherited wealth was enough to sustain the family without the necessity of his working. Dupee comments that if James felt isolated from "the Downtown world--so that as he grew older he was to find it increasingly difficult to imagine lively masculine figures in the center of things--it also accounted for the growing subtlety and power which he concentrated in his feminine portraits."<sup>10</sup> With the male contingent at work the majority of the time, and the 'women left to care for the amenities,' "James had once said that the United States

constituted a society of women in a world of men. "<sup>11</sup> Apart from the familiar international theme the search for something more vast and stabilizing in life was a repeated vision for the Jamesian women in his fiction.<sup>12</sup>

James's personal relationship with women was one of platonic and intellectual enjoyment, and definitely one of detachment. The key to understanding James's devotion to the intricacies of the feminine emotions and intellect might well be rooted in James's observation of his mother, as well as her relationship to the elder James and her children.<sup>13</sup> Edel pointed out that James was aware of a certain power and control that his mother seemed to radiate over the entire James household. The power was one of subtlety taking the form of her "selfless devotion" and the love for husband and home.<sup>14</sup> After his mother's death James wrote "she was the keystone of the arch."<sup>15</sup> The senior James was stricken by his wife's death and was unable to continue functioning without her. His death closely followed that of Mary James. Henry, the small boy, had become acutely aware of the male dependency on female support, love and devotion.<sup>16</sup> The effects of such parental devotion remained with James. According to Edel, James had reached an awareness of the logic of this situation:

At some stage the thought came to him that men derive strength from the women they marry and that conversely women can deprive men of their strength and life. Mothers--women--apparently were expected to give themselves wholly, submerge themselves (he uses the word availability twice in describing Mary James) in their family. Men used women, were propped by them and sometimes could control the lives of men and this he believed

was what happened to his father. . . . This lead to further considerations. What happens to anyone who gives himself to another? To love--was not that to renounce? . . . Is the man therefore a threat to the woman in a love relationship? (It was clear enough to him that the woman could be a threat to the man.) Would the man collapse and become weak (like the senior Henry) if he ever allowed himself to love a woman? To be a man and to love a woman for life--was that not something to be feared?<sup>17</sup>

Other relationships with women have seemed to provide James with the reaffirmation of this earlier lesson on the power of women. His later encounters with the opposite sex were ones of detachment from emotional involvement. His interest remained in the creativity and intellectuality of the new and old associations. One such relationship of worship from a distance was with Minny Temple, a distant cousin of James. James's concern with Minny came before his decision to lead a literary life in England. Through his associations with George Eliot Norton and Russell Lowell, editors of the North American Review and James T. Fields, editor of the Atlantic Monthly, James had been able to launch his career in the United States as a critic and fiction writer. Confident in his acceptance, James enjoyed some leisure time. By the summer of 1865 Henry James was spending a considerable amount of time at the home of the Edmund Tweedys in Newport and at the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Minny and her sisters lived with the Tweedys and Minny spent "the summer of 1865 in the White Mountains."<sup>18</sup> Minny Temple was a sparkling beauty of twenty surrounded by admirers "while Henry, the 'mere junior,' the civilian stay-at-home, looked on from the outer rim of talk."<sup>19</sup> Edel discusses James's feeling about Minny:

He was too reticent and withdrawn to be an ardent wooer, too intellectual to accept romance on its own engaging terms; and he lived in an era when, particularly in the world in which he moved, there was much greater reticence among the sexes than prevails today. Henry James was in love, but it was love of an inner sort. . . . We might say that Henry loved Minny as much as he was capable of loving any woman, as much as Winterbourne, [in Daisy Miller] uncertain of loving and doubting in his frosty bewilderment, loved Daisy, or the invalid Ralph [in The Portrait of a Lady] loved Isabel; a questioning love, unvoiced and unavowed, and not fully fathomed.<sup>20</sup>

Minny, unknown to James, had tuberculosis. After her early death James was heartbroken. Minny's dynamic personality and her ability to face life and death were to become the qualities that James would give to Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove. He would place her first in the image of Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady, but the later novel would tell of Minny's vibrancy in life and her acceptance of death. James eluded any passionate involvement with Minny, but the involvement was caught in the memory and thought of his fictional story of Milly Theale. It was not something to be feared anymore--this power; the memory of it was to evoke only admiration in the thoughts of the novelist.

During the years of his career, James was destined to associate himself with women of intellectual ability and wit. Incidents and qualities of these women were recorded in various episodes and scenes in James's fiction. He was also destined to shy away from what he thought to be the destructive power of involvement in passion and love. In the year 1881, Constance Fenimore Woolson, an American authoress, went to Europe with "a letter of introduction" to Henry James. She was related to



the noted American author, James Fenimore Cooper (a grandniece). James's exceptional writings had been the primary influence on her decision to visit James in England. James would have normally limited his attention to such a female authoress, but her avid "interest in his art, her bearing, and her sense of her own literary position quite disarmed him."<sup>21</sup> She was forty years old and James was thirty-seven. Miss Woolson attached herself to James, trying to emulate his style of writing. Her letters showed that "she had a certain exalted notion of her own literary powers."<sup>22</sup> The letters also revealed she had criticized James sharply for not "delineating a real love as it really is" with his fictional women.<sup>23</sup>

Later James visited with Miss Woolson in Italy, living in quarters close to those of hers. Their friendship was intimate enough for James to call her Fenimore. They shared meals together and each was busy "with the pursuit of work."<sup>24</sup> It was at this time that James began and almost completed his tale The Aspern Papers. Although the idea for his story came from another anecdote, the plot follows an almost accurate account of James's mounting fear of involvement with Fenimore. Long before his Florence visit James had entreated Fenimore to burn all their correspondence and he had pledged to do the same.<sup>25</sup> James was obsessed with the idea of privacy for the artist.<sup>26</sup> James created a plot in The Aspern Papers of "an old woman living beyond her time in a decaying Venetian palace . . . clinging to the precious letters written to her by a great American poet."<sup>27</sup> Edel has pointed out that in both the real

setting of the drama between James and Miss Woolson and the fictional setting of the tale "there was living a middle-aged niece--a grandniece, to be exact in each case--of James Fenimore Cooper in the real-life circumstances and of Juliana Bordereau in the fiction."<sup>28</sup> Miss Woolson had seemingly made a distinct impression on James's imagination as well as in reality.

During the years of 1890 and 1895, James spent time revising his work for the stage. The revision of his novel, The American, was the first attempt as a dramatist. The play had a second production in London and survived a mild success. Later attempts were criticized as too melodramatic and stiff. James was both "fascinated" and fearful of the theatre.<sup>29</sup> He had taken an active part in directing the actors in rehearsal, and had rewritten scenes for the production. Other attempts ended in disaster for James. The plays were failures and James experienced an acute disappointment. Dramatic episodes and scenes had been a vital part of James's novels and tales, and it was difficult for him to understand the problems of the playwright, the director, and the actors.

Long after his death, James's works were introduced to the film world. The film version of his novel Washington Square was entitled The Heiress, and later a television film entitled, The Innocents, was based on his ghostly tale, The Turn of the Screw. Michael Redgrave adapted The Aspern Papers into a play. These adaptations of James's literature were successful. The female protagonist in the film version and the television production displayed James's typical woman who struggled for a

moral victory of good over evil. Recently Daisy Miller was made into a film. Although not a box office sell-out, it was an intriguing adaptation of a familiar and much acclaimed story of James's "American girl of the future."<sup>30</sup>

Adaptations of James's literature would seem plausible and suitable for the medium of Readers Theatre. Readers Theatre has been termed as "Theatre of the Mind--Theatre of the Imagination."<sup>31</sup> Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White in their book, Readers Theatre Handbook, define Readers Theatre as:

Basically, Readers Theatre is a medium in which two or more oral interpreters through vivid vocal and physical clues cause an audience to see and hear characters expressing their attitudes toward an action so vitally that the literature becomes a living experience--both for the readers and for their audience.<sup>32</sup>

Most experts agree on the basic principles of Readers Theatre. Quoting from Keith Brooks, Eugene Bahn, and L. LaMont Okay, Coger and White state a multiple definition common to these experts of Readers Theatre: "a group activity in which a piece of literature is communicated from manuscript to an audience through the oral interpretation approach of vocal and physical suggestion."<sup>33</sup> Charlotte Lee in her book Oral Interpretation defines Readers Theatre as "the group interpretation of drama."<sup>34</sup> Other definitions of Readers Theatre include those of Joanna Maclay who defines Readers Theatre as "being committed to the principle of featuring with a special kind of clarity, literary texts."<sup>35</sup> In their book, Communicative Reading, Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen simply

state "that Readers Theatre is a form of multiple reading in which a dramatic dimension pervades the performance and in which the literary experience is communicated by suggestion rather than by literal portrayal."<sup>36</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to adapt James's novels, Daisy Miller, The Portrait of a Lady, and The Wings of the Dove, into a full-length Readers Theatre script illustrating the power image of James's female protagonists. For an effective Readers Theatre production, certain elements must be present in the literature. Coger and White focus on three of these elements. The first involves the appeal of the literature:

Literature with strong evocative power pulls the reader deeply into the experience recorded so that its significance is felt and becomes a part of his vicarious life. Such significant literature has the power to stir the imagination and energize the intellect of the listener.<sup>37</sup>

The second element involves characterizations:

Literature for Readers Theatre needs the interaction of interest-compelling characters. The more strongly delineated the characters are, the more fascinating they will be. The more sensitivethey are, the more intriguing they will be. The more involved they are with each other and with the situation and with each other--the action of the literature--the more involved the audience will be.<sup>38</sup>

The third element involves action and movement of the literature:

"In a script worthy of Readers Theatre, the characters need to be seen in action--action that is provocative, intriguing, stirring. This action need not be physical."<sup>39</sup>

Readers Theatre is a "form with focus on psychological words, rather than on physical movement."<sup>40</sup> James, as a master of dialogue, was adept in establishing a mental portrait, an impressionistic scene with "psychological words."

Although Readers Theatre has taken many forms in recent year to include compilation of materials and multi-media enhancement, the more traditional form has been adaptation from novels, plays, and short stories. If Readers Theatre had been recognized and performed in James's time, it might well have been a medium of success for his literature. The emphasis on narration, point of view, interaction of characters, evocative language, and restricted physical action were qualities James utilized in his writing. His literature was acclaimed as literature of the mind which seems to complement Readers Theatre as "Theatre of the Mind."

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), p. 357

<sup>2</sup>F. W. Dupee, Henry James (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1951), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Jay Martin, Harvest of Change (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), p. 325.

<sup>4</sup>Martin, p. 329.

<sup>5</sup>Martin, p. 323.

<sup>6</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), p. 357.

<sup>7</sup>Dupee, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup>Dupee, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup>Dupee, p. 112.

<sup>10</sup>Dupee, pp. 112-113.

<sup>11</sup>Dupee, p. 113.

<sup>12</sup>Dupee, p. 127.

<sup>13</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1953), pp. 53-54.

<sup>14</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 41.

<sup>16</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 49.

<sup>17</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 227.

<sup>19</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 233.

<sup>20</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 234.

<sup>21</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881, p. 411.

<sup>22</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881, p. 417.

<sup>23</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 89.

<sup>24</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 202.

<sup>25</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 87.

<sup>26</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 220.

<sup>28</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 224.

<sup>29</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 280.

<sup>30</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 345.

<sup>31</sup>Leslie Irene Coger and Melvin R. White, Readers Theatre Handbook: A Dramatic Approach to Literature (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>Coger and White, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>Coger and White, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup>Charlotte I. Lee, Oral Interpretation, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), p. 343.

<sup>35</sup>Joanna Hawkins Maclay, Readers Theatre Toward a Grammar of Practice (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen, Communicative Reading, 3rd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 472.

<sup>37</sup>Coger and White, p. 35.

## CHAPTER II

### BIOGRAPHY

The name of Henry James has an aristocratic sound reminiscent of the Victorian period in which he lived. Aristocracy, wealth, prestige and prominence surrounded and were submerged in the James family. The family travelled extensively to Europe, and the James children were exposed to all the cultural aspects of the Old World tradition. They were educated by governesses at an early age, and were offered the best in higher levels of their education. Henry, like his brother William, attended Harvard Law School, and both boys attended schools in Switzerland. Henry was enrolled in a school for engineers and architects for a brief period in Geneva, Switzerland.

Henry James, Jr. was born in 1843 at number 2 Washington Place, New York City on April 15. He was the second of five children born to Henry James, Sr., and Mary Robertson James. William was the older brother of Henry, then came Alice, the only girl, followed by two younger brothers, Garth Wilkinson and Robertson. Out of the five children, William and Henry would be the only ones to become acclaimed and famous for their work.

The elder James felt that extensive travel in Europe was an education in itself, and after complaining of the problems



beset by American educational systems he would plan a long trip to Europe. Later Henry wrote that the many trips to Europe left him confused. He saw his father as a restless person lacking direction and purpose in his life. As a young boy James felt embarrassed because his father wasn't in some sort of business like those of his friends. The elder James had been left an inheritance from his father that enabled him to live without the necessity of work.<sup>1</sup>

At twenty-one James sent his first novelette, The Story of a Year, to the Atlantic Monthly which appeared in the March, 1865 issue. At twenty-two James reviewed Louisa M. Alcott's book, Moods, and had critically remarked that writing a novel "requires neither travel, nor adventure, nor sightseeing. It is simply necessary to be an artist."<sup>2</sup> During this same year Edwin Lawrence Godkin asked James to contribute to his new political and literary weekly review, Nation. The invitation was issued to his brother William as well as to his father. The elder James had been writing and studying extensively on the philosophy of Emmanuel Swedenborg. Henry James was associated with the Nation for over fifty years. Records later showed that James received anywhere from \$5.00 to \$40.00 for his contributions to the weekly publication.<sup>3</sup>

In October, 1868 James reviewed a book entitled Modern Women in the Nation. Boldly he defended women under criticism from writers who reflected the female idiosyncrasies.<sup>4</sup> This review might well have been a beginning for James's concentration on his fictional female protagonists.

For the trip to England in 1869 James had drawn on his father's credit for his expenses. The amount was \$3,000. After an eleven month stay in Europe, James accounted to his mother that he had spent \$1,895 of this original sum.<sup>5</sup> James defended his expenditures, saying that his stay in Italy had been worth the money for reasons of his health. In describing Italy in the autumn of 1869, James had called the country "a beautiful disheveled nymph."<sup>6</sup> In interpreting his emotional response to his travels through the cities of Florence, Venice, and Rome, James wrote in later years this was his "Italian feeling" and the place that would inspire him the most for the interpretation of this "feeling" in his fiction.<sup>7</sup> Writing to his brother, William, James said that Florence had been an extraordinary experience for him and "had really entered into my life and is destined to operate there as a motive, a prompter, and inspirer of some sort."<sup>8</sup> The Portrait of a Lady, one of James's most acclaimed novels, was begun there less than three years after he wrote these lines.

James's link to his Italian visit had been Elizabeth Boott, daughter of an American widower, Francis Boott. They had lived and travelled in Europe, settling in Italy for long periods of time. Elizabeth had been a friend of Minny Temple, James's cousin that he adored from afar. Minny had planned on meeting James in Europe and James was grief-stricken when he learned in a letter from his mother that Minny had died of tuberculosis. James had been unaware of her illness.<sup>9</sup> In a long letter to William about Minny's death, James talked of her memory being

transmitted to a "mental image" that would be his living thought of her.<sup>10</sup> This image of Minny was to be characterized in his novels, Daisy Miller, The Portrait of a Lady, and The Wings of the Dove.

In December of 1873 James visited Rome and enjoyed the companionship of the American society in the city. He met Mrs. Wister, Mrs. Charles Sumner, Alice Bartlett, Mrs. Edward Boit, and Elena Lowe. All of whom were women of great distinction. He enjoyed the Roman drawing rooms and the socializing on an intellectual level. James liked nothing better than to attend a party where he could find "an agreeable corner, next to an agreeable and attractive woman."<sup>11</sup> When James remarked that he "admired" a woman it meant that he felt no threat of becoming entangled in an involved relationship.<sup>12</sup>

James accompanied these five women on various excursions of horseback riding. Mrs. Sumner, who was in the process of divorcing her husband, was frank, honest, sincere, and at ease in any situation, and also a great beauty who was blunt and outspoken, but never rude. She was a socialite who retained her maiden name of Alice Mason.<sup>13</sup> Louisa Boit, wife of an artist and mother of four children was both amusing and arrogantly flirtatious. She was an exciting and irresponsible woman who James described as "an equestrian terror."<sup>14</sup> Alice Bartlett was a mannish and athletic woman who he described as having "energy and independence." She eventually married a Texan and James had been impressed with her spirit.<sup>15</sup> James wrote his father that Elena Lowe was a somewhat "mysterious

woman" whose quietness and charm echoed a melancholy that intrigued him.<sup>16</sup> Sarah Wister was eight years older than James and James remarked that she had beautiful hair. They often rode together with her husband. She was the daughter of the actress, Fanny Kemble, and her father had been Pierce Bulter, a southern gentleman of distinction.<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Wister was the closest to a romantic involvement for James on this Roman stay, and when she returned to Philadelphia with her doctor husband and son, it was a sad moment for James. They corresponded in a warm, friendly manner.<sup>18</sup>

At this time James was thirty and had been writing for ten years, but he had not sent a book to be published. His stay in Rome became expensive and his magazine money had to be given to his father for payment of his credit. The elder James never handled money. Mary James was the financial manager for the family.<sup>19</sup>

After his Roman visit James moved to Florence where he started his first novel, Roderick Hudson. The heat in Florence became unbearable and he was forced to leave. He spent five weeks travelling through northern Italy and then to Switzerland.<sup>20</sup> James finished his novel after he returned to America, and Roderick Hudson was published in the Atlantic Monthly in January, 1875. In an unsigned "notice" of the novel that Mrs. Wister wrote to the North American Review she commented on the prose style, the language use, and the characters, and ended her review with the statement that "all it lacks is to have been told with more human feeling."<sup>21</sup>

James then spent a year in Paris as a correspondent for the New York Tribune and again he found himself surrounded with the female companionship of Mrs. Mason and a Mrs. Charles Strong of New York, a complex and nervous woman. There he met Henrietta Ruebell whom he described as an "extremely ugly, but very frank, intelligent and agreeable woman," and her house became a haven for James.<sup>22</sup> James's primary correspondent work entailed his writing about the current literary figures, and he was to write about Turgenev, de Maupassant, and others. The Tribune accepted James's somewhat non-journalistic articles, but they were not received well by the readers of the Tribune.

At the end of 1876 James went to London where doors were opened to him for his fame and sociability, but he still had a feeling of being an outsider in one sense, and of being at home in another.<sup>23</sup> Yet the doors in London that opened to James were of the great English society. He breakfasted with Lord Houghton and dined with Gladstone.<sup>24</sup>

By October of 1879 he again travelled to Rome. The Bootts came from Florence to spend the winter and James renewed old friendships. Alice Bartlett was in Rome at the same time as James. It was Alice who was the friend James described in the preface to Daisy Miller who had told him of an episode which involved a woman and her daughter in Italy. By April of 1878 James had published Daisy Miller in the Cornhill Magazine in London. Daisy Miller became James's best-seller, and after it was published he became more or less a celebrity.<sup>25</sup>

In the fall of 1879 James was criticized for his essays on America, and the American reading them felt the tone of his work depicted Americans in an unfavorable light. The specific essay which caused him to be criticized was his review of Hawthorne. He had described American as lacking in "history and bare in society" and asserted that Hawthorne's subject matter had been limited.<sup>26</sup> As if to emphasize his own rejection, James returned to England and Paris and completed his novel, Washington Square, which told of Catherine Sloper, the heiress, who is jilted by Morris Townsend, a fortune hunter. Morris returns years later to try to gain Catherine's fortune again, and she rejects him dramatically.

