

ASCH RECORDS AH 9126

GREAT SHORT STORIES OF THE WORLD

Written & Directed by
Morris Schreiber
with the Institute Players

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1971

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ASCH RECORDS AH 9126

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Written and Directed
by Morris Schreiber, with the
Institute Players

CAST

(in the order of their appearance)

Professor Carl Atkins
Dept. of English, N.Y. Institute of Technology
Professor Morris Schreiber
Dept. of English, N.Y. Institute of Technology
Professor William Hines
Dept. of English, N.Y. Institute of Technology
Mrs. Lillian T. Schreiber
Instructor, N.Y. City Schools
Mrs. Kathryn Menscher
Dept. of English, N.Y. Institute of Technology

SHORT STORIES CONSIDERED

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION: The Short Story Defined

PART TWO: NEW VISTAS IN THE SHORT STORY:
Backgrounds in Other Lands

Story	Author
The Outlaws	Selma Lagerlof
Red	Somerset Maugham
The Sniper	Liam O'Flaherty

PART THREE: THE SHORT STORY AS AN INSTRUMENT
OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

The Bet	Anton Chekhov
The Man of the House	Frank O'Connor
The Chrysanthemums	John Steinbeck
Quality	John Galsworthy
Disorder and Early Sorrow	Thomas Mann
The Last Class	Alphonse Daudet

PART FOUR: THE SHORT STORY AS A DYNAMIC
COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM

The Necklace	Guy De Maupassant
The Piece of String	Guy De Maupassant
The Interlopers	Saki (H. H. Munro)
The Man Who Liked Dickens	Evelyn Waugh
How Beautiful with Shoes	Wilbur Daniel Steele

PART FIVE: VARIATIONS ON A THEME: How Different Short
Story Writers Have Treated Related Subjects

A Spinster's Tale	Peter Taylor
Maternity	Lilliha Nakos
The Dead Are Silent	Arthur Schnitzler
Adultery	Enrique Albuja
The Baby Party	F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Garden Party	Katherine Mansfield
My Lord, the Baby	Sir Rabindranath Tagore
Mateo Falcone	Prosper Merrimee

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Directed by
Morris Schreiber
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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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GREAT SHORT STORIES OF THE WORLD

ANNOUNCER: Presenting "Great Short Stories
of the World," written and directed by Morris
Schreiber.... With the Institute Players....

NARRATOR: PART ONE: INTRODUCTION:
THE SHORT STORY DEFINED!

NARRATOR: Vita... Bios... Das Leben...
La Vie... La Vida... LIFE!.... --In any

language, in any country, on any theme, the short
story addresses itself primarily to Life--and the
problems of life....

Not with the broad strokes of the novel, its
panoramic sweep, not on its large and spacious
canvas... The short story is a delicate cameo...
Its writer engraves life in miniature, captures
it in capsule form...

NARRATOR: Like the one-act play, which it
greatly resembles, the short story is complete
unto itself... Sometimes, it is tightly drawn;
other times, loosely knit. Yet either way, it is
both cumulative and culminating. A curtain is
suddenly lifted on a segment of life, ANYWHERE
IN THE WORLD, allowing us a fleeting glimpse of
characters caught in a tense, climactic moment,
swept by love, hate, jealousy, and rage--by every
conceivable human emotion...

--A great short story is thus a condensed
artistic narrative...

ANNOUNCER: PART TWO: NEW VISTAS IN THE
SHORT STORY: Backgrounds in Other Lands!

NARRATOR: Ranging freely across the globe, the
short story often opens new vistas for the reader,
provides him with insights into unusual people and
places.

Locales vary widely--"Big town," "small
town"... mountain, jungle, desert, sea... From
O. Henry's glittering and raucous Old New York
to Sinclair Lewis' slothful Gopher Prairie...
From Kipling's regimental British India to
Somerset Maugham's exotic South Seas...

NARRATOR: A short story with such an unusual
locale is Selma Lagerlof's powerful work, "The
Outlaws." Here, in the frozen forests of Sweden,
hidden in its darkest shadows, venturing out only
with the greatest care are two fugitives. One is
the tall, brawny peasant Berg, who had murdered
a monk, the other, his helper and admirer, young
Tord, the sixteen-year-old fisherman, offspring
of a witch and a thief...

