Daisy Miller

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY JAMES

Henry James was born to a lecturer and social theorist, Henry James Sr., and was the second oldest of five children. Throughout James's childhood, his family moved back and forth between New York, Rhode Island, Paris, and Geneva. He and his brothers received a somewhat haphazard schooling as a result of this constant movement. The James family later settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Henry enrolled at Harvard Law School, though he soon quit. He began to publish stories during the Civil War, and also began contributing to magazines and journals like *The Nation* at this time. In 1874 he settled in Italy to write a novel, and then moved to Europe definitively in 1875. He first lived in Paris, where he met authors like Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola, and then to London. James's stories and novels began to reach international success, especially following the publication of *The Portrait of a Lady* in 1880. James never married, and was certainly attracted to men, although his homosexuality remained hidden from nearly everyone in his life. In the first few years of the twentieth century, James's "late period," he published three novels that cemented his legacy: *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Golden Bowl*. After returning to New York in 1905, he began to heavily revise a number of his works and to write literary introductions to them, which are considered exemplary essays in their own right. But despite his critical acclaim, approval from the general public continued to elude him, and he began to be deeply depressed. He recovered and returned to England, living to see the outbreak of World War I, and died in London.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The last thirty years or so of the nineteenth century in the United States are known as the Gilded Age, a term coined by Mark Twain, who was referring to the thin sheen of wealth and extravagance covering a reality of corruption and desperation. During this time, industrialization increased rapidly in the country, along with the expansion of railroads, corporations, and American imperial ventures. At the same time, many writers and thinkers began to critique what they saw as a culture of excess, not to mention the many poor and ethnic minorities left out of such growth. This was also a period that saw the birth of various suffragette movements that fought for women's rights. Daisy Miller evidently stems from one of the families that benefited from Gilded Age production—her father is a businessman in upstate New York—and yet were often considered to wear their wealth too openly, without proper discretion. This is also the period when an increasing number of young Americans, including women, participated in the "Grand Tour" in Europe—a chance to spend months abroad and become acquainted with the culture of the Old World.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Henry James returned again and again in his fiction, from *The Portrait of a Lady* to *The Ambassadors* and *The Wings of the Dove* and others, to stories of Americans abroad in Europe, as he explored the contrast between American innocence and freedom with European age and convention. He particularly focused on the trope of a young American lady facing an unknown society and culture in Europe. James's cousin, Milly Temple, who died quite young, is said to have been the model for Daisy Miller, but James also seems to have wanted to elaborate on this character study in greater depth. He did so in his great novel, *A Portrait of a Lady*, whose protagonist Isabel Archer bears some resemblance to Daisy. Edith Wharton was another novelist during this era who forged intricate cultural and psychological portraits of women—particularly women who are foreign or who have spent time abroad—including *The House of Mirth* and *The Age of Innocents*. Wharton and James began corresponding at the beginning of the 20th century. Henry James was also indebted to French realist novelists like Gustave Flaubert and Honoré de Balzac. He drew on their stylistic innovations and developed a mode of psychological realism in which readers could witness action through the consciousness of one character in particular, like Winterbourne in *Daisy Miller*. In the beginning of the 20th century, authors like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce would develop this tool even more radically through their stream-of-consciousness and "free indirect discourse" approach.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Daisy Miller*
- **When Written:** 1877-1878
- **Where Written:** London
- **When Published:** In serialized magazine form between June and July 1878; in book form later that year.
- **Literary Period:** Literary realism
- **Genre:** Novella
- **Setting:** Vevay, Switzerland and Rome, Italy
- **Climax:** Winterbourne discovers Daisy with her Italian admirer, Mr. Giovanelli, wandering the Coliseum late at night, risking illness in addition to her reputation.
- **Antagonist:** In some ways, the women in Rome who band against Daisy, judging and condemning her because of her

social improprieties, can be considered to be Daisy's antagonists. But Daisy herself can also be seen as an antagonist to the very way of life sketched out by Henry James in the novella.

- **Point of View:** The novella, written in the third person, distinguishes the narrator from Winterbourne, although it cleaves closely to Winterbourne's perspective. The narrator also often adopts a character's point of view and speaking style without directly quoting him or her, leading to a greater collapse between narrator and characters.

EXTRA CREDIT

Upstaged: Henry James attempted to gain wider public success by writing for the stage, but his play, *Guy Domville*, was a disaster. It was ridiculed by the public when it was staged in 1895.

All in the Family: Henry's brother, William James, was perhaps the most well-known philosopher and psychologist in the United States in the later part of the nineteenth century, and indeed is often considered the first modern American psychologist.

PLOT SUMMARY

Daisy Miller begins in the resort town of Vevay, in Switzerland, where a young expatriate American, Mr. Winterbourne, has arrived from Geneva (where, according to various rumors, he either studies or pursues an older foreign lady) to spend some time with his aunt, Mrs. Costello. Winterbourne encounters a young boy, also American, who is talkative and immediately engages Winterbourne in conversation. The boy's sister arrives, and Winterbourne learns their names: Daisy and Randolph Miller. Winterbourne finds Daisy quite pretty, and though she initially pays him little attention, she soon warms to him and starts chatting away, astounding him with her talkativeness and her lack of the shy feminine attitude he has grown used to in Geneva. Daisy asks if he might take her to the Château de Chillon, a castle across the lake, which she's wanted to see, and he agrees.

Winterbourne asks his aunt about the Millers, and she tells them that they are vulgar people. This disappoints him, as he is fascinated by Daisy and wanted to introduce her to his aunt. Mrs. Costello is particularly offended that Daisy plans to go with Winterbourne, unaccompanied by anyone else, to the chateau. That evening, Winterbourne meets Daisy again and, later, her mother, Mrs. Miller, who seems alternately bemused and unaffected by Daisy's up-front attitude towards Winterbourne. Daisy asks Winterbourne to take her out on a boat alone, even though it is late at night, but the courier, Eugenio, arrives to announce that he's finally gotten Randolph to go to bed, and they all retire.

A few days later Winterbourne takes Daisy to the chateau. He enjoys watching her and listening to her chatter on, but he's a little disappointed that, although she is quite frank with him, she doesn't seem nervous as he imagines a young lady would in such a situation if she were actually attracted to him. But when Winterbourne reveals that he has to return to Geneva shortly, Daisy is indignant, and she imagines he has a lover there. She continues to complain until Winterbourne agrees to meet her in Rome the following winter, where his aunt has an apartment, and where the Millers are going next.

Winterbourne arrives in Rome to learn, from his aunt, that Daisy is causing a great deal of talk in society—she is wandering around alone and always seems to be surrounded by admiring Italian gentlemen. Somewhat put off by the idea of such competition, Winterbourne goes to see a friend from Geneva, Mrs. Walker. There, however, he encounters the Millers, who are also paying Mrs. Walker a visit. Winterbourne talks to Mrs. Miller for a while, before greeting Daisy, who is quick to vocalize her dissatisfaction with the way he left her at Vevay. Mrs. Walker, however, finds it quite strange that she would act in such a way, since Daisy and Winterbourne had only known each other for a few days. Daisy announces that she is planning on going for a walk, to meet her Italian friend, Mr. Giovanelli. Mrs. Walker begs her not to go alone, and Daisy cheerily suggests that Winterbourne accompany her. They meet Giovanelli, a dashing Italian man, in the Pincian gardens, to walk. Before long, however, Mrs. Walker pursues them in a carriage, and she begs Daisy to get inside, since everyone is talking about her. Daisy holds her ground and refuses. Mrs. Walker, angry and frustrated, then insists that Winterbourne accompany her, and he leaves Daisy and Giovanelli. It begins to become difficult for Winterbourne to call on Daisy, as she is always out or with Giovanelli. At Mrs. Walker's party, Mrs. Miller comes alone, saying that Daisy has gotten wrapped up in playing piano with Giovanelli, and will come later. Mrs. Walker is shocked and indignant, and decides to refuse to talk to Daisy. Daisy comes with Giovanelli and is bright and cheerful as usual. When Winterbourne tries to warn her about what people are saying, Daisy says he's being disagreeable, and she spends the rest of the night with her Italian friend. When she goes to leave, Mrs. Walker turns her back to Daisy, and Winterbourne watches, feeling sorry for her, as Daisy seems confused and uncertain.

Mrs. Walker and her friends, after that, stop inviting Daisy to their parties. One day Winterbourne encounters Daisy with Giovanelli at a tourist site. Again he tries to tell her what people are saying, and she says that he should prevent people from being unkind. Winterbourne asks if she's engaged to Giovanelli, and Daisy first says she is, then—when Winterbourne says he believes her—that she's not.

A week later, Winterbourne eats out and decides to stroll home through the moonlight. He peeks into the Coliseum, which is

beautifully lit up, but then remembers that this is how one contracts the Roman fever. He is about to leave when he sees Daisy and Giovanelli there. Winterbourne feels both bitter and relieved, now that he thinks he finally understands that Daisy is simply a low, disreputable woman. Still, it's dangerous for her to be there at this hour, and when he asks why the Italian has brought her, Giovanelli says he can't prevent Daisy from acting as she wishes. Finally Winterbourne convinces them to leave. But soon after, Daisy falls seriously ill. When Winterbourne calls at their hotel, Mrs. Miller tells him that Daisy wanted him to know that she wasn't engaged to Giovanelli—she was very insistent about it. Daisy dies of the Roman fever soon after, and is buried in Rome. Not long after that Winterbourne returns to Geneva, but he comes back to Vevay to visit his aunt the next year, where he reflects that he misunderstood Daisy, and that she would have appreciated his esteem. The book ends with Winterbourne back in Geneva, either studying or, as others say, pursuing a foreign lady.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Daisy Miller – Although the novella takes Winterbourne's point of view throughout, the book can in large part be considered a character study of Daisy Miller, a young, very pretty, independent-minded American from Schenectady, New York, who has come to Europe with her mother and brother Randolph. Daisy is enchanted by the European sights, and is eager to see and experience whatever she can. She is cheerful and talkative, and isn't afraid to speak her mind—even with people she doesn't know very well. She also treats the courier, Eugenio, with much more familiarity than many people in Europe treat their servants. Daisy shocks the other Europeans and American expatriates around her with her refusal to obey unspoken social commandments, and with her insistence on doing things her way, whether that means wandering through Rome alone, staying out late, or arriving late to a party because she's distracted. Given that the view we have of Daisy is largely mediated through Winterbourne's eyes—and Winterbourne is not exactly an impartial observer—it is difficult to distinguish his own opinion of her from an "objective" perspective on Daisy. Is she respectable or disreputable? An overly coquettish flirt or just an excitable American abroad? By filtering the main character through another, Henry James complicates the very notion of character, which can be strung between a person's innate qualities and the social self that is largely constructed by other people. Daisy's death at the end of the novel suggests that her clash with those around her is ultimately unsustainable, and between the two ways of life at stake, it is Daisy's that fails.

Mr. Winterbourne – Another American abroad, Winterbourne has nonetheless assimilated into European society and become more a resident than a tourist. We do not learn much about Winterbourne's past life, other than that he lives most permanently in Geneva, where conflicting accounts say either that he is "studying" or that he is pursuing a mysterious older foreign lady. In any case, Winterbourne does not seem to have many passions or interests, other than an appreciation of female beauty—he remarks on how pretty Daisy is nearly every time he sees her. Winterbourne is both charmed by Daisy and suspicious of her, strung between admiration for her free spirit, frustration that she won't be more proper, and sympathy when others turn a cold shoulder to her. The inability of Winterbourne to decide what kind of a person Daisy is reflects his own inability to truly act or decide who he wants to be himself—indeed, it is his attempt to "figure out" Daisy that prevents (or frees) him from his own character development.

Mrs. Miller – Daisy's mother, a small and thin woman with frizzed hair and a delicate constitution—she suffers from dyspepsia, or indigestion. She is not very friendly with Winterbourne initially, but opens up when she has the opportunity to talk about her ailments and about her Dr. Davis, whom she holds in great respect. Mrs. Miller is clearly quite wealthy, and dresses lavishly, though it is intimated that she and her husband are "new money" Americans, unlike the respectable European families that have similar wealth. Her character escapes total parody thanks to her ambivalent relationship to her daughter; sometimes Mrs. Miller seems embarrassed by her behavior, as when Daisy asks Winterbourne to take her out on a boat late at night, but other times she remains oblivious to the subtle social judgments on her daughter. Either way, Mrs. Miller believes that Daisy's actions are out of her hands, a laissez-faire attitude to mothering that astounds and confuses Winterbourne, among others.

Randolph Miller – Daisy's younger brother, a boy of nine. He possesses some of Daisy's same characteristics: he speaks his mind, is rather forward with strangers, and doesn't like to be told what to do—especially when this concerns his bedtime. Lacking Daisy's beauty and charm, however, Randolph is more clearly just a spoiled child. He adores everything American and feels the difference between America and Europe keenly.

