Mobile library Anna Karenina by Par Leo Tolstoy EPUB All Chapters

Présentation de l'éditeurAcclaimed by many as the world's greatest novel, this is the story of a wife, Anna Karenina, who abandons her empty existence as the wife of a Petersburg government minister for a passionate relationship with a young officer, Count Vronsky..comSome people say Anna Karenina is the single greatest novel ever written, which makes about as much sense to me as trying to determine the world's greatest color. But there is no doubt that Anna Karenina, generally considered Tolstoy's best book, is definitely one ripping great read. Anna, miserable in her loveless marriage, does the barely thinkable and succumbs to her desires for the dashing Vronsky. I don't want to give away the ending, but I will say that 19th-century Russia doesn't take well to that sort of thing.ExtraitSince Anna Kareninawas published in 1877, almost everyone who matters in the history of literature has put in his two cents (and a few who stand out in other realms--from Matthew Arnold, who wrote a cogent essay in 1887 about "Count Tolstoy's" novel, to Lenin, who, while acknowledging his "first class works of world literature," refers to him as "a worn out sniveller who beat his breast and boasted to the world that he now lived on rice patties").Dostoyevsky, a contemporary, declared Anna Karenina perfect "as an artistic production." Proust calls Tolstoy "a serene god." Comparing his work to that of Balzac, he said, "In Tolstoi everything is great by nature--the droppings of an elephant beside those of a goat. Those great harvest scenes in Anna K., the hunting scenes, the skating scenes . . ." Flaubert just exclaims, "What an artist and what a psychologist!" Virginia Woolf declares him "greatest of all novelists. . . . He notices the blue or red of a child's frock . . . every twig, every feather sticks to his magnet."A few cranks, of course, weigh in on the other side. Joseph Conrad wrote a complimentary letter to Constance Garnett's husband and mentioned, "of the thing itself I think but little," a crack Nabokov never forgave him. Turgenev said, "I don't like Anna Karenina, although there are some truly great pages in it (the races, the mowing, the hunting). But it's all sour, it reeks of Moscow, incense, old maids, Slavophilism, the nobility, etc. . . . The second part is trivial and boring." But Turgenev was by then an ex-friend and Tolstoy had once challenged him to a duel.E. M. Forster said, "Great chords begin to sound, and we cannot say exactly what struck them. They do not arise from the story. . . . They do not come from the episodes nor yet from the characters. They come from the immense area of Russia. . . . Many novelists have the feeling for place . . . very few have the sense of space, and the possession of it ranks high in Tolstoy's divine equipment."After finishing Anna Karenina, Tolstoy himself said (to himself, in his journal), "Very well, you will be more famous than Gogol or Pushkin or Shakespeare or Molière, or than all the writers of the world--and what of it?"More great essays than I can recount here have been written about the book, especially those by George Steiner, Gary Saul Morson, Eduard Babev, and Raymond Williams.Tolstoy criticism continues to thrive, and now includes its own home called the Tolstoy Studies Journal. Resorting to any library today, one can page through recent articles with titles like "Tolstoy on the Couch: Misogyny, Masochism, the Absent Mother," by Daniel Rancour-Lafarriere; "Passion in Competition: The Sporting Motif in Anna Karenina," by Howard Schwartz; "Food and the Adulterous Woman: Sexual and Social Morality in Anna Karenina," by Karin Horwatt; and even "Anna Karenina's Peter Pan Syndrome," by Vladimir Goldstein.What's left, in the year 2000, for me to say?Once, when I was a girl of eleven or twelve, sprawled on a sofa reading, an adult friend of the family noticed that I went through books quickly and suggested that every time I finished one, I enter the name of the author and title, publisher, the dates during which I read it, and what my impressions were on a three-by-five index card.That kind of excellent habit is one we can easily imagine cultivated by the young Shcherbatsky princesses, when we first meet them "wrapped in a mysterious poetical veil." Levin wonders from afar, "Why it was the three young ladies had to speak French and English on alternate days; why it was that at certain hours they took turns playing the piano, the sounds of which were audible in their brother's room . . . why they were visited by those professors of French literature, of music, of drawing, of dancing; why at certain hours all three young ladies, and Mademoiselle Linon, drove in the coach to Tverskoy Boulevard, dressed in their satin cloaks,

