

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Classic Women's Short Stories

Read by **Carole Boyd • Liza Ross • Teresa Gallagher**

CLASSIC
FICTION



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|----------|--|-------|
| 1 | The Daughters of the Late Colonel
by Katherine Mansfield
read by Carole Boyd | 47:14 |
| 2 | The Garden Party by Katherine Mansfield
read by Teresa Gallagher | 37:05 |
| 3 | Lilacs by Kate Chopin
read by Liza Ross | 31:31 |
| 4 | Ma'ame Pelagie by Kate Chopin
read by Liza Ross | 21:25 |
| 5 | The Mark on the Wall by Virginia Woolf
read by Teresa Gallagher | 21:12 |

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Classic Women's Short Stories

Katherine Mansfield The Garden Party • The Daughters of the Late Colonel
Kate Chopin Ma'ame Pelagie • Lilacs **Virginia Woolf** The Mark on the Wall

The stories of **Katherine Mansfield**, born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1888, are often cited, with those of Anton Chekhov, as masterpieces of the genre. They are perfect miniatures, minutely crafted, yet with a distinctive simplicity of style and presentation.

Mansfield came to England to finish her education, returned to New Zealand, but in 1908 was back in London, clear in her mind that she would follow a writer's career.

Her first husband, George Bowden, persuaded her to approach *The New Age* with her early stories, and it supported her throughout her short life. In 1911 she met John Middleton Murry, an association that was to lead to a secure and intimate relationship. They married in 1918.

Despite suffering from tuberculosis, she wrote steadily, poetry as well as prose. *The Garden Party and Other Stories* was published in 1922 and has remained her most popular collection.

The Garden Party is a gem. A summer party is being held in the established

environment of the comfortable English society. The young things are learning to prepare and host it themselves – perpetuating customs. But this is post-First World War, and a new, more human, consciousness is emerging which questions the whole issue of class structure. Laura is faced with a dilemma and we feel that she will never be quite the same again.

In *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*, Katherine Mansfield looks acutely at lives caught in a time warp. Two ageing sisters come to terms with the death of their elderly father, and the implications for change in their own lives. Mansfield's rich sense of humour positions this tale on a wonderfully light level – yet in masterly fashion never conceals the tragedy within.

Kate Chopin was born Katherine O'Flaherty in St Louis, Missouri in 1850. At the age of twenty, she married a Creole, Oscar Chopin, and went to live in Louisiana – first of all in New Orleans and then in Cloutierville. When in 1882 her husband

died of swamp fever, Kate Chopin was left with five sons and a daughter. After a few years, she moved back to St Louis and started writing short stories, making a living with her pen.

Her distinctive, iconoclastic eye, saw the role and the plight of women in Louisiana society with a clarity unrecorded in fiction before. Chopin recognised the emotional and sexual needs of women at a time when such subjects were largely concealed beneath propriety.

Influenced by the French master of the short story, Guy de Maupassant, she wrote her first novel, *At Fault*, which was published in 1890. A succession of short stories followed – eventually she was to write over 100 – almost all set in the formal, restricted but passionate society she encountered during her married life in Louisiana. Collections were published, including *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *Acadie* (1897), and she contributed regularly to magazines and periodicals including Harper’s and Vogue.

In 1899, she published *The Awakening*, the novel for which she has been principally remembered. Often described as a Creole *Madame Bovary*, its account of a woman searching for herself is both vivid and

evocative, and was immediately criticised for its candid attitude towards unconventional morality.

These qualities can be found in the two stories in this collection. *Ma’ame Pelagie* perfectly sets the context of lives in the South thirty years after the Civil War. The very nature of the South was broken by conflict and even during Chopin’s time it had not recovered. The poignance of the plight of *Ma’ame Pelagie* is very real.

Lilacs is one of her most famous stories. Set in Paris, it once again presents a controversial subject and questions, without moralizing, where hypocrisy really lies. For Kate Chopin, there is no simple answer, no clear division between the good and the bad. We are just human beings, living and working in a society we created, she says.

Chopin died in 1904, and her work was largely forgotten until a strong revival of interest in the 1950s and 1960s allowed her to take her earned place in American literature.

The Mark on the Wall is, technically, the most advanced of these stories. Here, **Virginia Woolf** uses a small point of reference to work with the concept of the stream of consciousness – the seemingly

unordered, wayward succession of thoughts which emerge in the forefront of the mind.

Though best known for her major novels including *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves* (1931) and *Orlando* (1938), she also wrote short stories where she could experiment with styles and concepts.

Born in 1882, she periodically suffered from mental illness and committed suicide in 1941.

Notes by Nicolas Soames



Carole Boyd trained at the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama where she won the principal national prize for voice, the Carleton Hobbs Award, and immediately joined the BBC Radio Drama Company. Vocal versatility is her speciality, from her creation of the notorious character of Linda Snell in *The Archers* to *Poetry Please* and all the female characters in *Postman Pat*. She has won prestigious awards for her reading of Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Huth's *Landgirls*. She has written and recorded her own audiobook, Lynda Snell's *History of Ambridge*. Carole Boyd has also recorded Eliot's *Middlemarch* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Liza Ross has appeared on stage in the West End and in repertoire across the country, including *Wings* and *The Front Stage* at the Royal National Theatre. She has made many TV appearances including *After the War*, *Poor Little Rich Girl*, *Two's Company* and *The Month of the Doctors*. Her film work has included *Batman* and *The Shadowchasers*. She works extensively as a voice artist and has recorded numerous books. Among her Naxos AudioBooks recordings are: Chopin's *The Awakening* and, in the Junior Classics series, *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.



Teresa Gallagher has performed many leading roles in both plays and musicals across the country, London's West End and off Broadway. In addition, she is a well-known voice to listeners of BBC Radio Drama. Her work on film includes *The Misadventures of Margaret* and Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy*. For Naxos AudioBooks she has recorded the *Biography of Jane Austen* and *They Saw It Happen* and in the Junior Classics series *The Treasure Seekers* and *The Wouldbegoods*.

The music on this recording is taken from the MARCO POLO catalogue

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Maria Inês Guimarães, piano	
SPOHR STRING QUINTETS	8.223600
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ALKAN PIANO MUSIC	8.223284
Laurent Martin, piano	

Music programming by Nicolas Soames

Cover picture: *The Tea Party* by Jules Cayron courtesy of Bridgeman Art Library.

Classic Women's Short Stories

Katherine Mansfield *The Garden Party*

The Daughters of the Late Colonel

Kate Chopin *Ma'ame Pelagie* • *Lilacs*

Virginia Woolf *The Mark on the Wall*

Read by **Carole Boyd** • **Liza Ross** • **Teresa Gallagher**

Five stories from influential women writers from the close of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. New Zealand-born, Katherine Mansfield settled in England where she wrote a series of short stories that are widely recognised as among the finest of the 20th century for their economy, clarity, sensitivity and effect. *The Garden Party* is one of her most famous, while *The Daughters of the Late Colonel* shows how her wonderful sense of wit throws a shadow of poignance. Kate Chopin, writing in the last years of the 19th century, broke new ground with her daring view of women as individuals with human needs. *Ma'ame Pelagie* and *Lilacs* are sympathetic portraits of women with differing dilemmas. Woolf's *The Mark on the Wall* illustrates, in short story form, the turmoil within the stillness which became such a mark of her later novels.

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The stories were selected and produced by Nicolas Soames
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The Daughters of the Late Colonel: slightly abridged
All other stories: unabridged

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