



Little Daffydowndilly
Hawthorne, Nathaniel

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About Hawthorne:

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts, where his birthplace is now a museum. William Hathorne, who emigrated from England in 1630, was the first of Hawthorne's ancestors to arrive in the colonies. After arriving, William persecuted Quakers. William's son John Hathorne was one of the judges who oversaw the Salem Witch Trials. (One theory is that having learned about this, the author added the "w" to his surname in his early twenties, shortly after graduating from college.) Hawthorne's father, Nathaniel Hathorne, Sr., was a sea captain who died in 1808 of yellow fever, when Hawthorne was only four years old, in Raymond, Maine. Hawthorne attended Bowdoin College at the expense of an uncle from 1821 to 1824, befriendng classmates Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and future president Franklin Pierce. While there he joined the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. Until the publication of his *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837, Hawthorne wrote in the comparative obscurity of what he called his "owl's nest" in the family home. As he looked back on this period of his life, he wrote: "I have not lived, but only dreamed about living." And yet it was this period of brooding and writing that had formed, as Malcolm Cowley was to describe it, "the central fact in Hawthorne's career," his "term of apprenticeship" that would eventually result in the "richly meditated fiction." Hawthorne was hired in 1839 as a weigher and gauger at the Boston Custom House. He had become engaged in the previous year to the illustrator and transcendentalist Sophia Peabody. Seeking a possible home for himself and Sophia, he joined the transcendentalist utopian community at Brook Farm in 1841; later that year, however, he left when he became dissatisfied with farming and the experiment. (His Brook Farm adventure would prove an inspiration for his novel *The Blithedale Romance*.) He married Sophia in 1842; they moved to The Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, where they lived for three years. There he wrote most of the tales collected in *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Hawthorne and his wife then moved to Salem and later to the Berkshires, returning in 1852 to Concord and a new home The Wayside, previously owned by the Alcotts. Their neighbors in Concord included Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Like Hawthorne, Sophia was a reclusive person. She was bedridden with headaches until her sister introduced her to Hawthorne, after which her headaches seem to have abated. The Hawthornes enjoyed a long marriage, often taking walks in the park. Sophia greatly admired her husband's work. In one of her journals, she writes: "I am always so dazzled and bewildered with

the richness, the depth, the... jewels of beauty in his productions that I am always looking forward to a second reading where I can ponder and muse and fully take in the miraculous wealth of thoughts." In 1846, Hawthorne was appointed surveyor (determining the quantity and value of imported goods) at the Salem Custom House. Like his earlier appointment to the custom house in Boston, this employment was vulnerable to the politics of the spoils system. A Democrat, Hawthorne lost this job due to the change of administration in Washington after the presidential election of 1848. Hawthorne's career as a novelist was boosted by *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850, in which the preface refers to his three-year tenure in the Custom House at Salem. *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) followed in quick succession. In 1852, he wrote the campaign biography of his old friend Franklin Pierce. With Pierce's election as president, Hawthorne was rewarded in 1853 with the position of United States consul in Liverpool. In 1857, his appointment ended and the Hawthorne family toured France and Italy. They returned to The Wayside in 1860, and that year saw the publication of *The Marble Faun*. Failing health (which biographer Edward Miller speculates was stomach cancer) prevented him from completing several more romances. Hawthorne died in his sleep on May 19, 1864, in Plymouth, New Hampshire while on a tour of the White Mountains with Pierce. He was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord, Massachusetts. Wife Sophia and daughter Una were originally buried in England. However, in June 2006, they were re-interred in plots adjacent to Nathaniel. Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne had three children: Una, Julian, and Rose. Una was a victim of mental illness and died young. Julian moved out west, served a jail term for embezzlement and wrote a book about his father. Rose married George Parsons Lathrop and they became Roman Catholics. After George's death, Rose became a Dominican nun. She founded the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne to care for victims of incurable cancer. Source: Wikipedia

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Daffydowndilly was so called because in his nature he resembled a flower, and loved to do only what was beautiful and agreeable, and took no delight in labor of any kind. But, while Daffydowndilly was yet a little boy, his mother sent him away from his pleasant home, and put him under the care of a very strict schoolmaster, who went by the name of Mr. Toil. Those who knew him best affirmed that this Mr. Toil was a very worthy character; and that he had done more good, both to children and grown people, than anybody else in the world. Certainly he had lived long enough to do a great deal of good; for, if all stories be true, he had dwelt upon earth ever since Adam was driven from the garden of Eden.

