

Anna Karenina Book Notes

Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy

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Author/Context

Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy was born on August 28, 1828 into an aristocratic family who lived near Moscow. For years his family had been well acquainted with the Tsar's inner loop. At age nine, he was left an orphan and raised by his aunt. Seven years later, aged 16, he entered the University of Kazan, where he was heavily influenced by the 18th century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau believed, as Tolstoy did, in the value of a simple life. Tolstoy left the university in his third year, before ever getting his official degree.

Tolstoy then began to change. He spent time in loose living and wrestled with the guilt this engendered. He knew he believed in God, but he had no interest in joining an organized religion. He soon began to realize that city life was not for him.

With that, he went back to his family's estate near Moscow, called Yasnaya Polyana, which in English means "Clear Glade." He devoted himself wholly to his peasants and developed a system, mentioned in *Anna Karenina*, where he sold his peasants portions of his land so they, too, could be part owners of the land they were tending. But the peasants didn't always trust Tolstoy because he was a nobleman, and Tolstoy grew frustrated that he couldn't establish a better relationship with them. Angry, he went back to Moscow and once again engaged in a life of revelry, drinking, gambling and womanizing. He grew restless, all the time seeking a meaning for his life. It was then that he published *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*.

In 1851, Tolstoy followed his brother Nicholas into the army, serving in the Caucasus, where he fought Tartar guerilla troops. There for four years, he published an account of the Crimean War, writing as he fought.

In 1855, he left the army and departed for St. Petersburg, where he had already made a name for himself from his published account of the war, called *Sevastopol Sketches*. Once Tolstoy arrived at the city, however, he decided again that it was not for him. He resented the simplistic views of the city people and chose instead to travel all over Europe studying varying systems of education. He used what he learned in his travels to start a school for children of the peasants in 1859. He rejected the European styles of education, which he found stifling, and rather encouraged wonder and curiosity at his own school, developed at Yasnaya Polyana.

Four years later, Nicholas died of tuberculosis, which left Tolstoy profoundly changed. He recounted the story in *Anna Karenina*, using Levin to represent himself. Yet one year later, Tolstoy met his wife, Sofia Behrs, and thus began an exciting and productive part of his life, during which he wrote *War and Peace* and completed *Anna Karenina*.

In both of these works, and in many of his others, it is easy to see how Tolstoy transposes many of his personal experiences into his fiction. Often his characters experience what he does, struggling through spirituality and contemporary life. Marriage



and adultery are big issues, as are spirituality and the theme of city life vs. country life. These themes are prevalent in *Anna Karenina*.

Anna Karenina, in particular, is a major work because of its exploration of the human psyche and emotions common to any generation in any nation. Tolstoy was a master of dissecting psychology. He excelled in observing the smallest changes in consciousness and recorded these changes with extraordinary detail.

In his biography of Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky writes that Tolstoy once said, "Man survives earthquakes, epidemics, the horrors of disease, and all the agonies of the soul, but for all time his most tormenting tragedy has been, is, and will be the tragedy of the bedroom."

In his later years, Tolstoy became increasingly religious. His youngest son died before he did, and his wife and he were never the same thereafter. His memory began to fade and he finally died, a literary master, in November, 1910.

Tolstoy will long be remembered as a writer who rebelled against the social standards of his day. He had wildly original views on education, the peasantry, and the future of Russia and industrialization, yet spoke of relationships with a universal clarity and detail.

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Plot Summary

Anna Karenina has two plots that run side by side throughout the novel: the story of Anna and the story of Levin. Levin's story is an expression of Tolstoy's pastoral nature and a reaffirmation of the novelist's vision of the simple life. The beauty of the seasons and the pragmatic work of harvesting absorb Levin. Levin's relationship to the land and life is contrasted with Anna's enigmatic and destructive passions. Anna's appearance in the novel represents a rift in the tranquil world which allows physical passion and irrationality to prevail.

The book begins with a crisis at home. Anna's brother Stiva has been caught cheating on his wife, Dolly. Anna manages to convince Dolly to forgive him. Quickly, Anna is understood as a generous person, interested only in benevolence. She is married to the high-ranking, upper class Karenin. Their marriage seems stable and united from the start.

Shortly, though, Anna meets and falls in love with the dashing Count Vronsky. She tries hard to escape his stares, to avoid meeting him, but he is persistent and she is smitten. They have an affair that rips at the threads of their social lives when Anna becomes pregnant. She must, obviously, tell Karenin the news. He demands that his social pride and honor be preserved throughout the whole matter, and he and Anna pretend nothing is happening. He fears the ridicule of society far more than the destruction of his own marriage. Yet Anna cannot let go of Vronsky--she continues to see him quite often. Karenin discovers the extent of the affair when he sees Vronsky leaving his house, and he looks into divorce. Anna, meanwhile, runs off with Vronsky.

After having Vronsky's baby, Anna becomes seriously ill. Karenin thinks she is going to die, so he forgives her for everything she did. Anna swears that is all she wants out of her remaining life. Yet Anna recovers and forgets quickly about Karenin, once again taking up her torrid affair with the count. While Anna was sick and Karenin was present at her side, Vronsky was humiliated by what he had done. He tried to commit suicide by shooting himself, but he, like Anna, did not die. Now he and Anna leave for Italy. Karenin refuses a divorce with Anna, in order that he might deepen her guilt.

Anna's life becomes terrible. Her friends abandon her, ashamed of her behavior. She cannot go out in public with Vronsky, to the theater or the opera, because they would be subjecting themselves to the rumor mill. Vronsky, however, goes out without Anna; he is free to do so. Anna becomes horribly insecure, thinking that Vronsky goes out so much because he is in love with someone else. He is only in love with Anna, however, and the two fight often because of the unspoken tension that exists between them.

Anna is in a tough position. She isn't Vronsky's wife, but she is more than just his mistress. She depends entirely on him for internal peace and love. But what she finally realizes is that no one has the power to satisfy her emotional desires, not Vronsky nor anyone else. She has woven a complex web for herself, one she feels she can only



escape by killing herself. This is what she does, jumping in front of a train. She reconsiders briefly before the train hits her, but has no time to dodge.

Running side by side with Anna's story is Levin's, one that mimics the life and interests of the novelist himself. Levin, a landowner and country man, comes to the city to propose to Kitty, a pretty young lady who is mesmerized instead by Vronsky. She rejects Levin's proposal and keeps her eye on the count. Vronsky, however, is smitten with Anna.

Levin is crushed. He goes home to the country and immerses himself totally in his relationship with the land. He writes a book about farming practices in Russia, revealing his belief that landowners should split the land with their peasants so the peasants have an incentive to work harder. This is a controversial plan as Russia becomes more industrialized.

Kitty, too, is crushed by Vronsky's disinterest. She becomes ill, and her family take her to a spa in Germany, where she recovers and realizes that she has truly loved Levin all along. They meet again shortly, and Kitty accepts Levin's second proposal. They marry happily and have a boy named Mitya.

Kitty is a huge force in Levin's life, helping him to come to grips with his lifelong struggle with faith and religion. She also helps Levin cope with the death of his brother Nicholas. In Tolstoy's eyes, the two have the ideal marriage and love.

Though Anna and Levin's plot lines connect at times, Tolstoy dares only the briefest encounter between the two, near the end of the book. Levin is temporarily swept into Anna's world, proving to Tolstoy how dangerous a character like Anna is to Levin's (and his own) world.

As Anna and Levin's stories are contrasted, Tolstoy makes a thematic case, through Levin, for pre-industrial societies as the major source of happiness, wealth and sustenance. He advocates the idea of caring for the land as if it were the wealth of the world, and he labels the land as the only mutual association which can bind societies and families together. Tolstoy shows us the valuable role of rural society in preserving the family. Through Anna, Tolstoy associates city life with vice. That Anna is a creature of the social, urban world makes her character revolve less around virtue, and more around romance, sex, and societal affirmation.



Major Characters

Anna Arkadyevna Karenina: A beautiful iconoclast eventually destroyed by her own insecurity. Anna goes through an evolution from being near perfection to being a character marred by adultery, jealousy and spite. The change is so dramatic that it is terrifying--we witness the disintegration of a human psyche. Anna thinks she is fighting a battle against an oppressive society, but really she is battling herself, ultimately losing the fight.

Konstantin Dmitrich Levin (Kostya): Levin is the hero of the novel. It is Anna who ultimately collapses and Levin who rises to see the light. Anna's collapse works to underscore the significance of the coherence of Levin's life. Levin finds harmony with the land and the peasants and works within himself to attain the faith he needs.

Count Alexey Kirilich Vronsky: Vronsky represents the epitome of society life. He has charm, wit, intelligence and money. He loves women, women love him, and colleagues are envious of him. Still, in this he is typical of his society. What makes him different is that he has an affair, and this is what causes him to be ostracized on some level. Some find him cruel, but others think he's simply confused. Vronsky could be criticized for not making a more stable situation for Anna. Her friends desert her; many think he could have stopped that from happening. Despite his ills, and his need to show off his money, he indeed loves Anna and never considers leaving her, even when her company becomes increasingly difficult to enjoy. He ends up as the more mature one in their relationship.

Prince Stiva Arkadyevich Oblonsky: Stiva is a charming man. He is quite the host and makes acquaintances easily. Most in society would speak highly of him. Yet Stiva, like Vronsky, exists purely for money. Living the high life for so many years has tapped his personal account, and he therefore begins using Dolly's inheritance to pay off gambling debts. There is little to commend in Stiva's character. He is sweet and sentimental, but deceitful and unfaithful to his wife. Much like his sister, Anna, he is guided by his wayward passions.

Princess Darya Alexandrovna Oblonskaya (Dolly): Dolly connects everyone's lives. She is Kitty's sister, Anna's sister-in-law, and Stiva's wife. She is the typical betrayed wife whose husband cheats on her, yet a devoted mother who nevertheless raises fine children. She is strong in that sense. Her husband's betrayal makes her think she is no longer attractive, but she moves on with her life and stays true to him. Dolly copes with the few options she has in an already defined society. She becomes unhappy but doesn't make everyone feel bad for her. Dolly is the only one who remains a friend to Anna when everyone else deserts her. Tolstoy doesn't focus on Dolly very seriously, but she appears as a unique heroine in her own right.

