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Henry James

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Originally published in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1878 and in book form in 1879, *Daisy Miller* brought Henry James his first widespread commercial and critical success. The young Daisy Miller, an American on holiday with her mother on the shores of Switzerland's Lac Leman, is one of James's most vivid and tragic characters. Daisy's friendship with an American gentleman, Mr. Winterbourne, and her subsequent infatuation with a passionate but impoverished Italian bring to life the great Jamesian themes of Americans abroad, innocence versus experience, and the grip of fate. As Elizabeth Hardwick writes in her Introduction, Daisy Miller "lives on, a figure out of literature who has entered history as a name, a vision."

Daisy Miller Details

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From Reader Review Daisy Miller for online ebook

Melki says

"I'm very fond of society, and I have always had a great deal of it."

In no time at all, Winterbourne becomes infatuated with young Daisy Miller, a "pretty American flirt," whom he considers to be "uncultivated," and an "inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence." His aunt disapproves, considering the girl and her family to be "common." And indeed, Daisy wastes no time in flaunting society's rules, setting tongues wagging.

As a member of the proletariat, I should not enjoy a book concerning the exploits of the idle rich, but like The Great Gatsby, good writing can make all the difference. There's not much to this brief novel, and the obsession with manners and public behavior reminded me quite a bit of Colette's work. Still, it was eminently readable, and undoubtedly a good introduction to James' oeuvre.

Yulia says

a flimsy glance of an unintriguing character. i couldn't feel sorry for her; she seemed too frivolous to pity. and the double standard at the end is rather heavy-handed.

Ivana Books Are Magic says

I would say that Daisy Miller is a great introduction to Henry James. This book is not only shorter, but also less complex than other works of his that I have read. However, it bears a close resemblance to his novels and explores similar themes. Having previously read The Portrait of a Lady, I found it hard not to compare the two. Moreover, while I was reading Daisy Miller I experienced, perhaps predictably, a feeling of *déjà vu*. Daisy Miller was, if I recall well, James' first commercial literary success. Anyhow, I came to this novella with high expectations, but I wasn't disappointed.

Annie Miller aka Daisy is, just like Isabelle the heroine of his novel The Portrait of a Lady, an American girl visiting Europe for the first time. We could say that both girls are 'discovering' not only Europe but themselves for isn't there something about travel that can make us open our eyes? One could argue that travel always makes us compare and reevaluate things, and while we are about it, perhaps we could also add that travelling can make us learn something about ourselves? Youth is all about trying to discover who we are. In addition, when one is young, everything can feel like a discovery.

If one wants to write a novel that comments on society, a young woman always makes for a good protagonist. Why? Because society is especially diligent when it comes to paying attention to young ladies. This attention is not always a positive one, indeed, our society can be quite judgemental when it comes to young women. Young ladies are the ones who have to keep 'their reputation intact'. They are expected to behave accordingly to certain society rules, and while the society rules of this novel may seem 'archaic' to a

modern reader, one can still appreciate the sharp contrast between personal desires and social norms.

The description of pressure that society can put on an individual is often a part of James' writing. The relationship between our social and individual identity is always an interesting subject. Henry James excels at portraying the society and emphasizing the social pressure on individual. James' dialogues are always well written and natural sounding, but at the same time they capture the social norms with finesse. In this novel James compares and contrasts American and European society on more levels than one.

The novel opens up in Switzerland with Daisy meeting a fellow American Fredrick, who falls in love with her shortly. Daisy is not approved of by his aunt. Fredrick seems to be uncertain of his views of Daisy, but remains attracted to her. They socialize and spend some time together, but eventually Fredrick has to leave Daisy who invites him to visit her in Rome. They do meet in Rome, but there Daisy has made a new friend, a young Italian man nobody seems to approve of.