If James had felt the rejection of his fellow Americans, he was not afforded the same treatment in England. His friends and acquaintances were many and they admired his work. James himself was intrigued by three older feminine figures of English society. They were Fanny Kemble, Mrs. Anne Benson Procter, and Mrs. Duncan Stewart. Each held a special interest for him. Fanny Kemble was an actress thirty-two years older than James who became for James a source of many anecdotes that formed parts of his novels and tales. She was a strong, intelligent, capable woman with a fiery temperament.<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Procter had known all the famous people both past and present, and had known Shelley, Keats, Byron, Southey, and Landor. James remarked that she had value and character and was "a kind of window to the past."<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Duncan Stewart, who at eighty had, "masculine qualities--energy, decision, abruptness:

intrigued James because of her ability to keep her interest in life.<sup>29</sup>

James was able to project into his novels "a whole race of formidable and sometimes terrifying female power-figures."<sup>30</sup> His younger women were "charming, beautiful, and intense," while his older women were "strong, domineering, hard, and sometimes cruel." Evidence points to a parallel of his personal contact with women and to his fictional representation of them.<sup>31</sup>

By 1881 James had sent his story of the strong and charming Isabel Archer of The Portrait of a Lady to a magazine to run serially, and he completed the novel before the end of the year. The allusion to Minny Temple in the character of Isabel was stated in a letter to Grace Norton from James: In the letter James had said that Minny had been "incomplete" and he could imagine and "complete" what had been left unfinished in Minny's life with the telling of Isabel's story.<sup>32</sup>

In November of 1881 James had returned to Boston and Cambridge where he experienced a feeling of loneliness and felt he was an outsider in his own country. His absence from America had been one of six years. When he had left Venice five months earlier he had not anticipated that his feelings of isolation would exist in his own backyard.<sup>33</sup> He spent time in New York, travelling from there to Washington, renewing his friendships with Mrs. Wister and her husband and the Adamses who became his guides in Washington. Friends invited James to evening dinners and on one such occasion he dined with President Chester A. Arthur.<sup>3</sup>

It was here that James received news of his mother's illness. When she died before he could reach her bedside, James, grief-stricken, wrote that "she was the perfection of a mother--the sweetest, gentlest, most beneficent human being I have ever known."<sup>35</sup> The words he used to describe her were ones of his cherished image of his mother. In his fiction, the mothers of Henry James are "strong, determined, demanding, grasping women."<sup>36</sup>

Within months of her death Henry James was to return to his beloved Old World. His stay was a brief six months. News that his father was dying came. He reached Boston after his father's funeral, and stayed to take care of some of the financial settlements of the estate. It was during this period that his works were published by Macmillan in "blue-bound volumes."<sup>37</sup>

London beckoned again and James returned in 1883, renewing a friendship with Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson, a grandniece of James Fenimore Cooper. James had met Miss Woolson in Rome in 1881.<sup>38</sup> Constance Woolson stayed in London for over three years. Little is known of where she went and with whom, however, it was known that she and James did meet and attend the theatre, visit a museum, or take quiet walks.<sup>39</sup> In March of 1886 Constance returned to Italy, and in December of the same year James followed on one of his own Italian trips. Constance invited James to stay at the Villa Brichieri--Colombi on Bellosguardo in Florence. The Villa had housed many famous American writers such as Hawthorne, Cooper, and now James.<sup>40</sup>

Constance Woolson had written several books, and in reviewing her literary efforts James was kind in his remarks



and criticism, seemingly showing a devotion she had extended to him.<sup>41</sup> His article appeared in Harper's Weekly in February, 1887. He "commemorated" her again in his volume of essays Partial Portraits.<sup>42</sup>

A month later James moved to Florence where Vernon Lee's house offered the intellectual stimulation he always sought. From here James travelled to Venice where he became ill. Miss Woolson wrote he could return to Florence and occupy part of the villa she had rented, so he returned to the hill-top on Bellosguardo. This period became one of the most "productive of his career." He wrote ten of his famous tales and one short novel.<sup>43</sup>

From 1890 to 1895 James wrote plays. During this time his sister Alice died. Three years after her death, James recorded in his notebook a story, rather an idea of a story, of feelings between brother and sister which would show "two lives, two beings, and one experience." The idea troubled him and he never wrote the story.<sup>44</sup> At forty-nine James was still writing about and trying to understand "the heart of woman . . . and whether all his sureness about fickle womankind had been a mistake."<sup>45</sup>

In the spring of 1892 James escaped to Italy again. It was a brief trip of writing and visiting his wealthy and influential female friends. Mrs. Gardner, Mrs. Bronson, and Henrietta Reubell offered James a comfortable environment for the combination of socializing and writing that he thrived upon.<sup>46</sup>

Back in London James experienced the disappointment of his theatrical efforts. His play, The American, based on his novel of the same title, had been received with mild enthusiasm. Within the year of this news, James received word of Constance Woolson's apparent suicide in Venice. James was horrified with the report of her suicide and he decided not to go to Italy for her funeral. When he did return, he spent some time in helping with the disposal of Fenimore's effects, and then he stayed on to write some of his tales on "literary life."<sup>47</sup>

After Fenimore's death James's thoughts returned to Minny Temple's memory and he began his first notations on his novel to be, The Wings of the Dove, which would show the stricken heroine, "an heiress of all ages," and her death.<sup>48</sup> At the turn of the century James began the actual writing of this novel. At this point of his career, many of James's old friends and associates were dying. James had been twenty-seven when Minny Temple died and fifty-one when Constance Woolson had committed suicide. In 1901 at fifty-eight, James's reflections on death were not surprising.

The Jamesian women in The Wings of the Dove, Milly and Kate, are suggestive of a relationship in James's early life. The closeness of Mary James, his mother, and her sister Catherine, who was James's Aunt Kate, resemble that of the fictional friendship of Milly and Kate. Aunt Kate was "a strong assertive woman"<sup>50</sup> who lived with the Jameses after she divorced her husband. Mary James was Henry's image of a saint. Milly Theale and Kate Croy may well be James's images

from childhood "of a mother outwardly compliant and sacrificial, and an aunt assertive and manipulative."<sup>51</sup> James had returned to his stories of "the sacred woman" and a recreation of The Portrait of a Lady.<sup>52</sup>

The important novels of the last phase of James's career were The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove, and The Golden Bowl. All were a return to his international theme, but with a symbolism that posed an important question on the quality of life. That quality began for James in Italy where upon arriving in Rome he remarked: "At last I live."<sup>53</sup>

In 1903 James began a new relationship with a woman literary figure that lasted until his death in 1916. Mutual intellectual interest drew them together and Edith Wharton's writings appealed to James. One of Edith Wharton's male characters from her novel, The House of Mirth, was Lawrence Selden. "Selden lived alone in New York's frivolities, part of society and yet apart from it. He collects fine books and cultivates the finer perception. He refuses to enter the round of getting and spending and marrying . . . he discloses the existence of 'a republic of the spirit.'" James's male characters had much the same personality and they "are coupled with an eager and loving feminine spirit which they subtly or harshly disappoint by inner coldness."<sup>55</sup>

In his fiction James constantly waged "an unbiased search for reality"<sup>56</sup> of life, in a world that revealed "no real distinction between past and present."<sup>57</sup> Morality was integrated into life with no simple guidelines to show good and evil.<sup>58</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James The Untried Years: 1843-1870 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1953), p. 137.
- <sup>2</sup>Edel, Henry James The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 213.
- <sup>3</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 223.
- <sup>4</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 260.
- <sup>5</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 321.
- <sup>6</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 295.
- <sup>7</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 301.
- <sup>8</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 322.
- <sup>9</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 324.
- <sup>10</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 325.
- <sup>11</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), p. 104.
- <sup>12</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 106.
- <sup>13</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 107.
- <sup>14</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, pp. 107-108.
- <sup>15</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 109.
- <sup>16</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 112.
- <sup>17</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, pp. 108-109.
- <sup>18</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 121.

<sup>19</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 131.

<sup>20</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 173.

<sup>21</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 180.

<sup>22</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 232.

<sup>23</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 279.

<sup>24</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, pp. 286-289.

<sup>25</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 302.

<sup>26</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 387.

<sup>27</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 351.

<sup>28</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 353.

<sup>29</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 354.

<sup>30</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 357.

<sup>31</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 357.

<sup>32</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1879-1881, p. 422.

<sup>33</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), p. 22.

<sup>34</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 32.

<sup>35</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 38.

- 37Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 69.
- 38Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 86.
- 39Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 193.
- 40Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 200.
- 41Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 204.
- 42Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 202.
- 43Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 214.
- 44Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 305.
- 45Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 316.
- 46Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, pp. 324-326.
- 47Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 374.
- 48Edel, Henry James: The Middle Years: 1882-1895, p. 386.
- 49Leon Edel, Henry James: The Master: 1901-1916 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972)
- 50Edel, Henry James: The Master: 1901-1916, p. 111.
- 51Edel, Henry James: The Master: 1901-1916, p. 112.
- 52Edel, Henry James: The Master: 1901-1916, p. 112.
- 53Michael Swan, Henry James (London: Arthur Baker Limited, 1967), pp. 13-14.
- 54Millicent Bell, Edith Wharton and Henry James (New York: George Braziller, 1965), p. 33.
- 55Bell, p. 36.
- 56Walter F. Wright, The Madness of Art (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 3.
- 57Wright, p. 19.
- 58Wright, p. 19.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS OF THE NOVELS

The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate the power image of Henry James's female protagonists from his novels, Daisy Miller, The Wings of the Dove, and The Portrait of a Lady, through an analysis and adaptation of these novels for a Readers Theatre script. The choice of these novels has been determined by their representation of the important phases of James's literary career and their parallelism to James's personal relationship with women. Significantly, many critics have thought that Isabel Archer of The Portrait of a Lady, Milly Theale of The Wings of the Dove, and Daisy of Daisy Miller bear a marked resemblance to the image of James's cousin, Minny Temple.<sup>1</sup> Others have theorized that Isabel, Milly, and Daisy are also extension of James's own personality and life. The female protagonists of the above mentioned novels represent three distinct personality types and provide an element of variety for an adaptation of a Readers Theatre script. The analysis of the three novels includes a brief plot synopsis, and a discussion of point of view, theme, and character relationships and motivation of each novel. The plot synopsis is presented for the purpose of understanding James's complexity of narration.

Daisy, in Daisy Miller, is the young American girl from Schenectady, New York who has come with her mother and younger

brother to the little town of Vevey, Switzerland. It is here that she meet the Europeanized American, Winterbourne. Winterbourne is intrigued with Daisy's American freshness despite his aunt's warnings that Daisy and her mother are "hopelessly vulgar" people. Later, in Rome, Winterbourne encounters Daisy again and discovers for himself that Daisy is oblivious to European customs and traditions appropriate for a young lady. Daisy's insistence on breaking all rules of propriety leave Winterbourne bewildered and hesitant toward Daisy. Daisy has insisted on walking unchaperoned on public streets with an Italian gentleman, Giovanelli, and also insisted on going alone at midnight to the ruins of the Colosseum with him. This particular breach of rules held a physical danger of Roman fever. Also in Rome, Daisy is snubbed at a party given by Winterbourne's friend, Mrs. Walker, because she has invited Giovanelli to accompany her. Gossip spreads that Daisy is engaged to Giovanelli and Winterbourne becomes more cautious about his growing relationship with Daisy. He rebukes her for being in the company of an Italian gentleman of doubtful reputation and standing. The escapade at the Colosseum causes Daisy to fall seriously ill and she dies from the expected Roman fever. At her funeral Winterbourne discovers that the gossip had been unfounded and that he had been mistaken in judging Daisy's intentions.

Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady is faced with making a decision that will affect her entire life. The first part of Isabel's story involves her meeting with her aunt,



Mrs. Touchett, her leaving America to stay in England with the Touchett Family, her rejection of proposals of marriage by Lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood, and her decision to marry Gilbert Osmond. The second part of her story concentrates on the degenerating aspects of her marriage to Osmond, her awareness of the tragic mistake she has made in her choice, and the decision she inevitably has to make about Osmond. Throughout her ordeal Isabel has had the solace and advice of her invalid cousin, Ralph Touchett. Ralph is hopelessly in love with Isabel, and he arranges for her to receive an inheritance that will enable her to have the freedom she desperately wants. Isabel's freedom leads her into the tragic marriage with Osmond. Thinking Osmond to be an individual who is truly free, Isabel is unaware that Osmond has plotted with his former mistress, Madame Merle, to marry Isabel for her money. Osmond and Madame Merle have conceived a child out of wedlock, the young fifteen-year-old Pansy. The discovery of Madame Merle's involvement in arranging her marriage to Osmond, and the circumstances of Pansy's parentage compel Isabel to make a decision about her marriage. Unwilling to make a hurried or inadequate decision, Isabel chooses to leave her husband and to go to the bedside of her dying cousin, Ralph. Osmond becomes infuriated with Isabel's decision to see Ralph. In this explosive scene with Osmond, Isabel recognizes for the first time the totally despicable qualities in Osmond that have led to her unhappiness. After Ralph's death Isabel is confronted with her American suitor Caspar Goodwood, who has

never completely given up the prospect of Isabel's marrying him. Isabel rejects Caspar's proposal, fearing that he is offering the same freedom that has been destructive for her in the past, and she ultimately returns to Osmond. Isabel's search for individual freedom has ended with her loss of that freedom.

Just as Isabel encounters deception, so does Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove. Milly Theale, the young American heiress who has all the freedom money offers, is alone and seemingly friendless. Milly learns that she is suffering from a fatal illness. She leaves America for an extended trip to England and Europe. Her travelling companion, Mrs. Susan Stringham, is desperately concerned with Milly's health and emotional welfare. She arranges for Milly to meet Mrs. Maud Lowder, a former girlhood friend of hers. Mrs. Lowder's niece, Kate Croy, welcomes Milly's friendship. Milly takes Kate into her confidence about the fatal illness. In the interim Kate contrives with her lover, Merton Densher, to obtain Milly's money through a marriage of Merton and Milly. Unaware that Merton and Kate are engaged, Milly falls in love with Merton. Merton and Kate have purposefully kept their engagement secret. Kate's plotting for Milly's wealth has been controlled by her desire to leave her aunt and live with her father. Earlier in the exposition of the novel, Kate's father has been introduced as the poverty-stricken failure of her family. Because of the financial condition of Kate's family, Mrs. Lowder, her aunt, has made plans for Kate to

marry Lord Mark. Since Merton Densher does not have the financial means of a Lord Mark, Mrs. Loweder is against Kate's relationship with Densher. When Milly learns from Lord Mark that Kate and Densher are engaged she refuses to see Merton, "turns her face to the wall," and dies. Kate and Merton are both devastated when Densher receives a letter from Milly after her death, announcing that she has left a considerable amount of money to Densher. The deception has been carried out, but Milly has chosen to forgive, and Densher and Kate agree that each will never be "as we were."

In all three novels James utilizes his international theme of the American innocence set against the European culture and tradition. Daisy's innocence is suggested as the American innocence while Winterbourne, his aunt, Mrs. Costello, and Mrs. Walker characterize the adoption of European experience that is suggestive of evil. The theme of Americans versus Europeans is carried out in the other two novels, The Portrait of a Lady and The Wings of the Dove with Isabel Archer as the American innocent set against English society and tradition, and Milly Theale as the American heiress confronted with English treachery. Each of these characters is the "Poor Little Rich Girl" who becomes involved with European snobbery, tradition and treachery.<sup>2</sup> Daisy confronts Europeanism with defiance, Isabel confronts it with conceit, and Milly confronts the deception with both acceptance and forgiveness. Although James uses the international theme as a vehicle in these particular novels, the theme becomes less important in The Portrait of a

Lady and The Wings of the Dove than in Daisy Miller. It is Daisy's innocence that evokes a tenderness and a sense of pathos for the American who has been unduly wronged by a cultivated tradition. The central theme of The Portrait of a Lady is traced through Isabel's search for independence. She thinks she knows the difference between right and wrong because of her superior knowledge and acquired taste for beauty, but she is faced with making a "moral decision"<sup>3</sup> that exceeds her value of independence, and creates a conflict for her "between this greater morality and aesthetics."<sup>4</sup> Aesthetically Isabel is exposed to the beauty and tradition of England with the imposing Touchett home at Gardencourt. It's beauty was both intriguing and comforting to Isabel. Isabel thought that Gilbert Osmond's aesthetic sense was his finest quality. He was a collector of beautiful objects, but his "aesthetic judgment"<sup>5</sup> is selfish and egotistical. Osmond treats his daughter as though she were just another object in his collection, and Isabel discovers that he wishes to add her, as his greatest object of art, to the same collection.<sup>6</sup> When Isabel becomes aware of Osmond's shallowness and superficial beliefs about wealth and position, she realizes that she has been mistaken in her own values. The central theme of her story remains in Isabel's conflict and her "inadequate view of freedom."<sup>7</sup>

Milly Theale in The Wings of the Dove seeks a greater life and she has a "passion for this self-knowledge."<sup>8</sup> Milly is James's "dove" that beats her wings against an indifferent world. The theme of Milly's story is "the impact of the worldly world upon

the unworldly--its power to undermine, reduce, and finally to destroy those who cannot accommodate themselves to its values."<sup>9</sup> Milly learns early in the novel that she is dying. There is a softness and exquisite beauty in her character. Unlike Isabel Archer, Milly lacks the confidence and aggressiveness that characterizes Isabel. Milly is driven only by her intense desire to live. Her impending death intensifies her struggle to reach and grasp a meaning and purpose to living. Milly is introduced to Lancaster Gate where Mrs. Lowder, Kate, and Densher represent for Milly the living she wants to experience. Milly cannot feel that she is part of their world, but she tries desperately to become a part of it. Her wealth and illness have set her apart. The others view her as an important person because of her wealth and beauty. Milly feels isolated and alone when she attempts to tell Kate about her illness. She is unwilling to express her fears about dying, yet she cannot accept their indifference to her suffering. Milly's goodness in the face of the evil that surrounds her with Kate's and Densher's scheming incapacitates her. After Milly's death at the end of the novel, the fable theme of Milly as "the American millionairess, the Heir of all the Ages, the Fairy Princess, the Poor Little Rich Girl, and ultimately also the dove,"<sup>10</sup> emerges through Milly's final act of forgiveness of Densher. The saintly and heroic image which has an underlying meaning and purpose is described by Dorothea Krook:

As the religious might put it; by the holy life and holy death of one Milly Theale, Good has too evidently made foolish the wisdom of the world; and Lancaster Gate, being as intelligent as it is, does not fail to grasp the point. . . . The Jamesian moral passion seems here to reach a

pitch, the Jamesian vision of human possibility to acquire a depth and a breadth, which brings it to the edge of the line, the parallels with the religious are nevertheless striking: in the use, to begin with, of the Dove as a central image; but even more in the conception of the tragic conflict as a clash between the powers of light and darkness-- between the power of the world, figured in Lancaster Gate, to undermine and destroy the noble and the good, and the power of the good, figured in the person of Milly Theale, to abase the proud by answering it with forgiveness, loving-kindness and sacrificial death.<sup>11</sup>

All three, Daisy, Isabel, and Milly are characterized as innocent Americans struggling against a corrupt European society. Daisy, as James himself wrote is "a study" and suggests pity for her naive efforts. Isabel is an American who confronts the same tradition as those of her counterpart, Daisy, but she faces them with a great deal more confidence. The confidence is dispelled only by the awareness of her self-deception. Milly is not just a moneyed American girl struggling for a few last moments of happiness, but a Jamesian symbol of hope in the integrity of life. James concentrated on the American spirit of independence with his female protagonists, but the central support of his international theme is intermingled with the inner awareness and "consciousness" of Daisy, Isabel, and Milly.

The inner "consciousness" of the Jamesian characters is revealed and controlled by James's choice of narrative point of view. The typical Jamesian point of view is familiar to many critics. Elizabeth Stevenson retells his theory on point of view:

James held to it that if one tells a story, one should tell it in a fitting manner. Thinness does not result from this severity. Relevant details were endless. It was for the further ordering of the relevant parts of the whole that James developed the element which he himself named as the 'point of view.' The 'point of view' in this sense is simply the logic of the consciousness exhibited inside the story.

It is not necessarily the same logic from one story to another, but it is necessary that one method be chosen for each story, and then that method be held to for the honor of the maker.<sup>12</sup>

James abhorred the method of many of the Victorian writers who used an interruptive and didactic omniscient author point of view in their stories. James never interjected himself into his novels as narrator.

In Daisy Miller the reader views Daisy through the consciousness and point of view of Winterbourne, the young American who has lived in Europe for many years. It is Winterbourne who is conscious of the fact that he is both attracted to Daisy and appalled by her actions. The reader learns Winterbourne's views when he judges Daisy's disregard for tradition and custom of the grand European experience. The entire story is developed through the conservative eyes of Winterbourne. Daisy is the counter-balance of a more liberal spirit. James creates the balancing effect with Winterbourne's continual efforts to understand Daisy's defiance. When Winterbourne criticizes Daisy for flirting, Daisy accuses Winterbourne of being "too stiff."<sup>13</sup> Winterbourne explains that the Italians do not understand Daisy's American custom of flirting, much less her showing herself in public without a chaperone. Daisy protests that she "thought they understood nothing else!"<sup>14</sup> and that flirting "seems to me much more proper in young unmarried women than in old married ones."<sup>15</sup> Winterbourne declares that "when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place."<sup>16</sup> There is a balance and rhythm in their dialogue. Winterbourne's conservative and finally

disapproving view of Daisy is apparently established through Daisy's escapade at midnight to the Colosseum with Giovanelli coupled with the gossip of Daisy's and Giovanelli's engagement. Daisy's death at the end of the novel is viewed by Winterbourne as tragic in that he has misjudged her innocence and missed something by not fully understanding Daisy. Daisy is presented through Winterbourne's point of view, but Daisy's spirit has been the compelling force of Winterbourne's consciousness of her. The mental picture James has created of Daisy has been one of irony. Daisy's defiance and independence have resulted in Winterbourne's rejection, and ironically, Winterbourne's rejection has resulted in Daisy's death and his loss.

Isabel Archer is James's central consciousness in The Portrait of a Lady, and Isabel's developing awareness is the "portrait" and motivation of the plot. There is no single point of view in this novel. The point of view changes from Isabel to Osmond and to Madame Merle. The "sudden shift" is a meaningful and driving force of "the emotional structure of the book."<sup>17</sup> In the first section of the novel Isabel's viewpoint is the only one revealed. The change in point of view "confirms the suspicion" of Isabel's deception in the plotting and scheming of Osmond and Madame Merle.<sup>18</sup>

Ralph Touchett, Isabel's invalid cousin, is a part of the "direct presentation of Isabel's consciousness."<sup>19</sup> Ralph's attitudes and judgments of Isabel's problems are presented early in the novel. Ralph is more of an observer as he responds to Isabel's youthful and romantic ideals. Ralph is hopelessly in



love with Isabel, but he is content with his position of spectator and admirer. It is Ralph who listens to Isabel's reasons for not marrying Lord Warburton, and it is Ralph who patiently suggests that Osmond is too "small" a person for Isabel's magnitude of character and substance. Through his appreciative observations of Isabel and her desire for freedom, Ralph has arranged her inheritance from the elder Mr. Touchett. Isabel becomes for Ralph the interest he perpetually needs in his invalid state. Isabel diverted his mind from the immediacy of his death. When Ralph dies Isabel recognizes the final barrenness of her dilemma with Osmond.

