

# **IDHAYA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, KUMBAKONAM**



**SEMESTER**

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**SUBJECT**

**:NEW LITERATURE IN  
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**TITLE OF THE PAPER**

**: STONE ANGEL**

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**: DR. LIDWINA E. PEREIRA**

# ABOUT FICTION

- Fiction generally is a narrative form, in any medium, consisting of people, events, or places that are imaginary, in other words, not based strictly on history or fact. In its most narrow usage, fiction refers to written narratives in prose and often specifically novels, though also novellas and short stories.
- More broadly, fiction has come to encompass stories with imaginary elements in any format, including not just writings but also most live theatrical performances, films, television programs, radio dramas, comics, role-playing games, and video games.

## FICTION

VS

## NONFICTION

When it comes to books, there is an easy way to quickly classify all of them into two categories and say that some are fiction, while the rest are nonfiction. The same classification can also apply to television, plays, or films, but the terms "fiction" and "nonfiction" are still heard most often in literature.

### DEFINITION

When you are talking about FICTION, you are talking about the plot, the characters and the setting that are created by the

### DEFINITION

NONFICTION refers to stories that are based on events that actually happened in reality; the characters are real people,

# THE STONE ANGEL

- ◉ The Stone Angel is a novel by Canadian writer Margaret Laurence. First published in 1964 by McClelland and Stewart, it is perhaps the best-known of Laurence's series of five novels set in the fictitious town of Manawaka, Manitoba. In parallel narratives set in the past and the present-day.
- ◉ The Stone Angel tells the story of Hagar Currie Shipley. In the present, 90-year-old Hagar struggles against being put in a nursing home, which she sees as a symbol of death. This narrative alternates with Hagar looking back at her life.



