No Letter was ever Going to Come

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This year's (2009) Man Booker International Prize winner happens to be a Canadian woman short-story writer Alice Munro not for a particular book but 'for her lifetime body of work'. In recognition of her literary endeavours the panel that decided to give her the prize said, "To read Alice Munro is to learn something every time that you never thought of before." Honestly, I strongly feel inclined to agree to the statement after re-reading two of her short stories, *Thanks for the Ride* (1968) and *How I Met My Husband* (1974), when I came to know about her winning the Prize. In this fertile land of ours it is not easy to get hold of the book that you feel like reading at the right moment more so when it is an English language book. Naturally I had to be satisfied with the one that I had within my reach from my old collection.

Most of the names of Munro's short-stories and books fascinate me as a reader for example both above mentioned titles of the short-stories give me an immediate impression that she does not go for conventional things and is very informal in her storytelling. To justify my point I can give examples like *Lives of Girls and Women, Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You, Who Do You Think You Are?, and Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage.* This, to me, has resulted from her strong regional focus as she was born in a family of fox and poultry farmers, and narrating her stories in small-town settings making her look at things unconventionally and informally.

> Many critics compare Munro's works with Chekhov's because they think in her stories too, plot is less important and the talk drifts on, thoughts well up from within the breast, toss on the air and vanish like bubbles and little happens.

Munro published her first short-story, The Dimensions of a Shadow in 1950. I have no clear picture from her biography if she wrote any other stories between 1950 and 1968, for during that period of time she got married, gave birth to three daughters and moved once to Vancouver, British Columbia, and then to Victoria. Her first collection of stories, *Dance of the Happy Shades* came out in 1968, and her latest book, published in 2009, is titled *Too Much Happiness.* Many critics compare Munro's works with Chekhov's because they think