I would lie if I said that I cared deeply about what happened to Daisy. I cared, but not that much, it was more a feeling of detachment than indifference. Naturally, I was sad to see Daisy treated unfairly but I couldn't relate to her fully, because I found it hard to figure out who Daisy really was. Was Daisy provocative or was she just stubborn? Was she daring or was she just a flirt? Henry James is ever the master of ambiguity and while I usually enjoy the elusiveness of his writing, in this case I think there just wasn't enough space for proper character development. With this book James manages to capture our attention, create a credible character and build a tragic story around her, but the writer doesn't attempt a complex character study. Perhaps this decision only makes sense considering the length and the organization of the book. Speaking of the plot and the narrative, the ending was somewhat abrupt, but perhaps only more powerful because of that.

James' prose flows as beautifully as ever. His sentences are elegant and well crafted, his social observations clever and to the point. Is it enough? Quite frankly, for me it is. This novella was a wonderful read. It lacked the depth and the complexity of *A Portrait Of a lady*, but it makes for a lovely read. The story is somewhat predictable, yet by the time I finished reading this novella, I was glad I read it. It sure wasn't a wasted effort. It wasn't much of an effort at all. *Daisy Miller* was easy to read, an enjoyable book with enough food for the thought. I would recommend it to all fans of Henry James as well as those who want to read more of him but lack the time or the motivation to tackle his longer works.

Sue says

I have not read many of Henry James' works to date and am slowly adding some to my list. Today was time for *Daisy Miller*, originally published in 1878. This is really a novella, the story of a young woman seeing the Continent with her mother and young brother and catching the eye of one Mr. Winterbourne, an American who resides in Europe. James himself is present as narrator occasionally to exclaim in some way on the activity or thoughts of his characters.

The young woman is Daily Miller from New York state. She remarks upon her visits to New York City but her desire for large venues has led to this trip abroad. She is an enigma to Winterbourne who is puzzled by her behavior. She flirts as Americans do but she seems without guile. But she tempts the disapproval of the fashionable who she would court by her wish to be independent, particularly in her assignations with men.

She prefers what will be 20th century behaviors but it is not yet time. And it may not yet be time even at home in America.

By the end of this work, Daisy has received her final comeuppance for her "behavior" on the Continent, behavior deemed not quite right by those who are in the know, both European and Americans abroad. Is it innocence or not caring to conform that leads her on her own path? Is she as gullible as she seems to try to paint herself or does she want the best of all worlds: to be independent, enjoy her walking out with these charming men, and also preserving her place in society?

I'm not sure exactly where I put her on this scale, but it seems the Puritan gods have had their say in the end.

Stephen P says

Ah Daisy. What to do with you. You scuttle about this novel innocent, coquettish, a young pretty American in a foreign land. Why is it you won't listen? Neither to James or to me. Even your name sounds fresh, innocent. You, in such young years have disarmed Rome's society by seeing through their mountains of hypocrisy by not caring about what they consider scandalous or any careless dreams of joining their ranks.

Of course the narrator is too stiff for you, caught in his own web of threaded concealments barricaded against the throb of his own heart. But the Roman? Hmm. Handsome and pliable. A remainder to keep and mold. A lingering phantasm.

And about James? He is a well known author you know. You were in good hands. Set down debutant-ish, and through your naivety and good looks much was to happen to and for you. When was it Daisy? When did you take the reigns from James, the master, and from me and what is now looking back my metronomed reading of comforting expectations. Did James know about it? Maybe up to a point. Or not.

Your shedding Daisy of James' cast and mold, tossing aside the mask of coquetry for the emblem of Revolution? What? Poor James. Poor me. Fools that we are. You had no intention of, being deeded by a man as a parcel of property to be owned, of a society to set you to work to climb into the tiered class above through fools tricks, nor by family name or the interworking of family constrictions, and certainly not by a reader who now has to reformulate this buzzing readerly world and recompose himself with a new idol. A gleaming freedom fighter.

So, why did James kill you off? He can be, you know, a bitter old man. Well. maybe that's a little too strong but if it were you Daisy you would come right out and say it.