Alexey Alexandrovich Karenin: Karenin starts off as a society man, obsessed with superficial appearances and money. He resists his passions, however, and instead does what is right. That the sexual drive in his marriage fizzles doesn't bother Karenin; he



loves Anna because she is his wife and that is how it should be. He is a faithful husband and follows every law. This trait becomes harmful when Karenin learns of his wife's affair. He is concerned more with his pride and honor than with his or Anna's personal happiness. All of his actions are motivated and engendered by society. In the end, Karenin is completely manipulated. He fails in his efforts to find Christianity and becomes the victim of a fake mystic who tries to further distance him from Anna.

Princess Catherine Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky (Kitty): Kitty is the representation of everything a woman should be. She manages to strike a perfect balance between the roles of wife and mother, and she brings faith and understanding to her husband, Levin. Undergoing a drawn-out birth process in the book, she shares Tolstoy's appreciation for the life-death cycle, and wants to play her part in contributing. She is intelligent and faithful to God.

Minor Characters

Seriozha: Son of Anna and Karenin. His mother is an adultress and abandons him. He is told his mother has died, but she suddenly returns to talk to him, shocking the young boy.

Prince Shcherbatsky: Kitty's father.

Princess Shcherbatsky: Kitty's mother.

Nicholas Levin: Konstantin Levin's brother. He is sick and eventually dies, soothed by Konstantin Levin's wife, Kitty.

Countess Lydia Ivanovna: Karenin's friend, a mystic Princess who tries to convince Karenin that he has religious beliefs and faith. She is a social queen and a fraud.

Elizabeth Fedorovna Tverskaya (Betsy): A society lady who is cruel to Anna by trying to attract Karenin, and by trying to make society people publicly disapprove of Anna.

Mitya: The newborn son of Kitty and Levin.

Countess Nordston: A shallow friend of Kitty's, a high society lady who works to make Anna's life miserable.

Mary Nikolaevna (Masha): Girlfriend of Levin's brother, of whom Levin disapproves, since she is not legitimate.

Sergey: Levin's half brother, who hardly even appears in the book.



Objects/Places

Child: Children and babies are important in the book because they represent the continuation of the birth-death cycle, which Tolstoy privileges.

Peasant: Peasants play an important role by helping Levin find himself. They also serve to widen the disparity between country people, like Levin, and city people, like Stiva, Karenin and Vronsky, none of whom appreciate and value peasants the way Levin does.

Ball: Big society balls were events typical of the city people, rife with rumors, aristocrats, and dangerous flirtation. This is where Vronsky and Anna first connect in a meaningful way.

Countryside: Where Levin lives, works alongside peasants, and ultimately finds clarity and faith. This is also Tolstoy's home.

Quotes

Quote 1: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Book 1, Chapter 1, pg. 1

Quote 2: "The place where [Kitty] stood seemed to him a holy shrine, unapproachable, and there was one moment when he was almost retreating, so overwhelmed was he with terror. He had to make an effort to master himself, and to remind himself that people of all sorts were moving about her, and that he too might come there to skate. He walked down, for a long while avoiding looking at her as at the sun, but seeing her, as one does the sun, without looking." Book 1, Chapter 9, pg. 32

Quote 3: "The French fashion--of the parents arranging their children's future--was not accepted; it was condemned. The English fashion of the complete independence of girls was also not accepted, and not possible in Russian society. The Russian fashion of matchmaking by the officer of intermediate persons was for some reason considered disgraceful; it was ridiculed by everyone, and by the princess herself. But how girls were to be married, and how parents were to marry them, no one knew." Book 1, Chapter 12, pg. 49

Quote 4: "I see a man who has serious intentions, that's Levin; and I see a peacock, like this featherhead, who's only amusing himself." Chapter 15, pg. 61

Quote 5: "And as soon as her brother had reached her, [Anna] flung her left arm around his neck and drew him rapidly to her, and kissed him warmly, with a gesture that struck Vronsky by its decision and its grace. Vronsky gazed, never taking his eyes from her, and smiled, he could not have said why. But recollecting that his mother was waiting for him, he went back again into the carriage." Book 1, Chapter 18, pg. 68

Quote 6: "'Yes,' Anna went on. 'Do you know why Kitty didn't come to dinner? She's jealous of me. I have spoiled... I've been the cause of that ball being a torture to her instead of a pleasure. But truly, truly it's not my fault, or only my fault a little bit,' she said, daintily drawling the words 'a little bit.'" Book 1, Chapter 28, pg. 104

Quote 7: "The highest Petersburg society is essentially one: in it everyone knows everyone else, everyone even visits everyone else." Book 2, Chapter 4, pg. 135

Quote 8: "Steps were heard at the door, and Princess Betsy, knowing it was Madame Karenina, glanced at Vronsky. He was looking toward the door, and his face wore a strange new expression. Joyfully, intently, and at the same time timidly, he gazed at the approaching figure, and slowly he rose to his feet." Book 2, Chapter 7, pg. 146

Quote 9: "Alexey Alexandrovich had seen nothing striking or improper in the fact that his wife was sitting with Vronsky at a separate table, in eager conversation with him about something. But he noticed that to the rest of the party this appeared to be



something striking and improper. He made up his mind that he must speak of it to his wife." Book 2, Chapter 8, pg. 151

Quote 10: "She flew over the ditch as though not noticing it. She flew over it like a bird; but at the same instant Vronsky, to his horror, felt that he had failed to keep up with the mare's pace, that he had, he did not know how, made a fearful, unpardonable mistake, in recovering his seat in the saddle. All at once his position had shifted and he knew something awful had happened." Book 2, Chapter 21, pg. 195

Quote 11: "He vividly recalled all the constantly recurring instances of inevitable necessity for lying and deceit, which were so against his natural bent. He recalled particularly vividly the shame he had more than once detected in her at this necessity for lying and deceit. And he experiences the strange feeling that had sometimes come upon him since his secret love for Anna. This was a feeling of loathing for something-- whether for Aleksey Alexandrovich, or for himself, or for the whole world, he could not have said. But he always drove away this strange feeling. Now, too, he shook it off and continued the thread of his thoughts." Book 2, Chapter 25, pg. 211

Quote 12: "To Konstantin, the peasant was simply the chief partner in their common labor." Book 3, Chapter 1, pg. 251

Quote 13: "The longer Levin mowed, the oftener he felt the moments of unconsciousness in which it seemed that the scythe was mowing by itself, a body full of life and consciousness of its own, and as though by magic, without thinking of it, the work turned out regular and precise by itself. These were the most blissful moments." Book 3, Chapter 5, pg. 267

Quote 14: "He could not be mistaken. There were no other eyes like those in the world. There was only one creature in the world who could concentrate for him all the brightness and meaning of life. It was she. It was Kitty." Book 3, Chapter 12, pg. 293

Quote 15: "'Alexsey Aleksandrovich! What is it you want of me?'"

"'I want you not to meet that man here, and to conduct yourself so that neither the world nor the servants can reproach you...not to see him. That's not much, I think. And in return you will enjoy all the privileges of a faithful wife without fulfilling her duties. That's all I have to say to you. Now it's time for me to go. I'm not dining at home.' He got up and moved toward the door." Book 3, Chapter 23, pg. 338

Quote 16: "Levin said what he had genuinely been thinking of late. He saw nothing but death or the advance toward death in everything. But his cherished scheme only engrossed him all the more. Life had to be got through somehow till death did come. Darkness had fallen, upon everything for him; but just because of this darkness he felt that the one guiding clue in the darkness was his work, and he clutched it and clung to it with all his strength." Book 3, Chapter 32, pg. 372

Quote 17: "The Karenins, husband and wife, continued living in the same house, met every day, but were complete strangers to one another. Aleksey Aleksandrovich made it



a rule to see his wife every day, so that the servants might have no grounds for suppositions, but avoided dining at home. Vronsky was never at Aleksey Aleksandrovich's house, but Anna saw him away from home, and her husband was aware of it." Book 4, Chapter 1, pg. 373

Quote 18: "Levin got up and escorted Kitty to the door. In their conversation everything had been said; it had been said that she loved him, and that she would tell her father and mother that he would come tomorrow morning." Book 4, Chapter 13, pg. 439

Quote 19: "'Oh, why didn't I die? It would have been better!' she said, and tears flowed silently down both her cheeks; but she tried to smile so as not to hurt him." Book 4, Chapter 23, pg. 457

Quote 20: "'What doubt can you have of the Creator when you behold His creation?' the priest went on in the rapid customary jargon. 'Who has decked the heavenly firmament with its stars? Who has clothed the earth in its beauty? How could it be without the creator?' he said, looking inquiringly at Levin." Book 5, Chapter 1, pg. 463

Quote 21: "Levin could not look calmly at his brother; he could not himself be natural and calm in his presence. When he went in to the sick man, his eyes and his attention were unconsciously dimmed, and he did not see and did not distinguish the details of his brother's condition. He smelled the awful odor, saw the dirt, disorder, and miserable condition, and heard the groans, and felt that nothing could be done to help. It never entered his head to analyze the details of the sick man's situation...But Kitty thought, and felt, and acted quite differently. On seeing the sick man, she pitied him. And pity in her womanly heart did not arouse at all that feeling of horror and loathing that it aroused in her husband, but a desire to act, to find out the details of his condition, and to remedy them." Book 5, Chapter 18, pg. 518

Quote 22: "In spite of death, he felt the need for life and love. He felt that love saved him from despair, and that this love, under the threat of despair, had become still stronger and purer. The one mystery of death, still unsolved, had scarcely passed before his eyes, when another mystery had arisen, as insoluble, calling to love and to life. The doctor confirmed his suspicion about Kitty. Her indisposition was pregnancy." Book 5, Chapter 20, pg. 530

Quote 23: "'Anna,' he said.

'You, you are to blame for everything!' she cried, with tears of despair and anger in her voice, getting up.

'I begged, I implored you not to go; I knew it would be unpleasant...'

