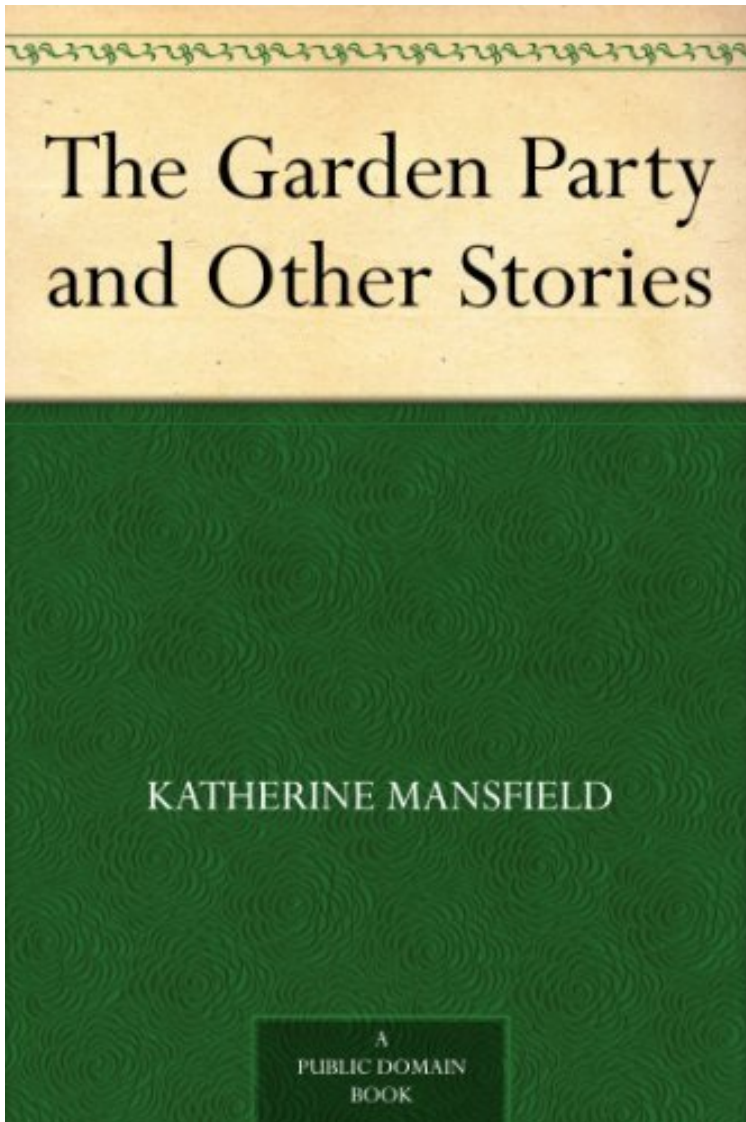


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The Garden Party and Other Stories (English Edition)



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Description : Description du produit Introduction by Claire Tomalin

Prsentation de l'diteur This book was converted from its physical edition to the digital format by a community of volunteers. You may find it for free on the web. Purchase of the Kindle edition includes wireless delivery..com Virginia Woolf once described Katherine Mansfield as "of the cat kind, alien, composed, always solitary observant." All of these qualities are on display in Mansfield's writing, as well; hers are lonely tales of missed connections, inchoate longings, and complicated emotions within the context of a rigidly defined social setting. Born in New Zealand, Mansfield set many of her stories there, even though she emigrated to England in 1908 at age 19, never to return. Her characters are almost invariably

middle-class, the daughters, sweethearts, wives, and widows of office clerks, military men, businessmen. In "At the Bay," for example, Mansfield focuses on the Burnell family as they take their summer vacation at the beach. Not content to follow just one character through the story, she drifts in and out of the consciousness of half a dozen, from the family cat to Stanley and Linda Burnell, their children, Linda's sister, Beryl and their in-laws, the Trouts. Dipping into Linda's thoughts, for example, we learn that she loves her husband--"not the Stanley whom everyone saw, not the everyday one; but a timid, sensitive, innocent Stanley who knelt down every night to say his prayers and who longed to be good." Unfortunately for Linda, "she saw her Stanley so seldom." Mansfield then swoops into the mind of Stanley's brother-in-law, Jonathan Trout, who is discontented with his life but knows he hasn't the will to change it, and then on to Beryl, whose longing for "someone who will find the Beryl they none of them know" leads her into a rash action. In the title story, Mansfield concentrates on young Laura Sheridan on the afternoon of her family's garden party. The story follows the family through the preparations--flags to identify the different sandwiches, the delivery of cream puffs, the setting up of a marquee on the lawn. This perfect idyll is broken, however, by news of a fatal accident down the lane. A young workman has been killed, leaving a wife and five children. Into Laura's perfect Eden, death comes whispering and her reaction to it is both subtle and surprising. In fact, many of Mansfield's stories feature young women on the brink of adulthood--facing, for the first time, the realities of their constricted lives. Love is a trap; childbearing is another; death can be "simply marvellous." Mansfield died in 1923 of tuberculosis, leaving behind a body of work that is as bold, unconventional, and modern as she was. *The Garden Party and Other Stories* is a fitting epitaph. --Alix Wilber

From Library Journal
The Garden Party is the last volume of short stories published before this New Zealand author's untimely death from tuberculosis at age 35. These 15 stories are typical Mansfield slice-of-life glimpses into human relationships: parent-child, wife-husband, friend-friend, all recognizable, all vivid in their gentleness and sensitivity. Marguerite Gavin reads in a light, American-accented, rather uninspired way, but her voices are marvelous; presenting British accents of every description from cockney to Queen, with clear delineation between characters male and female, is a skill especially important in these character-driven tales. Her sound effects (birdcalls, running water, etc.) are perfect, and she sings in such a lovely clear soprano that the listener wishes there were more songs in the stories. The short story format is often a favorite with listeners who hesitate to commit to hours and hours of the same work. Mansfield belongs in all fiction collections; highly recommended.

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