Nevertheless, Mr. Toil had a severe and ugly countenance, especially for such little boys or big men as were inclined to be idle; his voice, too, was harsh; and all his ways and customs seemed very disagreeable to our friend Daffydowndilly. The whole day long, this terrible old schoolmaster sat at his desk overlooking the scholars, or stalked about the school-room with a certain awful birch rod in his hand. Now came a rap over the shoulders of a boy whom Mr. Toil had caught at play; now he punished a whole class who were behindhand with their lessons; and, in short, unless a lad chose to attend quietly and constantly to his book, he had no chance of enjoying a quiet moment in the school-room of Mr. Toil.

"This will never do for me," thought Daffydowndilly.

Now, the whole of Daffydowndilly's life had hitherto been passed with his dear mother, who had a much sweeter face than old Mr. Toil, and who had always been very indulgent to her little boy. No wonder, therefore, that poor Daffydowndilly found it a woful change, to be sent away from the good lady's side, and put under the care of this ugly-visaged schoolmaster, who never gave him any apples or cakes, and seemed to think that little boys were created only to get lessons.

"I can't bear it any longer," said Daffydowndilly to himself, when he had been at school about a week. "I'll run away, and try to find my dear mother; and, at any rate, I shall never find anybody half so disagreeable as this old Mr. Toil!"

So, the very next morning, off started poor Daffydowndilly, and began his rambles about the world, with only some bread and cheese for his breakfast, and very little pocket-money to pay his expenses. But he had gone only a short distance, when he overtook a man of grave and sedate appearance, who was trudging at a moderate pace along the road.

"Good morning, my fine lad," said the stranger; and his voice seemed hard and severe, but yet had a sort of kindness in it; "whence do you come so early, and whither are you going?"

Little Daffydowndilly was a boy of very ingenuous disposition, and had never been known to tell a lie in all his life. Nor did he tell one now. He hesitated a moment or two, but finally confessed that he had run away from school, on account of his great dislike to Mr. Toil; and that lie was resolved to find some place in the world where he should never see or hear of the old schoolmaster again.

"O, very well, my little friend!" answered the stranger. "Then we will go together; for I, likewise, have had a good deal to do with Mr. Toil, and should be glad to find some place where he was never heard of."

Our friend Daffydowndilly would have been better pleased with a companion of his own age, with whom he might have gathered flowers along the roadside, or have chased butterflies, or have done many other things to make the journey pleasant. But he had wisdom enough to understand that he should get along through the world much easier by having a man of experience to show him the way. So he accepted the stranger's proposal, and they walked on very sociably together.

They had not gone far, when the road passed by a field where some haymakers were at work, mowing down the tall grass, and spreading it out in the sun to dry. Daffydowndilly was delighted with the sweet smell of the new-mown grass, and thought how much pleasanter it must be to make hay in the sunshine, under the blue sky, and with the birds singing sweetly in the neighboring trees and bushes, than to be shut up in a dismal school-room, learning lessons all day long, and continually scolded by old Mr. Toil. But, in the midst of these thoughts, while he was stopping to peep over the stone wall, he started back and caught hold of his companion's hand.

"Quick, quick!" cried he. "Let us run away, or lie will catch us!"

"Who will catch us?" asked the stranger.

"Mr. Toil, the old schoolmaster!" answered Daffydowndilly. "Don't you see him amongst the haymakers?"

