

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schilling Kralik Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschechow  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
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# **Daybreak; a Romance of an Old World**

James Cowan

## Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: James Cowan

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8491-5521-6

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

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# DAYBREAK: A ROMANCE OF AN OLD WORLD

## CHAPTER I.

### AN ASTRONOMER ROYAL.

It was an evening in early autumn in the last year of the nineteenth century. We were nearing the close of a voyage as calm and peaceful as our previous lives.

Margaret had been in Europe a couple of years and I had just been over to bring her home, and we were now expecting to reach New York in a day or two.

Margaret and I were the best of friends. Indeed, we had loved each other from our earliest recollection. No formal words of betrothal had ever passed between us, but for years we had spoken of our future marriage as naturally as if we were the most regularly engaged couple in the world.

"Walter," asked Margaret in her impulsive way, "at what temperature does mercury melt?"

"Well, to hazard a guess," I replied, "I should say about one degree above its freezing point. Why, do you think of making an experiment?"

"Yes, on you. And I am going to begin by being very frank with you. You have made me a number of hurried visits during my stay in Europe, but we have seen more of each other in the course of this voyage than for two long years. I trust you will not be offended when I say I hoped to find you changed. I have never spoken to you about this, even in my letters, and it is only because I am a little

older now, and because my love for you has increased with every day of life, that I have the courage to frame these words."

"Do tell me what it is," I exclaimed, thoroughly alarmed at her serious manner. "Let me know how I have disappointed you and I will make what amends I can. Tell me the nature of the change you have been looking for and I will begin the transformation at once, before my character becomes fixed."

"Alas! and if it should be already fixed," she replied, without a smile. "Perhaps it is unreasonable in me to expect it in you as a man, when you had so little of it as a boy; but I used to think it was only shyness then, and always hoped you would outgrow that and gradually become an ideal lover. You have such a multitude of other perfections, however, that it may be nature has denied you this so that I may be reminded that you are human. If the choice had been left with me I think I should have preferred to leave out some other quality in the make-up of your character, good as they all are."

"What bitter pill is this," I asked, "that you are sugar-coating to such an extent? Don't you see that I am aching to begin the improvement in my manners, as soon as you point out the direction?"

"You must know what I mean from my first abrupt question," she answered.

"To make an extreme comparison, frozen mercury is warm beside you, Walter.

If you are really to be loyal knight of mine I must send you on a quest for your heart."

"Ah, I supposed it was understood that I had given it to you."

"I have never seen it," she continued, "and you have never before said as much as is contained in those last words. Here we are, talking of many things we shall do after we are married, and yet you have nothing to say of all that wonderful and beautiful world of romance that ought to come before marriage. Is this voyage to come to an end and mean no more to us than to these hundreds of passengers around us, who seem only intent to get back to their work at the earliest possible moment? And is our wedding day to ap-

proach and pass and be looked upon merely as part of the necessary and becoming business of our lives? In short, am I never to hear a real love note?"

"Margaret, I have a sister. You know something of the depth of my affection for her. When I meet her in New York to-morrow or next day, if I should throw my arms around her neck and exclaim, in impassioned tones, 'My sister, I love you,' what would she think of me?"

"She would think you had left your senses on the other side," replied Margaret, laughing. "But I decline to accept the parallel. I have not given up my heart to your keeping these many years to be only a sister to you at last."

"But my mother! Is it possible for me to love you more than my mother loved me? And yet I never heard her speak one word on the subject, and, now that I think of it, I am not sure but words would have cheapened her affection in my mind. You do not doubt me, Margaret?"

"No more than you doubted your mother, although she never told her love.

No, it is not so serious as that; but I wish you were more demonstrative, Walter."

"What, in words? Isn't there something that speaks louder than words?"

"Yes, but let us hear the words, too. There is a beautiful proverb in India which says, 'Words are the daughters of earth and deeds are the sons of heaven.' That is true, but let us not try to pass through life without enjoying the company of some of the 'daughters of earth.'"

"I will confess this much, Margaret, that your words are one of your principal charms."

"Oh, do you really think so? I consider that a great compliment from you, for I have often tried to repress myself, fearing that my impulsive and sometimes passionate speech would offend your

taste, you who are outwardly so cold. Do you know, I have a whole vocabulary of endearing terms ready to be poured into your ears as soon as you begin to give me encouragement?"

