

RUSSIAN CLASSIC LITERATURE

ANTON CHEKHOV

THE LADY WITH THE DOG

Translated by *Constance Garnett*

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
КАРО
Санкт-Петербург

УДК 372.8
ББК 84(2Рос=Рус)
81.2 Англ
Ч 56

Чехов А. П.

Ч 56 Дама с собачкой и другие рассказы: пер. с рус. К. Гарнетт. — СПб.: КАРО, 2014. — 256 с.: — (Русская классическая литература на иностранных языках).

ISBN 978-5-9925-0980-9.

Вашему вниманию предлагаются переводы наиболее известных рассказов, относящихся к позднему периоду творчества А. П. Чехова.

Чехов следует принципу художественной объективности и не прописывает рецептов нравственного совершенствования и общественного переустройства. Мастер тонкого психологического анализа, он видит, что его герои страдают по причине житейских ошибок, дурных поступков и нравственной и умственной апатии.

Английский перевод рассказов, выполненный Констанс Гарнетт, снабжен постраничными, в большей степени культурологическими, комментариями. Книга адресована студентам языковых вузов, носителям языка и всем любителям русской классической литературы.

УДК 372.8
ББК 81.2 Англ

ISBN 978-5-9925-0980-9

© КАРО, 2014

**THE LADY WITH THE DOG
AND OTHER STORIES**
by
Anton Chekhov

Translated by *Constance Garnett*

In this collection are some of the most well-known stories of Anton Chekhov's later period (1892–1898) which depict various issues of both personal and contemporary social problems. They provide a deep insight into various aspects of the human condition, including woe, desire, and hope. The stories also examine the problems with Russian society and society in general. The power of Chekhov's prose provokes thoughts and ideas that are just as relevant now as they were then.

The English translation of the short stories made by Constance Garnett is complemented with footnotes. The book may be of interest to the University or College students who study English, the native English speakers and everyone who admires Russian Classic Literature.

The Life and Works of Anton Chekhov



The famous writer and dramatist Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born in 1869 in Taganrog. The writer's family descends from the serf peasants, though his father was a merchant.

Chekhov attended the Greek school and later the Taganrog classical gymnasium. It was then that he started writing his first literary works which we now only know by their names.

In 1879 Chekhov moved to Moscow where he entered the Medical Faculty of the Moscow University. In 1880 he published his first parodic short story "A Letter to the Learned Neighbor."

From 1880 to 1884 Chekhov endeavored to write in comic and serious genres at the same time. Chekhov's comic and satirical sketches were based on amusing or ridiculous incidents, curious or funny true-life stories. His early works were published in newspapers under various pseudonyms — Antosha Chekhontey, The Man without a Spleen, Brother of my brother, Ulysses, etc.

In 1885 he wrote such well-known works as "A Horsey Surname," "Misery," "Vanka," etc. Many of these new

stories combined ridiculous and tragic, irony and sympathy for the characters. The stories were then published in collections.

Since 1886 the writer began to publish his stories under his real name. The new stories ("The Witch," "Agafya," "The Teacher," etc.) were even more mature and meaningful. From 1884 to 1888 Chekhov created more than 350 works displaying vast variety of images, characters and subjects of Russian life. The type of Chekhov's hero was finally defined: "the average person" with their everyday, ordinary life.

In 1888 Chekhov wrote only 9 stories. A new feature which became significant for many of the later works appeared in this period: representation of life rose to be a generalization, a symbol. Chekhov tried to express the following idea: "Russian life beats the Russian to a pulp, pounds him like a thousand-pood stone... There is so much space that the tiny individual does not have the strength to get his bearings." This idea is reflected in the works of the late 80's: "The Steppe," "Fires," "The Trouble," etc. The characters try "to resolve the issue," to find reference points to understand and accept the life; all of them feel helpless in the odd and incomprehensible world.

In 1890 Chekhov went to Siberia, and then to Sakhalin where the penal colonies were situated. He had collected a large number of documentary materials about life of the Sakhalin convicts and locals and upon returning to Moscow wrote the book "The Sakhalin

Island” (1893–1894), which caused a huge resonance in Russia.