'Unpleasant!' she cried. 'Hideous! As long as I live I shall never forget it. She said it was a disgrace to sit beside me.'" Book 5, Chapter 33, pg. 576

Quote 24: "'And they attack Anna. What for? Am I any better? I have, anyway, a husband I love--not as I would like to love him, still I do love him, while Anna never loved hers. How is she to blame? She wants to live. God has put that in our hearts. Very likely I should have done the same.'" Book 6, Chapter 16, pg. 635



Quote 25: "'The one thing, darling, is that I am so glad to have you!' said Anna, kissing her again. 'You haven't told me yet how and what you think about me, and I keep wanting to know. But I'm glad you will see me as I am. Above all, I wouldn't want people to think that I want to prove anything. I don't want to prove anything; I merely want to live.'" Book 6, Chapter 18, pg. 643

Quote 26: "And he set off for the elections without appealing to her for a candid explanation. It was the first time since the beginning of their intimacy that he had parted from her without a full explanation. From one point of view this troubled him, but on the other hand he felt that it was better so. 'At first there will be, as this time, something undefined kept back, and then she will get used to it. In any case, I can give up anything for her, but not my independence,' he thought." Book 6, Chapter 25, pg. 673

Quote 27: "And though she felt sure that his love for her was waning, there was nothing she could do, she could not in any way alter her relations to him. Just as before, only by love and by charm could she keep him. And so, just as before, only by occupation in the day, by morphine at night, could she stifle the fearful thought of what would be if he ceased to love her." Book 6, Chapter 32, pg. 695

Quote 28: "'Tell your wife that I love her as before, and that if she cannot pardon me my position, then my wish for her is that she may never pardon it. To pardon it, one must go through what I have gone through, and may God spare her that.' 'Certainly, yes, I will tell her...' Levin said, blushing." Book 7, Chapter 10, pg. 730

Quote 29: "'What a marvelous, sweet, and pathetic woman!' he was thinking as he stepped out into the frosty air with Stepan Arkadyevich. 'Well, didn't I tell you?' said Stepan Arkadyevich, seeing that Levin had been completely won over. 'Yes,' said Levin dreamily, 'an extraordinary woman! It's not her cleverness, but she has such wonderful depth of feeling. I'm awfully sorry for her.'" Book 7, Chapter 11, pg. 730

Quote 30: "'You're in love with that hateful woman; she has bewitched you! I saw it in your eyes. Yes, yes! What can it all lead to? You were drinking at the club, drinking and gambling, and then you went...to her of all people! No, we must go away...I shall go away tomorrow.' It was a long while before Levin could soothe his wife." Book 7, Chapter 11, pg. 732

Quote 31: "Now nothing mattered: going or not going to Vozdvizhenskoe, getting or not getting a divorce from her husband. All that did not matter. The only thing that mattered was punishing him. When she poured out her usual dose of opium, and thought that she had only to drink off the whole bottle to die, it seemed to her so simple and easy that she began musing with enjoyment on how he would suffer, and repent and love her memory when it would be too late." Book 7, Chapter 26, pg. 781

Quote 32: "But she did not take her eyes from the wheels of the second car. And exactly at the moment when the midpoint between the wheels drew level with her, she threw away the red bag, and drawing her head back into her shoulders, fell on her hands



under the car, and with a light movement, as though she would rise immediately, dropped on her knees. And at the instant she was terror-stricken at what she was doing. 'Where am I? What am I doing? What for?' She tried to get up, to throw herself back; but something huge and merciless struck her on the head and dragged her down on her back." Book 7, Chapter 31, pg. 798

Quote 33: "But now, since his marriage, when he had begun to confine himself more and more to living for himself, though he experienced no delight at all at the thought of the work he was doing, he felt absolutely convinced of its necessity, saw that it succeeded far better than in the past, and that it kept on growing more and more." Book 8, Chapter 10, pg. 823

Quote 34: "Just as the bees, whirling round him, now menacing him and distracting his attention, prevented him from enjoying complete physical peace, forced him to restrain his movements to avoid them, so had the petty cares that had swarmed about him from the moment he got into the trap restricted his spiritual freedom; but that lasted only so long as he was among them. Just as his bodily strength was still unaffected in spite of the bees, so too was the spiritual strength that he had just become aware of." Book 8, Chapter 14, pg. 837



Topic Tracking: Balance

Book 1, Chapters 23-27

Balance 1: Levin is designated as Tolstoy's self-representation in this novel. He believes in the land, nature, faith and marriage. These are things that make him the single most balanced character in the book, the one that Tolstoy consistently supports. Levin's character represents a harmony unparalleled, the kind that befits a man chosen for a good life. As a character, he evolves into this harmonious state.

Book 2, Chapters 30-35

Balance 2: Kitty is introduced here as the most well-balanced female character. Her devotion to family and marriage make her genuine and worthy in Tolstoy's eyes. Her evolution as a balanced character supports Levin's evolution as well. They complement each other.

Book 3, Chapters 12-23

Balance 3: Vronsky is shown here to be entirely unbalanced. His superficial urban concerns are trivial compared with Levin's.

Book 7, Chapters 1-12

Balance 4: Anna here appears to be scrabbling for stability more than ever before. She is contrasted with both Kitty and Levin, the two most balanced and stable characters.

Book 7, Chapters 23-31

Balance 5: An unbalanced, toppling Anna falls to earth here. Her trivial, dishonest, insincere concerns in her life forced her to gradually decay and eventually fall.

Book 8, Chapters 6-19

Balance 6: This is the point where Levin finally finds the ultimate balance he's been seeking.

Balance 7: Levin finds ultimate spiritual strength through his family and his newborn son. He is whole.



Topic Tracking: City vs. Country

Book 1, Chapters 1-6

City vs. Country 1: Tolstoy never trusts urbanites like Stiva; rather, he finds morals and solace in the country. He favors Levin in every sense, because of Levin's background

Book 1, Chapters 7-15

City vs. Country 2: Countess Nordston is an upper class city woman whose major role is to serve as a satire the city.

Book 1, Chapters 16-22

City vs. Country 3: Levin is upset by Kitty's rejection, which occurs in the city. He heads back to his farm in the country to reshape his life.

Book 2, Chapters 4-11

City vs. Country 4: Just like Nordston, the Princess is designed to be a mocked urbanite.

Book 2, Chapters 12-17

City vs. Country 5: Levin hates city people like Stiva, who come to the country and make deals there while knowing little about how the countryside actually works. Levin gets angry when city people think their money can change the country.

Book 3, Chapters 4-6

City vs. Country 6: There is a good glimpse here into the tranquil country life of Levin. He is at peace with his work on the land and with the peasants.

Book 3, Chapters 12-23

City vs. Country 7: There is a contrast between Levin and Vronsky, and their major concerns. Vronsky's concern is his status and career, while Levin's is the emancipation of the serfs.

Book 6, Chapters 8-15

City vs. Country 8: Levin, Stiva and Veslovsky go on a hunting trip in the forest, and Levin again gets annoyed at the city dwellers for having little knowledge of the countryside and its elements. The three stop and spend the night at a peasant's home, where Stiva and Veslovsky each sleep with peasant women. Levin feels disgusted by the immorality of the act.



Book 8, Chapters 1-5

City vs. Country 9: City men support the Slavic cause, while country men, like Levin, do not.



Topic Tracking: Relationships

Part 1, Chapters 1-6

Relationships 1: A cluster of relationships is established: Anna and her husband, Karenin; Anna and her lover, Vronsky; Dolly and Stiva; Kitty and Levin; and ,perhaps most important, Anna and Levin, the two protagonists.

Part 1, Chapters 16-22

Relationships 2: Anna is starting to use her beauty here to captivate Vronsky. This is the beginning of a relationship that will consume both Anna and the book.

Part 1, Chapters 28-33

Relationships 3: Anna recognizes she is having moments of passion when flirting with Vronsky. By flirting, she acts unfairly to her own husband and infuriates Kitty, who quite obviously wants Vronsky all to herself. This is the first instance of Anna establishing herself as a weak individual and a poor friend.

Part 2, Chapters 26-29

Relationships 4: Karenin gets angry at Anna for ignoring him at the horse race. He confronts her, and she blatantly declares that she is in love with Vronsky. This is a crucial moment where Karenin suddenly loses some emphasis, which is stolen from him by the relationship unfolding between Anna and Vronsky.

Part 3, Chapters 7-11

Relationships 5: Levin, who had previously been rejected by Kitty, realizes he is still entirely in love with her and must ask her once again to be his faithful wife. He wants to spend his life with her.

Part 3, Chapters 12-23

Relationships 6: Karenin tells Anna there is no way she can see Vronsky anymore. He must preserve his honor in society. Karenin's relationships are crumbling. He considers divorcing Anna and challenging Vronsky to a duel, but decides against both. He is gradually decaying.

Part 4, Chapters 1-15

Relationships 7: For the first time, Kitty and Levin relate on a very intuitive level. It is easy to note the contrast between this relationship and any of Anna's relationships. This one is harmonic and balanced, with each party respecting the other and believing in the union.



Part 5, Chapters 1-6

Relationships 8: The foundation between Kitty and Levin is built around the idea of faith. The unparalleled strength between them develops even further.

Part 7, Chapters 1-12

Relationships 9: This is the crucial meeting point between Anna and Levin, an event which disrupts the relationships established in the book. Anna flirts with Levin, and Levin is slightly taken with her, infuriating Kitty. The happy couple reconciles, though. Anna grows more insecure about herself after this meeting with Levin, and she and Vronsky don't reconcile nearly as easily.



Topic Tracking: The Role of Women

Book 1, Chapters 1-6

The Role of Women 1: Dolly and Stiva have an arranged marriage. Stiva has affairs, but Dolly continues to support her husband. At this time in Russia, the woman has no independent role.

Book 2, Chapters 30-35

The Role of Women 2: Kitty decides she wants to dedicate her life to family and her husband, a bold declaration in Tolstoy's eyes. That Kitty has no interest in the society life from which she came makes her the model female in the book.

Book 3, Chapters 24-32

The Role of Women 3: Levin is distracted at dinner because the sister [whose sister?] is wearing a cleavage-revealing dress to attract his attention. That makes him uncomfortable. He does not want to think sensually about someone except in the context of marriage.

Book 6, Chapters 16-25

The Role of Women 4: Anna doesn't want to have more children because she fears being pregnant would subtract from her sexual attractiveness, which is the only thing she feels she has to offer. This is how she views her role in society, hanging on her attractiveness for social success rather than concentrating on her family as Kitty does.

Book 8, Chapters 6-19

The Role of Women 5: Levin is amazed by birth and pregnancy, but at this point wonders why it has not restored his religious faith. Still, he recognizes how much family matters to him, along with how much Kitty's role as childbearer matters.



