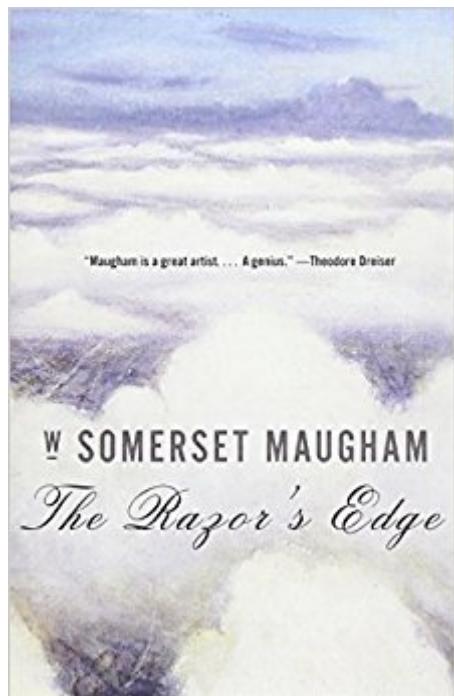


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The Razor's Edge



Synopsis

Larry Darrell is a young American in search of the absolute. The progress of his spiritual odyssey involves him with some of Maugham's most brilliant characters - his fiancée Isabel whose choice between love and wealth have lifelong repercussions, and Elliott Templeton, her uncle, a classic expatriate American snob. Maugham himself wanders in and out of the story, to observe his characters struggling with their fates.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“[Maugham is] a great artist . . . a genius.” Theodore Dreiser
“[Maugham] . . . is excessively rare gift of story-telling . . . is almost the equal of imagination itself.” The Sunday Times (London)
“It is very difficult for a writer of my generation, if he is honest, to pretend indifference to the work of Somerset Maugham. . . . He was always so entirely there.” Gore Vidal
“Maugham remains the consummate craftsman. . . . [His writing is] so compact, so economical, so closely motivated, so skillfully written, that it rivets attention from the first page to last.” Saturday Review of Literature

8 1.5-hour cassettes --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is probably not for everyone, with a somewhat dated style, but I loved the story of Larry Darrell, a man relentlessly pursuing a meaningful life, despite pressure from all around him, even

from the woman he loves. Darrell is sort of the original hippy, searching for spiritual fulfillment everywhere from a catholic monastery to a Indian ashram, while those around him destroy themselves chasing after material wealth, prestige, power, and all the other things which to Larry hold no value. I especially like the way he steadfastly refuses to bow to societal pressure. We are bombarded on TV with images of people who are supposed to be rebels because they use a certain kind of deodorant (which, of course, everybody else also uses), or drive a particular car. Darrell truly is a rebel, going his own way, living life the way HE wants, refusing to be distracted by society's rules. He doesn't argue, he doesn't try to convince others to join him. He just does his own thing. All in all, I found it an inspiring, life-affirming story.

"The Razor's Edge" has held the number one slot in my personal library for a very long time, as it has for most everyone that I have personally recommend it to. Based on real events in the life of W. Somerset Maugham, he shares a delicate and poignant story of crossed paths and intents that occur amongst a group of acquaintances he has post World War One. Maugham's writing flows like water and will keep you turning the pages when there are no pages left. I cannot tell you what other book this like, because I have never found another quite like it. "The Razor's Edge" is not pretentious, it is simply a beautiful work of literature that I have reread again and again over the years and never felt a wasted moment.

I had read this book long back, I was probably much less than twenty. I remember being intrigued by this book because this was not the Maugham that I had earlier experience. The nag remained with me for quite long. So, twenty years down the line, I decided to revisit this book to clear my nag. And am so glad that I did it. This is not a story book, it is deeply philosophical book, some thing like Jiddu Krishnamurti's works. But leave to a master with Maugham to make it so much more readable. Every character in this book holds a mirror to us, whether it be Isabel, Elliot or Gray. I am sure many a times in life, I may have been one of those characters. While Maugham, in all his modesty, tells the readers that one can skip the chapter 6 (I did that probably and that is why had to come back), but that chapter contains a big key to understanding many questions of life. Why do some people pursue perfection, are they pursuing glory in the process; what is a sin and if there are sinner, where is God; can one really understand God; what is Reality and Absolute. These are many questions for which Maugham has tried to find answers in Hinduism.

But what makes it interesting is the lucidness with which Maugham handles these questions. Being a Hindu, I can say this is one of the shortest work on Hinduism and because it is short, makes it so much more relevant. Thank you, Maugham. You are and will remain the best for me.

A classic story by a master, *The Razor's Edge* is so well-written that the reader glides through the story easily. There are none of the jarring grammar or punctuation gaffes included in most of today's self-published books, although some of the English usage is archaic and obviously British. It's a perfect teaching tool for aspiring writers in search of a this-is-how-it's-done manual. The story is about a self-discovery journey taken in an era long before it was common to do so. It describes one man's strength of will to keep searching for meaning at the cost of his place in society, a trait found only in the rare few who feel a profound dissatisfaction with the mundane world. The character descriptions are vivid and detailed; it's a mark of genius when readers understand the characters even if there is nothing in common with them. Highly recommend.

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