



# Anton Chekhov Early Short Stories, 1883-1888 (Modern Library)

*Anton Chekhov*

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"Chekhov is a supreme artist," said Harold Brodkey. "He has conferred more meaning on us than any other artist of the century. He is the founding master and tutelary spirit of democratic realism."

This collection, selected by Shelby Foote, presents seventy of Chekhov's early short stories, written between 1883 and 1888, in celebrated translations by Constance Garnett. One of the most memorable is "The Death of a Government Clerk," a glorious parody in which a fawning official is undone by an ill-timed sneeze. "On the Road," the history of an educated man's search for convictions, is one of Chekhov's finest dramatic stories and the source of his first full-length play, Ivanov. And in "The Steppe," which marked a turning point in Chekhov's career, a boy's picaresque journey across the Russian heartland evokes the soul of Russia itself. Also included are "The Huntsman," "Anyuta," "Easter Eve," "Happiness," and "The Kiss."

"Chekhov is a superb anatomist of the human heart and an utter master of his literary means," said John Barth. "The details of scene and behavior, the emotions registered--seldom bravura, typically muted and complex, often as surprising to the characters themselves as to the reader, but always right--move, astonish, and delight us line after line, story after story." Eudora Welty agreed: "Chekhov, speaking simply and never otherwise than as an artist and a humane man, showed us in fullness and plenitude the mystery of our lives. . . . What truth [he] found through his stories is ours forever."

Shelby Foote has provided an Introduction for this edition.

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