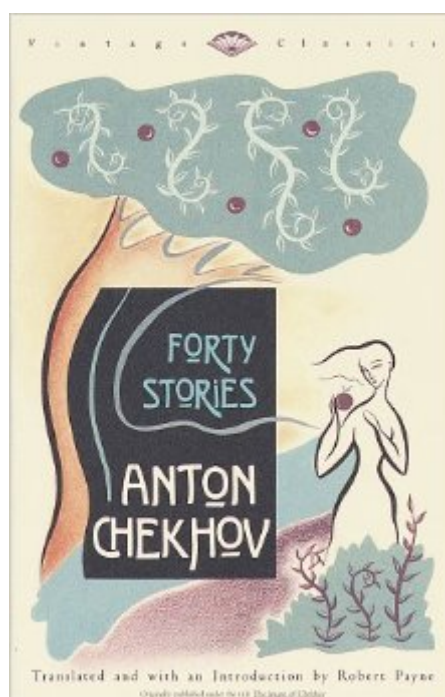


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Forty Stories (Vintage Classics)



Synopsis

If any writer can be said to have invented the modern short story, it is Anton Chekhov. It is not just that Chekhov democratized this art form; more than that, he changed the thrust of short fiction from relating to revealing. And what marvelous and unbearable things are revealed in these Forty Stories. The abashed happiness of a woman in the presence of the husband who abandoned her years before. The obsequious terror of the official who accidentally sneezes on a general. The poignant astonishment of an aging Don Juan overtaken by love. Spanning the entirety of Chekhov's career and including such masterpieces as "Surgery," "The Huntsman," "Anyuta," "Sleepyhead," "The Lady With the Pet Dog," and "The Bishop," this collection manages to be amusing, dazzling, and supremely moving—often within a single page.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) has long been acknowledged as one of Russia's greatest playwrights and short story authors, a man whose expressiveness with the pen stemmed, in great part, from the hardship of his childhood experiences and, later in life, his vast globetrotting wanderings. Chekhov's family abandoned him at the age of sixteen to a fate somewhat close to wage-slavery; astonishingly, he later assumed complete responsibility for their indiscretions, and thereafter always faced financial difficulties. To help supplement his income, Chekhov began writing professionally for magazines, and over the course of his life came to scribe more than two hundred short stories. This

collection, as suggested by the title, consists of forty pieces, of varying length and quality: the title is somewhat misleading, as several of these 'stories' are barely a page long and would be more aptly described as 'fragments', or, to take a cue from Turgenev, 'sketches' of Russian existence...although, in a sense, all of these stories could be described thus. With wit, compassion and keen insightfulness, the author paints a painfully accurate portrait of the Russian character: hardy, proud, generally inconsistent and very often drunken; and Russian environment, from the fertile luxury of the Crimea to the frozen wasteland exile of Siberia, from provincial predicaments to cityscape cluster-catastrophes. Like his contemporaries Gogol, Turgenev and Tolstoy, Chekhov wrote as he saw it, and his fiction now exists as literature - an invaluable testament of a bygone age. *Forty Stories* covers Chekhov's artistic span from 1880-1903.

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