

Free responses to questions from the book, "the razor's edge" written by Somerset...

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



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Part A

Summary of discussion between Larry and Isabel

The discussion between Larry and his fiancée Isabel revolves around his refusal to take up employment or any ‘ meaningful’ economic activity for that matter. He declares that he would just “ loaf” on his inheritance. Larry seems undecided, restless and lacks peace. He says ‘ I don’t think that I shall ever find peace till I make up my mind about things” (Maugham, 46). Isabel consoles Larry and she gets emotional when he explains his reasons for not wanting to take up any of her suggestions. He is disturbed by what he perceives to be meaningless in life following the tragic death of his friend. He says “ it is hard not to ask yourself whether there’s any sense to it (life) or it is just a tragic blunder of fate” (Maugham 46). The engagement between Larry and Isabel is strained by the occurrences as Isabel suggests that Larry needs to travel away for a while in order to recover from the torments of the war and overcome the loss of his friend. Larry says that he would want to go to Paris.

Maugham and Isabel are friends. Maugham had met Isabel and Larry at the house of Bradley- a rich widow who was having her house redecorated.

Maugham being the author drifts into the lives of the characters in order to have the characters express more about themselves and the issue they are going through. In this case, his appearance in Larry and Isabel’s conversation causes Isabel to reveal that she could not marry Larry because he was undecided on pursuit for money, which Isabel values in a man. Although Isabel confessed to love Larry, she could not marry him in his state and as such, they had chosen some separation since their interests conflicted.

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When Larry was in the war, his greatest friend in the air corps was killed while saving his life. This issue traumatizes him greatly and is a cause of many of his worried and decisions after the war.

Larry's life in Paris

Larry wants to go to Paris to clear his mind from the trauma of the war. He perceives Paris as giving him the feeling that there he could think out his thoughts “ to the end without let or hindrance” (Maugham, 47). He hopes to see his way before him. In Paris, Larry immerses himself into a life of study and contemplation.

B

Isabel's personality in the way she faced the stock market crash

Isabel comes across as a materialistic and greedy person. She is also selfish and uses her attractiveness to woo Gray to her so that she can benefit from his wealth. After the stock market crash, she feels trapped with gray who is now broke and seeks any jobs he gets in order to sustain his family. Isabel portrays regret at having lost the one she loved- Larry in pursuit of money. The stock market humbles her to realize that her personality led her to the unhappiness that she experienced after the crash of the stock market.

Isabel says, “ Gray hasn't a penny and I have almost exactly the income Larry had when he wanted me to marry him and I wouldn't because I thought that we couldn't possibly live on it” (Maugham, 131). Her description of their happy family is not accurate because she does not love Gray. Isabel sees her pride and materialism now that she and Gray are broke. Her personality

comes forth as pretentious. She praises Gray for loving her and states how compatible they are, “ he is just as much in love with me now as when we first married” (Maugham, 132). Maugham can tell that Isabel is avoiding the question of how Larry was doing and he moves on. He thinks of her description as funny and enlightening. He hopes that Isabel can see the joke in her choices and make amends.

Larry’s meeting with Maugham in Paris

Larry and Maugham met after a play they had attended in Paris. It had been an year since they met last and Maugham suggested that they meet after the play and “ have a glass of beer together” (Maugham, 235). Larry was hungry and they went looking for a restaurant from the Theatre Francais. They walked along Avenue de l’ Opera as they talked about the play they had watched. Larry stated that he would have liked it to be more natural. They went to Brasserie Graf where they had eggs and bacon. They talked about their past lives and Maugham stated that he had seen Isabel and Gray in Paris. They then joked about Gray and how he was a “ fish out of the water” in Paris and how he would only be happy to be back to work again. The two also talk about their times in India, about an Old Yogi that Larry met. In addition, they talked about places in Europe that each had been such as Bonn and Heidelberg in Germany.

Interesting things we learn about Larry

Larry is an interesting character. He wants to escape all form of modernity and chooses to do so by gong to Paris. He also chooses to live a Christian lifestyle and has an interest in aviation in order to get closer to God. After

the war he chooses to not to lie by Christian values anymore following the death of his friend. He is a “ deeply religious man who doesn’t believe in God” (Maugham, 247).

Works cited

Maugham Somerset " The Razor's Edge" 2 July 2015 <http://ir.nmu.org>.

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