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| Maeterlinck, Maurice (1862—1949) |
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| Maurice Maeterlinck was a Flemish francophone writer, who spent most of his life in France and whose prolific oeuvre entails poetry, plays, and essays. In 1911 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, mainly for his merits in the field of symbolist playwriting and his reputation as a man of great wisdom. However, his contemporary reputation relies as much on the musical compositions inspired around 1900 by some of his dramas. Take the musical compositions inspired by his *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1892, first performance in 1893): an orchestral suite by Gabriel Fauré, an opera by Claude Debussy, a symphonic poem by Arnold Schoenberg, and a suite by Jean Sibelius.  Disgusted by his Catholic upbringing and preferring a literary career to that of a lawyer, the very sensitive and emotional young man travelled from Belgium to Paris where he met Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and other representatives of the Symbolist movement. In line with this avant-garde, he broke away from all kinds of realism and tried to express the real with the help of symbols and metaphors. He used an extremely musical free verse in his first collection of poetry, *Les Serres chaudes* (*The Greenhouses*, 1889, the greenhouse being a metaphor for the human heart). It is however his Symbolist drama that established his exceptional and long-lasting reputation as the inventor of a new form of playwriting, the so-called 'static drama', in which dialogue replaces action and suggestion dominates over explicit reference. |
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