

5 Favourite Short Stories



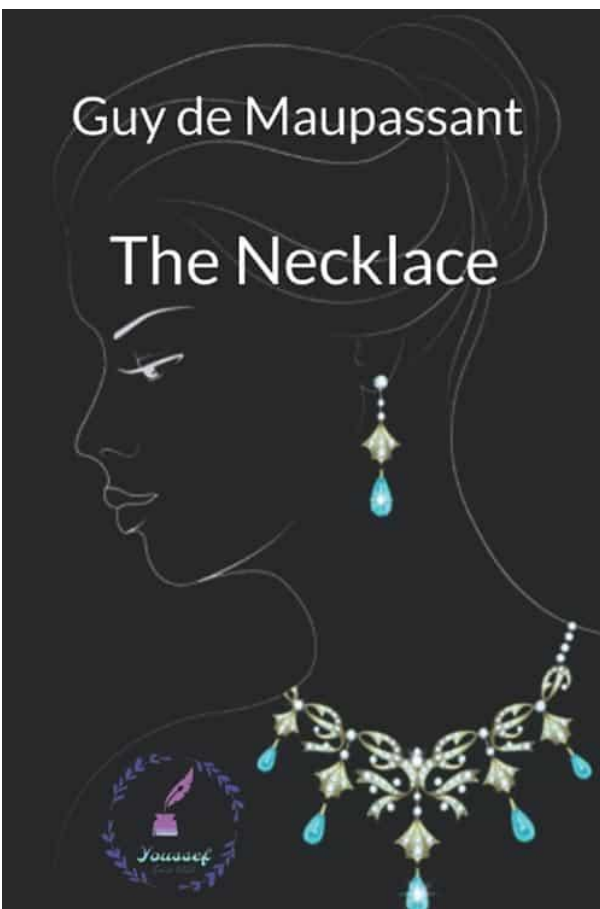
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The writing of a fine short story is such a very different art from writing a novel. Short stories thrive on brevity, drawing readers into a compact world rich with meaning. Each word must serve a purpose, each sentence a step toward to the resolution.

I am not a huge reader of short stories. Generally, I prefer more 'meat', a story that will last me for days, but I admire the conciseness, skilled choice of every single word, and the ability to rapidly pin down a character and situation found in short stories.

Here are some of my top favourites. Do you have any favourite short stories?

***The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant**



This is often given as the 'perfect example' of a short story. It quickly sets the scene – 19th century Paris, introduces the characters, Mathilde Loisel and her husband, a lowly clerk. She longs for a better life – balls, fine clothes and jewels. When the chance comes to attend a grand ball, she buys a new dress but has to borrow a necklace from a friend. The story ends with a classic 'twist in the tale' and leaves you pondering for days.

I will never forget my first experience of reading this story – I felt I'd been transported to Paris and was there with the Loisels and their misfortune. Characters, plot and words are all finely chiselled. They sparkle with a hard brilliance, just like the diamonds in the story. It really is quite brilliant!

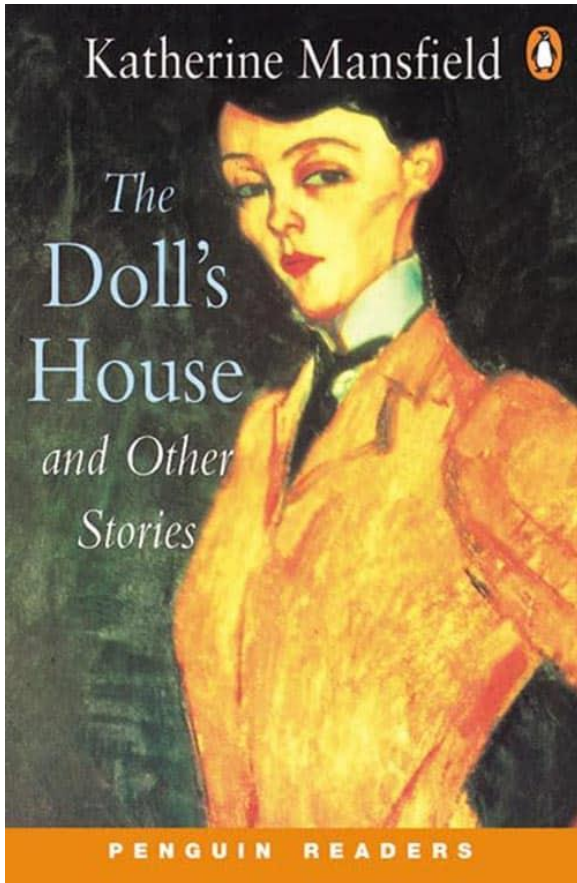
Here is a full copy of this short story for you to enjoy, [please download it now](#).