One possibility I think is that you went your own way leaving him with his masterly pen in his masterly hand. He was pissed. The only means of gaining control of you and the story, your story, was to kill you. But could it have also been a cautionary tale James was trying to work out? That if you fly too close to the sun your stalwart wings will be seared? As I think more about it the master might have been saying, you, we, can never reach total freedom though it may be worth trying, centering one's life around, since there is the body weighing us down. It is moving towards death as soon as it is, if not cared for, or even so...

You left him flailing with your meteoric rise to the heights of universal hero battling for what freedom we can have, which is why his ending this tale in your absence seemed something tacked on both hollowing the story out and weighing it down.

I closed the book but don't worry Daisy you will remain on for the foreseeable future.

Luís C. says

Henry James, much like other authors around the twentieth century, believes that society is all powerful, even to the extent that it obliterates any moral impulses that we have been born with. In *Daisy Miller*, the embodiment of a completely naive American girl is presented in the character of Daisy, unaware of the rules of European society. Even though Winterbourne, the protagonist, readily acknowledges the fact that she is common and uncultivated, he cannot help his fascination with her fresh, unsophisticated elegance. Her beauty and simplicity of manner is something that he often remarks on, even describing her as a sylph. However, throughout his interactions with Daisy, Winterbourne does not have a single moment when he is able to free himself from societies conventions. He wonders constantly at the conditions and limitations of one's intercourse with a pretty American flirt, unable to simply act naturally and be himself. In fact, he openly admits that by instinct, he should not appreciate her justly. In this way, Winterbourne embodies a man whose individuality has been completely obliterated by society. Thus, when he meets Daisy, a girl whose actions show a complete disregard for societal conventions, the only possible result is in her termination. When Winterbourne encounters Daisy in the Colosseum, he finally makes up his mind that she is a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect and his words cuts her accordingly. In effect, this cut metaphorically led to Daisy's death.

The world that James presents to us is an extremely chaotic one, which is why he chooses single consciousness as the method of narration to create a structured and meaningful version of this world through the eyes of one person. This effectively limits the reader to only Winterbourne's thoughts and emotions. What happens within Daisy's mind remains hidden, and we are only able to judge her, as Winterbourne does, through her external actions. If Daisy had only trespassed society laws mentally, she would not have met with the same tragic end. This fact can most clearly be seen when examining how Mrs. Walker passes judgment upon Daisy, telling her that her actions aren't the custom here. In reality, she has absolutely no interest Daisy's inner motives or intentions whatsoever when she walk.

Fred says

This little story catalyzed a lot of late 19th century debate about American values and European values and--particularly--the confident, un-blushing American girl who is not inclined to conform to the snobbish tastes and attitudes of the upper class people she meets as her family becomes wealthy.

"Daisy Miller" became a debatable *type* of American girl, Daisy Millerism a controversial kind of topic.

Contemporary readers should give some thought to how Daisy's major sin against expatriate society is that she spends time with and values the company of local people. Compare Winterbourne abroad, spending time only with people of means and breeding, to Daisy, who chooses to spend a lot of her time with Mr. Giovanelli, who is not--as Winterbourne's friends say--a treasure hunter but really a respectable and clever Italian man of modest means. (Daisy does not choose to spend time with scoundrels and criminals and men of low character, though Winterbourne's set sees her that way.) And then think about how middle class American kids backpacking around Europe and staying in hostels are Daisy's descendants, mixing and mingling with the local people because that's who interests them. And think of how in some ways

contemporary horror movies about American kids running into trouble Europe--the *Hostel* films, for example--echo Daisy's troubles. The kids are too bold, brash, and confident, interested in local culture but on their own terms, and they run into trouble because of it.

Of course, James doesn't run blame in one direction in "DM"; Daisy's overconfidence and naivete are not the only factors contributing to her fate. Winterbourne and his people antagonize and irritate Daisy so much that she disregards even their good advice (about, say, staying out of the Colosseum). And Winterbourne never gets around to admitting to himself that he likes Daisy very much more than he likes the upper class women who scare him with their threats of social ostracism. He never notices how Daisy's interest in culture is tied not to snobbish intellectual achievement but to understanding how people relate to and care about things. E.g., Rome comes alive for her when Giovanelli explains it, and the Chateau de Chillon is interesting only when Winterbourne--rather than the dry, dull tour guide--is explaining it. (For his part, Winterbourne is constantly hoping that Daisy's lapses from social propriety mean that she will yield up her person to him in some naughty way, and he even makes arrangements for that sort of thing at Chillon. Contrast to Giovanelli.)