Mrs. Costello – Winterbourne's aunt, who leads a typical life of a society lady between seasons in Vevay and in Rome. She appreciates her nephew's attentiveness, though she does not refrain from expressing her disapproval of his friendship with Daisy, whom she finds—together with Daisy's family—vulgar and "common." Mrs. Costello, indeed, possesses an acute and carefully shaded sense of social standing, and manages to situate the Millers on a low rung of her ladder, despite having to acknowledge their beautiful taste and Daisy's charming manner.

Mrs. Walker – Another of Winterbourne's American expatriate friends, Mrs. Walker lives in Geneva but also has a residence in

Rome. Mrs. Walker initially welcomes the Millers into her circle as fellow Americans in Rome, but she soon turns against Daisy, shocked by her embrace of free association with Italians, especially men, and by Daisy's refusal to let Mrs. Walker show her the correct way to behave. Mrs. Walker becomes the ringleader of the group condemning Daisy's behavior and abandoning her socially. In some ways, Mrs. Walker seems to consider Daisy's behavior a betrayal of the unspoken pact among upper-class women, who cling to the small amount of freedom possible within gender-based limits. That Daisy refuses to align herself with these expectations threatens, according to Mrs. Walker's point of view, to upend the very foundation of their society.

Mr. Giovanelli – Daisy's Italian "friend," and considered by many to be her lover—though the exact extent of their relationship is unclear. Giovanelli is a lawyer, and Winterbourne manages to find out that he is considered somewhat respectable, though not of the highest society. Given Daisy's wealth and his comparatively bourgeois, middle-class status, Giovanelli—as everyone realizes—cannot hope to marry Daisy, but he seems to be fascinated by her in much the same way that Winterbourne is. Though Winterbourne does feel a certain kinship with the Italian, he is also annoyed by Giovanelli's social extravagance, and the way he conforms to the expected behavior of a gentleman almost *too* perfectly.

Eugenio – The courier of the Millers, that is, a kind of combination tourist guide and butler who accompanies the family throughout their trip. Daisy and Mrs. Miller treat Eugenio quite familiarly, which is something else that counts against them to the Europeanized society they encounter. At the same time, Eugenio himself seems not to respect the Millers very much. He often seems to be holding back a smirk or criticism of Daisy's behavior.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Dr. Davis – Mrs. Miller's doctor back in Schenectady, New York. She apparently has great respect for him, and talks about him often.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN CHARACTER

Many of the novels of Henry James—an American expatriate himself—are fascinated with the Old World and the New World, not necessarily as places themselves but rather in terms of how these places affect the development of character. The European and American continents come to represent an American youth, innocence, and spontaneity versus a European subtlety, age, and complexity—a difference that can be revealed in, or conversely challenged by, individual characters themselves. Both Winterbourne and Daisy Miller are Americans by birth, and both find themselves taking the opposite journey of the European explorers who undertook the voyage to the Americas centuries before. But rather than discovering a "new," unspoiled paradise, Winterbourne and Daisy encounter a society with strict rules for social behavior, propriety, and attitudes.

Randolph, Daisy's little brother, is the only character permitted (because of his youth) to sing the praises of his native land and to constantly compare the countries to each other—though he tends to be portrayed as a wild, spoiled, and peculiarly American child as well. Older visitors are instead supposed to implicitly understand the European rules of behavior. Daisy seems to epitomize an American mentality, as she is always eager to grasp new opportunities and experience new things without regard for what others might think. Winterbourne remarks several times that she is the chattiest girl he's met in years; Europeans, in his view, tend to be more reserved.

Still, many other characters are quick to distance themselves from Daisy, fearing that she will make the Europeans around them look down on the vulgar American tourists flocking to their cities. Winterbourne is American as well, though he is largely assimilated to life and culture in Geneva, but he does take a liking to Daisy: he is the character who feels most strung between the two cultures and ways of life, even as he aligns his own lifestyle with the European worldview. Daisy's death ultimately serves as a warning about the danger of a total frankness and naiveté in the American mode, but European judgmental attitudes and unwillingness to see the charm in American "innocence" do not escape the author's critique either.

OBSERVING VS. LIVING

Although the beginning of the novella suggests that a romance between Winterbourne and Daisy might supply the rest of the novel, that expectation is thwarted once Winterbourne arrives in Rome and Daisy has taken up with an Italian gentleman, Mr. Giovanelli. Yet even before this, Winterbourne's relationship with Daisy is one of observation far more than interaction, and this mode of constant observation is tied to Winterbourne's own inability to embrace his own circumstances and fully live.

Although the narrator seems to be an objective observer, most of the time the narration cleaves to the perspective of Winterbourne, so that what we see of Daisy is through his eyes. Indeed, a number of times in the novella the narrator notes that

Winterbourne is watching or looking at Daisy as she interacts with others. Winterbourne's gaze is that of a regular male admirer, but there is also a certain morbid fascination as he watches her make social mistakes without ever really intervening in more than a half-hearted way. Instead, Winterbourne seems to want to wait to see what Daisy will do next, as if she were a theatrical spectacle unfolding before his eyes. Nowhere is this truer than in the scene at the Coliseum, when Winterbourne catches sight of Daisy with Giovanelli late at night. Even though this is devastating for Daisy's character (at least in the eyes of others), and even though she will contract the Roman fever here that will ultimately cause her death, Winterbourne feels more than anything a great relief to finally know how to categorize Daisy, exactly what kind of spectacle he is to watch.

Winterbourne's constant observations of Daisy are purportedly meant to understand her, and even to permit him to win her over—as she seems, to him, to be giving mixed signals regarding her interest. But this search for greater knowledge of Daisy comes at a cost for Winterbourne himself, who seems to lose any kind of motivation on his own other than that of observing Daisy and watching her life unfold. Tied to the woman whose relationship to him remains ambiguous, Winterbourne moves through the novella in a kind of paused state. As the end of the novella strikes much the same note as the beginning—with Winterbourne back to the pursuit of an "older foreign lady"—we come to see the novella as, from his point of view, one long parenthesis that could well have little effect on his later actions and behavior. Unlike Daisy, Winterbourne fails to make choices, even the wrong ones, such that life ends up passing him by.

JUDGMENT, KNOWLEDGE, AND KNOWABILITY

The heroine that lends her name to the title of *Daisy Miller* is an enigma both to Winterbourne and to the novella's readers. Despite all the time he spends watching her—and despite the national categories that should help in terms of identifying and explaining Daisy's actions—Winterbourne can never quite figure her out. Daisy's very character is deeply ambiguous throughout the novel, and this ambiguity serves to make Daisy such a fascinating character, even as it also suggests Henry James's own ambivalence regarding whether or not to parcel out judgment on Daisy's character.

Winterbourne has difficulty determining both why Daisy acts the way she does and what he should think about it. Daisy's constant meetings with Mr. Giovanelli suggest, for instance, that she is leading an unseemly affair with him; but she also seems to welcome Winterbourne's intrusion on her dates with the Italian, making him unsure of what is truly at stake in their relationship. Meanwhile, Daisy herself seems ambivalent regarding the judgments of others—at times claiming not to care, but at others blushing or growing anxious about other people's responses to her actions.

Other characters in the novel, including Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Costello, have a clearer idea of how to consider Daisy, as they condemn her for her free spirit and lack of social propriety. They believe they know what kind of person Daisy is, or at least refuse to believe that there might be more to her than her social improprieties. Winterbourne, however, never manages to embrace such certainty or such final judgment. The one thing he's sure about is that Daisy is "really quite pretty," a judgment repeated several times throughout the novella—yet even this physical judgment makes him unsure as to whether she is an innocent youth or a very American flirt. Winterbourne alternately rebels (if quietly) against society's condemnation of Daisy, and agrees with this condemnation himself. His encounters with Daisy cause him to question the social customs and traditions that he had long taken for granted—though not quite enough for him to overthrow them entirely, like Daisy does.

Daisy's character is never ultimately resolved in the novella. There is a part of her beyond her national character that remains inscrutable, to Winterbourne in particular but also in the novella more broadly. Through his portrayal of Daisy and other characters' attempts to know and to judge her, James seems to gesture towards an uncertainty regarding the extent to which we *can* know another person at all.

INNOCENCE

Part of the difference between American and European culture, at least in the eyes of Henry James, is a greater naïveté and innocence on the side of the Americans—although this innocence is never considered wholly positive. Indeed, the word "innocence" is used in several different ways in the novel. In some ways it is related to a lack of knowledge about the way the world works, an ignorance of the unspoken rules and commandments that rule people's behavior in polite society. In this sense, Daisy certainly seems to align with the idea of an innocent newcomer to European society. But innocence can also, particularly for women, be related to the concept of being "not guilty," especially with respect to sexual purity. This is the question on which many in Roman society seem divided with respect to Daisy.

Indeed, in different ways, Daisy is both innocent and savvy. She has a coterie of acquaintances on her own in Rome, and has little trouble meeting "locals." She seems entirely at ease in social interactions, with men as well as with women. This sense of savvy tends to be tied in the novella to her "American" character, and in particular to her family upbringing. Although her family members don't necessarily encourage her to speak her mind and to pursue all the opportunities that present

themselves to her, they also don't prevent Daisy from doing so or reprimand her for her choices.

At the same time, Daisy's fascination with European culture often reveals a certain guilelessness, a total openness to seeing and experiencing new things without an accompanying self-awareness about how to act amidst such novelties. Daisy accepts Mr. Giovanelli's offers to tour Rome unaccompanied by a "chaperone," she spends all evening with the same men at parties, and she doesn't act meek and polite around potential suitors. Does she act this way because she just doesn't know how things are done in Roman expatriate society? Or does she not care—and if not, how much is she courting scandal by seeing just how far she can go with eligible young men? By the end of the novel, both Winterbourne and Giovanelli seem convinced that Daisy is, in their estimation, "innocent"—Giovanelli pronounces this judgment at Daisy's grave—and yet it is no clearer than it was at the story's beginning what precisely innocence entails.

FEMALE INDEPENDENCE

The vast difference between the behaviors of Daisy and Winterbourne, two young, single Americans abroad, has one obvious explanation apart from their divergent personalities: as a man, Winterbourne is free to act as he wishes and to embrace an independent lifestyle without condemnation, while Daisy is not. The novella implicitly if not explicitly develops this unjust difference based only on gender norms. Daisy is part of a generation of young American women to whom more options than ever were open—women's rights movements were beginning in earnest, and the Grand Tour to Europe, which had earlier been open only to men, could now be enjoyed by women as well. However, this did not mean that women were entirely independent. That Mrs. Costello, Mrs. Walker, and others grow so shocked at Daisy's desire to walk alone—"alone" usually meaning with one man, unaccompanied by a chaperone—underlines these limitations.

In many ways, the novella shows just how frustrating these limitations and lack of independence can be for intelligent, curious young women. Still, James is seemingly very ambivalent about the position of young American women at this historical moment. The book hardly embraces Daisy's behavior as a model for young women, as her death at the end of the novella brings her experiments in independence to a tragic close, and is also shown as stemming from her own mistakes and rash choices. As the place of the woman in American and European culture was rapidly shifting, Henry James portrayed some of society's own ambivalent views on what paths the New Woman could take, and what dangers she still faced, especially in the older, more established European culture.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in blue text throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

ROMAN FEVER (MALARIA)

During the nineteenth century, Rome was considered the crowning destination of the "Grand Tour," a European voyage undertaken by Britons and Americans. Its many monuments and crumbling ruins made it a quintessential place of Romanticism for these travelers. But Rome was also considered to be dangerous and beset by malaria (which literally means "bad air"), which was thought to travel through the air to infect people, particularly delicate women.

Throughout the novella, Daisy's actions seem to remain in the relatively benign sphere of social relations. However, the threat of catching the Roman fever, also known as the *perniciosa*—a disease that is warned of throughout the book, before Daisy finally contracts it herself—raises the stakes of Daisy's stubborn desire to wander outside alone or late at night. Roman fever thus represents Daisy's uncouth behavior, suggesting its relation with a kind of ominous female sexuality. Roman fever, especially with respect to the prevalent theory of aerial transmission, also symbolizes the insidious ways that rumors and gossip seep through the air, infecting Daisy and isolating her from the social set of Americans abroad in Rome. Rome is the source of excitement, thrills, and novelty for Daisy, but it also will ultimately contribute to her downfall, as her feverish pursuit of Roman beauty becomes literal and she succumbs to the city's pernicious effects.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

Eleven o'clock (at night) is something like a witching hour in the novella. We are told that it is eleven o'clock at three different moments: when Eugenio emerges from the darkness to meet Daisy, Mrs. Miller, and Winterbourne at Vevay; when Daisy arrives with Mr. Giovanelli to Mrs. Walker's party; and when Winterbourne encounters Daisy and Mr. Giovanelli at the Coliseum. At each of these moments, Daisy is doing or threatening to do something unexpected, and usually disapproved of. In the first and the last case, she should not be out at this hour at all, especially if unaccompanied. In the case of Mrs. Walker's party, too, eleven o'clock is too late—especially for Daisy's arrival, since she has preferred to send her mother ahead and stay behind playing the piano with Mr. Giovanelli. This hour of the evening symbolizes Daisy's own independent spirit and self-created schedule, one that she is loath to have anyone interrupt or divert. As Winterbourne thinks to himself, the only expectation

he can have about Daisy is that she will always be unexpected—the regularity of her appearance at this odd hour only underlines this observation.

