



[The Return of Chorb](#), by Vladimir Nabokov

In A Nutshell

Vladimir Nabokov first wrote "The Return of Chorb" in Russian. It was published in a collection of the same name (except in Russian, but you knew that) in 1929. The story follows a young man who has returned from his honeymoon, without his wife, because she died on the trip. He tries to "re-create" her by reliving the past, which means this story is par for the Nabokovian course. (He wrote a lot about reincarnating dead lovers through memory.) "Chorb" was translated into English by this guy Gleb Struve, except his translation didn't satisfy Nabokov. So the author wrote his own English version in the 1970s, around the time he was translating many of his other Russian tales. "Chorb" was then published, in English, in a collection called *Details of a Sunset and Other Stories* in 1976. Nabokov, along with the help of his son Dmitri, published four volumes of stories in the 1970s, and took special care in arranging them in certain ways. That is, he paid attention to stylistic and thematic congruencies between the tales. If you like "Chorb," you should read the rest of the *Details of a Sunset* collection. We guarantee satisfaction.

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- 1 How does the narrative disrupt the normal flow of time? What is the effect of this technique?
- 2 Which characters are you sympathetic towards when you read? What about the prostitute? The lackey?
- 3 We talk a bit about the eerie and macabre tone of "The Return of Chorb," but does it also seem comic at times? What about that whole poodle/playbill incident? Is the story self-mocking, or just plain sinister?

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