Anna Karenina

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF LEO TOLSTOY

Tolstoy was born to a large noble family in Russia. He studied law in university, but he was an indifferent student and left without finishing his degree. After racking up gambling debts, Tolstoy joined the army and began to write while he was an officer. During a trip to Europe in 1860, he converted to a non-violent spiritual anarchist. Tolstoy and his wife, Sophia, had thirteen children. In addition to writing major works of fiction—among them *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and several short stories—Tolstoy also wrote several tracts on education and spiritual/political tracts, and in his later life felt that these tracts were the foundation of his legacy, as opposed to his fiction. He was extremely vigorous and zealous about working in the fields. Tolstoy died at a train station, and thousands of peasants flocked the streets at his funeral.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Liberal reforms initiated by Emperor Alexander II of Russia, especially emancipation of the serfs, form the background of the political events surrounding the events of the novel. In nineteenth-century Russia, writers were promoting communal living and the emancipation of women as well. Russia was undergoing a societal transition from a primarily rural, agricultural economy to a more Westernized, urban, industrial society, and in many ways Tolstoy was deeply suspicious of the changes.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina* in the height of what is now called the Golden Age of Russian Literature. Romanticism was at its peak, and the movement inspired writers in all genres. Gogol is generally considered one of the first authors of this era, and his novel *Dead Souls* was very influential in terms of style and psychological complexity. Dostoevsky's novels, such as *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, also explore the inner ranges of human experience, trying to capture both the individual and the national experience. Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina* is also reacting against the family novel, a type of work that had been popular in Russia.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Anna Karenina*
- **When Written:** 1873-1877
- **Where Written:** Russia
- **When Published:** Published in serial installments from 1873 to 1877 in a magazine called *The Russian Messenger*
- **Literary Period:** Golden Age of Russian Literature
- **Genre:** Realist novel
- **Setting:** Nineteenth-century Russia
- **Climax:** Anna's suicide in front of the train
- **Antagonist:** Vronsky and Karenin are both antagonists, though both are also mixed
- **Point of View:** The novel frequently shifts perspectives, but the main protagonists are Anna and Levin

EXTRA CREDIT

Art Imitates Life. In *Anna Karenina*, Levin gives Kitty a diary just before their wedding that exposes all his misdemeanors and guilty secrets. Right before he married his own wife, Tolstoy also gave her a diary containing all his sins.

Anna Karenina, the Musical. There have been numerous adaptations of *Anna Karenina* for stage and screen, but one of the most poorly reviewed ones was a 1992 Broadway musical that the New York Times called "comic-strip Tolstoy."

PLOT SUMMARY

The Oblonsky house is in turmoil: Stiva Oblonsky, a genial aristocrat, has had an affair with the children's former governess, and his wife, Dolly, is furious. She is devastated and refuses to leave her rooms. Oblonsky tries very hard to feel guilty, but he's too merry and affable, and too prone to enjoy life, to feel too remorseful. The servants know that they should side with Dolly, but they can't help being lenient with Oblonsky.

Levin, a landowner who lives in the country and is an old friend of Oblonsky's, comes to visit Oblonsky in his office in Moscow. Oblonsky has gotten his position through his brother-in-law, Karenin. Levin says that he is in love with Oblonsky's sister-in-law, Kitty, and Oblonsky sets up a plan for them to meet. While Levin is in Moscow, he stays with his half-brother, Koznyshev, an intellectual; the two men discuss Nikolai, their ill older brother. Even though Nikolai says he wants to be left alone, Levin resolves to go and see him.

Levin goes to the skating rink where Oblonsky had arranged for him to meet up with Kitty; sure enough, she is there, and he can show off his physical prowess. Oblonsky warns Levin of a rival suitor, a dashing young military officer named Vronsky. Levin visits Kitty and proposes to her, but Kitty is smitten with Vronsky and refuses Levin. The next day, Oblonsky and Vronsky both go to the **train** station: Oblonsky is there to meet his

sister, Anna, and Vronsky is there to pick up Countess Vronsky, his mother. As soon as Vronsky and Anna make eye contact, they fall in love. At the same time, a worker falls under the train and is killed.

