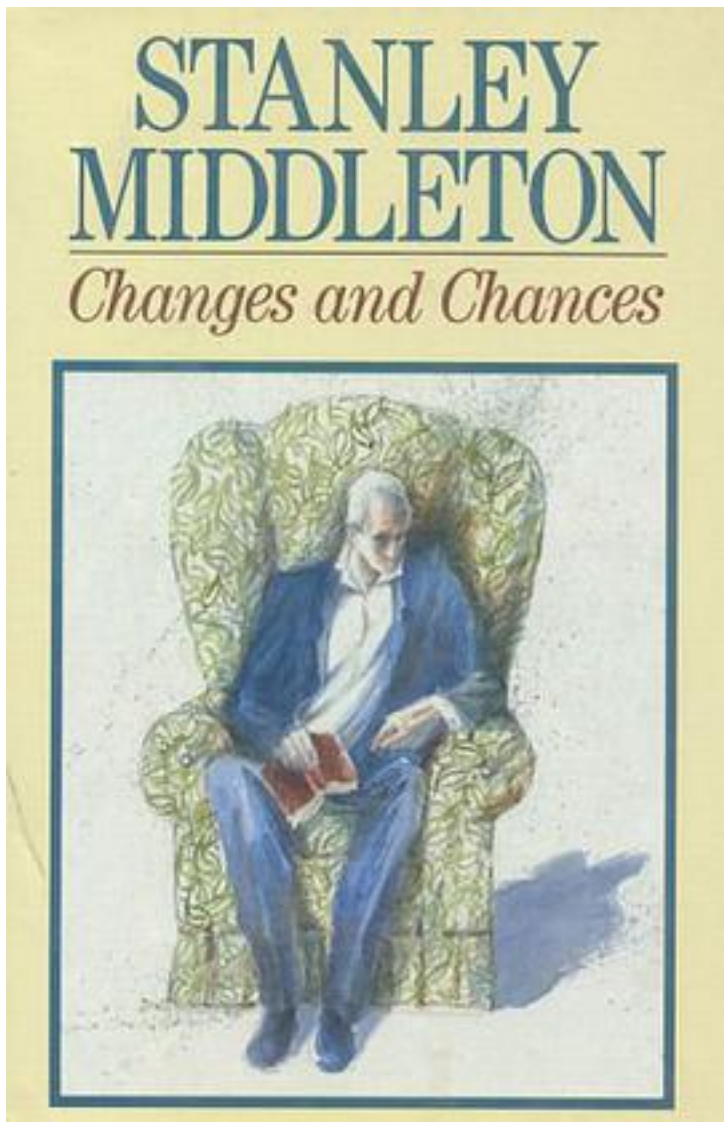


Changes and Chances



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Adrian Hiller is monied, cultivated, somewhat neurotic, and used to getting what he wants when he wants it. The local theater is dependent on his money, and, at this point, on his taste and judgement. His housekeeper, Elsie Mead, has become his lover because he meant to have it that way—even as, twenty or so years ago, he seduced Alice Fowler, a girl still in college, in a manner somewhat more forceful than seductive. But the 'changes and chances' mentioned in the Book of Common Prayer are indeed man's fate in this earthly existence. The theater group decides that it wants to do popular things rather than the classics, ancient and modern; Adrian makes a dignified speech, and resigns—and takes to his bed. Then Adrian's friend, Stephen Youlgrave, a poet in his seventies, asks Elsie to marry him, and she agrees. And Alice Fowler, whose teenage son works part time for Adrian and whose husband works for the large corporation in which Adrian is a principal shareholder, declines to be seduced again. Changes and chances. Psychologically acute without cant or dogma, seeing a little deeper into life without apparent effort, quietly noting the details of daily living and finding drama in them, Stanley Middleton puts before us another episode of the Human Comedy, controlled and measured à la Trollope.

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