Book 1, Part 1

Anna Karenina opens in the heart of a household crisis. Dolly has found that that Stiva is having an affair with the French governess, and she is threatening divorce. Stiva's sister, Anna Karenina, comes to their home for a visit. There, she works some magic and convinces Dolly to patch things up with Stiva. Also, Konstantin Levin, an old friend of Stiva's from years past, arrives in Moscow to propose marriage to Kitty Shcherbatsky, Dolly's sister. Kitty refuses him, as she is sure she's destined to be with the smashing Count Vronsky. From the beginning, Kitty is impressed with Anna's charm, style, and kindness. Little does Kitty know, however, that Anna will steal Vronsky's heart. By the end of Part I, there are a great many "love" issues: Stiva and Dolly have managed to construct a shaky balance in their relationship; Levin's heart is torn over Kitty; Kitty is torn over Vronsky; and Anna is torn between her passion for the dashing count and her obligation to her own family-her husband and son.

Part 1, Chapters 1-6

The first line of the book is one of the most famous in literature: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Part 1, Chapter 1, pg. 1

The line leads into a household crisis between a wife and husband, Dolly and Stiva, but also forecasts the issues that will arise throughout the rest of the book, all of them having to do with personal relationships and family structures: especially those of Stiva and Dolly, Anna and Karenin, and Anna and Count Vronsky.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 1

Stiva's habits are described in detail. To avoid arguing with Dolly about an affair he had with another woman, Stiva tries to distract himself by plunging into his work. He reads a liberal newspaper and comes off as a bit of a rogue (Tolstoy himself was a conservative). Stiva follows the liberal tradition, which denounces religion and marriage as cheap institutions. When a widow drops by to ask Stiva's help with a petition she's submitting to the government, Stiva helps her--not because he actually cares about the woman or her cause, but because he wants her to think well of him.

We find out about Stiva's history: he was lazy in school but nevertheless used his connections to achieve a distinguished government career. Stiva represents the worst aspects of the social world, since he hasn't earned his way through life.

On his way out of the house, Stiva almost forgets to apologize to Dolly. When he does so, she becomes furious with him, humiliated by his pity. She realizes she wants his love but can never have it. It is important to note here that Dolly and Stiva are the product of an arranged, "French," marriage, in which romance was not a major element.

Their marriage, modeled on those of 18th and 19th century France, was arranged to augment the families' social status. Russian nobility during this time often modeled their behavior after the French, who, they thought, lived a more stylish lifestyle.

Topic Tracking: The Role of Women 1

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 1

A man named Konstantin Levin arrives to see Stiva. This is the first appearance of one of the book's protagonists. It is easy to notice the contrast between Levin and Stiva. Stiva is the height of sophistication, and Levin seems blue-collar by comparison; it is the difference between city life and country life that stands out. Levin is shown to have a better background, purer values and a more positive attitude toward marriage than Stiva.



Part 1, Chapters 7-15

Levin's brother has been very ill with tuberculosis (referred to as consumption). Levin cannot cope with the idea of death and becomes depressed whenever he thinks of his brother. Before he even begins to deal with the death, he feels he must propose to Kitty Shcherbatsky, which is why he has arrived in Moscow.

Levin heads off to the skating rink to meet up with Kitty and her family. He tries to show off with his skating skills, and Kitty for a minute regains her fondness for Levin. Still, she believes she's in love with Vronsky, a man of social status. Kitty's own mother favors Vronsky as a match. Even though Princess Shcherbatsky invites Levin to her home, she does so with an air of coolness, and Levin grows uneasy, thinking his love for Kitty will be left unfulfilled.

"The place where [Kitty] stood seemed to him a holy shrine, unapproachable, and there was one moment when he was almost retreating, so overwhelmed was he with terror. He had to make an effort to master himself, and to remind himself that people of all sorts were moving about her, and that he too might come there to skate. He walked down, for a long while avoiding looking at her as at the sun, but seeing her, as one does the sun, without looking." Part 1, Chapter 9, pg. 32

Levin and Stiva dine together at a fancy French restaurant, and are once again contrasted. Stiva is of course comfortable and at home in an elegant restaurant, while Levin is noticeably out of place. Still, Levin doesn't care, for he is disgusted with superficial elements of life. Stiva refuses to speak French with the waiter, because he doesn't want to give the waiter an upper-class social status. At the restaurant, Levin and Stiva discuss women, and Levin laments his love for Kitty. He also seeks her forgiveness, since he "played around" during his younger years. During the conversation between the two men, Stiva reveals a certain liking for the count (since the count has amassed such status), but still tells Levin that he should indeed propose to Kitty.

Levin's arrival at the Shcherbatsky's prompts an argument between Kitty's parents. Her father, the prince, favors Levin. Her mother, the princess, favors Vronsky. She finds Levin too awkward and marred by country life. We see the beginning of the dissipation of arranged "French" marriages and the introduction of English marriages, where young people decide on their own who to marry:

"The French fashion-of the parents arranging their children's future-was not accepted; it was condemned. The English fashion of the complete independence of girls was also not accepted, and not possible in Russian society. The Russian fashion of matchmaking by the officer of intermediate persons was for some reason considered disgraceful; it was ridiculed by everyone, and by the princess herself. But how girls were to be married, and how parents were to marry them, no one knew." Part 1, Chapter 12, pg. 49



The princess feels uncomfortable with the change but recognizes that Kitty's marriage has to involve a mixture of parental guidance and free choice. The prince feels that if Kitty marries Vronsky, she might run into the same difficulties Dolly ran into with Stiva, since both men are from the same general background.

The next day, Levin proposes and Kitty refuses him. She says she just doesn't know what her feelings are. Hearing his proposal, she is "filled with rapture," but then she remembers Vronsky. Levin tries to leave her home but is prevented from doing so by the princess, Kitty's mother. The evening that follows is torture for Levin, as he gets needled by one of Kitty's friends, Countess Nordston. Countess Nordston is shown as shallow, especially when criticizing country life for being dull. Levin is forced to spend the evening with Vronsky, as well. Levin says it's no wonder Kitty would prefer such a handsome, dapper, graceful officer. Kitty's father, however, shines some light on the situation:

"I see a man who has serious intentions, that's Levin; and I see a peacock, like this featherhead, who's only amusing himself." Part 1, Chapter 15, pg. 61

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 2



Part 1, Chapters 16-22

Vronsky's life story is briefly told. He had no family life; his mother was a famous aristocrat and their relationship was strained. Essentially, he doesn't respect most of her life choices and it bothers him when she suddenly intrudes on his life. This relationship between Vronsky and his mother will play a bigger role as the novel unfolds. Vronsky doesn't seem to understand much about his relationship with Kitty--he does not see that he could easily damage her feelings by having affairs. Vronsky is too busy having a good time to worry about anything. Still, he is beginning to get bored of the night life of a city socialite.

Anna enters the picture for the first time. Her arrival has been expected--Stiva has been excitedly awaiting her presence, as he thinks Dolly's sister will be able to help his marriage. Anna's presence certainly begins to change things around town. In fact, Anna affects everyone and everything.

Vronsky is the first to meet Anna. He sees her as she comes off the train. She had been the compartment-mate of his mother, who introduces the two. Immediately, Vronsky is awed by Anna, noticing in her some kind of inner light which shines brightly. The first thing that comes across in Anna is a sense of mysteriousness. You wonder how she could drop her life at home and just come into Moscow on such short notice to see Stiva.

"And as soon as her brother had reached her, [Anna] flung her left arm around his neck and drew him rapidly to her, and kissed him warmly, with a gesture that struck Vronsky by its decision and its grace. Vronsky gazed, never taking his eyes from her, and smiled, he could not have said why. But recollecting that his mother was waiting for him, he went back again into the carriage." Part 1, Chapter 18, pg. 68

Just as Vronsky is falling in love, a major accident happens. It appears the stationmaster has either fallen, or thrown himself, in front of the moving train. Vronsky gives the man's widow 200 rubles to impress Anna. Yet something is strange about this scene. It seems to be a foreshadowing of events to come. Also, it instantly puts a dent in the passion growing between Anna and Vronsky. Most importantly, it associates something entirely negative with Anna's arrival in Moscow: death.

Finally, at the home, Anna convinces Dolly to forgive Stiva. She tells her about Stiva's shame and remorse (all lies she makes up to save the marriage) and tells Dolly that she is the most important thing in the world to Stiva. Anna, it appears, is very manipulative, a trait that would make most people hesitant to trust her.

When Dolly and Stiva reunite, Anna goes to see Kitty. Kitty instantly confides in her, telling her about Vronsky and an upcoming gala. She insists Anna come along, telling her that she should wear lilac.



Anna indeed goes to the ball, but she wears black, pointing to her sense of sophistication. Vronsky can't stop staring at her, and Anna does not appear to be aware of the pain she is causing Kitty. After all, Anna isn't exactly pushing Vronsky away--she is sparkling, bejeweled, and positively enticing. Tolstoy notes there is something "terrible and cruel in her charm." She is a sexual, seductive being.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 2



Part 1, Chapters 23-27

Levin is described as a plain, simple man, defined by his religion and his duty to the country. He is the true hero of the novel.

Topic Tracking: Balance 1

Levin, who becomes depressed over Kitty's rejection, goes to visit his brother Nicholas, who is ill. He begins to realize, after seeing his brother, that Nicholas has always been a victim of ills, including both sickness and poverty. Levin begins to regret getting caught up in his own passions, because he realizes he should be more concerned with his brother's problems. He finds his brother living with Masha, who is not a legitimate wife, but who acts as one. Levin instantly rejects this lifestyle, but he knows that Masha takes good care of Nicholas. He decides to ask Nicholas and Masha to come stay with him, promising himself that he'll forget his mindless passions and devote himself to more important things.

Levin returns to the country and begins to get his life in order. He tidies up his farm, tries to forget about Kitty, and spends some time with his brother. Levin seems different when he is at home in the country--more at peace with himself and his decisions.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 3



Part 1, Chapters 28-33

Anna decides she needs to leave Moscow and return to St. Petersburg, where her life is. Anna tells Dolly that she knows she ruined the gala for Kitty by flirting with Vronsky. Yet Anna contends the whole thing really wasn't her fault. Dolly makes an important note at this point: Anna denies blame in the same way Stiva does. This makes Anna, quite frankly, a liar.

