

The Creative Impulse and Other Stories

W. Somerset Maugham

A Before Reading

1 Match the words with the definitions:

1) a critic	a) a man who marries another woman when he already has a wife.
2) a butler	b) to go red in the cheeks. Shows that a person is embarrassed or upset.
3) a drawing-room	c) a woman who worked as a cleaner in the houses of upper-class people (an old-fashioned term).
4) to blush	d) a person who reads books and writes his or her opinion of them in a newspaper.
5) to envy	e) a woman who has never married.
6) a bigamist	f) a manservant in an upper-class house.
7) a spinster	g) to be upset or sad because someone else has something which you would like.
8) charwoman	h) a large room in a house where guests sit and are offered tea while they talk to each other.

B After Reading Each Story

THE CREATIVE IMPULSE

2 On page 21, Mr Simmons, Clifford Boylestone, Harry Oakland and Oscar Charles are all waiting for Mrs Albert Forrester in her flat. What do they talk about? Write their conversation.

THE ROUND DOZEN

3 Mortimer Ellis keeps newspaper cuttings about himself, his marriages, his trial and about the judge sending him to prison. Write one of the newspaper reports.

A Much Married Man



HEARTLESS SCOUNDREL PUNISHED

**JANE**

4 Mrs Towers tells the story about Jane Fowler. What would Jane tell us about herself and about her life and the people she knows? Write Jane's diary. Write her diary for three days.

(a) the day of the dinner party with Gilbert before their marriage.

(b) the day of the second dinner party two years later.

(c) the day Jane told Maugham and Mrs Tower that she had parted from Gilbert.

C After Reading All the Stories

5 Read these descriptions. Who are these people?

(a) She was not a young woman, for her hair was grey. She did not try to look younger than she was. She used no lipstick or make-up. Her hair was extremely short and arranged in many curls. Her dress was extraordinary. It was brightly coloured and looked like a dress that someone would wear to a fancy-dress party.

(b) He was a shabby little man. He wore a thin black coat and a shabby bowler hat. He looked cold and walked with his hands in his pockets. He was a tired-looking man with a long thin nose and pale blue eyes. He could have been any age between thirty-five and sixty.

(c) She was a very large lady. Luckily, she was also very tall so that she did not appear to be fat. Her face was large and this made her look very intelligent. Her eyes were large and bright. Her nose was large and her chin was square. She looked very important.

(d) The beautiful lady was not young – she was quite old. She was wearing a simple grey dress which was rather old-fashioned. But it was not the kind of dress worn by an older person. It was the kind of dress worn by a girl.

6 Read the descriptions in Question 4. Maugham gives us a lot of interesting details about these people – what they wear, what they look like, what kind of people they are. Write four detailed descriptions of famous people. Use the descriptions in Question 4 to give you ideas.

7 Maugham tells us a lot about people in his stories. These people often behave in strange ways. What do you think of the characters in each of these stories? Did you like or dislike them? Why? Write about:



(a) Mrs Albert Forrester



(b) Mortimer Ellis



(c) Jane



(d) Mr and Mrs St Clair

Have you read *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier? It is another Upper Intermediate Level Reader.