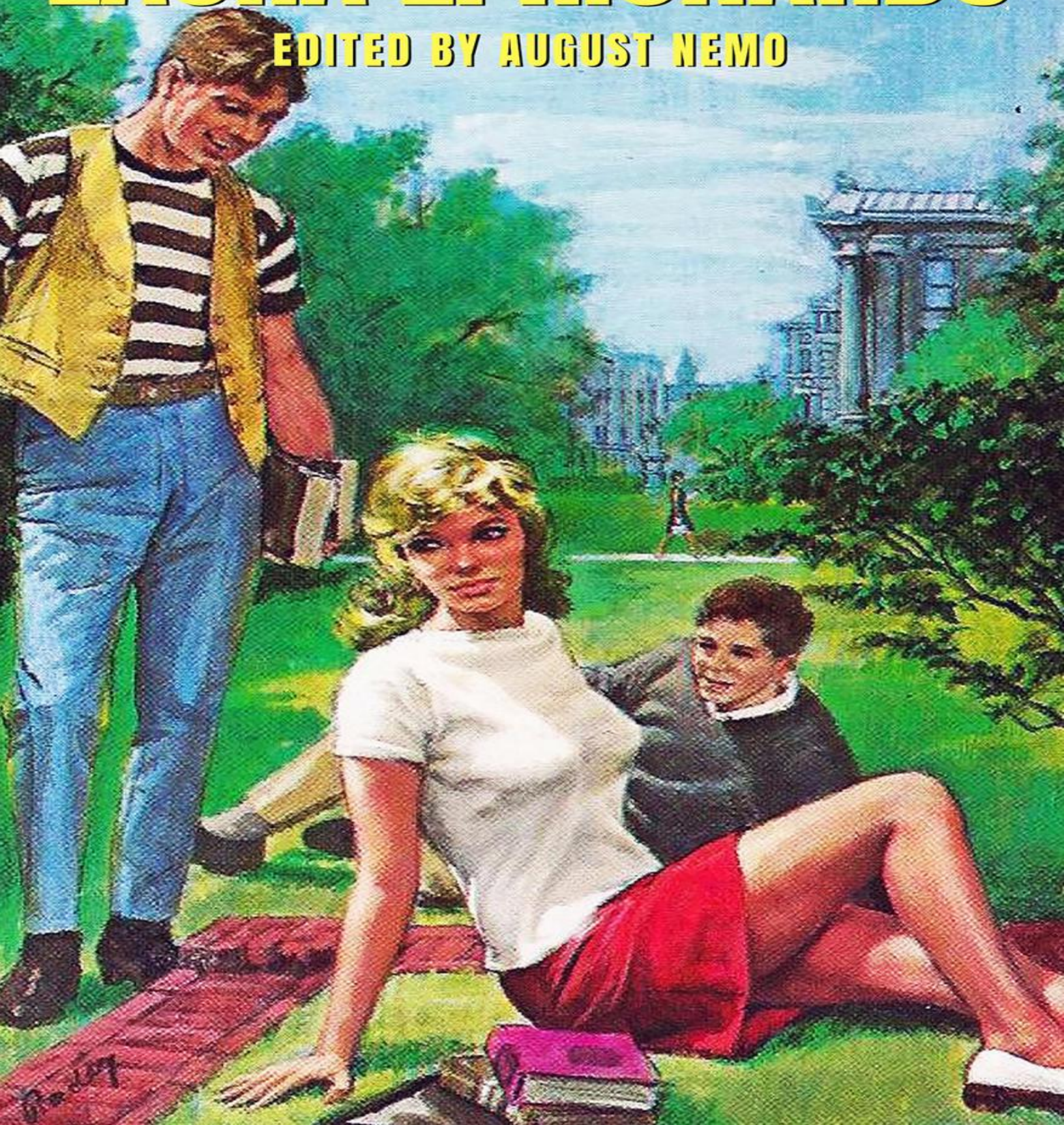


7 BEST SHORT STORIES BY **LAURA E. RICHARDS**

EDITED BY AUGUST NEMO



TACET BOOKS

7 *best*
short stories by
Laura E. Richards



EDITED BY
August Nemo

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The Author



A *utobiographical Sketch from the Junior Book of Authors, 1935.*



DEAR JUNIOR READERS,

I am asked to tell you something about myself and my work.

I must begin with my father and mother, since without them I should neither have worked nor existed. Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the friend and teacher of the blind, the man who first brought a blind deaf-mute (Laura Bridgman) into communion with ordinary persons; Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"; these were my dear and honored parents.

I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on February 27, 1850. I had three sisters and two brothers, and much of our childhood was passed in a delightful old house set in a lovely garden in a suburb of Boston. I have described this place, which my mother named Green Peace, in *When I Was Your Age* and in *Five Little Mice in a Mouse-Trap*, and in several books besides. I loved the place so much, my thoughts have always lived in it more or less, wherever else my home might be. Lawton's Valley, near Newport, where we spent our summers, was hardly less dear to me. In these two houses we children lived, and played, very happily. My brother Henry was nearest me in age, and we were constant

playmates. We loved Mayne Reid's books; much of our playtime was given to hunting elephants and rhinoceroses (which other persons did not see) in the garden, and we had wonderful adventures under the dining-room table.

My mother had a beautiful voice, and sang to us a great deal: I knew many songs and ballads of various nations before I could read. I learned them almost without knowing it, and ever since then I have gone on learning by heart—memorizing, it is called today—good poetry, the love of which has been one of the precious treasures of my life. If there were a tune to which the poem might be sung, so much the better; if not, my mother might make one; so singing, as well as memorizing, became a part of me.

When we were little, we had governesses and masters; then in due time we went to school. Always, our parents were the most delightful of teachers, playmates and companions.

The first of my own writing that I remember was a story called "Lost and Found," written when I was ten; it may be found in *When I Was Your Age*. I cannot read it now without laughing, but it was serious enough to me then.

I never thought seriously of writing till after my marriage to Henry Richards, in 1871; not indeed till after the birth of my first baby. I began to sing to her as my mother had sung to me; first the dear songs and ballads: "Old Crummles," "Fair Eleanor," and the rest; then jingles of my own, which came bubbling up as if from some spring of nonsense. Often they seemed to come without any conscious effort of mine.



THE OWL AND THE EEL and the Warming-pan
They went to call on the soap-fat man!

