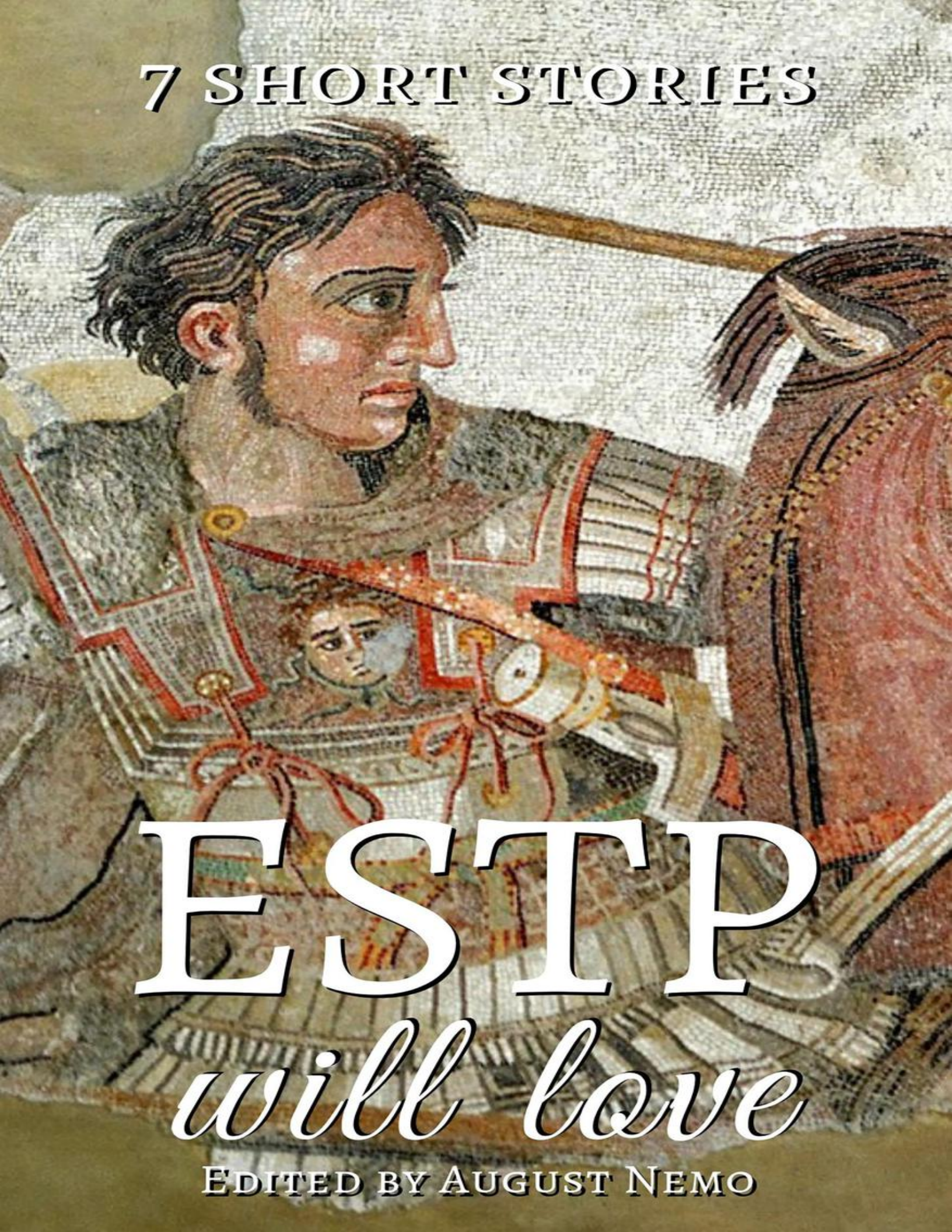
7 SHORT STORIES



ESTP will love

EDITED BY AUGUST NEMO

7 SHORT STORIES

ESTP
will love

EDITED BY AUGUST NEMO

Table of Contents

Authors

Kathleen Mansfield Murry was a prominent New Zealand modernist short story writer and poet who was born and brought up in colonial New Zealand and wrote under the pen name of Katherine Mansfield. At the age of 19, she left New Zealand and settled in England, where she became a friend of writers such as D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Mansfield was diagnosed with extrapulmonary tuberculosis in 1917; the disease claimed her life at the age of 34.

