

Text analysis  
“The Happy Man”  
by W. Somerset Maugham

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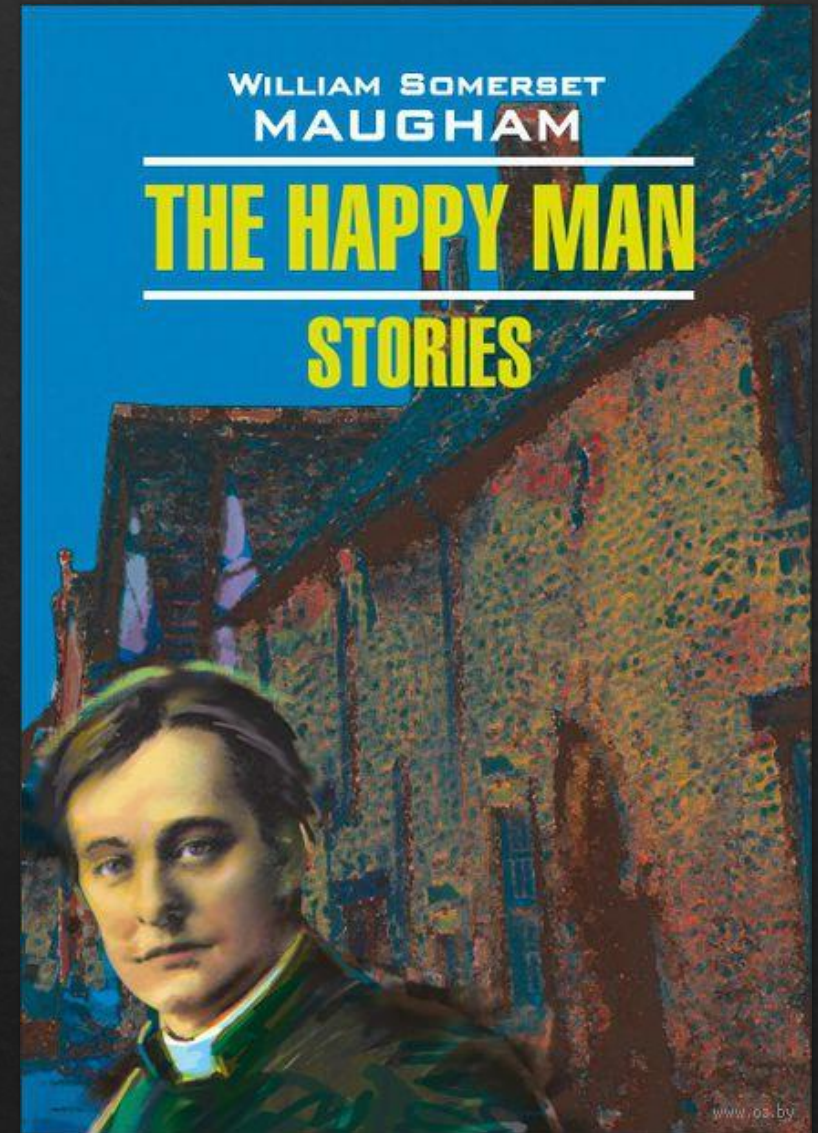
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# William Somerset Maugham



W. Somerset Maugham, a well-known English novelist, short-story writer, playwright and essayist. He was one of the best known writers of his time as he was master of short stories.

- ❖ In “The Happy Man” by W. Somerset Maugham we have the theme of uncertainty, happiness, change, humility and gratitude.
- ❖ The story starts with the narrator thinking and telling the reader about his attitude to giving advice to somebody. He thinks it to be quite difficult and even impossible to give the right advice as “we know nothing of the others”.





Narrative is in progress in the first person by an unnamed narrator.

- ❖ He was a young man when he advised well.
- ❖ He is a wise man: he knows that it is impossible to know another person as well as oneself to give advice which would be good for person.
- ❖ He is bold enough for a man who dares to give the life changing advice to a man he see for the first time.

The main character of the story is Stephens.

- ❖ His character is dynamic as he becomes fully another person to the end of the story.
- ❖ In the beginning of the story Stephens is described as a diffident, disillusioned, disappointed person. He wants to start a new life but still hesitates.
- ❖ In the end of the story we can see completely different person. The author writes about Stephens that “we couldn’t imagine a better person to drink a glass of wine with”.

Throughout the story the author uses quite a few metaphors:

- ◆ He compares every man to “a prisoner in a solitary tower”, life to “a difficult business”.
- ◆ Another metaphor is used when he says that “some people flounder at the journey’s start”.

## The text is a descriptive one

There are many descriptive signals:

- ❖ a modest apartment
- ❖ a total stranger
- ❖ an apologetic laugh
- ❖ a cursory glance
- ❖ a little man
- ❖ a wonderful life
- ❖ and others

## The author employs many contextual synonyms

- ❖ Dangerous - hazardous
- ❖ Unwillingly -forced
- ❖ Confused - embarrassed
- ❖ a total stranger - a perfect stranger
- ❖ Alter - change
- ❖ Twinkled - shone

The story is devoted to the problem of human's ability to change his life. For some people it is very difficult to live another life and they prefer to be in the same way all their lives. We shouldn't be afraid of new changes, because "life is full of compensations".