

ALICE MUNRO

*Hateship, friendship,
courtship,
loveship,
marriage*

Another breathtaking demonstration of her mastery of the short story...No one could possibly dispute Munro's greatness; the genius of her seamless, unmatched prose which nets up the flow of everyday life so miraculously' *Daily Mail*

Alice Munro

HATESHIP, FRIENDSHIP,
COURTSHIP, LOVESHIP,
MARRIAGE



V I N T A G E

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HATESHIP, FRIENDSHIP, COURTSHIP, LOVESHIP, MARRIAGE

Alice Munro is the author of *The Beggar Maid* (short-listed for the Booker Prize), one novel and several collections of stories, most recently *Open Secrets* (winner of the W.H. Smith Literary Award) and *The Love of A Good Woman*. Her work appears regularly in the *New Yorker*, and she is a winner of the Giller Prize and the Governor General's Prize in her native Canada.

ALSO BY ALICE MUNRO

Dance of the Happy Shades

Lives of Girls and Women

Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You

The Beggar Maid

The Moons of Jupiter

The Progress of Love

Friend of My Youth

Open Secrets

Selected Stories

The Love of a Good Woman

*With gratitude
to
Sarah Skinner*

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Alice Munro

DANCE OF THE HAPPY SHADES

‘The finest writer of short stories working in the English
language today’

The Times

‘The greatest living short story writer’

A.S. Byatt, *Sunday Times*

Alice Munro’s territory is the farms and semi-rural towns of south-western Ontario. In these dazzling stories she deals with the self-discovery of adolescence, the joys and pains of love and the despair and guilt of those caught in a narrow existence. And in sensitively exploring the lives of ordinary men and women, she makes us aware of the universal nature of their fears, sorrows and aspirations.

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Sunday Times



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Alice Munro

FRIEND OF MY YOUTH

‘One of the best short-story writers around’

The Times

‘Read not more than one of her stories a day, and allow them
to work their spell: they are made to last’

Observer

‘Alice Munro’s stories, *Friend of My Youth*, are wonderful:
intricate, deep, full of absorbing and funny detail, and
opening into painful and tender memories with cunningly
concealed skill’

Independent on Sunday

‘Brilliant at evoking life’s diversity and unpredictability
...and unrivalled chronicler of human nature under a vast
span of aspects, moods and pressures’

Sunday Times

‘The particular brilliance of Alice Munro is that in range and
depth her short stories are almost novels’

Daily Telegraph

‘She is our Chekhov, and is going to outlast most of her
contemporaries’

Cynthia Ozick



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Alice Munro

OPEN SECRETS

‘Open Secrets is shocking and delightful and mysterious’

A.S. Byatt

Ranging from the 1850s through two world wars to the present, and from Canada to Brisbane, the Balkans and the Somme, these dazzling stories reveal the secrets of unconventional women who refuse to be contained.

‘*Open Secrets* by the wonderful – and severely undervalued – Alice Munro, is a collection of short stories, written with exquisite style’

Joanna Trollope

‘Alice Munro excites the writer in me – there is something new to learn from her in every sentence’

A.S. Byatt

‘Alice Munro’s stories are miraculous’

Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *Sunday Times*

‘A book that dazzles with its faith in language and life’

New York Times



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Alice Munro

THE LOVE OF A GOOD WOMAN

‘One of the finest short-story writers of our time...absorbing
and brilliant’

Observer

‘That Munro is a great writer of short stories should, by
now, go without saying. She is also one of the two or three
best writers of fiction (of any length) now alive. The title
story of this collection is one of her masterpieces...A
brilliant piece of story-telling, tautly-structured and
exquisitely balanced’

Sunday Times

‘A new collection of Alice Munro stories is a literary event
that more and more of us look forward to, we are very
unlikely to find a richer or rarer treat all year...The eight
new stories in *The Love of a Good Woman* show this mirac-
ulous and truly great writer at the height of her powers...A
perfect story collection’

Scotland on Sunday



V I N T A G E

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Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage

Years ago, before the trains stopped running on so many of the branch lines, a woman with a high, freckled forehead and a frizz of reddish hair came into the railway station and inquired about shipping furniture.

The station agent often tried a little teasing with women, especially the plain ones who seemed to appreciate it.

"Furniture?" he said, as if nobody had ever had such an idea before. "Well. Now. What kind of furniture are we talking about?"

A dining-room table and six chairs. A full bedroom suite, a sofa, a coffee table, end tables, a floor lamp. Also a china cabinet and a buffet.

"Whoa there. You mean a houseful."

"It shouldn't count as that much," she said. "There's no kitchen things and only enough for one bedroom."