GENEVA

Although Winterbourne, like Daisy, is American, he has lived so long in Geneva that this city serves as his point of reference for evaluating the behavior of Daisy and others. Geneva is referred to as "Calvinist," suggesting a kind of rigorous, even severe, Protestant work ethic and buttoned-up attitude. Girls in Geneva, we learn, are reserved, polite, and always proper. Geneva in the novella comes to stand in for European attitudes to women's behavior in general, attitudes espoused in particular by Mrs. Walker, who has lived in Geneva along with Winterbourne—and attitudes that contrast sharply with the "American" way of life, or at least with Daisy's own actions. When Winterbourne wonders if he and Mrs. Walker have lived too long in Geneva, in fact, his doubts are another way of wondering whether his own attitudes and prejudices have come to cloud his judgment, when they may simply stem from a particular place's customs.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Dover Publications edition of *Daisy Miller* published in 1995.

Part 1: Les Trois Couronnes Quotes

He thought it very possible that Master Randolph's sister was a coquette; he was sure she had a spirit of her own; but in her bright, superficial little visage there was no mockery, no irony.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller, Randolph Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has just met the young Randolph, followed by his sister Daisy, in the garden of the hotel in Vevay, Switzerland where they all are staying. To Winterbourne, Daisy seems distracted and casual, though entirely frank in her attitude towards him. Here, he attempts to classify her within the available frameworks he has for interpreting female behavior. A "coquette" or flirt would usually be a pejorative term for a lady, suggesting that she breaks with established decorum. Winterbourne links the idea of a coquette with that of an independent spirit, something equally frowned upon for young woman. "But," he adds, there is something quite appealing in her attitude as well. To him she seems innocent rather than jaded: the label of a coquette might imply that a woman is perfectly aware of the seductive power she has over a man, and yet Daisy doesn't align with this attitude at all.

She paused again for an instant; she was looking at Winterbourne with all her prettiness in her lively eyes, and in her light, slightly monotonous smile. "I have always had," she said, "a great deal of gentlemen's society."

Related Characters: Daisy Miller (speaker), Mr. Winterbourne

Related Themes:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

Not long after Winterbourne has satisfactorily fitted Daisy into a box by which he can understand her character, she blasts open that box and says something that makes her once again complex and intriguing to him. Daisy has been comparing New York and Europe. She is, she tells him, used to being in society quite often in America, so she is not incredibly impressed by Europe's offerings. As she describes her many lady and gentleman friends in New York to Winterbourne, she seems to become aware of how her chatter might be interpreted.

Daisy's declaration about gentleman friends skirts the edges of decorum: the phrase could be interpreted quite innocently, and her light smile could either be another sign of frankness, or a recognition of the surprising, if not scandalous, admission of a young well-to-do lady spending too much time alone with men. Either way, Daisy does not hide these details of her past; instead, she parades them out for Winterbourne, making it clear that she has no shame or embarrassment about the way she has acted in the past, and that she will continue to direct her own actions in Europe as she has done in New York.

"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."

Related Characters: Mrs. Costello (speaker), Daisy Miller, Mr. Winterbourne

Related Themes:

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

Mrs. Costello, Winterbourne's aunt, has learned of his conversation with Daisy, and it is obvious that she does not approve. Mrs. Costello has noticed Daisy and her family around the hotel, and has been quick to point out their very American improprieties, such as being overly close and familiar with their servant, as well as their general "vulgarity."

Winterbourne has been attempting to discern whether or not Daisy is innocent, a judgment which assumes that he is knowledgeable enough to decide. Here Mrs. Costello reveals another, even opposite approach, suggesting that in fact Winterbourne is the innocent one, and Daisy the dangerous American interloper that he'll have be wary of. Mrs. Costello thus reflects the paradoxes of the way American character is perceived throughout the book. On the one hand, Americans—especially "little American girls"—are considered to lack the social sense and cultivation of Europeans; but in another way they are thought to be threatening and even conniving, the very opposite of innocent, and indeed liable to damage the innocence of well-meaning European men like Winterbourne.

❝ She seemed to him, in all this, an extraordinary mixture of innocence and crudity.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 26

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has accompanied Daisy to the castle across the lake, and they are spending the day touring together. He has just told her that he must return to Geneva the next day, and she has nearly thrown a fit: she decides that there must be a woman in Geneva to whom he is returning, and she begins to insult this imagined (at least, according to Winterbourne) woman with great passion.

Winterbourne is entirely taken aback by Daisy's insults. He is not used to women sharing their views so openly: jealousy and protectiveness obviously exist in his world, but they are covered by a veneer of socially acceptable behavior, behavior that Daisy seems not to know or care about at all. In some ways, this only makes her seem more innocent to Winterbourne, since she seems so perfectly ignorant of the way young ladies are supposed to act. At the same time, Winterbourne takes on the language of, for instance, his aunt, in designating this behavior as crude—a term that can often be applied to Americans, as lacking the subtlety and sophistication of their European counterparts. Winterbourne continues to observe Daisy, always having to modify or complicate his judgment of her based on new data or new observations.

Part 2: Rome Quotes

❝ Winterbourne meditated a moment. “They are very ignorant—very innocent only. Depend upon it they are not bad.”

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller, Mrs. Miller, Randolph Miller, Mrs. Costello

Related Themes:

Page Number: 29

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has just arrived in Rome, and Mrs. Costello is updating him about the earlier arrival of the Millers and their shocking behavior—particularly that of Daisy, who has taken to showing up at parties with an Italian man with a moustache. Here, Winterbourne seems to carefully consider his aunt's judgment, though not to embrace it wholeheartedly. Although he seems to only be thinking about the evidence that his aunt has laid out for him, it is clear that his own experience with Daisy influences what he tells his aunt as well.

Winterbourne does not entirely challenge his aunt's condemnation, but only seeks to explain it. "Ignorance" for him is not exactly a positive trait, but it is justifiable in terms of "innocence," rather than stemming from any kind of maliciousness. Winterbourne thus seeks to defend the Miller family's moral standing even as he refrains from justifying their behavior—for him it is simply that this behavior is socially rather than morally wrong. He seems to place a great deal of importance on his ability to describe and classify the Millers fairly, as well as on his ability to be an impartial judge in the matter. In that, Winterbourne fails

to fully understand, or perhaps admit to himself, how much his own fascination for Daisy plays into this process of judgment.

He remembered that a cynical compatriot had once told him that American women—the pretty ones, and this gave largeness to the axiom—were at once the most exacting in the world and the least endowed with a sense of indebtedness.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has met Daisy at a party, where she exclaims to the hostess how "mean" Winterbourne has been to her. He is surprised and a little annoyed: Daisy doesn't seem to recognize or to be grateful for the fact that he has traveled directly from Rome rather than making several stops along the way, as he usually does. Winterbourne's deeply ambivalent response to Daisy's character is clear throughout this section, and particularly in this passage, as he recalls a friend's judgment on the character of pretty American women.

Nationality, of course, is one frame by which Winterbourne seeks to understand and explain Daisy's behavior. By recalling his friend's words, Winterbourne is at least somewhat reassured, as he is able to classify Daisy as a typical American, "exacting" and yet failing to be properly thankful and demure to the men in her life. Of course, there are several layers of analysis at work, as both Winterbourne and presumably his "compatriot" are Americans as well, though in Winterbourne's case an American who has lived abroad for a long time and is perhaps less familiar with the national "character." Daisy's independence, both alluring and threatening to Winterbourne as to the other characters in the book, is better explained by this framework. Once again Winterbourne thinks he has understood her, even if this knowledge turns out to be only provisional.

The young girl looked at him more gravely, but with eyes that were prettier than ever. "I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate anything to me, or to interfere with anything I do."

Related Characters: Daisy Miller (speaker), Mr. Winterbourne

Related Themes:

Page Number: 36

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has accompanied Daisy to meet the Italian, Mr. Giovanelli, in a park, and he has told her that he won't leave her alone with the man. Daisy has been her usual cheerful, somewhat scattered self during her walk with Winterbourne, but now she becomes more serious, as it becomes apparent that she takes his vow seriously, and is troubled by its implications. Daisy's declaration is in the line of earlier statements to Winterbourne, such as her admission that she has plenty of gentlemen friends. Here she qualifies that claim by declaring that no one, not even one of these many gentleman friends—including Winterbourne, for that matter—can tell her what to do. Walking alone with an unknown Italian through a Roman park may not align with proper social customs, but Daisy is eager to pursue this experience, and she insists upon it with a resoluteness and independence that is again surprising to Winterbourne. The fact that Winterbourne focuses on how pretty Daisy is, something that often strikes him when she speaks to him, suggests that he continues to find her alluring and fails to be entirely shocked and appalled by her behavior.

That she should seem to wish to get rid of him would help him to think more lightly of her, and to be able to think more lightly of her would make her much less perplexing. But Daisy, on this occasion, continued to present herself as an inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

As Winterbourne walks with Mr. Giovanelli and Daisy, he continues to wonder about Daisy's true character, about what really lies behind her cheerful façade—if there is, that is, any secret behind her joy and desire for experience. Here, he realizes that if Daisy acted as if she would like him

to leave, he would be able to better understand: this would mean that she and Mr. Giovanelli were pursuing an affair, and would seek privacy. It would be shocking, to be sure, but at least Winterbourne and others would be able to situate this behavior within understood categories.

Instead, Winterbourne continues to characterize Daisy as "perplexing" and "inscrutable." She seems innocent enough, but then chooses odd acquaintances and seems to care little for what her actions might look like—and yet this very attitude might also suggest that she is not seeking to hide anything. Winterbourne cannot figure her out, but he has not tired of following her, observing her, and attempting to work out the relationship between her actions and character—a project that becomes no less alluring for being so tricky.

"Well," said Winterbourne, "when you deal with natives you must go by the custom of the place. Flirting is a purely American custom; it doesn't exist here."

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 45

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne is speaking to Daisy at Mrs. Walker's party about her behavior at the park the other day, and is trying to explain to her how and why she should conform to what is expected of her. Daisy doesn't see why she should follow the rules of others such as Mrs. Walker. In response, Winterbourne does not exactly defend the social practices of this little group *per se*; instead, he falls back on what he calls "custom."

Custom seems to have little basis in morality for Winterbourne: he does not, for instance, claim that it is ethically better to act in a certain way rather than another. Instead he believes that it is important to conform, to blend in wherever one might be. This is a pragmatic outlook, of course, and one that underlines how Winterbourne himself has gone about his time abroad and has, in general, succeeded in fitting in. Interestingly, though, this practice seems to counteract the notion of national character threaded throughout the book. If one can simply act like a European while in Europe, how can we deduce anything about a character from his or her origin? Winterbourne doesn't face these questions himself: Daisy is much more concerned with the implications for authenticity and experience that they raise, rather than the issue of nationality itself.

[Mrs. Walker] 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.

Related Characters: Daisy Miller, Mr. Winterbourne, Mrs. Walker

Related Themes:

Page Number: 46

Explanation and Analysis

Mrs. Walker has been seething with anger towards Daisy ever since she followed Daisy and Mr. Giovanelli to the park and implored Daisy to get into her carriage, and Daisy refused. On this night, Daisy has arrived late with the Italian in tow and has been her usual cheery, chatty self, failing to be properly muted and ashamed for her behavior. Mrs. Walker's painfully obvious dismissal of Daisy is the best revenge she can think of, and the best way she can find to show Daisy exactly how much she condemns her behavior. For Daisy, in turn, this is the first time that she is explicitly confronted with what others think about her, and in a way that she cannot easily dismiss or laugh off.

Winterbourne, meanwhile, watches silently from the door. He has been watching Daisy all throughout the book, attempting to puzzle her out even as he avoids condemning her like the other characters, such as Mrs. Walker. But neither does he defend her: instead he remains off to the side, only a transcriber of Daisy's experiences. He does not participate in her joy of travel, but neither does he live her shame and embarrassment with her, even as he feels some of her pain from afar. Winterbourne is in some ways the ideal narrator, remaining at a disinterested distance, even as he shows the disadvantages of remaining at such a distance.