And Daffydowndilly pointed to an elderly man, who seemed to be the owner of the field, and the employer of the men at work there. He had stripped off his coat and waistcoat, and was busily at work in his shirt-sleeves. The drops of sweat stood upon his brow; but he gave himself not a moment's rest, and kept crying out to the haymakers to make hay while the sun shone. Now, strange to say, the figure and features of this

old farmer were precisely the same as those of old Mr. Toil, who, at that very moment, must have been just entering his school-room.

"Don't be afraid," said the stranger. "This is not Mr. Toil the schoolmaster, but a brother of his, who was bred a farmer; and people say he is the most disagreeable man of the two. However, he won't trouble you, unless you become a laborer on the farm."

Little Daffydowndilly believed what his companion said, but was very glad, nevertheless, when they were out of sight of the old farmer, who bore such a singular resemblance to Mr. Toil. The two travellers had gone but little farther, when they came to a spot where some carpenters were erecting a house. Daffydowndilly begged his companion to stop a moment; for it was a very pretty sight to see how neatly the carpenters did their work, with their broad-axes, and saws, and planes, and hammers, shaping out the doors, and putting in the window-sashes, and nailing on the clapboards; and he could not help thinking that he should like to take a broad-axe, a saw, a plane, and a hammer, and build a little house for himself. And then, when he should have a house of his own, old Mr. Toil would never dare to molest him.

But, just while he was delighting himself with this idea, little Daffydowndilly beheld something that made him catch hold of his companion's hand, all in a fright.

"Make haste. Quick, quick!" cried he. "There he is again!"

"Who?" asked the stranger, very quietly.

"Old Mr. Toil," said Daffydowndilly, trembling. "There! he that is overseeing the carpenters. 'T is my old schoolmaster, as sure as I 'm alive!"

The stranger cast his eyes where Daffydowndilly pointed his finger; and he saw an elderly man, with a carpenter's rule and compasses in his hand. This person went to and fro about the unfinished house, measuring pieces of timber, and marking out the work that was to be done, and continually exhorting the other carpenters to be diligent. And wherever he turned his hard and wrinkled visage, the men seemed to feel that they had a task-master over them, and sawed, and hammered, and planed, as if for dear life.

"O no! this is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster," said the stranger. "It is another brother of his, who follows the trade of carpenter."

"I am very glad to hear it," quoth Daffydowndilly; "but if you please, sir, I should like to get out of his way as soon as possible."

Then they went on a little farther, and soon heard the sound of a drum and fife. Daffydowndilly pricked up his ears at this, and besought his companion to hurry forward, that they might not miss seeing the

soldiers. Accordingly, they made what haste they could, and soon met a company of soldiers, gayly dressed, with beautiful feathers in their caps, and bright muskets on their shoulders. In front marched two drummers and two fifers, beating on their drums and playing on their fifes with might and main, and making such lively music that little Daffydown-dilly would gladly have followed them to the end of the world. And if he was only a soldier, then, he said to himself, old Mr. Toil would never venture to look him in the face.

"Quick step! Forward march!" shouted a gruff voice.

Little Daffydowndilly started, in great dismay; for this voice which had spoken to the soldiers sounded precisely the same as that which he had heard every day in Mr. Toil's school-room, out of Mr. Toil's own mouth. And, turning his eyes to the captain of the company, what should he see but the very image of old Mr. Toil himself, with a smart cap and feather on his head, a pair of gold epaulets on his shoulders, a laced coat on his back, a purple sash round his waist, and a long sword, instead of a birch rod, in his hand. And though he held his head so high, and strutted like a turkey-cock, still he looked quite as ugly and disagreeable as when he was hearing lessons in the schoolroom.

"This is certainly old Mr. Toil," said Daffydowndilly, in a trembling voice. "Let us run away, for fear he should make us enlist in his company!"

"You are mistaken again, my little friend," replied the stranger, very composedly. "This is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster, but a brother of his, who has served in the army all his life. People say he's a terribly severe fellow; but you and I need not be afraid of him."

