

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM SHARP

William Sharp was a Scottish poet, novelist and autobiographer who was born in Paisley in 1855. The oldest of eight children, his father was a successful merchant and his mother was the daughter of the Swedish Vice Consul in Glasgow. He was a talented boy who read voraciously.

5 During his teenage years, he became attracted to his cousin Elisabeth, a girl who shared many of his enthusiasms. They formed a bond friendship which led eventually to their engagement and marriage.

Educated at Glasgow Academy, he attended Glasgow University but left without a degree, travelling to Australia instead. After his arrival in
10 London in 1878 he soon became a member of the circle of writers centred on Dante Rossetti. In London he was also a regular contributor to literary journals. He published biographies of Shelley and Browning and introduced popular editions of poetry.

He was the author of novels and several volumes of poetry. His novels
15 included *The Sport of Chance* (1888) and *The Children of Tomorrow* (1889) and his volumes of poetry *The Human Inheritance* (1882) and *Earth's Voices* (1884), among others. In later years he also wrote prose romances on Celtic themes, represented as being written by Fiona MacLeod. They include *Pharais* (1894) and *The Mountain Lovers* (1904),
20 written just before his death.

More than a pen-name, Fiona MacLeod was his second literary personality. Sharp kept his identity with MacLeod a closely guarded secret. Almost nobody knew MacLeod's real identity.

Sharp passed away in Sicily in 1905. Though he was a prolific and
25 remarkable writer, much is still uncertain and undiscovered about William Sharp's life.

Adapted from *The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English*

READING COMPREHENSION. Add TRUE or FALSE and copy the evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. Sharp used to read a lot when he was a boy.

TRUE FALSE The evidence is in line

2. Elisabeth had much in common with Sharp.

TRUE FALSE The evidence is in line

3. Sharp finished his studies at Glasgow University.

TRUE FALSE The evidence is in lines and

4. Many people knew MacLeod's real identity.

TRUE FALSE The evidence is in line

LEXICON. Find words or phrases in the text that mean the same as these given.

1. gifted

3. topics

2. ultimately

4. died

PHONETICS.

1. Write a word from the text that includes the same sound as "years" /z/ .

2. How is the "th" pronounced in "enthusiasms", /θ/ or /ð/ ?

3. Is the "-ed" pronounced /t/ , /d/ or /ɪd/ in "formed"?

4. Write a word from the text that includes the same sound as "just" /ʌ/.