He could not deny to himself that she was going very far indeed. He felt very sorry for her—not exactly that he believed that she had completely lost her head, but because it was painful to hear so much that was pretty and undefended and natural assigned to a vulgar place among the categories of disorder.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

As Winterbourne is touring in Rome with his aunt and other expatriates, he is privy to the gossip they share about Daisy, as well as their judgments and condemnations of her behavior. In some ways, Winterbourne shares their concerns; he comes from the same social background, which affects how he perceives Daisy's behavior, and he cannot help but think that her actions are going "very far indeed." At the same time, he cannot agree that these actions stem from any kind of sinfulness or maliciousness on the part of Daisy. He continues to think of her as innocent, as "natural." Indeed, as much as Winterbourne has tried to classify her in a boxed-in, understandable category, these attempts have so often failed: instead Daisy remains for him in a near-mystical space of mystery and uncertainty, in which her reasons remain inscrutable to everyone, even her closest observer. This is why Winterbourne makes such a crucial distinction between being "vulgar" and merely ignorant, even innocent, as for him the latter absolves Daisy of most of her social improprieties.

> He was angry at finding himself reduced to chopping logic about this young lady; he was vexed at his want of instinctive certitude as to how far her eccentricities were generic, national, and how far they were personal.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 51

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has failed several times to run into Daisy or to meet her at her home. He continues to muse over her character, and prior to this passage he wonders if she is too thoughtless to think of him at all, or if she is angrily defiant about his and other people's judgment about her. His inability to decide between these two options makes him generally angry at his failure to understand Daisy.

Winterbourne is a very logical person, and he is usually confident in his ability to reason out a problem—indeed, this is how he has approached the "problem" of Daisy for most of the novel. Only now does he truly grow "vexed" at how little his investigations have been fruitful or satisfying. He still can't understand or know Daisy. Even worse, he has trouble determining even what *kind* of unusual behavior she espouses: does it have something to do with her American origins? with her own, individual character? with some combination of the two? Winterbourne has been confident that waiting and watching Daisy can be just as revelatory as plunging into experiences with her, but now he is beginning to doubt whether or not that is the case.

> Winterbourne stopped, with a sort of horror, and it must be added, with a sort of relief. It was as if a sudden illumination had been flashed upon the ambiguity of Daisy's behavior, and the riddle had become easy to read. She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect.

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne (speaker), Daisy Miller, Mr. Giovanelli

Related Themes:

Page Number: 54

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has stopped late one evening by the Coliseum, and is pausing to look at the romantic, picturesque scene and to recite some lines of poetry to himself, when he makes out the figures of Daisy and Giovanelli in the Coliseum. For Winterbourne, this is the last straw, and a moment of revelation. For most of the visit to Rome, Winterbourne has agreed with his aunt that there is something improper about Daisy wandering around with an Italian, but he has continued to insist to himself that this behavior is innocent and ignorant rather than conniving—even as he has also struggled to put his finger on Daisy's true character. Now that character seems to come to light without the shadow of a doubt. Only a dishonorable young woman could be out late at night with another man: she must be having an affair with him, Winterbourne concludes, and more importantly, she is not worth his time or respect. The mystery, what here is called a "riddle," seems instantly resolved, and although it is a relief for Winterbourne to finally understand, to finally feel like he "knows" Daisy and can categorize her, it is also painful for

him to have to admit that he was wrong about her, and for her to lose her mystery and intrigue for him.

"Anyway, she says she's not engaged. I don't know why she wanted you to know; but she said to me three times, 'Mind you tell Mr. Winterbourne.' And then she told me to ask if you remembered the time you went to that castle in Switzerland."

Related Characters: Mrs. Miller (speaker), Daisy Miller, Mr. Winterbourne, Mr. Giovanelli

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 57

Explanation and Analysis

Daisy has fallen seriously ill with the Roman fever after spending an evening at the Coliseum, where Winterbourne had encountered her and Mr. Giovanelli. Upon seeing them there together late at night, Winterbourne was shocked and disappointed: he decided that it must be the case that Daisy and Mr. Giovanelli are simply lovers, and that all the alluring mystery he had assigned to Daisy was a lie.

Now, Mrs. Miller's comments to Winterbourne complicate this scheme once again. Daisy's true motivations and character continue to be obscure, especially since her words are refracted through her mother, who can be flighty. Still, it appears that Daisy is at least aware of how the scene must have looked to Winterbourne, and is eager to insist that he need not be disappointed in or angry with her—indeed, she may even have stronger feelings for him than he believed. What remains unclear, of course, is the full extent of these feelings, as well as the reason for reminding him of the visit to the castle in Switzerland, apart from the fact that it is a fond memory they both share of a more "innocent" time.

"She was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw, and the most amiable"; and then he added in a moment, "and she was the most innocent."

Winterbourne looked at him, and presently repeated his words, "And the most innocent?"

"The most innocent!"

Related Characters: Mr. Winterbourne, Mr. Giovanelli (speaker), Daisy Miller

Related Themes:

Page Number: 58

Explanation and Analysis

Winterbourne has encountered Giovanelli at Daisy's burial in a Protestant cemetery in Rome. No longer does Giovanelli look clever and dapper: now he is pale and sickly. Winterbourne lashes out at Giovanelli for having brought Daisy to the Coliseum, but Giovanelli (in a way that is not entirely satisfying) protests that Daisy would always find a way to do what she wanted to do.

However, Winterbourne's anger ebbs at these words of praise from Giovanelli. The repetition of the word "innocent" seems to cement that adjective as the most appropriate description of Daisy (while also casting into doubt yet again whether or not Daisy and Giovanelli really were lovers). Indeed, Giovanelli seems adamant that innocence is the best way to describe Daisy. Winterbourne, of course, has gone through countless cycles of believing, doubting, and provisionally accepting the idea that Daisy is innocent. Unlike Giovanelli, he phrases the word as part of a question; as for any aspect of Daisy's character, he knows now that any belief or judgment that he might have about Daisy can only be asked, not stated resolutely. He has believed throughout the novel that if he just observed Daisy carefully enough, if he reasoned through her actions logically enough, he would pierce the mystery of this alluring American girl. Not only has he failed to do so, but he has failed to fully live himself at the same time.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1: LES TROIS COURONNES

The book opens with the narrator's musings on the resort town of Vevay, Switzerland. It's situated on the side of a lake ringed with all kinds of inns and pensions (boardinghouses), with one in particular that grander than the rest, called Les Trois Couronnes ("The Three Crowns" in French). There are so many American tourists here in June that you might think you were in an American tourist town.

The narrator sets up a fully fleshed-out setting before we meet any of the major characters in the novella. As we'll see, place plays a significant thematic role in Daisy Miller, *and here the Swiss town of Vevay suggests a limited kind of cosmopolitanism. Here James also sets up the theme of Americans in Europe, and the clash of cultures between the Old World and the New World.*

The narrator situates this story two or three years in the past. A young American man, about 27 years old, is sitting in the Trois Couronnes garden looking idly around him. He has come here from Geneva, where he had been living. He came to see his aunt, but the aunt now has a headache, as usual.

The narrator slowly focuses in on one element of the setting, now less a landscape than a brief portrait of a young man, an American expatriate who is now doubly removed from his origins. Our first view of this person is of a quiet observer.

The young man is usually said to be "studying" in Geneva, but rumors abound that a foreign lady, older than himself, is the true source of his attentions. No one has seen her, but there are many stories about her in the air. Apart from that, though, Winterbourne (here we learn his name) has gone to school and college in Geneva and has many friends there, and enjoys its "Calvinist" spirit.

Although we will experience the rest of the novella largely through the eyes of Winterbourne, our own knowledge of him will remain indirect. He essentially exists to observe and to judge, not to act—we don't even really know what he does in Geneva. We do learn that the strict, proper Genevan culture is appealing to him: he seems to have exchanged it for his American home culture.

Winterbourne has coffee and lights a cigarette, before a small boy comes walking along the path, about 10 years old, pale and with sharp features. The boy asks Winterbourne to give him the sugar remaining from his coffee, and his voice is described as immature but not young. Winterbourne says he doesn't think sugar is good for boys, but says he may have it. The boy exclaims that it's "hard," and the way he pronounces the word reveals him to be American.

Winterbourne seems to be waiting for an event or an experience to cross his path rather than seeking it out himself, and here he's presented with such a force in the form of the boy. The immediate impression of this boy is of a somewhat spoiled, petulant child, amusing in his directness but only because of his young age.

The boy says he's had a number of teeth fall out since he and his mother and sister have been in Europe. He blames the hotels, then the candy, and calls American candy the "best." When he finds out that Winterbourne is American, the boy also calls American men the "best men."

The boy Winterbourne meets has a particularly black-and-white understanding of the differences between Europe and America, one that the story itself will go on to complicate in various ways.

The boy cries that his sister is coming. She is dressed in a fancy white muslin dress and Winterbourne immediately notices her beauty, thinking how pretty "they are," that is, American girls. The boy starts playing with a walking-stick he's carrying, and the girl calls him by name, Randolph. Randolph cries that Winterbourne is "an American man," and the girl calmly suggests that Randolph be quiet.

Winterbourne himself thinks almost in Randolph's terms here, isolating one element of the differences between Europe and America: an ideal of female beauty. Winterbourne's penchant for observation is especially emphasized when young women are involved.

Winterbourne rises, realizing that he might be able to talk to a young unmarried lady alone here, in Vevay, though this would be forbidden in Geneva except under special circumstances. But the girl largely ignores him, bending down and asking Randolph if he's going to take his pole to Italy. Winterbourne asks the lady if she's going to Italy, and she says yes, though nothing more.

Winterbourne has an acute sense of the particular rules and limitations of different cultural contexts. Here Vevay is a kind of in-between place for both characters—it's full of American tourists, but also more "liberated" than what Winterbourne is used to.

Winterbourne attempts to make an observation about the view, though now he feels less awkward, since he sees that the young lady isn't embarrassed at all: her seeming distraction is just her peculiar manner. Little by little, as he talks, she looks at him more directly with a frank though honest gaze. Winterbourne again marvels at how pretty her features are, pretty in a way he hasn't seen for a long time.

Although Winterbourne is only slowly succeeding in capturing the young lady's attention, he is already fascinated by how she doesn't seem to align with the kind of female types that he has come to know in Geneva, who would be more shy, less frank, and certainly to his eyes less pretty. We perceive all this objectification through Winterbourne's eyes, as the lady herself remains likewise mysterious to the reader.

Winterbourne loves to observe female beauty, and he notes that the young lady may well be a coquette (a flirt), but there is no mockery or irony in her face. She begins to warm to his conversation, telling him about her family's coming trip to Rome. She says Winterbourne seems to her more like a German than an American, an observation that makes him laugh.

A "coquette" means a flirt, but also has more negative connotations in this era and situation. Still, already Winterbourne finds his established categories of understanding women based on national or cultural characteristics muddled—as does this lady, in fact.

The lady says she's from New York State. Winterbourne asks her brother his name, and he says it's Randolph C. Miller: his sister, he says, is Annie P. Miller, but she goes by Daisy, though that's not the name on her "cards." Daisy asks Randolph to ask Winterbourne his name, but Randolph simply continues, saying his father is Ezra B. Miller, and he is in a "better place" than Europe, that is, Schenectady, where he runs a business.

Only multiple pages into the novella are we (and Winterbourne) properly introduced to the family, and done so in a way that almost parodies how introductions are made in proper society (complete with guest cards to ensure that one's name precedes one's presence). As Ezra never appears, the book will lack any kind of patriarchal figure.

Daisy tells Winterbourne that Randolph misses home, and that there aren't many boys around to play with him. Their mother thought about getting him a tutor, but Randolph wouldn't stand to have one giving him lessons in the cars all the time: it's true, she says, that they're often in cars traveling around. She asks if there are good teachers in Italy, and Winterbourne says he thinks there are.

Daisy makes it clear to Winterbourne from the start that her family does not care much about forcing each other into acting in a certain way. Daisy is interested in and concerned about her brother, but she and her mother won't force him into doing something he won't like.

Daisy continues chatting (Winterbourne thinks others might have characterized it as "chattering") about her family affairs as if she and Winterbourne are old friends. It's been a long time since he's heard a lady talk so much, but she does talk quietly, though her eyes are always moving. She gives a sketch of their travels thus far, remarking that while someone asked her if everyone lived in hotels in America, she's found Europe to be nothing but hotels. But she doesn't complain, saying that Europe hasn't disappointed her at all. Friends, of course, have told her about Europe before, and she has plenty of dresses from Paris, so perhaps, she thinks, that's why she finds it familiar.

Winterbourne is fascinated and enchanted by this talkative young woman: first of all, she isn't like any of the women he knows in Geneva, but in addition, her chatter means that he is free to observe and to listen rather than to think up things to say himself. Throughout these lines, the narrator takes on Daisy's tone and style of speaking often without directly quoting her, such that we are drawn into the scene and into Daisy's own quick consciousness.