"'Yes,' Anna went on. 'Do you know why Kitty didn't come to dinner? She's jealous of me.... I've been the cause of that ball being a torture to her instead of a pleasure. But truly, truly it's not my fault, or only my fault a little bit,' she said, daintily drawing the words 'a little bit.'" Part 1, Chapter 28, pg. 104

Anna leaves, laden with shame and guilt. She knows she's running from Vronsky, but she also knows she doesn't want to return to her husband. This haunts her. At one of the train stops, she needs to step outside for air to clear her head of guilt. Instead of a clean conscience, her head is filled with the sharp sounds of a worker hammering on the metal tracks.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 3

When Anna arrives at the St. Petersburg station she immediately sees her husband. She feels freshly guilty for not appreciating his devotion. Nonetheless, she immediately begins to notice all of her husband's physical imperfections. She compares him to Vronsky. Up until now, nothing sexual has happened between Anna and Vronsky--if she has cheated on her husband, then it has only been in her heart. Yet the moments of tension and surprise are building between her and Vronsky. Something major is bound to happen, and it is becoming rather clear to her now that she needs to leave her husband in order to find some sense of happiness.

Anna goes home with her husband and sees her loving son Seriozha. Even he is not as wonderful as Anna remembered. That realization is hard for Anna, because it solidifies that the only exciting things in her life at this point are the little encounters she has with the mysterious count. Karenin doesn't make much of an effort to spend time with his newly returned wife. We see that, at home, Anna isn't remotely as radiant as she was in Moscow--there she was passionate and alive. At home, she is bored and disgruntled.

Part 1, Chapter 34

Part 1 ends with Anna and Vronsky in their own homes. Everything is the way it used to be. The tension between Anna and Vronsky is nipped in the bud. Life is a matter of habit. But Vronsky is too exciting and full of life for Anna to remain in her boring life with Karenin.

Part 2

The second part of the book is rife with spoiled relationships. Kitty succumbs to her broken heart after being rejected by Vronsky, and she needs to go to a spa to recover. Anna and Vronsky finally connect-physically, that is-and Anna finds herself in difficulties when she becomes pregnant with Vronsky's child and has to confess to Karenin.

Part 2, Chapters 1-3

Kitty is in rough shape after her heart-breaking encounter with Vronsky and Anna. The Shcherbatsky family calls doctor after doctor to see if something is physically wrong with her. Really, Kitty is just emotionally scarred by the rejection.

When Dolly comes to visit Kitty, Kitty confesses that she realizes she indeed loves Levin. This realization frustrates her because she doesn't know how to cope with it. Kitty also gets mad at her parents for adhering to the French custom of trying to marry her off, instead of letting her find her own love and figure things out for herself. After thinking, Kitty decides she most enjoys her time spent with children, so she goes home with Dolly to see Dolly's nieces and nephews.



Part 2, Chapters 4-11

The upper echelons of Moscow society are described. The most elite social circle, to which Karenin belongs, consists of government officials. The next circle is headed by Countess Lydia Ivanova, and is composed of "elderly, ugly, benevolent, and godly women, and clever, learned, and ambitious men." It is referred to as the conscience of Petersburg society. The final circle is the world of high society--balls, gowns and the fashionable elite. This sparkling group is led by Princess Betsy Tverskaya. Each circle, Tolstoy tells us, overlaps to some extent.

"The highest Petersburg society is essentially one: in it everyone knows everyone else, everyone even visits everyone else." Part 2, Chapter 4, pg. 135

It becomes clear from the start that the princess is designed to be a mocked character. She is shallow, superficial and quite the gossip. She and her counterparts begin to talk about Anna and Vronsky. From what the Princess says, everyone knows that Anna and the count have some feelings for one another.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 4

Later on in the night, Anna and Vronsky both arrive at Betsy's, though separately.

"Steps were heard at the door, and Princess Betsy, knowing it was Madame Karenina, glanced at Vronsky. He was looking toward the door, and his face wore a strange new expression. Joyfully, intently, and at the same time timidly, he gazed at the approaching figure, and slowly he rose to his feet." Part 2, Chapter 7, pg. 146

Karenin notices that his wife is spending a great deal of time talking with the count, and he doesn't have a problem with it initially. That starts to change, however, when everyone at the party begins to gossip and spread rumors about Anna and Vronsky. Karenin feels he has some business to straighten out with his wife:

"Alexey Alexandrovich had seen nothing striking or improper in the fact that his wife was sitting with Vronsky at a separate table, in eager conversation with him about something. But he noticed that to the rest of the party this appeared to be something striking and improper. He made up his mind that he must speak of it to his wife." Part 2, Chapter 8, pg. 151

Karenin knows he needs to say something to Anna about the notion of an extramarital affair. He goes home early from the party to think things through. He decides that he isn't jealous, but that he is bothered mainly by what everybody else is saying. After all, Karenin has been the perfect husband, or so he believes. How could Anna really love someone else? She couldn't, he decides. So he figures out a reasonable, rational way to get his point across to Anna. He has two main points he chooses to emphasize: first, the significance of public opinion, and second, the religious obligations of a marriage. If

those two techniques don't work, he will mention the potential harm an affair would bring to their son, and also to Anna herself.

The talk doesn't go well. Anna lies and pretends nothing is going on. Karenin is blatantly nervous, cracking his knuckles. Inside, though, Anna is fraught with frustration and anger. To her, Karenin doesn't know the slightest thing about love. She begins to forget her guilt; rather, she starts to blame Karenin internally for his failed attempt at loving her. Karenin gives up, aware now that there is nothing he can really do to save his marriage.

In Chapter 10, Anna and Vronsky consummate their love, after a year of courting and flirting. Yet Anna has a strange reaction: she falls at Vronsky's feet and begs forgiveness. She is again consumed by her guilt. At this point, Anna and Vronsky realize they have started a new chapter in their relationship, and neither is quite sure of how to deal with the realization of the extramarital affair.

Part 2, Chapters 12-17

It's been many months since Levin's encounter with Kitty, but Levin hasn't gotten her out of his head. Nonetheless, he spends the majority of his time tending to his farm and writing a book on agriculture that emphasizes the need to emancipate serfs. Levin says freedom for farmers is just as important to farming as is soil/vegetation.

Stiva, suffering from financial problems, comes again to visit Levin on the farm. Stiva made a deal there with a dealer named Ryabinin to sell a forest owned by Dolly. Levin doesn't like the dealer or the deal--he thinks the price is too low and tells Stiva to raise it. But Stiva says it's too late to change the terms of the deal. Internally, Levin scoffs at city people, who come to the country with little knowledge of the land and therefore contribute to its destruction.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 5

Stiva also comes to the country bearing news of Kitty, about whom Levin has been trying not to think. Stiva informs the countryman that the love of his life never ended up with the count. Levin and Stiva continue on to argue over Vronsky's place in society, and what, in general, is the aristocracy. The two male characters have extremely dissenting opinions--Stiva speaks positively about the aristocrats while Levin criticizes. The differences between the two widen.



Part 2, Chapters 17-25

Anna realizes she is pregnant with Vronsky's baby, and she informs Vronsky of this. In another climactic event, Vronsky loses a horserace he is slated to win. Vronsky loses the race because he is distracted by his relationship with Anna, especially because his brother and mother very much disapprove of the affair. His mother thinks he is becoming too dangerously preoccupied with a married woman. Further, Vronsky is becoming frustrated at having to hide his life with Anna. With all that on his mind, Vronsky falls off his horse during the race and the horse, Frou Frou, dies:

"She flew over the ditch as though not noticing it. She flew over it like a bird; but at the same instant Vronsky, to his horror, felt that he had failed to keep up with the mare's pace, that he had, he did not know how, made a fearful, unpardonable mistake, in recovering his seat in the saddle. All at once his position had shifted and he knew something awful had happened." Part 2, Chapter 21, pg. 195

Right before the race Vronsky goes to see Anna and learns of the pregnancy. Anna is astounded at Vronsky's reaction--he tells her she should come live with him and leave her husband and son once and for all. He proves that he knows her well when he tells her she is suffering from the guilt of society and her family, and she can never really be a whole person again unless she detaches herself from those forces.

"He vividly recalled all the constantly recurring instances of inevitable necessity for lying and deceit, which were so against his natural bent. He recalled particularly vividly the shame he had more than once detected in her at this necessity for lying and deceit. And he experiences the strange feeling that had sometimes come upon him since his secret love for Anna. This was a feeling of loathing for something--whether for Aleksey Alexandrovich, or for himself, or for the whole world, he could not have said. But he always drove away this strange feeling. Now, too, he shook it off and continued the thread of his thoughts." Part 2, Chapter 25, pg. 211

It is a big moment for Vronsky, one unanticipated. Still, stubborn Anna will not listen to his reasoning. She will proceed in torment.



Part 2, Chapters 26-29

Karenin gets angry with Anna for ignoring him at the race. When he confronts her with this on the way home, she bluntly declares that she is in love with Vronsky, and that she hates Karenin. Karenin bounces back with a typical response, one detached from all emotion. He tells Anna she needs to act in public as though she were a good, obedient wife. Otherwise, Karenin's pride is on the line, and that isn't fair to him. Karenin feels no personal surprise or anger at Anna's outburst.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 4



Part 2, Chapters 30-35

At the spa where Kitty goes to recover, she meets a girl named Varenka, whom she tries to emulate. Kitty likes the fact that Varenka spends her time taking care of the elderly. But Kitty soon realizes the work isn't cut out for her. She makes the acquaintance of an elderly couple, and the husband becomes all too fond of her. Kitty then decides she needs to concentrate on her own family and friends. She realizes, having watched Varenka, that an unmarried life can be a lonely life. She confirms in her head a desire to marry and have a family. This is a big step in her personal growth. Kitty is going through a taxing period and trying to achieve some sort of clarity. She is figuring herself out, day by day.

Topic Tracking: Balance 2

Topic Tracking: The Role of Women 2

Part 3

For two men who could not be more intrinsically different, Levin and Vronsky manage to show some similarities in these chapters. Both feel as if their lives have stagnated. They feel something is missing, and they grow increasingly frustrated. Levin immerses himself entirely in his land, but he knows in his heart that his life needs Kitty. Vronsky, for his part, is annoyed that Anna has not yet left her husband. He wants Anna and himself to live a happy, public life.



Part 3, Chapters 1-3

Levin's half-brother Sergey comes to visit. Whenever Levin and Sergey get together, they debate politics and intellectual issues for hours. Levin comes to realize this time that Sergey, a city man himself, has a rather distorted view of peasants, nature and the countryside in general. To Sergey, the peasants are worth little.

"To Konstantin, the peasant was simply the chief partner in their common labor." Part 3, Chapter 1, pg. 251

Further, Sergey argues everything in his life intellectually; he never brings his heart or his emotions into the matter. It makes him seem devoid of something. For Levin, a man always searching for answers and spiritual development, this approach is not satisfactory. The road to knowledge can never be purely intellectual--it needs to have heart. Kitty would agree with this perspective.



