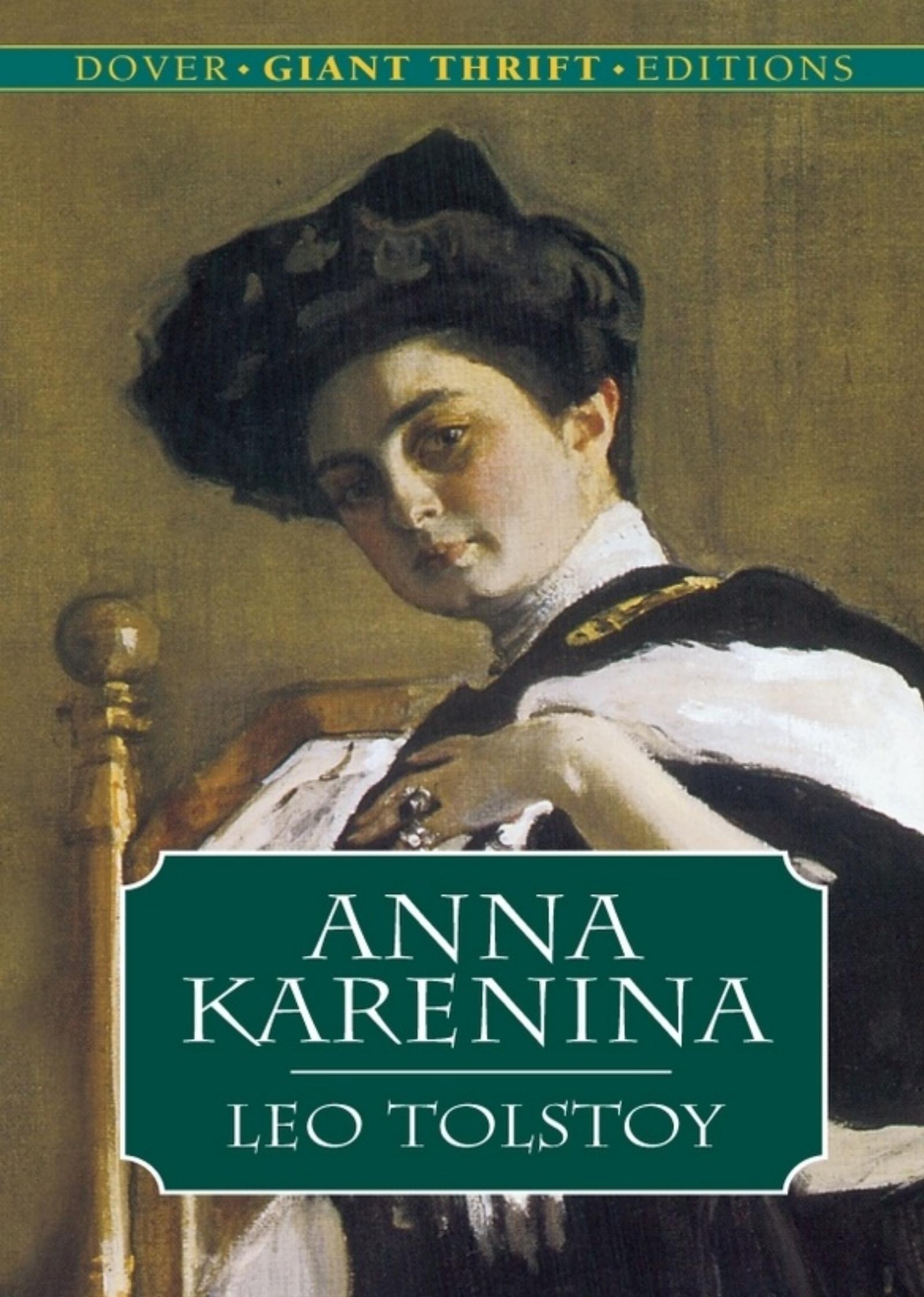


DOVER • GIANT THRIFT • EDITIONS



ANNA
KARENINA

LEO TOLSTOY

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Anna Karenina

LEO TOLSTOY

Translated by

Louise and Aylmer Maude



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LIST OF CHARACTERS

LIST OF RUSSIAN WORDS USED IN THIS VERSION OF ANNA KARENINA

Preface

Anna Karenina, the second of Tolstoy's great novels, was begun in 1873 when he was forty-five, and its publication was completed in 1877, when he was passing through the spiritual crisis described in his *Confession*, a book for which the last chapters of *Anna Karenina* may serve as an introduction, and which was the next work he wrote.