Again and again, the men hunting the peasant
Berg try to tempt Tord to betray his friend--to
no avail... But one day--

NARRATOR: --one day, while all Nature rages,
the once heathen Tord, ironically converted by
the slayer Berg, decides that his friend must pay
for his sins... Running off to the town, he im-
petuously alerts a band of men, promising to lead
them to Berg's hiding place...

NARRATOR: Tord returns alone, scattering peas
behind him to guide the men to the cave.

While he waits, Tord implores Berg to re-
pent, without revealing he has already betrayed
him. To the boy's amazement, Berg breaks down,
penitent and full of self-reproach. Wild with regret
at his hasty action, Tord blurts out what he has
done, begs Berg to flee with him before the men
arrive.

But Berg, enraged at the boy's act, gropes for his axe to kill him. In self-defense, Tord snatches his own axe, strikes first, splitting Berg's head open...

NARRATOR: "The peasants came rushing in... They rejoiced and praised the deed.

"You will win by this," they said to Tord."

NARRATOR: "(Later) Tord lay beside the body, talked to it, wept and begged the dead man to awake... The peasants arranged a bier...

"... When they lifted him on the bier, Tord rose, shook the hair back from his face, and said in a voice which shook with sob--"

TORD: "Say to Unn, who made Berg Rese a murderer, that he was killed by Tord, the fisherman, whose father is a wrecker and whose mother is a witch, because he taught him that the foundation of the world is justice..."

NARRATOR: Another striking locale for a short story is a lonely island in the South Pacific, setting for Somerset Maugham's masterful and suspense-filled tale, "Red."

Two men--a handsome sailor and a mysterious Swede--are involved in a curious triangle with a native woman.

To the Samoan lagoon, early in the story, comes a brute of a captain, a gross hulk of a man, disembarking from his freighter and entering the native village by a rude and precarious bridge. Soon he comes to a house, where he finds the strange and embittered Swede, Nielson, who had come there to recover his health twenty-five years before. Nielson lives now among the islanders, owner of a vast personal library and attended only by an aging native wife, spinning out his days on the lagoon.

NARRATOR: Drinking with Nielson, the captain listens to his tale of a haunting love affair--of Sally, a beautiful native woman in love with an American sailor called "Red," a young Adonis with flaming red hair who deserts from his ship and comes to live in idyllic bliss with the girl.

But one day, while boarding a passing ship to trade for tobacco, Red is carried off and impressed into service, leaving the broken and dispirited girl behind.

Nielson, deeply infatuated with her, finally prevails upon her to marry him. But though she lives with him, she does so without feeling, constantly tortured by her memories of Red.

NARRATOR: --Suddenly, in the midst of his story, the Swede stops short. Troubled by the feeling that he has known something of his visitor before, he asks the Captain his name.

NARRATOR: "The skipper's face puckered and he gave a cunning chuckle. He looked then malicious and horribly vulgar."

CAPTAIN: "It's such a damned long time since I heard it that I almost forgot it myself... But for thirty years now in the islands they've always called me.. 'Red.'..."

NARRATOR: A moment later, Sally, now grown old and stout, enters--and Nielson sits petrified. But neither she nor Red, once such ecstatic lovers, recognize each other...

Later, Sally asks Nielson casually who his visitor was...

NIELSON: "He's the captain of a schooner... He's come from Apia..."

SALLY: "Yes..."

NIELSON: "He brought me news from home... My eldest brother is very ill--and I must go back..."

SALLY: "Will you be gone long?"

NARRATOR: "He shrugged his shoulders"...

NARRATOR: A Swedish forest... A South Sea isle... Certainly, unusual settings for a short story... But surely even more unique is the locale for this next work, "The Sniper," by Liam O'Flaherty, staged on the rooftops of the city of Dublin!

NARRATOR: The time is the year of the Irish Revolution--and the opposing factions, the Republicans and the Freestaters, are waging civil war...

NARRATOR: "On a rooftop near O'Connell Bridge, a Republican sniper lay watching. Beside him lay his rifle and over his shoulders were slung a pair of field glasses. His face was the face of a student, thin and ascetic, but his eyes had the cold gleam of the fanatic... the eyes of a man who is used to look at death."

NARRATOR: Across the way, also solidly entrenched and hidden from sight, is a Freestater, his remorseless enemy, sworn to destroy him. For hours the two wage their deadly duel, plotting and calculating every delicate move -- until finally the Republican sniper lures his enemy out of cover and kills him...