Although Milly Theale is the center of The Wings of the Dove, James opens the novel with Kate Croy's point of view and her problems with her father and sister. From Kate's point of view the problems of her aunt's rejection of her lover, Merton Densher, are revealed. Milly's point of view is introduced fully at the mid-point of the novel. The reader is made aware of Milly's feeling about her illness, her attitude of self-determination, and her fear that she will not be able to grasp life fully. She becomes determined when Kate Croy and Mrs. Lowder introduce her to the English society that each feels is important for Milly and for themselves. Through Milly's point of view the reader learns of her isolation in not permitting herself to tell of her serious illness. Only when Milly learns of the deception perpetrated by Densher and Kate does the point of view change to that of Densher's. At this point Densher's consciousness of his feelings toward Kate and

Milly begin to come into focus. When the letter arrives from Milly's lawyers, Densher is overwhelmed by Milly's generosity. Through Densher's eyes the reader learns that Milly was aware of Densher's deception before her death. Densher relates the message to Kate that Milly has refused to see him and "has turned her face to the wall." Densher's consciousness of Milly's saintly forgiveness is shown in their dialogue at the end of the novel. Again James has used a change in point of view to emphasize the appeal and strength of his "dove." The "dove" has spread her wings for flight and folded them quietly and with great dignity in her death. The tips of those wings have touched Densher and Kate significantly.

Part of the power of the Jamesian heroines rests in their creator's endowing them with "material security."<sup>20</sup> Daisy is financially secure with her hard-working father in Schenectady, New York. Isabel inherits her security, and Milly is already a millionairess. The "power of money" was a question of moral value to James. Critics have accused James of characterizing only the upper echelon of wealth, but James had a specific purpose in mind with this endowment. Dorothea Krook discusses some of these purposes:

The money-value are there always for exposure, never for praise. They happen, however, in James's works, to be exposed not as part of a social system or an ethical code or any other abstraction but as the destructive element in particular concrete human beings who are in fact wonderful and prodigious in ways irresistibly stimulating to the imagination, sympathy, and general powers of appreciation of such an observer of life as Henry James.<sup>21</sup>

James's characters have not only money, but they have "a remarkable moral energy."<sup>22</sup> The Jamesian heroines have rare

degrees of "intelligence, imagination, sensibility,"<sup>23</sup> which is an answer to the outward power they exhibit. The typical Jamesian heroine also exhibits a trait of self-pride or selfness that intensifies inward strength and power. Daisy is absorbed in her own selfness, and is spontaneous in her actions. Isabel is also spontaneous and headstrong in her actions. She does what she pleases whenever she feels like it.<sup>24</sup> Milly is constantly aware of her selfness and wants to equate it with living.

The typical Jamesian heroines of Daisy, Isabel, and Milly emerge as three distinct personality types. If Daisy can be described as enchanting and romantic, Isabel can be described as even more so in a mature and striking manner. Daisy is young and naive, but Isabel is knowledgeable, confident in the rightness of her decisions, and believable in her unawareness of making a wrong decision. Her self-denial and stoic response to her tragedy is not surprising or unexpected. "Duty has meaning for Isabel, and sheer liberty has none."<sup>25</sup> Milly lacks Isabel's confidence, but she has the bravado that acts as a facade and at the same time reveals her inner conflict. There is an essence within James's heroines, Daisy, Isabel, and Milly, that personifies his mental image of Minny Temple. One could almost outline the progression of James's female protagonists into one single character that exemplifies the spirit of life, the destiny and fate of life, and the final consciousness of a living death. All three blend into the image of the spirit of Minny, her life and her death that live within James himself. All three are thought

to be "versions of the kind of brave yet stricken young American woman Minny Temple might have become."<sup>26</sup>

The analysis of The Portrait of a Lady, Daisy Miller, and The Wings of the Dove which includes their respective points of view, themes, and character motivations is a necessary and important step of organizing and adapting the textual material for a Readers Theatre script. The purpose of this analysis is to adapt the three novels into one workable, performance-based script. Other factors taken into consideration for such a project are the type of format that could contribute the effective use of biographical and critical information of James himself, and the transition material that would link and support each adaptation. A unifying theme of Jamesian women was chosen. The more specific problems of staging, such as movement, lighting, costuming, and stage properties will not be included with the script, but will be left to the discretion of the individual director. Also any deletion of narrative material should be the decision of an individual director.

For presenting the biographical and critical information on James, an introductory format involving all the readers speaking as James's biographers and critics was decided upon. The order of the appearance of each adaptation within the script was chosen to provide greater interest and smoothness of program. Daisy Miller is to be presented first in the program, and The Wings of the Dove follows immediately after Daisy Miller. At this point there will be an intermission period, at the end of which The Portrait of a Lady is presented.

The purpose of selecting this order was to present the two adaptations that were shorter in length first and to present the longer one at the end of the program. A related element in the choice of performance order corresponds with the insightful response that can be anticipated from the audience. This anticipated response would be accomplished by viewing Daisy of Daisy Miller as a symbol of the powerful spirit of freedom and its limitations, and by viewing Milly of The Wings of the Dove as a symbol of the power of good over evil. In contrast, Isabel of The Portrait of a Lady can be viewed as symbolic of an awareness of the destructive image of power and freedom, and the final stoic acceptance of that destructive element in life.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>S. Gorley Putt, A Reader's Guide to Henry James (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Dorothea Krook, The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (London: Cambridge at the University Press, 1962), p. 211.

<sup>3</sup>Edwin T. Bowden, The Themes of Henry James (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Bowden, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup>Bowden, p. 59.

<sup>6</sup>Bowden, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup>William T. Stafford, ed., Perspectives on James's The Portrait of a Lady (New York: New York University Press, 1966), pp. 99-100.

<sup>8</sup>Krook, p. 209.

<sup>9</sup>Krook, p. 200.

<sup>10</sup>Krook, p. 197.

<sup>11</sup>Krook, pp. 220-221.

<sup>12</sup>Elizabeth Stevenson, The Crooked Corridor (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 145.

<sup>13</sup>Henry James, Daisy Miller (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), p. 100.

<sup>14</sup>James, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup>James, p. 101.

<sup>16</sup>James, p. 101.

<sup>17</sup>Stevenson, p. 146.

<sup>18</sup>Stevenson, p. 146.

<sup>19</sup>Ora Segal, The Lucid Reflector (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 34.

<sup>20</sup>John P. O'Neill, Workable Design (Port Washington: National University Publications, 1973), p. 9.

<sup>21</sup>Krook, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup>Krook, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup>Krook, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup>Hugh Fox, Henry James: A Critical Introduction (Conesville: John Westburg and Associates, 1968), pp. 26-30.

<sup>25</sup>Oscar Gargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 104.

<sup>26</sup>Putt, p. 136.

**APPENDIX**



AN EVENING WITH THE WOMEN OF HENRY JAMES

A Readers Theatre Script Adapted

by Pat Wicker

Daisy Miller

Cast of Characters

Reader 3  
(Daisy)

A young American girl visiting Europe with her mother and younger brother. Daisy is from Schenectady, New York. She is attractive and quite flirtatious.

Reader 2  
(Winterbourne)

Winterbourne is twenty-seven years old. He is an American who has been educated in European and American schools, and who now lives in Europe.

Reader 4  
(Mrs. Costello)

Mrs. Costello is Winterbourne's wealthy aunt who has travelled extensively in Europe and has taken up residence in various European countries.

Reader 1  
(Narrator)

Reader 5  
(Narrator)

Time

Late 1880's

Place

European countries of Switzerland and Italy

The Wings of the Dove

Cast of Characters

Reader 1  
(Milly Theale)

Milly Theale is a young New York heiress who has no family and who has just learned that she is suffering from an incurable illness. She is small and very beautiful.

Reader 3  
(Kate Croy)

Kate Croy is a penniless young English-woman who has been forced to live with her aunt because of her financial condition. She is an aggressive young woman.

Reader 5  
(Merton Densher)

Densher is a young English newspaper man who is in love with Kate Croy. He is a rather passive young man.

Reader 4  
(Mrs. Stringham)

Susan Stringham is Milly Theale's travelling companion.

Reader 4  
(Aunt Maud)

Mrs. Maud Lowder is Kate Croy's aunt. She is wealthy and determined to see that Kate makes a worthwhile marriage to a man of distinction and means.

Reader 2  
(Narrator)

Time

1900

Place

England and Italy

The Portrait of a Lady

Cast of Characters

Reader 3  
(Isabel Archer)

Isabel is a young, intelligent American girl who seeks freedom and perfection in her life.

Reader 2 (Ralph Touchett)	Ralph is Isabel's invalid cousin who lives with his parents in England. He is in love with Isabel.
Reader 5 (Gilbert Osmond)	Osmond is an American living in Italy who collects fine objects of art.
Reader 5 (Caspar Goodwood)	Goodwood is Isabel's American suitor who follows her to England and to Italy trying to gain her acceptance to marry him.
Reader 4 (Mrs. Touchett)	Mrs. Touchett is Isabel's aunt and Ralph's mother. She is an independent and aggressive woman.
Reader 4 (Madame Merle)	Madame Merle is Mrs. Touchett's friend and a mysterious woman who had been Osmond's mistress.
Reader 4 (Pansy Osmond)	Pansy is the illegitimate daughter of Madame Merle and Osmond. She is a sweet, passive, and submissive young girl.
Reader 4 (Countess Gemini)	The Countess is Osmond's sister who has been involved in many affairs with other men. She has been the center of gossip. She is a very talkative older woman.
Reader 1 (Narrator)	
Time	Late 1800's
Place	England and Italy

Introduction to An Evening with the Jamesian Women

(Readers to represent James's leading biographers and critics)

Reader 1: "Past and present,

Reader 2: power and innocence,

Reader 3: experience and vision,

Reader 4: freedom and responsibility,

Reader 5: Europe and America--"

Reader 1: "On such antitheses Henry James's mind was nourished."<sup>1</sup>

Reader 2: "It was not a philosophic mind and systematic irony was foreign to it."<sup>2</sup>

Reader 3: "It preyed not upon ideas, but upon living beings in a world of thought and feeling."<sup>3</sup>

Reader 4: "Henry James stands astride two centuries and reaches backward to a third; with him the American novel, in a single leap, attained a precocious maturity it has never surpassed."<sup>4</sup>

Reader 5: "It is now recognized that with Henry James the novel in English achieved its greatest perfection."<sup>5</sup>

Reader 1: "Ironically, he was a writer from the New World--in an era when Americans were preoccupied with ever-widening frontiers and material things--who arrived upon the scene of the Old World to set the house of fiction in order."<sup>6</sup>

Reader 2: "Henry James, in his prophetic vision, foresaw that the great story of the Western World for

years to come, would be the New World's re-discovery of the Old, and the Old's discovery of the New."<sup>7</sup>

Reader 3: "The two worlds are still trying to accomodate themselves to each other's idiosyncrasies."<sup>8</sup>

Reader 4: "He felt that in this great balancing of values, moral and material, the Americans could face the old trans-Atlantic order unafraid and indeed rise on occasions superior to the complexities and corruption of the Europeans."<sup>9</sup>

Reader 5: The creation of this American-European legend was enhanced by James with the spirit of the American girl; the American woman.

Reader 1: "They were innocent and they were democratic;

Reader 2: They were woefully ignorant of any concept of society--

Reader 3: any sense of the old hierarchies and standards;

Reader 3: they suffered from an acute state of "queenship," being the spoiled darlings of American men who in the "young roaring and money-getting democracy" were busy with their own affairs,

Reader 4: possessing none of the leisure the European males of the upeer classes enjoyed in courtship."<sup>10</sup>

Reader 5: They were poetic studies.

Reader 1: "They were strong, egotistical young women."<sup>11</sup>

Reader 2: "They were the 'heiresses of all ages.'<sup>12</sup>

Reader 3: "They possessed power, will and strength in imposing themselves on the world."<sup>13</sup>

- Reader 4: "They responded to their destinies in a world that jilted, denied, betrayed----
- Reader 5: that made them for all their fine will to freedom and independence into second-class citizens in the very society that bestowed their heritage upon them."<sup>14</sup>
- Reader 1: They were poetic images in James's house of fiction. And their poetry began with the germ of the idea of the story of Daisy Miller.

Introduction to Daisy Miller

- Reader 5: He was in Rome during the autumn of 1877 when a friend living there happened to mention some simple and uninformed American lady, whose daughter, a child of nature and of freedom, accompanying her from hotel to hotel, had picked up, with the best conscience in the world, a good-looking Roman, of vague identity, astonished at his luck. He was all innocently, all serenely exhibited and introduced so far as the pair of ladies could see; this at least till the occurrence of some small social check, some interrupting incident, of no great gravity, which was a detail forgotten by James. He had never heard of the amiable but not otherwise eminent ladies, who weren't in fact named, and whose case had merely served to point a familiar moral. The pencil marks in his notebook

placed by this particular anecdote read, "Dramatize," and the result was James's short chronicle of Daisy Miller. Daisy Miller, A Study, the title read, and Daisy became James's "supposedly typical little figure" of pure poetry.

Narrator:  
(Reader 5)

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. 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 travelers 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, in 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.

Narr:  
(Reader 1)

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. 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 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.

Narr:  
(Reader 5)

As soon as the former lady had got better of her headache, he waited upon her in her apartments.



Mrs. Costello was a widow with a fortune; a person of much distinction, who frequently intimated that, if she were not so dreadfully liable to sick-headaches, she would probably have left a deeper impress upon her time. After the proper inquiries in regard to her health, he asked her if she had observed in the hotel an American family --a mamma, a daughter, and a little boy.

Mrs. Cost: And a courier? Oh yes, I have observed them. Seen them--heard them--and kept out of their way.

Winterbourne: I am afraid you don't approve of them.

Mrs. Cost: They are very common. They are the sort of Americans that one does one's duty by not--not accepting.

Wint: Ah, you don't accept them?

Mrs. Cost: I can't, my dear Frederick. I would if I could, but I can't.

Wint: The [pause] young girl is very pretty.

Mrs. Cost: Of course she's pretty. But she is very common.

Wint: I [pause] see what you mean, of course.

Mrs. Cost: She has that charming look that they all have. I can't think where they pick it up; and she dresses in perfection--no, you don't know how well she dresses. I can't think where they get their tastes.

Wint: But, my dear aunt, she is not, after all, a Commanche savage.

Mrs. Cost: She is a young lady who has an intimacy with her mamma's courier.

Wint: An intimacy with the courier?

Mrs. Cost: Oh, the mother is just as bad. They treat the courier like a familiar friend--like a gentleman. I shouldn't wonder if he dines with them. Very likely they have never seen a man with such good manners, such fine clothes, so like a gentleman. He probably corresponds to the young lady's idea of a count. He sits with them in the garden in the evening. I think he smokes.

Wint: Well, I am not a courier, and yet she was very charming to me.

Mrs. Cost: You had better have said at first, that you had made her acquaintance.

Wint: We simply met in the garden, and we talked a bit.

Mrs. Cost: Tout bonnement! And pray what did you say?

Wint: I said I should take the liberty of introducing her to my admirable aunt.

Mrs. Cost: Your admirable aunt! I am obliged to you.

Wint: It was to guarantee my respectability.

Mrs. Cost: And pray who is to guarantee hers?

Wint: Ah, you are cruel. She's a very nice young girl.

Mrs. Cost: You don't say that as if you believed it.

Wint: She is completely uncultivated. But she is wonderfully pretty, and, in short, she is very nice. To prove that I believe it, I am going to take her to the Chateau de Chillon.

Mrs. Cost: You two are going off there together? I should say it proved just the contrary. How long had you known her, may I ask, when this interesting project was formed?

Wint: I had known her half an hour!

Mrs. Cost: Dear me! What a dreadful girl!

Wint: You really think, then, --you really think that----.

Mrs. Cost: Think what, sir.

Wint: That she is the sort of young lady who expects a man, sooner or later, to carry her off?

Mrs. Cost: I haven't the least idea what such young ladies expect a man to do. But, I really think that you had better not meddle with little American girls that are uncultivated, as you call them. You have lived too long out of the country. You will be sure to make some great mistake. You are too innocent.

Wint: My dear aunt, I am not so innocent!

Mrs. Cost: You are too guilty, then!

Narr:  
(Reader 5) Winterbourne smiled and curled his mustache, meditatively. He had a great relish for feminine beauty; he was addicted to observing and analyzing it; and as regards this young lady's face he made several observations. It was not at all insipid, but it was not exactly expressive; and though it was eminently delicate, Winterbourne mentally accused it--very forgivingly--of a want of finish. Though

he was impatient to see her, he hardly knew what he should say to her about his aunt's refusal to become acquainted with her; but he discovered, promptly enough, that with Miss Daisy Miller there was no great need of walking on tiptoe. He found her that evening in the garden, wandering about in the warm starlight like an indolent sylph, and swinging to and fro the largest fan he had ever beheld. Miss Daisy Miller seemed very glad to see him.

Wint: Have you been all alone?

Daisy: I have been walking round with mother. But mother gets tired walking round.

Wint: Has she gone to bed?

Daisy: No; she doesn't like to go to bed. She doesn't sleep--not three hours. She says she doesn't know how she lives. She's dreadfully nervous. I guess she sleeps more than she thinks. She's gone somewhere after Randolph; she wants to try to get him to go to bed. He doesn't like to go to bed.

Wint: Let us hope she will persuade him.

Daisy: She will talk to him all she can; but he doesn't like her to talk to him. She's going to try to get Eugenio to talk to him. But he isn't afraid of Eugenio. Eugenio's a splendid courier, but he can't make much impression on Randolph. I am afraid my brother is an extremely trying child.

[pause]

I have been looking round for that lady you want to introduce me to. She's your aunt. I want to know her ever so much. I know just what your aunt would be; I know I should like her. She would be very exclusive. I like a lady to be exclusive; I'm dying to be exclusvie myself. Well, we are exclusive, mother and I. We don't speak to every one--or they don't speak to us. I suppose it's about the same thing. Anyway, I shall be ever so gald to know your aunt.

Wint: She would be most happy, but I am afraid those headaches will interfere.

Daisy: But I suppose she doesn't have a headache every day.

Wint: She tells me she does. [pause]

Daisy: She doesn't want to know me! Why don't you say so? You needn't be afraid. I'm not afraid!

Wint: My dear young lady, she knows no one. It's her wretched health.

[pause]

Daisy: Gracious! She is exclusive!

Narr:  
(Reader 1) Winterbourne wondered whether she was seriously wounded and for a moment almost wished that her sense of injury might be such as to make it becoming in him to attempt to reassure and comfort her. He had a pleasant sense that she would be

very approachable for consolatory purposes. He felt then, for the instant, quite ready to sacrifice his aunt, conversationally; to admit that she was a proud, rude woman, and to declare that they needn't mind her.

Two days afterwards he went off with her to the Castle of Chillon. He waited for her in the large hall of the hotel, where the couriers, the servants, the foreign tourists, were lounging about and staring.

Narr:  
(Reader 5)

Winterbourne was a man of imagination and, as our ancestors used to say, sensibility; as he looked at her dress and--on the great staircase--her little rapid, confining step, he felt as if there were something romantic going forward. He could have believed he was going to elope with her. Winterbourne's preference had been that they should be conveyed to Chillon in a carriage, but she expressed a lively wish to go in the little steamer; she declared that she had a passion for steamboats. To the young man himself their little excursion was so much of an escapade--an adventure--that, even allowing for her habitual sense of freedom, he had some expectation of seeing her regard it in the same way. People continued to look at his pretty companion's distinguished air. He had been a little afraid that she would talk loud, laugh overmuch,

and even, perhaps, desire to move about the boat a good deal. But he quite forgot his fears; he sat smiling with his eyes upon her face, while her conversation was chiefly of what metaphysicians term the objective cast.

- Daisy: What on earth are you so grave about?
- Wint: Am I grave? I had an idea I was grinning from ear to ear.
- Daisy: You look as if you were taking me to a funeral. If that's a grin, your ears are very near together.
- Wint: Should you like me to dance a hornpipe on the deck?
- Daisy: Pray do, and I'll carry round your hat. It will pay the expenses of our journey.
- Wint: I never was better pleased in my life.
- Daisy: I like to make you say those things! You're a queer mixture! I never saw a man that knew so much. I wish you would travel with us and go round, we might know something in that case. Don't you want to come and teach Randolph?
- Wint: Nothing possibly could please me more, but unfortunately I have other occupations.
- Daisy: Other occupations? I don't believe it. What do you mean? You are not in business.
- Wint: I have engagements which will force me to go back to Geneva in a day or two.
- Daisy: Oh, bother! I don't believe it!

- Wint: It is a melancholy fact that I shall have to return tomorrow.
- Daisy: Well, Mr. Winterbourne, I think you're horrid!
- Narr:  
(Reader 1) Poor Winterbourne was fairly bewildered; no young lady had as yet done him the honor to be so agitated by the announcement of his movements. How did Daisy Miller know that there was a charmer in Geneva? Winterbourne, who denied the existence of such a person, was quite unable to discover; and he was divided between amazement at the rapidity of her induction and amusement at the grankness of her persiflage. She seemed to him in all this, an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity.
- Daisy: Does she never allow you more than three days at a time? Doesn't she give you a vacation in summer? There is no one so hard worked but they can get leave to go off somewhere at this season. I suppose, if you stay another day, she'll come after you in the boat. Do wait over till Friday, and I will go down to the landing to see her arrive!  
[pause] -- Oh brother, I'll stop teasing you if you promise solemnly to come to Rome in the winter.
- Wint: That's not a difficult promise to make. My aunt has taken an apartment in Rome for the winter, and has already asked me to come and see her.
- Daisy: I don't want you to come for your aunt. I want you to come for me.



