



Anton Chekhov Short Story Collection 1 In A Strange Land and Other Stories

- **Title:** Anton Chekhov Short Stories Collection 1
- **Subtitle:** In A Strange Land and Other Stories
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- **Category:** Classic Fiction, Short Stories, Comedy, Drama, Romance
- **Language:** English (Unabridged)
- **Author:** Anton Chekhov
- **Translator:** Constance Garnett
- **Music:** Pyotr Tchaikovsky
- **Narrator:** Max Bollinger
- **Imprint:** Sovereign
- **Running Time:** 130 min, 2 Audio CDs
- **On Sale:** 2010
- **RRP:** £18.80 (UK) (inc VAT)

Brief Description

A collection of 11 Short Stories by Anton Chekhov featuring A Tragic Actor; In A Strange Land; Oh The Public; The Looking Glass; Her Husband; Overdoing It; Talent; Anyuta; The Helpmate; Ivan Matveyich; Polinka; Audio book version contains 2 CDs or downloadable as 11 MP3 files. Read in English (Unabridged). E-Book version contains all 11 stories, introduction and notes. Paper back version will contain all 11 stories from this release and additional stories from future release entitled "About Truth, Freedom and Love". Paper back version is planned for release in 2011.

CD1

- 01 A Tragic Actor
- 02 In A Strange Land
- 03 Oh! The Public
- 04 The Looking Glass
- 05 Her Husband
- 06 Overdoing It

CD2

- 01 Talent
- 02 Anyuta
- 03 The Helpmate
- 04 Ivan Matveyitch
- 05 Polinka

Extended Description

The selection of stories in this book represents Chekhov's early work which perhaps is not as well known as some of his plays. The stories nevertheless possess unique potency and relevance to our modern lives just as they did back in 19th century Russia when they first appeared in various Russian publications.

Chekhov himself described his work as comic satire: "All I wanted was to say honestly to people: 'Have a look at yourselves and see how bad and dreary your lives are!' The important thing is that people should realize that, for when they do, they will most certainly create another and better life for themselves. I will not live to see it, but I know that it will be quite different, quite unlike our present life."

Chekhov was often criticized by prominent literary reviewers of the time for not providing readers with an answer or ideas how these "dreary lives" can be improved. Of course Chekhov is not giving a direct instruction or providing readers with a manual on how to live a life, but it is possible to find solutions in his stories as they appear between the lines for each reader. Resolutions are different for each person and only each individual soul can find the right and most appropriate way in their life. Chekhov's own response to this is well documented. He often insisted that the job of an artist was not to answer questions, it was to ask them.

About The Author

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (Антон Павлович Чехов) 1860 – 1904 was a Russian short story writer, playwright and physician, considered to be one of the greatest short story writers in the history of world literature. His career as a dramatist produced all-time classics The Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Three Sisters and Cherry Orchard. His short stories are held in high esteem by writers, critics and audiences of all generations.

About The Composer

Pyotr Ilyich Chaikovskiy (Пётр Ильич Чайковский) 1840 – 1893, Russian composer of the Romantic era. Chaikovskiy achieved worldwide recognition during his lifetime, was awarded an honorary doctorate at Cambridge University. In 1891 the Carnegie Hall program booklet proclaimed him to be one of the greatest living musicians. Music critics praised him as "a modern music lord". In Russia Chaikovskiy was considered a national treasure, and his music admired and adored by all. He wrote some of the most popular concert and theatrical music in the current classical repertoire, including the ballets Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker, the 1812 Overture, his Piano Concertos, his Symphonies, and the opera Eugene Onegin.

About The Translator

Constance Clara Garnett 1861 — 1946, an English translator of nineteenth century Russian Literature. Following her visit to Russia in 1893 where she met Leo Tolstoy, Constance started translating Russian literature, which became her life's passion and resulted in English language versions of dozens of volumes by Tolstoy, Pushkin, Turgenev, Chekhov and other prominent Russian writers. Russian anarchist Sergei Stepniak assisted in preparation of her early works.

Max Bollinger who speaks Russian fluently considers Garnett's work the most faithful to original Russian and most characteristic of the era. "As a native Russian speaker I can tell you that the elegance, wit and idiomatic composition of Garnett's work is of highest calibre. There are very few modern translators who can compete with Constance" wrote Max Bollinger in his introductory note.

Joseph Conrad compared Constance to a great musician interpreting a great composer (Turgenev). Katherine Mansfield wrote: "Constance Garnett transformed the lives of younger authors by revealing a new world." Without her translations, H. E. Bates believed, modern English literature itself could not have been what it is.

