



The Patagonia

Henry James

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The Patagonia Details

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From Reader Review The Patagonia for online ebook

Elizabeth Reid says

What!? Wow, that ending really surprised me! A short read, a bit unlike James' normal. But I enjoyed it.

Duane says

small spoilers

Typical Henry James writing here with this novella published in 1891 in what is considered James "middle period".

It's setting is an American steamer bound for London and the story is centered on a small group of acquaintances on board, primarily on a 30 year old American woman intending to marry a man she doesn't want. Her flirtatious fling with a young man on the ship, perhaps a last chance to escape her situation, brings on gossip and ridicule and has a disastrous ending. James, as in much of his writing, contrasts the new America and the old Europe and the changes and differences in culture and moral tradition.

Darinda says

Read in *Daisy Miller and Other Stories*.

The setting is aboard *The Patagonia* a ship traveling from America to Europe. The group of people aboard includes Grace, Mrs. Nettlepoint, and Jasper, Mrs. Nettlepoint's son. Grace is traveling to Europe to meet her fiance, who she hasn't seen in years and isn't happy about marrying. While aboard the ship, she begins a friendship with Jasper, which ends tragically.

This short story is told from the perspective of a gentleman friend of Mrs. Nettlepoint. An interesting commentary on society in the 1880s.

sree says

The Patagonia is a very popular book among the readers. Please read this book and post your comments.

Laura Verret says

[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25500/...](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25500/)

good one edited says

test

Graychin says

A busybody takes the slow boat to Europe and obsesses about the suspected, illicit romance of two young persons aboard ship. Tragedy ensues. This is solid, middle-period James.

“He was of the type of those whom other people worry about, not of those who worry about other people.”

Jim says

This 1891 novelette by Henry James tells of an ocean voyage on a ship called The Patagonia, sailing from Boston to Liverpool. The unnamed narrator is friends with a Mrs. Nettlepoint, a woman of good family with a son named Jason. Accompanying them -- somewhat unexpectedly -- is a young woman named Grace Mavis, who is to marry a childhood friend whom she has not seen for ten years. During the cruise, it appears that Miss Mavis is spending an inordinate amount of time with Jason Nettlepoint, who is some years younger than she is. The usual shipboard gossip has decided that Grace and Jason are an "item," and that the woman's intended would likely be thrown over.

There is something of a surprise ending which abashes the characters circling around Grace Mavis worrying about the proprieties.

The Patagonia can be read in a single sitting and is not a bad story to begin an acquaintance with the psychological depths of James's *oeuvre*.

Ci says

The first half of this story is a fine study of personality and social manners. Here I encountered an illuminating segment where the first-person narrator talking to Mrs. Nettlepoint in her cabin. They are discussing the subtle nuances of the visible and imagined encounters of her young son Jasper and a young woman Grace who are both on the long voyage out to England. Both the older people are observers (the narrator) and somewhat anxious and annoyed participator (the mother).

This chapter serves neatly as an instructive analysis of the character analysis à la Jane Austen. The idea is beyond social convention into the realm of moral character and psychology. Social convention is often done to illustrate the louder colors of transgressions through individual's desire and Will. With its clear-cut class mores, or its blurring such delineation in American, the reading only on social convention would pale by the lack of a deeper reading of moral character. Henry James implied that this story does plumb that richer depth of psyche.

Intriguingly, would the young people also watch the reactions of the older ones? Would they deliberately manage theirs so as to force them out of the delusion of being the Olympian watchers?

The second half turns sinister and grim, not so much the Mrs. Pecks the scuttlebutt trader, but Mrs. Nettlepoint's "maternal immorality" (in today's cheap comedy, it would be *Everyone Loves Raymond*'s mother Marie). But the heart of the matter is the heartlessness of young Jasper, casually dispensing his time on Grace while fencing her in a socially impossible situation. The bleakness of her fate -- if we can re-read this story from her point of view from her own mother's pleading of Mrs. Nettlepoint -- is pain and suffering in quiet and somber colors, yet sustained with spirit and moral integrity. I shan't re-read it because of re-imagine Grace's eyes steadily looking out from a thin veil, in a hostile world, finding no purchase for life.

neelakshi says

lol!!

William Leight says

This appeared in a collection together with "Daisy Miller" and "Pandora", as another story of a young woman striving to rise to a new social position, but it is far more conventional and less interesting than either of those. Both Daisy Miller and Pandora Day are, as Pandora is described, "self-made": they don't need a man — or, really, anybody — to validate their new place in society. By contrast, the rising young woman of "The Patagonia", Grace Mavis, is a more traditional social climber, openly embarrassed by her mother — neither Daisy nor Pandora ever show such a feeling — and pining for the upper-class man, Jasper Nettlepoint, who is happy to dally with her but doesn't take her seriously. Part of the problem is that James is being mostly serious, while the setup, in which Grace's mother asks Jasper's mother to watch out for Grace while she travels to Europe to meet the fiance that she hasn't seen in years (self-made girls always have a fiance in the background, as we are told in "Pandora"), cries out for comedy. But we never really get to know either Grace or Jasper — everything is told from the perspective of a middle-aged gentleman who is a friend of Mrs. Nettlepoint but is not all that close with the young people — and the ending is abrupt and something of a copout. It's not that the story is not worth reading — James is always worth reading — but it's definitely not one of his best.

Diana says

I read this book by accident. Turned out pretty interesting. Somebody's observations about social interactions and intrigues on a sea cruise in 1920s. Interesting to read old English.
