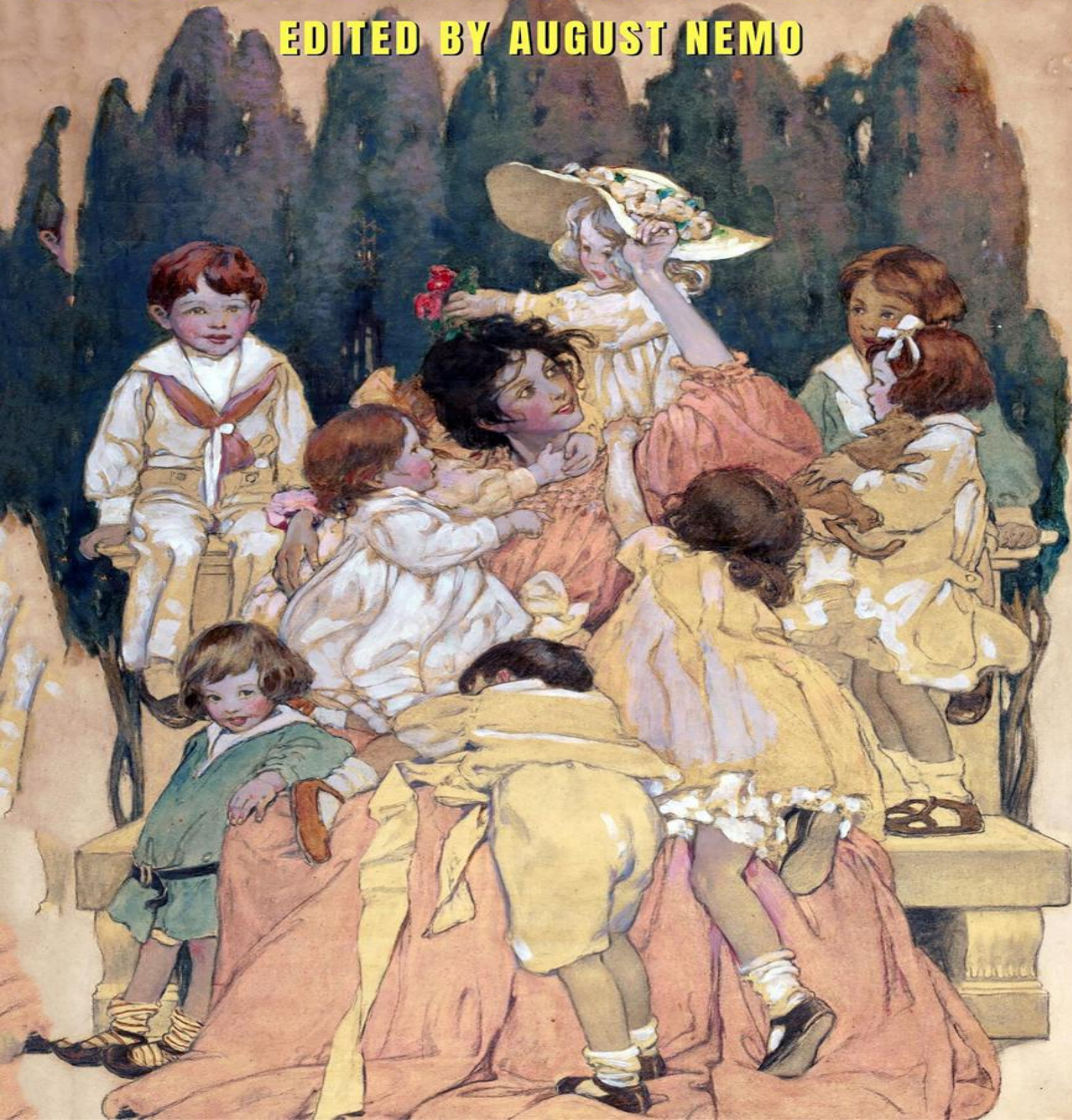


7 BEST SHORT STORIES BY **Eleanor H. Porter**

EDITED BY AUGUST NEMO



TACET BOOKS

7 BEST SHORT STORIES

Eleanor H.
Porter

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August Nemo

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The Author

Eleanor Hodgman Porter was an American novelist, creator of the Pollyanna series of books that generated a popular phenomenon. Hodgman studied singing at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. She gained a local reputation as a singer in concerts and church choirs and continued her singing career after her marriage in 1892 to John L. Porter, a businessman. By 1901, however, she had abandoned music in favour of writing. Her stories began appearing in numerous popular magazines and newspapers, and in 1907 she published her first novel, *Cross Currents*. There followed *The Turn of the Tide* (1908); *The Story of Marco* (1911); *Miss Billy* (1911), her first really successful book; and *Miss Billy's Decision* (1912).

In 1913 Porter published *Pollyanna*, a sentimental tale of a most improbable heroine, a young girl whose “glad game” of always looking for and finding the bright side of things somehow reforms her antagonists, restores hope to the hopeless, and generally rights the wrongs of the world. The book's immediate and enormous popularity—in countless reprinted editions it eventually sold over a million copies—must be attributed to the American reading public's eagerness for reassurance that rural virtues and cheerful optimism still existed, as well as to Porter's skill in blending dashes of social conscience and ironic distance into the sentimentalism of her message. *Pollyanna*, second on the fiction best-seller list for 1914, was followed by *Pollyanna Grows Up* (1915). It also was made into a Broadway play (1916) starring Helen Hayes and then into a motion picture (1920) starring Mary Pickford (a 1960 version starred Hayley Mills), and it inspired a veritable industry for related books and products. “Glad” clubs sprang up around the country and then abroad as *Pollyanna* was translated into several

foreign languages. The name itself soon entered the American lexicon, albeit in a largely pejorative sense.

Porter's other books include the best-sellers *Just David* (1916), *The Road to Understanding* (1917), *Oh, Money! Money!* (1918), *Dawn* (1919), and *Mary-Marie* (1920). Many of her more than 200 stories were collected in *Across the Years* (1919), *The Tie That Binds* (1919), and, posthumously, *Money, Love and Kate* (1925), *Little Pardner* (1926), and *Just Mother* (1927). A series of juvenile Pollyanna books were subsequently written by Harriet L. Smith and Elizabeth Borton.

A Delayed Heritage.

When Hester was two years old a wheezy hand-organ would set her eyes to sparkling and her cheeks to dimpling, and when she was twenty the "Maiden's Prayer," played by a school-girl, would fill her soul with ecstasy.

To Hester, all the world seemed full of melody. Even the clouds in the sky sailed slowly along in time to a stately march in her brain, or danced to the tune of a merry schottische that sounded for her ears alone. And when she saw the sunset from the hill behind her home, there was always music then—low and tender if the colors were soft and pale-tinted, grand and awful if the wind blew shreds and tatters of storm-clouds across a purpling sky. All this was within Hester; but without—

There had been but little room in Hester's life for music. Her days were an endless round of dish-washing and baby-tending—first for her mother, later for herself. There had been no money for music lessons, no time for piano practice. Hester's childish heart had swelled with bitter envy whenever she saw the coveted music roll swinging from some playmate's hand. At that time her favorite "make-believe" had been to play at going for a music lesson, with a carefully modeled roll of brown paper suspended by a string from her fingers.

Hester was forty now. Two sturdy boys and a girl of nine gave her three hungry mouths to feed and six active feet to keep in holeless stockings. Her husband had been dead two years, and life was a struggle and a problem. The boys she trained rigorously, giving just measure of love and care; but the girl—ah, Penelope should have that for which she herself had so longed. Penelope should take music lessons!