



# The Magician

*W. Somerset Maugham*

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## **The Magician** W. Somerset Maugham

First published in 1908, "The Magician" is one of the early novels of W. Somerset Maugham, a Frenchman who lived from 1874 to 1965. Although his popularity was at its highest in the 1930s, this novel is a clear precursor of the simplistic, often haunting method of writing that brought him fame. This tale revolves around the magician Oliver Haddo, a man living in the bohemian Paris of the beginning of the twentieth century. Haddo, a caricature of the disreputable black magician Aleister Crowley of Maugham's day, makes a sinister attempt to create life. The author tells this story to remarkable effect, combining the weird and ghastly with the pure and sweet aspects of ordinary life in an effortless and genuine way. Though actually written in London, this novel reveals the café society of Paris in such a way that demonstrates the intimate knowledge of Maugham, who lavished his considerable skill as a writer on this surprisingly lesser known of his works.

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