

**(W. Somerset Maugham)**

*Remembering Mr. Maugham: A Conversation with Ruth Gordon, Clare Booth Luce, George Cukor, Garson Kanin, Aerol Arnold*

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\$250

REMEMBERING MR. MAUGHAM



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First edition. Tall octavo. 37pp. Stapled printed wrappers. Modest wear to the oversized “yapped” wrappers, else very near fine. Although not signed, this was Ruth Gordon and her husband Garson Kanin’s copy. In the text, where Gordon mentions that upon her death she hopes they won’t have a “Remembering Ruth Gordon” event, Kanin’s second wife, the actress Marian Seldes, has inserted a tiny slip with the date of her close friend Gordon’s death in 1982. One needn’t look too far to read some poignancy in to that act.

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REMEMBERING MR. MAUGHAM

*A Conversation with*  
RUTH GORDON  
CLARE BOOTHE LUCE  
GEORGE CUKOR  
GARSON KANIN  
AEROL ARNOLD

APRIL 14, 1966

Miss Gordon:

May I just say something? You know, when I die, if anybody here thinks of getting up an evening called "Remembering Ruth Gordon," forget it. I wouldn't be doing my performances so we wouldn't know. But with Mr. Maugham, darling Mr. Maugham, Dr. Arnold can think what he wants, and Clare can, and George can, I can, and Garson can, but he left the books behind. And you all read the books, and you figure it out for yourselves. Just in closing, let me tell you that he was an adorable fellow, he was a charmer, and he set a great table.

Mr. Kanin:

I have only a brief passage left but in connection with the often-quoted difficulties about Maugham's inability to come to grips with exchanged love, may I invite our old friend Dorothy Parker to join us for a few seconds. You remember that Dorothy Parker wrote, "By the time you swear you're his, quivering and sighing, and he swears his love will be infinite, undying, lady make a note of this, one of you is lying."

Garson Kanin: (reading from his manuscript)

1954. London. Tonight we talk of age and the span of life. I ask why it is that so few are able to end well. Achievements fall farther and farther into the past. I ask if he has observed that the longer you live the fewer friends you seem to have and the more, shall I say, enemies? Well, no, not necessarily enemies, but people who have offended you or whom you have offended in one way or another. Colleagues who are doing better than you are, or not as well, either condition creating an awkward situation. The longer you live the more possibilities you have for error, for irritation, for friction, for giving and taking offense.

He agrees absolutely, and adds, "Yes, that is all as . . . sad and unfortunate as it is true. But what is even worse is the . . . burden of memory."

I think that was his phrase. I am not certain what he meant by it.

"If you live long enough," he says, "you can become known. And if you live too long, you may become unknown again."

"What is most difficult about the . . . passage of time," says WSM, "is to stay in the fashion. It is extremely difficult to do so, since the constant repetition of a way of . . . dress or a way of speech or of life