"Then teach me how to encourage you, and I will certainly begin at once. Shall we seek some retired spot, where we can be free from observation, and then shall I seize your hand, fall on my knees, and, in vehement and extravagant words, declare a passion which you already know I have, just as well as you know I am breathing at this moment?"

"Good!" cried Margaret. "That's almost as fine as the real scene. So you have a passion for me. I really think you are improving."

Before going on with this conversation, let me tell you a little more about Margaret and my relations to her.

There was good cause for her complaint. I was at that time a sort of animated icicle, as far as my emotional nature was concerned. But although I could not express my feelings to Margaret in set phrase, I do not mind saying to you that I loved her dearly, or thought I did, which was the same thing for the time being. I loved her as well as I was capable of loving anybody. What I lacked Margaret more than made up, for she was the warmest-hearted creature in all the world. If I should begin to enumerate her perfections of person and character I should never care to stop.

Her educational advantages had been far above the average, and she had improved them in a manner to gratify her friends and create for herself abundant mental resources. She had taken the full classical course at Harvard, carrying off several of the high prizes, had then enjoyed two years of post-graduate work at Clark, and finally spent two more years in foreign travel and study. As has been intimated, I had been over for her, and we were now on our way home, expecting to land on the morrow or the day after.

If you imagine that Margaret had lost anything by her education or was less fitted to make a good home, it is because you never knew her. Instead of being stunted in her growth, broken in constitution, round-shouldered, pale-faced and weak-eyed, the development of her body had kept pace with the expansion of her mind, and she was now in the perfect flower of young womanhood, with

body and soul both of generous mold. Her marvelous beauty had been refined and heightened by her intellectual culture, and even her manners, so charming before, were now more than ever the chaste and well-ordered adornments of a noble character. She was as vivacious and sparkling as if she had never known the restraints of school, but without extravagance of any kind to detract from her self-poise. In short, she was a symphony, a grand and harmonious composition, and still human enough to love a mortal like me. Such was the woman who was trying to instill into my wooing a little of the warmth and sympathy of her delightful nature. As for myself, it will be necessary to mention only a single characteristic. I had a remarkably good ear, as we say. Not only was my sense of hearing unusually acute, but I had an almost abnormal appreciation of musical sounds. Although without the ability to sing or play and without the habit of application necessary to learn these accomplishments, I was, from my earliest years, a great lover of music. People who are born without the power of nicely discriminating between sounds often say they enjoy music, but these excellent people do not begin to understand the intense pleasure with which one listens, whose auricular nerves are more highly developed. But this rare and soul-stirring enjoyment is many times accompanied, as in my case, with acute suffering whenever the tympanum is made to re-sound with the slightest discord. The most painful moments of my life, physically speaking, have been those in which I have been forced to listen to diabolical noises. A harsh, rasping sound has often given me a pang more severe than neuralgia, while even an uncultivated voice or an instrument out of tune has jarred on my sensitive nerves for hours.

My musical friends all hated me in their hearts, for my peculiarity made me a merciless critic; and the most serious youthful quarrel between Margaret and myself arose from the same cause. Nature had given Margaret a voice of rare sweetness and a fine musical taste, and her friends had encouraged her in singing from her youth. One day, before she had received much instruction, she innocently asked me to listen to a song she was studying, when I was cruel enough to laugh at her and ridicule the idea of her ever learning to sing correctly. This rudeness made such an impression on her girlish mind that, although she forgave the offense and continued to

love the offender, she could never be induced again to try her vocal powers before me. All through her school and college days she devoted some attention to music, and while I heard from others much about her advancement and the extraordinary quality of her voice, she always declared she would never sing for me until she was sure she could put me to shame for my early indiscretion, so painfully present in her memory. This became in time quite a feature of our long courtship, for I was constantly trying to have her break her foolish resolution and let me hear her. Although unsuccessful, the situation was not without a pleasurable interest for me, for I knew it must end some time, and in a way, no doubt, to give me great enjoyment, judging from the accounts which came to my ears. Margaret, too, was well satisfied to let the affair drift along indefinitely, while she anticipated with delight the surprise she was preparing for me.

During the years she had just been spending abroad a good share of her time had been given to her musical studies, principally vocal culture, and in her letters she provokingly quoted, for my consideration, the flattering comments of her instructors and other acquaintances. She did this as part of my punishment, trying to make me realize how much pleasure I was losing. Each time I crossed the ocean to visit her I expected she would relent, but I was as often disappointed; and now this homeward voyage had almost come to an end, and I had never heard her voice in song since she was a child. Open and unreserved as she was by nature, in this particular she had schooled herself to be as reticent and undemonstrative as she accused me of being.