NARRATOR: But suddenly, struck by a strange desire to learn the identity of the dead sniper, the Republican soldier hurries across the street, oblivious of the rain of bullets...

NARRATOR: "A machine gun tore up the ground around him with a hail of bullets, but he escaped. He threw himself face downward beside the corpse. The machine gun stopped.

"Then the sniper turned over the dead body--and looked into... his brother's face..."

ANNOUNCER: ...PART THREE!... The Short Story as an Instrument of International Understanding...

NARRATOR: ...A great world short story reaches

far beyond its own boundaries... Leaps barriers of space and time... And by providing cultural insights or glimpses into the hearts and thoughts of many peoples, it proves once more that "all the world is kin."

NARRATOR: The work is "The Bet," Anton Chekhov's unique study of a Russian lawyer suddenly confronted with the most momentous challenge of his life. The setting is pre-Revolutionary Russia, with its sharp contrasts between the oppressed poor and the bored and languid rich.

In opposition are the two chief characters--the young lawyer and the impetuous banker. Grim decisions face the two. The events of the story not only cast light on a phase of Russian life but also make it a work of universal appeal.

NARRATOR: The story opens at a party given by the banker. A heated argument over voluntary vs. enforced imprisonment leads to a wild and ridiculous bet. The banker stakes two millions that the lawyer will not be able to endure fifteen years of voluntary solitary confinement without breaking under the strain. The lawyer impulsively accepts...and the long and gruelling confinement begins.

NARRATOR: Fifteen years later, shortly before the expiration of the bet, the banker, a heavy loser on the Stock Exchange, decides to kill his prisoner rather than be forced to pay him the two millions. Stealing in at night, he tiptoes into the lawyer's cell to find him asleep at the desk, a pale, haggard skeleton of a man, a letter under his bended head.

BANKER: (TO HIMSELF) ... Poor devil, he's asleep and probably seeing millions in his dreams. I have only to take and throw this half dead thing on the bed, smother him in a moment with the pillow and the most careful examination will find no trace of unnatural death. But, first, let us see what he has written here.

LAWYER: "My Dear Jailer:

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock midnight, I shall obtain my freedom and the right to mix with people. But before I leave this room and see the sun, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. On my own clear conscience and before God who sees me, I declare to you that I despise freedom, life, health, and all that your books call the blessings of the world.

"For fifteen years I have diligently studied earthly life. True, I saw neither the earth nor the people, but in your books I drank fragrant wine, sang songs, hunted deer and wild boar in the forests, loved women...and beautiful women, like clouds ethereal, created by the magic of your poets' genius, visited me by night, and whispered to me wonderful tales, which made my head drunken. In your books I climbed the summits of Elburz and Mont Blanc and saw from there how the sun rose in the morning, and in the evening suffused the sky, the ocean, and the mountain ridges with a purple gold.

I saw from there how above me lightning glimmered, cleaving the clouds: I saw green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, cities: I heard sirens singing, and the playing of the pipes of Pan: I touched the wings of beautiful devils who came flying to me to speak of God... In your books I cast myself into bottomless abysses, worked miracles, burned cities to the ground, preached new religions, conquered whole countries...

"Your books gave me wisdom. All that unwearying human thought created in the centuries is compressed to a little lump in my skull. I know that I am cleverer than you all.

"And, I despise your books, despise all worldly blessings and wisdom. Everything is void, frail, visionary and delusive as a mirage. Though you be proud and wise and beautiful, yet will death wipe you from the face of the earth like the mice underground: And your posterity, your history, and the immortality of your men of genius will be as frozen slag, burnt down together with the terrestrial globe.

"You are mad and gone the wrong way. You take falsehood for truth and ugliness for beauty. You would marvel if suddenly apple and orange trees should bear frogs and lizards instead of fruit, and if roses would begin to breathe the odor of a sweating horse. So do I marvel at you, who have bartered heaven for earth. I do not want to understand you.

"That I may show you in deed my contempt for that by which you live, I waive the two millions which I once dreamed of as Paradise, and which I now despise. That I might deprive myself of my right to them, I shall come out from here five minutes before the stipulated term, and thus shall violate the agreement."