Ever since Dolly found out about Oblonsky's affair, she has remained isolated from society with her children. Anna greets Dolly compassionately and sympathetically. When Kitty arrives at the Oblonsky house, Anna is warm to her, and Kitty looks up to Anna. However, at the ball that is held soon after Kitty and Anna arrive, Anna dresses her best and steals the spotlight. Vronsky is clearly captivated by her, and though he dances some waltzes with Kitty, he saves the most important dances for Anna, demonstrating that he is in love with Anna, not Kitty.

Levin, gloomy after Kitty has rejected him, goes to visit Nikolai, who is even sicklier than Levin remembers. Levin tells Marya, Nikolai's mistress, to write to Levin if things get worse. Levin feels much better when he returns home to the countryside and the **natural world**.

After the ball, Anna returns to Petersburg, relieved to escape Vronsky, but she sees Vronsky on the train platform and realizes, with a little glow of pride, that he has followed her from Moscow. Anna's husband, Karenin, meets her at the platform, and Vronsky can tell that Anna does not love her husband. When Anna sees her son, Seryozha, she is initially disappointed: he does not quite live up to her ideal memory of him. After a conversation with Countess Lydia, a smug, morally upright lady, Anna reassures herself that nothing untoward has happened with Vronsky.

Kitty's health has been worsening all spring, and after consultation with doctors, the family decides she should go to a foreign spa. Dolly talks to Kitty and realizes that Kitty is devastated both because she rashly refused Levin and because she is upset over Vronsky's rejection of her. Meanwhile, in Petersburg, Anna has been spending more and more time in Princess Betsy's elite, brilliant, morally lax social circle, where Vronsky also lingers, instead of in the stuff, morally righteous circle that Countess Lydia anchors. Though Anna initially asks Vronsky to return to Kitty, her eyes tell a different story: she is in love with him. Rumors are beginning to fly about Anna and Vronsky, but nothing concrete has happened yet. When Anna returns home after a party at Princess Betsy's, Karenin confronts her about her relationship with Vronsky, warning her that she has been too carefree. The narrative jumps forward to after Anna and Vronsky have just slept together, and Anna sobs, **dreaming** rashly that Vronsky and Karenin are both her husband.

Levin, still dejected after Kitty's refusal, busies himself with his work in the **natural world** on the farm; he sends Nikolai to a foreign spa to improve his health. Oblonsky pays Levin a visit, and Levin learns that Kitty is not married and that she is ill, but he does not inquire too deeply out of pride and embarrassment. Oblonsky and Levin discuss a tract of forest that Oblonsky is selling; Levin thinks that Oblonsky is getting swindled.

Ever since the affair with Anna, Vronsky's external life has remained essentially the same: he's still a popular officer in the regiment. Vronsky buys a new **horse**, Frou-Frou, for the upcoming officers' steeplechase. Just before the race, Vronsky visits Anna, who tells him that she's pregnant. Vronsky is almost late for the race, but he makes it back in time. Frou-Frou is excitable, and though Vronsky almost rides her to victory, he shifts incorrectly on her near the end; she breaks her back and must be killed. Although the relationship between Anna and Karenin has appeared the same externally throughout Anna and Vronsky's affair, on the inside, it is crumbling. At the race, Anna only has eyes for Vronsky; afterwards, Karenin admonishes her to keep up appearances.

At the German spa, Kitty meets Varenka, a humble, virtuous young girl; she is the ward of Madame Stahl, an outwardly pious old society lady. Varenka aids Petrov, a painter at the spa; Kitty attempts to do the same, but the painter develops a crush on Kitty. Kitty realizes that she must be true to herself, rather than attempt to follow another person's way of living life. The arrival of the old Prince, Kitty's father, also helps to expose Madame Stahl as a hypocrite.