This trip had worsened Chekhov’s health considerably — he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Therefore in 1892 Chekhov bought the Melikhovo manor near Moscow. He helped local peasants as doctor and built schools for country children. In his later, “melikhovsky,” period Chekhov wrote among others his famous short stories “Ward No. 6,” “The Man in a Case,” “The Case from the Practice,” etc., and the plays “The Seagull” and “Uncle Vanya.”

In 1897 Chekhov’s illness sharply aggravated again, and he had to be hospitalized. The doctors insisted on his moving to the south. In 1898 Chekhov sold The Melikhovo manor and moved to Yalta.

In Yalta Chekhov wrote the play “Three Sisters” (1900) for the Moscow Art Theatre. It was staged in 1901. In this play there is no common plot, the style is defined by the nature of the dialogues which show disrupted relations between people and remind the “conversations of the deaf.” In 1903 he had written the play “The Cherry Orchard” for the Moscow Art Theatre again and it was staged in 1904. The main feature of this work is Chekhov’s unique symbolism. The protagonist is not a character, but an image of the cherry orchard representing the noble Russia and the old life foundations.

Chekhov’s illness amplified so that in May of 1904 he went to Badenweiler, a well-known resort in south Germany, and died there.

* * *

The stories of Anton Chekhov's later period examine the problems with Russian society and society in general. In this collection are stories which provide a deep insight into various aspects of the human condition, including woe, desire, and hope.

The theme of "The Lady with the Dog" (1898) is a rare and true love. In it, a chance meeting turns into a passionate love affair, revealing to the protagonist a rich inner life he himself did not know he had. Despite various obstacles, the two attempt to realize happiness with each other.

In "The Grasshopper" (1892), the main characters are the social and philandering Olga Ivanovna and her husband, the humble and scientifically driven Dr. Dymov. Her utter disrespect of and unfaithfulness to her husband and his unceasing humility and kindness provide a stark contrast between the two.

"Ward No. 6" (1892) takes every possible psychological ailment in Russia at the time and puts it in the ward of a mental hospital. Not only does it include a remarkable cast of characters, but it also incorporates a dialogue between the sane and the insane, the highly revered and the complete outcasts. It reveals the problems in the structure of the prisonlike institution and shatters the barrier between doctor and patient.

In "The House with the Mezzanine" (1896) an artist begins to frequent the estate of a wealthy family. Through the narrator's conversations with the two daughters, the

author focuses on both love and the needs of the common people. Through the eyes of the four different members of the nobility, the story examines the roles of art, education, and labor.

The caricature of a Classics teacher comes alive in “The Man in a Case” (1898) through Byelikov. He attempts to shield himself from reality as it poses a threat to his ideally crafted system of beliefs. Justifying himself through mild criticisms, he creates a world to his liking. Although he is able to do so initially, the story watches his barriers fall.

“Gooseberries” (1898) depicts a main character with the sole life goal of owning an estate with gooseberry bushes. He makes sacrifices in every possible way, many of them painstaking, in order to achieve his goal. Blinding himself to everything else, he shows the results of a single focus consuming him.

The stories in this collection depict various issues of both personal and contemporary social problems. Chekhov’s insight into the plight of the human condition and the power of his prose provokes thoughts and ideas that are just as relevant now as they were then.

THE LADY WITH THE DOG



I

It was reported that a new face had been seen on the quay; a lady with a little dog. Dmitri Dmitrich Gurov, who had been a fortnight at Yalta¹ and had got used to it, had begun to show an interest in new faces. As he sat in the pavilion at Verné's² he saw a young lady, blond and fairly tall, and wearing a broad-brimmed hat, passed along the quay. After her ran a white Pomeranian³.

Later he saw her in the park and in the square several times a day. She walked by herself, always in the same broad-brimmed hat, and with this white dog. Nobody knew who she was, and she was called the lady with the dog.

¹ **Yalta** — a resort town on the north coast of the Black Sea on the Crimean Peninsula.

² **Verné's** — an actual french chocolate house in Yalta.

³ **Pomeranian** — a dog breed of the Spitz type named after the Pomerania region to the south of the Baltic Sea.

