



The Verger

By

William Somerset Maugham

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Introduction

Somerset Maugham is a famous English writer. He has written many novels and short stories. This short story is about a verger, who is an illiterate. This story shows how an illiterate man can earn more money and wealth, because of his smart thinking.

Introduction of the Verger:

Albert Edward is a verger of a small church. A verger is someone who takes care of the church. Albert has been working in the church for a long time. He takes care of the church very well. He takes great care of his uniform. The story opens with the end of christening ceremony in the church. The verger waits for the vicar to move, but the vicar is staying there.

The Past and the Present Vicar:

The vicar of the church has taken his position in the recent past. He is new to the church and to the position. The vergger is not comfortable with the new vicar. He considers the old vicar as someone better than the new one. The old vicar had never complained him and had always been good to him. Though the new vicar is good in controlling the child who has come to christening, the vergger is not comfortable with him and his manners.

Happenings between the Vicar and the Verger:

The vicar calls the verger to his office. Two wardens of the church also come to the vicar's office. The vicar says that he and the church management are not comfortable with the performance of the verger. They consider him an illiterate, who cannot read and write. The two wardens support the vicar. The verger is helpless.

Verger's Illiteracy

The verger accepts the fact that he is an illiterate. He had joined the church when he was twelve and had not attempted to educate himself since then. The previous vicar did not mind about his education. The verger is also able to execute his job in the best way possible, even without proper education. He assures the new vicar that he can continue to do his job well.

Verger Coming out of the Church

The vicar and the wardens do not accept his plea. They almost threaten the verger. Out of compulsion and repulsion, the verger moves out of the church. He resigns his job as a verger. He is confused about the future. He does not know how to earn his living thereafter. In utter confusion, he takes an unusual road to his house. He is hopeless.

Verger a Wealthy Man:

After sometime, he finds that he has taken the wrong route. He is frustrated and he wants to ease himself. He approaches a few shops and asks for a cigarette. No shop sells him a cigarette. It is then he strikes with an idea of opening cigar shops. He opens a shop where there are no shops. His business throngs well. He sells more cigars and he becomes wealthy. Later he approaches a few other places where they do not sell cigars and he puts up a new shop there. He becomes a prospective business man. He becomes very wealthy. He hoards more money in the bank.

Conclusion:

One-day the manager of the bank advises him to invest his amount in some safe securities. Albert says that he does not want to take risk and want his money safe in the bank. Moreover he does not know how and in which securities he can invest. The manager replies that he is there to look after his investment and the only thing he has to do is put his signature. After setting up the business, Albert has learnt to sign. He asks the manager how he could know where he is investing. The manager says that he can read the document and then put his signature on that. Albert confesses that he is an illiterate.

The manager is astonished at his confession. Without knowing how to read or write Albert has amassed a huge sum. What he could have done if he were a literate and educated. But Albert humbly answers him that if he knows to read and write he would be a vergger at St. Peter's Neville Square and nothing more.

Thank You