As a respite from his intellectual life, Koznyshev, Levin's half-brother, goes to visit Levin on his farm, which makes Levin uncomfortable, because life on the farm is anything but relaxing for him. Koznyshev lectures Levin for withdrawing from public affairs, but Levin is more concerned with actually plowing his fields than with the philosophical issues surrounding peasant life. Levin finds deep fulfillment when he joins the peasants in mowing. Dolly has moved to her country estate with her children for the summer to save money, but the estate is falling apart. Oblonsky writes to Levin to ask him to help Dolly; when Levin arrives, Dolly has the estate under control, but she is nevertheless happy to see him. Dolly mentions Kitty, which makes Levin angry and embarrassed. But when he sees Kitty passing in a carriage, his love for her is renewed.

Karenin wants to keep up his reputation in society. He decides that the best punishment for Anna is to refuse her request for a divorce and to forbid her from seeing Vronsky anymore. Anna is shocked and furious. She writes Karenin a letter saying that she is taking Seryozha and going to Moscow, but in the end, she tears up the letter. Instead of going to Moscow, she goes to Princess Betsy's croquet party, where she hopes to see Vronsky; when Vronsky isn't there, she arranges to meet with him through a complicated interchange of **notes**.

Although Vronsky appears to live the same carefree life as all the officers of the regiment, he is much more scrupulous both with his finances and with his reputation than most. However, Anna's pregnancy throws him for a loop, as he does not know how to proceed with his normal rules of conduct. When his old

colleague Serpukhovskoy visits, who has just received a big promotion, Vronsky realizes that his affair with Anna has been holding his career back. When Vronsky and Anna meet, Vronsky encourages her to press Karenin for a divorce; Anna, however, says that this is impossible, because with a divorce she will never see Seryozha again. Karenin has a major political triumph with a successful speech, and that same night, Anna confronts Karenin and tells him that they cannot live as man and wife.

Levin has come to hate the farm labor he once loved. Kitty is on Dolly's estate nearby, which distracts Levin so much that he goes to visit his friend Sviyzahsky, who tries to set Levin up with his sister-in-law. Sviyazhsky's actions contradict his philosophies: though he purports to be against serfdom, he runs his farm as though the peasants are serfs. Sviyzahsky says that education is the key to improving peasant life, but Levin disagrees. Levin realizes that farming only works when the peasants are incentivized; though the peasants are resistant to Levin's reforms initially, they eventually come around to his ideas. Nikolai visits the farm; he is sicker than ever, and his visit causes Levin to start thinking about death and mortality.

Anna and Karenin remain married, but their marriage is only a façade, upheld solely for reputation's sake. Despite Karenin's explicit demands to the contrary, Vronsky appears at the Karenin household. Anna is pregnant and no longer as beautiful as she once was; she is irritable and jealous, though she and Vronsky still share a bond stronger than ever. It turns out that Anna and Vronsky have had the same ominous **nightmare** involving a peasant man speaking in French. Karenin is furious that Vronsky has arrived in his house. Karenin says that he is taking Seryozha and moving to Moscow and does not relent when Anna implores him to let her have custody of her son. Karenin snatches Vronsky's love **letters** to Anna and takes them to a divorce lawyer, but it turns out that they are insufficient evidence to prove adultery. Karenin runs into Oblonsky, who invites him to a dinner party at his house; though Karenin refuses at first, telling Oblonsky that he is getting a divorce from Anna, he eventually accepts.

