

Rafael Sabatini

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Rafael Sabatini (April 29, 1875 - February 13, 1950) was an Italian/British writer of novels of romance and adventure.

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Life

Rafael Sabatini was born in Jesi, Italy to an English mother and Italian father. His parents were opera singers who became teachers.

At a young age, Rafael was exposed to many languages, living with his grandfather in England, attending school in Portugal and, as a teenager, in Switzerland. By the time he was seventeen, when he returned to England to live permanently, he was the master of five languages. He quickly added a sixth language — English — to his linguistic collection. He consciously chose to write in his adopted language, because, he said, "all the best stories are written in English."

After a brief stint in the business world, Sabatini went to work as a writer. He wrote short stories in the 1890s, and his first novel came out in 1902. It took Sabatini roughly a quarter of a century of hard work before he attained success with *Scaramouche* in 1921.

This brilliant novel of the French Revolution became an international best-seller. It was followed by the equally successful *Captain Blood* in 1922. All of his earlier books were rushed into reprints, the most popular of which was *The Sea Hawk* from 1915. Sabatini was a prolific writer; he produced a new book approximately every year. While he perhaps didn't achieve the mammoth success of *Scaramouche* and *Captain Blood*, nonetheless Sabatini still maintained a great deal of popularity with the reading public through the decades that followed. The public knew that in picking up a Sabatini book, they could always count upon a good read, and his following was loyal and extensive.

By the 1940s, illness forced the writer to slow his prolific method of composition. However, he did write several additional works even during that time. He died February 13, 1950 in Switzerland. He is buried at Adelboden, Switzerland. On his head stone his wife had written, "He was born with a gift of laughter and a sense that the world was mad," the first

line of his best-known work, *Scaramouche*.

He is best known for his world-wide bestsellers:

- *The Sea Hawk* (1915), a tale of the Spanish Armada and the pirates of the Barbary Coast;
- *Scaramouche* (1921), a tale of the French Revolution in which a fugitive hides out in a commedia dell'arte troupe;
- *Captain Blood* (1922), in which the title character is admiral of a fleet of pirate ships (Sabatini also wrote two sequels); and
- *Bellarion the Fortunate* (1926), about a cunning young man who finds himself immersed in the politics of fifteenth-century Italy.

The first three of these books have been made into notable films.

In all, he produced thirty one novels, eight short story collections, six nonfiction books,

numerous uncollected short stories, and a play.

Works

Series

Scaramouche

- *Scaramouche* (1921)
- *Scaramouche the Kingmaker* (1931)

Captain Blood

- *Captain Blood* (1922) (also known as *Captain Blood His Odyssey*)
- *Captain Blood Returns* (also known as *The Chronicles of Captain Blood*, 1931)
- *The Fortunes of Captain Blood* (1936) (N.B. *Captain Blood Returns* and *The Fortunes of Captain Blood* are not sequels, but collections of short stories set entirely within the timeframe of the original novel.)

Novels

- *The Lovers of Yvonne* (also known as *The Suitors of Yvonne* ,1902)
- *The Tavern Knight* (1904)
- *Bardelys the Magnificent* (1905)
- *The Trampling of the Lilies* (1906)
- *Love-At-Arms: Being a narrative excerpted from the chronicles of Urbino during the dominion of the High and Mighty Messer Guidobaldo da Montefeltro* (1907)
- *The Shame of Motley* (1908)
- *St. Martin's Summer* (1909)
- *Mistress Wilding* (also known as *Anthony Wilding* ,1910)
- *The Lion's Skin* (1911)
- *The Strolling Saint* (1913)
- *The Gates of Doom* (1914)
- *The Sea Hawk* (1915)
- *The Snare* (1917)
- *Fortune's Fool* (1923)
- *The Carolinian* (1924)
- *Bellarion* (1926)
- *The Hounds of God* (1928)
- *The Romantic Prince* (1929)

- *The King's Minion* (also known as *The Minion* ,1930)
- *The Black Swan* (1932)
- *The Stalking Horse* (1933)
- *Venetian Masque* (1934)
- *Chivalry* (1935)
- *Scaramis* (1936')
- *The Lost King'* (1937)
- *The Sword of Islam* (1939)
- *The Marquis of Carabas* (also known as *Master-At-Arms* ,1940)
- *Columbus* (1941)
- *King In Prussia* (also known as *The Birth of Mischief* ,1944)
- *The Gamester* (1949)
- *Saga of the sea* (1953)
- *The Treasure Ship* (2004)

Collections

- *The Justice of the Duke* (1912)
- *The Banner of the Bull* (1915)
- *The Nuptials of Corbal* (1927)
- *The Reaping* (1929)
- *Turbulent Tales* (1946)
- *Sinner, Saint And Jester: A Trilogy in*

- *Romantic Adventure (omnibus, 1954)*
- *In the Shadow of the Guillotine*
(Omnibus comprising *Scaramouche*,
The Marquis of Carabas and *The Lost King*, 1955)
- *A Fair Head of Angling Stories* (1989)
- *The Fortunes of Casanova and Other Stories* (1994, stories originally published 1907-21 & 1934)
- *The Outlaws of Falkensteig* (2000, stories originally published 1900-2)
- *The Camisade: And Other Stories of the French Revolution* (2001, stories originally published 1900-16)

Plays

- *The Tyrant: An Episode in the Career of Cesare Borgia, a Play in Four Acts* (1925)

Anthologies edited

- *A Century of Sea Stories* (1935)
- *A Century of Historical Stories* (1936)

Non fiction

- *The Life of Cesare Borgia* (1912)
- *Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition* (1913)
- *The Historical Nights' Entertainment* (1917)
- *Heroic Lives* (1934)

Epitaph

Sabatini's epitaph, on his gravestone in Adelboden, is the first line from *Scaramouche*:

“ He was born with the gift of laughter, and a sense that the world was mad. ”

External links

- Works by Rafael Sabatini at Project Gutenberg
- Rafael Sabatini.com

- Rafael Sabatini Dustjacket Gallery

See also

- Alexandre Dumas, père
- H. Rider Haggard
- Karl May
- Baroness Orczy
- Emilio Salgari
- Samuel Shellabarger
- Lawrence Schoonover
- Jules Verne
- Frank Yerby

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