## ABOUT AUTHOR



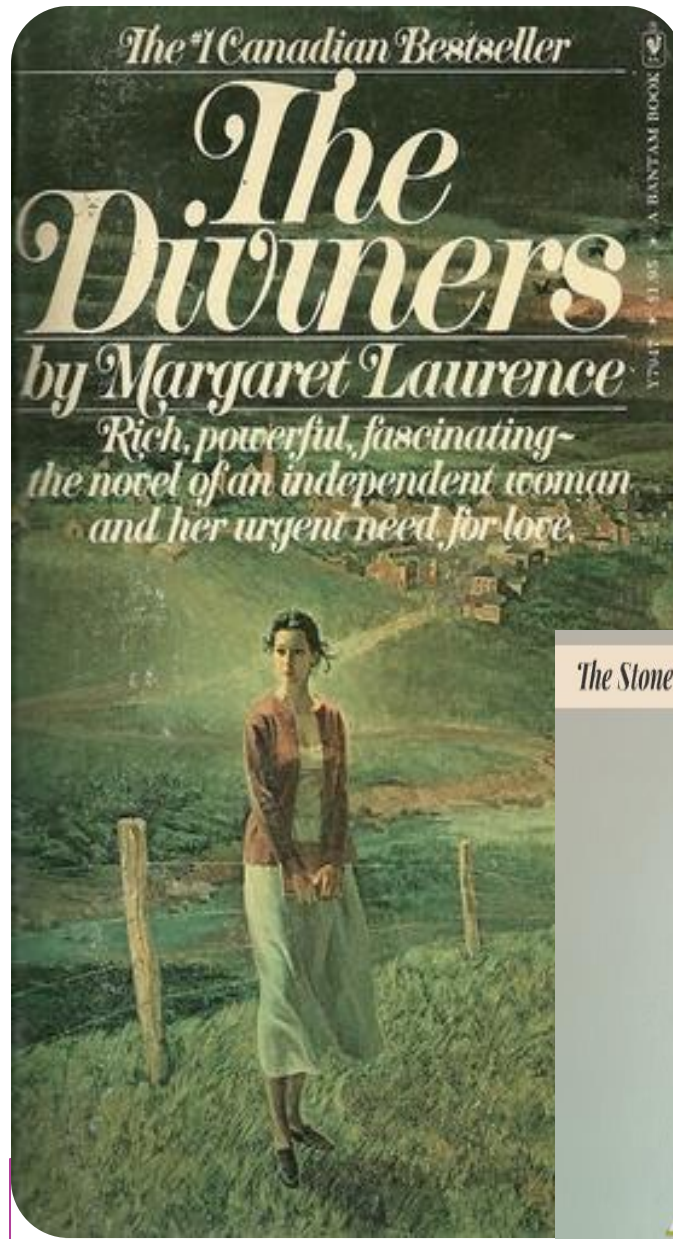
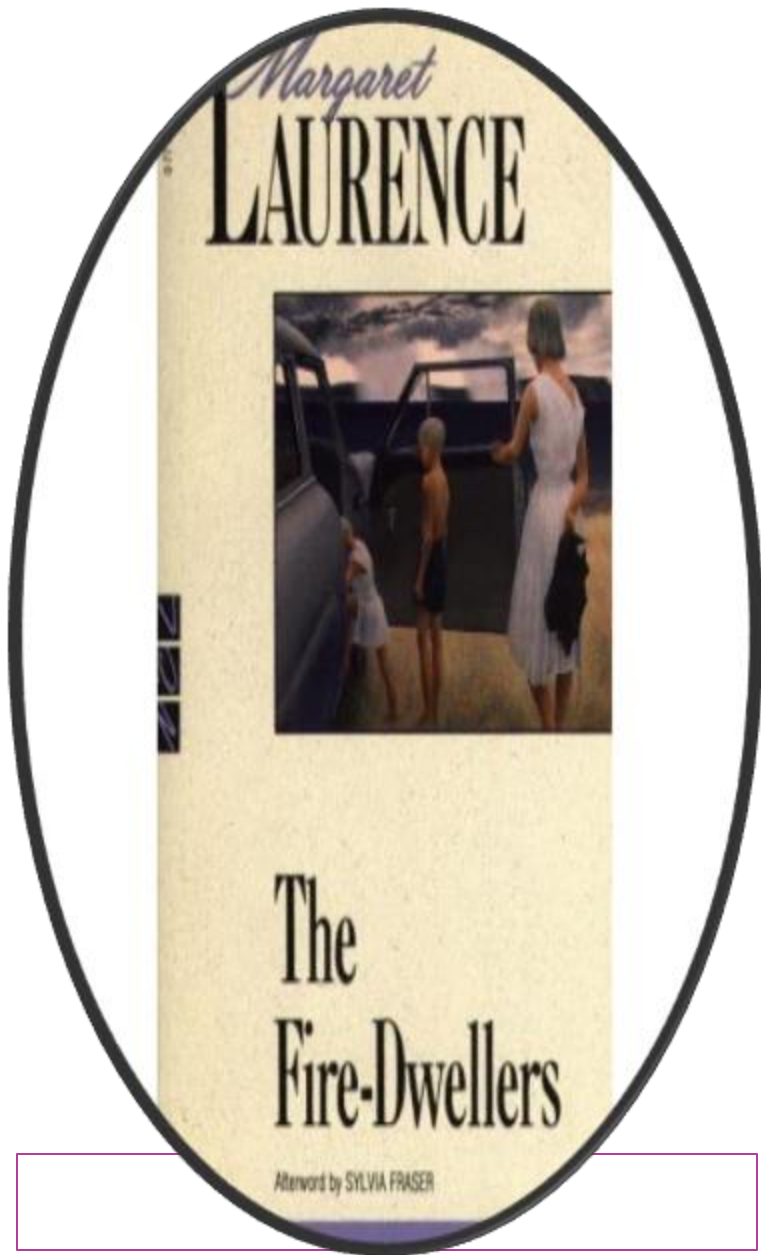
Jean Margaret Laurence was a Canadian novelist and short story writer, and is one of the major figures in Canadian literature.

She was also a founder of the Writers' Trust of Canada, a non-profit literary organization that seeks to encourage Canada's writing community.

In 1944, Laurence attended Winnipeg's United College, an arts and theology college associated with the University of Manitoba, that would later become the University of Winnipeg

In 1986, Laurence was diagnosed with lung cancer late in the disease's development. According to the James King biography, *The Life of Margaret Laurence*, the prognosis was grave, and as the cancer had spread to other organs, there was no treatment offered beyond palliative care.





# General Review of the Novel

- Although Margaret Laurence had been publishing fiction for a decade before The Stone Angel was published in 1964, it was this novel that first won her a wide and appreciative audience.