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was a Russian playwright and short-story writer, who is considered to be among the greatest writers of short fiction in history. His career as a playwright produced four classics, and his best short stories are held in high esteem by writers and critics. Along with Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg, Chekhov is often referred to as one of the three seminal figures in the birth of early modernism in the theatre. Chekhov practiced as a medical doctor throughout most of his literary career: "Medicine is my lawful wife", he once said, "and literature is my mistress."

Marcus Aurelius was Roman emperor from 161 to 180 and a Stoic philosopher. He was the last of the rulers traditionally known as the Five Good Emperors, and the last emperor of the Pax Romana, an age of relative peace and stability for the Roman Empire. He served as Roman consul in 140, 145, and 161. The Column and Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius still stand in Rome, where they were erected in celebration of his military victories. Meditations, the writings of 'the philosopher' – as contemporary biographers called Marcus, are a significant source of the modern understanding of ancient Stoic philosophy. They

have been praised by fellow writers, philosophers, monarchs, and politicians centuries after his death.

Frederick Douglass was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, gaining note for his oratory and incisive antislavery writings. In his time, he was described by abolitionists as a living counter-example to slaveholders' arguments that slaves lacked the intellectual capacity to function as independent American citizens. Northerners at the time found it hard to believe that such a great orator had once been a slave.

William Sydney Porter, better known by his pen name O. Henry, was an American short story writer. O. Henry's stories frequently have surprise endings. In his day he was called the American answer to Guy de Maupassant. While both authors wrote plot twist endings, O. Henry's stories were considerably more playful, and are also known for their witty narration. Most of O. Henry's stories are set in his own time, the early 20th century. Many take place in New York City and deal for the most part with ordinary people: policemen, waitresses, etc.

Sherwood Anderson was an American novelist and short story writer, known for subjective and self-revealing works. Self-educated, he rose to become a successful copywriter and business owner in Cleveland and Elyria, Ohio. In 1912, Anderson had a nervous breakdown that led him to abandon his business and family to become a writer. At the time, he moved to Chicago and was eventually married three additional times. His most enduring work is the short-story sequence Winesburg, Ohio, which launched his career. Throughout the 1920s, Anderson published several short story collections, novels, memoirs, books of essays, and a book of poetry. Though his books sold reasonably well, Dark

Laughter (1925), a novel inspired by Anderson's time in New Orleans during the 1920s, was his only bestseller.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was an Irish poet and playwright. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, he became one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. He is best remembered for his epigrams and plays, his novel The Picture of Dorian Gray, and the circumstances of his criminal conviction for "gross indecency", imprisonment, and early death at age 46.

The Man Without a Temperament

by Katherine Mansfield

HE stood at the hall door turning the ring, turning the heavy signet ring upon his little finger while his glance travelled coolly, deliberately, over the round tables and basket chairs scattered about the glassed-in veranda. He pursed his lips-he might have been going to whistle-but he did not whistle-only turned the ring-turned the ring on his pink, freshly washed hands.

Over in the corner sat The Two Topknots, drinking a decoction they always drank at this hour-something whitish, greyish, in glasses, with little husks floating on the top-and rooting in a tin full of paper shavings for pieces of speckled biscuit, which they broke, dropped into the glasses and fished for with spoons. Their two coils of knitting, like two snakes, slumbered beside the tray.

The American Woman sat where she always sat against the glass wall, in the shadow of a great creeping thing with wide open purple eyes that pressed-that flattened itself against the glass, hungrily watching her. And she knoo it was there-she knoo it was looking at her just that way. She played up to it; she gave herself little airs. Sometimes she even pointed at it, crying: “Isn’t that the most terrible thing you’ve ever seen! Isn’t that ghoulish!” It was on the other side of the veranda, after all . . . and besides it couldn’t touch her, could it, Klaymongso? She was an American Woman, wasn’t she, Klaymongso, and she’d just go right away to her Consul. Klaymongso, curled in her lap, with her

torn antique brocade bag, a grubby handkerchief, and a pile of letters from home on top of him, sneezed for reply.