When Levin arrives at the Oblonsky's dinner party, all he can think about is seeing Kitty again; both Levin and Kitty are keyed up with emotion. The discussion turns to infidelity, which makes Karenin deeply uncomfortable; Karenin tells Dolly that he is planning to divorce Anna, and though Dolly begs him to reconsider, he remains firm. Meanwhile, at the dinner party, Levin proposes to Kitty nearly wordlessly with a special **code**: they are so in sync with each others' desires that they don't need any words to show their love and to become engaged to be married. The next day, in a blissful haze, Levin calls on Kitty and her parents; he shows her a **diary** that reveals all his secrets—i.e., that he is agnostic and not a virgin—and she forgives him.

After the dinner party, Karenin receives two telegrams, one saying that he has not received a promotion he'd wanted and the other saying that Anna is dying in childbirth and that she begs his forgiveness. When he arrives at her bedside, he sees Vronsky and realizes that Vronsky loves her as well. Anna has delivered a baby girl, but it does not seem as though Anna will survive, and Karenin forgives both Anna and Vronsky. Karenin feels buoyed by his own ability to forgive. Vronsky is in despair; he attempts to shoot himself, but ends up wounding without killing himself. Even when Anna doesn't die, Karenin still accepts the daughter as legally his own and feels uplifted with spiritual joy at his forgiveness. Vronsky accepts a post in central Russia, and Princess Betsy begs Karenin to allow Vronsky to visit one last time; Karenin says that it's Anna's decision, and Anna refuses to see Vronsky again. Oblonsky suggests to Karenin that Karenin grant Anna a divorce, and Karenin concedes that this is the best option. Upon hearing the news that Karenin has agreed to the divorce, Vronsky goes to visit Anna, and the two embrace passionately. He abruptly turns down his post in Russia, and he and Anna leave for Italy without accepting Karenin's offer of divorce.

The marriage preparations for Kitty and Levin proceed quickly. Though Levin expresses his religious doubts to the priest, the priest allows Levin to proceed with the marriage anyway. Despite some last-minute comical mishaps and fumbles, the wedding itself proceeds beautifully; Kitty and Levin truly seem to have an equal partnership.

Meanwhile, Vronsky and Anna have been traveling in Italy. Anna is in a state of infatuated bliss, but Vronsky is bored: he has taken up painting in the palazzo they've rented, but he doesn't have true skill. Vronsky commissions the talented painter Mikhailov to paint a portrait of Anna. Upon seeing the true painter's portrait, Vronsky abandons his own work and grows even more dissatisfied with Italian life.

Levin and Kitty slowly adjust to married life; though initially they quarrel often, they eventually settle into a routine. Levin is unable to get much work done on his book while Kitty is around, and he doesn't understand why she is so obsessed with housework; Kitty, for her part, is preparing to have a baby. They receive a letter from Marya, Nikolai's mistress, saying that Nikolai is very ill; Levin and Kitty both travel to visit him. Levin is so emotionally shaken that he becomes useless around Nikolai, but Kitty takes charge, dealing instinctively and expertly with all the pragmatic arrangements. Nikolai declines slowly, his illness lingering, but he eventually passes away; at nearly the same moment of his death, Kitty learns that she is pregnant.

Anna and Vronsky return to Petersburg. Countless Lydia calls on the grief-stricken Karenin and offers herself as a confidant. Lydia attempts to drive an even greater wedge between Anna and Karenin by refusing to answer Anna's request to see Seryozha. When Karenin learns that Anna is in Petersburg, he is horrified, which delights Lydia. Although Seryozha has been told that Anna is dead, he refuses to believe it. Anna visits

Seryozha, which reminds her of the deep emotional connection to her son that she lacks with her daughter who she had with Vronsky. Anna is becoming increasingly hectic and resentful that Vronsky can continue to travel in society while she is a social pariah. Anna goes to the opera, despite Vronsky's warnings, and the night is a disaster, as she is publicly humiliated as a disgrace. The next day, she and Vronsky leave Petersburg for Vronsky's country estate.