Part 3, Chapters 4-6

The mowing scene in these chapters is presented in great detail. Levin's intense relationship with the peasants and the countryside is fully shown. Levin admires the peasants for their skills, and we see him showing a great deal of heart along the way.

"The longer Levin mowed, the oftener he felt the moments of unconsciousness in which it seemed that the scythe was mowing by itself, a body full of life and consciousness of its own, and as though by magic, without thinking of it, the work turned out regular and precise by itself. These were the most blissful moments." Part 3, Chapter 5, pg. 267

This scene captures what Levin wishes he could have said to Sergey during their arguments about the countryside. This scene, for Levin, is exactly what matters in life. While Sergey needs to describe things, Levin needs to experience them. Here and now, that is exactly what he is doing: working side by side with the peasants, learning from them.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 6



Part 3, Chapters 7-11

Dolly and her children move to the family estate to cut down on some financial expenditures and get a rest from the city life. The estate is located right near Levin's. Dolly comes to the countryside to regain her stability and find happiness with her kids. She succeeds.

Kitty is coming for a visit to Dolly's estate. Levin says he will make himself unavailable, since he is trying desperately to forget Kitty. Yet once Kitty arrives, Levin spots her in her carriage and their eyes meet. He realizes he still loves her.

"He could not be mistaken. There were no other eyes like those in the world. There was only one creature in the world who could concentrate for him all the brightness and meaning of life. It was she. It was Kitty." Part 3, Chapter 12, pg. 293

Levin again realizes his most sincere feelings are stemming from his heart, not his brain. There is no time to analyze; his heart has told him what he needs to do. Incidentally, right before he sees Kitty, Levin meets a young married couple who are very much in love. He realizes that the harmony and synchronicity they share is exactly what he is missing in his life. Not coincidentally, this is what he anticipates with Kitty.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 5



Part 3, Chapters 12-23

Karenin is at his wit's end with his wife's affair and doesn't quite know how to handle knowing that his wife is an adulteress. He considers both challenging Vronsky to a fight and divorcing Anna. He decides against both of those options, going instead with what will be the easiest: pretending in public that everything is fine between him and his wife. He decides that this option will cause Anna the most grief anyway. The guilt will destroy her, Karenin predicts.

"Alexsey Aleksandrovich! What is it you want of me?"

"I want you not to meet that man here, and to conduct yourself so that neither the world nor the servants can reproach you...not to see him. That's not much, I think. And in return you will enjoy all the privileges of a faithful wife without fulfilling her duties. That's all I have to say to you. Now it's time for me to go. I'm not dining at home.' He got up and moved toward the door." Part 3, Chapter 23, pg. 338

Topic Tracking: Relationships 6

Anna agrees with her husband that the best thing to do is indeed to stay together and avoid a public scandal. She goes to Princess Betsy for advice. It doesn't reflect well on Anna that she seeks advice from a gossip queen.

Karenin goes along with his plan to undermine Anna by sending her money, along with a very cool and impersonal note. Vronsky, too, is having problems. His career isn't advancing as quickly as he wants it to. He heard from an old friend that women are the obstacles to a man's career advancement. With that, Vronsky begins to worry that Anna is getting in the way of his own success. And if he can't be successful, their love is doomed anyway.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 7

Topic Tracking: Balance 3



Part 3, Chapters 24-32

Levin goes to visit his friend, Sviazhsky, who lives far from the farm. He is nervous to go there because he knows Sviazhsky's wife wants to set Levin up with her sister. Levin is distracted at dinner because the sister is wearing a cleavage-revealing dress to attract his attention. That makes him uncomfortable (he does not want to think sensually about someone unless in the context of marriage).

Topic Tracking: The Role of Women 3

Levin leaves the table to join the men in a talk on farming. Everyone in attendance is complaining about the serf system. Some say the serfs were better before emancipation; some say things became better after emancipation. The problem, though, is that the serfs don't feel they have enough stake in the land to work hard. Levin says this is because the serfs are poor. He proposes a communal system in which he will share all his profits equally with the peasants. Everyone, that way, would have an interest in farming and everyone's incomes would benefit. He goes home to begin working on this revolutionary project which would grant everyone full partnership in the land.

Later on, Nicholas comes to Levin at home, sicker than ever. His death is imminent. Levin grows depressed and takes comfort in the fact that maybe his work can save him from death.

"Levin said what he had genuinely been thinking of late. He saw nothing but death or the advance toward death in everything. But his cherished scheme only engrossed him all the more. Life had to be got through somehow till death did come. Darkness had fallen, upon everything for him; but just because of this darkness he felt that the one guiding clue in the darkness was his work, and he clutched it and clung to it with all his strength." Part 3, Chapter 32, pg. 372

In this way, work is life itself for Levin.



Part 4, Chapters 1-15

These are the chapters where Vronsky and Karenin finally come eye to eye, both knowing what they know. Oddly, Anna and Karenin are still living together, feigning a marriage.

"The Karenins, husband and wife, continued living in the same house, met every day, but were complete strangers to one another. Aleksey Aleksandrovich made it a rule to see his wife every day, so that the servants might have no grounds for suppositions, but avoided dining at home. Vronsky was never at Aleksey Aleksandrovich's house, but Anna saw him away from home, and her husband was aware of it." Part 4, Chapter 1, pg. 373

Anna sees Vronsky all the time, with Karenin fully aware of it. His only request is that Vronsky stay away from the house. It seems a minor request, given the situation. Yet Anna manages to violate it, inviting Vronsky to the house one night when Karenin isn't expected at home. Karenin, however, arrives home earlier than expected and meets Vronsky on the front steps. He is enraged inside and tells Anna he will divorce her and have his sister raise the boy.

Shortly after, Anna has an ominous dream, which predicts her forthcoming death. The dream continues to recur throughout the rest of the book.

Meanwhile, Levin and Kitty meet once again at a party thrown by Stiva. Levin realizes that Kitty must love him because of the longing look in her eye. He proposes, using covert signals that she, but no one else, understands.

"Levin got up and escorted Kitty to the door. In their conversation everything had been said; it had been said that she loved him, and that she would tell her father and mother that he would come tomorrow morning." Part 4, Chapter 13, pg. 439

This is an example of the fact that Levin and Kitty relate to each other on a subconscious, intuitive level. They equal harmony, the kind Levin has always been searching for. The same could hardly be said of Anna and Vronsky. Levin finally asks publicly for Kitty to be his wife, and her parents are thrilled. He apologizes to her that he is not a virgin. She forgives him.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 7

Part 4, Chapters 16-23

Karenin gets word that Anna is dying. Through a telegram, she asks him to come see her. At first, he doesn't believe she can be dying. After all, she has lied a thousand times. Still, he needs to see her. Once he gets there, he meets Anna's new illegitimate daughter and finds Anna herself suffering from a high fever. She begs Karenin to forgive her and Vronsky. Karenin does so. This makes Anna feel prepared for her own death.



Meanwhile, Vronsky is embarrassed by the sight of Karenin and tries to commit suicide by shooting himself. His servant finds him in the nick of time, though, and he does not die. Karenin has come in contact with some kind of inner peace for the first time in his life. He even says he will raise Anna and Vronsky's daughter.

Anna begins to bounce back and recover, much to Karenin's surprise. He once again grows angry when he Anna requests to spend time with Vronsky before he leaves for a new job. Karenin is angry with himself for forgiving them, and he calls the divorce off.

Stiva, who is worried about his sister, begs Karenin to give Anna the divorce, and Karenin grudgingly agrees. Betsy goes to tell Vronsky the news. Vronsky is overjoyed that Anna is finally his. The two decide to move to Italy together. Anna refuses Karenin's offer of divorce, because it would deny her custody of Seriozha.

"Oh, why didn't I die? It would have been better!" she said, and tears flowed silently down both her cheeks; but she tried to smile so as not to hurt him." Part 4, Chapter 23, pg. 457

The threat of death makes Anna remorseful, Karenin forgiving and Vronsky deeply ashamed. Once Anna improves, moods begin to shift again, as Kitty is now pregnant.

"In spite of death, he felt the need for life and love. He felt that love saved him from despair, and that this love, under the threat of despair, had become still stronger and purer. The one mystery of death, still unsolved, had scarcely passed before his eyes, when another mystery had arisen, as insoluble, calling to love and to life. The doctor confirmed his suspicion about Kitty. Her indisposition was pregnancy." Part 4, Chapter 20, pg. 530

Part 5, Chapters 1-6

These first chapters build up the relationship between Kitty and Levin. Levin goes to see a priest because Stiva tells him he needs to have a certificate of confession in order to be wholly married. Levin doesn't believe in God, but he goes to see the priest anyway. He confesses that his biggest sin is doubting the existence of God. The priest then asks him how he could doubt God when he (Levin) works so intently with the land, which is God's creation.

"What doubt can you have of the Creator when you behold His creation?' the priest went on in the rapid customary jargon. 'Who has decked the heavenly firmament with its stars? Who has clothed the earth in its beauty? How could it be without the creator?' he said, looking inquiringly at Levin." Part 5, Chapter 1, pg. 463

Levin realizes that the priest makes some good points, but decides he still doesn't entirely believe in God. He decides it is Kitty's love which can help him find the faith he is missing.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 8

Tolstoy uses five chapters to detail the wedding, adding in bits of the vows, the prayers, the scenery, the gossip. He makes it clear that weddings, as they were intended, are very important in Russian society and should be given appropriate attention.



Part 5, Chapters 7-13

Attention turns from the wedding ceremony to Italy, where Anna and Vronsky have been settled for three months. Anna is happy with her new life and loves being with Vronsky, even though she ran away from her son and left her friends behind. But something is changing in Vronsky's head. He realizes he gave up his entire career for Anna, and he is beginning to grow tired of his new life. He takes up painting as a hobby, and finds that he has some talent as an artist. Anna and Vronsky take some of Vronsky's works to a professional painter nearby, a man named Mikhailov. There, Vronsky asks the painter to paint a portrait of Anna. Once Vronsky realizes that the painter is much better than he is, he gives up painting, too, now totally frustrated by his personal sense of uselessness. It's starting to seem that pure romance is enough for Anna, but not nearly enough for Vronsky.