The other tables were empty. A glance passed between the American and the Topknots. She gave a foreign little shrug; they waved an understanding biscuit. But he saw nothing. Now he was still, now from his eyes you saw he listened. “Hoo-e-zip-zoo-oo!” sounded the lift. The iron cage clanged open. Light dragging steps sounded across the hall, coming towards him. A hand, like a leaf, fell on his shoulder. A soft voice said: “Let’s go and sit over there-where we can see the drive. The trees are so lovely.” And he moved forward with the hand still on his shoulder, and the light, dragging steps beside his. He pulled out a chair and she sank into it, slowly, leaning her head against the back, her arms falling along the sides.

“Won’t you bring the other up closer? It’s such miles away.” But he did not move.

“Where’s your shawl?” he asked.

“Oh!” She gave a little groan of dismay. “How silly I am, I’ve left it upstairs on the bed. Never mind. Please don’t go for it. I shan’t want it, I know I shan’t.”

“You’d better have it.” And he turned and swiftly crossed the veranda into the dim hall with its scarlet plush and gilt furniture-conjuror’s furniture-its Notice of Services at the English Church, its green baize board with the unclaimed letters climbing the black lattice, huge “Presentation” clock that struck the hours at the half-hours, bundles of sticks and umbrellas and sunshades in the clasp of a brown wooden bear, past the two crippled palms, two ancient beggars at the foot of the staircase, up the marble stairs three at a time, past the life-size group on the landing of two stout peasant children with their marble pinnies full of marble

grapes, and along the corridor, with its piled-up wreckage of old tin boxes, leather trunks, canvas holdalls, to their room.

The servant girl was in their room, singing loudly while she emptied soapy water into a pail. The windows were open wide, the shutters put back, and the light glared in. She had thrown the carpets and the big white pillows over the balcony rails; the nets were looped up from the beds; on the writing-table there stood a pan of fluff and match-ends. When she saw him her small, impudent eyes snapped and her singing changed to humming. But he gave no sign. His eyes searched the glaring room. Where the devil was the shawl!

“*Vous desirez, Monsieur?*“ mocked the servant girl.

No answer. He had seen it. He strode across the room, grabbed the grey cobweb and went out, banging the door. The servant girl’s voice at its loudest and shrillest followed him along the corridor.

“Oh, there you are. What happened? What kept you? The tea’s here, you see. I’ve just sent Antonio off for the hot water. Isn’t it extraordinary? I must have told him about it sixty times at least, and still he doesn’t bring it. Thank you. That’s very nice. One does just feel the air when one bends forward.”

“Thanks.” He took his tea and sat down in the other chair. “No, nothing to eat.”

“Oh do! Just one, you had so little at lunch and it’s hours before dinner.”

Her shawl dropped off as she bent forward to hand him the biscuits. He took one and put it in his saucer.

“Oh, those trees along the drive,” she cried. “I could look at them for ever. They are like the most exquisite huge ferns. And you see that one with the grey-silver bark and the clusters of cream-coloured flowers, I pulled down a head of them yesterday to smell, and the scent”-she shut her eyes at the memory and her voice thinned away, faint, airy–“was like freshly ground nutmegs.” A little pause. She turned to him and smiled. “You do know what nutmegs smell like-do you Robert?”

And he smiled back at her. “Now how am I going to prove to you that I do?”

Back came Antonio with not only the hot water-with letters on a salver and three rolls of paper.

“Oh, the post! Oh, how lovely! Oh, Robert, they mustn’t be all for you! Have they just come, Antonio?” Her thin hands flew up and hovered over the letters that Antonio offered her, bending forward.

“Just this moment, Signora,” grinned Antonio. “I took-a them from the postman myself. I made-a the postman give them for me.”

“Noble Antonio!” laughed she. “There-those are mine, Robert; the rest are yours.”

Antonio wheeled sharply, stiffened, the grin went out of his face. His striped linen jacket and his flat gleaming fringe made him look like a wooden doll.

Mr. Salesby put the letters into his pocket; the papers lay on the table. He turned the ring, turned the signet ring on his little finger and stared in front of him, blinking, vacant.

But she-with her teacup in one hand, the sheets of thin paper in the other, her head tilted back, her lips open, a

brush of bright colour on her cheek-bones, sipped, sipped, drank . . . drank.

“From Lottie,” came her soft murmur. “Poor dear . . . such trouble . . . left foot. She thought . . . neuritis . . . Doctor Blyth . . . flat foot . . . massage. So many robins this year . . . maid most satisfactory . . . Indian Colonel . . . every grain of rice separate . . . very heavy fall of snow.” And her wide lighted eyes looked up from the letter. “Snow, Robert! Think of it!” And she touched the little dark violets pinned on her thin bosom and went back to the letter.

