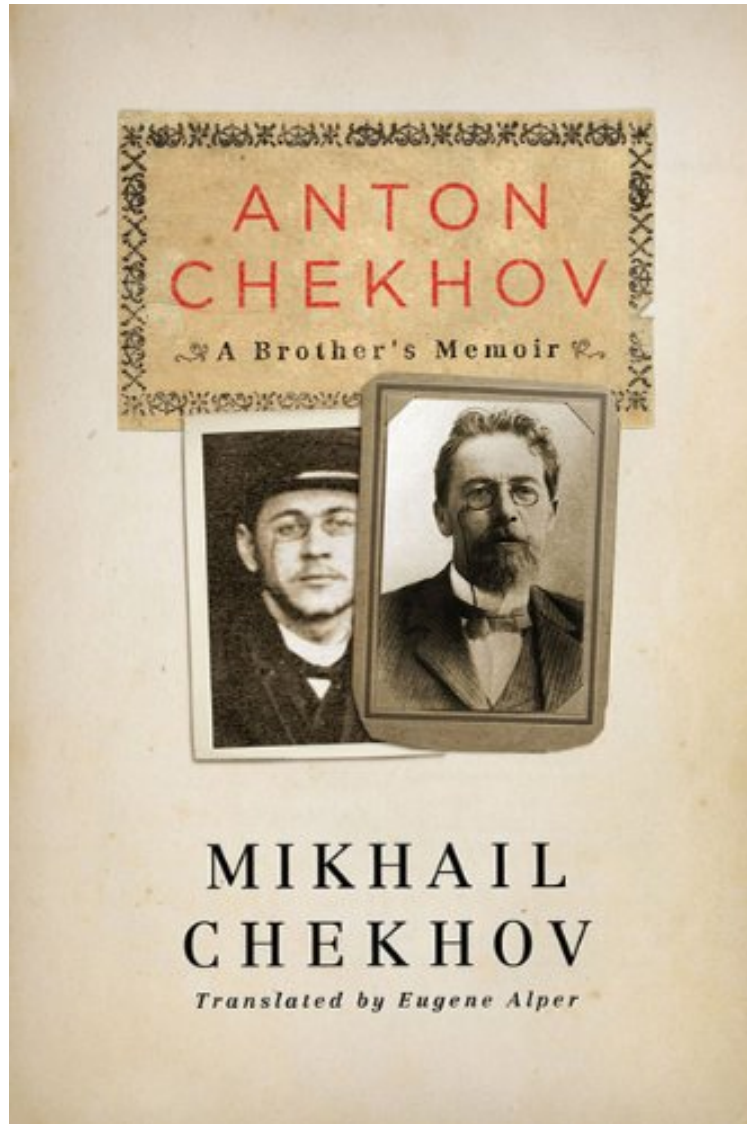


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Anton Chekhov: A Brother's Memoir

Mikhail Chekhov

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Mikhail Chekhov : Anton Chekhov: A Brother's Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Anton Chekhov: A Brother's Memoir:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. InterestingBy Martina A. NicollsAnton Chekhov: A Brothers's Memoir (1933, English version 2010) is the biography of Russian physician and author, most noted for his short stories. The third of six children (1869-1904), the memoir is written by the youngest child, Mikhail (1865-1936). Mikhail was 68 years old when he commenced the memoir, originally called Around Chekhov: Encounters and Impressions. Like his famous brother, Mikhail was also a writer of short stories, but in addition he wrote theatre