So it's a godo story, and it's short, and it deals with James's great Americans-scandalizing-Europe theme, so if you think you'd like to try out some Henry James, it's a great place to start.

James says

I loved this book, in less than 90 pages, a wonderfully understated tragedy unfolds, society is judged and found wanting in a way that resonates today. In Daisy Miller, a young woman has her every move dissected by a hovering society unwilling to ascribe anything but the most base of motives to behavior that falls out of their norms. The norms defined by the late 19th century may seem ridiculously stifling to our modern eye, but I would argue that these norms have been eased, replaced but not removed, particularly if you are a young woman.

Reading the other reviews my reaction seems to be a highly individual interpretation. In particular, the lack of consensus on Daisy Miller as a hero of her time, and not some flibbigibbert seemed really odd to me.

As a teenager I once tried to read a Henry James only to be driven off by the dryness and verbosity. I also was further discouraged by his preface to the book which is written with a rather glorious use of synonyms and a word count that seemed to bode ill. While it's not quite as catchy as Cyndi Lauper's girls just wanna have fun, the dry understated style adds tremendously to the story.

jess says

Okay I picked this up because, with only three discs, it was the shortest audiobook I could find at the library and I wanted something brief for a shortened week of commuting. I had never read Daisy Miller, not heard much about it, and I hardly feel much like discussing it now that it's over. It bored the crap out of my kid, which goes to show that none of us have any appreciation for classic literature these days. Reading this felt a lot like being back in high school english class. The language is simple, so the book is really accessible. This was perfect for an audiobook on my commute. It's easy to get lost in fancy sentence structure when you're dodging semi-trucks on a major interstate in the rain. Daisy Miller is an American tourist, traveling around

Europe with her mother and young brother. She is acquainted with several Americans also living in Europe, but her flirtatious manner toward men is totally unbecoming to her social station and reveals her as a terribly uninformed, ignorant American flirt. She is young and having a good time and behaves irreverently toward the more conservative social conventions. The major plot conflicts arise from tension between new money and old, Europe and America, & women and men. Daisy Miller is something of a spitfire in a totally tedious and ignorant sort of way, defying convention, refusing to cowtow to elitism and perception, and rejecting the idea that she should "behave" in a "ladylike manner," so maybe we could like her for her resilient and resistant spirit, like a zygotic feminist. I mean, usually I do side with that kind of girl. But Daisy Miller is simpering, manipulative and she whines so much, it was absolutely impossible for me to feel sympathy for her or her bad social graces or her untimely death. She was so very unlikable, as were all of the characters, and at the end of the book I wasn't left with any sort of grand allegorical insight. I was just thinking, "GOD I would kill myself if I had to interact with people like that."

Anne says

How to make this book better: Winterbourne meets Daisy Miller and decides he does not like her. He returns home. THE END.

David says

Qui se passes ses fantaisies....

She does what she wishes. *Daisy Miller*, published in 1879 brought Henry Miller his first success. The short novela (72 pages) casts an eye of societal norms of the day.

Told through the eyes of a fellow American but raised in Geneva, Winterbourne is charmed by the open spirited Daisy Miller, who is traveling in Europe with her mother and nine-year brother, Randolph.

This is a book about class, elitism, snobbery and money. The Millers have enough money for part of the family to see Europe (the father stays home to make enough for him to travel later). As was the custom back then, the Americans want to be "educated" by the grand old countries of Europe, and yet, Europe doesn't seem to fit well with the Millers. Daisy, who is used to flirting at social parties in America, is bored and wants to experience Europe.

