

## **SYNOPSIS OF ELEVEN MINUTES BY PAULO COELHO**

Maria, a young girl from the interior of Brazil, has her heart broken by her first innocent brushes with love and convinces herself that love is a terrible thing that will make her suffer. Then, as time goes by, she grows to become a beautiful girl from a poor family. Her adventure starts when she goes to Switzerland for a holiday but unintentionally she is offered a job as a samba dancer by a foreigner. However, that job does not last long because she feels cheated by the boss. Instead of going back to Brazil, she chooses to stay and work as a prostitute in an expensive bar called the Copacabana.

There, she learns how to please men by reading books about sex in a library. She even participates in a sadomasochism activity. With the hope that one day she will go back to Brazil triumphantly and buy a farm for her parents, Maria works hard in order to get a lot of money.

One day when she meets a special client named Ralf Hart, she is gradually faced with two hard choices: she has to keep being a prostitute or she has to end her adventure and follow her heart to love Ralf Hart.

Finally, Maria decides to stop working as a prostitute in the Copacabana and go back to Brazil. Unexpectedly, she meets Ralf Hart again when

she transits in Paris. Not wanting to lose someone she loves for the nth time, she decides to get together with Ralf Hart and they live happily in the end.

## **SYNOPSIS OF MAGGIE: A GIRL OF THE STREETS** **BY STEPHEN CRANE**

Maggie, a young beautiful girl, lives in the tenements of the Bowery, a slum area of New York City. She comes from a broken family and lives with her mother, Mary, and her two brothers Jimmie and Tommie. Her brother, Jimmie, and she always suffer child abuse. Her mother gets used to hitting and pounding them every time she gets drunk.

As time passes, her father and her little brother, Tommie, die. She grows up to be a beautiful girl who is covered by poverty. Pete, Jimmie's friend and a bartender, begins dating her. She is taken to the public entertainments by him. Feeling cared for by Pete, she starts to be interested in him. She sees in him a promising escape from the misery of her present life. She even puts her life in his hand because she thinks of him as her hero.

There comes a night when Maggie comes home, her mother throws her out of the house because her mother accuses her of doing something bad and disgracing her family. She then leaves home and lives with Pete. Her behavior becomes a neighborhood scandal. The neighbors often ask her mother about her existence.

A few weeks after leaving her house, she is with Pete in a bar where they meet Nellie. Nellie is Pete's friend who influences Pete to leave Maggie.

Abandoned, Maggie tries to return home, but she is rejected by her family. She then visits Pete at work, and he refuses her too because he thinks that he is not responsible for her and her ruin; besides, he is also tired of her.

After several months, Maggie becomes a prostitute in the street of New York. She tries hard to get a client, but no one hires her. The next day, there is the news that her dead body is found in the river.

## **BIOGRAPHY OF PAULO COELHO**

Coelho was born on August 24, 1947 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he attended law school, but in 1970 abandoned his studies to travel throughout Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, as well as Europe and North Africa. Before dedicating his life completely to literature, he worked as theatre director and actor, lyricist and journalist. He and his wife Christina live in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and in Tarbes, France.

In 1982 Coelho published his first book, *Hell Archives*, which failed to make any kind of impact. In 1985 he contributed to the *Practical Manual of Vampirism*, although he later tried to take it off the shelves, since he considered it bad quality. In 1986, Paulo Coelho did the pilgrimage to Saint James of Compostella, an experience later to be documented in his book *The Pilgrimage*. In the following year, Coelho published *The Alchemist*. Slow initial sales convinced his first publisher to drop the novel, but it went on to become one of the best selling Brazilian books of all time.

Other titles include *Brida* (1990), *The Valkyries* (1992), *By the river Piedra I sat Down and Wept* (1994), the collection of his best columns published in the Brazilian newspaper Folha de São Paulo entitled *Maktub* (1994), the compilation of texts *Phrases* (1995), *The Fifth Mountain* (1996), *Manual of a*

*Warrior of Light* (1997), *Veronika Decides to Die* (1998), *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000), the compilation of traditional tales in *Stories for Parents, Children and Grandchildren* (2001), *Eleven Minutes* (2003), *The Zahir* (2005). He also adapted *The Gift* (Henry Drummond) and *Love Letters of a Prophet* (Kalil Gibran).

Coelho has sold a total of 75 million copies and, according to the magazine *Publishing Trends*; he was the most sold author in the world in 2003 with his book *Eleven Minutes* – even though at the time it had not been released in the United States, Japan and 10 other countries.

(Source: “Paulo Coelho”)

## **BIOGRAPHY OF STEPHEN CRANE**

Stephen Crane was born in Newark, New Jersey, as the 14th child of a Methodist minister Jonathan Townley Crane and his wife Mary Helen Peck Crane in 1871. Crane started to write stories at the age of eight. At 16 he was writing articles for the *New York Tribune*. Both of his parents did some writing and two of his brothers became newspapermen. His mother was active in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and published fiction. His first article, on the explorer Henry M. Stanley, appeared in 1890 in *Villette*. Crane studied at Lafayette College and Syracuse University. After his mother's death in 1890, Crane moved to New York. He worked as a free-lance writer and journalist for the Bachelor-Johnson newspaper syndicate. While supporting himself by his writings, he lived among the poor in the Bowery slums to research his first novel, *Maggie: a Girl of the Streets* (1893), a milestone in the development of literary naturalism. Crane had to print the book at his own expense, borrowing the money from his brother. Crane's faithfulness to accuracy of details led him once to dress up as a tramp and spend the night in a flophouse. This produced the sketch 'Experiment in Misery' in 1894. Crane's work also inspired other writers, such as Hutchins Hapgood (1869-1944), to examine the Lower East Side.

In 1898 Crane settled in Sussex, England, where he became friends with Joseph Conrad, H.G. Wells, and Henry James. During these restless years, Crane refined his use of realism to expose social ills, as in *George's Mother* (1896), which explored life in the Bowery. In 1899 appeared *Active Service*, which was based on the Greco-Turkish War.

In 1899 Crane returned to Cuba, to cover the Spanish-American War. Due to poor health he was obliged to return to England. Crane died on June 5, 1900 at Badenweiler in Germany of tuberculosis, which was worsened by malarial fever he had caught in Cuba.

Crane's works introduced into American literature realism although his innovations in technique and style and the use of symbolism gave much of his best work a romantic rather than a naturalistic quality.

(Source: "Stephen Crane")