reviews and children's tales, as well as translating texts (nicknamed 'English Grammar'). Born in Taganrog, southern Russia, Anton moved to Moscow in 1879, three years after his family, to join his two eldest brothers, Alexander and Nikolay, who were studying at University, and the rest of the family due to financial problems. Their poor financial situation defined their life in Moscow, where Anton assumed responsibility for supporting his family. Here the brothers, and Nikolay an illustrator, submitted articles to literary magazines while Anton completed his medical studies. Nikolay's death from consumption (tuberculosis) at 31 years of age (1858-1889) affected Anton deeply; it was the first death in the family; after which he wrote stories; at a feverish pace; and became more involved with the theatre. In 1890 he travelled for two months across Siberia to Sakhalin Island, a penal colony in the north Pacific, where he stayed for three months interviewing 'thousands of people'; for his book, which was published five years later. On his return home he travelled via Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), which he described as 'paradise on earth'. The following year he travelled widely: to Vienna (Austria), Nice (France), Monte Carlo (Monaco), Paris and Biarritz (France), Naples and Venice (Italy). Anton bought a country property in 1892, called Melikhovo, '575 acres of house, forest, farmland, and meadows'; about 65 kilometres (40 miles) south of Moscow, housing the whole family (parents, aunts, brothers and sisters) as well as boarders and visitors. But from 1884 he had been getting progressively worse bouts of coughing and ruptured lungs, leading to tuberculosis. He sought better climates for his health, and in 1898 he uprooted his family and bought a small property in Yalta in southern Russia. In a trip to Moscow in 1901, Anton surprised his family by marrying Olga Knipper when he was 41 years old. Mikhail writes, 'I did not even know who his bride was.' Mikhail never saw Anton again. Anton never returned to his southern property, and he died three years later in Badenweiler, Germany, at 44 years old. Mikhail writes of Anton's humour, his pranks, his love of French literature and writer Victor Hugo, and that he 'never read his pieces to anyone and criticized authors who did.' The village, Babkino, played an important role in the development of Anton's talent, for it was 'full of interesting people.' Intermittently throughout the memoir readers are briefly told of Anton's inspirations for his short stories. For example, Anton's story 'Happiness' was influenced by their nanny's stories. He modelled the character of Rassudina in 'Three Years' after his sister's girlfriend who became an astronomer. And the story 'The Death of a Government Official' really happened at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Writing and story telling is a family trait for the Chekhovs. Hence this memoir is well written, with clearly defined periods in Anton's life. Occasionally, and briefly, Mikhail gets distracted and writes of his own life during times when he is not living with his brother. And the final three years of Anton's life after his sudden marriage is left unrevealed. However, it is an interesting memoir, not only of Anton Chekhov, but also of a close family that lived together and supported each other throughout periods of debt, poverty, illness, and famine, as well as literary failures and ultimate successes. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great insights into Chekhov's personality. By Paul E. Richardson This wonderful translation (by Eugene Alper) of a hundred-year-old biography by Anton Pavlovich's younger brother, secretary and assistant, offers uncommon first-hand insight into family dynamics and history as well as background on some of Chekhov's literary works. But the perspective of a sibling, the brother of a famous man, is intriguing enough in its own right, and one cannot help grazing this fertile biography in search of telling asides and tender criticisms, which are plentiful. It helps that Mikhail has something of his brother's cutting eye for detail, and that he does not stint on his opinions, be it on an ill-chosen summer cottage or on "The Beautiful Lika" who long sought the writer's affection. As reviewed in Russian Life Jan/Feb 2010 issue. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Chekhov Lite. By Christian Schlect For fans of Anton Chekhov this would be an excellent purchase. To my mind it is a memoir better read after you have some prior exposure to the great Russian writer's life and works. Literary detectives will discover explanations given by this author/brother to certain characters and scenes in Anton Chekhov's many stories.

In a style reminiscent of Anton Chekhov himself--realistic, intimate, and dynamic--Mikhail Chekhov shares unparalleled memories and insights, transporting readers into the world of the Chekhov family. He visits the places where his brother lived and worked and introduces the people he knew and loved, Leo Tolstoy and Piotr Tchaikovsky among them. As a unique eyewitness to the beloved writer's formative years and his artistic maturity, Mikhail Chekhov shows here first-hand the events that inspired the plots for *The Seagull*, *The Black Monk*, and *The Steppe*, among other enduring works. Captivating, surprising, and a joy to read, this memoir reveals the remarkable life of one of the most masterful storytellers of our time.

From Publishers Weekly In 1905, the year after his older brother Anton's death, Mikhail Chekhov began publishing a series of biographical recollections about his famous sibling. More than 20 years later, the younger Chekhov compiled many of the most important stories from his collections into this volume, appearing here in English for the first time. In Alper's competent translation, Mikhail provides some useful and interesting glimpses into the Chekhov family life and his older brother's personality and playful sense of humor. He also relates events behind the plots of some of Anton's more famous stories and of his play, *The Seagull*. In a fit of madness, and perhaps jealousy, a friend of

Anton's went out to the lake with his shotgun, killed a seagull, and threw the dead bird at the feet of his lover, without any explanation. But this volume reveals as much about Mikhail as about his celebrated brother, so the book will appeal only to deeply devoted Chekhov fans who have not been able to read Mikhail's recollections in Russian . (Jan.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "It is wonderful to have this memoir finally translated into English. It provides a fascinating and absorbing portrait of Anton Chekhov and his circle. Mikhail Chekhov's voice has the uniquely compelling ring of authenticity."--William Boyd, award-winning author of *A Good Man in Africa*, *Restless*, and the forthcoming *Ordinary Thunderstorms*