Title: "But, Volodichka, what am I to talk about?": Voicing the Women in Chekhov's Short Stories

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This paper will use A.P. Chudakov's seminal work *Chekhov's Poetics* (1971) as a point of departure for a closer look at the ways in which the Chekhovian narrator does – and doesn't – voice its female protagonists. Working with Chudakov's periodization of Chekhov's stories through changes in narrative voice, I begin with a consideration of female-driven stories from the "middle" period (1888-1894), such as "V ovrage [In the Ravine]" (1890)" and "Poprygunia [The Grasshopper] (1892), in order to focus on "Dushechka [The Darling]" (1899), the masterful, yet troubling, story of the final period – a story in which Chekhov's hallmark narratorial indirect speech serves to further devoice an already narrative-deprived female protagonist.