Our talk on the subject of my shortcomings, that evening on shipboard, had not continued much longer before I acknowledged in plain language that I knew my fault and was ready to cooperate in any scheme that could be suggested to cure it.

"What you need," said Margaret, "is some violent sensation, some extraordinary experience to stir your soul."

"Yes," I answered, "my humdrum life, my wealth, which came to me without any effort of my own, and the hitherto almost unruffled character of my relations with you have all conspired to make me satisfied with an easy and rather indolent existence. I realize I need

a shaking up. I want to forget myself in some novel experience, which shall engross all my attention for a time and draw upon my sympathies if I have any."

"But what can one do in 'this weak piping time of peace'? There are no maidens to be rescued from the enchantments of the wizard, and it is no longer the fashion to ride forth with sword and halberd to murder in the name of honor all who oppose themselves. No more dark continents wait to be explored, neither is there novelty left in searching the ocean's depths nor in sailing the sky above us. Civilized warfare itself, the only field remaining where undying fame may be purchased, seems likely to lose its hold on men, and soon the arbitrator will everywhere replace the commander-in-chief and the noble art of war will degenerate into the ignoble lawsuit. So even universal peace may have its drawbacks."

"That is quite sufficient in that line," said Margaret. "Now let us come down to something practicable."

"Well, I might bribe the pilot to sink the steamer when we are going up the bay, so that I could have the opportunity of saving your life."

"It would be almost worth the trial if it were not for the other people," she returned. "Such a role would become you immensely."

"I regret that I cannot accommodate you," I said. "But I have thought of something which would be rather safer for you. How would you like to have me fall desperately in love with some pretty girl?"

"Just the thing," exclaimed Margaret, laughing and clapping her hands, "if you can only be sure she will not return your passion."

"Small chance of that," I answered. "So you approve the plan, do you?"

"Certainly, if you care to try it. Lady never held knight against his will. But have you forgotten that, after the resources of this planet are exhausted, as you seem to think they are soon likely to be, you and I have other worlds to conquer? Perhaps in that work you may find diversion powerful enough to draw you out of yourself and, possibly, opportunities for some heart culture."

I must explain that this was a reference to a plan of life we were marking out for ourselves. Margaret was an enthusiast on the subject of astronomy. I would include myself in the same remark, only the word enthusiast did not fit my temperament at that time. But our tastes agreed perfectly in that matter, and we had always read with avidity everything we could find on the subject. Margaret, however, was the student, and as she had developed great proficiency in mathematics, she had decided to make astronomy her profession.

It was understood that I was to perform the easier part of furnishing the money for an observatory and instruments of our own, and I was determined to keep pace with Margaret in her studies as well as I could in an amateurish way, so that she might be able to retain me as an assistant. We were to be married at sunrise sharp, on the first day of the next century, and to lay the corner-stone of our observatory at the exact moment of the summer solstice of the same year. These were Margaret's suggestions, but even I was not averse to letting my friends see I had a little sentiment.

That night I dreamed of almost everything we had been talking about, but lay awake at intervals, wondering if I could, by force of will, work out the reform in my character which Margaret desired. The night passed, and it was just as I was rising that a thought flashed upon me which I determined to put into execution at the first opportunity. This came early the next evening. As we expected to reach our wharf soon, we had finished our packing, and were now sitting alone in a retired spot on deck on the starboard side. As soon as we were comfortably arranged I said to my companion:

"Margaret, as this is the last evening of this voyage, it makes an epoch in our lives. Your school days are now over, and henceforth we hope to be together. Would not this be a most appropriate time for me to be introduced to a voice with which I propose to spend the rest of my life? Last night you were anxious to think of something which would arouse my dormant heart and draw out in more passionate expression my too obscure affections. Your words haunted my sleeping and waking thoughts until it fortunately occurred to me that you yourself had the very means for accomplishing my reformation. You know how impressionable I am to every

wave of sound. Who knows but your voice, which I am sure will be the sweetest in the world to me, may be the instrument destined to stir my drowsy soul, to loose my halting tongue, and even to force my proud knees to bend before you? In short, why not adopt my suggestion, break your long-kept resolution, and sing for me this moment? Is the possible result not worth the trial?" To this long address, which was a great effort for me, Margaret answered:

"You surprise me already, Walter. If the mere thought of hearing me sing can prompt such a sentimental speech as that, what would the song itself do? Perhaps it would drive you to the other extreme, and you would become gushing. Just think of that. But, seriously, I am afraid you would laugh at my voice and send me back to Germany. When you were talking I thought I could detect an undercurrent of fun in your words."