NARRATOR: "When he had read the letter, the banker put the sheet on the table, kissed the head of the strange man, and began to weep. He went out of the wing. Never at any other time, not even after his terrible losses on the Exchange, had he felt such contempt for himself as now. Coming home, he lay down on his bed, but agitation and tears kept him a long time from sleeping...

"The next morning, the poor watchman came running to him and told him that they had seen the man who lived in the wing climb through the window into the garden. He had gone to the gate and disappeared. The banker instantly went with his servants to the wing and established the escape of his prisoner. To avoid unnecessary rumors he took the paper with the renunciation from the table and, on his return, locked it in his safe."

NARRATOR: "The Bet" provides not only a character study of two Russian men in different fields of life but a glimpse into the mind of the tormented Russian writer himself--into Chekhov's impressionable, brooding, and morbid spirit.

NARRATOR: A great world short story can also

broaden understanding of family problems and relationships.

In the story "The Man of the House," Frank O'Connor presents a delicate and heart-warming tale of a little boy and his mother. Rural Ireland is the setting. The crisis threatening the family is the mother's sudden illness. "The Man of the House" is O'Connor himself, retelling a poignant story of his own early youth.

NARRATOR: Sent by the doctor for cough medicine for his sick mother, the little boy trudges dutifully off to the dispensary. He obtains the medicine--only to be lured away by a selfish little girl on whom he lavishes a pennyworth of sweets. She also convinces him to taste the syrupy and soothing cough medicine--and together, they finish the bottle. Suddenly horrified by what he has done, he runs home to his mother, fevered and frightened, and, after a first palpable lie, confesses all. Now it is he, "The Man of the House," who is nursed back to health by his kindly and forgiving mother, in this charming story of family relationships.

NARRATOR: Two other writers whose short stories starkly depict aspects of life among the poor and the working class are the American, John Steinbeck, and the British, John Galsworthy.

In the story, "The Chrysanthemums," Steinbeck re-creates an aspect of the Great American Depression of the Thirties, with its widespread unemployment and economic privation. To what self-abasement man can descend for a crust of bread is vividly portrayed in Steinbeck's tale of a hungry itinerant tinker who flatters Elisa, a reluctant housewife, into letting him mend her saucepans by pretending to admire her chrysanthemums.

NARRATOR: ... Later, driving into town with her husband, Elisa finds that she is the victim of a stark betrayal. The tinker has coldly tossed her tenderly nourished flowers away, keeping only the pot in which she had placed them:

NARRATOR: "Far ahead in the road Elisa saw a dark speck. She knew.

"She tried not to look as they passed it, but her eyes would not obey. She whispered to herself sadly: 'He might have thrown them off the road. That wouldn't have been much trouble, not very much. But he kept the pot,' she explained. 'He had to keep the pot. That's why he couldn't get them off the road.'"

NARRATOR: Customers were also scarce at Gessler Brothers, the small London bootery, scene of John Galsworthy's poignant short story, "Quality." There the two German-born brothers kept making quality boots year after year, while they fought a vain battle against the mass production of the factories.

The author, a lifetime patron of the brothers and a devoted admirer of their pride in craftsmanship, returns to the shop after a long absence--to find a new owner...

NARRATOR: "As I was saying--we make boots for some very good people..."

NARRATOR: "Yes, yes... But Mr. Gessler?"

NARRATOR: "Oh... Dead..."

NARRATOR: "Dead!... But I only received these boots from him last Wednesday week..."

NARRATOR: "Ah!... a shockin' go... Poor man starved 'imself..."

NARRATOR: "Good God!"

NARRATOR: "Slow starvation, the doctor called it. You see he went to work in such a way! Would keep the shop on, wouldn't have a soul touch his boots except himself. When he got an order, it took him such a time. People won't wait. He lost everybody. And there he'd sit, goin' on and on... I'll say that for him--not a man in London made a better boot...*** But he never gave 'imself time to eat, never had a penny in the house. All went in rent and leather. How he lived so long I don't know. He regular let his fire go out. He was a character. But he made good boots!"

NARRATOR: "Yes--he made good boots... --- (to himself)... And I turned and went out quickly, for I did not want that youth to know that I could hardly see..."

NARRATOR: Thus, a great short story helps to foster economic awareness, understanding of how people work and live and struggle to survive...

NARRATOR: Nor is economic survival the problem of the poor and destitute alone.

