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L.
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The Vertical Ladder

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The Vertical Ladder is a nice short story written by W. Somerset Maugham. It is just an incident without plot and story. But the single incident is powerful enough to hold the attention of the readers. The story deals with no characters. The author does not care to present a character sketch of Flegg; the dark haired girl referred to occasionally in the story. The author uses the introductory method, and in that he shows a rare skill. He is a clever artist and presents a deft handling of the theme.

The story is a beautiful example of the skilled combination of the selective and narrative technique. ~~the story~~ once the story is begun, one goes through it with an unflagging interest. It is surprising to find that the story is absorbing from the beginning to the end. It is one of the most unconventional stories but it holds the interest of the readers. An analytical study of the story will reveal that the story depends for its effects on strong and potential situation. A gentleman, Mr. Flegg, entered into a bet for no loss and gain except that he risks his life and evoked the admiration of the dark haired girl he loved that he would climb the top of the gasometer. He began his climb up on the gasometer and he had hardly gone up ten feet high then he started feeling his own error. The rest of the story presents a very graphic chart of his rising emotional tension and consequent set-backs. The main interest of the story is essentially emotional. There is something in the narrative technique which makes it easier for the readers to identify himself with the hero of the story. His feelings are rendered extremely universal. We feel a strange sense of sympathy for the poor sufferer. His conflicts, his aspirations, his depression, his elegant tragedy ceases to be personal. We share his mental agonies, painful tortures and his overwhelming depression. What he dared is not quite startling. What he aspired to, gives dynamism to the story. But what he suffered is diffused with rich and intense passion.

It would be idle to think that the book is a piece of unalloyed gold. There are merits in the story which can't be denied. It can be called a successful experiment.

in the modern technique of story telling. But the absence of a plot is a conventional loss. The greater loss, however, is the absence of story in it. It is amply compensated by a skillful use of ~~the~~ the emotionally tense situation. So, one naturally feels the absence of any well-spun story.

The language of the story is remarkable. It deserves a special mention. The author has used a selected stock of vocabulary. The use of apt words makes his style quite natural, full of ease and confidence. The capability of using words build a suitable atmosphere too the story. As an experiment in literary technique, the story remains excellent and superb.

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