Dolly in a long one, Natalie in a shorter one, and Kitty in one so short that her shapely little legs in tight red stockings were exposed."Of course, I was an American girl, not a Russian princess, and instead of foreign languages and piano tutors what I had was outside. From dawn to dusk, all summer, we ran to the woods, scavenging lumber, hauling boards, digging holes to build forts that were rarely completed; but we became muddy and tired.I never followed the family friend's good advice.Now I wish I had. A reason to keep a reading journal would be to compare the experience of the same book met at different ages. It could provide the deepest kind of diary. Anna Karenina, War and Peace, In Search of Lost Time and Middlemarch hold sway over a reader for weeks, months, a whole summer, and so we tend to remember our lives along with them, the way we would someone we'd roomed with for a period of months and then not seen again. I remember Tolstoy's novels personally--where I was when I first read them, for whom I was pining or from whom I was recovering. (For me, the novels were a bit long to read in the throes.)Tolstoy himself kept just such a diary, his biographers tell us, a journal of "girls and reading. And remorse." He presented these journals, with all their literary impressions and squalid confessions, to his young fiance, Sofia Behrs, as Levin does to Kitty in Anna Karenina.In the novel, as in Tolstoy's life, the squalor got all the attention from the young bride to be. But for history, as it might have been for Tolstoy later in his life, his youthful writing about books proves to be not only more important but more personal.Though I didn't keep a journal of reading, I did keep journals of "feelings," largely of boys whose names the black-bound volumes record. A list of those names no longer conjures the faces or characteristic gestures.But I remember where I was the first time I read Anna Karenina. I was at Yaddo, a writers' colony in upstate New York, during the high season, and I felt distinctly outside the community's social world. Another young female writer arrived with, it seemed to me, a better wardrobe. I found myself checking what she was wearing at every meal. I hadn't considered that I was visiting a town that for more than 150 years had been a summer "watering hole." A small backpack held all my clothes for the summer. A pretty orchestra conductor with whom I jogged examined a pin-sized stain on my best white blouse. "I wouldn't wear it," she said.I was twenty-four years old and, I'll admit it, I read the novel to learn about love. I was at the beginning of my life and I'd come from one of the unhappy families Tolstoy mentions. I was, in my own oblique way, writing about that circus in all its distinction. But I wanted my own life to be one of the happy ones and I felt at peace there, in my studio on the second story of an old wooden, formal house. I had the time to lie on my white bed with the pine fronds ticking the window and learn how.I felt enchanted, as any girl might be, with the balls, the ice-skating parties, most especially with Kitty's European tour to recover from heartbreak. I identified with Anna and with Kitty, never for a second with Varenka, whose position might have actually been closest to my own.In fact, I was young enough to remember a particular magazine I'd read while in a toy store as a child, no doubt published by the Mattel Corporation, that chronicled a holiday week in the life of a doll called Barbie. Like the characters in Anna Karenina, Barbie also went to an ice-skating party and wore a muff. Barbie also owned formal gowns. Barbie, too, sat to have her portrait painted.I mention this not to call attention to the rather girlish and unsophisticated imagination I still had but rather to show how far into a child's fantasy Tolstoy ventures before then shocking us by rendering our heroine's aversion to touching her husband. And here I'm not talking only about Anna. He makes mention of Kitty's "revulsion" toward Levin as well.I read--that first time--for the central characters, to see whom they married; to decide what was dangerous in a man, what fulfilling; what kind of love to hope for, to fear.I didn't like Vronsky. Or I did, but I was afraid of him. Vronsky says something at the beginning of the novel that the repeat reader will never forget. We meet him, in his first appearance, as Kitty's suitor, and already fear--as her mother will not quite let herself--that he will turn out to be a cad. The conversation in the parlor turns to table-rapping and spirits, and Countess Nordston, who believed in spiritualism, begins to describe the marvels she has seen.Vronsky says, " '. . . for pity's sake, do take me to see them! I have never seen anything extraordinary, though I am always on the lookout for it everywhere.' " He says this in Kitty's living room, in her presence. Of course, he has not yet seen Anna.That night, after flirting with Kitty, he goes straight home to his rented room and falls asleep early, musing, "That's why I like the Shcherbatskys', because I become better there."His yearning for the extraordinary, the small account he gives to the peace-giving quality of the Shcherbatskys, tells his whole story, the way a prologue often announces the great Shakespearean themes. Kitty's father has never liked or trusted Vronsky, while her mother favors him, considering Levin only a "good" match, but Vronsky a "brilliant" one.The dangers and glory of that kind of exceptionalism--in love--were for me, that first time, the subject of the novel.That question of the viability of extraordinary and ordinary loves was even more riveting for me, at twenty-four, than the differences between happy and unhappy families. This dilemma, in fact--along with work and how to get by on little money in New York City--was the main thing my friends and I talked about. How X loves Y, but Y loves Z, but Z loves . . . all coming down to whether we would have