In Thomas Mann's sensitive social portrait of an afternoon in the life of a German history professor, we learn how a professional man lived and thought in the days of the struggling Weimar republic before the Nazis dealt it a death blow.

NARRATOR: The story is "Disorder and Early Sorrow" and the occasion is a social gathering at Professor Cornelius' house. "The Generation Gap," so much discussed today, is here, too, in the sharp differences in outlook and interests of the older and the younger generation at the party.

But all--young and old alike--are already beginning to feel the economic pinch in Germany. There are many food shortages. And at the party, too, there are few of the delicacies to which the Professor and his family have become accustomed.

The story is a series of brief but revealing encounters between the various personality types invited for the afternoon. At the climax the Professor's little daughter, Ellie, whom he so dearly loves, bursts into loud and bitter tears when a young man who has clowned and amused her, dances with someone his own age. The Professor has all he can do to console his little one.

NARRATOR: But though nothing very startling happens, the story offers some unusual insights.

Mann, probing the psychological make-up of Dr. Cornelius, finds him a man divided within himself, uneasily aware of the great social changes of the present, but still enchanted with the past.

NARRATOR: "...that temper broods over the past--and it is a temper much better suited to the nervous system of a history professor than are the excesses of the present... The past is immortalized, that is to say, it is dead; and death is the root of all godliness and all abiding significance... It is this conservative instinct of (Dr. Cornelius), his sense of the eternal, that has found in his love for his little daughter a way to save itself from the wound inflicted by the times. For father love, and a little child on its mother's breast--are not these timeless, and thus very, very holy and beautiful?

NARRATOR: In this work, "Disorder and Early Sorrow," Mann gives us a picture of a colorful segment of life under the Weimar Republic. The "disorder" is the upheaval in the Professor's old and established values and habits. The "sorrow" is the little girl's first taste of frustration and disappointment.

Hence, a great short story can help to sharpen our historical perspectives. It can also illuminate an important era in world history by examining its direct impact on the lives of the people.

NARRATOR: Goosestepping into France, seventy years before Hitler, had come other German armies, invaders in the Franco-Prussian War.

What that war meant to both young and old, is starkly told in Alphonse Daudet's short story, "The Last Class," a child's view of the German take-over of his school in Alsace-Lorraine. By extension, we can picture what life--and education--could be under the conqueror's heel.

NARRATOR: "At that very moment the trumpets of the Prussians, who were returning from Drill, broke out under our windows. Monsieur Hamel rose very pale from his chair. Never had he seemed to me so tall."

SCHOOLMASTER: "--My friends... My friends... I... I--"

NARRATOR: "But something seemed to choke him. He was unable to finish the sentence. Then he turned toward the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and bearing down with all his strength, he wrote in letters as large as he could:

SCHOOLMASTER: "VIVE LA FRANCE!"

NARRATOR: "He remained there, with his head leaned against the wall, and, without speaking, with his hand, he motioned to us:

SCHOOLMASTER: "--It is all over... Go... now!..."

NARRATOR: And so, as we have just seen, a great world short story can become a powerful instrument for international understanding... It can develop

cultural insights... It can broaden understanding of other nations' family problems and relationships... It can foster economic and social awareness--show us in pointed human terms how other people work and live... And it can sharpen historical perspectives--illuminating important eras in world history...

ANNOUNCER: PART FOUR: The World Short Story as a Dynamic Communications Medium!

(SOUND: Elevator door opening... Murmur of voices... Footsteps echoing down corridor... Door opening and closing)

NARRATOR: The time is early fall... The occasion, a special meeting of the Pioneer Film Studios, called to plan for next year's World Film Festival.

Gathered here today, to offer their ideas is a group of producers, directors, writers, and financiers, asked to discuss the company's part in the Festival--a series of short films based on great short stories of the world.

NARRATOR: Preliminary discussion has established the following standards:

A short story suitable for translation to film should:

- Contain scenes with strong visual appeal...
- Have pace and vigor...
- Present colorful and engaging characters...
- Tell a story of human interest...

NARRATOR (continuing): It should also:

- Be readily understandable by foreign audiences...
- Have unity of design... and
- Make its point within the brief compass of a short subject...

NARRATOR: First to rise and offer his suggestions is Wilbur Adams, chief scriptwriter for the company... Mr. Adams, long an admirer of the French short story master, De Maupassant, looks at two of his works.