Daisy says the only thing she doesn't like about Europe is the society. That is, she's not sure if it doesn't exist or if she hasn't found it. In New York, she's had seventeen dinners given for her, and has plenty of lady and gentleman friends. She glances at Winterbourne and says, smiling, that she's always had many gentlemen friends.

Daisy may seem to care little about social rules that others follow, but in other ways she is quite sensitive about other elements of the social ladder, like parties and invitations. Her reference to having many gentleman friends could be seen as scandalous (especially in the environment Winterbourne's used to), and adds to the growing question of just how "innocent" Daisy is.

Winterbourne is confused by Daisy but also charmed. He wonders whether she is really uncouth in her behavior or if he's just lived in Geneva too long and can't remember what Americans are like. Still, he can't really believe that all pretty American girls with gentlemen friends are like this.

As will become a trend, Winterbourne reacts to Daisy's talk and behavior with a sense of confusion, if not discomfort. Though an American himself, this American young lady seems entirely foreign to him.

Winterbourne wonders again if Daisy is unscrupulous—his instincts about people's character seem to be failing him. She looks innocent, but some have told him that American girls are quite innocent, while others have said the opposite. He asks himself if Daisy is just a flirt, a category of women he doesn't know well. He has known several older European married women who are dangerous, serious "coquettes," but he decides Daisy is different and less sophisticated, just a "pretty American flirt." He is relieved to have succeeded in categorizing her.

It is not entirely clear what Winterbourne means by "innocent" in this case—indeed, for the rest of the novella the term will take on various implications, from sexual purity to lack of social understanding. Here innocence, whatever it might mean exactly, is more useful for Winterbourne as a method of categorization, which would allow him to have a handle on Daisy—mastering her in a way.

Daisy points to the Château de Chillon (a castle) in the distance and asks if Winterbourne has ever been there. He says he has. Daisy replies that she would love to go before she leaves. They were going to go last week, but Daisy's mother grew ill, she says; she regularly suffers from dyspepsia (indigestion). Randolph doesn't care about castles and would rather stay at the hotel, she confides, but their courier (a kind of butler who's also acting as their tour guide) won't stay with him, so they haven't been to many places.

Daisy's openness lies not just in her willingness to take the lead in conversation but also in her lack of shyness or modesty about somewhat intimate family topics, from indigestion to small disagreements about travel plans. Daisy's lack of embarrassment about sharing all these things is appealing to Winterbourne, even as it's also confusing.

Winterbourne makes a few suggestions, but Daisy looks at him and cries that she wishes *he* would stay with Randolph. Winterbourne hesitates, then says he's rather go to the castle with Daisy. Winterbourne knows that a girl in Geneva would have risen, blushing, at this suggestion—he's been bold—but Daisy doesn't seem offended. Instead she says that her mother probably won't go, but she and Winterbourne could arrange something. Eugenio will stay with Randolph if her mother does too, she says—telling Winterbourne that Eugenio is the courier—so they can go to the castle.

Having listened to Daisy chatter on for a while, now Winterbourne dares to be more open and bolder himself. He's willing to take the risk because the possible reward—being able to accompany this pretty American girl to a romantic Swiss castle—seems too attractive to pass up. Although Daisy is eager to go the castle, she also seems much less shrewd than Winterbourne about the planning of this process.

Eugenio appears, tall and handsome, and looks Winterbourne up and down before announcing that lunch is ready. Daisy rises and cries that she's going to the castle anyway. Eugenio asks if Daisy has made "arrangements" in a tone that strikes Winterbourne as rude. Daisy blushes a little and turns towards Winterbourne, asking if he won't back out, and he reassures her that he won't. She asks if he's staying in the hotel, and if he's "really" an American. He says he'll introduce her to someone who will confirm his identity, by which he means his aunt.

Eugenio remains largely a stock character in the book, a polished, buttoned-up figure who helps to underline the curious social situation of the Millers, who possess great amounts of money but are not always clued in to the "proper" way to treat people, like servants, of other social stations. This is the first time we see that Daisy is, in fact, attuned to nuanced aspects of social affairs.

Daisy smiles and turns to follow Eugenio, as Winterbourne watches her go. He returns to his aunt's apartments, and asks his aunt, Mrs. Costello, if she's noticed an American family with a little boy. Mrs. Costello is a wealthy widow with a long face and an impressive shock of white hair. Her three sons live in New York and Europe, but they don't often come to see her. Winterbourne had "picked up" in Geneva the idea that he should be attentive to his elder relatives, and she's pleased to see him. When he asks about the Millers, her tone immediately indicates that their social currency is low. They're "common," she says, the kind of Americans that one cannot accept.

Intrigued about the brother and sister he's just met, Winterbourne is eager to learn more about the Millers from his aunt, who holds an impeccable social position and will undoubtedly be able to fill him in. Unfortunately, Mrs. Costello does not share with Winterbourne the kind of information he'd like to have. Mrs. Costello seems to have pretty quickly adopted a judgment and attitude towards this family, one that won't change for the rest of the book.

Mrs. Costello agrees with Winterbourne that the young lady is pretty and charming, and dresses perfectly: she can't imagine where her taste comes from. Mrs. Costello also criticizes the family for treating the courier so familiarly. Winterbourne shares that he talked with Daisy in the garden, and admits that he said, to show his respectability, that he would introduce her to his aunt. Winterbourne says she is certainly uncultivated, but pretty and nice. In fact, he is going to take her to the Château de Chillon, he says, smiling. Mrs. Costello cries that all this has taken place in less than 24 hours, and remarks that this girl is really dreadful.

For Mrs. Costello, the excellent taste of Daisy Miller does not qualify her "commonness" but is only a puzzle within her general certainty about the Millers' social status. Winterbourne has recently wondered about Daisy's "innocence," and here he appears to have settled upon a provisional judgment, one in which Daisy is "uncultivated," that is, lacking the kind of education that would permit her to know how to act socially. This is viewpoint is condescending, but not condemning—he thinks Daisy and her family are just ignorant, not wicked or "low."

Winterbourne, more seriously, asks if Mrs. Costello thinks Daisy might expect a man to "carry her off." She doesn't know, but cautions him not to meddle with uncultivated American girls—he has been away from America from too long, and is too innocent. Winterbourne objects that he's not so innocent, and she says he's too guilty, then. She declines to make Daisy's acquaintance. Winterbourne asks if all American girls don't act this way, and Mrs. Costello declares that she should like to see her granddaughters act in such a way.

It is obvious that Winterbourne is interested in Daisy for himself, which gives a certain urgency or at least greater importance to his desire to know what kind of relationship Daisy might expect from men. Winterbourne's conversation with his aunt further complicates the notion of innocence, as the word (in it's meaning of "not guilty") is now applied to Winterbourne himself.

Despite this conversation, Winterbourne remains impatient to see Daisy again. He finds her that evening in the hotel garden, wandering around alone. She was with her mother, she tells him, but she left to go pursue Randolph, who doesn't like to go to bed. They remain there for a time, and Daisy says she's been looking around for Winterbourne's aunt. The chambermaid has told Daisy all about Mrs. Costello, Daisy says: she is apparently quite proper, quiet, and has a headache every two days. Daisy cries that she finds this a lovely description: she loves when ladies are exclusive, and would like to be so herself. She would be glad to know Mrs. Costello, she says.

Winterbourne may pay closer attention to the nuanced social judgments at work among the expatriate community than Daisy does, but he too doesn't care quite enough about them to stop seeing Daisy, despite his aunt's disapproval. Daisy reveals again that she is quite curious about the people around her on her voyage through Europe. Like the monuments and sights of the continent, the people mostly seem to please and delight her as unusual, new specimens.

Winterbourne, embarrassed, says that he agrees, although the headaches will make that difficult. Daisy glances at him and says they're sure to find a time. But when Winterbourne slowly contradicts that, Daisy stops walking and pauses. She suddenly cries out, laughing, that Mrs. Costello simply doesn't want to know her—Winterbourne should have just said so. He wonders if he can hear a tremor in her voice, and is mortified and touched. But Daisy continues walking, laughing, and as she approaches the dark lake and looks out on it, she remarks that Mrs. Costello is indeed exclusive. Winterbourne is about to decide to criticize his aunt, so that he might enjoy comforting Daisy, but Daisy seems to have already moved on, remarking that her mother is approaching.

Every so often, such as at this moment and in the scene of Eugenio's snide remark, Daisy seems much more socially savvy than she otherwise appears (again complicating her "innocence"). Thus it is difficult to tell, for Winterbourne and consequently for us, what exactly Daisy feels about Mrs. Costello's reaction: whether she's feigning nonchalance, whether she finds Mrs. Costello's "exclusivity" just another odd but interesting cultural quirk, or whether she's genuinely hurt by this rejection.

They see a figure approaching in the darkness, and suddenly pause. Winterbourne says she must not see them, but Daisy says her mother probably won't approach since she sees *him*. Winterbourne offers to leave her, but Daisy says her mother doesn't like any of her gentleman friends. Still, she always introduces them—she'd find it unnatural otherwise. They walk up to Mrs. Miller, who is leaning on the garden parapet and looking out to the lake. Daisy calls to her mother, who turns. Winterbourne finds her delicate and graceful, small with thin, frizzed hair.

Mrs. Miller is another character to whom we are introduced slowly, indirectly, and through the eyes of other characters. Daisy does seem to have certain scruples and proprieties to which she adheres herself, such as introducing her mother to her gentlemen friends; it's just that these customs have little to do with the kinds of customs that are prevalent in the family's new context.

Mrs. Miller doesn't greet Winterbourne, and when Daisy asks gaily what she's doing here, Mrs. Miller responds that she doesn't know. She couldn't get Randolph to bed, she says. Winterbourne says he's had the pleasure of meeting Randolph. Mrs. Miller admits that he was worse in Dover—he wouldn't go to bed at all. Daisy says he's been tiresome, though Mrs. Miller rebukes her for criticizing her own brother, who's only nine.

Mrs. Miller seems nice but somewhat absent-minded, and lacking any kind of dominant maternal instinct—she cannot seem to control Randolph, but nor does she seem overly concerned about this fact. Neither she nor Daisy seem to be worried that Winterbourne (and the European society around them) will judge them for airing their family news.

Daisy says that at least she'll be able to go to the castle now that Winterbourne has offered to take her. At first Mrs. Miller doesn't respond, so Winterbourne thinks she doesn't approve but can probably be easily be managed. He says that Daisy has kindly allowed him to be her guide, and Mrs. Miller stops her wandering eyes on Daisy and says she's never been to the castle. Winterbourne says it's a pity. He prepares himself to lose his private date. They've seen a number of castles in England, Mrs. Miller says, but he says Chillon is worth seeing as well. Mrs. Miller says Daisy is always up for anything. Winterbourne, pushing the point, asks if Mrs. Miller really won't join them. Mrs. Miller looks at him sidelong, saying simply that she supposes Daisy will go alone. Winterbourne marvels at this kind of mothering.

Winterbourne is relatively quick to construct his own judgment about Mrs. Miller, largely in terms of how her character will impact his own hopes of success in wooing her daughter. There is much that remains unsaid and beneath the surface in this scene, as Mrs. Miller and Winterbourne exchange glances, direct and sidelong, and as Winterbourne attempts to pursue his own objectives. Does Mrs. Miller suspect anything out of the ordinary or overly forward in Winterbourne, or in her daughter? Is she uncertain about the area's customs? Or is she simply unconcerned?

Daisy suddenly calls to Winterbourne, asking if he can take her out on a boat right now. Mrs. Miller exclaims at her, but Winterbourne asks Mrs. Miller to let Daisy go. Daisy complains that Winterbourne hasn't spoken to her in an hour, but when he protests that he's been talking to her mother, she just repeats her request for him to take her out into a boat. Winterbourne watches her smile and swing her fan around, and marvels again at how pretty she is.

Here, however, Daisy does seem to have crossed an unspoken line, what with the late hour and her rash, spontaneous desire. Daisy's repeated requests here suggest a different kind of "innocence," one more like the childish petulance of Randolph, although it is still charming to Winterbourne.

Winterbourne suggests Daisy take his arm and they'll go find a boat at the nearby landing-place. She laughs lightly, remarking that she enjoys when gentlemen are formal. Mrs. Miller wonders what time it is, and Eugenio, who has just appeared out of the darkness, says it's eleven o'clock. Daisy cries to him that Winterbourne is taking her out in a boat. Mrs. Miller asks Eugenio to forbid her, and Eugenio says Daisy had better not. Daisy exclaims that Eugenio doesn't think anything is proper. Eugenio looks at Winterbourne, then bows and says she may do as she pleases. Daisy says that she had hoped a fuss would be made: now that she has permission, she doesn't want to go as much.