“If,” thought Gurov, “if she is here without a husband or a friend, it would be well to make her acquaintance.”

He was not yet forty, but he had a daughter of twelve and two boys at school. He had married young, in his second year at the University, and now his wife seemed half as old again as himself. She was a tall woman, with dark eyebrows, erect, grave, stolid, and she thought herself an intellectual woman. She read a great deal, called her husband not Dmitri, but Demitri, and in his private mind he thought her short-witted, narrow-minded, and ungracious. He was afraid of her and disliked evenings. He had begun to betray her with other women long ago, betrayed her frequently, and, probably for that reason nearly always spoke ill of women, and when they were discussed in his presence he would maintain that they were an inferior race.

It seemed to him that his experience was bitter enough to give him the right to call them any name he liked, but he could not live a couple of days without the “inferior race.” With men he was bored and ill at ease, cold and unable to talk, but when he was with women, he felt easy and knew what to talk about, and how to behave, and even when he was silent with them he felt quite comfortable. In his appearance as in his character, indeed in his whole

nature, there was something attractive, indefinable, which drew women to him and charmed them; he knew it, and he, too, was drawn by some mysterious power to them.

His frequent, and, indeed, bitter experiences had taught him long ago that every affair of that kind, at first a divine diversion, a delicious smooth adventure, is in the end a source of worry for a decent man, especially for men like those at Moscow who are slow to move, irresolute, domesticated, for it becomes at last an acute and extraordinary complicated problem and a nuisance. But whenever he met and was interested in a new woman, then his experience would slip away from his memory, and he would long to live, and everything would seem so simple and amusing.

And it so happened that one evening he dined in the gardens, and the lady in the broad-brimmed hat came up at a leisurely pace and sat at the next table. Her expression, her gait, her dress, her coiffure told him that she belonged to society, that she was married, that she was paying her first visit to Yalta, that she was alone, and that she was bored... There is a great deal of untruth in the gossip about the immorality of the place. He scorned such tales, knowing that they were for the most part concocted by people who would be only too ready to sin if they had the chance, but when

the lady sat down at the next table, only a yard or two away from him, his thoughts were filled with tales of easy conquests, of trips to the mountains; and he was suddenly possessed by the alluring idea of a quick transitory liaison, a moment's affair with an unknown woman whom he knew not even by name.

He beckoned to the little dog, and when it came up to him, wagged his finger at it. The dog began to growl. Gurov again wagged his finger.

The lady glanced at him and at once cast her eyes down.

“He won't bite,” she said and blushed.

“May I give him a bone?” — and when she nodded emphatically, he asked affably: “Have you been in Yalta long?”

“About five days.”

“And I am just dragging through my second week.”

They were silent for a while.

“Time goes quickly,” she said, “and it is amazingly boring here.”

“It is the usual thing to say that it is boring here. People live quite happily in dull holes like Bieliiov or Zhizdra¹, but as soon as they come here they say:

¹ **Bieliiov, Zhizdra** — Russian towns: Bieliiov is located in Tula region and Zhizdra in Kaluga region.

‘How boring it is! The very dregs of dullness!’ One would think they came from Grenada.”

She laughed. Then both went on eating in silence as though they did not know each other; but after dinner they went off together — and then began an easy, playful conversation as though they were perfectly happy, and it was all one to them where they went or what they talked of. They walked and talked of how the sea was strangely luminous; the water was lilac, so soft and warm, and athwart it the moon cast a golden streak. They said how stifling it was after the hot day. Gurov told her how he came from Moscow and was a philologist by education, but in a bank by profession; and how he had once wanted to sing in opera, but gave it up; and how he had two houses in Moscow... And from her he learned that she came from Petersburg, was born there, but married at S. where she had been living for the last two years; that she would stay another month at Yalta, and perhaps her husband would come for her, because, he too, needed a rest. She could not tell him what her husband was — Provincial Administration or Zemstvo Council¹ — and she seemed to think it funny. And Gurov found out that her name was Anna Sergejevna.

¹ **Zemstvo** — a form of elective local government in Russian Empire, existed from 1864 till 1917.

