



# **The Cost of Living: Early and Uncollected Stories (New York Review Books Classics)**

*Mavis Gallant*

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A New York Review Books Original

Mavis Gallant is renowned as one of the great short-story writers of our day. This new gathering of long-unavailable or previously uncollected work presents stories from 1951 to 1971 and shows Gallant's progression from precocious virtuosity, to accomplished artistry, to the expansive innovatory spirit that marks her finest work.

"Madeleine's Birthday," the first of Gallant's many stories to be published in *The New Yorker*, pairs off a disaffected teenager, abandoned by her social-climbing mother, with a complacent middle-aged suburban housewife, in a subtly poignant comedy of miscommunication that reveals both characters to be equally adrift. "The Cost of Living," the extraordinary title story, is about a company of strangers, shipwrecked over a chilly winter in a Parisian hotel and bound to one another by animosity as much as by unexpected love.

Set in Paris, New York, the Riviera, and Montreal and full of scrupulously observed characters ranging from freebooters and malingerers to runaway children and fashion models, Gallant's stories are at once satirical and lyrical, passionate and skeptical, perfectly calibrated and in constant motion, brilliantly capturing the fatal untidiness of life.

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