Part 5, Chapters 14-20

Kitty and Levin are fighting a great deal, but their fights are not bad. Instead, they are productive and aid in the building process of their life together. Just when the fighting begins to die down, they receive word from Moscow that Nicholas is dying. Much to Levin's surprise, Kitty demands that she go with him to see his brother. Once they arrive, Levin becomes extremely upset. He is sad about his brother, but also about the poor quarters and the presence of Masha, his brother's girlfriend. Levin stagnates, while Kitty expertly aids Nicholas.

"Levin could not look calmly at his brother; he could not himself be natural and calm in his presence. When he went in to the sick man, his eyes and his attention were unconsciously dimmed, and he did not see and did not distinguish the details of his brother's condition. He smelled the awful odor, saw the dirt, disorder, and miserable condition, and heard the groans, and felt that nothing could be done to help. It never entered his head to analyze the details of the sick man's situation...But Kitty thought, and felt, and acted quite differently. On seeing the sick man, she pitied him. And pity in her womanly heart did not arouse at all that feeling of horror and loathing that it aroused in her husband, but a desire to act, to find out the details of his condition, and to remedy them." Part 5, Chapter 18, pg. 518

She has Nicholas moved to a better room, one with fresh sheets, and she cleanses him. Kitty even gets along well with Masha. We see here the contrast between Levin and Kitty. Just as before, Levin tries to intellectualize the situation, while Kitty only knows how to "emotionalize" it. Her intuition tells her what to do. Levin realizes here that he needs to learn how to be more like Kitty. Their love will keep him faithful.

Nicholas dies in Chapter 20, the only chapter in the novel to bear a title: "Death." Just afterwards, though, Kitty learns she is pregnant, uniting the themes of birth and death.



Part 5, Chapters 21-30

Karenin's life has become a misdirected mess. He is confused as to how he can still have affectionate feelings for Anna and also for the daughter she had with Vronsky. He is trying to raise his son, but he endures constant ridicule from society. Nonetheless, a society lady named Lydia Ivanovna, comes to his house and tells him she will take care of him and his home. The first thing she does, though, is tell the boy Seriozha that his mother is dead. She does everything she can to hurt Anna and make Karenin fall in love with herself.

It seems everyone is trying to crush Anna. Betsy tells Vronsky that he shouldn't be seen with her while in Petersburg. Then, Betsy goes to Anna, under the veil of friendship, telling her that while she doesn't mind Anna and Vronsky's relationship others do.

News of the general disapproval of her relationship with Vronsky makes Anna extremely agitated. She sneaks into her old home to see her son, who is shocked since he has been told she is dead. Anna realizes she loves Seriozha overwhelmingly, with a love she could never feel for her daughter. Anna will come to resent her daughter for denying her Seriozha.

Even worse is Anna's decision not to obey Vronsky's request that the two keep a low profile. She tells him she is going to the opera. He is infuriated. She goes to the opera, and he goes as well, but he doesn't sit with her. He doesn't understand why she has to be so beautiful--after all, that's why he is in this position in the first place. As expected, the opera scenario causes a scandal. Other opera-goers refuse to sit in the same box as Anna, for she has sinned. Once the two arrive home they fight, then finally make peace.

"Anna," he said.

'You, you are to blame for everything!' she cried, with tears of despair and anger in her voice, getting up.

'I begged, I implored you not to go; I knew it would be unpleasant...'

'Unpleasant!' she cried. 'Hideous! As long as I live I shall never forget it. She said it was a disgrace to sit beside me.'" Part 5, Chapter 33, pg. 576

They leave for the country to relax. Anna begins to notice how Vronsky resembles Karenin in his concern for what others think--why can't she find an independent man, she wonders.

Anna starts to dream that Vronsky doesn't love her. Certain events and emotions are literally driving her insane.

Part 6

In this section, Tolstoy delves into the lives of the three main female characters: Anna, Kitty and Dolly. The Levins have visitors, and one of the guests pays a little too much attention to Kitty. Levin finds himself jealous. Dolly goes to see Anna and realizes that no woman could ever want Anna's life. Lastly, Anna herself grows increasingly more in need of Vronsky's total attention. She doesn't want to be his wife, yet she is not happy being his mistress.



Part 6, Chapters 1-7

The Levins take many summer guests into their home, including two characters named Koznyshev and Varenka. Koznyshev's fiancée died before the two could marry; he became lonely and now finds himself attracted to Varenka. About to propose, he backs down.

Stiva arrives later for a visit and brings a friend named Veslovsky. Levin gets jealous because Veslovsky flirts with Kitty. But Veslovsky is just a flirt. He goes to see Anna and flirts with her too. The two principal women react differently to this man, as do the two main male characters.



Part 6, Chapters 8-15

Levin, Stiva and Veslovsky go on a hunting trip in the forest, and Levin again gets annoyed at the city dwellers for having little knowledge of the countryside and all its elements. The three stop and spend the night at a peasant's home, where Stiva and Veslovsky each sleep with peasant women. Levin is disgusted. Yet he eventually realizes that he's not really in a position to make judgments about others, so he finds it in his heart to befriend the two anew.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 8

Once they return to the estate, Veslovsky again flirts with Kitty. Levin takes drastic measures and tells Veslovsky to leave. Kitty is pregnant, and Levin considers her a sacred gem. He feels that Veslovsky is a pollutant.



Part 6, Chapters 16-25

Dolly goes to visit Anna and grows distraught at Anna's personal situation. She recognizes that Vronsky has many important elements in his life that Anna doesn't share with him. She feels bad for Anna and says she would have done the same thing had she been in her position:

"And they attack Anna. What for? Am I any better? I have, anyway, a husband I love-not as I would like to love him, still I do love him, while Anna never loved hers. How is she to blame? She wants to live. God has put that in our hearts. Very likely I should have done the same." Part 6, Chapter 16, pg. 635

To Dolly, it seems that Anna is more of a guest in Vronsky's home than his lover. All Anna really has, Dolly realizes, is the ability to be beautiful at all times.

"The one thing, darling, is that I am so glad to have you!" said Anna, kissing her again. 'You haven't told me yet how and what you think about me, and I keep wanting to know. But I'm glad you will see me as I am. Above all, I wouldn't want people to think that I want to prove anything. I don't want to prove anything; I merely want to live.'"

Part 6, Chapter 18, pg. 643

Vronsky asks Dolly to convince Anna to get a divorce from Karenin so he and she can have children together which will be legally his. Anna, however, doesn't want to have more children. She fears that being pregnant would take away from her sexual attractiveness, which she sees as all she has. By choosing to not have children, Anna is further separated from Vronsky.

Topic Tracking: The Role of Women 5

Once Dolly leaves, Anna is utterly bored. Vronsky becomes active politically and spends less time with her.

"And he set off for the elections without appealing to her for a candid explanation. It was the first time since the beginning of their intimacy that he had parted from her without a full explanation. From one point of view this troubled him, but on the other hand he felt that it was better so. 'At first there will be, as this time, something undefined kept back, and then she will get used to it. In any case, I can give up anything for her, but not my independence,' he thought." Part 6, Chapter 25, pg. 673



Part 6, Chapters 26-32

The men attend a conference on farming. The women are at home. Anna is in a bad situation, feeling so lonely that she now takes drugs (morphine) to fall asleep. Meanwhile, Kitty is in Moscow, happily waiting for her child to be born.

At the conference, Levin and Vronsky disagree on almost everything to do with farming. Vronsky is a new type of farmer, a modern kind who indulges in the industrialization of farming. It doesn't occur to Vronsky to make his peasants equal partners. Levin doesn't see farming as "industry." He wants equality on the land. During the conference, Vronsky gets a note from Anna saying the baby is ill and he must return home immediately. He returns home to find that the baby was never ill and that Anna manipulated him. He is furious. Anna doesn't know what to do with herself and gets worried that Vronsky is angry at her. She writes to Karenin, asking for divorce on any grounds.

"And though she felt sure that his love for her was waning, there was nothing she could do, she could not in any way alter her relations to him. Just as before, only by love and by charm could she keep him. And so, just as before, only by occupation in the day, by morphine at night, could she stifle the fearful thought of what would be if he ceased to love her." Part 6, Chapter 32, pg. 695

She awaits Karenin's response, expecting to marry Vronsky just as Kitty and Levin are preparing for parenthood.

Part 7

In this part, Karenin has a religious revelation, refuses to divorce Anna, and Anna throws herself in front of a train, putting an end to her tortured life and soul.



Part 7, Chapters 1-12

The Levins have been living in the city, Moscow, for months now, placing themselves in a region close to a clinic to prepare for Kitty's birth. One night, while out at a club, Stiva introduces Levin to Vronsky. The two already know each other to a degree, of course, for while Levin was falling in love with Kitty, she was pining after Vronsky. Now, though, Levin seems to be free of those tensions in his life, having grown more comfortable with himself and his wife. He finds that he actually likes Vronsky, and Vronsky feels the same way. Kitty also bumps into Vronsky one day while taking a walk. She, too, finds that she feels perfectly at ease talking to him. Everyone seems glad that the past is behind them. With that, Vronsky invites Levin to his home.

Levin and Stiva make their way to Vronsky and Anna's house. Levin, like most other men, is charmed by Anna's beauty and intelligence. Yet Anna is visibly disturbed when she sees Levin. She tells him to give her regards to Kitty, saying:

"Tell your wife that I love her as before, and that if she cannot pardon me my position, then my wish for her is that she may never pardon it. To pardon it, one must go through what I have gone through, and may God spare her that."
'Certainly, yes, I will tell her...' Levin said, blushing." Part 7, Chapter 10, pg. 730

Topic Tracking: Balance 4

Afterwards, Levin comments on his encounter with Anna:

"What a marvelous, sweet, and pathetic woman!" he was thinking as he stepped out into the frosty air with Stepan Arkadyevich.
'Well, didn't I tell you?' said Stepan Arkadyevich, seeing that Levin had been completely won over.
'Yes,' said Levin dreamily, 'an extraordinary woman! It's not her cleverness, but she has such wonderful depth of feeling. I'm awfully sorry for her.'" Part 7, Chapter 11, pg. 730

This is a scene worth remembering, for it involves the meeting of Tolstoy's two main characters. Clearly, they are drawn to one another on some level, probably because each has what the other lacks. Despite their differences, they have some clear similarities. Most notably, both Levin and Anna are dissatisfied with what society dictates for them. But Anna acts strangely around him, flirting with him. By mentioning Kitty, she is introducing the topic of infidelity and ruined expectations, something Levin never before considered.

