



Short Stories by Anton Chekhov Bk.3 About Truth, Freedom and Love

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- **BIC Classification:** FC - Classic fiction, FR – Romance, FYB – Short Stories
- **Language:** English (Unabridged)
- **Author:** Anton Chekhov
- **Translator:** Constance Garnett
- **Music:** Antonin Dvorak
- **Narrator:** Max Bollinger
- **Imprint:** Sovereign
- **Running Time:** 90 min, 2 Audio CDs
- **On Sale:** 2010

Brief Description

The third audio book in the series of Chekhov's Short Stories featuring a trilogy of interlinked stories about Truth, Freedom and Love. Read by Max Bollinger in English (unabridged). First published in 1898 in Russian and released as separate stories. This title, based on translations by Constance Garnett with revision and adaptation by Max Bollinger follows Chekhov's original vision by bringing the three stories together once again.

Tracks / Chapters

01 About Truth

02 About Freedom

03 About Love

Extended Description

The selection of the 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 dedicated considerable amount of time writing the 3 stories in this trilogy and was very particular about his intention to release them as once piece. This is evident from his correspondence with his publisher. But his wishes were ignored during his lifetime and the first story had been published separately. The story received colossal amount of attention from both professional critics and general public and resonated so strongly that readers were compelled to write long letters to Chekhov (in some cases over 20 pages in length) praising him for being so truthful, for enlightening and reflecting the reality of their lives. Many prominent critics of the time such as Lyatsky attacked Chekhov for attempting to generalise "life in a bubble" which he claimed was more of a pathological exception than a rule. Lyatsky also accused Chekhov of only showing the dreadful sides of life and never providing the reader with an answer of how to improve it.

Leo Tolstoy disagreed with Lyatsky after reading the second story. "Happiness does not exist and should not exist. And if there is purpose in life, this purpose should not be our personal happiness, it should be about something more intelligent, something more divine", from Tolstoy's letter to Gusev (1910).

The third story, About Love, concludes the trilogy, but Chekhov's initial thoughts were to produce a fourth story which never materialised. The relationship described in the third and last story in this trilogy was based on Chekhov's own relationship with Miss Avilova who upon publication of this story compared Chekhov with "busy bee who flies about and is happy to collect honey from just about anything on its way". Chekhov quickly responded to Miss Avilova, "You are being unkind towards your busy bee. The bee first sees bright beautiful flowers and only then collects honey from them".

After publication of all stories in this trilogy, even most unflattering critics of Chekhov agreed that these 3 stories represented a significant milestone in Chekhov's personal development as a serious writer. They all noted that the tone of these stories was less frivolous in comparison to his earlier work. Regarding Chekhov's *About Love*, Mikhailovsky wrote that Chekhov was touching upon most significant and important questions of human life with such skill, depth and emotion that "Chekhov in lifting us to the sky, is showing us a third dimension, so to speak".

Nevertheless, Bogdanovich, another critic of the time, found yet more reasons to criticise Chekhov. This time it was for allowing Chekhov's personal voice to speak through his characters and for Chekhov's own guiding light shining and showing readers the way.

Such fierce and often unfair criticism no doubt played its part in contributing towards Chekhov's poor health. In his letters he described that he simply could not write anymore. He moved to the sunny shores of Black Sea and only after a long pause started to write again giving us such treasures as *Cherry Orchard*, *Uncle Vanya* and *The Seagull* and many other wonderful novels and stories.

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.

What the Critics Say About Anton Chekhov

His meticulous anatomies of complicated human impulse and response, his view of what's funny and poignant, his clear-eyed observance of life as lived — all somehow matches our experience. **Richard Ford**

Anton Chekhov's late stories mark a pivotal moment in European fiction — the point where nineteenth-century realist conventions of the short story begin their transformation into the modern form. His psychological insight was profound and dynamic. Joyce may have more exactly captured the texture of human consciousness, but no short story writer has better expressed its often invisible complexities. **Dana Gioia**

Chekhov raised the portrayal of banality to the level of world literature. He developed the short story as a form of literary art to one of its highest peaks, and the translation of his stories into English has constituted one of the greatest single literary influences at work in the short story of America, England, and Ireland. This influence has been one of the factors encouraging the short-story writers of these nations to revolt against the conventional plot story and seek in simple and realistic terms to make of the story a form that more seriously reflects life. **James T Farrell**

About the translator and changes made in this version

Constance Clara Garnett 1861 — 1946, 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.

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. Max Bollinger considers Garnett's translation work as the most faithful to original Russian and most characteristic of the era.

The stories in this particular collection have undergone substantial revision however, especially the first story, *About Truth*. This story is particularly rich in certain idiomatic content and, amongst other things, Chekhov is employing use of Ukrainian language as well as Russian in his original text. This inevitably creates additional layer of complexity for translators. Inclusion of Ukrainian language in Chekhov's original Russian text is not purely decorative. Chekhov uses these lines with great skill to create unique atmosphere and shape up his characters.

"The Ukrainian reminds one of the ancient Greek in its softness and agreeable resonance", says Byelikov, the lead character in the first story.

This audio version includes the nuances of the Ukrainian lines used by Chekhov and certain slang words dotted around his original text . The listeners will have the opportunity to hear the Ukrainian and Russian words and lines at certain points together with English translation.

The e-Book and paper back version will have updated translation with some of the nuances so skilfully incorporated by Anton Pavlovich into his texts. PDF versions of e-Book can also display Russian and Ukrainian script. Not all other e-Book formats are capable of displaying additional non-Latin scripts.

About The Composer

Antonin Dvorak 1841 – 1904, a Czech composer of Romantic music, who used elements of the folk music of Moravia and his native Bohemia. His works include operas, symphonic, choral and chamber music. His best-known works include his New World Symphony, the Slavonic Dances, "American" String Quartet, and Cello Concerto in B minor. Dvorak's symphonic poems are among his most original symphonic works. Audio book adaptation of Chekhov's Trilogy about Truth, Freedom and Love produced by Max Bollinger includes music themes based on Dvorak's Slavonic Dances composition.

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

Chekhov's stories are about nothing and everything. This trilogy has the timeless simplicity of what Nabokov called Chekhov's "dove-grey world": the lives of ordinary people set in the extraordinary expanse of Russia's landscape and altering skies. But in the unrequited longings of the characters' souls, in their quiet tragedies and in their questioning of truth, freedom, love and happiness, the stories are lifted to another plane. Russian-born Max Bollinger whose passion for Chekhov is palpable, is perfect reader.

Rachel Redford, The Observer (UK)

A selection of reviews from Short Stories by Anton Chekhov Bk. 1: A Tragic Actor and Other Stories and Bk.2: Talent and Other Stories released earlier.

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 credibility 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 then 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 Chekhov'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) ★★★★★

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 Chekhov 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