Besides being a splendid novel, *Anna Karenina* is of great autobiographical value. It was Tolstoy's way to put much of himself into his characters, but in none of them has he so frankly depicted himself as in Levin, the hero of this story. The description of Levin's estate is largely drawn from Tolstoy's own patrimony, Yasnaya Polyana. The character of the old servant, Agatha Mikhaylovna, is drawn from a retainer of his. Nicholas Levin is Tolstoy's brother, Dmitry. The way in which Levin proposes to Kitty, by writing only the initial letters of the words he wants to say, was an incident in Tolstoy's own courtship of his wife. Levin's contempt for the Zemstvo (of which, like Tolstoy, he was a member for only a short time) expresses the author's own feeling, as does Levin's censure of the Russian Volunteers who joined in the struggle between Turkey and its Christian subjects in the days preceding the Russo-Turkish war of 1877.

On that matter Tolstoy opposed what appeared to be the prevalent feeling of the Russian nation, and he did the same on the yet more fundamental problem of marriage. Russian divorce law was extremely rigid, but the general trend of the Russian Liberal movement, both in life and in literature, for a generation before *Anna Karenina* appeared had been opposed to regarding the marriage ceremony as a sentence for life. This book was therefore considered reactionary, and its author was, for a while, classed among the Conservatives. It is, however, absurd to blame a novelist for depicting a happy marriage and a disastrous illicit passion, for certainly such things are met with in real life, and no one need generalize from a particular example.

The book contains one incident the credibility of which has sometimes been questioned. It is said that Vronsky could not have broken his horse's back in the way depicted in the steeplechase, but I am informed by a very competent authority that just such accidents have actually occurred. A rider by sitting back when jumping a ditch may jerk up his horse's head and so cause it to drop its hind legs into the ditch, thus breaking its back. It is, moreover, just at *narrow* ditches, as in Tolstoy's description, that this is most likely to occur.

Readers of Tolstoy's books often wish to know something of the author's life. I may therefore perhaps be allowed to mention that Messrs. Methuen are just publishing a short life of *Leo Tolstoy*, condensed from the two-volume *Life of him* which I wrote just before he died.

As English readers are sometimes in doubt where to place the accent on Russian

names, a list of characters with the names accentuated is supplied, as also is a list of the Russian words, weights and measures mentioned in the book.

The translators desire to express their thanks to the friends who have assisted them with advice and information during the preparation of this work, and in particular to thank Mr. Benjamin Grad for his kind cooperation.

AYLMER MAUDE

26 January 1918

Publisher's Note

“Man survives earthquakes, epidemics, the horrors of disease, and agonies of the soul, but all the time his most tormenting tragedy has been, is, and will always be, the tragedy of the bedroom.”

—Leo Tolstoy

The relationship of man to woman, and its potential for profound tragedy, is one of the major themes of this immense work, widely considered one of the two or three greatest novels of all time. *Anna Karenina* paints a sweeping portrait of Russia under the czars as the novel tells the story of the intertwined lives of a group of privileged aristocrats based in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Although its characters and events are specific to one time and place, part of the novel's greatness lies in its precise and probing exploration of the human psyche and emotions common to all people in all times. Like Henry James, Tolstoy excelled at dissecting the feelings, thoughts and passions of his characters, observing the tiniest changes in response or behavior, and recording those changes in extraordinary detail.

The central story is one of adultery—a woman's betrayal of her husband. Anna Karenina, wife of Alexey Alexandrovich Karenin, a stiff and humorless government official, falls in love with the dashing Count Vronsky, a wealthy and handsome landowner. Soon their romance is scandalizing the social circles in which they move. Karenin, fearful of losing face, refuses to allow Anna her freedom. He is not so much bothered by the fact that his wife loves another man, as he is by the thought of how it will look to the neighbors. Thus he is willing to overlook her affair as long as she does not seek a separation or divorce. Indeed, it is not so much Anna's moral failings that cause her downfall, as her refusal to observe the proprieties customarily exacted in such liaisons by the hypocritical high society to which she belongs. Her condemnation comes not from the church; in this novel adultery is more a social issue than a moral or religious one.