Enter the men in Daisy's life. First Winterbourne, then an Italian Giovanelli. Boating on Lake Geneva, then outings in Rome. Gossip and elders who knew better. A recipe for disaster? Is Daisy free spirited? Naive? A little tart? Reckless? What kind of family does she come from? Obviously not classy enough.

Henry James does not lecture morals, only reflects the times. One can infer a lot in this book. For us 150 years later, it may seem dated but that "gossip effect" still exists today.

James says

Book Review

4 of 5 stars to *Daisy Miller* by Henry James, a story about a free and unattached American girl who is spending some time in Europe after being removed from American society for some time. She unwittingly defies the moral code of European society, never realizing it until the very end when she dies. All throughout the story, “Daisy does what she likes, responds to what she likes. To the world around her she is a young girl, an American girl, she represents a society and a sex. She is expected to be what she appears-whether that is an innocent girl or a fallen woman” (Allen 337). In America, Daisy was free to roam about, flirting occasionally with the men. Once she enters Rome though, her behavior with a “dubious native [is] in defiance of the system of curfews and chaperons which [the society] holds dear” (Dupee 298). James sets up the plot of the story by having Daisy run into a man who is also an American transplant. Frederick Winterbourne, a kind free-spirited and unemployed gigolo, has lived in Europe for quite a few years searching for an older, rich woman to marry. When he meets Daisy, he is immediately intrigued by the “pretty American flirt” (James 102). Once this connection is established, Daisy’s innocence becomes the focus of the text. In the very beginning, “when contrary to the code of Geneva, [Winterbourne] speaks to the unmarried Daisy, he wonders whether ‘he has gone too far.’ . . . When he attempts to classify her, she undermines all of his stuffy and inapplicable generalizations. He decides that [Daisy] may be ‘cold,’ ‘austere,’ and ‘prim’ only to find her spontaneous and as ‘decently limpid as the very cleanest water’” (Gargano 314). Daisy and Winterbourne have now established their relationship at this point; They are attracted to one another and would like to go and see the Chateau de Chillon. When Winterbourne asks her to go with him, Daisy says, with some placidity, “With me?”. Winterbourne responds by respectfully inviting her mother along also. However, after the flirtatious exchange between the two, “[Daisy] didn’t rise, blushing, as a young girl at Geneva would have done” (James 103). The process in which Daisy loses her innocence begins here.

However, James’s short story is told from the perspective of Winterbourne, which overshadows the true story of Daisy’s innocence. Readers see and understand Daisy’s actions through Winterbourne’s eyes and actions. After Winterbourne leaves town to care for his aunt, he and Edna find their way back to each other. However, Winterbourne is non-committal to Daisy because of her flirtatious behavior with him and other men. Nevertheless, Daisy is not alone when they meet up this time. She is dating an Italian man named Giovanelli, who is obviously only after her money. Daisy continues to see Giovanelli, but she also spends some time with Winterbourne. Society begins to see that she is involved with both of these two men, quite intimately apparently. Daisy’s mother thinks she is engaged to Giovanelli, but Daisy is also seen out with Winterbourne every once in a while. F. W. Dupee remarks that when society is “judging [Daisy’s] morals by her manners, they imagine the worst and they ostracize her. They are wrong” (Dupee 299). However, “all the chattering tongues of Rome do not bother Daisy. She knows that Winterbourne, the one person whose opinion she values, believes in her innocence and chastity” (Buitenhuis 310). Daisy later focuses her thoughts on Giovanelli, and ignores Winterbourne even though he has always believed in her innocence and cared for her.