-----  
Narr:  
(Reader 1)

Winterbourne who had returned to Geneva the day after his excursion to Chillon, went to Rome towards the end of January. His aunt had been established there for several weeks, and he had received a couple of letters from her, which had said:

Mrs. Cost: (reading a letter) Those people you were so devoted to last summer at Vevay have turned up here, courier and all. They seem to have made several acquaintances, but the courier continues to be the most intime. The young lady, however, is also very intimate with some third-rate Italians, with whom she rackets about in a way that makes much talk. If, after what happens--at Vevay and everywhere--you desire to keep up the acquaintance, you are very welcome. Of course a man may know every one. Men are welcome to the privilege! But really, the girl goes about alone with her foreigners. As to what happens further, you must apply elsewhere for information. She had picked up half a dozen of the regular Roman fortune-hunters, and she takes them about to people's houses. When she comes to a party she brings with her a gentleman, with a good deal of manner, and a wonderful mustache, a Mr. Giovanelli, I think. They are hopelessly vulgar people. Whether or not being hopelessly vulgar is being 'bad' enough to dislike, at any rate, and for this short

life that is quite enough. Bring me that pretty novel of Cherbuliez's--Paule Mere--and don't come later than the 23rd.

Narr:  
(Reader 5)

The news that Daisy Miller was surrounded by half a dozen wonderful mustaches checked Winterbourne's impulse to go straightway to see her. If, however, he determined to wait a little before reminding Miss Miller of his claims to her consideration, he went very soon to call upon two or three other friends. One of these friends, a Mrs. Walker, was an American lady who had spent several winters at Geneva, where she had placed her children at school. She was a very accomplished woman. He had not been there ten minutes when the servant came in, announcing "Madame Milla!" This announcement was presently followed by the entrance of little Randolph Miller, who stopped in the middle of the room and stared at Winterbourne. An instant later his pretty sister crossed the threshold. Pleasantries were exchanged, Daisy talked incessantly to Mrs. Walker, and had remarked about the lovely new dress she had for Mrs. Walker's party, and about the intimate friend she was going to bring with her. He knew plenty of Italians, "but he wants to know some Americans. He thinks ever so much of Americans," she had said. She had bluntly asked Winterbourne to accompany her to the Pincio to meet Mr. Giovanelli--the beautiful

Giovanelli. Mrs. Walker had attempted to persuade Daisy with subtle hints that walking to the Pincio at this unhealthy hour was most improper. Daisy had been beautifully oblivious at any improper action on her part.

On the night of Mrs. Walker's party, Winterbourne waited expectantly, but Daisy came after eleven o'clock and she was not, on such an occasion, a young lady to wait to be spoken to.

Daisy: It's a pity these rooms are so small; we can't dance.

Wint: I am not sorry we can't dance; I don't dance.

Daisy: Of course you don't; you're too stiff. I hope you enjoyed your drive with Mrs. Walker.

Wint: No, I didn't enjoy it; I preferred walking with you.

Daisy: We paired off; that was much better. But did you ever hear anything so cool as Mrs. Walker's wanting me to get into her carriage and drop poor Mr. Giovanelli, and under the pretext that it was proper? People have different ideas! It would have been most unkind; he had been talking about that walk for ten days.

Wint: He should not have talked about it at all. He would never have proposed to a young lady of this country to walk about the streets with him.

- Daisy: About the streets? Where, then, would he have proposed to her to walk? The Pincio is not the streets, either; and I, thank goodness, am not a young lady of this country. The young ladies of this country have a dreadfully poky time of it, so far as I can learn; I don't see why I should change my habits for them.
- Wint: I am afraid your habits are those of a flirt.
- Daisy: Of course they are. I'm a fearful, frightful flirt! Did you ever hear of a nice girl that was not? But I suppose you will tell me now that I am not a nice girl.
- Wint: You're a very nice girl; but I wish you would flirt with me, and me only.
- Daisy: Ah! Thank you---thank you verymuch; you are the last man I should think of flirting with. As I have had the pleasure of informing you, you are too stiff.
- Wint: You say that too often.
- Daisy: If I could have the sweet hope of making you angry, I should say it again.
- Wint: Don't do that; when I am angry I'm stiffer than ever. But if you won't flirt with me, do cease, at least, to flirt with your friend; they don't understand that sort of thing here.
- Daisy: I thought they understood nothing else!
- Wint: Not in young unmarried women.

- Daisy: It seems to me much more proper in young unmarried women than in old married ones.
- Wint: Well, when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is purely American custom; it doesn't exist here. So when you show yourself in public with Mr. Giovanelli, and without your mother--
- Daisy: Gracious! Poor mother!
- Wint: Though you may be flirting, Mr. Giovanelli is not; he means something else.
- Daisy: He isn't preaching, at any rate. And if you want very much to know, we are too good friends for that; we are very intimate friends.
- Wint: Ah! If you are in love with each other, it is another affair.
- Daisy: (Blushing) Mr. Giovanelli, at least, never says such very disagreeable things to me!
- Narr:  
(Reader 1) When Daisy came to take leave of Mrs. Walker, this lady conscientiously repaired the weakness of which she had been guilty at the moment of the young girl's arrival. She turned her back straight upon Miss Miller, and left her to depart with what grace she might. Winterbourne was standing near the door; he saw it all. Daisy turned very pale, and looked at her mother; but Mrs. Miller was humbly unconscious of any violation of the usual social forms. He on his side was greatly touched.

One Sunday afternoon, having gone to St. Peter's with his aunt, Winterbourne perceived Daisy strolling about the great church in company with the inevitable Giovanelli. Presently he pointed out the young girl and her cavalier to Mrs. Costello.

Mrs. Cost: That's what makes you so pensive in these days, eh?

Wint: I had not the least idea I was pensive.

Mrs. Cost: You are very much preoccupied; you are thinking of something.

Wint: And what is it that you accuse me of thinking of?

Mrs. Cost: Oh, that young lady's--Miss Baker's, Miss Chandler's --What's her name--?--Miss Miller's intrigue with that little barber's block.

Wint: Do you call it an intrigue--an affair that goes on with such peculiar publicity?

Mrs. Cost: That's their folly, it's not their merit.

Wint: No, I don't believe that there is anything to be called an intrigue. [pensively]

Mrs. Cost: I have heard a dozen people speak of it, they say she is quite carried away.

Wint: I don't believe she thinks of marrying him, and I don't believe he hopes to marry her.

Mrs. Cost: You may be sure she thinks of nothing. She goes on from day to day, from hour to hour, as they did in the Golden Age. I can imagine nothing more vulgar. And at the same time, depend upon it that she may tell you any moment that she is engaged.

Narr:  
(Reader 5)

After this Daisy was never at home, and Winterbourne ceased to meet her at the house of their common acquaintances, because, as he perceived, these shrewd people had quite made up their minds that she was going too far. They ceased to invite her; and they intimated that they desired to express to observant Europeans that the great truth that, though Miss Daisy Miller was a young American lady, her behavior was not representative-- was regarded by her compatriots as abnormal. Winterbourne wondered how she felt about all the cold shoulders that were turned towards her, and sometimes it annoyed him to suspect that she did not feel at all.

A few days later he encountered her in that beautiful abode of lowering desolation known as the Palace of the Caesars. It seemed to him that Daisy had never looked so pretty--

Daisy: Well, I should think you would be lonesome.

Wint: Lonesome?

Daisy: You are always going round by yourself. Can't you get anyone to walk with you?

Wint: I am not so fortunate as your companion.

Daisy: I know why you say that. Because you think I go round too much with him.

Wint: Every one thinks so--if you care to know.

Daisy: Of course I care to know. But I don't believe it. They are only pretending to be shocked. They don't really care a straw what I do. Besides, I don't go round so much.

Wint: I think you will find they do care. They will show it disagreeably.

Daisy: How disagreeably?

Wint: Haven't you noticed anything.

Daisy: I have noticed you. But I noticed you were as stiff as an umbrella the first time I saw you.

Wint: You will find I am not so stiff as several others.

Daisy: How shall I find it?

Wint: By going to see others.

Daisy: What will they do to me?

Wint: They will give you the cold shoulder. Do you know what that means?

Daisy: Do you mean as Mrs. Walker did the other night?

Wint: Exactly!

Daisy: I shouldn't think you would let people be so unkind.

Wint: How can I help it!

Daisy: I should think you would say something.

Wint: I did say something. I say that your mother tells me that she believes you are engaged.

Daisy: Well, she does. [pause] Since you have mentioned it, I am engaged (Winterbourne laughs) You don't believe it.

Wint: Yes, I believe it.



Daisy: Oh, no you don't! Well, then--I am not!

Narr:  
(Reader 1) Winterbourne had one more occasion to encounter Miss Daisy Miller and Mr. Giovanelli. He had walked home one evening after dinner beneath the Arch of Constantine and past the vaguely lighted monuments of the Forum. It was eleven o'clock. The place had never seemed to him more impressive. One-half of the gigantic circus was in deep shadows, the other was sleeping in the luminous dusk. As he stood there he began to murmur Byron's famous line, out of "Manfred"; but before he had finished his quotation he remembered that if nocturnal meditations in the Colosseum are recommended by the poets, they are deprecated by the doctors. He turned away towards the entrance of the place, but, as he did so, he heard Daisy speak--

Daisy: Why, it was Mr. Winterbourne! He saw me, and he cuts me!

[ignoring Mr. Giovanelli]

Wint: (brutally) How long have you been here?

Daisy: All evening. I never saw anything so pretty.

Wint: I am afraid that you will not think Roman fever very pretty. This is the way people catch it.

Daisy: I never was sick, and I don't mean to be! I don't look like much, but I'm healthy! I was bound to see the Colosseum by moonlight; I shouldn't have

wanted to go home without that; and we have had the most beautiful time, haven't we, Mr. Giovannelli. If there has been any danger Eugenio can give me some pills. He has some splendid pills.

Wint: I should advise you to drive home as fast as possible and take one!

Daisy: Did you believe I was engaged the other day?

Wint: It doesn't matter what I believed the other day.

Daisy: Well, what do you believe now?

Wint: I believe that it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not!

Narr: Winterbourne mentioned to no one that he had encountered Miss Miller, at midnight, in the Colosseum with a gentleman. A week after this poor girl died; it had been a terrible case of the fever. Daisy's grave was in the little Protestant cemetery, in an angle of the wall of imperial Rome, beneath the cypresses and the thick spring-flowers. Winterbourne almost immediately left Rome, but the following summer he again met his aunt, Mrs. Costello, at Vevay. Mrs. Costello was fond of Vevay. In the interval Winterbourne had often thought of Daisy Miller and her mystifying manners. He had asked himself whether Daisy's defiance came from the consciousness of innocence, or from her being, essentially, a young person of the reckless class. It must be admitted that holding

one's self to a belief in Daisy's innocence had been to Winterbourne more and more a matter of fine-spun gallantry. One day he spoke of her to his aunt--said it was on his conscience.

Wint: I feel that I have done her an injustice.

Mrs. Cost: I am sure I don't know. How did your injustice affect her?

Wint: She sent me a message before her death which I didn't understand at the time, but I have understood it since. She would have appreciated one's esteem.

Mrs. Cost: Is that a modest way of saying that she would have reciprocated one's affection?

Wint: You were right in that remark that you made last summer. I was booked to make a mistake. I have lived too long in foreign parts.

#### Introduction to The Wings of the Dove

Reader 1: "Critics have tended to dismiss Henry James, the man, as a figure that sat and wrote for half a century--a kind of disembodied Mind, a writing machine riveted to a desk creating characters without flesh and stories without passion."<sup>15</sup>

Reader 2: "Was it true for Henry James that he was 'the man of his time, the man, to whom nothing on earth was to have happened?'"<sup>16</sup>

- Reader 3: "Did nothing happen to Henry James except the writing of an extremely long shelf of books?"<sup>17</sup>
- Reader 4: "His life was no mere succession of facts, such as could be compiled and recorded by another hand; it was a densely knit cluster of emotions and memories, each one steeped in lights and colours thrown out by the rest, the whole making up a picture that no one but himself could dream of undertaking to paint."<sup>18</sup>
- Reader 5: He carried a memory with him throughout his life.
- Reader 1: Of what? Or should I say of whom?
- Reader 2: It was the image of a bright, energetic, and beautiful young woman who died of tuberculosis in her twenties.
- Reader 3: Didn't he ever marry?
- Reader 4: No. She was his cousin. He worshipped her, but he was content in his role of spectator. He wanted only to please her.
- Reader 5: Were there other women in James's life?
- Reader 1: An excessive amount. But James's interest in them was one of detachment from any romantic involvement.
- Reader 2: James had an inner fear of the emotional strength of women.
- Reader 3: Some critics have pointed to James's relationship with his mother as a key to understanding his role of detachment.

- Reader 4: Mary James gave herself wholly to her family thus exercising a subtle power in her act of submissiveness to husband and home.
- Reader 5: James reasoned that he could not give himself wholly to marriage. If he did, it would be an act of renouncing that he could not undertake.
- Reader 1: He was an observer of life.
- Reader 2: Life to James was art.
- Reader 3: He could not renounce his art.
- Reader 4: His house of fiction demanded perfection.
- Reader 5: The windows of James's house revealed his observations and memories.
- Reader 2: The Wings of the Dove, published in 1902, represented to James's memory a very old and perhaps a very young, motive. He could scarce remember the time when the situation on which this long-drawn fiction mainly rests, was not vividly present to him. The idea was that of a young person conscious of a great capacity for life, but early for life, but early stricken and doomed, condemned to die under short respite, while also enamoured of the world; aware of the condemnation and passionately desiring to achieve, however briefly and brokenly, the sense of having lived. He had from far back mentally projected a certain sort of young American as more the "heir of all ages" than any other young person whatever. To be the heir of all the ages only to know yourself,

as that consciousness should deepen, would be to play the part, or at least to arrive at the type, in the most effective manner. What James had discerned was that a young person so devoted and exposed, a creature with her security hanging so by a hair, couldn't but fall somehow into some abysmal trap. Didn't the truth, and a great part of the interest, he argued, also reside in the appearance that she would constitute for others, a complication as great as any they might constitute for herself? He noted how, again and again, he was less direct with the straight exhibition of Milly. The indirection was merciful. The process was one of relief to deal with her at second hand as though she were an unspotted princess. So, if we talk of princesses, do the balconies opposite the palace gates, do the coign of vantage and respect enjoyed for a fee, rake from afar the mystic figure in the gilded coach as it comes forth into the great "place."

Narr: Leaving a London newspaper office Merton Densher appeared as a longish, leanish, fairish young Englishman, not unamenable, on certain sides, to classification. He was young for the House of Commons, he was loose for the Army. He was refined, as might have been said, for the city, and

quite apart from the cut of his cloth, skeptical, it might have been felt, for the Church. The difficulty with Densher was that he looked vague without looking weak--idle without looking empty. He was in short visibly absent-minded, irregularly clever, liable to drop what was near and to take up what was far. In his thoughts Merton Densher had repeatedly said to himself that he should be a fool not to marry a woman whose value would be in her difference; and Kate Croy, had quickly recognized in the young man a precious unlikeness. He represented what her life had never given her and certainly, without some such aid as his, never would give her; all the high dim things she lumped together as of the mind. It was on the side of the mind that Densher was rich for her and mysterious and strong; and he had rendered her the sovereign service of making that element real. She had had all her days to take it terribly on trust, no creature she had ever encountered having been able to testify for it directly. Densher's perception went out to meet the young woman's and quite kept pace with her own recognition. Having so often concluded on the fact of his weakness, as he called it, for life--his strength merely for thought--life, he logically opined, was what he must somehow arrange to annex and possess. So the young man,

ingenious but large, critical but ardent too, made out both his case and Kate Croy's.

They had accepted their acquaintance as too short for an engagement, but they had treated it as long enough for almost anything else, and marriage was somehow before them like a temple without an avenue. They belonged to the temple and they met in the grounds; they were in the stage at which grounds in general offered much scattered refreshment.

Kate: I've an idea--in fact I feel sure--that Aunt Maud means to write to you; and I think you had better know it. [pause] So as to make up your mind how to take her. I know pretty well what she'll say to you.

Densher: Then will you kindly tell me?

Kate: [thinking a little] I can't do that. I should spoil it. She'll do the best for her own idea.

Densher: Her idea, you mean, that I'm a sort of scoundrel; or, at the best, not good enough for you?

Kate: [pause] Not good enough for her.

Densher: Oh I see. And that's necessary.

Kate: She has behaved extraordinarily.

Densher: And so have we. I think, you know, we've been awfully decent.

Kate: For ourselves, for each other, for people in general, yes. But not for her. According to her we're a failure as a family?



- Densher: You don't really tell me anything. It's so vague that what am I to think but that you may very well be mistaken? What exactly has Mr. Croy done?
- Kate: He has done some particular thing. It's known--only thank God, not to us. But it has been the end of him. And yet it's a part of me.
- Densher: A part of you?
- Kate: My father's dishonour. (tone of proud still pessimism) How can such a thing as that not be the great thing in one's life?
- Densher: I shall ask you, for the great thing in your life, to depend on me a little more. (pause and debating) Doesn't he belong to some club?
- Kate: He used to--to many.
- Densher: But has he dropped them?
- Kate: They've dropped him. And it was for that I went to him--to come and be with him, make a home for him so far as is possible. But he won't hear of it.
- Densher: You offered him--impossible as you describe him to me--to live with him and share his disadvantages? You are gallant.
- Kate: Because it strikes you as being brave for him? It wasn't courage--it was the opposite. I did it to save myself--to escape.
- Densher: Escape from what?
- Kate: From everything.

Densher: Do you mean from me?

Kate: No; I spoke to him of you, told him that I would bring you, if he would allow it, with me.

Densher: But he won't allow it.

Kate: Won't hear of it on any terms. He won't help me, won't save me, won't hold out a finger to me. He simply wriggles away, in his inimitable manner, and throws me back.

Densher: Back then, thank goodness on me. But if you didn't wish to escape me?

Kate: I wished to escape Aunt Maud. But he insists that it's through her and through her only that I may help him; just as my sister Marian insists that it's through her, and through her only, that I can help her.

Densher: But have you offered to live with your sister?

Kate: I would in a moment if she'd have me. That's all my virtue--a narrow little family feeling. I've a small stupid piety--I don't know what to call it. Sometimes, alone, I've to smother my shrieks when I think of my poor mother. She went through things--they pulled her down; I know what they were now--I didn't then, for I was a pig; and my position, compared to hers, is an insolence of success. That's what Marian keeps before me; that's what papa himself, as I say, so inimitably does. My position's

a value, a great value, for them both. It's the value--the only one they have.

Densher: And the fact you speak of holds you!

Kate: Of course it holds me. It's a perpetual sound in my ears. It makes me ask myself if I've any right to personal happiness, any right to anything but to be as rich and overflowing, as smart and shining, as I can be made.

Densher: You might by good luck have the personal happiness too. Will you settle it by our being married tomorrow?

Kate: Let us wait to arrange it till after you've seen her.

Densher: You're afraid of her yourself.

Kate: No, but I don't see why you don't make out a little more that if we avoid stupidity we may do all. We may keep her.

Densher: Make her pension us?

Kate: Wait at least till we've seen.

Densher: Seen what can be got out of her?

Kate: After all I never asked her; never, when our troubles were at the worst, appealed to her not went near her. She fixed upon me herself, settled on me with her wonderful gilded claws.

Densher: You speak as if she were a vulture.

Kate: Call it an eagle--with a gilded beak as well, and with wings for great flights. If she's a thing of

the air, say at once a great silk balloon--I never myself got into her car. I was her choice.

Densher: What she must see in you!

Kate: Everything. There it is.

Densher: So that what you mean is that I'm to do my part in somehow squaring her?

Kate: See her, see her. (with impatience)

Densher: And grovel to her?

Kate: Ah, do what you like!

Narr: The two ladies who, in advance of the Swiss season, had been warned that their design was unconsidered, that the passes wouldn't be clear, nor the air mild, nor the inns open--the two ladies who, characteristically, had braved a good deal of possibly interested remonstrance were finding themselves, wonderfully sustained. Mrs. Stringham, the elder of the companions, moved in a fine cloud of observation and suspicion; she was in the position, as she believed, of knowing much more about Milly Theale than Milly herself knew, and yet of having to darken her knowledge as well as make it active. She found herself dedicated to subtlety by a new set of circumstances--she could scarce say what to call it--had begun for her the day she left New York with Mildred. She had come on from Boston for that purpose; had seen little of the girl before accepting her proposal of a European trip of some length. Milly Theale was a

striking apparition, then unheralded and unexplained in the eyes of Mrs. Stringham; the slim, constantly pale, delicately haggard, agreeably angular young person, of not more than two and twenty summers, whose hair was somehow exceptionally red even for the real thing, and whose clothes were remarkably black even for robes of mourning. It was New York mourning, it was New York hair, it was a New York history, confused as yet, but multitudinous, of the loss of parents, brothers, sisters, almost every human appendage, all on a scale and with a sweep that had required the greater stage; it was a New York legend of affecting, of romantic isolation, and it was by most accounts, in respect to the mass of money so piled on the girl's back, a set of New York possibilities. She was alone, she was stricken, she was rich, and in particular was strange--a combination in itself of a nature to engage Mrs. Stringham's attention.

Many things, had come and gone since their meeting in Boston, and one of the best of them doubtless had been the voyage itself, by the happy southern course, to the succession of Mediterranean ports, with the dazzled wind-up at Naples.