I've written about this superb short story, its author, and even my first encounter with it:

[Guy de Maupassant](#)

Purchase [The Necklace](#) by Guy de Maupassant

***The Doll's House* by Katherine Mansfield**



Every NZ schoolchild gets this short story to read. It is set in Wellington, at the Karori school Mansfield had herself attended, and it concerns the gift of a doll's house to the family of the story.

The three little girls select which of their school friends will get to see the treasured doll's house first. But two little girls will NOT be invited, the Kelvey sisters whose mother is a washerwoman. The story is a real indictment of the snobbery and class divisions that existed in late 19th century Wellington. I find the last line almost unbearably moving.

Here is a full copy of this short story for you to enjoy, [please download it now](#).

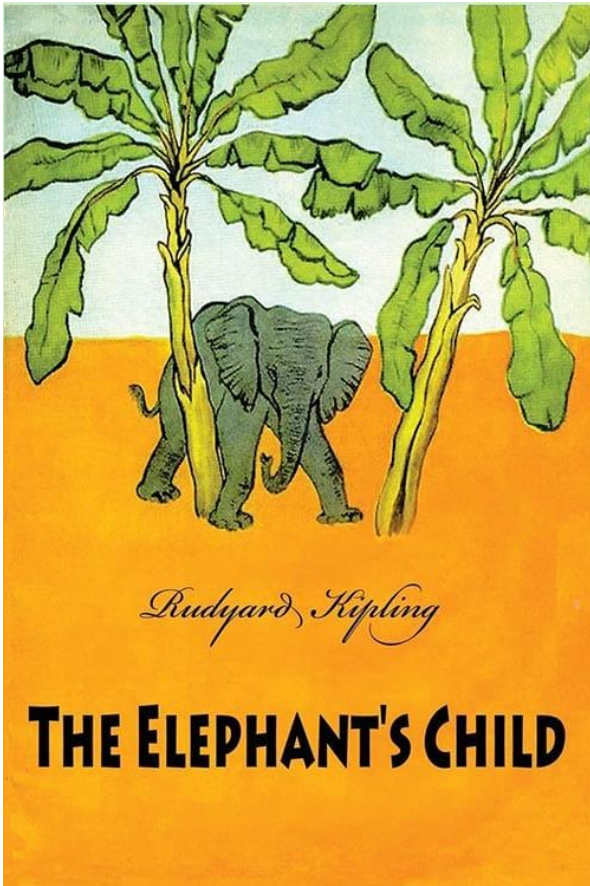
I have a 60 minute video talk more about Katherine Mansfield. [Watch it for free](#).

I've written about this superb short story, its author, and even my first encounter with it:

[Katherine Mansfield](#)

Purchase [The Doll's House by Katherine Mansfield](#)

***The Elephant's Child* by Rudyard Kipling**



Anyone who becomes an adult without having encountered Kipling's "great, grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees", has had a deprived childhood.

Kipling created this story for his daughter Josephine. Later it became one of *The Just-So Stories*, so named because she insisted he tell it 'just so' every night, without changing a word. It's an 'origin story', showing how the elephant got its trunk.

Here is a full copy of this short story for you to enjoy, [please download it now](#).

I've previously written about this short story too, including my first encounter with it, which is different this time. [Download it here](#).

I've written about this superb short story, its author, and even my first encounter with it: [Rudyard Kipling](#)

Purchase [The Elephant's Child by Rudyard Kipling](#)

***A Simple Heart (Un Coeur Simple)* by Gustave Flaubert**



One of his *Three Tales*, this is the story of a maid, Felicité, who has hardly anyone to love.

She is given a parrot, Loulou, which she adores. When Loulou dies, she is stuffed and continues to provide company.

Julian Barnes' excellent novel [Flaubert's Parrot](#) was inspired by this story. It's a moving, sad, and beautifully written short story by a writer who was an absolute master of French prose.

Here is a full copy of this short story for you to enjoy, [please download it now](#).

I've written about Gustave Flaubert, his interesting life and his extraordinary novel, *Madame Bovary*. [Download it here](#).



I've written about this superb short story, its author, and even my first encounter with it: [Gustave Flaubert](#)

Purchase [A Simple Heart \(Un Coeur Simple\) by Gustave Flaubert](#)

***The Lady with the Little Dog* by Anton Chekhov**



PENGUIN CLASSICS

ANTON CHEKHOV
The Lady With The Little Dog

Published in 1899, this tells of the affair between a married man and a married woman who are holidaying at Yalta. Their affair has unexpected consequences.

No real resolution is reached, but Chekhov paints so vividly both characters, their developing feelings for each other, and the petty intrigues of the Black Sea resort town.

Today a [statue of the 'lady'](#) with her little dog stands in Yalta, but I've never been to see it.

Here is a full copy of this short story for you to enjoy, [please download it now](#).

I've written about this superb short story, its author, and even my first encounter with it:

[Anton Chekhov](#)

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