Although Mrs. Miller was surprised at Daisy's desire, she doesn't seem willing to move to stop it. Instead, Eugenio, who belongs to the "Old World" rather than the American culture of the Millers, intervenes—even if apparently by chance—to bring Daisy's and Winterbourne's prospective nighttime journey to an end. Again, Eugenio's tone, body language, and gestures all indicate a general disapproval of and judgmental attitude towards Daisy's decisions.

Eugenio frigidly announces that Randolph has gone to bed. Mrs. Miller tells Daisy to accompany her back, and Daisy looks back at Winterbourne. She smiles and says she hopes he is disappointed or disgusted at her. Winterbourne says he's just puzzled. He watches them go and lingers by the lake, continuing to wonder at Daisy's capricious behavior.

What Daisy really seems to have wanted was attention—not necessarily to go in the boat. This again makes us question her "innocence" (guilelessness), and how much she affects such a persona to manipulate others. Winterbourne judges Daisy constantly, but still seems unable to resist her charms.

Two days later Winterbourne waits for Daisy in the hotel hall. She darts downstairs, buttoning her gloves as Winterbourne admires her figure and feels romantic. All the others in the hall turn to look at them as they leave, but Daisy immediately begins to chatter, expressing her preference to go to the castle by boat rather than carriage, as she so enjoys the breeze and the sights.

As Daisy descends the main staircase of the hotel, Winterbourne is given a prime vantage point from which to observe and admire her. Daisy seems unfazed by the gazes of both Winterbourne and the other hotel guests, instead continuing to be enraptured by the novelties around her—but again it's unclear just how unaware she really is.

Daisy is charming and animated, but Winterbourne is a little disappointed that she doesn't seem anxious or fluttered and doesn't blush at all. Still, he enjoys listening to her original ideas and charming talkative nature. She pauses to ask why Winterbourne is so grave, and he protests that he thought he was smiling: he has never been so pleased. Daisy looks at him and then laughs delightedly, saying she likes to make him say such things.

Winterbourne seems to have envisaged a romantic excursion to the castle, but it seems that Daisy's openness and frankness is not, after all—at least not obviously—seductive or sexual in nature. Daisy doesn't shy away from Winterbourne's advances, but neither does she seem concerned about encouraging them.

They arrive at the castle and walk around. Daisy seems less interested in antiquities than she is in asking Winterbourne about his family, his tastes, and his habits, and comparing them to her own. Although she seems not really to listen to his stories about the history of the place, she does express a wish that Winterbourne would travel with her and her family and educate them. He could be Randolph's tutor, even. Winterbourne says he would love to do this, but he says he has other "occupations," engagements that will force him back to Geneva the next day. Daisy cries that he is horrid, and she rebukes him continuously for the next ten minutes.

Although Daisy has expressed a great deal of interest in seeing the sights of Europe, she is just as if not more fascinated by the people that she encounters along the way. She has pulled Winterbourne easily into her life, enough that she finds it unbelievable that he has an entirely separate life and set of commitments in Geneva. These commitments remain shrouded in mystery, as Winterbourne always remains only a partially fleshed-out character.

Winterbourne is astonished by Daisy's reaction. She begins to hurl insults on the woman she imagines Winterbourne is running back to Geneva to see. Winterbourne denies that this woman exists and can't imagine how Daisy might have alighted on this idea. He is both startled and amused by her frankness, finding her simultaneously innocent and crude. Daisy cries that the lady really does keep Winterbourne on a short leash. Finally, she says she'll stop teasing him if he agrees to come to Rome in the winter.

Of course, at least according to the rumors, Winterbourne does in fact have a woman waiting for him in Geneva: what surprises him is both how Daisy could have known, and that she would eschew all discreetness in chastising him for "running back" to his lover. If Daisy really does feel romantically attracted to Winterbourne, she has an unusual way of showing it—but this is also what's so fascinating to Winterbourne.

In fact, Mrs. Costello has taken an apartment in Rome for the winter. But Daisy says she wants Winterbourne to come for *her*, not for his aunt. Winterbourne agrees to come, and they return to Vevay, with Daisy remaining quite quiet. That evening Winterbourne tells Mrs. Costello where he's been. She asks if the pair went alone, and when she finds that they did, she sniffs and exclaims indignantly that *this* was the lady Winterbourne wanted her to know.

Again, if Daisy is romantically interested in Winterbourne, her demands are very forward for the time and place. If she is not, however, then Winterbourne cannot tell why she is so upset about his absence. Part I ends with Winterbourne just as mystified about Daisy's true character as at the beginning, and with Mrs. Costello just as certain about the right way to judge Daisy.

PART 2: ROME

Winterbourne arrives in Rome in the end of January, a few weeks after his aunt. She has already written to tell him that the Millers are there, and the young lady has taken up with "third-rate" Italians. People are beginning to talk about her.

Months later, news of the Millers comes, as is often the case in this novella, indirectly, through various levels of observation and report. Here that gossip is condemning Daisy again.

Winterbourne asks for more specifics, and Mrs. Costello says that Daisy wanders around alone with the Italians, whom she takes as guests to people's houses—in particular a gentleman with a remarkable moustache. Mrs. Costello says the family is dreadful, while Winterbourne, after musing a bit, says they are just ignorant and innocent, not bad. They are vulgar, Mrs. Costello corrects him.

Winterbourne wishes to have all the facts about Daisy's behavior at his disposal so that he might be able to judge for himself. His understanding of Daisy's innocence adds another wrinkle here: by linking it to ignorance, he suggests that it is neither laudable nor a true sin.

Winterbourne is a little annoyed to hear about all the foreign men flitting around Daisy, interrupting his image of her alone at a Roman window, awaiting his arrival. So he first goes to call on a friend, an American lady who used to spend winters in Geneva. After ten minutes, however, the lady's servant announces the arrival of Mrs. Miller, with Randolph and Daisy with her. Upon entering, Randolph declares that he knows Winterbourne. Winterbourne greets the boy and begins to talk to him. Only then does Daisy, recognizing Winterbourne's voice, turn and marvel that he is there. She didn't believe he would come, she says, and he should have come to see her. He protests that he arrived yesterday, and when Daisy refuses to believe that, Winterbourne smiles in protest at her mother, who evades his glance and sits down with her son. Randolph says that their home is bigger than this one, and she stirs, rebuking him.

Although nothing definitively romantic has taken place between Winterbourne and Daisy, he has allowed himself to imagine that there is some interest, and that he may continue pursuing her—a notion that immediately seems suspect in Rome. It is clearly a small expatriate American community in the city, such that the characters can continually run into each other, and such that everyone seems to know everyone else's affairs. Randolph, given his youthful lack of propriety, is the vehicle by which we come to understand the Millers' wealthy economic status, even if the corresponding social elite in Rome refuse to embrace Daisy.

Winterbourne asks if Mrs. Miller has been well. Randolph exclaims that she has dyspepsia, and he and his father do as well. Mrs. Miller seems relieved rather than embarrassed by this. She begins to complain of the climate in Europe, and of the lack of a good doctor like her Dr. Davis in Schenectady. As Daisy continues to chat with the hostess, Mrs. Miller tells Winterbourne that she has been disappointed by Rome, which she expected to be otherwise than how it is. Winterbourne says it will grow on them, and Randolph pipes in, saying he hates it more every day. Mrs. Miller tells Winterbourne that Zurich, for instance, she found delightful.

Unlike Daisy (though in some ways like Randolph), Mrs. Miller is not entirely enthralled and enchanted by Europe, instead preferring to revert to familiar topics and familiar characters populating her social circle back home in New York. Mrs. Miller does make an effort to construct the kind of cosmopolitan opinions expected of people making the Grand Tour in Europe, distinguishing Rome from Zurich, but the effort seems half-hearted.

Mrs. Miller says that Daisy has loved Rome and is in fact carried away because of the "splendid" society. Daisy knows many gentlemen, she says, which always makes things more pleasant for a young lady.

There is no sense of condemnation in Mrs. Miller's observation, simply a sense that Daisy is independent and will do as she likes.

Daisy turns and declares that she's been telling Mrs. Walker, the hostess, how "mean" Winterbourne has been. Winterbourne is a little annoyed that Daisy hasn't appreciated that he went directly to Rome, stopping nowhere along the way, precisely because he was impatient to see her. He recalls a friend who once told him that pretty American women are both very exacting and entirely unlikely to feel indebted to someone. Daisy cries that Winterbourne didn't stay at Vevay when she asked, and Winterbourne exclaims that he's come all the way to Rome just to hear her reproaches. Daisy turns to Mrs. Walker, marveling at Winterbourne, but Mrs. Walker seems to be on Winterbourne's side.

Winterbourne has one certain narrative unfolding in his mind about his budding relationship with Daisy, but Daisy either doesn't see or refuses to play along with that illusion. Instead she prefers to rebuke Winterbourne in a way that seems simultaneously playful and indignant. Though American himself, and surrounded by other Americans abroad in Vevay and in Rome, Winterbourne considers Daisy a more "authentic" specimen of his native country.

Daisy then asks Mrs. Walker's permission to bring a friend to her upcoming party. Mrs. Walker, turning to Mrs. Miller, says she'd be delighted to meet their friend, but Mrs. Miller shyly says she doesn't know this friend. Daisy says it is an "intimate" friend, Mr. Giovanelli. Mrs. Walker pauses, glances at Mrs. Miller, and then says she'd be glad to see him. Daisy serenely continues talking, praising him as handsome and clever and saying he'd like to meet Americans.

A gentleman friend would normally be welcome as a friend of the family, but here Mrs. Miller shrugs off the role of matriarch and allows her daughter to express her own wishes and ask her own favors. Mrs. Walker's pause and glance can be understood as an unspoken judgment on the behavior of both Daisy and her mother.

Daisy tells her mother to leave without her, as she's going to walk. Randolph says she's meeting Mr. Giovanelli. It's the end of the afternoon, when many people are out, and Mrs. Walker doesn't think it's safe. Mrs. Miller agrees, saying Daisy will get the fever. Daisy smiles and kisses Mrs. Walker good-bye, saying she's not going alone, but with a friend. Mrs. Walker asks if it's Mr. Giovanelli. Daisy glances at Winterbourne, but without hesitating, smiles and says yes. Mrs. Walker pleads with her not to go to meet an Italian at this hour. Daisy says that she doesn't want to be improper, so she'll ask Winterbourne to accompany her. He agrees, and they go downstairs.

This is the first time we hear of the Roman fever, or malaria. This was a fear for many travelers to Rome, who believed it could be transmitted through the air and thus that certain areas were particularly fraught with danger. Daisy receives these warnings calmly and cheerfully, as usual, but also without even appearing to consider them and deviate from her own plan. Daisy's understanding of what is "proper" obviously differs very much from Mrs. Walker's.

Daisy and Winterbourne go outside and move slowly through the packed streets. Winterbourne enjoys seeing many passersby ogle at Daisy, but he wonders how she could have thought to make this walk alone.

As often is the case, Winterbourne is torn between his attraction to Daisy and his confusion regarding her motivations and actions.

Daisy rebukes Winterbourne for not coming to see her earlier, but then turns to other topics. She says she'll stay in Rome all winter if the fever doesn't kill them. She was afraid Rome would be stuffy and boring, but now she's met many charming people and enjoys the "select" society with many foreigners.

Unlike other travelers, Daisy seems unconcerned about the mysterious Roman fever. Instead she prefers to concentrate on her own definition of social success, participating in the fascinating Roman "society."

They pass the Pincian Gardens gate, and Winterbourne says he won't help Daisy find Mr. Giovanelli. She laughs, then sees the Italian leaning against a tree. He is handsome, and wears a cocked hat and a nosegay (small bunch of flowers) in the buttonhole of his shirt. Winterbourne says he won't leave her alone with him, but Daisy only looks at Winterbourne, seeming unembarrassed as she rebukes his arrogant tone. Daisy says she's never let any gentleman interfere with her affairs or tell her what to do. Winterbourne thinks she should listen to the *right* gentleman. As the Italian approaches, Winterbourne tells Daisy that *this* is not the right gentleman.

The banter between Winterbourne and Daisy is playful and, at least on Winterbourne's side, seems to stem from truly felt emotions. Winterbourne certainly seems to find it inappropriate for Daisy to be wandering around with an unknown Italian man by herself, but he also obviously would much prefer if Daisy were to spend time with him *instead. Daisy's streak of independence comes out clearly here, as she dismisses interference by any man. Unfortunately, this female independence is wholly condemned by the society she's now living in.*

Daisy introduces the two men and they walk, each on one side of her. Mr. Giovanelli is polite, clever, and sophisticated, but speaks with little sense. Winterbourne thinks that the man is just an imitation of a gentleman, and he feels indignant that Daisy can't tell a real one apart from a fake one. Still, he admits that Giovanelli is agreeable and adept at pretending.