# SUMMARY

- ◉ The Stone Angel is a 1964 novel by Margaret Laurence, a Canadian writer. It is one of a number of books by Laurence set in the fictional town of Manawaka, Manitoba, in a rural area of Canada. Manawaka is a conservative place that clings to traditional social values.
- ◉ Two plot lines are juxtaposed. One is set in the early 1960s, and the other earlier in the life of the central character, Hagar Currie Shipley, who is ninety years old in the present timeframe and fighting against being placed in a nursing home, which she sees as the sign of impending death.
- ◉ It is narrated in the first person by Hagar, with stream-of-consciousness utilized at times. Hagar's diminishing cognitive functioning is exemplified as the story progresses.
- ◉ Hagar flees when she finds out that her son Marvin and her daughter-in-law Doris plan to place her in a nursing home. She finds an abandoned cannery in which to spend the night. When she is found the next day, she is suffering from exposure and is so ill she ends up in a hospital.
- ◉ There, she is secured to the bed to prevent her from running again. This is the point at which the narrative begins to include flashback scenes that are also presented in the present tense. Hagar's relationships with men seem to have defined her life. Hagar is the daughter of Jason Currie, a successful businessman.

- ⦿ Growing up, Hagar is always well dressed and was spoiled to some extent. As she gets older, she does not take on the traits of her mother, who is weak, but rather her father who is intelligent, persistent, and hard working.
- ⦿ She has two older brothers, neither of whom have much business ability in comparison with Hagar. Her father attempts to teach all of his children about business and his trade. Hagar is unable to see how much her father loves her, or that he is trying to instill in her the skills she needs for later in life.
- ⦿ Skills that Hagar does not seem to acquire include the ability to nurture others. When one of her brothers suffers an injury from falling through ice she refuses to care for him and he dies.
- ⦿ Later in her life, Hagar is close with her younger son, John, in whom she sees a lot of her own personality. She is distant from her older boy, Marvin.
- ⦿ It is clear that Jason is setting Hagar up to take over the family business. She is sent to an Eastern finishing school while her brother is not afforded a similar opportunity.
- ⦿ When she returns, her father wants her to take on one of the most important jobs in his company: keeping the accounts. Jason knows that this is the first step in preparing her to take over the business.
- ⦿ Hagar, however, sees it as her father's attempt to control her, rather than a showing of his faith in her ability. She decides that she wants to become a teacher.



- ◉ As an act of rebellion, she marries a man named Brampton (Bram) Shipley, whom her father cannot approve of. As a result, Jason cuts her out of his life. Ultimately, she receives no inheritance from her father.
- ◉ The marriage of Hagar and Bram is not a happy union. His family is considered to be part of the lower class of Manawaka. He is described as being crude in his ways. He works just enough to get by, but has little ambition.
- ◉ He spends a lot of time with his horses and drinking. He does not consider the needs of Hagar or their sons in any decisions that he makes.
- ◉ There is some level of physical attraction between Hagar and Bram, and while he is clearly self-absorbed, he is not without feelings for his wife.
- ◉ Hagar, having experienced higher education, looks down on Bram and is embarrassed by his lower class manner of speaking.
- ◉ Her position in society has dropped and people no longer see her as Jason Currie's daughter, a status she valued more than being Bram Shipley's wife.
- ◉ As she grows increasingly bitter over her loss of social status, Hagar becomes increasingly verbally abusive to, and controlling of, Bram.
- ◉ When the couple ultimately separates she leaves town with their younger son John.

- ◉ As John gets older, Hagar begins to act more and more like her father. She wants to control her son but is unable to, and he returns to Manawaka and marries a girl named Arlene.
- ◉ When John and Arlene die in a car accident, Hagar is unable to feel anything. She feels as if she has turned to stone. As the narrative returns to the present day, Hagar fears becoming dependent on others, while Marvin and Doris feel that they cannot care for her properly at home.
- ◉ When she is in the hospital, her surviving son visits and she makes her peace with him, finally able to express her feelings.
- ◉ January Magazine said of *The Stone Angel*, “This is not a Dickensian-style story about a badly led life that is redeemed at the end by a revelation brought in a golden light that brings a joyous repentance.
- ◉ Rather, it is Laurence’s look at an unlovely life built on uncompromising convictions. And-being Laurence-we are given vivid portraits in time, character and place that have made *The Stone Angel* an unforgettable novel.”

*" When I say work  
I only mean writing.  
Everything else is just odd jobs."*



Margaret Laurence



A white rectangular sticky note is pinned to a purple background with a red pushpin at the top center. The note has a slight shadow and is surrounded by orange, leaf-like shapes. The text "THANK YOU" is written in a black, casual, hand-drawn font. The word "THANK" is on the top line, and "YOU" is on the bottom line, both centered.

THANK  
YOU