About The Narrator

Max Bollinger is a Russian born British actor, producer and writer with credits including BBC's Doctor Who, ITV's Ghostboat TV film, Pan MacMillan's Easy English for Busy People audio training, Short Stories by Anton Chekhov audio series, Mumu by Ivan Turgenev audio book.

Prior to establishing career in performing arts held management posts at The Cambridge University Local Examination Syndicate (now Cambridge Assessment), various management and consulting posts in British Telecommunications Plc (BT), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Max Bollinger about Anton Chekhov and new production of Chekhov Short Stories:

"One of my most loved authors is Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. I admire not only his literary works, but also his personal achievement as a great human being. Chekhov continued to work as physician and kept treating poor patients free of charge throughout his life, even at times when his own family experienced financial hardships. His style of writing is one of the most unique. He invented stream of consciousness technique and made such immense contribution during his fairly short life, that his works can be described as truly immortal. His work is full of inspiration, wisdom and wit which shines so bright, that it can be seen quite possibly beyond the boundaries of our small planet"

I rediscovered Chekhov in England after having read his short stories in English. It felt like Chekhov's texts started to speak to me. I found his words so agile, so relevant, and so enigmatic, that I could not stop. It was like some magic book written in code suddenly opening up and transforming into beautiful gleaming stream of light.

Chekhov's writing is full of enlightenment, wisdom and humour that I made it a personal goal to bring these stories to anyone seeking light and truth

Chekhov had a sharp eye and was able to capture life with extraordinary skill He often insisted that the duty of art and an artist is not to answer questions, but ask them. And indeed what his writing does is huge effort to make people think and not only see the question but also resolve it. And this resolution is not written in the form of instruction by Chekhov; the way he constructed his stories is such that answers come between the lines. And the solution is different for each person."

Reviews

Anton Chekhov was one of the early masters of the short story as well as a great playwright. As is typical of Chekhov's stories, the five tracks here are carefully constructed slices of life, rich in portrait and moral ambiguity rather than dramatic experiences. Some listeners will find them a less familiar side of the author of UNCLE VANYA and THE CHERRY ORCHARD. Max Bollinger brings the authentic voice and soul of Russia to these classic Constance Garnett translations. While many of the issues in these stories are timeless, listeners will also get to visit, for a while, the old Russia of the czars.

D.M.H. AudioFile Magazine, Portland (USA)

These unabridged stories in the faithful Constance Garnett translation are presented with fine flourish by the Russian-born narrator. The poignant, everyday dramas of Imperial Russia are here, from jolting carriages across boundless taiga, to a tragic actor and a French tutor insulted by his boastful employer.

Rachel Redford, The Observer, The Guardian (UK)

This is an audio book, and the narrator has a light Russian accent that lends creditability to the stories. Each of the stories is a picture for me. In fact, I liken each of them to a Monet painting in which you can see the individual strokes of the brush if you stand too close, but stepping back you see the whole picture at once and not the bits that created the whole. Masterpieces!

Frayda Glass (MA, USA) ★★★★★

All the faults concerning my interaction with this work, are mine. I have trained myself to sit and read a book: it is an activity which absorbs one's main sensory organs, the eyes; and so, the World is closed out. With an audio book, such as this, one needs to block out all extraneous input and drink in the delightful atmosphere as the stories are beautifully read to one.

The tracks are superbly interspersed with snatches of music by Tchaikovsky, which set the mood perfectly. It would be exceedingly simple to overdo the 'Russian-ness' of this disc but, the editor has judged the mood perfectly. I have now listened to it a few times and will certainly do so again (hopefully, many times).

Enough about the style of the disc, what about the content? My youth coincided with the cold war and so, Russia has always seemed to be a mysterious place where the people are somehow different. These tales of nineteenth century Russia should therefore be totally alien. They are not, of course: Chekhov describes the human condition, it is inherently the same in Russia as in England, or where, and when, ever one happens to live. I suspect that if we do, eventually, find sentient life upon another planet, then they too would read, or listen to, these fables and nod their understanding.

Ken Petersen (UK) ★★★★★

Listening to Chekhov short stories told in a Russian accented voice. What a pleasant way to spend an hour. Anton Chekhov does so well at condensing time and space into just a few words. Most writers of his time, and of today, would need a novel to tell what he can put into not very many pages. I'm not usually an audio book user, but did enjoy this one. The subtle sound effects and the Russian-sounding narrator added to the listening.

Michael Schwager (Southern Idaho, USA) ★★★★★

Short Stories by Anton Chekhov is an audio book containing five of Chekhov's stories. They are delightfully narrated by Max Bollinger in his charming accented English. The stories are excellent examples of Chekhov's style. Superb characterisation and brilliantly observed slices of life. Chekhov's stories don't come to an end they just peter out inconclusively leaving you to draw your own conclusions. A very enjoyable collection.