. . . Snow. Snow in London. Millie with the early morning cup of tea. “There’s been a terrible fall of snow in the night, sir.” “Oh, has there, Millie?” The curtains ring apart, letting in the pale, reluctant light. He raises himself in the bed; he catches a glimpse of the solid houses opposite framed in white, of their window boxes full of great sprays of white coral . . . . In the bathroom-overlooking the back garden. Snow-heavy snow over everything. The lawn is covered with a wavy pattern of cat’s -paws; there is a thick, thick icing on the garden table; the withered pods of the laburnum tree are white tassels; only here and there in the ivy is a dark leaf showing. . . . Warming his back at the dining-room fire, the paper drying over a chair. Millie with the bacon. “Oh, if you please, Sir, there’s two little boys come as will do the steps and front for a shilling, shall I let them?” . . . And then flying lightly, lightly down the stairs–Jinnie. “Oh, Robert, isn’t it wonderful! Oh, what a pity it has to melt. Where’s the pussy-wee?” “I’ll get him from Millie.” . . . “Millie, you might just hand me up the kitten if you’ve got him down there.” “Very good, sir.” He feels the little beating heart under his hand. “Come on, old chap, your missus wants you.” “Oh, Robert, do show him the snow-his first snow. Shall I open the window and give him a little piece on his paw to hold? . . . ”

“Well, that’s very satisfactory on the whole-very. Poor Lottie! Darling Anne! How I only wish I could send them something of this,” she cried, waving her letters at the brilliant, dazzling garden. “More tea, Robert? Robert dear, more tea?”

“No, thanks, no. It was very good,” he drawled.

“Well, mine wasn’t. Mine was just like chopped hay. Oh, here comes the Honeymoon Couple.”

Half striding, half running, carrying a basket between them and rods and lines, they came up the drive, up the shallow steps.

“My! have you been out fishing?” cried the American Woman. They were out of breath, they panted: “Yes, yes, we have been out in a little boat all day. We have caught seven. Four are good to eat. But three we shall give away. To the children.”

Mrs. Salesby turned her chair to look; the Topknots laid the snakes down. They were a very dark young couple-black hair, olive skin, brilliant eyes and teeth. He was dressed “English fashion” in a flannel jacket, white trousers and shoes. Round his neck he wore a silk scarf; his head, with his hair brushed back, was bare. And he kept mopping his forehead, rubbing his hands with a brilliant handkerchief. Her white skirt had a patch of wet; her neck and throat were stained a deep pink. When she lifted her arms big half-hoops of perspiration showed under her arm-pits; her hair clung in wet curls to her cheeks. She looked as though her young husband had been dipping her in the sea and fishing her out again to dry in the sun and then-in with her again-all day.

“Would Klaymongso like a fish?” they cried. Their laughing voices charged with excitement beat against the glassed-in veranda like birds and a strange, saltish smell came from the basket.

“You will sleep well tonight,” said a Topknot, picking her ear with a knitting needle while the other Topknot smiled and nodded.

The Honeymoon Couple looked at each other. A great wave seemed to go over them. They gasped, gulped, staggered a little and then came up laughing-laughing.

“We cannot go upstairs, we are too tired. We must have tea just as we are. Here-coffee. No-tea. No-coffee. Tea-coffee, Antonio!” Mrs. Salesby turned.

“Robert! Robert!” Where was he? He wasn’t there. Oh, there he was at the other end of the veranda, with his back turned, smoking a cigarette. “Robert, shall we go for our little turn?”

“Right.” He stumped the cigarette into an ash-tray and sauntered over, his eyes on the ground. “Will you be warm enough?”

“Oh, quite.”

“Sure?”

“Well,” she put her hand on his arm, “perhaps”-and gave his arm the faintest pressure–“it’s not upstairs, it’s only in the hall-perhaps you’d get me my cape. Hanging up.”

He came back with it and she bent her small head while he dropped it on her shoulders. Then, very stiff, he offered her his arm. She bowed sweetly to the people of the veranda while he just covered a yawn, and they went down the steps together.

“*Vous avez voo ca!* “ said the American Woman.

“He is not a man,” said the Two Topknots, “he is an ox. I say to my sister in the morning and at night when we are in bed,