





## A Tedious Story (From An Old Man's Journal)

Anton Chekhov (1860 - 1904) Translated by S. S. Koteliansky and J. M. Murray

Read by: David Wales Length: 2 hours 29 minutes Genre(s): Fiction, Novellas, Short Fiction		Language: Style:	English Solo	
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Influenced by the death of his brother Nicolay from tuberculosis, Chekhov's novella **"A Tedious Story (From An Old Man's Journal)**" chronicles the alienation and confusion of Nikolai Stepanovich, a renowned professor of medicine, during his decline from an unspecified illness. He describes struggles with insomnia and bouts of debilitating weakness while he tries to analyze the cause of his rapid physical and psychological decline from an unspecified illness. His world grows increasingly strange and distant as his disorientation increases. He watches his daughter and step-daughter suffer as they try to care for him, but he is too numb to feel anything or connect in any meaningful way. Chekhov wrote: "The thing about my hero is that he does not care for those around him. People close to him shed tears, make mistakes, tell lies, but all he can do is dispassion-ately lecture them on theatre or literature." Critical reception was divided, reflecting perhaps a difficulty in defining a new and unsettling kind of

work. One critic called it ""undeniably the best work of Russian literature of the last year", while another dismissed it as a trivial "etude on the slow decline of an old man's mind". Commenting on the superficial similarity to Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch", one critic felt Chekhov had fallen into "a trap of imitation", while another praised the story as "a highly original piece of writing". It is now considered one of Chekhov's most enduring works.

**Anton Chekov** (January 29, 1860 – July 15, 1904) was a Russian physician, playwright and author of short stories. He is considered one of the finest writers of short fiction in history and, along with Ibsen and Strindberg, one of the founders of modernism in the theatre. He was born the third of six children in the port town of Taganrog on the north shore of the Sea of Azov in southern Russia. His father, a grocer, declared bankruptcy in 1876 and moved the family to Moscow, leaving Anton behind to liquidate the property and complete his schooling. Anton joined his family and entered medical school in 1879, supporting the family by writing short vignettes and humorous sketches for the newspapers and gaining both popular and literary attention. He became a doctor in 1884 but practiced little. At about the same time he contracted tuberculosis. Noted author Dmitry Grigorovich helped him win the Pushkin prize in 1888 for his short story collection *At Dusk*. He settled in a small country estate in 1892, where he wrote his first major play, *The Seagull*, in 1894, and then built a villa in Yalta after his tuberculosis worsened. He married actress Olga Knipper in 1901. The *Cherry Orchard*, his last major play, received accolades when it was produced a few months before his death in 1904 and established his reputation a great Russian writer, second only to Tolstoy, which stands to this day.