After losing track of Daisy for quite some time, Winterbourne runs across her at the Colosseum in Rome. The Colosseum was known to be a place where young lovers would go to experience passion and love. Daisy and Giovanelli are standing in the arena when Winterbourne notices them. Winterbourne tries to leave without making his presence known, but Daisy sees him. He asks her if she is engaged to Giovanelli, and Daisy tells him that she is. Winterbourne, at this point, believes that Daisy is nothing but a flirt who toys with men’s emotions for her own self-interest. It was also very dangerous for one to go near the Colosseum at such late hours because it was common for people to catch Roman Fever, a form of malaria. When Winterbourne tells Daisy this, she seems to hardly care at all about getting sick, and her actions even lead the readers to believe that she is going there purposely. Daisy’s actions appear suicidal. Winterbourne is

concerned and he “not only expresses his concern for her health so recklessly exposed, but [by doing so,] he also lets her see that he has lost faith in her purity” (Buitenhuis 310). Shortly after, Daisy takes ill and begins to die. On her death bed, she can only think of telling Winterbourne that she really is not engaged to Giovaneli, who skips out on her once she gets sick.

Daisy eventually dies from the Roman Fever. It seems as though “Daisy dies because she cannot be fitted into any European scheme of things” (Allen 337). At this point, “[Winterbourne] realizes too late that he could have loved Daisy, and that Daisy could have loved him” (Buitenhuis 310). It is sad that it has to come to this, but society binds women to the strict standards of what they can and cannot do. If Daisy was in America, she would have gotten away with her behavior, but she was in Europe. European culture expects women to conform to specific standards. Just as Daisy is expected to live by the customs of Europe, so is Edna Pontellier from Kate Chopin’s novel *The Awakening*.

About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

Kalliope says

WINTRY DAISIES

I rarely discuss plot, and doing so in a book on which so much has been written, seems to me like jumping into a bottomless pit.

But I was sad, no; I ought to say that it irked me that Henry James had her Annie, ‘Daisy’, die at the end.

For I was becoming more and more interested in her. Was she a superficial and provincial flirt? Or was she extremely modern and free in her defiance of stringent rules?

For even if the stiff Winterbourne, when faced with a similar riddle eventually took the first possibility, I was leaning towards the second as the book advanced and James decided to uproot the fascinating spring flower as the wintry clouds approached and began threatening her.

As this was James’ first true success, I also wondered at what exactly had appealed to his contemporary readers.

Brierly says

If you haven't read Henry James, I would recommend *Daisy Miller* over the longer works. James crafts beautiful sentences with a lot of description and semicolons. His nickname is "The Master" and you can see why. Not much happens in a James narrative, but I love 19th century literature (formalities and all) so he's always been a favorite of mine.

The narrative follows a young American man, Winterbourne, as he observes and critiques a young American woman--Daisy Miller--through their brief acquaintanceship. You get to see all the basic elements of James at play but without the page fatigue. And, if you do fall in love with his writing, there's loads more.

Agnieszka says

Henry James in a nutshell. This novel contains all typical and topical for him issues, to mention only freshness and spontaneity contra preciousness and social niceties, differences between young and puritan country and fossilized and sophisticated Old World, clash between America and Europe, innocence of the first and corruption of the latter, though in that particular example we have rather America versus America.

Daisy Miller, a young American, stays with her mother and younger brother at a hotel in one of the Swiss resorts, Vevey where she is acquainted with Frederick Winterbourne, American by birth but European by education and choice. The man is smitten with her beauty and unpretentious behavior. He considers her a charming coquette, a flirt even, more attractive than European ladies he used to know. From his censorious aunt he learns, however, that Daisy is not a good catch and what's even worse due to her overly casual, inappropriate manners and reckless behavior she's considered a thorn in local social scene's flesh.

Did I enjoy *Daisy Miller*? Yes, a lot though I perceive it as a prelude to Henry James' later works portraying an independent and self-sufficient protagonists. Did I like Daisy? Not that much. But my not succumbing to her charm or behaviour had different roots than disliking and ostracism she was subjected to by her compatriots. She was too infantile and flirtatious to my liking; you could say that there's nothing wrong with flirtatiousness, agreed, but I felt that behind her coquettish way of being, that could be only a mask, nothing really was hidden.