ADAMS: Ladies and gentlemen, to me De Maupassant's story "The Necklace" has always been his work supreme--with his other short masterpiece, "A Piece of String," a close second.

WILKINS: Your reasons, Mr. Adams?

ADAMS: Well, both show Man a victim of a single tragic mistake--partly of his own making, the other of someone else's doing... In each case, though, the victim pays a penalty far too severe for the blunder...

WILKINS: In what way?

ADAMS: In "The Necklace" the Loisels, both husband and wife, sacrifice ten years of their life to pay for a lost necklace--only to learn at the end that their decision to conceal its loss was in vain--that the necklace was really only paste. In "The Piece of String" a poor peasant M. Hauchecorne, is falsely accused of picking up and keeping a wallet with five hundred francs. He swears--to no avail--

that he had only stooped to pick up a piece of string... And even though the wallet is eventually returned by someone else, Hauchecorne dies a broken man, driven mad by circumstantial evidence--protesting his innocence to the last...

--Here is how De Maupassant concludes it:

"Now the jokers asked him to tell the story of 'The Piece of String' for their amusement, as a soldier who has seen service is asked to tell about his battles. His mind, attacked at its source, grew feeble."

"Late in December, he took to his bed."

"In the first days of January he died, and in the delirium of his death agony, he protested his innocence, repeating:

"A little piece of string--a little piece of string--see, here it is, M'sieu Mayor."

WILKINS: Both have great film possibilities... A powerful story... Appealing characters... A bitterly ironic ending... Both show men caught in a tragic web, unable to escape... Here's a suggestion!... Why not combine them? Call it "The Web of Fate -- Two by DeMaupassant."

CARTER: An excellent idea... And talking about ironic endings... Why not consider the story "The Interlopers?" by the British writer, Saki, pen name of H. H. Munro? There's suspense, conflict, an eerie locale in a Russian forest--and a smashing climax!--grim and wholly unexpected... As for characters--: Picture two deadly enemies, everlastingly feuding and sworn to destroy each other, both helplessly trapped in the woods, side by side...

WILKINS: Sounds fascinating. How would you lead up to that climax?

CARTER: I'd open with a peaceful landscape... Show isolated incidents building up to the blood feud... Introduce the two antagonists hunting animals... then each other... Men hunting men... What Richard Connell called "The Most Dangerous Game," in his great short story of that name...

ADAMS: You called the ending "bitterly ironic"... How so?

CARTER: While the two noblemen wait, trapped in the dense tangle of the underbrush, each decides to forgive and forget past hatreds... When their men arrive, they will order a joint rescue, end the feud, and start a new life... Suddenly Ulrich sees figures moving through the woods, coming towards them... Here is how Saki tells it:

NARRATOR: "'Are they your men?' asked Georg. 'Are they your men?' he repeated impatiently as Ulrich did not answer."

"No," said Ulrich with a laugh, the idiotic, chattering laugh of a man unstrung with hideous fear.

"Who are they?" asked Georg quickly, straining his eyes to see what the other would gladly not have seen.

"WOLVES..."

WILKINS: Certainly a remarkable work!... I fully agree with the choice... And speaking about entrapment... There are all sorts of traps... A man can be spiritually trapped--just as well as physically...

ADAMS: In what way?

WILKINS: Take one of my favorite short stories--"The Man Who Liked Dickens," by Evelyn Waugh, the Englishman... A British explorer, named Henty, is lost in the Amazon jungles. Finally, he reaches shelter at the plantation of an illiterate and eccentric owner named McMaster--a man with a strange passion for the works of Dickens... But what starts out as harmless daily reading from Dickens' works to please his host becomes a grinding and nerve-wracking chore... Eventually, the scheming owner makes him a prisoner for life, condemned to read Dickens aloud interminably--for the rest of his days!

ADAMS: What a bizarre situation! But isn't such a work too slow-moving? And too unrealistic to appeal to the average audience?--let alone a foreign one?

WILKINS: Far from it... The central conflict would be clear to anyone... --A man trapped against his will... McMaster, the plantation owner, I feel, symbolizes blind and indiscriminating Fate... And there's plenty of action and suspense: The daily battle of nerves between the two men... The growing realization of the explorer that he has become a prisoner... His futile attempts to escape... Then, unknown to him, the erection of a false grave by McMaster--to convince a party searching for the explorer that he has died... And the final bitter blow when Henty asks for a boat...

