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The Lady with the Dog and Other Stories

Anton Chekhov (1860–1904) Translated by Constance Garnett

Read by: Multiple readers Language: English
 Length: 3 hours and 25 minutes Style: Solo
 Genre(s): Fiction, Short Fiction

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The Lady with the Dog and Other Stories is a collection of seven short stories. The title story, Chekhov’s most famous, describes an affair between two unhappily married people who meet by chance at the seaside resort of Yalta while vacationing alone. The affair becomes a love that endures after each returns home and leads to clandestine meetings and the inevitable heartbreak that comes from distance, lengthy absences and the impossibility of leaving their established lives. In “An Upheaval” a young governess suffers the indignity of having her room searched in her absence by the lady of the house. “A Doctor’s Visit” centers on an inner connection that develops between a doctor and the young heiress he has been called to examine that goes unexpressed. “Ionitch” also charts the evolution of a missed romantic opportunity between a young doctor with a promising future and a coquettish young woman from an artistic family.

“The Head of the Family” is a wealthy, pompous ass who drinks and gambles and bullies anyone without the good sense to stay as far away as possible, most notably his young son. “Volodya” displays the emotional distress of a conflicted, frustrated teenage being raised in awkward surroundings by a vain single mother. “The Husband” portrays a mean-spirited, ill-humored tax collector who meanly spirits his wife away from a dance with a visiting regiment for having too much fun. As always, Chekhov portrays real life in all its wonder and horrors, its plainness and mystery, with the telling details and revealing remarks, without judging, for all to see.

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.