

Published in 1904, *The Golden Bowl* is the last completed novel of Henry James. In it, the widowed American Adam Verver is in Europe with his daughter Maggie. They are rich, finely appreciative of European art and culture, and deeply attached to each other. Maggie has all the innocent charm of so many of James's young American heroines. She is engaged to Amerigo, an impoverished Italian prince; he must marry money, and as his name suggests, an American heiress is the perfect solution. The golden bowl, first seen in a London curio shop, is used emblematically throughout the novel. Not solid gold but gilded crystal, the perfect surface conceals a flaw; it is symbolic of the relationship between the main characters and of the world in which they move. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford Worlds Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more. Also in Europe is an old friend of Maggie's, Charlotte Stant, a girl of great charm and independence, and Maggie is blindly ignorant of the fact that she and the prince are lovers. Maggie and Amerigo are married and have a son, but Maggie remains dependent for real intimacy on her father, and she and Amerigo grow increasingly apart. Feeling that her father has suffered a loss through her marriage, Maggie decides to find him a wife, and her choice falls on Charlotte. Charlotte's affair with the prince continues and Adam Verver seems to her to be a suitable and convenient match. When Maggie herself finally comes into possession of the golden bowl, the flaw is revealed to her, and, inadvertently, the truth about Amerigo and Charlotte. Fanny Assingham (an older woman, aware of the truth from the beginning) deliberately breaks the bowl, and this marks the end of Maggie's innocence. She is no pathetic heroine-victim, however. Abstaining from outcry and outrage she instead takes the reins and maneuvers people and events. She still wants to be with Amerigo, but he must continue to be worth having and they must all be saved further humiliations and indignities. To be a wife she must cease to be a daughter; Adam Verver and the unhappy Charlotte are banished forever to America, and the new Maggie will establish a real marriage with Amerigo.

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