



# **A Chapter of Hats: Selected Stories - Tranlated by John Gledson (Translated by John Gledson)**

*MacHado De Assis*

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*Machado De Assis*

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MacHado De Assis

Two gentlemen standing outside a church in Rio de Janeiro see a respectable lady emerge - one of them has an unexpected, and to him inexplicable story to tell about her past life as a prostitute; a popular composer of polkas burns the midnight oil in a desperate attempt to create great classical music; a teenager finds himself caught up by the sight of the bare arms of an older woman who lives with his employer; an impoverished, lazy young man turns to the lucrative trade of catching runaway slaves; and, dull, monotonous Mariana has a tiff with her husband about the hat he wears to town, and decides to sing 'the Marseillaise of matrimony' by going off on a trip to town herself with her more daring, flirtatious friend Sophia. These are some of the situations developed in these stories, some of the most brilliant to have been written in the nineteenth century. They echo Poe and Gogol, they anticipate Joyce, they have been compared to contemporary works by Chekhov, Maupassant, and Henry James, yet they are not quite like any of these. Anyone who has read "Epitaph of a Small Winner" or "Dom Casmurro", his most famous novels, will want to savour these stories - those who haven't, will find them a varied and enjoyable introduction to Machado's work.

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