

The Piazza

Herman Melville



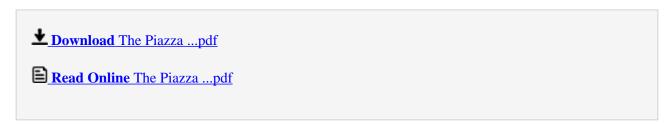
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The Piazza Herman Melville In "The Piazza", especially written as an introductory story to the volume, the protagonist idealizes a radiant spot on the mountain he looks upon from his piazza. This spot is a house and one day he goes to the cottage, only to find the unhappy girl Marianna, who longs to see the lucky individual who lives in the white house she looks upon from her window. The narrator understands that he himself has been the object of a fantasy not unlike his own, and leaves thinking how all idealism is an illusion. In addition to numerous biblical and mythological references, which Sealts calls "a familiar Melvillean pattern," the story alludes to Emerson's essay "The Problem", Don Quixote and Paradise Lost, and explicitly namechecks Edmund Spenser. The narrator points to some plays by Shakespeare, and according to Sealts, the girl Marianna should remind the reader of both the Marianna in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and Alfred, Lord Tennyson's Marianna.



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