--McMaster answers:

McMASTER: "My friend, do not let us mention the subject again..."

HENTY: "I'm glad you've enjoyed (my readings). But I really must be thinking of getting back..."

McMASTER: "Yes, the black man was like that (too)... He thought of it all the time... But he died here..."

NARRATOR: After a brief recess, the film conference reconvenes to consider the final entry, the story, --"How Beautiful with Shoes"--by the American, Wilbur Daniel Steele--recommended by film writer Hazel Stevens...

MISS STEVENS: I've been asked why I picked such a distressing story--a girl in the clutches of an escaped lunatic: A situation that might frighten off some viewers--and prove repugnant to most... Well, my reasons are these: It's a masterful, wholly engrossing story... Told with the greatest delicacy and restraint...

Humble Jewett, the lunatic, a deranged former

country school teacher, is--even in his madness-- a sensitive youth, more to be pitied than condemned... He is both chivalrous and lyrical in his treatment of Amarantha, the terrified farm girl whom he holds prisoner. He pours forth to her impassioned love poetry--from the Song of Solomon and from Lovelace... Here is the passage:

JEWETT: "You remember how I sat at your feet, long ago, like this, and made up a song? And all the poets in all the world have never made one to touch it, have they, Love?"

AMARANTHA: "Ugh--ugh--never..."

JEWETT: "'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes'... Remember?"

AMARANTHA: "Oh, my God, what's he sayin' now?"

JEWETT: "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter---"

NARRATOR: Held prisoner all night, Amarantha is finally freed by a neighbor, who shoots her captor dead...

Her rough, tobacco-chewing fiancé, Ruby Herter, comes to console her, but she is oblivious of him... All she can recall from her night of terror is the sight of that sprawling, twisted form writhing in death--and the magic and glamor of his words lighting up her drab and dreary existence:

JEWETT: "'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O Prince's daughter... How... beautiful... with... shoes..."

NARRATOR: You have just been present at a film conference of the Pioneer Studios, called to plan short story adaptations for next year's World Film Festival... Do you agree with the Studio's choices?

Stop the record now at the band--and discuss these selections with members of your class... Afterwards, start the record again at Part Five: "Variations on a Theme"...

ANNOUNCER: PART FIVE: -Variations on a Theme: How Different Short Story Writers Have Treated Related Subjects...

NARRATOR: Someone has flatly said that there is little new in the art of fiction... That there are perhaps only twenty to thirty original plots open to the writer... And that all the rest are modifications or variations of these basic themes...

NARRATOR: If this is so, what then distinguishes one short story from another on a related--or similar--theme?

NARRATOR: The answer lies, we believe, in another writer's fresh outlook and approach... His cultural mores... His penetrating insight into the motives and behavior of human beings... Subtlety of treatment... And skill of expression...

NARRATOR: To test this theory let us look at a group of short stories by writers of different nationalities on related, or similar subjects:

NARRATOR: THEME NO. 1: Pity for the Unfortunate!

NARRATOR:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shores..."

NARRATOR: The story is --"How Beautiful with Shoes"--by Wilbur Daniel Steele...

This is the theme! --A demented man, in death, brings grace and loveliness to an emotionally starved farm girl...

NARRATOR: Here is a variation on the theme!

--"A Spinster's Tale," by the American, Peter Taylor... A young girl, perpetually terrified of the town drunkard, mourns him in death as a poor and pitiful unfortunate.

NARRATOR: Another treatment! The story is "Maternity," by the Greek writer, Lilika Nakos...

An Armenian refugee boy tries to find food for his starving baby brother. All turn in horror from the monstrously swollen, emaciated child. Only a Chinese woman, herself nursing a baby, finally accepts the pitiful infant...

NARRATOR: THEME NO. 2! --Marital Relationships...

NARRATOR:

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!"

NARRATOR: The story is: --"The Dead Are Silent"--by the Austrian, Arthur Schnitzler...

This is the theme!

--A married woman, whose lover is accidentally killed during a rendezvous with her, escapes from the scene, only to have her husband fathom her long-kept secret through her wild and erratic behavior.

NARRATOR: Now note this variation! --The story is "Adultery"--by the Peruvian, Enrique Albuja.

