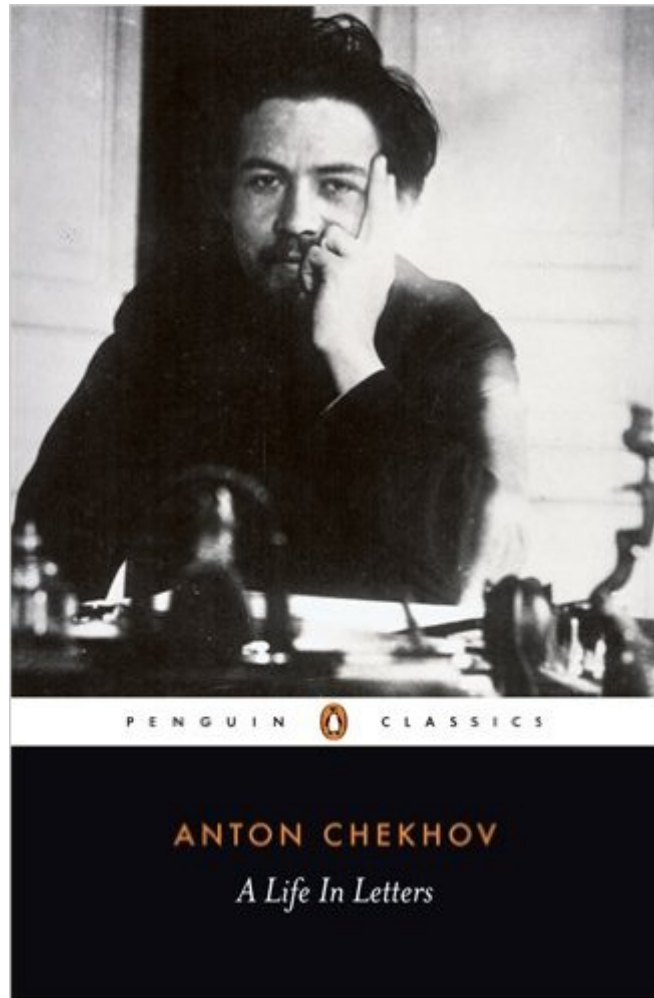


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# A Life In Letters (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

The life story of a Russian master as he told it to others— From the teenager in provincial Russia in 1875 to his premature death in Germany in 1904, Chekhov wrote over 4,500 letters to a range of correspondents, including family and friends, his publisher and fellow writers - not to mention actresses. These letters tell the story of Chekhov's life as a man and a writer and he emerges from them as a tough, generous, life-enhancing, and enigmatic character. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics (September 28, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140449221

ISBN-13: 978-0140449228

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1.1 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #464,553 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > Russian #101 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Russian #278 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Russia

## Customer Reviews

Janet Malcolm's "Reading Chekhov: A Critical Journey" (2001) - a brilliant little book undeservedly maligned by some reviewers - sent me straight back to the book store for a biography of Anton Chekhov. I can report from this trip that the largest bookstore in South East Asia does not carry one single biography of Chekhov! Instead, I found "Anton Chekhov: A Life in Letters" (2004). And I did not regret it one bit. The book is the fullest collection of Chekhov's letters in English translation to date and contains 370 selected letters reproduced in full. It comes with a chronology of Chekhov's life, a very readable, splendid short introduction, suggestions for further reading, a helpful list of

correspondents and four very useful maps. An index at the end of the volume assists in, among other things, finding references to stories and plays in Chekhov's letters. According to the editors, this book is also the first uncensored edition of Chekhov's correspondence in any language.

Chekhov, a physician by training, called the facts of life by their name and took life's mishaps with a sense of humor. Later editors, more prudish and therefore considerably more boring, simply cut out what they called "rude language." Only after Glasnost, in the 1990s, the official portrait of Chekhov as a "decorous and refined gentleman with a stick, who never permitted himself to use racy language and who was rather pious and sickly, with little interest in women" (xv) was beginning to be revised.

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