

The Luncheon (A short story)
By - S. Maugham

The Luncheon is one of the nice stories written by S. Maugham. This is a plotless story, full of humour. This is a significant story for its art of characterisation. There are only two characters in the story around whom the story revolves. The writer presents the two characters at a particular place against a particular set of circumstances. Both the characters remain unexposed, and the narrator of the story happens to be the hero of the story. He talks about a lady who is in fact the heroine of the story. The narrator sees her inside a theatre and she requests him to go with her. But the narrator fails to recognise her. She reminds him that twenty years ago he had arranged for her a luncheon.

The narrator was then a young writer. He had written a book which the lady had gone through and written a letter of admiration to him. In reply, she was thanked too. She proposed for a luncheon at Foyot's which the narrator could not turn down, though at that time he had little income. It may be possible that he might be expecting that the lady would excite passion and love in him.

As the two met for a luncheon at the Foyot's, the real character of the lady appears. She imposes of heavy built and slightly deformed which makes the narrator disappointed. The worst thing about her is that she is very talkative and makes several excuses for eating more and more. At the outset, she says that she does not take anything at luncheon, but when the host requests her, she expresses her desire to have a dish of salmon. While it is being cooked, she wishes to get a dish of caviare. On the other hand, the poor narrator orders for the cheapest mutton chop for himself. She rebuked him mildly that he would destroy his stomach by overloading it with heavy things like a chop. She advises him to follow her and take only one thing at a time.

Then comes the question of drinks, she plays the same trick and says that she would not take anything presently, the narrator dithers her as well. But she

makes a show of not hearing him and instantly declares that the doctor would not allow her to drink anything other than the white digestive French wine and the costly champagne. Now it is clear that the lady is a glutton as she is least attentive to why the narrator selected for himself the cheapest sonnet chop and worse than that a glass of ordinary water only. She is really inconsiderate. As the narrator enquires whether she would like to have coffee, she, without any hesitation, asks for both - ice-cream and coffee. Thus, the narrator places order for two cups of coffee and in addition he orders for ice-cream for only the guest. The worst moment occurs when she strongly desires to eat some of those giant spanners. When the luncheon is supposed to be over, she absent mindedly picks up a huge peach from the basket the waiter is carrying.

The story reaches its climax when she calls the narrator a humorist at his prompt reply to her advice. Her advice was that he would eat heavy things and eat only one thing at a time. His reply was that he would do more for he would not eat anything at least ~~do~~ that night.

Thus, it can be concluded that the story is very interesting and humorous. It is also very entertaining for the readers.