Milly: What was it that, in New York, on the ninth, when you saw him alone, Doctor Finch said to you?

- Mrs. S: Nothing whatever, on my word of honor. I don't quite make out how you know I did see him alone.
- Milly: No--you never told me. And I don't mean during the twenty-four hours while I was bad, I mean after I was better.
- Mrs. S: Who told you I saw him then?
- Milly: He didn't himself. We speak of it now for the first time. But if you're not in his confidence, it's no matter.
- Mrs. S: I'm not in his confidence--he had nothing to confide. But are you feeling unwell?
- Milly: I don't know--haven't really the least idea. But it might be well to find out.
- Mrs. S: Are you in trouble--in pain?
- Milly: Not the least little bit. But I sometimes wonder----!
- Mrs. S: Wonder what?
- Milly: If I shall have much of it.
- Mrs. S: Much of what? Not of pain?
- Milly: Of everything. Of everything I have.
- Mrs. S: (anxiously, tenderly) You "have" everything; so that when you say "much" of it----
- Milly: I only mean (breaking in) shall I have it for long? That is if, if I have got it.
- Mrs. S: If you've got an ailment?
- Milly: If I've got everything (laughing).
- Mrs. S: Ah that--like almost nobody else.
- Milly: Then for how long?

- Mrs. S: Do you want to see someone? We'll go straight to the best near doctor. Tell me, for God's sake, if you're in distress.
- Milly: I don't think I've really everything (said as if to explain).
- Mrs. S: But what on earth can I do for you?
- Milly: Dear, dear, thing--I'm only too happy.
- Mrs. S: Then what's the matter?
- Milly: That's the matter--that I can scarcely bear it.
- Mrs. S: But what is it you think you haven't got?
- Milly: The power to resist the bliss of what I have!
- Mrs. S: Whom will you see? Where will you first go?
- Milly: I want to go straight to London.
- Narr: It was settled and Mrs. Stringham, anxious to interest Milly in the idea of people and the signs of life, treated her companion to the story of her only London tie, a Mrs. Maud Lowder. It seems that Maud Manningham Lowder, the odd but interesting English girl, had been a friend of Mrs. Susan Stringham in the old days at the Vevey School. They had written to one another regularly at first, then each had married and the letters had ceased. Maud Manningham had made, she believed, a great marriage, while she herself had made a small one. Maud had appeared to have so much, and would have now--for wasn't it also in general quite the rich law of English life? Whatever Mrs. Lowder might have

to show, she would have nothing like Milly Theale, who constituted the trophy producible by poor Susan. Maud's young niece, Kate Croy, might be just the person to help Milly learn to enjoy London life, and Milly herself would be, as Mrs. Stringham imagined, a princess in a conventional tragedy looking down on the kingdoms of the earth. In an extremely short time Milly did learn to enjoy London, and in London she learned also to accept Kate Croy's friendship. Milly's range of high happiness was immense; she had to ask nobody for anything, to refer nothing to anyone; her freedom, her fortune and her fancy were her law. Kate was altogether in the phase of forgiving her so much bliss; in the phase moreover of believing that, should they continue to go on together, she would abide in that generosity. She had at such a point no suspicion of a rift within the lute--Milly's confidence in Kate had grown to a larger capacity and she was willing to intrust Kate with the knowledge of her illness.

Milly: Will you render me a great service?

Kate: Any service in the world.

Milly: But it's a secret one--nobody must know. I must be wicked and false about it.

Kate: Then I'm your woman, for that's the kind of thing



I love. Do let us do something bad. You're im-  
possibly without sin, you know.

Milly: It's only to deceive Susan Stringham, as thoroughly  
as I can.

Kate: And for cheating, my powers will contribute? I'll  
do my best for you.

Milly: I need your presence while I visit Sir Luke Strett.

Kate: What in the world is the matter with you?

Milly: I want to find out.

Kate: Then let us by all means!

Milly: I thought you'd like to help me. But I must ask  
you, please, for the promise of absolute silence.

Kate: And how, if you are ill, can your friends remain  
in ignorance?

Milly: That will be one of my advantages. I think I  
could die without its being noticed.

Kate: You're an extraordinary young woman. What a re-  
markable time to talk of such things!

Milly: We wont' talk precisely, I only wanted to make  
sure of you.

Kate: Here in the midst of----

Milly: Here in the midst of what?

Kate: Of everything. There's nothing you can't have.  
There's nothing you can't do.

Milly: So Mrs. Lowder tells me.

Kate: We all adore you.

Milly: You're wonderful (laughing).

Kate: No, it's you. And we've known you for just three weeks!

Milly: Never were people on such terms! All the more reason that I shouldn't torment you.

Kate: But me? What becomes of me?

Milly: You--if there's anything to bear you'll bear it.

Kate: But I won't bear it.

Milly: Yes you will. You'll pity me awfully, but you'll help be very much. And I absolutely trust you.

(Repeat only Doctor's lines for vague replies--Milly hearing them as though through a mist or haze.)

Milly: May I go back to the Continent?

Dr. Strett: By all means back to the Continent. (repeat)

Milly: You won't want to keep seeing me?

Dr. Strett: Worry about nothing. It's a great rare chance.  
(repeat)

Milly: May I come back to England too?

Dr. Strett: Whenever you like. (repeat)

Milly: Shall I suffer?

Dr. Strett: Not a bit. (repeat)

(Stop here. Read lines singularly again.)

Milly: And yet then live?

Dr. Strett: My dear young lady, isn't to live exactly what I'm trying to persuade you to take the trouble to do? [pausing at length before beginning narration]

Narr: She had gone out with these last words so in her ears that when once she was well away it was as if some instant application of them had opened out there before her. It was positively an excitement that carried her on; she went forward into space under the sense of an impulse received. It came of a sudden when all other thought was spent. She had been asking herself:

Milly: Why, if my case was grave should he have talked to me at all about what I might do; or why, if it were light, should he attach an importance to the office of friendship? He confessed his interest in my combinations, my funny race, my funny losses, my funny gains, my funny freedom, and, no doubt, my funny manners--funny, like those of Americans. It reduced me to the state of a poor girl with her rent to pay. I have rent to pay for my future! I must go home like the poor girl and see. It is perhaps superficially more striking that one can live if one would; but it is more appealing, insinuating, irresistible in short, that one would live if one could.

Kate: Well, what?

Milly: It's all right. He's lovely.

Kate: You mean you've been absurd?

Milly: Absurd.

Kate: There's nothing at all the matter?

- Milly: Nothing to worry about. I need a little watching, but I can do in fact as I like.
- Kate: You can do as you like?
- Milly: Quite. Isn't it charming?
- Kate: And what shall you do?
- Milly: For the moment simply enjoy it.
- Kate: Learning, you mean, so easily, that you are well?
- Milly: Learning, I mean, so easily, that I am well.
- Kate: Only no one's well enough to stay in London now. He can't want this of you.
- Milly: Mercy no--I'm to go to places.
- Kate: But not beastly climates Engadines, Rivas, boredoms?
- Milly: No, just where I prefer. I'm to go in for pleasure.
- Kate: But what kind of pleasure?
- Milly: The highest.
- Kate: Which is the highest?
- Milly: It's just our chance to find out. You must help me.
- Kate: What have I wanted to do but help you from the moment I first laid eyes on you? I like your talking, though, about that. What help, with your luck all round, do you need?
- Narr: Milly at last couldn't say; so that she really had for the time brought it along to the point so oddly marked for her by her visitor's arrival, the truth that she was enviably strong. She carried this out, from that evening for each hour still left her, and

the more easily perhaps that the hour were now narrowly numbered. Mrs. Lowder and her niece, Kate, were to dine with Milly and Mrs. Stringham in the evening. The night was hot and stale, and it was late enough by the time the four ladies had been gathered in, for their small session, at the hotel, where the windows were still open to the high balconies and the flames of the candles were motionless in the air in which the season lay dead. Mrs. Stringham before adjourning had gone off for some shawl, and Kate had wandered out to the balcony. Aunt Maud had something particular in mind to say:

Aunt Maud: Dear Susan tells me that you saw in America Mr. Merton Densher--whom I've never till now, asked you about. But do you mind in connection with him, doing something for me? Will you name him in any way you like, to her? (nodding to the balcony)

Milly: But I don't know that it's important to me to find out. Except you mean that it's important to you. You know I never have yet named him to her; so that if I should break out now--She may wonder what I've been making a mystery of. I knew him only briefly in New York.

Aunt Maud: No--she wouldn't. So it's she, you see, who has made the mystery.

Milly: Can't you ask her yourself?

- Aunt Maud: We never speak of him!
- Milly: Do you mean he's an acquaintance of whom you disapprove for her?
- Aunt Maud: I disapprove of her for the poor young man. She doesn't care for him.
- Milly: And he cares so much----?
- Aunt Maud: Too much. And my fear is that he privately besets her. She keeps to herself, but I don't want her worried. Neither (said generously and confidentially) do I want him.
- Milly: But what can I do?
- Aunt Maud: You can find out where they are. If I myself try I shall appear to treat them as if I supposed them deceiving me.
- Milly: And you don't suppose them deceiving you.
- Aunt Maud: Kate's thoroughly aware of my views for her, and that I take her being with me at present, in the way she is with me, if you know what I mean, for a loyal assent to them. Therefore as my views don't happen to provide a place at all for Mr. Densher, much, in a manner, as I like him.
- Milly: You do like him then?
- Aunt Maud: Oh dear yes, don't you?
- Milly: I did--three times--in New York.
- Aunt Maud: You dear American thing! But people may be very good and yet not good for what one wants.

- Milly: Yes, even I suppose when what one wants is something very good. Why, if our friend here doesn't like him----.
- Aunt Maud: My dear how can you ask? Put yourself in her place. She meets me, but on her terms. Proud young women are proud young women. And proud old ones, are--well, what I am. Fond of you as we both are, you can help us.
- Milly: Does it come back then to my asking her straight?
- Aunt Maud: You can tell her perfectly that I had asked you to say nothing.
- Milly: And may I tell her that you've asked me now to speak?
- Aunt Maud: You can't do it without----?
- Milly: I'll do what I can if you'll kindly tell me one thing more. (faltering) Will he have been writing to her?
- Aunt Maud: It's exactly, my dear, what I should like to know! Push in for yourself and I dare say she'll tell you.
- Narr: Three minutes hadn't passed before Milly quite knew she should have done nothing Aunt Maud had just asked her. She knew it moreover by much the same light that had acted for her with that lady and with Sir Luke Strett. It pressed upon her then, and there she was still in a current determined, through her indifference, timidity, bravery, generosity--she scarce could say which--by others;

that not she but the current acted, and that somebody else always was the keeper of the lock or the dam. Kate had but to open the flood-gate; the current moved in its mass--the current, as it had been, of her doing as Kate wanted. What, somehow, in the most extraordinary way in the world, had Kate wanted but to be, of a sudden, more interesting than she had ever been? Mrs. Lowder had said to Milly that she and her niece, as allies, could practically conquer the world; but though it was a speech about which there had even then been a vague grand glamour the girl read into it more of an approach to a meaning. Kate, by herself, could conquer anything, and she, Milly Theale, was probably concerned with the world only as the small scrap of it that most impinged on her and that was therefore first to be dealt with. On this basis of being dealt with she would doubtless herself do her share of the conquering; she would have something to supply, Kate something to take--each of them thus, to that tune, something for acquiring with Aunt Maud's ideal. This was what it came to now--that the occasion had the quality of a rough rehearsal of the possible big drama. Milly knew herself dealt with--handsomely, completely; she surrendered to the knowledge for so it was, she felt, that she



supplied her helpful force.

Kate: She's not a bit right, you know. I mean in health. I mean it looks grave. For you she would have come, if it had been at all possible.

Densher: What in the world's the matter with her?

Kate: Why what I've told you--that she likes you so much.

Densher: Then why should she deny herself the joy of meeting me?

Kate: Perhaps it's true that she is bad. She and Mrs. Stringham were on the point of leaving town. We bade them good-bye. They do mean to go, but they've postponed it. They've postponed it for you. You've made Milly change her mind. She wants not to miss you.

Densher: After the tremendous time you've all been telling me she had had?

Kate: That's it. There's a shadow across it.

Densher: The shadow of some physical break-up?

Kate: Some physical break-down. Nothing less. She's scared. She has so much to lose. And she wants more.

Densher: Couldn't one say to her that she can't have everything?

Kate: No--for one wouldn't want to. She really has been somebody here. Ask Aunt Maud--you may think me prejudiced. Aunt Maud will tell you--the world's before her. It has all come since you saw her, and

it's a pity you've missed it, for it certainly would have amused you. She has really been a perfect success--I mean of course so far as possible in the scrap of time--and she has taken it like a perfect angel. If you can imagine an angel with a thumping bank-account. Her fortune's absolutely huge. Aunt Maud has had all the facts from Mrs. Stringham, and Susie Stringham speaks by the book. There she is, it's open to her to make the very greatest marriage. I assure you we're not vulgar about her. Her possibilities are quite plain.

Densher: But what good then on earth can I do her?

Kate: You can console her.

Densher: And for what?

Kate: For all that, if she's stricken, she must see swept away. I shouldn't care for her if she hadn't so much. I shouldn't trouble about her if there were one thing she did have. She has nothing.

Densher: Not all the young dukes?

Kate: Well we must see--see if anything can come of them. She at any rate does love life. To have met a person like you is to have felt you become, with all the other fine things, a part of life.

Densher: In what extraordinary state is she?

- Kate: I believe that if she's ill at all she's very ill. I believe that if she's bad she not a lit-  
tle bad. She's so wonderful. She won't show for that, anymore than your watch, when it's about to stop for want of being wound up, gives you convenient notice or shows as different from usual. She won't die, she won't live, by inches. She won't smell, as it were, of drugs. She won't taste, as it were, of medicine. No one will know.
- Densher: What you want of me then is to make up to a sick girl.
- Kate: But you admit yourself that she doesn't affect you as sick. You understand moreover just how much--and just how little.
- Densher: It's amazing what you think I understand.
- Kate: Well, if you've brought me to it that has been your way of breaking me in. So far as making up to her goes, plenty of others will.
- Densher: Others can follow their tastes. Besides, others are free.
- Kate: But so are you, my dear.
- Densher: You're prodigious!
- Kate: Of course, I'm prodigious!
- Narr: This at least was his crucifixion--that Milly was so interested. Facing their visit itself--to that, no matter what he might have to do, he would never consent to be pushed; and this even though it might

be exactly such a demonstration as would figure for him at the top of Kate's list of his proprieties. He could wonder freely enough, if Kate's view of that special propriety had not been modified by a subsequent occurrence; but his deciding that it was quite likely not to have been had no effect on his own preference for tact. It pleased him to think of tact as his present prop in doubt. He wasn't inhuman, so long as it would serve. It had to serve now to help him not to sweeten Milly's hopes.

- Densher: Will it be safe for you to break into your custom of not leaving the house?
- Milly: Safe----? You suppose me so awfully bad?
- Densher: I'll believe whatever you tell me.
- Milly: Well then, I'm splendid.
- Densher: Oh I don't need you to tell me that.
- Milly: I mean I'm capable of life.
- Densher: I've never doubted it.
- Milly: I mean that I want so to live----!
- Densher: Well?
- Milly: Well, that I know I can.
- Densher: If you want to do it?
- Milly: If I want to live. I can.
- Densher: Ah then that I believe.
- Milly: I will, I will.
- Densher: You simply must! (smiling as though through a mist)

Milly: Well then, if you say it, why mayn't we pay you our visit?

Densher: Will it help you to live?

Milly: Every little helps (laughing) and it's very little for me, in general, to stay at home.

Densher: You can come when you like.

Milly: I won't do anything I oughtn't or that I'm not forced to.

Densher: Who can ever force you? You're the least coercible of creatures.

Milly: Because, you think, I'm so free?

Densher: The freest person probably now in the world. You've got everything.

Milly: Well, call it so. I don't complain.

Densher: No I know you don't complain.

Milly: It isn't a merit--when one sees one's way.

Densher: To peace and plenty? Well, I dare say not.

Milly: I mean to keeping what one has.

Densher: Oh that's success. If what one has is good, it's enough to try for.

Milly: Well, it's my limit. I'm not trying for more. And now about your book.

Densher: My book----? I'm not doing a book.

Milly: You're not writing?

Densher: I don't know, upon my honor, what I'm doing.

Milly: Then if it's not for your book----?

Densher: What am I staying for?

- Milly: I mean with your London work--with all you have to do. Isn't it rather empty for you?
- Densher: Empty for me? Oh well----! (vague reply)
- Milly: I ask too many questions. You stay because you've got to.
- Densher: (grasping at her words) I stay because I've got to. Isn't it enough, whatever may be one's other complications, to stay after all for you?
- Milly: Oh you must judge.
- Densher: Well, then, so long as I don't go you must think of me all as judging!
- Narr: He didn't go home, on leaving her--he didn't want to; he walked instead, through his narrow ways and his campi with gothic arches to a small and comparatively sequestered cafe where he had already more than once found refreshment and comparative repose, together with solutions that consisted mainly and pleasantly of further indecisions. When half an hour before, he had turned about to Milly on the question of the impossibility so inwardly felt, turned about on the spot and under her eyes, he had acted, by the sudden force of his seeing much further, seeing how little, how not at all, impossibilities mattered. It wasn't a case for pedantry; when people were at her pass everything was allowed. And her pass was now, as by the sharp click of a spring, just completely his

own--to the extent, as he felt, of her deep dependence on him. Anything he should do or shouldn't in his hands--and ought never to have reference to anything else. It was on the cards for him that he might kill her--that was the way he read the cards as he sat in his customary corner. The fear in this thought made him let everything go, kept him there actually, all notionless, for three hours on end. He was mixed up in her fate, or her fate was mixed up in him, so that a single false notion might either way snap the coil. He was only not to budge without the girl's leave--not, to move without it, anymore than without Kate's. He felt himself shut up to a room on the wall of which something precious was too precariously hung. A false step would bring it down, and it must hang as long as possible.

Kate:           Wouldn't it have been possible to deny the truth of the information?

Densher:       Possible for whom?

Kate:           Why for you.

Densher:       To tell her we lied.

Kate:           To tell her she's mistaken.

Densher:       And to lie myself, you mean, to do it. We are, I suppose, still engaged.

Kate:           Of course we're still engaged. But to save her life----!

- Densher: I didn't even seriously think of a denial to her face. The question of it was put to me definitely enough; but to turn it over was only to dismiss it. Besides, it wouldn't have done any good.
- Kate: You mean she would have had no faith in your correction? Did you try?
- Densher: I hadn't even a chance.
- Kate: She wouldn't see you? (hesitating) Couldn't you write?
- Densher: She had turned her face to the wall.
- Kate: She refused even to let you speak to her.
- Densher: She was miserably, prohibitively ill.
- Kate: Well, that was what she had been before.
- Densher: And it didn't prevent? No, it didn't, and I don't pretend that she's not magnificent.
- Kate: She's prodigious.
- Densher: So are you. But that's how it is, and there we are.
- Kate: You've fallen in love with her?
- Densher: Well then say so--with a dying woman. Why need you mind and what does it matter?
- Kate: Wait till she is dead! Mrs. Stringham is to telegraph. For what then did Milly send for you?
- Densher: It was what I tried to make out before I went. She believed, I suppose, that I might deny; and what, to my own mind, was before me in going to



her was the certainty that she'd put me to my test. She wanted from my own lips--the truth.

Kate: She never wanted the truth. She wanted you. She would have taken from you what you could give her and been glad of it, even if she had known it false. You might have lied to her from pity, and she have seen you and felt you lie, and yet she would have thanked you and blessed you and clung to you but the more. For that was your strength, my dear man--that she loves you with passion. She'll recover of her feeling of having been misled.

Densher: Then what's the use of her strength?

Kate: She must die, my dear, in her own extraordinary way. The great thing is that she's satisfied, which is what I've worked for.

Densher: Satisfied to die in the flower of her youth?

Kate: Well, at peace with you.

Densher: Oh "peace."

Kate: The peace of having loved.

Densher: Is that peace?

Kate: Of having been loved. That is of having realized her passion. She wanted nothing more. She has had all she wanted. You may think it hideous that I should now, that I should yet pretend to draw conclusions. But we've not failed.

Densher: Oh! (he only murmured)

Kate: We've succeeded. She won't have loved you for nothing, and you won't have loved me.

(Use Milly's voice for this narration of the psalm.)

Narr: My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me,

And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest.

Densher: The communication can't possibly belong to these last days. The postmark, which is legible does; but it isn't thinkable that she wrote----!

Kate: Do you mean a letter?

Densher: Addressed to me in her hand--in hers unmistakably.

Kate: And you've brought it to show me?

Densher: I've brought it to show you.

Kate: You mean you haven't read it?

Densher: I haven't read it. It's because I love you that I've brought you this.

Kate: Why you've not broken the seal!

Densher: If I had broken the seal I should know what's within. It's for you to break the seal that I bring it. I'll abide by whatever you think of it.

Kate: I won't break your seal.

Densher: You positively decline?

Kate: Positively. Never. I know without.

Densher: And what is it you know?

Kate: That she announces to you she has made you rich.

Densher: Left me her fortune?

Kate: Not all of it, no doubt, for it's immense. But money to a large amount. I don't care to know how much. (with a strange smile) I trust her.

Densher: I'm willing to believe that the amount of money's not small. If she was to leave me a remembrance, it would inevitably not be meager.

Kate: It's worthy of her. It's what she was herself-- if you remember what we once said that was.

