

The Spectator's Account of Himself Summary

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Curiosity About the Author: The essay starts with the writer's thoughts about readers. He says readers want to know about the author's life. They want to know personal details, like whether the writer is married, his appearance, or his personality. The author decides to write about himself first. He wants readers to understand him before reading more essays.

Family Background and Early Life: He says he was born to a small family estate. The land has belonged to his family for six hundred years. No field was ever lost or added. His mother dreamed he would be a judge when she was pregnant. His father was a justice of the peace. The villagers thought this dream was special. As a baby, he was quiet and serious. He did not like noisy toys.

School and University Life: He says his early childhood was not remarkable. He was a silent and serious boy at school. His teacher said he was clever and solid. At university, he also spoke very little. For eight years, he rarely said a hundred words. He mostly spoke in public college activities. He spent most of his time reading books. He read many famous books in many languages.

Travel After His Father's Death: When his father died, he decided to travel. He left university with a strange reputation. People thought he was smart but odd. He visited many countries in Europe. He wanted to see new and interesting things. He even traveled to Egypt to see a pyramid. After this, he returned home to England.

Life in the City and Public Places: He now lives in the city. He often visits busy public places. He goes to coffee houses and the theatre. He sometimes listens to politicians at Will's coffee-house. He smokes at Child's and listens to people talk. He is seen at St. James's Coffee-house on Sundays. He visits places like the Grecian and the Cocoa-Tree. Few friends know who he truly is. He mixes with many groups but rarely speaks. He sometimes passes as a merchant or a Jew at the market.

Role as a Spectator: He says he is a spectator in life. He likes to watch rather than take part. He learns about politics, business, and family life by watching others. He never joins in with strong opinions. He wants to be neutral between different groups. He wants to keep his role as an observer.

Limited Personal Information: He tells only a little about his life. He wants readers to know he is ready for this work. He will tell more in later papers. He keeps his name, age, and address a secret. He likes privacy and does not want attention. He will only share these things if needed.

Writing and Sharing Thoughts: His friends say he should share his thoughts. He does not like to speak much in person. He chooses to write and publish his ideas instead. He will write daily for the readers' benefit. He hopes to help or entertain his country. He hopes he will not live in vain.

Invitation and Promise for the Next Essay: He asks readers to send letters to him. His club meets to check and improve the papers. He promises to introduce his friends and club members in the next essay. The author wants to be a thoughtful observer and writer.