

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR**

William Somerset Maugham was born in Paris, from Irish ancestry, as the sixth and youngest son of the prominent solicitor to the British embassy. His father, Robert Ormond Maugham, was an English lawyer who handled the legal affairs of the British embassy. His grand-father was also a lawyer and a cofounder of the English Law Society. Although most of his family's members were active in the Law's field but Willie seemed not having the same interest like his father or grand-father. Willie's mother, Edith Mary, was an ordinary woman who had tuberculosis on her lungs. She had other five children, but her last son was born died and brought her to death after six days. At the age of 10, Willie's mother died at age 41 and two years after it Willie's father died of cancer. Since the death of his father, Willie was sent back to England to be cared for by his uncle, Henry MacDonald Maugham, who was a minister in Kent.

Willie's life under his uncle's charge was really depressed him. His uncle was proved cold and emotionally cruel. He never let little Willie to lose his temper or to make emotional displays of any kind, and he was denied the chance to see others express their own emotions. His uncle treated Willie with a strict manner, where Willie's life was tame and his emotions were tightly circumscribed. He was a quiet, private but very curious child, and this denial of the emotion of others was at least as hard on him as the denial of his own emotions. Willie's school experiences were also miserable, just like his life at his uncle's house. He was sent to a boarding school,

The King's School, in Canterbury. There he was teased by his schoolmates for his bad English because French had been his first language. He was also bullied for his short stature, which he inherited from his father. One of his weaknesses that caused him terrible problem, during his childhood and lasted for his adulthood, was his stammer. He developed his bad stammer when he moved to his uncle's place in Kent. He was always poked fun at for his weird English accent and his difficulties to speak smoothly by his friends. However, he had a special ability to apply a wounding remark to those who displeased him. His educational experience in London was stopped when he was sixteen because he refused to continue his study at The King's School. Instead he travelled to Germany where he studied at Heidelberg University and took majors in Literature, Philosophy and German. After he came back to England, his uncle tried to look for a job for Willie but he could not find a suitable one. Then, the local doctor offered a profession of medicine to Willie and his uncle approved it. Finally, Willie had to continue his study as a medical student at King's College in London for five years.

Willie's hobby to write was started at his age of fifteen and since then he had been writing steadily. He enthusiastically intended to become an author, but because he was not of age, he could not admit it to his strict uncle. However, he wrote his first book about a biography of Meyerbeer which he wrote when he was sixteen and during his study at Heidelberg University. Maugham lived in Paris for ten years as a struggling young author. In 1897 appeared his first novel, *LIZA OF LAMBETH*,

which drew on his experiences of attending women in childbirth. *Liza of Lambeth* proved popular with both reviewers and the public, and the first print run sold out in a matter of weeks. This was enough to convince Maugham, who had qualified as a doctor, to drop medicine and embark on his sixty-five year career as a man of letters. Of his entry into the profession of writing he later said, "I took to it as a duck takes to water." His first play, *A MAN OF HONOUR*, was produced in 1903. Four of his dramas ran simultaneously in London in 1904. Maugham's breakthrough novel was the semi-autobiographical *OF HUMAN BONDAGE* (1915), which is usually considered his outstanding achievement.

William Somerset Maugham was the master of the short, concise novel and he could convey relationships, greed and ambition with a startling reality. The remote locations of the quietly magnificent yet decaying British Empire offered him beautiful canvasses on which to write his stories and plays. The real-life inhabitants of these locations were frankly shocked at being portrayed as so trivial, parochial and vacuous creatures. Maugham's English is clear and lucid and this makes his books easy to come to terms with. His works are often full of the basest, and yet more interesting, of the human vices but can still evoke the day to day feelings and emotions that allow us to understand and identify with his characters. A complex and interesting character, Somerset Maugham managed to catch much of the darker essence of Empire. Nevertheless, the close relationship between fictional and non-fictional became Maugham's trademark, despite the legal requirement to state that "the

characters in [this or that publication] are entirely imaginary". In 1938 he wrote: "Fact and fiction are so intermingled in my work that now, looking back on it, I can hardly distinguish one from the other." In 1928, Maugham bought Villa Mauresque on twelve acres at Cap Ferrat on the French Riviera, which would be his home for most of the rest of his life, and one of the great literary and social salons of the 1920s and 30s. His output continued to be prodigious, including plays, short stories, novels, essays and travel books. By 1940, when the collapse of France forced Maugham to leave the French Riviera and become a well-heeled refugee, he was already one of the most famous writers in the English-speaking world, and one of the wealthiest.

Maugham's masterpiece is generally agreed to be *OF HUMAN BONDAGE*, an autobiographical novel that deals with the life of the main character, who like Maugham, was orphaned and brought up by his pious uncle. Later successful novels were also based on real-life characters: *The Moon and Sixpence* fictionalizes the life of Paul Gauguin; and *Cakes and Ale* contains thinly veiled characterizations of authors Thomas Hardy and Hugh Walpole.

