

# Quotes and Images From The Short Stories of Maupassant

Guy de Maupassant - Edited and Arranged by David Widger

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Title: Quotes and Images From The Short Stories of Maupassant

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Release Date: September 4, 2004 [EBook #7549]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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QUOTES AND IMAGES FROM MAUPASSANT

THE ORIGINAL SHORT STORIES

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

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QUOTATIONS:

SHORT STORIES VOLUME I.

Anguish of suspense made men even desire the arrival of enemies  
Dependent, like other emotions, on surroundings  
Devouring faith which is the making of martyrs and visionaries  
Freemasonry made up of those who possess  
Great ones of this world who make war  
I am learning my trade  
Insolent like all in authority  
Legitimized love always despises its easygoing brother  
Like all women, being very fond of indigestible things  
Presence of a woman, that sovereign inspiration  
Spirit of order and arithmetic in the business house  
Subtleties of expression to describe the most improper things

Thin veneer of modesty of every woman  
Thrill of furious and bestial anger which urges on a mob to massacre

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME II.

Chronic passion for cleaning  
Greatest shatterer of dreams who had ever dwelt on earth  
Hardly understand at all those bellicose ardors  
Key of a door  
Kiss of the man without a mustache  
Let us be indignant, or let us be enthusiastic  
Muscles of their faces have never learned the motions of laughter  
Resisted that feeling of comfort and relief  
Unconscious brutality which is so common in the country  
What is sadder than a dead house

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME III.

Did wrong in doing her duty  
Don't talk about things you know nothing about  
Impenetrable night, thicker than walls and empty  
Love is always love, come whence it may  
"My God! my God!" without believing, nevertheless, in God  
Pines, close at hand, seemed to be weeping  
Preserved in a pickle of innocence  
She was an ornament, not a home

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME IV.

The warm autumn sun was beating down on the farmyard. Under the grass, which had been cropped close by the cows, the earth soaked by recent rains, was soft and sank in under the feet with a soggy noise, and the apple trees, loaded with apples, were dropping their pale green fruit in the dark green grass.

The servant, Rose, remained alone in the large kitchen, where the fire was dying out on the hearth beneath the large boiler of hot water. From time to time she dipped out some water and slowly washed her dishes, stopping occasionally to look at the two streaks of light which the sun threw across the long table through the window, and which showed the defects in the glass.

The fowls were lying on the steaming dunghill; some of them were scratching with one claw in search of worms, while the cock stood up proudly in their midst. When he crowed, the cocks in all the neighboring farmyards replied to him, as if they were uttering challenges from farm to farm.

Neither could there be any scruples about an unequal match between them, for in the country every one is very nearly equal; the farmer works with his laborers, who frequently become masters in their turn, and the



female servants constantly become the mistresses of the establishments without its making any change in their life or habits.

Is it not rather the touch of Love, of Love the Mysterious, who seeks constantly to unite two beings, who tries his strength the instant he has put a man and a woman face to face?

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME V.

Calling all religious things "weeper's wares"  
Everyone has his share  
How much excited cowardice there often is in boldness  
Love has no law  
People do not think as they speak, and do not speak as they act  
Rage of a timid man  
She saw that he would yield on every point

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME VI.

As he had never enjoyed anything, he desired nothing  
Do you know how I picture God?  
Don't know what to say, for I am always terribly stupid at first  
Hotel bed: Who has occupied it the night before?  
Irresistible force of mutual affection  
Isn't for the fun of it, anyhow!  
Love must unsettle the mind  
Machine for bringing children into the world  
Moments of friendly silence  
One cannot both be and have been  
Only by going a long distance from home  
Sadness of existences that have had their day  
Well-planned disorder  
When did you lie, the last time or now?

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME VII.

A sceptical genius has said: "God made man in his image and man has returned the compliment." This saying is an eternal truth, and it would be very curious to write the history of the local divinity of every continent as well as the history of the patron saints in each one of our provinces. The negro has his ferocious man-eating idols; the polygamous Mahometan fills his paradise with women; the Greeks, like a practical people, deified all the passions.

Pierre Letoile was silent. His companions were laughing. One of them said: "Marriage is indeed a lottery; you must never choose your numbers. The haphazard ones are the best."--Another added by way of conclusion: "Yes, but do not forget that the god of drunkards chose for Pierre."

No noise in the little park, no breath of air in the leaves; no voice passes through this silence. One ought to write at the entrance to this

district: 'No one laughs here; they take care of their health.'

"Listen, Jacques. He has forbidden me to see you again, and I will not play this comedy of coming secretly to your house. You must either lose me or take me."--"My dear Irene, in that case, obtain your divorce, and I will marry you."--"Yes, you will marry me in--two years at the soonest. Yours is a patient love."

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME VIII.

"Do you know the people who live in the little red cottage at the end of the Rue du Berceau?"--Madame Bondel was out of sorts. She answered: "Yes and no; I am acquainted with them, but I do not care to know them."

It seems that he had led a bad life, that is to say, he had squandered a little money, which action, in a poor family, is one of the greatest crimes. With rich people a man who amuses himself only sows his wild oats. He is what is generally called a sport. But among needy families a boy who forces his parents to break into the capital becomes a good-for-nothing, a rascal, a scamp. And this distinction is just, although the action be the same, for consequences alone determine the seriousness of the act.