In his room at night, he thought of her and how they would meet next day. They must do so. As he was going to sleep, it struck him that she could only lately have left school, and had been at her lessons even as his daughter was then; he remembered how bashful and gauche she was when she laughed and talked with a stranger — it must be, he thought, the first time she had been alone, and in such a place with men walking after her and looking at her and talking to her, all with the same secret purpose which she could not but guess. He thought of her slender white neck and her pretty, grey eyes.

“There is something touching about her,” he thought as he began to fall asleep.

II

A week passed. It was a blazing day. Indoors it was stifling, and in the streets the dust whirled along. All day long he was plagued with thirst and he came into the pavilion every few minutes and offered Anna Sergeyevna an iced drink or an ice. It was impossibly hot.

In the evening, when the air was fresher, they walked to the jetty to see the steamer come in. There was quite a crowd all gathered to meet somebody, for they carried bouquets. And among them were

clearly marked the peculiarities of Yalta: the elderly ladies were youngly dressed and there were many generals.

The sea was rough and the steamer was late, and before it turned into the jetty it had to do a great deal of manoeuvring. Anna Sergeyevna looked through her lorgnette at the steamer and the passengers as though she were looking for friends, and when she turned to Gurov, her eyes shone. She talked much and her questions were abrupt, and she forgot what she had said; and then she lost her lorgnette in the crowd.

The well-dressed people went away, the wind dropped, and Gurov and Anna Sergeyevna stood as though they were waiting for somebody to come from the steamer. Anna Sergeyevna was silent. She smelled her flowers and did not look at Gurov.

“The weather has got pleasanter toward evening,” he said. “Where shall we go now? Shall we take a carriage?”

She did not answer.

He fixed his eyes on her and suddenly embraced her and kissed her lips, and he was kindled with the perfume and the moisture of the flowers; at once he started and looked round; had not some one seen?

“Let us go to your room...” he murmured.

And they walked quickly away.

Her room was stifling, and smelled of scents which she had bought at the Japanese shop. Gurov looked at her and thought: "What strange chances there are in life!" From the past there came the memory of earlier good-natured women, gay in their love, grateful to him for their happiness, short though it might be; and of others — like his wife — who loved without sincerity, and talked overmuch and affectedly, hysterically, as though they were protesting that it was not love, nor passion, but something more important; and of the few beautiful cold women, into whose eyes there would flash suddenly a fierce expression, a stubborn desire to take, to snatch from life more than it can give; they were no longer in their first youth, they were capricious, unstable, domineering, imprudent, and when Gurov became cold toward them then their beauty roused him to hatred, and the lace on their lingerie reminded him of the scales of fish.

But here there was the shyness and awkwardness of inexperienced youth, a feeling of constraint; an impression of perplexity and wonder, as though some one had suddenly knocked at the door. Anna Sergeyevna, "the lady with the dog" took what had happened somehow seriously, with a particular gravity, as though thinking that this was her downfall and very strange and improper. Her features seemed to sink and wither, and on either side of her

face her long hair hung mournfully down; she sat crestfallen and musing, exactly like a woman taken in sin in some old picture.

“It is not right,” she said. “You are the first to lose respect for me.”

There was a melon on the table. Gurov cut a slice and began to eat it slowly. At least half an hour passed in silence.

Anna Sergeyevna was very touching; she irradiated the purity of a simple, devout, inexperienced woman; the solitary candle on the table hardly lighted her face, but it showed her very wretched.

“Why should I cease to respect you?” asked Gurov. “You don’t know what you are saying.”

“God forgive me!” she said, and her eyes filled with tears. “It is horrible.”

“You seem to want to justify yourself.”

“How can I justify myself? I am a wicked, low woman and I despise myself. I have no thought of justifying myself. It is not my husband that I have deceived, but myself. And not only now but for a long time past. My husband may be a good honest man, but he is a lackey. I do not know what work he does, but I do know that he is a lackey in his soul. I was twenty when I married him. I was overcome by curiosity. I longed for something. ‘Surely,’ I said to myself, ‘there is another kind of life.’ I longed to

live! To live, and to live... Curiosity burned me up... You do not understand it, but I swear by God, I could no longer control myself. Something strange was going on in me. I could not hold myself in. I told my husband that I was ill and came here... And here I have been walking about dizzily, like a lunatic... And now I have become a low, filthy woman whom everybody may despise.”

