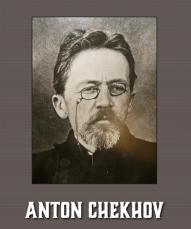
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## AN ANONYMOUS STORY



TRANSLATED BY CONTANCE GARNETT

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## An Anonymous Story

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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An Anonymous Story is a novella published in 1893 that has also been translated as *The Story of a Nobody* and *The Story of an Unknown Man*. The unknown man is the narrator, "Stefan", a revolutionary who has taken an undercover position as a footman in the home of Orlov, an aristocratic playboy, in order to gain access to his father, a powerful bureaucrat. As luck would have it, Orlov has little to do with his father, but does manage to seduce a married woman, Zinaida, who falls in love with him, leaves her husband, and moves in. Orlov finds her affection an inconvenient constraint on his freedom, and soon disappears for weeks at a time, supposedly on "inspection tours in the provinces", but actually staying with a friend. Stefan's ideals are crushed by the flagrant hypocrisy on display and the general profligacy and purposelessness. His disillusion is mitigated by his compassion for Zinaida, which morphs into simple passion. He comes clean about Orlov's activities as well as his own identity and

deceit, and convinces her to flee with him to Europe. After several months abroad, he becomes acutely ill, and as she nurses him back to health she realizes he is in love with her, and is not simply an altruistic rescuer. She herself is unwell and pregnant with Orlov's child. Things do not go well, and the outcome is unexpected, tragic, and complex. There are no heroes here, yet Chekhov makes no moral judgments, which results in a powerful irony that forces reader to resolve ambiguities on their own.

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.

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