

Dale Carnegie

5-Minute Biographies

Author of "How to Win Friends and Influence People."



SOMERSET MAUGHAM

The Play That "Wasn't Worth Bothering About" Became the Greatest Drama Since Hamlet

What would you say is the greatest stage play ever written? When leading critics of New York voted by secret ballot, on the ten greatest plays of all time, the first honors went to Hamlet, written more than 3 hundred years ago. And they decided that the second greatest play ever written was not Macbeth nor King Lear nor The Merchant of Venice—but Rain. Yes, Rain, that tempestuous drama of sex and religion, fighting tooth and claw, in the South Seas—the play based on a short story by Somerset Maugham.

Maugham has made \$200,000 out of Rain. Yet he didn't spend even five minutes writing the play.

This is how it happened: He wrote a short story called Sadie Thompson. He didn't think much of the story—but one night, John Colton was staying at his house, and Colton wanted something to read till he fell asleep. Maugham handed him the proofs of Sadie Thompson.

Colton was fascinated with the story. It thrilled him. He got out of bed and paced the floor, and in

his imagination that night he saw it as a play—a drama that was destined to become immortal. The next morning he rushed to Somerset Maugham. "There's a great play in that story," he told him. "I've been thinking about it all night. Put me to sleep, eh? I didn't sleep a wink."

But Maugham wasn't impressed. "A play?" he said in his crisp British voice, "O yes, possibly—a morbid sort of play. Might run six weeks. But it isn't really worth bothering about. Not really." And the play that he didn't think worth bothering about made him a fifth of a million dollars.

When the play was finished, several producers turned it down. They were positive it would fail. Then Sam Harris accepted it. He wanted it for a young actress named Jeanne Eagles. But the agent for the play objected. He wanted someone who was better known.

Finally Jeanne Eagles got the part and played Sadie Thompson with a passion and power that made her the sensation of Broadway. She played to packed houses

On Dime Tour



LOS ANGELES . . . Sr Harry Lauder, now 67, arrived here from New Zealand on a round-the-world cruise which he is financing with dime saved during his long stage career.

for four hundred and fifteen rip-roaring performances.

Somerset Maugham has written many distinguished books such as Of Human Bondage, The Moon and Sixpence, and The Painted Veil; and he has written a score of successful dramas. But he didn't write his own most celebrated play.

Some people call him a genius now; but he was a financial failure for eleven years after he started writing. Think of it! This man who was destined to make a million dollars as an author earned only five hundred dollars a year for the first eleven years that he turned out stories and novels. Sometimes he went hungry. He tried to get a job writing editorials on a salary basis; but he couldn't. "I had to keep on writing," Maugham told me "because I just literally couldn't hold down a job."

His friends told him he was a fool to keep on trying to write. He had already been graduated from medical college, so they urged him to forget fiction and practice medicine. But nothing could swerve him from his determination to write his name large across the pages of English literature.

Bob Ripley of Believe It Or Not fame, once said to me: "A man will work and slave in obscurity for ten years and then become famous in ten minutes." That is about what happened to both Ripley and Maugham.

Here is how Somerset Maugham got his first break. Somebody's play had failed in London, and the manager of the theater was looking around for something to replace it. He wasn't looking for a hit—just any old thing would do to fill in until he could get a real play into rehearsal. He fished around in his desk and pulled out a play by Somerset Maugham. Lady Frederick, it was called. He had had it in his desk for a year; he had read it; it wasn't much of a play—he knew that. But it might do for a few weeks. He put it on—and the miracle happened. Lady Frederick was a smash hit. It set all London talking. It tickled England as nothing had since the sparkling dialogue of Oscar Wilde.

Immediately every theater manager in London begged for a play by Somerset Maugham. He dug old manuscripts out of his desk; and within a few weeks, three of his plays were playing to capacity houses.

Royalties came pouring in in a golden flood. Publishers fell over each other bargaining for the work of this new genius. Society showered him with invitations; and after eleven years of oblivion, Somerset Maugham found himself the toast of Mayfair drawing rooms.