Alan Moreton (Essex, UK) ★★★★★

A lovely listen, rich, velvety Russian voice, never obtrusive. Well-paced reading, nicely interspersed with Tchaikovsky for atmosphere. A good addition to reading the plays or stories. I will recommend it to my pupils who are studying The Cherry Orchard.

Liz O'Sullivan (France) ★★★★★

This was my first experience with an audio book, at least for many years. I found the stories themselves captivating and now wish to read them in "regular" form. And only 5 stories is just a sample of Anton Chekhov's works. But I would listen to another collection of his stories again. His stories are about people, with real problems. There are no trite solutions for their problems, sometimes just an understanding of the characters' flaws. Each story offers a portrait of a person, a situation, and through simple dialogue we learn more about them than they know themselves. It is a wonderful experience to hear these stories.

Joseph Belliveau (Canada) ★★★★★

I really enjoyed this collection of subtly funny vignettes from the life of 19th century small town Russia. There was something odd that I didn't remember about Chekhov's stories at all, but which caught my attention this time - their climax was as subtle as their wit, and seemed to take place way before the end, or not at all.

Karim Mamdani (Toronto, Canada) ★★★★★½

This was an enjoyable experience for me. Its not often that I listen to audiobooks. The readers lightly accented voice wasn't too fast, too slow or too annoying (which can happen with audiobooks and ruins them.) The little vignettes themselves were great. My favorite was the one about the 'little foot'. Hilarious.

Renee (MI, USA) ★★★★★

I really do enjoy Chekhov, and it was very pleasant to walk to and from work listening to these stories. I thought the narrator did a decent job turning the prose into something enjoyable to the ear, and Chekhov, as always, writes great stuff.

Jennie Blake (Manchester, United Kingdom) ★★★★★½

I've always loved Chekhov's stories and this collection has that wonderful mix of humour and poignancy.

Maki Vounoridis (Melbourne, Australia)

For those who already love Chekhov's stories, this CD will delight and demand repeated hearings. And for those unfamiliar with the genius of Anton Chekhov in short story form, welcome to a new world that is close to addictive. Excellent addition to the library and as gifts to friends in love with literature.

This very solid instalment in Max Bollinger's series. The stories are each in the range of ten minutes in length (some a bit longer as in the postlude of Tchaikovsky's piano music at the end of 'The Talent'). It would be difficult to imagine a more verismo atmosphere to these great stories than that Max Bollinger offers the listener. This is echt Russian and a brilliant homage to Chekhov's artistry. Highly Recommended.

Grady Harp (CA, USA) ★★★★★

I really enjoyed this short story collection, read by Max Bollinger with music by Chaikovskiy. I loved hearing the stories read with the Russian accent and the music really pulled the whole cd together. The stories are all about ten minutes long and the whole listening experience is calming and enjoyable. As always, Chekov's stories are interesting and provide a great listening experience.

Elena Garabis (VA, USA) ★★★★★

These stories are small masterpieces. The scene is set quickly and within a few sentences the story line is underway. But all seem to contain an element of the unexpected. In "The Husband" a newly famous stage actress laments her now dependent husband's whines and demands. In "Oh, the Public" Chekov depicts a running battle between a conscientious train conductor and an obstreperous passenger. The unhappy results when a doting father invites the members of a theater caste to his home for dinner are related in "A Tragic Actor"

Joseph Belliveau (Canada) ★★★★★

Chekhov is the master of the short story. I've always liked Chekhov and I was thrilled to be able to 'consume' his stories in a new way. The stories on these CD all describe people at crucial points of their lives: having to make choices about their future, but somehow unable to really get a grip on their lives. Hindered by their character, their family or by other reasons... at the end of each story you are left with the feeling that these people could - or maybe should - have made some better decisions than they did, and should - or maybe could - have acted less naive than they did. It took some time to get used to the voice of the reader, especially because of the intonation used. But I think it is a good voice for these stories and I liked the way he pronounced the Russian names. The music didn't add much to the stories. But it didn't hinder me also.

Roland Bron (The Netherlands) ★★★★★

The selection of short stories in this collection combined with accent and style of reader Max Bollinger combine to great effect in this sound recording. For me the addition of musical selections by Chaikovskiy on second CD did not enhance (nor detract) from the work. Chekhov's stated ambition with his short stories was to hold up a mirror to the drear and dismal lives of his readers with a view to compelling them to see themselves in the stories and then work to improve their own lives. The stories are well written, and beautifully read, the characters compelling but simultaneously repulsive- ranging from the pathetic to the unpleasant. Five stories were for me enough in one go as the effect is to create a melancholy atmosphere when listening to them

Lisa Oldham (New Zealand) ★★★★★

This was my first ever audiobook experience, and it was a good one. The stories were well-treated, a very enjoyable listen. The narrator's treatment of speech and the light piano music every so often were very good and the story choice came together to give an understanding of Chekhov's view of people and society, in a not completely depressing way.