Contrasted with the ultimately tragic situation of Anna and Vronsky is a parallel plot line depicting the romance and happy marriage of Kitty and Levin. A forward-looking farm owner, who sympathizes with the peasants who work the land, Levin is widely thought to embody Tolstoy's own views and experience. His marriage, though not without its difficulties, is largely a harmonious one, reflecting the author's own positive experience with the state of matrimony. But while his marriage is happy, Levin is nevertheless a complex and passionate human being, whose heartfelt philosophizing, anguished doubts concerning the meaning of existence, and flirtation

with suicide reflect the author's own spiritual struggles at the time.

As numerous critics have noted, many parts of the novel appear to have been based on experiences from Tolstoy's own life. Levin is a devoted agriculturalist, as well as a seeker of meaning, who sees farming as a way of transcending one's own self-absorption and personal interests—a state of mind he regards as crucial to achieving a life of faith and happiness. By contrast, Russia's liberal class, as exemplified by the Oblonskys, Vronskys and other socialites, are depicted as directionless pleasure-seekers. They do not have close ties with ordinary citizens or the land; they exist in an artificial and illusory atmosphere, poisoned by lies and hypocrisy.

As it turns out, Levin is ultimately the only character in the novel who achieves a clear vision of what is required for a contented existence. For him, as for Tolstoy, a life close to field and forest, in the old Russian tradition, and the consolations of home and family are the ultimate blessing. Moreover, his conversion to religious faith puts the final capstone on Levin's happiness. Not surprisingly, in Tolstoy's own life, the writing of *Anna Karenina* was a turning point in his career, the point at which he shifted away from fiction toward religious belief.

The novel, however, is not concerned only with the personal; it deals with broad societal and political issues as well. Tolstoy attacks what he sees as the evils of the czarist state, including the inefficient and corrupt bureaucratic system, which led to vast amounts of embezzlement even at the highest levels of officialdom. Karenin, cold and impersonal, represents the heartlessness and cruelty of the entire state system. Also dealt with are the conflicts between Slavophiles, who believed traditional Russian ways were best, and Westernizers, who promoted Western ideals of rationalism, democracy, and technology. Although Russian intellectuals of the day loudly protested the autocratic style of the czars and clamored for more liberal, European-style constitutional rights, Tolstoy seems somewhat ambivalent about the matter. He portrays Karenin as a coolly efficient bureaucrat in the Western mold, who is nevertheless rigid and passionless.

In its vast scope, wealth of scenes and characters, and perceptive treatment of human, social and philosophical issues, *Anna Karenina* ranks among the very greatest works of literature, a book that repays many readings. And while Tolstoy is often regarded as a simple, straightforward writer of fiction, in reality he was also something of a stylistic innovator, particularly in his use of the interior monologue. Although he did not invent the technique, he made great use of it, perhaps most notably in Anna's distraught brooding leading up to her suicide. The success of the technique in exploring a character's psychological state and motivation paved the way for other masterly uses of the form, such as Molly Bloom's celebrated silent soliloquy in *Ulysses*.

These revealing monologues, supported by the novel's careful architectonics and seamless structure, help convey Tolstoy's profound understanding and appreciation of human beings, embodied in unforgettable characters that live long in the mind and memory. In recreating the vanished world of nineteenth-century Russia, with its vast snow-covered forests and farmlands, glittering balls and lavish lifestyle of the well-to-do, contrasted with the dawn-to-dusk hardships of the rugged Russian serfs, Tolstoy

achieved a rare fusion of elements that resulted in a masterpiece of the novelist's art. His fellow writer and compatriot Dostoyevsky spoke for many readers and critics when he noted that "*Anna Karenina*, as an artistic production, is perfect."