Maugham told me that he never writes after one o'clock. He says his brain goes dead in the afternoon. He writes in a penthouse on top of his Moorish villa on the French Riviera. He always smokes his pipe and reads philosophy for an hour before he starts to write.

He told me that he isn't superstitious—nevertheless he has the sign of the Evil Eye stamped on the bindings of his books. He has the same curious design on his stationary and on his playing cards. He has it carved on the mantel above the fireplace, and he even has it carved above the entrance to his villa. But when I asked him if he really believed in it, he merely smiled.

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Grandma: "I feel much better now, and I don't think there is anything wrong with my appendix. But it was nice of the minister to call and see about it."

Daughter: "But, mother, that was not the new minister, that was a specialist from the city who examined you."

Grandma: "Oh, he was a doctor, was he? I thought he was a little familiar for a minister."

Maybe the trouble with the machinery of peace is that they try to keep it greased by using only banana oil.

FAMOUS DUNGEON IS BEING RAZED

Buffalo Prison Held Assassin of President McKinley in Face of Angry Mob

Buffalo, N. Y., June 19.—Bare stone dungeon walls which once held the assassin of a President crumbled into dust here today.

Workmen are demolishing an ancient, three-storied brick building which for many years housed police headquarters. Most notorious occupant of the old building was Leon Czolgosz who shot and killed President William McKinley.

Memories of the eventful September afternoon in 1901 arose from the ruins of the old headquarters building—now being removed for its unsightliness. Here it was that Czolgosz was brought after the President, grasping hands with the thousands who filed past him at the Pan-American Exposition, suddenly was struck down by a bullet.

Dying, the President was taken to a nearby residence, while at police headquarters, down deep in the dungeon, the cowering assassin heard crowds howling for his life.

An admitted Red and disciple of Emma Goldman, Czolgosz cringed against the steel bars of his cell. No longer was he the hero who had faithfully executed the ghastly commands of the "Order of the Golden Lion."

Pleads for Life

"Don't let them get me," he sobbed to his guards. Upstairs, Brig. Gen. William S. Bull, police superintendent, listened to messages from all parts of the city telling of crowds moving toward police headquarters—their goal the cringing, shaken Czolgosz.

"Get Regan," he commanded. "Big Mike" Regan, six feet four inches of brawn with muscles of steel and captain of the Eighth

New Air Safety Chief



WASHINGTON, D. C. . . Richard C. Gazley, the newly appointed chief of the Safety and Planning Division Bureau of the Department of Commerce.

precinct, had been expecting the call.

"You have only one order," snapped Gen. Bull. "Get that mob off the street. Order such help as you may need."

"I don't need any help," Mike muttered to reporters on his way out. He stood two stone steps up, facing the mob.

"Gwan," he bellowed. "Get out of here. Get going." And then he charged. It was a one-man charge, but "Big Mike" used to say jokingly that he was just as good as ten ordinary men.

Two of the leaders in the front rank went down under the flailing blows of Mike's huge fists. Rear ranks stood hesitant for a fraction of a minute and then broke and ran. It was a complete rout.

Regan disdained to give chase. The mob spirit was broken and Czolgosz remained in his dungeon cell, saved—for the electric chair.

Hours later, reporters slept fitfully on tables and the floor of their drab room in the building. Two remained awake, George

MacManus and Stephen Dough-

ton. MacManus had been standing at the President's right elbow when the bullet struck McKinley down. He had swung a sturdy left hook at the jaw of the gunman but missed. Marines and police piled on Czolgosz after that.

MacManus' gaze wandered over a heavy holster hanging on the wall, the ivory handle of an enormous revolver protruding from it. "You know, Steve," he said, "right now I might have been a national hero instead of a guy who just does police reporting. Now take that gun there—I've carried it for five years."

"The only time I was justified in using it was when that guy

plugged the President this afternoon. I could have shot his head off and the whole country would have been cheering me. And do you know why I didn't shoot him?"

"No I don't know," said Dough-

ton. "What's the answer?"

"I just completely forgot I had the gun," MacManus sighed.

Difficult.

Judge: "Speeding, eh? How many times have you been before me?"

Speeder: "Never, Your Honor. I've tried to pass you on the road once or twice, but my old bus will only do fifty-five."

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