Densher: Stupendous? (as if he remembered one only of the many things)

Kate: Stupendous. (continuing gently) I think that what it really is must be that you're afraid of all the truth. If you're in love with her without it, what indeed can you be more? And you're afraid--it's wonderful!--to be in love with her.

Densher: I never was in love with her.

Kate: I believe that now--for the time she lived. But your change came the day you last saw her; she died for you then that you might understand her. From that hour you did. And I do now. She did it for us. I used to call her, in my stupidity-- for want of anything better a dove. Well she stretched out her wings, and it was to that they

reached. They cover us.

Densher: They cover us.

Kate: That's what I give you. That's what I've done for you.

Densher: Do I understand then----?

Kate: That I do consent. No--for I see. You'll marry me without the money; you won't marry me with it. If I don't consent you don't.

Densher: You lose me? Well, you lose nothing else. I make over to you every penny.

Kate: Precisely--so that I must choose.

Densher: You must choose.

Kate: There's but one thing that can save you from my choice.

Densher: From your choice of my surrender to you?

Kate: Yes, (she gave a nod at the long envelope on the table) your surrender of that.

Densher: What is it then.

Kate: Your word of honor that you're not in love with her memory.

Densher: Oh--her memory!

Kate: Don't speak of it as if you couldn't be. Her memory's you love. You want no other.

Densher: I'll marry you in an hour.

Kate: As we were?

Densher: As we were!

Kate: We shall never be again as we were!

## INTERMISSION

Introduction to The Portrait of a Lady

Reader 1: To James the house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million--a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will. These windows, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other.

During James's three-month residence in Italy in the spring of 1879, The Portrait of a Lady was begun. It was a long novel and he was long in writing it. He had rooms on Riva Scguavini, at

the top of a house near the passage leading off to San Zaccaria; the waterside life, the wondrous lagoon spread before him and the ceaseless human chatter came in at his windows.

The germ of the idea for his subject was in the sense of a single character, the character and aspect of a particular engaging young woman, to which all the usual elements of a "subject," certainly of a setting, were to need to be super-added. The point was, that this single small cornerstone, the conception of a certain young woman affronting her destiny, had begun with being all his outfit for the large building of The Portrait of a Lady.

Narr: Ralph Touchett, Isabel's cousin, had been a very small boy when his father, Dainel Tracy Touchett, a native of Rutland, in the state of Vermont, came to England as subordinate partner in a banking-house when some ten years later he gained preponderant control. Ralph spent several terms at an American school, took a degree at an American university, and returned to England for a three year residence at Oxford. Ralph was not only fond of his father, he admired him. Daniel Touchett, to his perception, was a man of genius, and though he had no aptitude for the banking mystery he

made a point of learning enough of it to measure the great figure his father had played. After leaving Oxford, Ralph had worked at his father's bank. After eighteen months he had caught a violent cold, which fixed itself on his lungs and threw them into dire confusion. He had to give up work and apply, to the letter, the sorry injunction to take care of himself. He had good winters and poor winters, and while the former lasted he was sometimes the sport of a vision of virtual recovery. But this vision was dispelled three years earlier. He had on that occasion remained later than usual in England and had been overtaken by bad weather before reaching Algiers. He arrived more dead than alive and lay there for several weeks between life and death. His convalescence was a miracle, but the first use he made of it was to assure himself that such miracles happen but once. He said to himself that his hour was in sight and that it behooved him to keep his eyes upon it, yet that it was also open to him to spend the interval as agreeably as might be consistent with such a preoccupation.

It was very probably this sweet-tasting property of the observed thing in itself that was mainly concerned in Ralph's quickly-stirred interest in the advent of a young lady who was evidently not insipid.

If he was considerably disposed, something told him, here was occupation enough for a succession of days.

Ralph: And now tell me about the young lady. What do you mean to do with her?

Mrs. Touchett: I mean to ask your father to invite her to stay three or four weeks at Gardencourt.

Ralph: You needn't stand on any such ceremony at that. My father will ask her as a matter of course.

Mrs. T: I don't know about that. She's my niece; she's not his.

Ralph: Good Lord, dear mother; what a sense of property! That's all the more reason for his asking her. But after that--I mean after three months (for it's absurd asking the poor girl to remain but for three or four paltry weeks)--what do you mean to do with her?

Mrs. T: I mean to take her to Paris. I mean to get her clothing. I shall invite her to spend the autumn with me in Florence.

Ralph: You don't rise above detail, dear mother. I should like to know that you mean to do with her in a general way.

Mrs. T: My duty!

Ralph: Give me a hint of where you see your duty.

Mrs. T: In showing her four European countries--I shall leave her the choice of two of them--and in giving



her the opportunity of perfecting herself in French, which she already knows very well.

Ralph: That sounds rather dry.

Mrs. T: If it's dry (with a laugh) you can leave Isabel alone to water it!

Ralph: Do you mean she's a gifted being?

Mrs. T: I don't know whether she's a gifted being, but she's a clever girl--with a strong will and high temper. She has no idea of being bored.

Ralph: How do you two get on?

Mrs. T: Do you mean by that that I'm a bore? I don't think she finds me one. I think I greatly amuse her. We get on because I know the sort of girl she is. She's very frank, and I'm very frank; we know just what to expect of each other.

Ralph: Ah, dear mother, one always knows what to expect of you! You've never surprised me but once, and that's today--in presenting me with a pretty cousin whose existence I had never suspected.

Mrs. T: Do you think her so very pretty?

Ralph: Very pretty indeed; but I don't insist upon that. It's her air of being some one in particular that strikes me. Who is this rare creature, and what is she? Where did you find her, and how did you make her acquaintance?

Mrs. T: I found her in an old house in Albany, sitting in a dreary room on a rainy day, reading a heavy book

and boring herself to death. I thought she was meant for something better. It occurred to me that it would be a kindness to take her about and introduce her to the world. She thinks she knows a great deal of it. If you want to know, I thought she would do me credit. You know I had seen nothing of my sister's children for years; I disapproved entirely of the father. But I always meant to do something for them when he should have gone to his reward. There are two others of them, both of whom are married. The elder jumped at the idea of my taking an interest in Isabel. There was a little difficulty about the money-question, but she has a small income and she supposes herself to be travelling at her own expense. It may be that Isabel's a genius--in want of encouragement and patronage, but in that case I've not yet learned her special line.

Ralph: Ah, if she's a genius, we must find out her special line. Is it by chance for flirting?

Mrs. T: I don't think so. You may suspect that at first, but you'll be wrong. You won't, in anyway, be easily right about her.

Ralph: Warburton's wrong then! He flatters himself he has made that discovery.

Mrs. T: Lord Warburton won't understand her. He needn't try. Isabel will enjoy puzzling a lord.

- Ralph: What does she know about lords?
- Mrs. T: Nothing at all; that will puzzle him all the more.
- Ralph: All this time you've not told me what you intend to do with her.
- Mrs. T: Do with her? You talk as if she were a yard of calico. I shall do absolutely nothing with her, and she herself will do everything she chooses. She gave me notice of that.
- Ralph: What you meant then in your telegram, was that her character's independent.
- Mrs. T: I never know what I mean in my telegrams--Clearness is too expensive.
- Ralph: You've no plan of marrying her? (he smiles)
- Mrs. T: Marrying her? I should be sorry to play her such a trick. But apart from that, she's perfectly able to marry herself.
- Ralph: Do you mean to say that she has a husband picked out?
- Mrs. T: I don't know about a husband, but there's a young man in Boston. . . !
- Ralph: (having no desire to hear about the young man in Boston) As my father says, they're always engaged!
- Narr: Isabel Archer was a young person of many theories, her imagination was remarkably active. It had been her fortune to possess a finer mind than most of the persons among whom her lot was cast; to have a larger perception of surrounding facts and to

care for knowledge that was tinged with the unfamiliar. It is true that among her contemporaries she passed for a young woman of extraordinary profundity; for these excellent people never withheld their admiration from a reach of intellect of which they themselves were not conscious, and spoke of Isabel as a prodigy of learning, a creature reported to have read the classic authors--in translations. She had no talent for expression and too little of the consciousness of genius; she only had a general idea that people were right when they treated her as if she were rather superior. It may be affirmed that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of self-esteem; she was in the habit of taking for granted that she was right; she treated herself to occasions of homage. She had a theory that it was only under this provision life was worth living. The girl had a certain nobleness of imagination which rendered her a good many services and played her a great many tricks. She spent half her time in thinking of beauty and bravery and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, or irresistible action; she held it must be detestable to be afraid or ashamed. Her life should always be in harmony with the most pleasing impression she should produce;

she would be what she appeared, and she would appear what she was. Sometimes she went so far as to wish that she might find herself some day in a difficult position, so that she should have the pleasure of being heroic as the occasion demanded.

It was one of her theories that Isabel Archer was very fortunate in being independent, and that she ought to make some very enlightened use of that state. Isabel was stoutly determined not to be hollow. Of course, among her theories, this young lady was not without a collection of view on the subject of marriage. The first on the list was a conviction of the vulgarity of thinking too much of it. She held that a woman ought to be able to live to herself, and that it was perfectly possible to be happy without the society of a more or less coarse-minded person of another sex. Few of the men she saw seemed worth a ruinous expenditure. Deep in her soul lay a belief that if a certain light should dawn she could give herself completely; but this image was too formidable to be attractive. She was too young, too impatient to live, too unacquainted with pain. She always returned to her theory that a young woman whom after all everyone thought clever should begin by getting a general impression of life.

Her trip to England and England itself was a revelation to her. Her uncle's house seemed a picture made real; no refinement of the agreeable was lost upon Isabel; the rich perfection of Gardencourt at once revealed a world and gratified a need. The large, low rooms, with brown ceilings and dusty corners, the deep embrasures and curious casements, the quiet of light on dark, polished panels, the deep greenness outside, the sense of well-ordered privacy in the center of a "property"--these things were much to the taste of our young lady, whose taste played a considerable part in her emotions. She formed a fast friendship with her uncle, and often sat by his chair when he had had it moved out to the lawn. Like the mass of American girls, Isabel had been encouraged to express herself. Many of her opinions had doubtless but slender value; but they had left a trace in giving her the habit of seeming at least to feel and think, and Mr. Touchett used to think that she reminded him of his wife when his wife was in her teens. But it was Ralph Touchett who was completely fascinated with his cousin.

Ralph: Is your objection to my society this evening caused by your expectation of another visitor?

Isabel: Another visitor? What visitor should I have?

Ralph: You've a great many friends that I don't know. You've a whole past from which I was perversely excluded.

Isabel: You were reserved for my future. You must remember that my past is over there across the water. There's none of it here in London.

Ralph: Very good, then, since your future is seated beside you. Capital thing to have your future so handy. I promised just now to be very amusing; but you see I don't come up to the mark, and the fact is there's a good deal of temerity in one's undertaking to amuse a person like you. What do you care for my feeble attempts--You've grand ideas--I assure you I'm very serious. You do really ask a great deal.

Isabel: I don't know what you mean. I ask nothing!

Ralph: You accept nothing. There's something I should live very much to say to you. It's a question I wish to ask. It seems to me I've a right to ask it, because I've a kind of interest in the answer.

Isabel: Ask what you will. (replying gently)

Ralph: Well, then, I hope you won't mind my saying that Warburton has told me of something that has passed between you.

Isabel: I suppose it was natural he should tell you.

Ralph: I have his leave to let you know he had done so. He has some hope still. He had it a few days ago.

Isabel: I don't believe he has any now.

Ralph: I'm very sorry for him then; he's such an honest man.

Isabel: Did he ask you to talk to me?

Ralph: No, but he told me because he couldn't help it. We're old friends. He was heavy-hearted; he had just got a letter from you.

Isabel: (after a few moments pause) Do you know how often he has seen me? Five or six times.

Ralph: That's to your glory.

Isabel: If you've not been requested by Lord Warburton to argue with me, then you're doing it disinterestedly--or for the love of argument.

Ralph: I've no wish to argue with you at all. I'm simply greatly interested in your own sentiments.

Isabel: I'm greatly obliged to you. (with a slightly nervous laugh)

Ralph: Of course you mean that I'm meddling in what doesn't concern me. But why shouldn't I speak to you of this matter without annoying you or embarrassing myself? What's the use of being your cousin if I can't have a few privileges? What's the use of adoring you without hope of a reward if I can't have a few compensations? What's the use of being ill and disabled and



restricted to mere spectatorship at the game of life if I really can't see the show when I've paid so much for my ticket? Tell me this, what had you in mind when you refused Lord Warburton?

Isabel: (having listened with quickened attention) What had I in mind?

Ralph: What was the logic--the view of your situation--that dictated so remarkable an act?

Isabel: I didn't wish to marry him--if that's logic. (reflecting a moment) Why do you call it a remarkable act. That's what your mother thinks too.

Ralph: Warburton's such a thorough good sort; as a man, I consider he had hardly a fault. He has immense possessions, and his wife would be thought a superior being.

Isabel: I refused him because he was too perfect then. I'm not perfect myself, and he's too good for me. Besides her perfection would irritate me.

Ralph: That's ingenious rather than candid. As a fact you think nothing in the world too perfect for you.

Isabel: Do you think I'm so good?

Ralph: No, but you're exacting, without excuse of thinking yourself good. Nineteen out of twenty, even of the most exacting sort, would have managed to do with Warburton.

- Isabel: It seems to me that one day when we talked of him you mentioned odd things in him.
- Ralph: If I'd known he wished to marry you I'd never have alluded to them. It would have been in your power to make him a believer.
- Isabel: I think not. I don't understand the matter, and I'm not conscious of any mission of that sort. You're evidently disappointed, you'd have liked me to make such a marriage. (with rueful gentleness)
- Ralph: Not in the least. I don't pretend to advise you, and I content myself with watching you--with the deepest interest.
- Isabel: (with a conscious sigh) I wish I could be as interesting to myself as I am to you!
- Ralph: There you're not candid again; you're extremely interesting to yourself. Do you know that if you've really given Warburton his final answer I'm rather glad it has been what it was.
- Isabel: Are you thinking of proposing to me?
- Ralph: By no means. From the point of view I speak of that would be fatal.
- Isabel: I don't understand you very well. (abruptly) I don't see what harm there is in my wishing not to tie myself. I don't want to begin life by marrying. There are other things a woman can do.

- Ralph: You want to see life--you'll be hanged if you don't, as the young men say.
- Isabel: I don't think I want to see it as the young men want to see it. But I do want to look about me.
- Ralph: You want to drain the cup of experience.
- Isabel: No, I don't wish to touch the cup of experience. It's a poisoned drink! I only want to see for myself.
- Ralph: You want to see, but not to feel.
- Isabel: I don't think that if one's a sentient being one can make the distinction.
- Ralph: You've answered my question. You've told me what I wanted.
- Isabel: It seems to me I've told you very little.
- Ralph: You've told me the great thing: that the world interests you and that you want to throw yourself into it.
- Isabel: I never said that.
- Ralph: I think you meant it. Don't repudiate it. It's so fine!
- Isabel: I don't know what you're trying to fasten upon me, for I'm not in the least an adventurous spirit. Women are not like men.
- Ralph: No, women rarely boast of their courage. Men do so with a certain frequency.
- Isabel: Men have it to boast of!
- Ralph: Women have it too. You've a great deal.

Isabel: Enough to go home in a cab, but no more.

Ralph: We'll find your cab.

Isabel: By no means; you're very tired; you must go home and go to bed.

Ralph: When people forget I'm a poor creature I'm often incommoded, but it's worse when they remember it.

Narr: She had no hidden motive in wishing him not to take her home; it simply struck her that for some days past she had consumed an inordinate quantity of his time, and the independent spirit of the American girl whom extravagance of aid places in an attitude that she ends by finding "affected" had made her decide that for these few hours she must suffice to herself. She had moreover a great fondness for intervals of solitude, which since her arrival in England had been meagerly met. It was a luxury she could always command at home and she had wittingly missed it. That evening, however, an incident occurred which would have taken all color from the theory that the wish to be quite by herself had caused her to dispense with her cousin's attendance. Seated toward nine o'clock in the dim illumination of Pratt's Hotel and trying with the aid of two tall candles to lose herself in a volume she had brought from Gardencourt, she succeeded only to the extent of reading other words than those printed on the

page--words that Ralph had spoken to her that afternoon. Suddenly the well-muffled knuckle of the waiter was applied to the door, which presently gave way to his exhibition of the card of a visitor from Boston. Casper Goodwood was accordingly the next moment shaking hands with her, but saying nothing.

Isabel: How did you know I was there.

Caspar: Miss Stackpole let me know.

Isabel: Where did she see you--to tell you that?

Caspar: She didn't see me; she wrote to me.

Isabel: Henrietta never told me she was writing to you. This is not kind of her.

Caspar: Is it so disagreeable to you to see me.

Isabel: I didn't expect it. I don't like such surprises.

Caspar: But you knew I was in town. It was apparently repugnant to you even to write to me.

Isabel: (exclaiming with bitterness) Henrietta's certainly not a model of all the delicacies! It was a great liberty to take.

Caspar: I've been hoping every day for an answer to my letter. You might have written me a few lines.

Isabel: It wasn't the trouble of writing that prevented me; I could as easily have written you four pages as one. But my silence was an intention. I thought it the best thing.

Caspar: You said you hoped never to hear from me again; I know that. But I never accepted any such rule as my own. I warned you that you should hear very soon.

Isabel: I didn't say I hoped never to hear from you.

Caspar: Not for five years then; for ten years; twenty years. It's the same thing.

Isabel: Do you find it so? It seems to me there's a great difference. I can imagine that at the end of ten years we might have a very pleasant correspondence. I shall have matured my epistolary style.

Caspar: Are you enjoying your visit to your uncle's?

Isabel: Very much indeed. (line dropped in tone--then breaking out impatiently) What good do you expect to get by insisting?

Caspar: The good of not losing you.

Isabel: You've no right to talk of losing what's not yours. And even from your own point of view, you ought to know when to let one alone.

Caspar: I disgust you very much.

Isabel: Yes, you don't at all delight me, you don't fit in, not in any way, just now, and the worst is that your putting it to the proof in this manner is quite unnecessary.

Caspar: I can't reconcile myself to that. (simply stated)

- Isabel: I can't reconcile myself to it either, and it's not the state of things that ought to exist between us. If you'd only try to banish me from your mind for a few months we should be on good terms again.
- Caspar: I see. If I should cease to think of you at all for a prescribed time, I should find I could keep it up indefinitely.
- Isabel: Indefinitely is more than I ask. It's more even than I should like.
- Caspar: You know that what you ask is impossible.
- Isabel: Aren't you capable of making a calculated effort? (demandingly) You're strong for everything else; why shouldn't you be strong for that?
- Caspar: An effort calculated for what? I'm capable of nothing with regard to you, but just of being infernally in love with you. If one's strong, one loves only the more strongly.
- Isabel: There's a good deal in that.--Think of me or not, as you find most possible; only leave me alone.
- Caspar: Until when?
- Isabel: Well, for a year or two.
- Caspar: Which do you mean? Between one year and two there's all the difference in the world.
- Isabel: Call it two then. (with a studied effect of eagerness)
- Caspar: And what shall I gain by that?

Isabel: You'll have obliged me greatly.

Caspar: And what will be my reward?

Isabel: Do you need a reward for an act of generosity?

Caspar: Yes, when it involves a great sacrifice.

Isabel: There's no generosity without some sacrifice.

Men don't understand such things. If you make the sacrifice you'll have all my admiration.

Caspar: I don't care a cent for your admiration--not one straw, with nothing to show for it. When will you marry me?

Isabel: Never--if you go on making me feel only as I feel at present.

Caspar: What do I gain then by not trying to make you feel otherwise?

Isabel: You'll gain quite as much as by worrying me to death. (crying out in a trembling voice) Why do you make me say such things to you! I only want to be gentle--to be thoroughly kind. It's not delightful to me to feel people care for me and yet to have to try and reason them out of it. I think others also ought to be considerate; we have each to judge for ourselves. I know you're considerate; you've good reasons for what you do. But I really don't want to marry, or to talk about it at all now. I shall probably never do it--no, never. I've a perfect right to feel that way, and it's no kindness to a woman to press her so



hard, to urge her against her will. If I give you pain I can only say I'm very sorry. It's not my fault. I can't marry you simply to please you. I won't say that I shall always remain your friend, because when women say that, in these situations, it passes, I believe, for a sort of mockery. But try me some day.

Caspar: I'll go home--I'll go tomorrow--I'll leave you alone.----Only, (heavily) I hate to lose sight of you!

Isabel: Never fear. I shall do no harm.

Caspar: You'll marry someone else, as sure as I sit here.

Isabel: Do you think that a generous charge?

Caspar: Why not? Plenty of men will try to make you.

Isabel: I told you just now that I don't wish to marry and that I almost certainly never shall.

Caspar: I know you did, and I like your "almost certainly"! I put no faith in what you say.

Isabel: Do you accuse me of lying to shake you off? You say very delicate things.

Caspar: Why should I not say that? You've given me no pledge of anything at all.

Isabel: No, that's all that would be wanting!

Caspar: You may perhaps even believe you're safe--from wishing to be. But you're not.

Isabel: Very well then. We'll put it that I'm not safe. Have it as you please.

