

# The Turn of the Screw

Henry James

The story had held us, round the fire, sufficiently breathless, but except the obvious remark that it was **gruesome**, as, on Christmas Eve in an old house, a strange tale should essentially be, I remember no comment uttered till somebody happened to say that it was the only case he had met in which such a **visitation** had fallen on a child. The case, I may mention, was that of an **apparition** in just such an old house as had gathered us for the occasion—an appearance, of a dreadful kind, to a little boy sleeping in the room with his mother and waking her up in the terror of it; waking her not to **dissipate** his dread and soothe him to sleep again, but to encounter also, herself, before she had succeeded in doing so, the same sight that had shaken him. It was this observation that drew from Douglas—not immediately, but later in the evening—a reply that had the interesting consequence to which I call attention. Someone else told a story not particularly effective, which I saw he was not following. This I took for a sign that he had himself something to produce and that we should only have to wait. We waited in fact till two nights later; but that same evening, before we scattered, he brought out what was in his mind.

“I quite agree—in regard to Griffin’s ghost, or whatever it was—that its appearing first to the little boy, at so tender an age, adds a particular touch. But it’s not the first occurrence of its charming kind that I know to have involved a child. If the child gives the effect another **turn of the screw**, what do you say to TWO children—?”

“We say, of course,” somebody exclaimed, “that they give two turns! Also that we want to hear about them.”

I can see Douglas there before the fire, to which he had got up to present his back, looking down at his interlocutor with his hands in his pockets. “Nobody but me, till now, has ever heard. It’s quite too horrible.”

# The Turn of the Screw Questions

1. When and where is this tale set?

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2. Who did Griffin's ghost appear to?

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3. What makes Douglas' story different?

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