This is the theme!--Carmelo, a South American Indian, enraged at his wife's confession that she has committed adultery with another Indian during his absence, sues the other and wins considerable damages...

...On their way home, elated by his newfound riches, Carmelo broadly hints to his wife that he might shut his eyes to her future escapades!...

NARRATOR: THEME NO. 3! --A Festive Occasion...

NARRATOR:

"Let joy be unconfined,
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet."

NARRATOR: The story is --"The Baby Party,"

by the American, F. Scott Fitzgerald...

NARRATOR: Here is the theme!--Two couples, celebrating at a birthday party for one of their children, become involved in a foolish quarrel over fighting by the children. They become more violent and insulting with each passing moment. The happy occasion ends with a wild fist fight between the two husbands, with each badly battered and regretful.

NARRATOR: Another variation: "The Garden Party," by the New Zealander, Katherine Mansfield...

This is the theme!--A happy garden party at a wealthy home is suddenly marred by news of a fatal accident to a poor young wagon driver, father of five, in a nearby slum. Laura, young lady of the house, brings a basket of food from her garden party to the bereaved family--and gets her first look at death...

NARRATOR: THEME NO. 4! --Father Love!

NARRATOR: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."

NARRATOR: The story is --"My Lord, the Baby"--by the Indian writer, Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

Here is the theme! A young servant, through whose carelessness a judge's infant son vanishes on a river bank, atones heavily in later life. He pretends that a son born to him is the judge's missing child, whom he maintains he stole. After turning over his own son to the judge and his wife, he disappears and is never seen again.

NARRATOR: Another variation: "Mateo Falcone," by the Frenchman, Prosper Merrimee.

--In this treatment, father love, once so strong, turns to hate. Mateo Falcone, a wealthy Corsican shepherd and a crack marksman, finds that his young son has violated the family code of honor. Enticed by a gold watch, the boy turns over to the island soldiery a fugitive whom he had at first hidden. When the father learns of the boy's treacherous act, he takes him to a ravine and kills him with a single shot.

NARRATOR: Which of the variations on a theme did you find the most appealing? Which, the least? Do you agree that no matter how similar or related the subject, it is the individual personality, treatment, and style of each writer that differentiates one short story from another and determines its quality and power.

Most of all, it is the writer's heart--and humanity--that make the difference...

NARRATOR: Or, as William Faulkner, the great American short story writer and novelist, put it in his admirable Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1950:

"The writer must... (leave) no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of

the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed--love, honor, pity, and pride, compassion and sacrifice..."

GREAT SHORT STORIES OF THE WORLD

Written and Directed
by Morris Schreiber, with the
Institute Players

CAST

(in the order of their appearance)

Professor Carl Atkins
Dept. of English, N. Y. Institute of Technology
Professor Morris Schreiber
Dept. of English, N. Y. Institute of Technology
Professor William Hines
Dept. of English, N. Y. Institute of Technology
Mrs. Lillian T. Schreiber
Instructor, N. Y. City Schools
Mrs. Kathryn Menscher
Dept. of English, N. Y. Institute of Technology

Short Stories Considered --Parts 1-4--

TITLE	AUTHOR	NATION
The Outlaws	Selma Lagerlof	Sweden
Red	Somerset Maugham	England
The Sniper	Liam O'Flaherty	Ireland
The Bet	Anton Chekhov	Russia
The Man of the House	Frank O'Connor	Ireland
The Chrysanthemums	John Steinbeck	America
Quality	John Galsworthy	England
Disorder and Early Sorrow	Thomas Mann	Germany
The Last Class	Alphonse Daudet	France
The Piece of String	Guy de Maupassant	France
The Interlopers	"Saki" (H. H. Munro)	England
The Man Who Liked Dickens	Evelyn Waugh	England
How Beautiful with Shoes	Wilbur Daniel Steele	America

Others

Part 5--"Variations on a Theme"

A Spinster's Tale	Peter Taylor	America
Maternity	Lilika Nakos	Greece
The Dead Are Silent	Arthur Schnitzler	Austria
Adultery	Enrique Albuja	Peru
The Baby Party	F. Scott Fitzgerald	America
The Garden Party	Katherine Mansfield	New Zealand
My Lord, the Baby	Rabindranath Tagore	India
Mateo Falcone	Prosper Merrimée	France