Gurov was already bored; her simple words irritated him with their unexpected and inappropriate repentance; but for the tears in her eyes he might have thought her to be joking or playing a part.

“I do not understand,” he said quietly. “What do you want?”

She hid her face in his bosom and pressed close to him.

“Believe, believe me, I implore you,” she said. “I love a pure, honest life, and sin is revolting to me. I don’t know myself what I am doing. Simple people say: ‘The devil entrapped me¹,’ and I can say of myself: ‘I was entrapped by the devil.’”

“Don’t, don’t,” he murmured.

He looked into her staring, frightened eyes, kissed her, spoke quietly and tenderly, and gradually

¹ **The devil entrapped me** — a Russian saying, meaning “to fall into temptation”.

quieted her and she was happy again, and they both began to laugh.

Later, when they went out, there was not a soul on the quay; the town with its cypresses looked like a city of the dead, but the sea still roared and broke against the shore; a boat swung on the waves; and in it sleepily twinkled the light of a lantern.

They found a cab and drove out to Oreanda¹.

“Just now in the hall,” said Gurov, “I discovered your name written on the board — von Dideritz. Is your husband a German?”

“No. His grandfather, I believe, was a German, but he himself is an Orthodox Russian.”

At Oreanda they sat on a bench, not far from the church, looked down at the sea and were silent. Yalta was hardly visible through the morning mist. The tops of the hills were shrouded in motionless white clouds. The leaves of the trees never stirred, the cicadas trilled, and the monotonous dull sound of the sea, coming up from below, spoke of the rest, the eternal sleep awaiting us. So the sea roared when there was neither Yalta nor Oreanda, and so it roars and will roar, dully, indifferently when we shall be no more. And in this continual indifference to the

¹ **Oreanda** — a small town on the southern coast of Crimea, in Yalta district.

life and death of each of us, lives pent up, the pledge of our eternal salvation, of the uninterrupted movement of life on earth and its unceasing perfection. Sitting side by side with a young woman, who in the dawn seemed so beautiful, Gurov, appeased and enchanted by the sight of the fairy scene, the sea, the mountains, the clouds, the wide sky, thought how at bottom, if it were thoroughly explored, everything on earth was beautiful, everything, except what we ourselves think and do when we forget the higher purposes of life and our own human dignity.

A man came up — a coast-guard — gave a look at them, then went away. He, too, seemed mysterious and enchanted. A steamer came over from Feodosia¹, by the light of the morning star, its own lights already put out.

“There is dew on the grass,” said Anna Sergeyevna after a silence.

“Yes. It is time to go home.”

They returned to the town.

Then every afternoon they met on the quay, and lunched together, dined, walked, enjoyed the sea. She complained that she slept badly, that her heart beat alarmingly. She would ask the same question

¹ **Feodosia** — a city in Crimea, a port and resort on the Black Sea coast.

over and over again, and was troubled now by jealousy, now by fear that he did not sufficiently respect her. And often in the square or the gardens, when there was no one near, he would draw her close and kiss her passionately. Their complete idleness, these kisses in the full daylight, given timidly and fearfully lest any one should see, the heat, the smell of the sea, and the continual brilliant parade of leisured, well-dressed, well-fed people almost regenerated him. He would tell Anna Sergeyevna how delightful she was, how tempting. He was impatiently passionate, never left her side, and she would often brood, and even asked him to confess that he did not respect her, did not love her at all, and only saw in her a loose woman. Almost every evening, rather late, they would drive out of the town, to Oreanda, or to the waterfall¹; and these drives were always delightful, and the impressions won during them were always beautiful and sublime.

They expected her husband to come. But he sent a letter in which he said that his eyes were bad and implored his wife to come home. Anna Sergeyevna began to worry.

¹ **The waterfall** — the waterfall Utchan-Su near Yalta.