Winterbourne's sense of what a "real" gentleman would be isn't entirely clear, but it has to to do with being enmeshed in a network of social relations in which everyone understands each other's social positions. This status has little to do with any personal charm—the thing Daisy seems to admire most. Once again Winterbourne is shown as a character who primarily observes and judges, rather than acts. Giovanelli may not be a "proper gentleman," but he at least makes his interest in Daisy clear.

Again Winterbourne wonders if a "nice girl" would really meet up with a foreigner to walk about alone. Daisy is not quite delicate, but neither can he bring himself to feel that she is just a flirt, an occasion for a brief passion. Still, Daisy doesn't seem to want to get rid of Winterbourne: she once again seems both bold and innocent, he thinks.

Here, Winterbourne contrasts innocence to boldness, as he wonders if Daisy is really toying with him or just frankly enjoys his company. "Delicate" and "flirtatious" and "nice" are all further descriptors that he tries out, but that fail to fully work. We start to get the sense that Winterbourne's judgments fail so often because Daisy is a real, complicated human, and thus can't be narrowed down to a single category.

After fifteen minutes, Mrs. Walker pulls up in a carriage, her face flushed, and beckons to Winterbourne. She cries that 50 people have noticed Daisy, and she must stop. Winterbourne asks her not to make a fuss about it, since Daisy is simply innocent, but Mrs. Walker calls her crazy, with an "imbecile" mother. She's come to drive Daisy around in the carriage for a while, so that people might see she isn't completely wild.

Mrs. Walker seems to have patronizingly taken on Daisy's social education for herself. As a fellow American woman in Rome, Mrs. Walker has had to learn just how she can and cannot act in society, and it is maddening for her to see Daisy flout these rules. Her descriptors for Daisy are much harsher than Winterbourne's own characterizations.

Winterbourne goes to fetch Daisy, who seems delighted to present Mr. Giovanelli to Mrs. Walker. Mrs. Walker asks her to get in the carriage, and Daisy replies brightly that she would be charmed to, but is quite happy where she is. This isn't the custom here, Mrs. Walker says, and Daisy exclaims that it should be. When Mrs. Walker suggests she walk with her mother, Daisy says a little more sharply that she is old enough, and Mrs. Walker says she's old enough to be talked about. Daisy continues to smile and queries what Mrs. Walker means; the older woman only tells her to get in. Winterbourne starts to feel awkward, as Daisy says she doesn't want to know what Mrs. Walker means by this.

It is difficult to tell to what extent Daisy is oblivious about the trouble that she is causing, and to what extent she simply is willing to ignore it. Even if Mrs. Walker acquaints Daisy with local "customs," Daisy cannot see why the existence of such customs should force her to act in a certain way—she has her own customs, stemming from her place of origin, but also her sense of the way things should be stemming from her own idiosyncratic and independent character. This seems like an admirable position for Daisy to take, but in a society of such rigid rules, it is seen as "vulgar" and even "wicked."

Daisy begins to flush, and looks quite pretty to Winterbourne. She asks him if her reputation requires that she get in the carriage. Winterbourne flushes himself and, after pausing, decides it is most gentlemanly to tell the truth, so he says she should get in. Daisy laughs loudly and cries that she will just have to be improper, and then she promptly turns away to walk with Mr. Giovanelli.

Finally Daisy seems to become aware of the stakes of refusing Mrs. Walker's entreaties, but now it has become a question of asserting her own free spirit. So she digs her heels in and embraces impropriety, ensuring that the principle of her own independence will be secured (but her reputation with Mrs. Walker will be ruined).

Mrs. Walker, her eyes tearing up, tells Winterbourne to get in: when he says he must follow Daisy, she says if he does she'll never speak to him again. Winterbourne catches up with Daisy just to tell her he's leaving. She hardly looks at him as he says goodbye. Mr. Giovanelli tips his hat extravagantly.

Mrs. Walker's frustration and anger contrasts sharply to the nonchalance of Daisy and Mr. Giovanelli. Winterbourne is strung between them, sharing some of Mrs. Walker's opinions but still drawn to Daisy—once again a character who only observes and judges, but cannot act.

Winterbourne tells Mrs. Walker, back in the carriage, that her earnestness has backfired: Daisy means no harm. Mrs. Walker thinks she's gone too far, flirting with Italians, dancing with the same men all evening, and receiving visitors late at night. Winterbourne, laughing, says Daisy's brother stays up even later, but Mrs. Walker isn't amused. She says the servants all exchange smiles when a gentleman comes to ask for Daisy. Winterbourne grows angry at this, saying Daisy's only fault is her lack of cultivation.

Initially, Winterbourne hopes to downplay Mrs. Walker's condemnation of Daisy and make it into something humorous, but Mrs. Walker refuses to lighten up. Soon enough, however, Winterbourne himself grows offended, this time by the realization that Daisy's reputation is suffering—even among their social "inferiors," the servants. This seems to especially upset Winterbourne.

When Mrs. Walker marvels at how Daisy should have made a fuss about Winterbourne leaving Vevay, when they'd only known each other for a few days, Winterbourne pauses and then says that she and he himself have lived too long in Geneva.

Winterbourne too was frustrated by Daisy's ambiguous reaction to his departure from Vevay, but now he chooses to defend her, perceiving that he and Mrs. Walker may hold their own prejudices.

Mrs. Walker asks Winterbourne to stop associating with Miss Miller, but he says he likes her very much and won't. Mrs. Walker warns that he'll contribute to her scandal, but then she says she's said her piece, so she drops him off by the Villa Borghese at the edge of the Pincian Garden. In the distance Daisy and Mr. Giovanelli are seated on a bench. Winterbourne watches them wander toward the wall, where Giovanelli perches himself. Winterbourne pauses, then walks away towards Mrs. Costello's.

Mrs. Walker, for her part, is becoming increasingly stubborn herself regarding Daisy's behavior, and now even attempting to have Winterbourne shun Daisy as well. As Winterbourne watches Daisy and Giovanelli, it becomes clear that his role in her life is now definitively one of an observer rather than a participant, which is why he knows enough to turn away.

The next two days, Winterbourne tries to call at Daisy's hotel, but she's not home either time. On the third day is Mrs. Walker's party, where she has gathered several specimens of European society, whom she likes to trot out at such events.

Mrs. Walker, an American expatriate herself, also enjoys setting European and American "specimens" against each other—assuming that she has fully "assimilated" herself.

When Winterbourne arrives, he sees Mrs. Miller, though not Daisy. Mrs. Miller tells Winterbourne and Mrs. Walker that she feels frightened to have come alone. Daisy is dressed, she says, but started playing at the piano with the Italian, and they were too enraptured to leave. Mrs. Walker is deeply offended, and tells Winterbourne to the side that Daisy is having her revenge for the other day. Mrs. Walker says she won't speak to Daisy when she comes.

Mrs. Miller, as usual, does not seem embarrassed or concerned with concealing her specific family affairs, or with Daisy's stubbornness and penchant for independence. For her part, Mrs. Walker finds Daisy's behavior utterly reprehensible, and searches for a way to punish her for what she sees as her rudeness. This behavior seems especially petty and spiteful, but Mrs. Walker sees it as her "duty" in upholding proper social rules.

Daisy doesn't arrive until eleven o'clock, looking lovely, smiling and chattering next to Mr. Giovanelli. She goes straight to Mrs. Walker and introduces her to the Italian, saying his beautiful singing made them late. Mrs. Walker is short with Mr. Giovanelli, who continues to act like a handsome Italian, singing and curling his mustache, throughout the evening.

Eleven o'clock, a motif throughout the book, is related to Daisy's independent sense of schedule and propriety. She hardly feels that arriving late is an offense to Mrs. Walker. Giovanelli is described as a very European, though somewhat ridiculous, figure.

Daisy and Winterbourne begin to talk. She says she was shocked that Mrs. Walker wanted her to abandon Mr. Giovanelli and join her in the carriage the other day, scoffing at the idea that this would have been "proper," rather than merely unkind, as he had invited her long before to walk in the gardens. Winterbourne says Giovanelli would never have asked an Italian lady to walk around the streets with him. Daisy is grateful she's not from here, and doesn't see why she should change her habits for them.

It is not that Daisy lacks all sense of social custom and propriety: she retains her own sense of what is and is not proper. For her, abandoning Mr. Giovanelli would be its own form of social indecency. Winterbourne feels that Giovanelli's attitude stems from stereotypes associated with "forward" American ladies, though Daisy doesn't seem to mind this.

Winterbourne warns her that her habits are those of a flirt, and, staring and smiling at him, she cries that she's certainly a flirt, as all nice girls are. Winterbourne agrees that she is nice, but says he'd like her only to flirt with himself. Daisy thanks him but says he is much too stiff to flirt with. She laughs at his discomfort.

Is Daisy teasing Winterbourne, provoking him just as a flirt would do, or is she just deflecting his critique by making light of it? Either or both may be true. In any case, Winterbourne lacks Daisy's social ease and comfort.

Winterbourne continues, trying to convince Daisy that she should follow the custom of a certain place, rather than flirt in the American custom, which people may misinterpret. Daisy brightly says they're not flirting anyway: she and Mr. Giovanelli are intimate friends. Winterbourne casually remarks that it's different if they're in love, and he's surprised to see that this comment, after such frank chat, makes Daisy rise and blush. She says that Mr. Giovanelli never says such disagreeable things to her.

Winterbourne is still earnest in his desire for Daisy to understand the implications of her actions, and what they mean for others around them. But again, Daisy deflects his careful categorization of European versus American customs and characters. Still, her sudden embarrassment suggests that she's not just toying with Winterbourne after all.

Daisy turns to the Italian, who asks if she'd like tea—which she says Winterbourne has never thought to offer her. Daisy remains with Mr. Giovanelli in the other room for the rest of the party. When Daisy prepares to bid Mrs. Walker goodbye, the hostess turns her back on Daisy. Winterbourne watches from the door as Daisy turns pale and glances at Mrs. Miller, who remains oblivious. Winterbourne realizes that Daisy is shocked and confused, and he is touched. After the Millers leave, Winterbourne tells Mrs. Walker that she was cruel, but she only declares she'll never invite Daisy again.

Daisy finds her own way to punish Winterbourne for his off-the-cuff comment. As she leaves, though, Daisy herself is punished by Mrs. Walker's coldness to her. Winterbourne, as is often the case, watches this scene unfold rather than participating in it actively himself. He seems to begin to conceive of Daisy as, again, innocent in the sense of remaining open to opportunities, but lacking a sense of their implications—not bold so much as ignorant.

Winterbourne continues to visit the Millers' hotel, where they are often absent, though when they are there Giovanelli always is too. Much of the time it is only he and Daisy in the drawing room. Winterbourne is surprised that Daisy never seems annoyed when Winterbourne intrudes on their meetings. He thinks that if she really does love Giovanelli, she should be more upset when their privacy is interrupted. But he certainly appreciates her innocent indifference and good humor, and her seeming inability to be jealous. Winterbourne has often felt something approaching fear of women he had been interested in before, and he doesn't feel that way at all with Daisy.

Winterbourne understands that, as a lover, he has largely lost out to Giovanelli, but he still cannot bring himself to stop his regular visits to Daisy. He also retains a sense of hope that Daisy is not in love with Giovanelli after all. In either case, however, Winterbourne seems to have ceased feeling a jealous protectiveness of Daisy, and instead simply remains fascinated by her as a person, attempting to puzzle out why she acts the way she does.

Still, Winterbourne has to admit that Daisy seems to find Giovanelli fascinating: she is always asking him questions and ordering him around. One day Winterbourne is at St. Peter's with Mrs. Costello and sees the couple together. Mrs. Costello remarks that Winterbourne has been quiet recently, and must be wrapped up in thinking about Miss Miller's affair with the Italian. Winterbourne corrects her, saying it's not an "intrigue" since it's so out in the open.

Daisy, too, is perhaps less interested in Giovanelli as a lover than as a European specimen, one from whom she's continuing to learn about this novel, exciting society and setting. She cares so little to hide her relationship that, for Winterbourne, it can't count as an "intrigue." Mrs. Costello is less interested in those subtleties. And yet at the same time it's still unclear if Giovanelli is Daisy's lover or not, or if he is just another fascinated devotee like Winterbourne (but a more active one).

Mrs. Costello, watching the couple, says she easily understands the appeal: Daisy must think him a fine gentleman, finer even than the courier, who probably introduced them. Winterbourne says he doesn't think they'll marry, and his aunt replies that Daisy certainly lives day-to-day, thinking of nothing. Mrs. Costello calls this perfectly vulgar.

Mrs. Costello speaks with calm but biting sarcasm, condemning Daisy for her willingness to burst open the strict social ladder constructed by both Europeans and Americans abroad. "Vulgar" is a term she repeatedly associates with the new-money Millers.

