



What Maisie Knew (Oxford World's Classics)

Henry James, Adrian Poole

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What Maisie Knew (1897) represents one of James's finest reflections on the rites of passage from wonder to knowledge, and the question of their finality. The child of violently divorced parents, Maisie Farange opens her eyes on a distinctly modern world. Mothers and fathers keep changing their partners and names, while she herself becomes the pretext for all sorts of adult sexual intrigue.

In this classic tale of the death of childhood, there is a savage comedy that owes much to Dickens. But for his portrayal of the child's capacity for intelligent 'wonder', James summons all the subtlety he devotes elsewhere to his most celebrated adult protagonists. Neglected and exploited by everyone around her, Maisie inspires James to dwell with extraordinary acuteness on the things that may pass between adult and child. In addition to a new introduction, this edition of the novel offers particularly detailed notes, bibliography, and a list of variant readings.

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