PART ONE

1

ALL HAPPY families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Everything was upset in the Oblonskys' house. The wife had discovered an intrigue between her husband and their former French governess, and declared that she would not continue to live under the same roof with him. This state of things had now lasted for three days, and not only the husband and wife but the rest of the family and the whole household suffered from it. They all felt that there was no sense in their living together, and that any group of people who had met together by chance at an inn would have had more in common than they. The wife kept to her own rooms; the husband stopped away from home all day; the children ran about all over the house uneasily; the English governess quarrelled with the housekeeper and wrote to a friend asking if she could find her another situation; the cook had gone out just at dinner-time the day before and had not returned; and the kitchen-maid and coachman had given notice.

On the third day after his quarrel with his wife, Prince Stephen Arkadyevich Oblonsky—Stiva, as he was called in his set in Society—woke up at his usual time, eight o'clock, not in his wife's bedroom but on the morocco leather-covered sofa in his study. He turned his plump, well-kept body over on the springy sofa as if he wished to have another long sleep, and tightly embracing one of the pillows leant his cheek against it; but then suddenly opened his eyes and sat up.

'Let me see—what was it?' he thought, trying to recall his dream. 'What was it? O yes—Alabin was giving a dinner-party in Darmstadt—no, not in Darmstadt but somewhere in America. Oh yes, Darmstadt was in America,—and Alabin was giving the party. The dinner was served on glass tables—yes, and the tables sang "*Il mio tesoro*" ... no, not exactly "*Il mio tesoro*," but something better than that; and then there were some kind of little decanters that were really women.' His eyes sparkled merrily and he smiled as he sat thinking. 'Yes, it was very nice. There were many other delightful things which I can't just get hold of—can't catch now I'm awake.' Then, noticing a streak of light that had made its way in at the side of the blind, he gaily let down his legs and felt about with his feet for his slippers finished with bronze kid (last year's birthday present, embroidered by his wife); and from nine years' habit he stretched out his arm, without rising, towards where his dressing-gown usually hung in their bedroom. And then he suddenly remembered that, and why, he was not sleeping there but in his study. The smile vanished from his face and he frowned.

'Oh dear, dear, dear!' he groaned, recalling what had happened. And the details of his quarrel with his wife, his inextricable position, and, worst of all, his guilt, rose up

in his imagination.

‘No, she will never forgive me; she can’t forgive me! And the worst thing about it is, that it’s all my own fault—my own fault; and yet I’m not guilty! That’s the tragedy of it!’ he thought. ‘Oh dear, oh dear!’ he muttered despairingly, as he recalled the most painful details of the quarrel. The worst moment had been when, returning home from the theatre merry and satisfied, with an enormous pear in his hand for his wife, he did not find her in the drawing-room nor, to his great surprise, in the study, but at last saw her in her bedroom with the unlucky note which had betrayed him in her hand.

She sat there: the careworn, ever-bustling, and (as he thought) rather simple Dolly—with the note in her hand and a look of terror, despair, and anger on her face.

‘What is this? This?’ she asked, pointing to the note. And, as often happens, it was not so much the memory of the event that tormented him, as of the way he had replied to her.

At that moment there had happened to him what happens to most people when unexpectedly caught in some shameful act: he had not had time to assume an expression suitable to the position in which he stood toward his wife now that his guilt was discovered. Instead of taking offence, denying, making excuses, asking forgiveness, or even remaining indifferent (anything would have been better than what he did), he involuntarily (‘reflex action of the brain,’ thought Oblonsky, who was fond of physiology) smiled his usual kindly and therefore silly smile.

He could not forgive himself for that silly smile. Dolly, seeing it, shuddered as if with physical pain, and with her usual vehemence burst into a torrent of cruel words and rushed from the room. Since then she had refused to see him.

‘It’s all the fault of that stupid smile,’ thought Oblonsky. ‘But what am I to do? What can I do?’ he asked himself in despair, and could find no answer.

2

Oblonsky was truthful with himself. He was incapable of self-deception and could not persuade himself that he repented of his conduct. He could not feel repentant that he, a handsome amorous man of thirty-four, was not in love with his wife, the mother of five living and two dead children and only a year younger than himself. He repented only of not having managed to conceal his conduct from her. Nevertheless he felt his unhappy position and pitied his wife, his children, and himself. He might perhaps have been able to hide things from her had he known that the knowledge would so distress her. He had never clearly considered the matter, but had a vague notion that his wife had long suspected him of being unfaithful and winked at it. He even thought that she, who was nothing but an excellent mother of a family, worn-out, already growing elderly, no longer pretty, and in no way remarkable—in fact, quite an ordinary woman—ought to be lenient to him, if only from a sense of justice. It turned out that the very opposite was the case.

