

A Small Boy And Others: A Critical Edition - Henry James

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Henry James was the final survivor of a remarkable family, and his memoir, written at the end of a long and tireless career, was prompted initially by the death of his "ideal Elder Brother," the psychologist and philosopher William James. *A Small Boy and Others* recounts the novelist's earliest years in Albany and, more importantly, New York City, where he was allowed to wander at will. He evokes the theatrical entertainments he enjoyed, the varied social scene in which the family mixed, and the piecemeal nature of his education. With the first of several extended trips, the "romance" of Europe begins as the small boy becomes acquainted with a British culture already familiar from his precocious reading of the great Victorian novelists. And it is in France, in the Louvre's Galerie d'Apollon, that he undergoes an initiation into the aesthetic power of great art and an intimation of all the "fun" it might bring him. Yet the child also registered, within this privileged and extended family group, signs of dysfunction and failure. James's autobiography has significantly determined the nature and even the terms of the extensive biographical and critical interest he continues to enjoy. This first fully annotated critical edition of *A Small Boy and Others*, which guides the reader through the allusive complexities of James's prose, also offers fresh insights into the formative years of one of literature's most influential figures.

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