

Collected Stories Of Katherine Mansfield

Katherine Mansfield

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Katherine Mansfield : Collected Stories Of Katherine Mansfield before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Collected Stories Of Katherine Mansfield:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Considerable TalentBy J C E HitchcockThis volume contains all of Katherine Mansfield's short stories, together with a number of unfinished fragments. She published three collections of stories in her lifetime, "In a German Pension" in 1911 and "Bliss" and "The Garden Party" in the early 1920s towards the end of her life; her husband John Middleton Murry was to publish two collections more after her death in 1923 at the age of 34."In a German Pension" was based on Mansfield's experiences staying in such an establishment in Bad Wrisshofen, Bavaria. Unusually for a work by an English-speaking writer, most of the characters in these stories are German, although Mansfield herself makes an occasional appearance as a detached, ironic observer. She herself was later to describe the collection as "immature", and her views of German life certainly seem jaundiced, even patronising. At times she seems to be pandering to the anti-German feelings which were so prominent in Britain in the years preceding the First World War. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to judge her too harshly, given that she would only have been 23 in 1911, and one or two stories do reveal her as a writer of great promise. "The Sister of the Baroness", for example, in which an impostor passes herself off as an aristocrat, is an ironic account of social snobbery (something as prevalent in Britain as in Germany during this era), and "The Child Who Was Tired" is a striking account of the miserable life of a young servant in a bourgeois family.Mansfield is sometimes labelled a "modernist" writer, largely because her stories did not always follow the traditional formal structure of "a beginning, a middle and an end". Her stories generally deal with subtle moods rather than with violent emotions or with physical actions. One traditional feature present in many of her stories is the "twist at the end", often involving a change in a

character's emotional state, or in the way in which that character is perceived by the reader. A good example is "The Fly", one of her best-known stories. A wealthy businessman becomes very emotional while thinking about his son, who died in the Great War, but allows himself to be distracted by a fly, which has crawled into the inkpot on his desk. A few minutes later he has no recollection of what he was thinking about before the fly, revealing that his grief for his son was much more superficial than the reader had been led to believe. Strangely enough for a writer who did most her writing in the late 1910s and early 1920s, this is one of Mansfield's few explicit references to the War; it can be read as an indictment of how those who died in it quickly came to be forgotten by the elder generation. Another example is "Mr and Mrs Dove", describing the efforts of a young man, Reggie, to persuade his a young woman named Anne to marry him before he leaves England to try his hand at farming in Rhodesia. (The title is taken from Anne's two pet doves, who remind her of a comical old married couple). Mansfield draws deft pen-picture of the two; Reggie is shy, awkward and slightly comical, Anne beautiful, and self-assured but rather cold and unconsciously cruel in her attitude towards him. It seems that the young man's suit seems doomed to failure, until a sudden shift in mood at the end of the story gives hope of a happier ending. This story is notably warmer in tone than many of the others; Mansfield could take a bleak view of human nature, and cynical endings like that of "The Fly" are commoner in her work. A theme which frequently features in these stories is that of social class; in the early twentieth century it would appear that Mansfield's native New Zealand was just as class-conscious as the mother country. In "The Garden Party" there is a sharp contrast between the affluent, middle-class Sheridans, who are giving the party in question, and the working-class Scotts, who suffer a bereavement on the same day. The story deals with the rather patronising, if well-meaning, efforts of Laura, one of the Sheridan daughters, to comfort the bereaved family. Another story in the same vein is "The Dolls' House", dealing with the ostracism of two young working-class girls, Lil and Else Kelvey, by their more affluent classmates; the story ends with Lil and Else gaining some small consolation from the sight of a dolls' house belonging to one of those classmates. (It is notable that the middle-class children are actively encouraged in their snobbish behaviour by their parents). Not all of Mansfield's work is as good as the examples singled out above which is why my rating for this collection is not higher). She is capable of flashes of genius, but only occasional ones. Too many of her stories seem long and drawn-out, with no perceptible point, an example being "Prelude", the longest story in this book, which reads less like a short story than a chapter taken at random from a much longer novel. I am not sure why it was necessary to publish her unfinished fragments, which add little to her reputation and may have been left unfinished because she was dissatisfied with them, not because she died before she could complete them. In my review, however, I have concentrated on those stories I liked rather than those I found disappointing. (Other excellent stories include "Pictures", "Mr Reginald Peacock's Day", "The Little Governess", "Life of Ma Parker" and "The Singing Lesson"). The tragedy of Mansfield's early death deprived the world of literature of a considerable talent, who might well have gone on to greater things had she lived longer. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Cautionary Tales that Continue to Glow By Booklover! Katherine Mansfield short stories reach across the decades to grab readers by the hand and yank them back to another time and place. Bullets whiz by on a battlefield. Dresses, food, carpets all come to life as if the years suddenly stopped. Mansfield stories reek of claustrophobic danger, where there is something, lurking round the corner, just there. Katherine Mansfield speaks to the feelings and fears we all have. Of people being conned by others. Of individuals pushed to their breaking point and consequences of that crack. Mansfield's stories remain relevant and have lost nothing of their luster. The "Little Governess" is a cautionary tale of the too trusting and those who don't look beyond the obvious. As the Little Governess's train chugs along we know she's headed for disaster and yet we sit with baited breath waiting for that train wreck that she never sees coming. The "Tired Child" which some say is very similar to a Chechov story details the story of a child forced to work for a large family and the results are horrifying. Mansfield's own life ended sadly and too soon. She suffered and some of that suffering found its way into her characters, stories and tales. Submerge yourself in Mansfield's world. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Loved this book By Mockingbird Loved this book. I've always liked Katherine Mansfield and these are some of her best stories all in one book.