"Why; you are just the same as the others, you fool!" That was indeed bravado, one of those pieces of impudence of which a woman makes use when she dares everything, risks everything, to wound and humiliate the man who has aroused her ire. This poor man must also be one of those deceived husbands, like so many others. He had said sadly: "There are times when she seems to have more confidence and faith in our friends than in me." That is how a husband formulated his observations on the particular attentions of his wife for another man. That was all. He had seen nothing more. He was like the rest--all the rest!

He awaited he knew not what, possessed with that vague hope which persists in the human heart in spite of everything. He awaited in the corner of the farmyard in the biting December wind, some mysterious aid from Heaven or from men, without the least idea whence it was to arrive. A number of black hens ran hither and thither, seeking their food in the earth which supports all living things. Ever now and then they snapped up in their beaks a grain of corn or a tiny insect; then they continued their slow, sure search for nutriment.

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME IX.

Full of that common sense which borders on stupidity  
Let them respect my convictions, and I will respect theirs  
Love that is sacred--not marriage!  
Mediocrities and the fools always form the immense majority  
Night-robe of streams and meadows  
Only being allowed to read religious works or cook-books  
Poetry did not seem to be the strong point  
Purgatory and paradise according to the yearly income  
She went through life in a mood of perpetual discontent

So stupid and they pretend they know everything  
Spend his time quietly regretting the past  
The tomb is the boundary of conjugal sinning  
When we love, we have need of confession  
World has made laws to combat our instincts

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME X.

"I heard 'birr! birr!' and a magnificent covey rose at ten paces from me. I aimed. Pif! paf! and I saw a shower, a veritable shower of birds. There were seven of them!"--And they all went into raptures, amazed, but reciprocally credulous.

She was still smiling as she looked at him; she even began to laugh; and he lost his head trying to find something suitable to say, no matter what. But he could think of nothing, nothing, and then, seized with a coward's courage, he said to himself: 'So much the worse, I will risk everything,' and suddenly, without the slightest warning, he went toward her, his arms extended, his lips protruding, and, seizing her in his arms, he kissed her.

My elder sons never loved me, never petted me, scarcely treated me as a mother, but during my whole life I did my duty towards them, and I owe them nothing more after my death. The ties of blood cannot exist without daily and constant affection. An ungrateful son is less than a stranger; he is a culprit, for he has no right to be indifferent towards his mother.

#### SHORT STORIES VOLUME XI.

I held my tongue, and thought over those words. Oh, ethics! Oh, logic! Oh, wisdom! At his age! So they deprived him of his only remaining pleasure out of regard for his health! His health! What would he do with it, inert and trembling wreck that he was? They were taking care of his life, so they said. His life? How many days? Ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred? Why? For his own sake? Or to preserve for some time longer the spectacle of his impotent greediness in the family.

But all at once one envelope made me start. My name was traced on it in a large, bold handwriting; and suddenly tears came to my eyes. That letter was from my dearest friend, the companion of my youth, the confidant of my hopes; and he appeared before me so clearly, with his pleasant smile and his hand outstretched, that a cold shiver ran down my back. Yes, yes, the dead come back, for I saw him! Our memory is a more perfect world than the universe: it gives back life to those who no longer exist.

But she shook with rage, and got up one of those conjugal scenes which make a peaceable man dread the domestic hearth more than a battlefield where bullets are raining.

## SHORT STORIES VOLUME XII.

Monsieur Saval, who was called in Mantes "Father Saval," had just risen from bed. He was weeping. It was a dull autumn day; the leaves were falling. They fell slowly in the rain, like a heavier and slower rain. M. Saval was not in good spirits. He walked from the fireplace to the window, and from the window to the fireplace. Life has its sombre days. It would no longer have any but sombre days for him, for he had reached the age of sixty-two. He is alone, an old bachelor, with nobody about him. How sad it is to die alone, all alone, without any one who is devoted to you!

He pondered over his life, so barren, so empty. He recalled former days, the days of his childhood, the home, the house of his parents; his college days, his follies; the time he studied law in Paris, his father's illness, his death. He then returned to live with his mother. They lived together very quietly, and desired nothing more. At last the mother died. How sad life is! He lived alone since then, and now, in his turn, he, too, will soon be dead. He will disappear, and that will be the end. There will be no more of Paul Saval upon the earth. What a frightful thing! Other people will love, will laugh. Yes, people will go on amusing themselves, and he will no longer exist! Is it not strange that people can laugh, amuse themselves, be joyful under that eternal certainty of death? If this death were only probable, one could then have hope; but no, it is inevitable, as inevitable as that night follows the day.

## SHORT STORIES VOLUME XIII.

How I understood them, these who weak, harassed by misfortune, having lost those they loved, awakened from the dream of a tardy compensation, from the illusion of another existence where God will finally be just, after having been ferocious, and their minds disabused of the mirages of happiness, have given up the fight and desire to put an end to this ceaseless tragedy, or this shameful comedy.

Suicide! Why, it is the strength of those whose strength is exhausted, the hope of those who no longer believe, the sublime courage of the conquered! Yes, there is at least one door to this life we can always open and pass through to the other side. Nature had an impulse of pity; she did not shut us up in prison. Mercy for the despairing!

If genius is, as is commonly believed, a sort of aberration of great minds, then Algernon Charles Swinburne is undoubtedly a genius.

Great minds that are healthy are never considered geniuses, while this sublime qualification is lavished on brains that are often inferior but are slightly touched by madness.

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