“It is a good thing I am going away,” she would say to Gurov. “It is fate.”

She went in a carriage and he accompanied her. They drove for a whole day. When she took her seat in the car of an express-train and when the second bell sounded, she said:

“Let me have another look at you... Just one more look. Just as you are.”

She did not cry, but was sad and low-spirited, and her lips trembled.

“I will think of you — often,” she said. “Good-bye. Good-bye. Don’t think ill of me. We part for ever. We must, because we ought not to have met at all. Now, good-bye.”

The train moved off rapidly. Its lights disappeared, and in a minute or two the sound of it was lost, as though everything were agreed to put an end to this sweet, oblivious madness. Left alone on the platform, looking into the darkness, Gurov heard the trilling of the grasshoppers and the humming of the telegraph-wires, and felt as though he had just woke up. And he thought that it had been one more adventure, one more affair, and it also was finished and had left only a memory. He was moved, sad, and filled with a faint remorse; surely the young woman, whom he would never see again, had not been happy with him; he had been kind to her, friendly, and sincere, but still in his attitude toward

her, in his tone and caresses, there had always been a thin shadow of raillery, the rather rough arrogance of successful male aggravated by the fact that he was twice as old as she. And all the time she had called him kind, remarkable, noble, so that he was never really himself to her, and had involuntarily deceived her...

Here at the station, the smell of autumn was in the air, and the evening was cool.

"It is time for me to go North," thought Gurov, as he left the platform. "It is time."

III

Evening in Moscow, it was already like winter; the stoves were heated, and in the mornings, when the children were getting ready to go to school, and had their tea, it was dark and their nurse lighted the lamp for a short while. The frost had already begun. When the first snow falls, the first day of driving in sledges, it is good to see the white earth, the white roofs; one breathes easily, eagerly, and then one remembers the days of youth. The old lime-trees and birches, white with hoarfrost, have a kindly expression; they are nearer to the heart than cypresses and palm-trees, and with the dear familiar trees there is no need to think of mountains and the sea.

Gurov was a native of Moscow. He returned to Moscow on a fine frosty day, and when he donned his fur coat and warm gloves, and took a stroll through Petrovka Street, and when on Saturday evening he heard the church-bells ringing, then his recent travels and the places he had visited lost all their charm. Little by little he sank back into Moscow life, read eagerly three newspapers a day, and said that he did not read Moscow papers as a matter of principle. He was drawn into a round of restaurants, clubs, dinner-parties, parties, and he was flattered to have his house frequented by famous lawyers and actors, and to play cards with a professor at the University club. He could eat a whole plateful of hot *sielianka*¹.

So a month would pass, and Anna Sergeyevna, he thought, would be lost in the mists of memory and only rarely would she visit his dreams with her touching smile, just as other women had done. But more than a month passed, full winter came, and in his memory everything was clear, as though he had parted from Anna Sergeyevna only yesterday. And his memory was lit by a light that grew ever stronger. No matter how, through the voices of his children saying their lessons, penetrating to the

¹ *Sielianka* — a dish of Russian cuisine made of stewed cabbage with meat, fish or mushrooms.

evening stillness of his study, through hearing a song, or the music in a restaurant, or the snow-storm howling in the chimney, suddenly the whole thing would come to life again in his memory: the meeting on the jetty, the early morning with the mists on the mountains, the steamer from Feodosia, and their kisses. He would pace up and down his room and remember it all and smile, and then his memories would drift into dreams, and the past was confused in his imagination with the future. He did not dream at night of Anna Sergeyevna, but she followed him everywhere, like a shadow, watching him. As he shut his eyes, he could see her, vividly, and she seemed handsomer, tenderer, younger than in reality; and he seemed to himself better than he had been at Yalta. In the evenings she would look at him from the bookcase, from the fireplace, from the corner; he could hear her breathing and the soft rustle of her dress. In the street he would gaze at women's faces to see if there were not one like her...

He was filled with a great longing to share his memories with some one. But at home it was impossible to speak of his love, and away from home — there was no one. It was impossible to talk of her to the other people in the house and the men at the bank. And talk of what? Had he loved then? Was there anything fine, romantic, or