

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

Original by Henry James

Retold by Pauline Francis



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Introduction

Henry James was born in 1843 in New York, America. After schooling in New York and in Europe, he went to law school at the age of nineteen. Three years later, he began to write short stories. When he was almost thirty, Henry James spent a year in Paris and he met many famous French writers. Then he went to live in England.

The Turn of the Screw is his best-known horror story. It first appeared in book form, along with other stories, in 1898.

The story tells us of a young governess who is in charge of two young children, Miles and Flora. She – we never know her name – believes that they see the evil ghosts of their former governess and their uncle's valet. But we never really know the truth. Did the governess see the ghosts, or was she mad? Did the children see the ghosts? Did the governess try to save her pupils, or was she responsible for what happened to them? The reader must make up his or her own mind.

Henry James wrote many novels, including *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). Some of them have been made into films. He became an English citizen in 1915, and died a year later, at the age of seventy-two.