‘How awful! Oh dear, oh dear, how awful!’ Oblonsky kept repeating to himself, and could arrive at no conclusion. ‘And how well everything was going on till now—how happily we lived! She was contented, happy in her children; I never interfered with her but left her to fuss over them and the household as she pleased.... Of course it’s not quite nice that *she* had been a governess in our house. That’s bad! There’s something banal, a want of taste, in carrying on with one’s governess—but then, what a governess!’ (He vividly pictured to himself Mlle Roland’s roguish black eyes, and her smile.) ‘Besides as long as she was in the house I never took any liberties. The worst of the matter is, that she is already. ... Why need it all happen at once? Oh dear, dear, dear! What am I to do?’

He could find no answer, except life’s usual answer to the most complex and insoluble questions. That answer is: live in the needs of the day, that is, find forgetfulness. He could no longer find forgetfulness in sleep, at any rate not before night, could not go back to the music and the songs of the little decanter-women, consequently he must seek forgetfulness in the dream of life.

‘We’ll see when the time comes,’ thought Oblonsky, and got up, put on his grey dressing-gown lined with blue silk, tied the cords and drawing a full breath of air into his broad chest went with his usual firm tread toward the window, turning out his feet that carried his stout body so lightly, drew up the blind and rang loudly. The bell was answered immediately by his old friend and valet, Matthew, who brought in his clothes, boots, and a telegram. He was followed by the barber with shaving tackle.

‘Any papers from the Office?’ asked Oblonsky, as he took the telegram and sat down before the looking-glass.

‘They’re on your table,’ answered Matthew with a questioning and sympathizing glance at his master—adding after a pause with a sly smile: ‘Some one has called from the jobmaster’s.’

Oblonsky did not answer, but glanced at Matthew’s face in the looking-glass. From their looks, as they met in the glass, it was evident that they understood one another. Oblonsky’s look seemed to say: ‘Why do you tell me that? As if you don’t know!’

Matthew put his hands into the pocket of his jacket, put out his foot, and looked at his master with a slight, good-humoured smile.

‘I ordered him to come the Sunday after next, and not to trouble you or himself needlessly till then,’ said he, evidently repeating a sentence he had prepared.

Oblonsky understood that Matthew meant to have a joke and draw attention to himself. He tore open the telegram and read it, guessing at the words, which (as so often happens in telegrams) were misspelt, and his face brightened.

‘Matthew, my sister Anna Arkadyevna is coming to-morrow,’ he said, motioning away for a moment the shiny plump hand of the barber, which was shaving a rosy path between his long curly whiskers.

‘The Lord be thanked!’ said Matthew, proving by his answer that he knew just as well as his master the importance of this visit: namely, that Anna Arkadyevna, Stephen Arkadyevich’s favourite sister, might help to reconcile the husband and wife.

‘Is she coming alone, or with Mr. Karenin?’

Oblonsky could not answer as the barber was busy with his upper lip; but he raised one finger, and Matthew nodded to him in the glass.

‘Alone. Would you like one of the upstairs rooms got ready?’

‘Ask Darya Alexandrovna.’

‘Darya Alexandrovna?’ Matthew repeated, as if in doubt.

‘Yes, tell her. Give her the telegram, and see what she says.’

‘You want to have a try at her?’ was what Matthew meant, but he only said: ‘Yes, sir.’

Oblonsky was washed, his hair brushed, and he was about to dress, when Matthew, stepping slowly in his creaking boots, re-entered the room with the telegram in his hand. The barber was no longer there.

‘Darya Alexandrovna told me to say that she is going away. “He may do as he pleases”—that is, as you please, sir,’ he said, laughing with his eyes only; and, putting his hands in his pockets, with his head on one side, he gazed at his master. Oblonsky remained silent, then a kind and rather pathetic smile appeared on his handsome face.

‘Ah, Matthew!’ he said, shaking his head.

‘Never mind, sir—things will shape themselves.’

‘Shape themselves, eh?’