Topic Tracking: Relationships 9

After Levin and Anna have their crucial meeting, the two main couples find themselves fighting. Kitty notices that Levin is acting oddly and she has a feeling that he, too, has fallen for Anna.



"You're in love with that hateful woman; she has bewitched you! I saw it in your eyes. Yes, yes! What can it all lead to? You were drinking at the club, drinking and gambling, and then you went...to her of all people! No, we must go away...I shall go away tomorrow.' It was a long while before Levin could soothe his wife." Part 7, Chapter 11, pg. 732

Once the two talk about it, they reconcile their problem and move along to sleep. This does not happen with Anna and Vronsky. Anna is too insecure; she thinks Vronsky wants everyone but her. To get Vronsky's attention, she tells him she is "near disaster and afraid of myself." This indicates that Anna has spiraled entirely out of control, and that almost anything could happen to her. She keeps mentioning a certain "spirit of strife" that exists in her bond with Vronsky, both in her heart and in his.



Part 7, Chapters 13-17

Kitty gives birth. Levin finds the whole experience surreal, and Kitty finds it entirely peaceful, even though she is in a great deal of pain. When he first sees his newborn son, Levin is surprised by what he feels: pain. He knows his son will suffer in the world, simply because his son is human.

There are five chapters dedicated to the birth process, emphasizing the intensity of childbirth.

Part 7, Chapters 18-22

In these chapters we see what Levin fears as the future of Russia--one that is entirely industrialized.

The story returns to Stiva, who has ever-worsening finances. He is trying to get a government job with the Committee of the Joint Agency of the Mutual Credit Balance of Southern Railways and Banking Houses. It is a long-winded, bureaucratic name for the position, and the job itself is bureaucratic and jejune.

Karenin, of all people, decides to help Stiva get the job. This seems like an odd pairing, since Stiva has been the one asking Karenin to divorce Anna all along. Karenin finally asks Stiva to come late one night to Countess Lydia's, where he will share with Stiva his decision on the divorce from Anna. There, Stiva learns something strange about Karenin from Lydia: Karenin has "fallen under the influence" of a clairvoyant named Landau. This mysterious man apparently has thrown society for a loop, even causing one socialite to adopt him and dub him Count Bezzubov. Lydia tells Stiva that Karenin will do whatever Landau advises.

We see Landau enter into a trance, muttering weird words and listening for voices. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Landau tells Stiva he must leave. The very next morning, Stiva gets a note saying the divorce cannot happen.

Landau is a fake. By coming under his sway, Karenin and Countess Lydia show that they really don't have any true religious feelings in their hearts. Karenin is using religion as a ploy to further punish Anna. He kids himself into thinking he actually is being led by a higher power now. Karenin appears to be a very weak character. We have witnessed his gradual decline.



Part 7, Chapters 23-31

Anna has convinced herself that Vronsky is in love with a certain Princess Sorokina. Yet Vronsky has had his fill of Anna's paranoia. She has become too difficult to live with. Vronsky continues to go to public places like the opera, knowing that Anna cannot accompany him. Perhaps he has done so because he needs to get away from Anna often.

"Now nothing mattered: going or not going to Vozdvizhenskoe, getting or not getting a divorce from her husband. All that did not matter. The only thing that mattered was punishing him. When she poured out her usual dose of opium, and thought that she had only to drink off the whole bottle to die, it seemed to her so simple and easy that she began musing with enjoyment on how he would suffer, and repent and love her memory when it would be too late." Part 7, Chapter 26, pg. 781

The two have another fight and decide to return to the country to relax. Vronsky has some business to take care of, and somewhere along the process he will have to meet with Princess Sorokina. When Anna realizes this, she throws a fit.

The next day Anna refuses to go to the country. Vronsky receives a letter from Stiva saying that Karenin won't divorce Anna. Vronsky tries to comfort Anna by telling her she and the children are important in his life. But Anna, being cold and difficult as ever, says that Vronsky mentioned the children because he doesn't ever think of her alone. She is stirring the caldron here, but Vronsky remains collected.

Once he leaves, Anna convinces herself that Vronsky has said cruel things to her. She tells a servant to inform Vronsky that she'd like not to be disturbed while she sleeps, as she's about to go to bed. But then she tells herself that if Vronsky really loves her he'll come to her room and see to her. How could Vronsky know to do such a thing? Respecting her desires to be undisturbed, Vronsky goes to sleep in his study.

That night Anna has the recurring nightmare of the man banging on the railroad tracks.

The next day, the Princess Sorokina stops by with papers for Vronsky to read. Anna becomes enraged. Vronsky doesn't know how to handle her. He leaves the house. Anna sends him a note apologizing, but it doesn't get there in time. She sends the servant to Vronsky's mother's house. She even goes over to Dolly's, where she ends up meeting with Kitty. She instantly thinks Vronsky wishes he married Kitty. She purposely tells Kitty how charming Levin was when they met that night, intending to make Kitty jealous. But Kitty doesn't get jealous. She instead feels sorry for a woman in decay.

When Anna gets home she receives a note from Vronsky saying he won't be back that night until 10. She is angry with him and decides to go to his mother's to see him sooner. She doesn't understand that he never received her apologetic note, so he isn't aware of her feelings.



Anna hops onto the carriage to head to the train station, so she can go to Vronsky's mother's home. There, she hurts herself by envisioning Vronsky and the Princess together. She thinks of her husband, Karenin, and her son, Seriozha. She ponders betrayal. In the process, she forgets entirely why she has come to the train station; her servant must remind her.

She gets onto the train certain she has found the meaning of life: everyone is born to suffer.

She arrives at the transfer station and there receives a note from Vronsky apologizing and explaining that he didn't receive her note. Despite his kindness, she is infuriated. The only thing on her mind is punishing Vronsky for these supposed infidelities. She bends down to the tracks, so a train car can run over her body.

"But she did not take her eyes from the wheels of the second car. And exactly at the moment when the midpoint between the wheels drew level with her, she threw away the red bag, and drawing her head back into her shoulders, fell on her hands under the car, and with a light movement, as though she would rise immediately, dropped on her knees. And at the instant she was terror-stricken at what she was doing. 'Where am I? What am I doing? What for?' She tried to get up, to throw herself back; but something huge and merciless struck her on the head and dragged her down on her back." Part 7, Chapter 31, pg. 798

But it is too late. Anna Karenina is hit by a train and killed.

Anna dies at the hands of revenge, killing herself to hurt Vronsky. Anna has tried to distance herself from the natural birth-death cycle--both in her refusal to have children with Vronsky and by thinking of her own death as a means to harm Vronsky. Nowhere along the way does she share Kitty's understanding of life or Levin's strength of conviction. In many ways, she has brought about her own misfortune and spent her entire life suffering the consequences of her own actions.

Topic Tracking: Balance 5

Part 8

Now that Anna is dead, the story has come to its close. The final section deals with political issues facing Russia as a whole (originally, Tolstoy's publisher decided not to publish this final part of the book, since its political message was so controversial). The final part is summarized in a section called "What Happened to Anna Karenina." It is an explanation of Tolstoy's feelings on humanity and nature. This section discusses Levin's survival and endurance, and his dedication to religion, presenting a hopeful future for Russia.



Part 8, Chapters 1-5

Tolstoy plunges into a political issue facing the Slavs. At the end of the 19th century, the Slavic people living in the Ottoman Empire fought against the Turks, who discriminated against them. Many Russians supported the Slavic cause, but many others did not.

Topic Tracking: City vs. Country 9

It's important to notice which characters support the Slavic cause: Levin's half brother Sergei, Stiva and Vronsky--characters shown as morally flawed in their lifestyles.

Back at the train station, Vronsky has a scene of grief. He seems to be disintegrating just as Anna had, suffering from all the grief he has experienced in his life. He is trying to hold onto the last semblances of honor. It seems he views war as the most honorable way to die. He is suffering here from a toothache of all things (not exactly a fatal pain). The thoughts and the reality are sarcastically juxtaposed here: a stalwart soldier who wants to die gallantly is crying from a toothache?



Part 8, Chapters 6-19

Sergei goes to visit Kitty and his half-brother on their estate. There, on the estate, Kitty is happy because the baby is starting to understand more and even recognize people he knows. But just as this is happening, Levin grows more restless. He is studying more and more these days, and personal growth is lost. He doesn't understand how he was able to pray when Kitty was pregnant, all the while rejecting any belief in God. Levin is still looking for faith.

Topic Tracking: Balance 6

The climax for Levin, the hero of *Anna Karenina*, comes when he speaks with a peasant named Theodore. Theodore tells him we should live not for our bellies, but for our souls. We must remember God and things that are bigger than us. Levin suddenly understands what this means, realizing that the best things are beyond our control as humans. How appropriate that a peasant helps Levin to realize all of this.

"But now, since his marriage, when he had begun to confine himself more and more to living for himself, though he experienced no delight at all at the thought of the work he was doing, he felt absolutely convinced of its necessity, saw that it succeeded far better than in the past, and that it kept on growing more and more." Part 8, Chapter 10, pg. 823

Levin becomes ecstatic, thinking he understands the meaning of life. He thinks to himself that he will never again be anything but kind to everyone in sight. Shortly afterward, though, he yells at a peasant and becomes confused. Yet in his new state of clarity he realizes that having faith doesn't equal perfection. Levin, like others, understands now that to be human is to be flawed.

When Levin approaches home, coming in from his land, he hears that Kitty and the baby have gone into the woods. A thunderstorm crashes down. Levin is frightened that they could be struck by lightning. He finds them in the woods, finally, safe but soaked. The storm represents the confusion in Levin's mind. Yet right after Levin finds his family, the sky clears. Everyone is safe again.

"Just as the bees, whirling round him, now menacing him and distracting his attention, prevented him from enjoying complete physical peace, forced him to restrain his movements to avoid them, so had the petty cares that had swarmed about him from the moment he got into the trap restricted his spiritual freedom; but that lasted only so long as he was among them. Just as his bodily strength was still unaffected in spite of the bees, so too was the spiritual strength that he had just become aware of." Part 8, Chapter 14, pg. 837

Topic Tracking: Balance 7

The final scene in the novel depicts the new baby, Mitya, recognizing his father, Levin. It is as if the younger generation is thinking of and evaluating the older generation, much in the way the older generation thinks of the younger generation. Levin realizes this and understands that the cycle of life has come full circle.