

Seize the Day Characters

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Characters

Tommy Wilhelm: The protagonist of the story, Tommy (real name Wilhelm Adler), is a middle-aged man (44). He is going through a series of personal and financial crises. He is separated from his wife. He is unemployed and struggling to find a purpose in life. Tommy is constantly seeking validation and approval from his father and others. He embarks on a journey of self-discovery throughout the novella. Catherine (Philippa) is his sister.

Dr. Adler: Dr. Adler is the father of Tommy. He is a retired and wealthy physician. He lives comfortably at the Hotel Gloriana. He has a strained relationship with his son. He often criticizes and rejects Tommy's choices and failures. His cold attitude and lack of sympathy make Tommy feel more lonely and helpless.

Maurice Venice: He is a dishonest talent scout (a person who seeks talented people in acting, singing, sports, or modeling and helps them get jobs) from Tommy's past. At first, he shows interest in Tommy because of his good looks. He thinks Tommy could be an actor. But Tommy fails in the screen test. Besides, Tommy's stuttering and other weaknesses look worse on camera. So, Venice refuses to help him. Later, it is shown that Venice was not a real talent scout. Actually, he was secretly involved in a prostitution business. His talent scout job was only a disguise.

Dr. Tamkin: Dr. Tamkin is a mysterious and manipulative character. He becomes a so-called friend of Tommy. He lives at the Hotel Gloriana. He is a dishonest man, tells many lies. He says he is a psychologist, poet, doctor, inventor, and even a gangster. Most people do not trust him, but Tommy believes him. Tamkin gives strange advice and convinces Tommy to invest in the stock market. Tommy trusts him with his last money, hoping to make a profit. But in the end, Tamkin tricks him and disappears.

Margaret: Margaret is Tommy Wilhelm's wife, but they are separated. She is the mother of his two sons. We never see her directly in the story. We only know about her through Tommy's thoughts, Dr. Adler's words, and phone calls. Tommy sees her as a cold, harsh, and unsympathetic woman. She demands money from him. She refuses to give him a divorce. She tells Tommy that she will not make things easy for him. Because of this, Tommy feels trapped

and helpless.

Olive: Olive is the beloved of Tommy Wilhelm. We never meet her in the story. She is small, pretty, and dark-haired. She worked with Tommy at Rojax Corporation. Later, he was fired from there. Olive is a Christian. But she is ready to marry Tommy even if it is beyond the church's rules. However, Tommy's wife, Margaret, refuses to divorce him. It makes their marriage impossible. Tommy thinks about Olive often and feels that Margaret has ruined their future. Near the end of the book, he says he will go to Olive and beg her to stay with him, because Tommy believes she truly loves him.

Catherine (Philippa): She is Tommy's sister and Dr. Adler's daughter. Her full name is Catherine Adler, but she has changed it to Philippa. She has a science degree from Bryn Mawr College. She wants to be a painter. Her father refuses to help her rent a gallery for her paintings because he does not believe in her talent. Tommy also does not care much about her art but tries weakly to defend her. Catherine never appears in the story. She likes Tommy and struggles to get support from her father.

Minor characters:

Mr. Rappaport: He is a very old man with poor eyesight at the stock exchange. He cannot see the numbers clearly and always asks for help. He is a symbol of the "blindness" of the world around Tommy. He asks Tommy to go with him to a cigar store, and Tommy agrees. He also tells a story about being yelled at by Teddy Roosevelt during a war. This story gives Tommy a short moment of connection with the world.

Mr. Perls: He is a companion of Dr. Adler at breakfast. He is a salesman. Tommy feels that his father prefers spending time with people like Mr. Perls instead of with his own family. Mr. Perls represents the practical, self-satisfied men whom Tommy cannot understand or connect with.

Mr. Rubin: Mr. Rubin is the owner of the newspaper and cigar stand in the Hotel Gloriana. He is an ordinary working man. He talks politely with Tommy and other hotel guests. His short appearance shows the busy, practical life of city people. He represents the everyday, emotionless routine of modern society.

Mr. Rowland: Mr. Rowland is an old man who invests money in the stock market. He is calm and rich. Unlike Tommy, he plays with money for fun, not for survival. He enjoys business as a game. His character shows the difference between the rich and the poor in the modern world.

Mr. Rappaport's Daughter: She is the daughter of Mr. Rappaport, the nearly blind old man. We never see her directly in the story. Mr. Rappaport only mentions her in his talk. She takes care of him and helps him with his daily life. Her short mention shows the human need for care

and support in old age.

Lx Notes