great loves or have to "settle," as we put it.Of course, we all want to have something extraordinary, in love. None of us, at twenty-four anyway, wants to settle or be settled for.Part of what is touching, on a second reading, is Vronsky's first meeting with Anna. If you had asked me about that scene before I reread the book, I would have relied on convention and said that Vronsky met a beautiful woman at the train station. But on first seeing Anna--who will be for Vronsky the great love--Vronsky sees her full of life, but not necessarily exceptional. He glances at her once more "not because she was very beautiful" but because of an expression on her face of "something peculiarly . . . soft." Vronsky has not had an ordinary family life. He doesn't much remember his father, and his mother, now "a dried-up old lady," had been "a brilliant society woman, who had had during her married life, and especially afterward, many love affairs notorious in all society." Tolstoy makes it clear that Vronsky does not love or respect his mother.Anna says, " 'The countess and I have been talking all the time, I of my son and she of hers.' "Vronsky recognizes Anna first as a mother, a mother miserable to be away--for only a few days--from her beloved son. We might say that what seemed extraordinary for him was just the quality of ordinary maternal devotion his own mother never had.And here we feel the tragic parallel. Anna is bound to become a woman like Vronsky's mother, notorious for her affair. Later on, her great concern will be that her son may lose respect for her.Vronsky will wish for nothing more than to make his daughter legitimate and to marry Anna, in the usual way." 'My love keeps growing more passionate and selfish, while his is dying, and that's why we're drifting apart,' " Anna says, near the end. " 'He is everything to me, and I want him more and more to give himself up to me entirely. And he wants more and more to get away from me. . . . If I could be anything but a mistress, passionately caring for nothing but his caresses; but I can't and I don't care to be anything else. And by that desire I rouse aversion in him, and he rouses fury in me, and it cannot be different.' "There, Anna is, I believe, talking about sex. But by then, Vronsky wants the precious ordinary: a marriage, a family--which is as unattainable for him as his heightened passion is for Kitty or Levin or Dolly or even Stiva.

Par Leo Tolstoy

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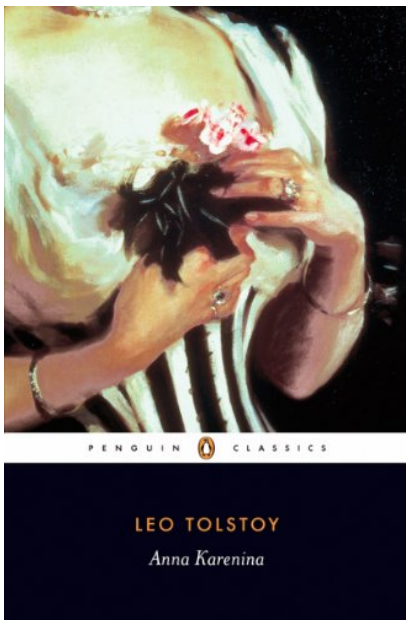

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Commentaires clientsCommentaires clients les plus utiles0 internautes sur 0 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. great bookPar Anne Mayohadn't read this since school and I was very happy i bought it again. a really good story! enjoyed it very much0 internautes sur 2 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. A bit damagedPar AMFThe

book arrived in due date and I was surprised to see how cheap it was, but it was a bit damaged in the cover (new, but folded).0 internautes sur 0 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. Another Tolstoy ClassicPar Peter JonesOprah Winfrey was right about her high reagrds for his story. Anna Karenina, a remarkable work of art by one of the few mega-novelists of all times is an ageless story that is more real than fiction. I decided to read a copy of this book on my way to vacation last the summer and ended up spending most of my first week being glued to the book. Though it is a Russian story of a century and a half ago, its essence still resonates today.Anna who is married to the wealthy and older Karenin lives a life of comfort without any excitement, a life that is full of routines and no zest. It is a life she had become used to until she meets the elegant Vronsky and falls in love. Now she must pay the price of adultery or seek marital stability and forgo the echoes of her heart, a soul searching trial that destabilizes the life of her family and that of her lover. In essence she abandons the meaning for her life and pursues the zest of life.On the other hand is Levine who is in search of the meaning of life and abandons the zest of life for a purposeful life that includes a family, ideas on the advancement of humanism, being at peace with ones world and hard work in is farm and being at peace with God.In a way, both Levine and Anna can not be blamed for opting considering one choice above the other. They all wanted happiness without having evil intentions and found a balance between the zest of life and the search of its meaning in their own different ways, hurting and find love in the process and in the end, enriching and destroying themselves in their different ways. A highly recommended read and the most insightful love story I have ever read.The Union Moujik, Doctor Zhivago , Eugene Onegin are some of the other books set in Russia that I enjoyed alongside Anna Karenina.