Katy Nicholls (New Zealand)

I usually do not enjoy audio books, as I feel that they do not always represent the works with full justice. However, the way this audio book intermingled short pieces of Tchaikovsky's with a great selection of Chekov's short stories, was really intriguing. I listened to the disc while driving, and it complements a long trip very well.

The narrator's tone and speed are spot-on, making the stories easy to comprehend, even when driving. He does a great job representing the many voices of the dialogue, without ever adopting a ridiculous, phony voice. Though accented, his voice is consistently clear and understandable. The music also adds to the atmosphere while driving, so that you are not just sitting in silence listening to someone speak.

I have been a fan of Chekhov for some time, and this selection of stories includes some of his best. This disk would offer a great introduction to the author for someone who has never experienced him before, but would also be new and refreshing for long-time Chekhovian readers. These stories also provide an insightful look into the daily lives of Russians of Chekhov's time, and would be a great historical learning experience for those unfamiliar with Russian history. The stories that are included in this collection do a great job in illustrating the Russian human experience while approaching the subject with interspersed humour to keep the stories from being too depressing.

Kristine Kowalski (New Jersey, USA) ★★★★★

The first CD (64 minutes) of translated short stories of Russian writer, playwright, and physician Anton Chekhov. Living from 1860 - 1904, Chekhov was considered one of the greatest short story writers in the history of world literature. Russian-born, British actor, writer, and producer, Max Bollinger, narrates these stories for you in his 2009 release. I am pleased to report that there is no bad language, excessive violence or explicit sexual material. The 6 stories on first CD are:

1. A Tragic Actor - Marsha, daughter of a police captain, thoroughly enjoyed the company of actors and begs her father to invite them to dinner. Marsha becomes mesmerized with the actors, especially one of them.
2. In a Strange Land - A French tutor has an indefinite job with a Russian. The Russian is insulting to the Frenchman, who is quick to point out the shortcomings of the French, to the point where the Frenchman becomes insulted and prepares to leave.
3. Oh! The Public - An invalid passenger on a train is unwilling to produce his ticket.
4. The Looking Glass - Nellie, daughter of a landowner, sits looking in the mirror and dreaming of being married when she meets the object of her dreams. When her husband becomes ill, she demands the local doctor drop everything and come right away.
5. Her Husband - Natalia, an opera singer, lies in bed thinking of her little girl, when her husband comes in and disrupts her peace.

6. Overdoing It - A land surveyor is looking for transportation to travel to an estate that he is to survey.

Kathy Wroblewski (Baltimore, USA) ★★★★★

Talent is the opening piece in the second CD, and for anyone who listens to it, I suggest you pay attention - this is the work Anton Chekhov, after all, and he is gonna be subtle. And he ain't gonna to comment directly, though he has a lot to say. Not much happens in Talent; there are no big moments, no cataclysmic scenes, and the story ends without climactic denouement. There are, however, ideas threaded throughout, and Chekov evinces these in a coupl'o' masterful ways. The images are wonderful, which is good because this is a story of a painter. But said images aren't merely pretty, they tell, they contain little gems of information, little bits of Chekhovian thought. Anton isn't simply going to come out and tell you what he thinks, he wants you to work for it, to chip some gold from the surrounding stone. Mostly, yer gonna hafta catch the parallels yerself - this is the main method Chekhov employs to display his colors. We have a painter. We have the painter's painter friends. We have the painter's neglected girlfriend whose neglected, neglectful mother is also the painter's landlord. And we have a backdrop of workers, cobwebs, dust, and lots of dreaming about the future without a lot of effort put in to achieve it. And the connections between all of these provide an interesting commentary on art, work, class, and duty. An excellent story.

The second story is Anyuta: A medical student; an artist; a body. (The body of the Anyuta as it turns out - alas, she is alive - to the listener at least.) Chekhov employs the aforementioned strategies. Again, they are very effective. (What is the leap one must make to be a doctor or an artist? Listen, it's quite good.)

Number 3. The Helpmate. Even if one does not care for some of Chekhov's attitudes here, (and that assumes he is speaking universally, and is not merely describing a unique individual), it's still a fine piece with some nice twists and wonderful irony. Be careful with your choices in this life!

Four: Ivan Matveyitch. Mildly Amusing. (But the relationship in this bit reverberates somehow.)

Lastly (5), Polinka. And in this story, all of Chekhov's greatness is distilled. Tight as a whalebone corset.

Lance Caabrese (CA, USA) ★★★★★½

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