Daisy was carefree and naïve young girlie, not giving a damn what people think of her. Very well, I liked that particular quality in her for I didn't care about this hypocritical, mutual admiration society either, but unfortunately I thought she was empty and shallow too. Even if at first I was willing to think about her attitude as a façade so why I constantly had the impression that innocence felt more like silliness ? Did she discard social restraints ? Yes, though rather out of sheer contrariness than conscious choice. Was she an innocent victim of the ruthless and snobbish milieu? Yes, again but it didn't make her a heroine I would identify with.

She was charming, spontaneous and easily giving in to a charm of the moment but that's not enough for me. I expected more complexity here, I expected a woman ahead of her times. She wanted attention, she wanted to shine and she wanted to remain herself. Go for it, Daisy ! But constant babbling about nothing and batting

your eyelashes or forbidden forays to mark your independence not especially spoke to me. Maybe I look at the novel from the wrong angle, too contemporary, through the times when young unmarried girl on the tryst with handsome foreigner is nothing that scandalous, at least in most countries. Perhaps if I have changed a perspective I could admit her actions being more brave than frivolous? I was looking at her like at rare colourful specimen by some unfortunate accident wrongly placed and not like a person who was to herald a modern and self-aware woman. For more complex and multifaceted personalities in Henry James' oeuvre I rather look around for Catherine Sloper or Isabel Archer.

I'm not up to reading too much in symbolism though maybe *Daisy* and *Winterbourne* are not that accidental names after all, and choosing Coliseum, place where people were dying for their beliefs, for fateful excursion somewhat appeals to me as well. And, on reflection, that's not true that Daisy didn't care about others, after all her last words witness that she did care what Winterbourne would think about her. And I find it highly ironic if not tragic too.

3.5/5

Frona says

To condemn values of victorian origin it is necessary to demonstrate that they cannot overcome some of their essential antagonisms. If a critique of questionable morals is the intention of this book, the second part is more vague, since it lacks any struggle worth struggling for. We get to meet a young woman without many redeeming qualities that lives only to charm man-kind. She fights for nothing but her right to annoy, which meets some reservations among others, readers as well. "All I want is a little fuss" she tells us and summerizes her motives.

If the author's intention was to show that any person, no matter how superfluous she may be, deserves freedom and acceptance, it would be a wonderful book, with all the steady rythm and clarity of style. But he seems to claim the opposite - all that lies under the petty social judgments are some innocent actions performed by harmless girls, and so such social standards are worthless. And although he tries to make a tragic hero out of her, he lets her stand out only in her poise, for her mind stays old-fashioned, as men remain her only interest. Maybe that's how changes always form, first comes form and then comes the content. But I think it would be better if he just put less fantasy and more life into it.

Henry Avila says

Customs of different countries and people seem of little importance today to many, we are basically the same , underneath... all humans, yet language, religion, history or even weather and geographic features divides us , what is accepted in one place is not in another: Daisy Miller, (real name Annie) is making the required Grand Tour of Europe, for wealthy Americans, those with aspirations to join high society, this novella was written in 1878. A typical American teenager , a girl, friendly, needing no proper introductions to speak to anyone, adventurous, never told to behave in a certain manner, in other words like a lady. This causes misunderstandings in Europe, scandals in fact but to Daisy the innocent, what is the big deal? With her timid, silly, unwise mother and rambunctious, nine- year -old brother , Randolph, a big pest, constantly getting into trouble. Miss Miller , is from a rich Schenectady, New York family, the father remained in America, taking care of business, no time to waste on trivial pursuits . Daisy is a great flirt, she doesn't realize the harm her

