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The House with the Mezzanine and Other Stories

Anton Chekhov (1860–1904) Translated by S.S. Koteliansky and Gilbert Cannan

Read by: Multiple readers Language: English
 Length: 7 hours and 1 minute Style: Solo
 Genre(s): Fiction, Short Fiction

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The House with the Mezzanine and Other Stories is a collection of six short stories and a novella, most written between 1890 and 1898. The title story is also known as “An Artist’s Story”, in which a landscape painter clashes with a strong-willed young teacher dedicated to improving the lives of the locals. The painter falls in love with the teacher’s younger sister, who is immediately spirited far away when she discloses the happy news to her sister. “The Lady with the Toy Dog” describes an affair between an unhappily married Moscow banker and a young married woman that begins while each is vacationing alone at the resort of Yalta on the Black Sea and grows into a deep and surprisingly enduring love. In “Gooseberries”, a veterinary surgeon narrates his puzzlement at the choice made by his brother to abandon a career as an official at the Exchequer Court and buy a farm to re-live the happiness they had experienced as children, symbolized by gooseberries, which he plants and partakes of at every chance. “My Life: The Story of a Provincial” is the story of a young nobleman who declines to pursue the occupations expected of one of his class and instead makes his living doing manual labor. His father, an architect not averse to taking bribes, is ashamed of him and berates him. Chekhov is in peak form throughout, showing his sly humor and his understanding of human character with the clear, precise prose of a realist who prefers to show things as they are and leave it at that.

Anton Chekhov (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.