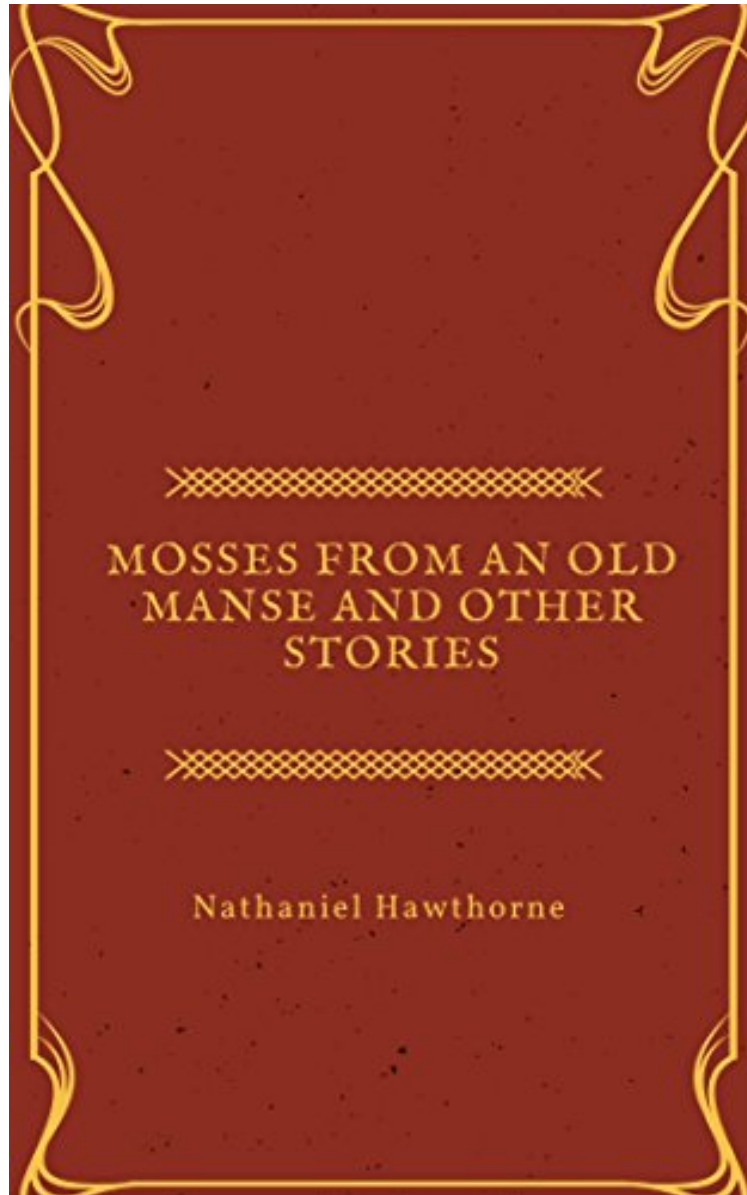


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Mosses from an Old Manse and other stories

Nathaniel Hawthorne

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Nathaniel Hawthorne : Mosses from an Old Manse and other stories before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mosses from an Old Manse and other stories:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Delightful Collection, but Incomplete in the Free Version for KindleBy Don QuixoteAs my title indicates, the Kindle version of this text that you can download for free does not include all of the stories that compose Hawthorne's 1846 collection Mosses from an Old Manse. This is the only reason why I am giving this book four stars instead of five. I have reviewed the Modern Library edition of Mosses,