"Well, well," said little Daffydowndilly, "but, if you please, sir, I don't want to see the soldiers any more."

So the child and the stranger resumed their journey; and, by and by, they came to a house by the roadside, where a number of people were making merry. Young men and rosy-checked girls, with smiles on their faces, were dancing to the sound of a fiddle. It was the pleasantest sight that Daffydowndilly had yet met with, and it comforted him for all his disappointments.

"O, let us stop here," cried he to his companion; "for Mr. Toil will never dare to show his face where there is a fiddler, and where people are dancing and making merry. We shall be quite safe here!"

But these last words died away upon Daffydowndilly's tongue; for, happening to cast his eyes on the fiddler, whom he should behold again, but the likeness of Mr. Toil, holding a fiddle-bow instead of a birch rod,

and flourishing it with as much ease and dexterity as if he had been a fiddler all his life! He had somewhat the air of a Frenchman, but still looked exactly like the old schoolmaster; and Daffydowndilly even fancied that he nodded and winked at him, and made signs for him to join in the dance.

"O dear me!" whispered he, turning pale. "It seems as if there was nobody but Mr. Toil in the world. Who could have thought of his playing on a fiddle!"

"This is not your old schoolmaster," observed the stranger, "but another brother of his, who was bred in France, where he learned the profession of a fiddler. He is ashamed of his family, and generally calls himself Monsieur le Plaisir; but his real name is Toil, and those who have known him best think him still more disagreeable than his brothers."

"Pray let us go a little farther," said Daffydowndilly. "I don't like the looks of this fiddler at all."

Well, thus the stranger and little Daffydowndilly went wandering along the highway, and in shady lanes, and through pleasant villages; and whithersoever they went, behold! there was the image of old Mr. Toil. He stood like a scarecrow in the cornfields. If they entered a house, he sat in the parlor; if they peeped into the kitchen, he was there. He made himself at home in every cottage, and stole, under one disguise or another, into the most splendid mansions. Everywhere there was sure to be somebody wearing the likeness of Mr. Toil, and who, as the stranger affirmed, was one of the old schoolmaster's innumerable brethren.

Little Daffydowndilly was almost tired to death, when he perceived some people reclining lazily in a shady place, by the side of the road. The poor child entreated his companion that they might sit down there, and take some repose.

"Old Mr. Toil will never come here," said he; "for he hates to see people taking their ease."

But, even while he spoke, Daffydowndilly's eyes fell upon a person who seemed the laziest, and heaviest, and most torpid of all those lazy and heavy and torpid people who had lain down to sleep in the shade. Who should it be, again, but the very image of Mr. Toil!

"There is a large family of these Toils," remarked the stranger. "This is another of the old schoolmaster's brothers, who was bred in Italy, where he acquired very idle habits, and goes by the name of Signor Far Niente. He pretends to lead an easy life, but is really the most miserable fellow in the family."

"O, take me back!—take me back!" cried poor little Daffydowndilly, bursting into tears. "If there is nothing but Toil all the world over, I may just as well go back to the school-house!"

"Yonder it is,—there is the school-house!" said the stranger; for though he and little Daffydowndilly had taken a great many steps, they had travelled in a circle, instead of a straight line. "Come; we will go hack to school together."

There was something in his companion's voice that little Daffydowndilly now remembered; and it is strange that he had not remembered it sooner. Looking up into his face, behold! there again was the likeness of old Mr. Toil; so that the poor child had been in company with Toil all day, even while he was doing his best to run away from him. Some people, to whom I have told little Daffydowndilly's story, are of opinion that old Mr. Toil was a magician, and possessed the power of multiplying himself into as many shapes as lie saw fit.

Be this as it may, little Daffydowndilly had learned a good lesson, and from that time forward was diligent at his task, because he knew that diligence is not a whit more toilsome than sport or idleness. And when he became better acquainted with Mr. Toil, he began to think that his ways were not so very disagreeable, and that the old schoolmaster's smile of approbation made his face almost as pleasant as even that of Daffydowndilly's mother.

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