- Caspar: I don't know, however, that my keeping you in sight would prevent it.
- Isabel: Don't you indeed? I'm after all very much afraid of you. Do you think I'm so very easily pleased?  
(suddenly changing tone)
- Caspar: No--I don't. I shall try to console myself with that. But there are a certain number of very dazzling men in the world; and if there were only one it would be enough. The most dazzling of all will make straight for you. You'll be sure to take no one who isn't dazzling.
- Isabel: If you mean by dazzling, brilliantly clever--and I can't imagine what else you mean--I don't need the aid of a clever man to teach me how to live. I can find it out for myself.
- Caspar: Find out how to live alone? I wish that, when you have, you'd teach me!
- Isabel: (looking at him for a moment with a quick smile)  
Oh, you ought to marry.
- Caspar: (murmured between his teeth as he turns away)  
God forgive you!
- Isabel: You do me great injustice--you say what you don't know. (she broke out) I shouldn't be an easy victim--I've proved it.
- Caspar: Oh, to me, perfectly.
- Isabel: I've proved it to others as well. (pausing for a moment) I refused a proposal of marriage last week

what they call--a dazzling one. It was a proposal many girls would have accepted; I was offered a great position and a great fortune--by a person whom I like extremely.

Caspar: Is he an Englishman?

Isabel: He's an English nobleman.

Caspar: I'm glad he's disappointed.

Isabel: I've refused a most kind, noble gentleman. Make the most of that. And now you had better go home.

Caspar: May I not see you again?

Isabel: I think it's better not. You'll be sure to talk of this, and you see it leads to nothing.

Caspar: I promise you not to say a word that will annoy you. Who would wish less to curtail your liberty than I? What can give me greater pleasure than to see you perfectly independent--doing whatever you like? It's to make you independent that I want to marry you.

Isabel: That's a beautiful sophism. (with a smile)

Caspar: An unmarried woman--a girl of your age--isn't independent. There are all sorts of things she can't do. She's hampered at every step.

Isabel: That's as she looks at the question. (with much spirit) I'm not in my first youth--I can do what I choose--I belong quite to the independent class. I've neither father nor mother; I'm poor and of a serious disposition; I'm not pretty. I therefore

am not bound to be timid and conventional; indeed I can't afford such luxuries. Besides, I try to judge things for myself; to judge wrong. I don't wish to be a mere sheep in the flock; I wish to choose my fate and know something of human affairs beyond what other people think it compatible with propriety to tell me. (pausing, but no long enough for a reply) Let me say this to you, Mr. Goodwood. You're so kind as to speak of being afraid of my marrying. If you should hear a rumor that I'm on the point of doing so--remember what I have told you about my love of liberty and venture to doubt it.

Caspar: (obviously changing the subject) When you leave your uncle where do you go?

Isabel: I go abroad with my aunt--to Florence and other places.

Caspar: And when shall you come back to America?

Isabel: Perhaps not for a long time. I'm very happy here.

Caspar: Do you mean to give up your country.

Isabel: Don't be an infant!

Caspar: You want simply to travel for two years? I'm quite willing to wait two years, and you may do what you like in the interval. But I'll come back, wherever you are, two years hence.

Isabel: (changing her tone to a softer one) Ah, remember, I promise nothing--absolutely nothing! And

remember too that I shall not be an easy victim.

Caspar: You'll get very sick of your independence.

Isabel: Perhaps I shall; it's even very probable. When that day comes, I shall be very glad to see you.

Narr: She was trembling--trembling all over. Vibration was easy to her, and she found herself now humming like a smitten harp. She intensely rejoiced that Caspar Goodwood was gone; there was something in having thus got rid of him that was like payment, for a stamped receipt, of some debt too long on her mind. As she felt the glad relief, she bowed her head a little lower; the sense was there, throbbing in her heart; it was part of her emotion, but it was a thing to be ashamed of--it was profane and out of place. It was not for some ten minutes that she rose from her knees, and even when she came back to the sitting-room her tremor had not quite subsided. It had, verily, two causes: part of it was to be accounted for by her long discussion with Mr. Goodwood, but it might be feared that the rest was simply the enjoyment she found in the exercise of her power. She sat down in the same chair again and took up her book, but without going through the form of opening the volume. She leaned back with the low, soft, aspiring murmur with which she often uttered

her response to accidents of which the brighter side was not superficially obvious, and yielded to the satisfaction of having refused two ardent suitors in a fortnight. That love of liberty of which she had given Caspar Goodwood so bold a sketch was as yet almost exclusively theoretic; she had not been able to indulge it on a large scale. But it appeared to her she had done something; she had tasted of the delight, if not of battle, at least of victory; she had done what was truest to her plan.

In the months that followed, Isabel was to have her chance of independence. Her uncle died, leaving Isabel a considerable sum of money. Even Mrs. Touchett's close friend and houseguest, Madame Merle, was strangely indignant over Isabel's sudden fortune. Isabel herself had been totally unprepared for the enormity of the sum. She had enjoyed her uncle's company and was saddened at his death.

Isabel and her aunt had arrived in Florence, where Ralph was convalescing in the Italian sun. Isabel was most anxious to ask him some rather vital questions on the subject.

Isabel: I want to ask you something, something I've thought more than once of asking you by letter, but that I've hesitated on the whole to write about. Did

you know your father intended to leave me so much money?

Ralph: What does it matter, my dear Isabel, whether I knew? My father was very obstinate.

Isabel: So, you did know.

Ralph: Yes, he told me. We even talked it over a little.

Isabel: What did he do it for. (abruptly)

Ralph: Why, as a kind of compliment.

Isabel: A compliment on what?

Ralph: On your so beautifully existing.

Isabel: He liked me too much.

Ralph: That's a way we all have.

Isabel: If I believed that, I should be very unhappy. Fortunately I don't believe it. I want to be treated with justice; I want nothing but that.

Ralph: Very good. But you must remember that justice to a lovely being is after all a florid sort of sentiment.

Isabel: I'm not a lovely being. How can you say that at the very moment when I'm asking such odious questions? I must seem to you delicate!

Ralph: You seem to me troubled.

Isabel: I am troubled.

Ralph: About what?

Isabel: Do you think it good for me suddenly to be made so rich? Henrietta doesn't.

Ralph: Oh, hang Henrietta. If you ask me, I'm delighted at it.

- Isabel: Is that why your father did it--for your amusement?
- Ralph: I differ with Miss Stackpole, I think it very good for you to have means.
- Isabel: I wonder whether you know what's good for me--or whether you care.
- Ralph: If I know, depend upon it I care. Shall I tell you what it is not to torment yourself.
- Isabel: Not to torment you, I suppose you mean.
- Ralph: You can't do that; I'm proof. Take things more easily. Don't ask yourself so much whether this or that is good for you. Don't question your conscience so much--it will get out of tune like a strummed piano. Keep it for great occasions. Don't try so much to form your character--it's like trying to pull open a tight, tender young rose. Live as you like best, and your character will take care of itself. Most things are good for you; the exceptions are very rare, and a comfortable income's not one of them. You've too much power of thought--above all too much conscience. It's out of all reason, the number of things you think wrong. Put back your watch. diet your fever. Spread your wings; rise above the ground. It's never wrong to do that.
- Isabel: (having listened eagerly) I wonder if you appreciate what you say. If you do, you take a great responsibility.



- Ralph: You frighten me a little, but I think I'm right.  
(pressing the issue with cheeriness)
- Isabel: All the same what you say is very true. [pausing]  
I'm absorbed in myself--I look at life too much  
as a doctor's prescription. Why indeed should we  
perpetually be thinking whether things are good  
for us, as if we were patients lying in a hospital?  
Why should I be so afraid of not doing right? As  
if it mattered to the world whether I do right or  
wrong!
- Ralph: You're a capital person to advise. You take the  
wind out of my sails.
- Isabel: (looking at him as if she had not heard him) I  
try to care more about the world than about  
myself--but I always come back to myself. It's  
because I'm afraid. (stopping and voice trembling  
a little) Yes, I'm afraid; I can't tell you. A  
large fortune means freedom, and I'm afraid of  
that. It's such a fine thing, and one should  
make such a good use of it. If one shouldn't,  
one would be ashamed. And one must keep thinking;  
it's a constant effort. I'm not sure it's not a  
greater happiness to be powerless.
- Ralph: For weak people I've no doubt it's a greater hap-  
piness. For weak people the effort not to be con-  
temptible must be great.
- Isabel: And how do you know I'm not weak?

Ralph: Ah, (answering with a flush that the girl noticed)  
If you are I'm awfully sold!

Narr: Madame Merle, who had come to Florence on Mrs. Touchett's arrival, at the invitation of this lady, some six months after old Mr. Touchett's death--Mrs. Touchett offering her for a month the hospitality of Palazzo Crescentini--the judicious Madame Merle spoke to Isabel about a Mr. Gilbert Osmond and expressed the hope she might know him; making, however, no such point of the matter in recommending the girl herself to Mr. Osmond's attention. The reason of this was perhaps that Isabel offered no resistance whatever to Madame Merle's proposal. In Italy, as in England, the lady had a multitude of friends, both among the natives of the country and its heterogeneous visitors. She had mentioned to Isabel most of the people the girl would find it well to "meet"--of course, she said, Isabel could know whomever in the wide world she would--and had placed Mr. Osmond near the top of the list. He was an old friend of her own; she had known him these dozen years along with his sister, the Countess Gemini, and his small daughter, Pansy. He was one of the cleverest and most agreeable men in Europe. He was altogether above the respectable average; quite another affair. He wasn't a professional charmer--

far from it, and the effect he produced depended a good deal on the state of his nerves and his spirits. When not in the right mood he could fall as low as any one, saved only by his looking at such hours rather like a demoralized prince in exile. But if he cared or was interested or rightly challenged--just exactly right it had to be--then one felt his cleverness and his distinction. Those qualities didn't depend, in him, as in so many people, on his not committing or exposing himself. He had his perversities--which indeed Isabel would find to be the case with all the men really worth knowing--and didn't cause his light to shine equally for all persons. He was easily bored, and dull people always put him out; but a quick and cultivated girl like Isabel would give him a stimulus which was too absent from his life. One shouldn't attempt to live in Italy without making a friend of Gilbert Osmond, who as an American knew more about the country than anyone except two or three German professors.

Isabel: Aunt Lydia, I've something to tell you.

Mrs. T: You needn't tell me; I know what it is.

Isabel: I don't know how you know.

Mrs. T: The same way that I know when the window's open--by feeling a draught. You're going to marry that man.

- Isabel: What do you mean? (with great dignity)
- Mrs. T: Madame Merle's friend--Mr. Osmond.
- Isabel: I don't know why you call him Madame Merle's friend. Is that the principal thing he's known by?
- Mrs. T: If he's not her friend he ought to be--after what she had done for him! I shouldn't have expected it of her; I'm disappointed.
- Isabel: If you mean that Madame Merle has had anything to do with my engagement you're greatly mistaken. (with ardent coldness)
- Mrs. T: You mean that your attractions were sufficient without the gentleman's having had to be lashed up? You're quite right. They're immense, your attractions, and he would never have presumed to think of you if she hadn't put him up to it. He has a very good opinion of himself, but he was not a man to take trouble. Madame Merle took the trouble for him.
- Isabel: He has taken a great deal for himself. (voluntary laugh)
- Mrs. T: I think he must after all, to have made you like him so much.
- Isabel: I thought he even pleased you.
- Mrs. T: He did, at one time; and that's why I'm angry with him.
- Isabel: Be angry with me, not with him.

- Mrs. T: I'm always angry with you; that's no satisfaction! Was it for this that you refused Lord Warburton?
- Isabel: Please don't go back to that. Why shouldn't I like Mr. Osmond, since others have done so?
- Mrs. T: Others, at their wildest moments, never wanted to marry him. There's nothing of him.
- Isabel: Then he can't hurt me.
- Mrs. T: Do you think you're going to be happy? No one's happy, in such doings, you should know.
- Isabel: I shall set the fashion then. What does one marry for?
- Mrs. T: What you will marry for, heaven only knows. People usually marry as they go into partnership--to set up a house. But in your partnership you'll bring everything.
- Isabel: Is it that Mr. Osmond isn't rich? Is that what you're talking about.
- Mrs. T: He has not money; he has no name; he has no importance. I value such things and I have the courage to say it; I think they're very precious. Many other people think the same, and they show it. But they give some other reason.
- Isabel: I think I value everything that's valuable. I care very much for money, and that's why I wish Mr. Osmond to have a little.
- Mrs. T: Give it to him then, but marry someone else.

- Isabel: His name's good enough for me. It's a very pretty name. Have I such a fine one myself?
- Mrs. T: All the more reason you should improve on it. There are only a dozen American names. Do you marry him out of charity?
- Isabel: It was my duty to tell you, Aunt Lydia, but I don't think it's my duty to explain to you. Even if it were I shouldn't be able. So please don't remonstrate; in talking about it you have me at a disadvantage.
- Mrs. T: I don't remonstrate, I simply answer you; I must give some sign of intelligence. I saw it coming and said nothing. I never meddle.
- Isabel: You never do and you've been very considerate.
- Mrs. T: It was not considerate--it was convenient. But I shall talk to Madame Merle.
- Isabel: I don't see why you keep bringing her in. She has been a very good friend to me.
- Mrs. T: Possibly; but she has been a poor one to me.
- Isabel: What has she done to you?
- Mrs. T: She has deceived me. She had as good as promised me to prevent your engagement.
- Isabel: She couldn't have prevented it.

- Mrs. T: She can do anything; that's what I've always liked her for. I knew she could play any part; but I understood that she played them one by one. I didn't understand that she would play two at the same time.
- Isabel: I don't know what part she may have played to you. To me she has been honest and kind and devoted.
- Mrs. T: Devoted, of course; she wished you to marry her candidate. She told me she was watching you only in order to interpose.
- Isabel: She said that to please you. (conscious of the inadequacy of the explanation)
- Mrs. T: To please me by deceiving me? She knows me better. Am I pleased today?
- Isabel: I don't think you're ever much pleased. If Madame Merle knew you would learn the truth what had she to gain by insincerity?
- Mrs. T: She gained time, as you see. While I waited for her to interfere you were marching away, and she was really beating the drum.
- Isabel: But by your own admission you saw I was marching, and even if she had given the alarm you wouldn't have tried to stop me.
- Mrs. T: No, but someone else would.
- Isabel: Whom do you mean? (looking hard at her aunt)
- Mrs. T: (sustained Isabel's gaze) Would you have listened to Ralph?

Isabel: Not if he had abused Mr. Osmond.

Mrs. T: Ralph doesn't abuse people; you know that perfectly. He cares very much for you.

Isabel: I know he does and I shall feel the value of it now, for he knows that whatever I do I do with reason.

Mrs. T: He never believed you would do this. I told him you were capable of it, and he argued the other way.

Isabel: He did it for the sake of argument. You don't accuse him of having deceived you; why should you accuse Madame Merle?

Mrs. T: He never pretended he'd prevent it.

Isabel: I'm glad of that (gaily) I wish very much that when he comes you'd tell him first of my engagement.

(Dialogue to run continually with the preceding dialogue with Mrs. Touchett)

Ralph: I think I've hardly got over my surprise. You were the last person I expected to see caught.

Isabel: I don't know why you call it caught.

Ralph: Because you're going to be put into a cage.

Isabel: If I like my cage, that needn't trouble you.

Ralph: You must have changed immensely. A year ago you valued your liberty beyond everything. You wanted only to see life.

Isabel: I've seen it. It doesn't look to me now, I admit such an inviting game. I've seen that one can't



do anything so general. One must choose a corner and cultivate that.

Ralph: And one must choose as good a corner as possible. I had no idea, all winter, while I read your delightful letters, that you were choosing. You said nothing about it, and your silence put me off my guard.

Isabel: It was not a matter I was likely to write to you about. Besides, I knew nothing of the future. If you had been on your guard, what would you have done?

Ralph: I should have said "Wait a little longer."

Isabel: Wait for what?

Ralph: For a little more light.

Isabel: Where should my light have come from? From you?

Ralph: I might have struck a spark or two.

Isabel: You're beating about the bush, Ralph. You wish to say you don't like Mr. Osmond, and yet you're afraid.

Ralph: Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike? I'm willing to wound him, yes--but not to wound you. I'm afraid of you, not of him. If you marry him it won't be a fortunate way for me to have spoken.

Isabel: If I marry him! Have you had any expectation of dissuading me?

Ralph: Of course that seems to you to fatuous.

Isabel: No, it seems to me too touching.

- Ralph: That's the same thing. It makes me so ridiculous that you pity me.
- Isabel: I know you've a great affection for me. I can't get rid of that.
- Ralph: For heaven's sake don't try. Keep that well in sight. It will convince you how intensely I want you to do well.
- Isabel: And how little you trust me!
- Ralph: I trust you, but I don't trust him. (said after a moment of silence)
- Isabel: You've said it now, and I'm glad you've made it so clear. But you'll suffer by it.
- Ralph: Not if you're just.
- Isabel: I'm very just. What better proof of it can there be than that I'm not angry with you? I don't know what's the matter with me, but I'm not. Perhaps I ought to be angry, but Mr. Osmond wouldn't think so. He wants me to know everything; that's what I like him for. You've nothing to gain, I know that. I've never been so nice to you, as a girl, that you should have much reason for wishing me to remain one. You give very good advice; you've often done so. I've always believed in your wisdom. It seems a strange thing to argue about, and I ought to tell you definitely that if you expect to dissuade me you may give it up. You'll not move me an inch. As you say, I'm caught.

Certainly it won't be pleasant for you to remember this, but your pain will be in your own thoughts. I shall never reproach you.

Ralph: It's not in the least the sort of marriage I thought you'd make.

Isabel: What sort of marriage was that?

Ralph: I can hardly say. I hadn't exactly a positive view of it, but I had a negative. I didn't think you'd decide for--well, for that type.

Isabel: What's the matter with Mr. Osmond's type, if it be one? His being so independent, so individual, is what I most see in him. What do you know against him? You know him scarcely at all.

Ralph: I confess I haven't facts and items to prove him a villain. But all the same I can't help feeling that you're running a grave risk.

Isabel: Marriage is always a grave risk, and his risk's as grave as mine.

Ralph: That's his affair! If he's afraid, let him back out. I wish to God he would.

Isabel: I don't understand you. (then coldly) I don't know what you're talking about.

Ralph: I believed you'd marry a man of more importance.

Isabel: (a color like a flame leaped into her face) Of more importance to whom? It seems to me enough that one's husband should be of importance to one's self?

Ralph: (blushing as well) I'll tell you in a moment what I mean. (attitude of agitation but wishing to be gentle)

Isabel: In everything that makes one care for people, Mr. Osmond is preeminent. There may be nobler natures, but I've never had the pleasure of meeting one. Mr. Osmond's is the finest I know; he's good enough for me, and interesting enough, and clever enough. I'm far more struck with what he has and what he represents than with what he may lack.

Ralph: I had treated myself to a charming vision of your future. I had amused myself with planning out a high destiny for you. There was to be nothing of this sort in it. You were not to come down so easily or so soon.

Isabel: Come down, you say?

Ralph: That renders my sense of what has happened to you. You seemed to me to be soaring far up in the blue--to be, sailing in the bright light, over the heads of men. Suddenly someone tosses up a faded rosebud--a missile that should never have reached you--and straight you drop to the ground. It hurts me, hurts me as if I had fallen myself!

Isabel: What you do mean by my soaring and sailing? I've never moved on a higher plane than I'm moving on

now. There's nothing higher for a girl than to marry--a person she likes. (wandering into the didactic)

Ralph: It's your like the person we speak of that I venture to criticize. I should have said that the man for you would have been a more active, larger, freer sort of nature. (hesitating) I can't get over the sense that Osmond is somehow--small.

Isabel: Small? (making it sound immense)

Ralph: I think he's narrow, selfish. He takes himself so seriously!

Isabel: He has a great respect for himself; I don't blame him for that. It makes one more sure to respect others.

Ralph: Yes, but everything is relative; one ought to feel one's relation to things--to others. I don't think Mr. Osmond does that.

Isabel: I've chiefly to do with his relation to me. In that he's excellent.

Ralph: He's the incarnation of taste. (thinking hard how he could best express Gilbert Osmond's sinister attributes without purring himself in the wrong by seeming to describe him coarsely. He wished to describe him impersonally, scientifically.) He judges and measures, approves and condemns, altogether by that.

Isabel: It's a happy thing then that his taste should be exquisite.

Ralph: It's exquisite, indeed, since it has led him to select you as his bride. But have you ever seen such a taste--a really exquisite one--ruffled?

Isabel: I hope it may never be my fortune to fail to gratify my husband's.

Ralph: (with a sudden passion at her words) Ah, that's willful, that's unworthy of you! You were not meant to be measured in that way--you were meant for something better than to keep guard over the sensibilities of a sterile dilettante!

Isabel: You go too far. (looking at each other defiantly)

Ralph: I've said what I had on my mind--and I've said it because I love you!

Isabel: (turning pale and wishing to strike him off the tiresome list that included Warburton and Goodwood) Ah then, you're not disinterested!

Ralph: I love you, but I love without hope.

