

The Razor's Edge - William Somerset Maugham

This is my first ever book by William Somerset Maugham. He has a, I'm going to say, 'fluffy' writing style. Sentences are very sophisticated even though convey a very simple idea. Some may like this kind of writing style. I like it when the language is plain and 'flows'.

We have our main character Larry, who's a fighter pilot traumatized by his experiences in war. Instead of a regular pathway such as finding a job, getting married and providing for your home he chases his spiritual growth. Along the way he hopes to find God. The story covers the main characters nearly entire lifetime from their 20s to until the narrator doesn't see them again. Mainly events take place around 1920's.

Author did a great job conveying the times people and the way of living. You can clearly see the class differences among people. The appearance of the middle class, how the upper class resists and feels irritated by it, how different nations see each other across the world and many more.

The main feeling that the book left on me is that there's no final point. We don't get to know what are characters feeling, what they do, what they would do different in the end. This is perfectly aligned with the fact that narrator is a character in the book. This ending is also usually like how our relationships are like with each other in real life. After a point we just have no idea.

Quotes and Thoughts

"My mind is free when I'm washing a car or tinkering with a carburettor and when the job's done I have the pleasant sensation of having accomplished something"

Reminds me of Zima Blue from Love, Death, Robots. Chop wood, carry water.

"I thought with melancholy how an author spends months writing a book, and may be puts his heart's blood into it, and then it lies about unread till the reader has nothing else in the world to do."

This fact is so frustrating and so real. Not only for books but with

many things. We ourselves do it too. We must learn to accept it.

"Nothing in the world is permanent, and we're foolish when we ask anything to last, but surely we're still more foolish not to take delight in it while we have it."

Reminds me the times when I blindly follow a goal and not enjoy the things around me. I think of people accumulating vast riches like they're not going to die.

"they could acquire liberation by tranquillity, restraint, renunciation, resignation, by steadfastness of mind and by an ardent desire for freedom."

Calm and free mind, if it can ever be, even the thought of it feels like a bliss. A bliss that I want to have.

"Men have always wanted a personal God to whom they can turn in distress for comfort and encouragement."

Men don't usually even think about God. Apart to ask and fear.

"if you will act as if you believed belief will be granted to you"

The king comes first . The kingdom afterwards. Not the other way around.

"what's worse, fear of life. Often they're people who seem in the best of health, prosperous, without any worry, and yet they're tortured by it."

This life style may seem like a free life. However it's just another prison with different notes. That's why it tortures those who live inside it.

"He wants to work, he feels he ought to, and it humiliates him not to be wanted."

Successes that we chase, the goals. We don't need it, we don't want it. We want to be seen, feel important.

"You wouldn't believe it, my dear fellow, but last ti-me I was in America a taxi driver addressed me as brother."

Anyone with a mouth can address you as he/she wants. Doesn't matter who you're.

"After all, if you want to know something the best way is to ask."

How simpler it can be? If you want to find something just seek. If you

want to know just ask.

Lessons

Things Change: Throughout the book we observe change. Change of people, of the society, change of the closest to us. It's the fact of nature and doesn't exclude human character. Kings can become peasants, peasants can become kings.

There's No Correct Way of Living: Larry decides to "loaf". Elliot decides to "entertain" people. Isabelle wants to live distinguished. We may judge, despise or argue about them. There's no right or wrong to this. Just wants and choices.

More Knowledge Doesn't Mean More Wisdom: In search for spiritual growth Larry religiously reads and learns. Only when he gets out, meet people, experience and feel he starts to grasp wisdom.