"I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life, and I am sorry you will not sing. Is your answer final?"

"I think I will wait a little longer. We are liable to be disturbed here. And now that you have made a start, perhaps you will improve in manners becoming a lover without any more help."

"No, I shall relapse and be worse than ever. Now is your time to help me find my heart."

Without answering, Margaret sprang up impulsively, exclaiming:

"There! I have forgotten that book the professor borrowed. Men never return anything. I must go and get it, and put it into my bag. And I had better run down and see if auntie wants anything. You stay right here; don't move, and I'll be back in just three minutes."



## CHAPTER II.

### A FALLEN SATELLITE.

I promised, and then settled myself more comfortably into my steamer chair to await Margaret's return. The three minutes passed, and she did not come. Evidently it was hard to find the professor, or perhaps he was holding her, against her will, for a discussion of the book. At any rate, I could do nothing but sit there, in that easy, half-reclining position, and watch the full moon, which had just risen, and was shining square in my face, if that could be said of an object that looked so round.

I fell into a deep reverie. My mind was filled with contending emotions, and such opposing objects as rolling worlds and lovely maidens flitted in dim images across my mental vision. I loved the best woman on the earth, and I wondered if any of those other globes contained her equal. If so, then perhaps some other man was as fortunate as myself. I was drowsy, but determined to keep awake and pursue this fancy. I remember feeling confident that I could not sleep if I only kept my eyes open, and so I said I would keep them fixed on the bright face of the moon. But how large it looked. Surely something must be wrong with it, or was it my memory that was at fault? I thought the moon generally appeared smaller as it rose further above the horizon, but now it was growing bigger every minute. It was coming nearer, too. Nearer, larger—why, it was monstrous. I could not turn my eyes away now, and everything else was forgotten, swallowed up in that one awful sight. How fast it grew. Now it fills half the sky and makes me tremble with fear. Part of it is still lighted by the sun, and part is in dark, threatening shadow. I see pale faces around me. Others are gazing, awe-stricken, at the same object. We are in the open street, and some have glasses, peering into the deep craters and caverns of the surface.

I seemed to be a new-comer on the scene, and could not help remarking to my nearest neighbor:

"This is a strange sight. Do you think it is real, or are we all bereft of our senses?"

"Strange indeed, but true," he answered.

"But what does it mean?" And then, assuming a gayety I did not feel, I asked further: "Does the moon, too, want to be annexed to the United States?"

"You speak lightly, young man," my neighbor said, "and do not appear to realize the seriousness of our situation. Where have you been, that you have not heard this matter discussed, and do not understand that the moon is certain to come into collision with the earth in a very short time?"

He seemed thoroughly alarmed, and I soon found that all the people shared his feeling. The movement of the earth carried us out of sight of the moon in a few hours, but after a brief rest everybody was on the watch again at the next revolution. The excitement over the behavior of our once despised moon increased rapidly from this time. Nothing else was talked of, business was well-nigh suspended, and the newspapers neglected everything else to tell about the unparalleled natural phenomenon. Speculation was rife as to what would be the end, and what effect would follow a union of the earth with its satellite.

While this discussion was going on, the unwelcome visitor was approaching with noticeable rapidity at every revolution of the earth, and the immense dark shadow which it now made, as it passed beneath the sun, seemed ominous of an ill fate to our world and its inhabitants. It was a time to try the stoutest hearts, and, of course, the multitude of the people were overwhelmed with alarm. As no one could do anything to ward off what seemed a certain catastrophe, the situation was all the more dreadful. Men could only watch the monster, speculate as to the result, and wait, with horrible suspense, for the inevitable. The circle of revolution was now becoming so small that the crisis was hourly expected. Men everywhere left their houses and sought the shelterless fields, and it was well they did so, for there came a day when the earth received a sudden and awful shock. After it had passed, people looked at each other wonderingly to find themselves alive, and began congratulating each other, thinking the worst was over. But the dreadful anxie-