

# **THE OUTCRY**

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The outcry by Henry James

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**HENRY JAMES**

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# THE 'OUTCRY

BY

HENRY JAMES

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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1911

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**BOOK FIRST**

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I

“NO, my lord,” Banks had replied, “no stranger has yet arrived. But I’ll see if any one has come in—or who has.” As he spoke, however, he observed Lady Sandgate’s approach to the hall by the entrance giving upon the great terrace, and addressed her on her passing the threshold. “Lord John, my lady.” With which, his duty majestically performed, he retired to the quarter—that of the main access to the spacious centre of the house—from which he had ushered the visitor.

This personage, facing Lady Sandgate as she paused there a moment framed by the large doorway to the outer expanses, the small pinkish paper of a folded telegram in her hand, had partly before him, as an immediate effect, the high wide interior, still breathing the quiet air and the fair pannelled security of the couple of hushed and stored centuries, in which certain of the reputed treasures of Dedborough Place beautifully disposed themselves; and then, through ample apertures and beyond the stately stone out-works of the great seated and supported house—uplifting terrace, balanced, balustraded steps and containing basins where splash and spray were at rest—

## THE OUTCRY

all the rich composed extension of garden and lawn and park. An ancient, an assured elegance seemed to reign; pictures and preserved "pieces," cabinets and tapestries, spoke, each for itself, of fine selection and high distinction; while the originals of the old portraits, in more or less deserved salience, hung over the happy scene as the sworn members of a great guild might have sat, on the beautiful April day, at one of their annual feasts.

Such was the setting confirmed by generous time, but the handsome woman of considerably more than forty whose entrance had all but coincided with that of Lord John either belonged, for the eye, to no such complacent company or enjoyed a relation to it in which the odd twists and turns of history must have been more frequent than any dull avenue or easy sequence. Lady Sandgate was shiningly modern, and perhaps at no point more so than by the effect of her express repudiation of a mundane future certain to be more and more offensive to women of real quality and of formed taste. Clearly, at any rate, in her hands, the clue to the antique confidence had lost itself, and repose, however founded, had given way to curiosity—that is to speculation—however disguised. She might have consented, or even attained, to being but gracefully stupid, but she would presumably have confessed, if put on her trial for restlessness or for