reputation is suffering, (quite an innocent child in the woods) the result, the Victorian era Europeans, are shocked...Going on walks with grown men , unchaperoned, disgusting, the gossip spreads far and wide, they say, she's gone too far. At a luxurious Swiss hotel, high in the always snow-capped mountains, by the gigantic, exquisite Lake Geneva, a Mr. Frederick Winterbourne, an idle expatriate of well to do Americans meets the unpretentious Daisy, unbelievably... without being properly introduced, an error that shows the upper class, she has no class, her kid brother informally did , after asking for a lump of sugar, from Winterbourne. Since Miss Miller, is very pretty and beautifully dressed, Frederick becomes obsessed with her, following Daisy to Rome, he's a gentleman though and was requested to do so, a promise is a promise . Besides Mr. Winterbourne, has an Aunt there. Daisy, of course, has many suitors, in the Eternal City, particularly a young, mysterious Giovanelli, an Italian without any apparent job, you can guess what he is, maybe wrongly. The small American community, are naturally offended and stop giving invitations, to their parties, the funny part is Daisy doesn't even realize it again, being much too busy. Winterbourne can't leave Rome, always hanging around , to get a chance to talk to Miss Miller, visiting the Roman Colosseum, in the moonlight.....and surprisingly seeing Giovanelli and Daisy there together . She, tells the lovesick gentleman, Mr. Winterbourne some bad news indeed, states rather in an offhanded way that they're engaged... he can't believe it...Tragedy soon happens. One of Henry James's best books, it encompasses everything that the great author wanted to convey to the reader about Europe and America, they are similar...but not quite the same.

Tea Jovanovi? says

Ovo je prva knjiga koju sam pro?itala na engleskom, od korica do korica... :) U prvom razredu gimnazije... I to je u to vreme bilo neobi?no... A sada klinci još u osnovnoj školi ?itaju knjige u originalu, što je dobro :) Henri Miler je bio i ostao jedan od mojih najdražih pisaca...

Duane says

Daisy Miller is a short novel that seems to me like a condensed version of The Portrait of a Lady. Daisy is a young American girl traveling abroad in Europe with her mother and younger brother. Doing what any young American girl would consider normal, she is ridiculed and scorned for not adhering to the rigid and uncompromising moral standards and customs that existed in 19th century Europe, especially relating to young ladies actions in society. James writes his stories in a style that is uniquely his own, very verbose some would say, but I like his writing and enjoy his stories.

Roberto says

Il giorno della civetta

Daisy è una graziosa ragazza americana che durante una vacanza incontra in Svizzera un giovane americano residente da anni in Europa.

Inutile dire che sono tutti di buona famiglia, siamo in un racconto nell'ottocento, e che della differenza tra la cultura europea e americana si parla a ogni pagina, è Henry James.

La ragazza è molto spigliata e poco attenta alle convenzioni. Il ragazzo è focoso come un merluzzo surgelato.

Chi è Daisy? Una civetta o una ragazza per bene? E' poco seria o anticonformista? Frivola o spensierata? Leggera o istintiva? Zoccola (si direbbe oggi) o semplicemente libera e emancipata?

Cosa significa essere una ragazza per bene? Sfortunatamente i costumi sociali non sono uguali in ogni luogo, in ogni tempo e in ogni cultura e ognuno di noi lo sa bene. Si può indossare una minigonna a Parigi ma non a Ryad, si può mangiare con le mani a Calcutta ma non a Londra, ci si può soffiare il naso a Roma ma non a Tokyo (dove invece si tira su col naso...). Il punto è che ogni cultura ha i suoi canoni e le sue regole. E se ci si vuole comportare in modo diverso c'è inevitabilmente un prezzo da pagare, più o meno alto.

Daisy non fa nulla di male. Si limita a passeggiare sola con uomini soli, è indifferente alle regole e si gode la vita per quanto possibile. Ma siamo in un'altra epoca e il giudizio della comunità è chiaro: la ragazza è volgare e immorale. E non può che pagare al termine del romanzo per questa sua imperdonabile "leggerezza".

Il romanzo è breve, folgorante e ha una fine inattesa. Ma nonostante scorra velocissimo come fosse una storia banale e leggera, ha invece un significato e un razionale importante e molto ben definito.

Oggi fortunatamente i costumi sono abbastanza cambiati, anche se ancora troppo spesso sento apostrofare impropriamente come zoccola (specie dalle nuove generazioni) una donna che si veste in un certo modo o che ha un comportamento critico o spiacevole.

Mi domando: quante Daisy hanno dovuto (e devono ancora) soffrire e combattere per cambiare convenzioni e discriminazioni?