and given it five stars, so if you want my comments on the entire book please look up this other version and see my review there. Some may argue that an incomplete version of a book deserves one star. I felt, however, that giving a low rating to this book because it does not include all the stories might be construed as a negative judgment on Hawthorne's work. In addition, one must keep in mind that reviews often appear under different editions of a particular book. I decided to subtract one star to indicate that the work is incomplete, and after that to focus on what *is* included, as opposed to what is missing. My point, in short: what you get in this book is excellent, even if you should be aware that there are some texts missing. Another thing to be aware of is the misleading title: *Mosses from an Old Manse and Other Stories*. Hawthorne never wrote a story titled "Mosses from an Old Manse." That is simply the title of the collection, which begins with a descriptive/poetic preface titled simply "The Old Manse," a text that is ironically not included in this free version. A more accurate title, then, would be *Selections from Mosses from an Old Manse*. What is included here? Hawthorne's fiction can be divided roughly into two groups: tales and sketches. The vast majority of the texts included here are tales, by which I mean that they tend to focus on plot. Most of what is missing in this version of the book are the sketches, that is, texts in which plot is not the main element and which tend to be descriptive in nature. I will comment briefly on the texts included:

- * *The Birth-Mark*: A scientist wants to remove a birthmark from his wife's cheek. This often-anthologized tale deals with the (male) obsession with (female) purity, especially in relation to physical appearance.
- * *Young Goodman Brown*: A young man meets one of literature's oldest characters in the woods. The conversation that ensues teaches the young man some things about the apparently virtuous community he belongs to. Hawthorne's most famous and most studied tale.
- * *Rappaccini's Daughter*: This longer tale, a novella, concerns a student who meets a lovely young woman in a scientist's garden in Italy. There are echoes here of the story of the Garden of Eden. An interesting take of the traditional love story.
- * *Mrs. Bullfrog*: A satire on marriage and the motives that people have for marrying. A great example of Hawthorne's humorous style.
- * *The Celestial Railroad*: A satire that adapts John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* to Hawthorne's time, so that people make their pilgrimage by railroad. Also an example of Hawthorne's humor, this text is more of a sketch.
- * *The Procession of Life*: A meditation, or sermon, on the road towards eternity. The style is reminiscent of the transcendentalists, especially of Emerson. Like "The Celestial Railroad," it may be catalogued as a sketch, as there is no plot to speak of.
- * *Feathertop*: Subtitled "A Moralized Legend," this tale was not included in the original edition of *Mosses*, but was added to the second edition. In it, a witch gives life to a scarecrow and sends him out into society. The story challenges the real/fake dichotomy.
- * *Egotism; or, The Bosom-Serpent*: The terrifying story of a man who is convinced that there is a snake living in his chest. Connecting with others is offered as a way to leave the prison of one's ego.
- * *Drowne's Wooden Image*: An artist creates a beautiful wooden figurehead for a captain. One day, the captain is seen walking around the town with a foreign-looking lady that is the spitting image of the figurehead. Has the work of art come to life? One of my personal favorites from the collection, because of the way it approaches the fantastic.
- * *Roger Malvin's Burial*: A man leaves behind his wounded father-in-law, at the latter's request. He marries his fiancée, has a son, and goes on with his life, but he cannot stop feeling guilty. An unforgettable meditation on how the past is ever present, a theme that Faulkner would develop extensively.
- * *The Artist of the Beautiful*: An artist creates a mechanic butterfly. His artistic/spiritual temperament is contrasted to his rival's practical/material nature, as both are attracted to the same young woman.

What is missing? The preface (titled "The Old Manse") plus 14 texts, all of which I would label as sketches, not tales. So, if narrative and plot (as opposed to description and meditation) are your preference, this incomplete version of the book will satisfy you. If you enjoy the two sketches included here, you may want to explore the missing pieces. One word about the sketches, though: while most of us tend to prefer plot because it's what we're used to, Hawthorne's more descriptive and poetic pieces are beautiful and moving. They may be an acquired taste, but I recommend giving them a try. To me, this incomplete version of *Mosses* served as a sample of Hawthorne's stories. Does it include the best of *Mosses*? For the most part, yes, though as soon as I was done reading it, I looked for the complete version of Hawthorne's collection, and was glad that I did. To keep things in perspective, let me repeat that this version is free. Even if it is incomplete, no money is wasted, and one is getting some of the greatest pieces in *Mosses*, and at least three of Hawthorne's most famous short stories. Hawthorne published three collections of short stories for adults (plus two for children). The other two collections for adults, *Twice-Told Tales* (1837) and *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1852), are also available for free, but be advised: the former is complete, while the latter is not. My next book by Hawthorne will be either *Twice-Told Tales* or *The House of the Seven Gables*. Thanks for reading, and enjoy the book!