Winterbourne says he's asked around about Giovanelli, who is apparently respectable, though he doesn't move in the finest circles. Daisy, he says, probably thinks him a gentleman, just as he finds her pretty, interesting, and splendid. Giovanelli must know that there is an elusive Mr. Miller who pays for all Daisy's opulence, and Giovanelli doesn't have any title and can't hope to marry her. But neither does Daisy, he continues, have any idea of what it would mean to "catch" a real count or marchese.

In his constant attempt to understand Daisy, Winterbourne has gained indirect access to her "intimate friend." He accepts that Daisy doesn't have a nuanced sense of social distinctions, but for him that isn't to be condemned—Daisy's innocence here frees her from a characterization as a vulgar American trying to "catch" a rich Italian.

At St. Peter's, other friends of Mrs. Costello gather around them and discuss how Daisy has really gone "too far." Winterbourne is upset at this talk, finding it painful to hear her innocence described as vulgar disorder, but he has to concede that she's gone too far.

The other members of the small expatriate community are confident that they have gained complete knowledge of Daisy, while Winterbourne thinks they've merely misinterpreted her character.

One day Winterbourne meets a friend in the Corso (a large boulevard) who has just emerged from the Doria Palace, where he saw a Velazquez portrait of Innocent X. The friend says he also saw "another kind of portrait"—the pretty American girl whom the friend knows Winterbourne to be acquainted with. She was with a little Italian, he says: he thought the lady was of better society than that.

The casual words of Winterbourne's friend underline what is, in fact, a crucial element of the book—the attempt, made by Winterbourne and others, to paint Daisy's portrait in language. But capturing Daisy in words or categories, is, of course, is not a straightforward task.

Winterbourne says that she is. He quickly gets into a cab to find Mrs. Miller, who is at home and says that Daisy is off with Mr. Giovanelli, as usual. Daisy claims she isn't engaged, says Mrs. Miller, but she feels that the couple might as well be. She does hope Giovanelli tells her if it's the case, so she can write to Mr. Miller. Winterbourne is so amazed and confused at Mrs. Miller's lack of parental concern that he gives up his idea to warn her about Daisy's behavior.

Once again Winterbourne finds himself in the position of having to defend Daisy's reputation, or at least warn her of what is at stake in her behavior, which is now being noticed by a whole host of other figures throughout Rome. For Mrs. Miller, Daisy's independence is a given, not something she can hope to change.

After this Winterbourne never finds Daisy at home, nor at the houses of his friends, who have stopped inviting her, and who have attempted to reassure their European friends that Daisy is not representative of young American ladies at all.

Although the American expatriates are not true Europeans, they are eager to let it be known that they, unlike Daisy, have successfully assimilated.

It annoys Winterbourne to think that Daisy might not even notice or care about this coldness—she is probably too "light," uncultivated, and thoughtless to be upset. However, he also wonders whether she might not just be defiant about other people's reactions to her behavior. He is annoyed with himself, too, for his uncertainty regarding her actions, and the extent to which her peculiarities stem from her nationality or her personality. Winterbourne realizes that, either way, Daisy has passed him by.

Once again, Winterbourne moves back and forth regarding his understanding of Daisy's character. Of particular frustration to him is his inability to categorize her either as a typical American, or as a peculiar, strongly independent flirt. It is also telling that Winterbourne accepts the fact the life has "passed him by" while he's been observing and judging Daisy—and yet he still can't stop.

A few days later Winterbourne finds Daisy at the Palace of the Caesar on a fine spring day, strolling amid the mossy marble ruins. Giovanelli is at her side. Daisy calls that Winterbourne must be lonely, always walking alone. He says he's not as lucky as Daisy's companion. Giovanelli has always been distinguished and polite with Winterbourne, hardly acting like a jealous lover, and Winterbourne thinks he might easily have an understanding with Giovanelli, sharing their mutual amazement at Daisy's extraordinary nature.

The setting of this encounter between Winterbourne, Daisy, and Giovanelli properly takes place around the kind of romantic Roman ruins that so fascinate Daisy. Indeed, it seems that for Daisy, Giovanelli (like Winterbourne before him) is another element of the setting that Daisy adores experiencing—though others can only conceive of it as inappropriate flirting. The interactions between the three further mystify Winterbourne as to the nature of Daisy and Giovanelli's relationship.

Daisy says Winterbourne thinks she's with Giovanelli too much. Everyone thinks so, Winterbourne replies. Daisy declares that everyone is "pretending" to be shocked, while really they don't care what she does. They do, and they will grow disagreeable about it, Winterbourne says. Daisy asks him just how, and Winterbourne says she'll see by calling on their acquaintances and seeing how they treat her coldly. Daisy starts to flush, and refers to Mrs. Walker's behavior the other night.

Initially, Daisy doesn't seem to believe that her behavior, which to her is so obviously benign, could possibly be so upsetting to others. But Daisy's "innocence," as described by Winterbourne, does not extend to total obliviousness: she does seem to grasp what it means for everyone around her to turn a cold shoulder to her, and this is disorienting and hurtful to her.

Daisy looks at Giovanelli, then back at Winterbourne, and says Winterbourne shouldn't let people be so unkind. He protests that he has said something. Then he says Mrs. Miller believes Daisy is engaged. Daisy agrees that her mother does think this. Winterbourne begins to laugh, but stops when Daisy says she *is* engaged. She declares that Winterbourne doesn't believe it. He says he does believe it, and then Daisy says that, in that case, she's *not* engaged.

Daisy may have begun to grasp how eithers perceive of her actions, but she cannot align that with her own understanding of her behavior. Her contradictory statements seem to stem from this frustration and misunderstanding, as Daisy seeks to escape Winterbourne's own judgment and belief that he's "figured her out." Yet as with the boat ride scene, here she seems to be acting petulant just to get attention—once again making it unclear whether her social improprieties are an admirable act of defiance, an oblivious ignorance of others, or a spoiled bid for attention.

Winterbourne leaves the couple. A week later he eats dinner at a villa on the Caelian Hill, and decides to walk past the monuments of the Forum in the moonlight, with the moon slightly concealed by the clouds. It is eleven o'clock when Winterbourne reaches the Coliseum. He loves picturesque scenes and decides to peek inside. He walks to one of the arches, where he sees an open carriage. Then he passes inside, where half of the circle of the Coliseum is lit in dusk and the other is totally dark.

In one of the few instances when we see Winterbourne alone, it is as a typical idle gentleman, willing to be affected by sensory experience without going out in dogged pursuit of it himself. Picturesque "scenes" rather than exciting experiences are his forte. Eleven o'clock, though, as we've come to expect, is of significance for Daisy rather than for him.

Winterbourne begins to recite some lines of poetry, but then remembers that doctors caution against spending time around these ancient monuments at night, since it can lead to the fever. Winterbourne hastens towards the middle, planning to leave quickly afterward. Then he sees two people poised on the low steps, talking: he recognizes Daisy's voice.

The nineteenth-century understanding of malaria transmission made dark, cool ruins particular sites of danger. Winterbourne is unwilling to run this risk—but as will not be surprising by this point, Daisy does not feel the same.

Winterbourne is horrified by this discovery, but also a little relieved. Daisy's behavior is finally easy to read for him—she is simply not a respectable lady. Winterbourne is angry that he's spent so much time confused about how to think of her. He quickly retreats, but Daisy sees him and calls out his name. She rises and Giovanelli lifts his hat. Winterbourne's thoughts turn to how dangerous it is for Daisy to be spending the evening lounging around in a place known to cause malaria.

Encountering Daisy at the Coliseum with Giovanelli late at night seems to solve the mystery of her character for Winterbourne, and his relief at this encounter is arguably the climax of the book. For a while now he hasn't really wanted to court Daisy or to defend her character against condemnation, but mostly just to observe this fascinating person until he can know *her and* judge *her. No longer does he feel the need to weigh competing evidence, as this totally shocking behavior is evidence enough to prove her character disreputable to him. Still, the fever that Daisy has joked about recently is, for Winterbourne, now a real danger for both of them.*

Daisy says she's been here all evening, and nothing can be so pretty. Winterbourne tells her that people catch Roman fever from such beauty. He rebukes Giovanelli for leading her here, and Giovanelli says he's not afraid for himself, and the lady has never been prudent. Daisy declares that she couldn't have left Rome without seeing the Coliseum by moonlight.

Daisy, as usual, sees nothing uncouth in her own actions. Although Winterbourne believes he no longer needs to worry about Daisy, he still retains a remnant of concern. Now, for him, the only thing left to worry (about as a gentleman) is Daisy's health.

Winterbourne counsels them to leave immediately, and Giovanelli goes to get the carriage. Daisy doesn't seem at all embarrassed, though after a minute of chatting she asks why Winterbourne is silent. He only begins to laugh. When she asks if he really thought her to be engaged the other day, he says that it doesn't matter: he now thinks it makes little difference if she's engaged or not. Daisy's eyes fix themselves on Winterbourne, but as she's about to speak, Giovanelli calls that the carriage is ready. In a strange tone, Daisy declares that she doesn't care whether or not she gets Roman fever, and the carriage rolls away.

Winterbourne's laughter should be read as more bitter than lighthearted, as he now definitively moves from caring deeply about Daisy's reputation to understanding (he thinks) that he's been wrong in trying to defend it all along, and wrong even in trying so hard to uncover her character. Daisy, usually so talkative, seems able to express more in her significant last look at Winterbourne than words could accomplish—she is deeply affected by his condemnation of her.

Winterbourne mentions to no one the circumstances of his meeting with Daisy, but in a few days all the Americans seem to know about it—they would have found out at the hotel upon Daisy's return, Winterbourne realizes. Still, he no longer feels very sorry that Daisy should be gossiped about.

Winterbourne does not stoop as low as other travelers, who are quick to gossip and spread rumors about Daisy, but his encounter with her has made him lose any great sense of protectiveness over her.

A few days later, the same gossips reveal that Daisy is seriously ill. Winterbourne goes to the hotel at once, where a few other acquaintances are in Mrs. Miller's salon, and Randolph is declaring that Daisy is sick with the fever from wandering around at night.

Just as he had feared, Winterbourne cannot stay away for long once he hears that Daisy is sick. Again, Randolph speaks greater truth than discretion would allow.

Mrs. Miller appears, seeming distressed but composed, though she does continue to talk a great deal about Dr. Davis. Mrs. Miller tells Winterbourne that Daisy has asked her to tell him that Daisy was never engaged to Mr. Giovanelli—who has disappeared since Daisy has been sick. Mrs. Miller doesn't think he's such a gentleman after all. Anyway, she concludes, Daisy asked her three times to give that message to Winterbourne, and to ask him if he remembers when they went to a castle in Switzerland.

Mrs. Miller escapes parody only by her earnest sense of concern for her daughter, and by the crucial message that she transmits from Daisy to Winterbourne (even if Mrs. Miller doesn't seem to see how important the message is). We realize here that Daisy was not, after all, just playing or toying with Winterbourne: whatever her character, she does consider him a friend, and possibly even a romantic interest.

A week later Daisy dies, and she is buried in the small Protestant cemetery in Rome. There are more mourners than one might have predicted, given the scandal. Giovanelli is there, looking pale. Finally he says that Daisy was the most beautiful and amiable lady he'd ever seen. He adds that she was the most innocent, too. Winterbourne looks at him and repeats that last phrase as a question. Giovanelli repeats what he said. Winterbourne, angry, asks why Giovanelli took her to the Coliseum. Giovanelli says he was not afraid for himself, and she wanted to go. If she had lived, he says, she never would have married him. Winterbourne looks down at the flowers, and when he turns back, Mr. Giovanelli has gone.

The harsh social treatment dealt Daisy when she was alive is not equaled at her death, suggesting a certain level of quiet humbling, if not regret at the way people condemned her. Right at the end, Winterbourne is back to being unable to decide whether or not Daisy was "innocent," and what that would even mean. Giovanelli has proved himself to be not the most gallant gentleman (although his use of the word "innocent" again throws the sexual nature of their relationship into question), but Winterbourne does have to agree with his last thoughts on Daisy's independence and free spirit.

Winterbourne leaves Rome soon. The next summer he meets his aunt again at Vevay. One day he reflects to Mrs. Costello that he had done an injustice to Daisy: she gave him a message before her death that he only understands now. She would have appreciated his esteem of her, he says. Winterbourne says Mrs. Costello was right to have said, last summer, that he was susceptible to making a mistake. He's lived abroad too long, he says. Yet Winterbourne goes back to live in Geneva, where some say he is studying, and others that he is involved with a foreign lady.

It takes Winterbourne a good deal of time and space to understand that Daisy was more complex than he gave her credit for after their encounter at the Coliseum. She died searching for novelty and experience, something that Winterbourne cannot understand, as we see that he remains a static observer, ending at the same place where he started. It's as if Daisy Miller—a real, complicated person who lived and died (in the world of the novella)—was just an episode or character study in Winterbourne's life, and now he continues on as usual, seemingly unchanged.

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