Isabel: I'm afraid your talk then is the wildness of despair! I don't understand it--I'm not arguing with you; I've only tried to listen to you. (gently as if the anger with which she had begun had subsided) It's very good of you to try to warn me, if you're really alarmed; but I won't promise to think of what you've said: I shall forget it as soon as possible. Try and forget it yourself; you've

done your duty, and no man can do more. I can't explain to you what I feel, what I believe, and I wouldn't if I could. I can't enter into your idea of Mr. Osmond. I see him in quite another way. He's not important--no, he's supremely indifferent. If that's what you mean when you call him "small" then he's as small as you please. I call that large--it's the largest thing I know. I won't pretend to argue with you about a person I'm going to marry. I'm not the least concerned to defend Mr. Osmond; I should think it would seem strange even to yourself that I should talk of him so quietly and coldly. I wouldn't talk of him at all to anyone but you; and you, after what you've said--I may just answer you once for all. Would you wish me to make a mercenary marriage--what they call a marriage of ambition? I've only one ambition--to be free to follow out a good feeling. I had others once, but they've passed away. Do you complain of Mr. Osmond because he's not rich? That's just what I like him for. I've fortunately money enough; I've never felt so thankful for it as today. There have been moments when I should like to go and kneel down by your father's grave: he did perhaps a better thing than he knew when he put it into my power to marry a poor man--a man who has

borne his poverty with such dignity, with such indifference. Mr. Osmond has never scrambled nor struggled--he has cared for no worldly prize. If that's to be narrow, if that's to be selfish, then it's very well. I'm not frightened by such words, I'm not even displeased; I'm only sorry that you should make a mistake. Others might have done so, but I'm surprised that you should. You might know a gentleman when you see one--you might know a fine mind. Mr. Osmond makes no mistakes! He knows everything, he understands everything, he has the kindest, gentlest, highest spirit. You've got hold of some false idea. It's a pity, but I can't help it; it regards you more than me. (pausing and then going on with renewed passion)

You talk about one's soaring and sailing, but if one marries at all one touches the earth. One has human feelings and needs, and one must marry a particular individual. Your mother has never forgiven me for not having come to a better understanding with Lord Warburton, and she's horrified at my contenting myself with a person who has none of his great advantages--no property, no title, no honors, no houses, nor lands, nor position, nor reputation, nor brilliant belongings of any sort. It's the total absence of all these



things that pleases me. Mr. Osmond's simply a very lonely, a very cultivated and a very honest man--he's not a prodigious proprietor.

Narr: The elation of success, which surely now flamed high in Osmond, emitted meanwhile very little smoke for so brilliant a blaze. Contentment on his part, took no vulgar form; excitement, in the most self-conscious of men, was a kind of ecstasy of self-control. This disposition made him an admirable lover; it gave him a constant view of the smitten and dedicated state. He never forgot himself, and so he never forgot to be graceful and tender. He was immensely pleased with his young lady; Madame Merle had made him a present of incalculable value. What could be a finer thing to live with than a high spirit attuned to softness? For would not the softness be all for one's self, and the strenuousness for society, which admired the air of superiority? What could be a happier gift in a companion than a quick, fanciful mind which saved one repetitions and reflected one's thought on a polished, elegant surface? Osmond hated to see his thought reproduced literally--that made it look stale and stupid; he preferred it to be freshened in the reproduction even as "words" by music. His egotism had never taken the crude form of desiring a dull wife, this

lady's intelligence was to be a silver plate, not an earthen one--a plate that he might heap up with ripe fruits, to which it would give a decorative value, so that talk might become for him a sort of served dessert. He found the silver quality in this perfection in Isabel; he could tap her imagination with his knuckle and make it ring. He knew perfectly, that their union enjoyed a little favor with the girl's relations.

Osmond: It's the difference in our fortune they don't like. They think I'm in love with your money.

Isabel: Are you speaking of my aunt--of my cousin? How do you know what they think?

Osmond: I don't mind them; I only care for one thing--for your not having the shadow of a doubt. My dear girl, I can't tell you how life seems to stretch there before us.

It seems to me that I've sufficiently proved the limits of my itch for it; I never in my life tried to earn a penny and I ought to be less subject to suspicion than most of the people one sees grubbing and grabbing. I suppose it's their business to suspect; it's proper on the whole they should. They'll like me better some day.

Narr: Isabel remembered Gilbert Osmond's confident words with the pain of consciousness. Her memory lingered

the months of their courtship. The days of long afternoon walks when he had brought Pansy with him two or three times--That she would always be a child was the conviction expressed by her father, who held her by the hand when she was in her sixteenth year and told her to go and play while he sat down a little with the pretty lady. Isabel remembered how she had felt that Pansy already so represented part of the service she could render, part of the responsibility she could face. Her father took so the childish view of her that he had not yet explained to her the new relation in which he stood to the elegant Miss Archer.

Osmond: She doesn't know. She thinks it perfectly natural that you and I should come and walk here together simply as good friends. There seems to me something enchantingly innocent in that; It's the way I like her to be. No, I'm not a failure, as I used to think; I've succeeded in two things. I'm to marry the woman I adore, and I've brought up my child, as I wished, in the old way.

Narr: Pansy was dear to her. It was like a soft presence--like a small hand in her own; on Pansy's part it was more than an affection--it was a kind of ardent coercive faith. The two were constantly together; Mrs. Osmond was rarely seen without her stepdaughter. Isabel liked her company, it had the

effect of one's carrying a nosegay composed of all the same flower.

Isabel had not seen much of Madame Merle since her marriage. Familiarity had modified in some degree her first impression of this lady, but it had not essentially altered it; there was still much wonder of admiration in it. Madame Merle had her own ideas; she had of old exposed a great many of them to Isabel, who knew also that under an appearance of extreme self-control her highly cultivated friend concealed a rich sensibility. But her will was mistress of her life; there was something gallant in the way she kept going. It was as if she had learned the secret of it--as if the art of life were some clever trick she had guessed. Isabel, as she herself grew older, became acquainted with revulsions, with disgusts; there were days when the world looked black and she asked herself with some sharpness what it was that she was pretending to live for. Her old habit had been to live by enthusiasm, to fall in love with suddenly-perceived possibilities, with the idea of some new adventure. But Madame Merle has suppressed enthusiasm; she fell in love now-a-days with nothing; she lived entirely by reason and by wisdom. There were hours when Isabel would have given anything for lessons in

this art. But by this time Isabel's needs and inclinations had considerably changed. She had lost the desire to know this lady's clever trick. Madame Merle had known Gilbert Osmond and his little Pansy very well, better almost than anyone, she was not after all of the inner circle. She was on her guard; she never spoke of their affairs till she was asked. She had a dread of seeming to meddle. She candidly expressed this dread to Isabel.

M. Merle: I must be on my guard. I might so easily offend you. I must not forget that I knew your husband long before you did; I must not let that betray me. If you were a silly woman you might be jealous. You're not a silly woman; but neither am I; therefore, I'm determined not to get into trouble. A little harm's very soon done; a mistake's made before one knows it. Of course if I had wished to make love to your husband I had ten years to do it in, and nothing to prevent; so it isn't likely I shall begin today, when I'm so much less attractive than I was. But if I were to annoy you by seeming to take a place that doesn't belong to me, you wouldn't make that reflection; you'd simply say I was forgetting certain differences. I'm determined not to forget them. Certainly a good friend isn't always thinking of that; one doesn't

suspect one's friends of injustice. Don't think I make myself uncomfortable; I'm not always watching myself. I think I sufficiently prove it in talking to you as I do now. All I wish to say is, that if you were to be jealous--that's the form it would take--I should be sure to think it was a little my fault. It certainly wouldn't be your husband's.

Narr: In Isabel's mind today there was nothing clear; there was a confusion of regrets, a complication of fears. She felt helpless. Madame Merle knew so little what she was thinking of! Jealous of her--jealous of her with Gilbert? She almost wished jealousy had been possible; it would have made it a manner for refreshment. Wasn't it in a manner one of the symptoms of happiness? A girl in love was doubtless not a free agent; but the sole source of her mistake had been within herself. There had been no plot, no snare; she had looked and considered and chosen. When a woman had made such a mistake, there was only one way to repair it--just immensely to accept. It was not her fault--she had practiced no deception; she had only admired and believed. She had taken all the first steps in the purest confidence, and then she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley

with a dead wall at the end. Instead of leading to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, it led rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above, and where it served to deepen the feeling of failure. It was her deep distrust of her husband--this was what darkened the world. It had come gradually--it was not till the first year of their life together, so admirably intimate at first, had closed that she had taken the alarm. She knew of no wrong he had done; he was not violent, he was not cruel; she simply believed he hated her. He had discovered that she was so different, that she was not what he had believed she would prove to be. He had thought at first he could change her, and she had done her best to be what he would like. But she was, after all, herself--she couldn't help that and now there was no use pretending, wearing a mask, for he knew her and had made up his mind. He would if possible never give her a pretext, never put himself in the wrong. Isabel, scanning the future with dry, fixed eyes, saw that he would have the better of her there. He was not changed; he had not disguised himself, during the year of his courtship, anymore than she. But she

had seen only half his nature then, as one saw the disc of the moon when it was partly masked by the shadow of the earth. She saw the full moon now--she saw the whole man.

Isabel: (continuing her thought out loud) Ah, I had been immensely under the charm! He really admired me-- he told me why; because I was the most imaginative woman he had known. I hadn't read him right. That he was poor and lonely and yet that somehow he was noble were the features that interested me most. He was like a skeptical voyager strolling on the beach while he waited for the tide, looking seaward yet not putting to sea. I would be his providence, it would be a good thing to love him. I could have never done it but for my money. Seventy thousand pounds; Ralph's father was too generous to me. Why hadn't Gilbert the courage to say he was glad that I was rich! He complained that I had too many ideas; but that's just what one married for, to share them, with someone else. One couldn't pluck them up by the roots, though one might suppress them, be careful not to utter them. He has taken personal offense to my way of looking at life.

Narr: She could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. Between those four walls she had



lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation. Osmond's beautiful mind gave it neither light nor air; Osmond's beautiful mind indeed seemed to peep down from a small high window and mock at her. She could come and go; she had her liberty; her husband was perfectly polite. He took himself so seriously; it was something appalling. Under all his culture, his cleverness, his amenity, under his good-nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers. It implied a sovereign contempt for everyone but some three or four very exalted people whom he envied, and for everything in the world but half a dozen ideas of his own. What did he think of her--that she was base, vulgar, ignoble? He at least knew now that she had no traditions? The real offence, as she ultimately perceived, was her having a mind of her own at all. Her mind was to be his--attached to his own like a small gardenplot to a deer-park. He would rake the soil gently and water the flowers; he would weed the beds and gather an occasional nosegay. It would be a pretty piece of property for a proprietor already far-reaching. They were strangely married,

at all events, and it was a horrible life. Nothing was a pleasure to her now; how could anything be a pleasure to a woman who knew that she had thrown away her life?

Isabel's confusion has been interrupted with the news from England that Ralph was dying. Osmond and she had not spoken to one another in over a week. Her fear of an encounter with her husband was overwhelming, yet she felt compelled to tell him that she must return to Gardencourt for the sake of her dying cousin.

Osmond: Why must you go to Gardencourt?

Isabel: To see Ralph before he dies.

Osmond: I don't see the need of it. He came to see you here. I didn't like that, but I tolerated it because it was to be the last time you should see him. Now you tell me it's not to have been the last. You're not grateful!

Isabel: What am I to be grateful for?

Osmond: For my not having interfered while he was here.

Isabel: Oh yes, I am. I remember perfectly how distinctly you let me know you didn't like it. I was very glad when he went away.

Osmond: Leave him alone then. Don't run after him.

Isabel: I must go to England.

Osmond: I shall not like it if you do.

Isabel: Why should I mind that? You won't like it if I

don't. You like nothing I do or don't do. You pretend to think I lie.

Osmond: Let it be clear. If you leave Rome today it will be a piece of the most deliberate, the most calculated, opposition.

Isabel: How can you call it calculated? I received my aunt's telegram but three minutes ago.

Osmond: You calculate rapidly; it's a great accomplishment. I don't see why we should prolong our discussion; you know my wish.

Isabel: You've no reason for such a wish, and I've every reason for going. I can't tell you how unjust you seem to me. It's your own opposition that's calculated. It's malignant.

Osmond: It's all the more intense then. (adding as if he were giving her a friendly counsel) This is a very important matter. You say I've no reason? I have the very best. I dislike, from the bottom of my soul, what you intend to do. It's dishonorable, it's indecent. Your cousin is nothing whatever to me, and I'm under no obligation to make concessions to him. Your relations with him, while he was here, kept me on pins and needles; but I let that pass, because from week to week I expected him to go. I've never liked him and he has never liked me. That's why you like him--because he hates me. (with a quick audible tremor in his

voice) I've an idea of what my wife should do and should not do. She should not travel across Europe alone, to sit at the bedside of other men. Your cousin's nothing to you; he's nothing to us. You smile most expressively when I talk about us, but I assure you that we, we, Mrs. Osmond, is all I know. I take our marriage seriously; you appear to have found a way of not doing so. I'm not aware that we're divorced, or separated; for me we're indissolubly united. You are nearer to me than any human creature, and I'm nearer to you. It may be a disagreeable proximity; it's one, at any rate, of our own deliberate making. You don't like to be reminded of that, I know, but I'm perfectly willing, because--because--[pause] because I think we should accept the consequences of our actions, and what I value most in life is the honor of a thing!

Isabel: I know you're a master of the art of mockery. How can you speak of an indissoluble union--how can you speak of your being contented? Where's our union when you accuse me of falsity? Where's your contentment when you have nothing but hideous suspicion in your heart?

Osmond: It is in our living decently together, in spite of such drawbacks.

Isabel: We don't live decently together!

Osmond: Indeed we don't if you go to England.

Isabel: That's very little, that's nothing. I might do much more.

Osmond: If you've come to threaten me I prefer my drawing.

Isabel: I suppose that if I go you'll not expect me to come back.

Osmond: Are you out of your mind?

Isabel: How can it be anything but a rupture? Especially if all you say is true?

Osmond: I really can't argue with you on the hypothesis of you defying me. (turns away and takes up his painting again)

Narr: Her faculties, her energy, her passion, were all dispersed again; she felt as if a cold, dark mist had suddenly encompassed her. Osmond possessed in a supreme degree the art of eliciting any weakness. But what she was afraid of was not her husband--his displeasure, his hatred, his revenge; it was simply the violence there would be in going when Osmond wished her to remain. A gulf of difference had opened between them. What he thought of her she knew, what he was capable of saying to her she had felt; yet they were married, for all that, and marriage meant that a woman should cleave to the man with whom, she had stood at the altar. She sank down on her sofa at last and buried her head in a pile of cushions.

When she raised her head again Osmond's sister, the Countess Gemini, hovered before her.

Isabel: You're going to tell me something horrible.

Countess: You can call it by whatever name you will. My first sister-in-law had no children.

Isabel: Your first sister-in-law?

Countess: I suppose you know at least, that Osmond has been married before! I've never spoken to you of his wife. The poor little woman lived hardly three years and died childless. It wasn't till after her death that Pansy arrived.

Isabel: Pansy's not my husband's child then?

Countess: Your husband's, but no one else's husband's. Some one else's wife. Ah, my good Isabel, with you one must dot one's i's!

Isabel: I don't understand. Whose wife's?

Countess: The wife of a horrid little Swiss who died. Don't you recognize how the child could never pass for her husband's? That is with Mr. Merle himself. They had been separated too long for that, and he had gone to some far country--I think to South America. The conditions happened to make it workable under stress that Osmond should acknowledge the little girl. His wife was dead--very true; but she had not been dead too long to put a certain accommodation of dates out of the question--for the moment, I mean, that suspicion wasn't started.

What was more natural than that poor Mrs. Osmond, at a distance, should have left behind her, the pledge of her brief happiness that had cost her her life? My poor sister-in-law, in her grave, couldn't help herself, and the real mother, to save her skin, renounced all visible property in the child.

Isabel: He must have been false to his wife--and so very soon! But to me, to me----.

Countess: To you he has been faithful? Well, it depends, my dear, on what you call faithful. When he married you he was no longer the lover of another woman. That state of affairs had passed away; the lady had repented, or at all events, for reasons of her own, drawn back; she had always had, a worship of appearances so intense that even Osmond himself had got bored with it. But the whole past was between them.

Isabel: Why then did she want him to marry me?

Countess: That's her superiority. Because you had money; and because she believed you would be good to Pansy.

Isabel: It's very strange, I suppose I ought to know, but I'm sorry.

Countess: You don't take it as I should have thought.

Isabel: How should I take it?

- Countess: I should say as a woman who has been made use of. They've always been bound to each other; they remained even after she broke off--or he did. But he has always been more for her than she has been for him. When their little carnival was over they made a bargain that each should give the other complete liberty, but that each should also do everything possible to help the other on. Now see how much better women are than men! She has found a wife for Osmond, but Osmond has never lifted a little finger for her. So you needn't be jealous. ( added humorously)
- Isabel: (feeling bruised and scant of breath; her head was humming with new knowledge) I'm much obliged to you. (changing her tone abruptly) How do you know all this?
- Countess: Let us assume that I've invented it! Now will you give up your journey? I've done wrong to speak--I've made you ill!
- Isabel: I must see Ralph! (with a tone of far-reaching, infinite sadness)
- Isabel: I never thanked you--I never was what I should be! What must you have thought of me? Is it true that you made me rich--that all I have is yours?
- Ralph: Don't speak of that--but for that----I believe I ruined you.
- Isabel: He married me for the money.



- Ralph: He was greatly in love with you.
- Isabel: I only want you to understand.
- Ralph: I always understood. You wanted to look at life for yourself--but you were not allowed; you were punished for your wish. You were ground in the very mill of the conventional!
- Isabel: Oh yes, I've been punished.
- Ralph: Was he very bad about your coming?
- Isabel: He made it very hard for me. But I don't care.
- Ralph: It is all over then between you?
- Isabel: Oh no; I don't think anything's over.
- Ralph: Are you going back to him?
- Isabel: I don't know--I can't tell. I don't want to think. Here on my knees, with you dying in my arms, I'm happier than I have been for a long time. And I want you to be happy--not to think of anything sad; only to feel that I'm near you and I love you. Why should there be pain? In such hours as this what have we to do with pain? That's not the deepest thing; there's something deeper.
- Ralph: You must stay here.
- Isabel: I should like to stay--as long as seems right.
- Ralph: As seems right--as seems right? Yes, you think a great deal about that.
- Isabel: Of course, one must. You're very tired.

Ralph: You said just now that pain's not the deepest thing. No--but it's very deep. If I could stay----.

Isabel: For me you'll always be here.

Narr: In her long journey from Rome her mind had been given up to vagueness; she was unable to question the future. She had plenty to think about; but it was neither reflection nor conscious purpose that filled her mind. Disconnected visions passed through it, and sudden dull gleams of memory, of expectation. The past and the future came and went at their will, but she saw them only in fitful images, which rose and fell by a logic of their own. It was extraordinary the things she remembered. Now that she was in the secret, now that she knew something that so much concerned her and the eclipse of which had made life resemble an attempt to play whist with an imperfect pack of cards, the truth of things, their mutual relations, their meaning, and for the most part their horror, rose before her with a kind of architectural vastness. Nothing seemed of use to her. All purpose, all intention, was suspended; all desire too, save the single desire to reach her much-embracing refuge. Gardencourt had been her starting-point, and to those muffled chambers it was at least a temporary solution to return. She had gone forth

in her strength; she would come back in her weakness. She envied Ralph his dying. To cease utterly, to give it all up and not know anything more--this idea was as sweet as the vision of a cool bath in a marble tank, in a darkened chamber, in a hot land.

She had moments indeed in her journey from Rome which were almost as good as being dead. A week later a considerable number of people found time, at the height of the London "season" to take a morning train down to a quiet station in Berkshire and spend half an hour in a small grey church which stood within an easy walk. It was in the green burial-place of this edifice that Mrs. Touchett consigned her son to earth. She stood herself at the edge of the grave, and Isabel stood beside her. If it was sad to think of poor Ralph, it was not too sad, since death, for him, had had no violence. He had been dying so long; he was so ready, everything had been so expected and prepared.

Her errand was over; she had done what she had left her husband to do. She had a husband in a foreign city, counting the hours of her absence. He was not one of the best husbands, but that didn't alter the case. Certain obligations were involved in the very fact of marriage. Isabel thought of

her husband as little as might be; but now that she was at a distance, beyond its spell, she thought with a kind of spiritual shudder of Rome. There was a penetrating chill in the image, and she lived from day to day, postponing, closing her eyes, trying not to think. She knew she must decide, but she decided nothing. Osmond gave no sound and evidently would give none. From Pansy she heard nothing, but that was very simple: Her father had told her not to write.

Isabel remembered her last conversation with Pansy before her departure to England.

Pansy: You're not happy, Mrs. Osmond.

Isabel: Not very. But it doesn't matter.

Pansy: Don't leave me here.

Isabel: Will you come away with me now.

Pansy: Did papa tell you to bring me?

Isabel: No, it's my own proposal.

Pansy: I think I had better wait then. Did papa send me no message?

Isabel: I don't think he knew I was coming to see you.

Pansy: Papa wished me to think a little--and I've thought a great deal.

Isabel: What have you thought?

Pansy: That I must never displease papa.

Isabel: You knew that before.

Pansy: Yes, but I know it better.

Isabel: I leave Rome tonight.

Pansy: You look strange, you frighten me.

Isabel: I'm very harmless.

Pansy: Perhaps you won't come back?

Isabel: Perhaps not. I can't tell.

Pansy: Mrs. Osmond, you won't leave me!

Isabel: What are you afraid of?

Pansy: Of papa--a little. And of Madame Merle.

Isabel: You must not say that.

Pansy: Madame Merle has been here. (adding abruptly)  
I don't like Madame Merle.

Isabel: You must never say that--that you don't like  
Madame Merle.

Pansy: I never will again. You'll come back?

Isabel: Yes----I'll come back.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>F. W. Dupee, Henry James (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1951), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Dupee, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Dupee, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1953), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup>Leon Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), p. 311.

<sup>11</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881, p. 393.

<sup>12</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881, p. 392.

<sup>13</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881, p. 394.

<sup>14</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Conquest of London: 1870-1881, p. 392.

<sup>15</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>Edel, Henry James: The Untried Years: 1843-1870, pp. 13-14.

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