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Unusual but delightful tales

By Israel Drazin

Many readers have enjoyed Nathaniel Hawthorne's books (1804-1864) for more than a century. He was one of America's greatest writers of his time, His books — such as: *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of Seven Gables*, and *The Marble Faun*, are repeatedly being reprinted. People of virtually all ages will be able to appreciate his skill and enjoy how he tells his stories by reading the tales in this volume. The stories include: *The Birthmark*, *Young Goodman Brown*, *Rappaccini Daughter*, *Mrs. Bullfrog*, *The Celestial Railroad*, *The Procession of Life*, *Feathertop*, and others. All are good and unusual. In *The Birthmark*, for example, a scientist decides to remove a birthmark from the face of his beautiful wife, a mark that he used to think added to her beauty, but now disgusts him. His wife also begins to dislike the mark. In *Young Goodman*, to cite

another example, a man living in Salem during the days of the witch trials there meets the devil. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Pleasantly surprised By Anna Hermanson I got this simply because of two things: 1. I wished to read Rappaccini's Daughter again; and 2. Curiosity. Aside from the aforementioned story, I don't recall having read any Hawthorne. I was quite surprised by the underlying dark humor in some of the stories. I may be looking into more Hawthorne in the future.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was already a man of forty-six, and a tale writer of some twenty-four years' standing, when "The Scarlet Letter" appeared. He was born at Salem, Mass., on July 4th, 1804, son of a sea-captain. He led there a shy and rather sombre life; of few artistic encouragements, yet not wholly uncongenial, his moody, intensely meditative temperament being considered. Its colours and shadows are marvelously reflected in his "Twice-Told Tales" and other short stories, the product of his first literary period. Even his college days at Bowdoin did not quite break through his acquired and inherited reserve; but beneath it all, his faculty of divining men and women was exercised with almost uncanny prescience and subtlety. "The Scarlet Letter," which explains as much of this unique imaginative art, as is to be gathered from reading his highest single achievement, yet needs to be ranged with his other writings, early and late, to have its last effect. In the year that saw it published, he began "The House of the Seven Gables," a later romance or prose-tragedy of the Puritan-American community as he had himself known it—defrauded of art and the joy of life, starving for symbols as Emerson has it. Nathaniel Hawthorne died at Plymouth, New Hampshire, on May 18th, 1864. Hawthorne's contributions to magazines were numerous, and most of his tales appeared first in periodicals, chiefly in "The Token," 1831–1838, "New England Magazine," 1834, 1835; "Knickerbocker," 1837–1839; "Democratic Review," 1838–1846; "Atlantic Monthly," 1860–1872.

About the Author Nathaniel Hawthorne, born Nathaniel Hathorne; July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was an American novelist, Dark Romantic, and short story writer. He was born in 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts, to Nathaniel Hathorne and the former Elizabeth Clarke Manning. His ancestors include John Hathorne, the only judge involved in the Salem witch trials who never repented of his actions. Nathaniel later added a "w" to make his name "Hawthorne" in order to hide this relation. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1824, and graduated in 1825. Hawthorne published his first work, a novel titled Fanshawe, in 1828; he later tried to suppress it, feeling it was not equal to the standard of his later work. He published several short stories in periodicals, which he collected in 1837 as Twice-Told Tales. The next year, he became engaged to Sophia Peabody. He worked at the Boston Custom House and joined Brook Farm, a transcendentalist community, before marrying Peabody in 1842. The couple moved to The Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, later moving to Salem, the Berkshires, then to The Wayside in Concord. The Scarlet Letter was published in 1850, followed by a succession of other novels. A political appointment as consul took Hawthorne and family to Europe before their return to Concord in 1860. Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864, and was survived by his wife and their three children.