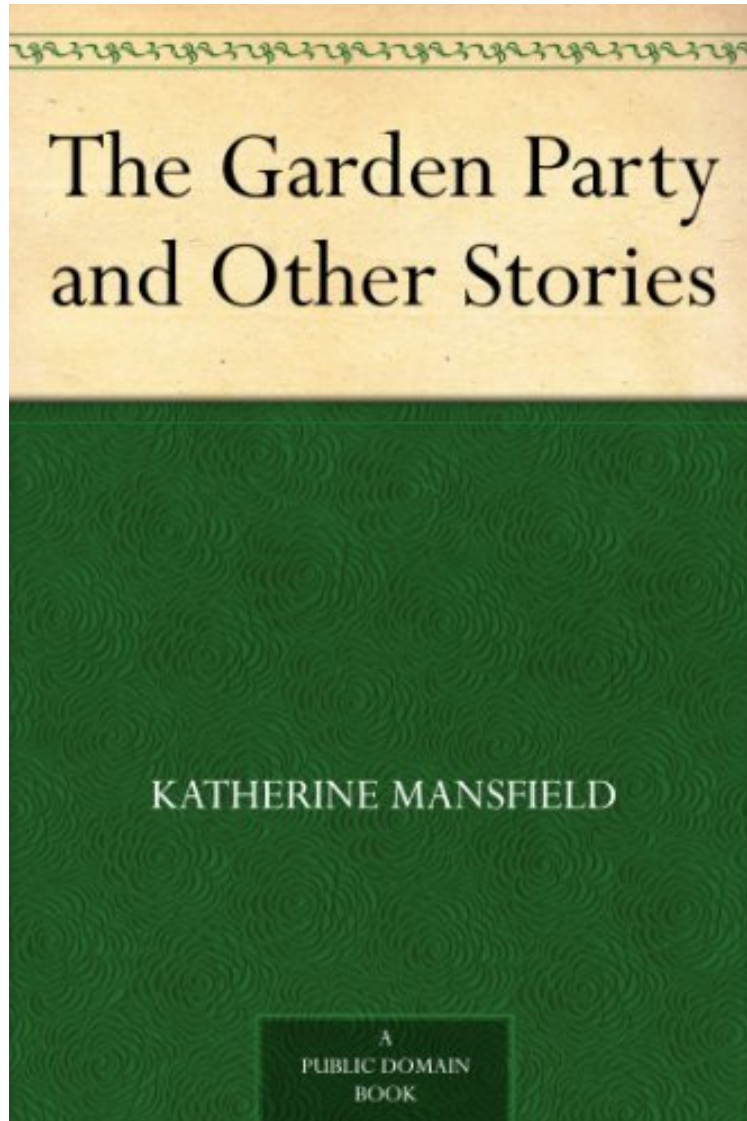


[Download pdf] The Garden Party and Other Stories (English Edition)

The Garden Party and Other Stories (English Edition)

Von Katherine Mansfield

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Von Katherine Mansfield : The Garden Party and Other Stories (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Garden Party and Other Stories (English Edition):

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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.com

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