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“Is He Living or is He Dead?” leaves you with ambiguous thoughts. It intrigues you at the beginning and leaves you “empty” at the end. Then you try to find something special in you missed in the story, something truly philosophical and hard-hitting. But no, you just don’t find it.

It is, in some way, a funny and easy-to-read story that flies by you like bullet, leaving a couple of questions like “What was that? Am I being shot at?” It has an intriguing start, although a bit rushed and botched. Then it makes you wonder how the major story of Mr. Smith would end. And in the end you realize that it was a mere story of fraud. A group of artists in need try to sell pictures and sketches they paint. One of the artists comes up with an idea that every thing made by a man’s hand is unique and death of the man means nothing will be ever made by his hand again so it becomes absolutely unique. Reading it makes you think that Mr. Smith is excited by the result of his friend’s actions and sees nothing but good and witty while in its very meaning tricks and lies are tricks and lies. And fraud is a fraud and nothing else. This story of Mark Twain is considered to be a short comedy, but it is not funny. It tries to be a short and comical revelation that lie is sometimes a salvation, but it resembles stating the obvious in a strange and a bit twisted manner. It might make you take a quick glance at the moment that death makes something unique in this world and at the same time prevents you from wondering about this moment with its repulsive emptiness and the very idea of “white lie”.