Maugham's last major novel, *The Razor's Edge*, published in 1944, was a departure for him in many ways. While much of the novel takes place in Europe, its main characters are American, not British. The protagonist is a disillusioned veteran of World War I who abandons his wealthy friends and lifestyle, travelling to India seeking enlightenment. The story's themes of Eastern mysticism and war-weariness struck a chord with readers as World War II waned, and a movie adaptation quickly

followed. In 1947 Maugham instituted the Somerset Maugham Award, awarded to the best British writer or writers under the age of thirty-five of a work of fiction published in the past year. Notable winners include V.S. Naipaul, Kingsley Amis, Martin Amis and Thom Gunn. On his death, Maugham donated his copyrights to the Royal Literary Fund.

William Somerset Maugham died at the age of 91 in Nice, France.

## **SYNOPSIS OF THE SHORT STORY**

There was a Colonel who has married to his wife for about twenty four years. The Colonel was a former soldier when the World War happened. The Colonel's name was George Peregrine, while his wife's was Eva Katherine Hamilton. They lived in a country, some twenty miles from Sheffield. Their life was normal and ordinary among their peaceful neighborhood.

The Colonel was figured as a fine man although he was little over fifty. He was a tall an, with grey curly hair, frank blue eyes, good features and a high color. He was also a good shot, a golfer and he still could play a hard game of tennis. His appearance did not disappoint everyone who looked at him. He was also a public-spirited man, chairman at any number of local organizations and a loyal member of the Conservative party. The Colonel was a rich man yet kind. He often did charitable activities as if he had devoted all his life on seeking other people's welfare. He had built a cottage hospital on the outskirts of the village and paid the wages of a nurse from his own money. He was honored by the people for his kindness and generosity. He was a friendly man, affable to his inferiors, considerate with his tenants and popular with the neighboring gentry.

The Colonel's wife was a lady. She was a good hostess and she managed the house uncommonly well. She was forty five years old but she was a pretty woman, with a creamy skin, light brown hair and a trim figure. She was always neat and

suitably dressed, but she did not seem to bother how she looked; she wrote no make-up and did not even use lipstick. However, the village people adored her so much. She did the charitable activities just like what her husband did. She often tended the sick and succored the poor. She was a good wife and she could be a perfect mother but unfortunately she could not give a child to his husband.

Their peaceful and ordinary life was disturbed one day by the publication of a poetry book written by the Colonel's wife. The book told about a love affair happened several years ago between a married woman with a younger bachelor which was fulfilled by joy and happiness. There was nothing special about the book but what made it special was the suspected woman was the Colonel's wife. The book was a great success everywhere. All the people talked about that poetry book because the contents were so pure and full of desire for lovers. At the first impression, the Colonel did not think that his calm wife could have written a book like that. However, to pay a little respect for her he forced himself to read that book. He could not understand why other people would fall in love to that book because he only saw irregular verses throughout the poems.

The next time when one of his business trips brought him to London, his partner named Daphne praised his wife's poetry book. The Colonel wanted to deny that the writer was his wife but finally he admitted it. He was shocked to know that the woman inside the story was his wife, whom had had an affair with a young man. Every one seemed to know that the poems were not made up but it was a real story.

He could not take the idea that his wife had been unfaithful to him during their marriage.

To prove his own curiosity he decided to read the poetry book once more. There, he found out that the story was not a made up one. It seemed that he heard Eva's voice in every line; over and over again he came upon turns of phrase he had heard her use, there were details that were as familiar to him as to her. There was no doubt about it; it was her own story she had told, and it was as plain as anything could be that she had had a lover and her lover had died. When he finished reading the poetry book, he felt dismayed and he was horrified yet amazed. He could not ask Eva because he did not have a proof except the book. He asked for help from his lawyer friend to put a detective on his wife to find out the truth. His friend thought that it would have been a shame of him because the affair had happened several years ago.

The Colonel himself could not admit his wife's affair because he was afraid that he would lose his high social status in the society. He never wanted his popularity to be disturbed by his wife's affair, which was only known from the story inside poems. Although he could not hold his head up but he could not admit it. He knew that he became a laughing stock but he did not care for that. As long as the affair was just a rumor, he would not lose his social status. However, his dignity as a man was hurt by his wife's unfaithfulness. The idea that Eva would have cheated on him never crossed his mind. He thought that she was quiet, demure and self-



possessed. He could not accept the idea that there was a man who could have been attracted to her because she made no effort to look younger than she was, a woman who had nothing what he still called IT. He had this thought that men's having an affair was very common but for women it was a shame. That's why he could not admit his wife's affair. If he admitted Eva's affair he would lose her. And if he lost her then he would lose his social status and also his self-respect as a man. At last, he did nothing concerning his wife's affair. He let other people talk about the rumor but he knew by heart that he could not do anything without his wife.