Her teeth were crowded to the front of her mouth as if they were ready for an argument.

"You'll be needing the truck," he said.

"No. I want to send it on the train. It's going out west, to Saskatchewan."

She spoke to him in a loud voice as if he was deaf or stupid, and

there was something wrong with the way she pronounced her words. An accent. He thought of Dutch—the Dutch were moving in around here—but she didn't have the heft of the Dutch women or the nice pink skin or the fair hair. She might have been under forty, but what did it matter? No beauty queen, ever.

He turned all business.

"First you'll need the truck to get it to here from wherever you got it. And we better see if it's a place in Saskatchewan where the train goes through. Otherways you'd have to arrange to get it picked up, say, in Regina."

"It's Gdynia," she said. "The train goes through."

He took down a greasy-covered directory that was hanging from a nail and asked how she would spell that. She helped herself to the pencil that was also on a string and wrote on a piece of paper from her purse: *G D Y N I A*.

"What kind of nationality would that be?"

She said she didn't know.

He took back the pencil to follow from line to line.

"A lot of places out there it's all Czechs or Hungarians or Ukrainians," he said. It came to him as he said this that she might be one of those. But so what, he was only stating a fact.

"Here it is, all right, it's on the line."

"Yes," she said. "I want to ship it Friday—can you do that?"

"We can ship it, but I can't promise what day it'll get there," he said. "It all depends on the priorities. Somebody going to be on the lookout for it when it comes in?"

"Yes."

"It's a mixed train Friday, two-eighteen p.m. Truck picks it up Friday morning. You live here in town?"

She nodded, writing down the address. 106 Exhibition Road.

It was only recently that the houses in town had been numbered, and he couldn't picture the place, though he knew where Exhibition Road was. If she'd said the name McCauley at that time

he might have taken more of an interest, and things might have turned out differently. There were new houses out there, built since the war, though they were called “wartime houses.” He supposed it must be one of those.

“Pay when you ship,” he told her.

“Also, I want a ticket for myself on the same train. Friday afternoon.”

“Going same place?”

“Yes.”

“You can travel on the same train to Toronto, but then you have to wait for the Transcontinental, goes out ten-thirty at night. You want sleeper or coach? Sleeper you get a berth, coach you sit up in the day car.”

She said she would sit up.

“Wait in Sudbury for the Montreal train, but you won’t get off there, they’ll just shunt you around and hitch on the Montreal cars. Then on to Port Arthur and then to Kenora. You don’t get off till Regina, and there you have to get off and catch the branch-line train.”

She nodded as if he should just get on and give her the ticket.

Slowing down, he said, “But I won’t promise your furniture’ll arrive when you do, I wouldn’t think it would get in till a day or two after. It’s all the priorities. Somebody coming to meet you?”

“Yes.”

“Good. Because it won’t likely be much of a station. Towns out there, they’re not like here. They’re mostly pretty rudimentary affairs.”

She paid for the passenger ticket now, from a roll of bills in a cloth bag in her purse. Like an old lady. She counted her change, too. But not the way an old lady would count it—she held it in her hand and flicked her eyes over it, but you could tell she didn’t miss a penny. Then she turned away rudely, without a good-bye.

“See you Friday,” he called out.

She wore a long, drab coat on this warm September day, also a pair of clunky laced-up shoes, and ankle socks.

He was getting a coffee out of his thermos when she came back and rapped on the wicket.

"The furniture I'm sending," she said. "It's all good furniture, it's like new. I wouldn't want it to get scratched or banged up or in any way damaged. I don't want it to smell like livestock, either."

"Oh, well," he said. "The railway's pretty used to shipping things. And they don't use the same cars for shipping furniture they use for shipping pigs."

"I'm concerned that it gets there in just as good a shape as it leaves here."

"Well, you know, when you buy your furniture, it's in the store, right? But did you ever think how it got there? It wasn't made in the store, was it? No. It was made in some factory someplace, and it got shipped to the store, and that was done quite possibly by train. So that being the case, doesn't it stand to reason the railway knows how to look after it?"

She continued to look at him without a smile or any admission of her female foolishness.

"I hope so," she said. "I hope they do."

The station agent would have said, without thinking about it, that he knew everybody in town. Which meant that he knew about half of them. And most of those he knew were the core people, the ones who really were "in town" in the sense that they had not arrived yesterday and had no plans to move on. He did not know the woman who was going to Saskatchewan because she did not go to his church or teach his children in school or work in any store or restaurant or office that he went into. Nor was she married to any of the men he knew in the Elks or the Oddfellows or the Lions Club or the Legion. A look at her left hand while she was getting the money out had told him—and he was not surprised—that she