The Oblonsky country estate has been ruined, so Dolly and her children are spending the summer at Kitty and Levin's country house; Kitty's friend Varenka and Levin's half-brother, Kozyshev, are also spending the summer there. Varenka and Kozyshev go mushroom-hunting together, and though Kozyshev is on the brink of a marriage proposal, he backs away at the crucial moment, and the proposal does not transpire. Oblonsky arrives with his young, dashing friend Veslovsky, and Levin is immediately jealous when he sees Kitty smiling at Veslovsky. Oblonsky, Levin, and Veslovsky all go out hunting; Oblonsky and Levin are skilled, but Veslovsky is inept. Levin's dog, Laska, can understand Levin's moods. Levin fluctuates between being sour and resentful that Veslovsky is messing things up and enjoying the snipe-shooting. Even though Veslovsky is generally an affable, likeable guest, upon their return, Veslovsky flirts with Kitty so much that Levin kicks him out.

Dolly goes to visit Anna; Levin insists that she take his carriage. During the ride, Dolly is envious of the peasant women she sees and is jealous of Anna as well, lamenting that she is no longer pretty and loveable. Princess Varvara, Anna and Oblonsky's aunt, is sponging off Anna and Vronsky's largess. Anna and Vronsky live in an opulent, lavish fashion in the countryside, and Dolly is ashamed of Levin's dirty carriage and her shabby wardrobe. But all the luxury is a cold replacement for love, Dolly realizes; she sees that Anna does not really have an emotional bond with Annie, her daughter. Vronsky asks Dolly to press Anna to write to Karenin for a divorce so that if he and Anna have more children, they can legally belong to Vronsky rather than Karenin. Dolly feels awkward, dowdy, and uncomfortable at the fancy estate: everything seems fake and artificial. Vronsky dismisses the peasants and dismisses Levin's attitude toward them, and Dolly finds herself defending Levin.

Though Tolstoy does not write out the explanation explicitly, Anna confesses to Dolly that she will not have any more children. Despite this explanation, Dolly continues to insist that divorce is the best option. Anna has been taking morphine to try and escape her troubles. When Dolly returns to Levin and Kitty's estate, she now feels satisfied and happy in her life, rather than anxious and irritated, as she had before.

Vronsky and Anna continue in the same static status quo of their relationship. In the fall, Vronsky goes to Moscow for the elections. Kitty and Levin are also in Moscow for Kitty's confinement before she has her baby, and Kitty encourages Levin to go to the elections as well, even though he doesn't see the point of politics. Levin feels uncomfortable and awkward at the elections: he doesn't follow the gist of the debates, and he finds himself making awkward mistakes and gaffes. In contrast, Oblonsky, Vronsky, and Koznyshev love all the political fervor and activity. Vronsky receives a **letter** from Anna saying that Annie is sick and that Vronsky must return home at once; he is irritated, but he gets on the next **train** home. Even though, in hindsight, Anna regrets the hectic and desperate tone of her letter, she's pleased that it worked. When Vronsky returns, he affirms his love for her, and Anna agrees to ask Karenin for a divorce.

In Moscow, Kitty and Levin await the birth of their child. Kitty is calm, but Levin, who is out of his element in the city as opposed to the country, is anxious. He doesn't socialize at the club and isn't involved in politics, so the city is boring to him, and the daily routines of city life exhaust him. Levin visits his friend Katavasov and the scholar Merov, who likes the sound of his own voice much more than listening to Levin's project. He goes to a concert with Wagnerian-style music but is puzzled by the aesthetic and doesn't know what to think. Levin drops by the club, which is unusual for him; he relaxes and jokes with everyone, even Vronsky. Oblonsky insists that Levin accompany him on a visit to Anna; Oblonsky says that Anna is lonely in Petersburg, passing the time in writing a children's book and caring for an English family. Levin is first struck by Mikhailov's portrait of Anna, and is then smitten with the woman herself. When Levin returns home, Kitty can tell by his **blushes** that he has developed a crush on Anna, and she is devastated; they talk about it until the wee hours of the morning. Anna—whether consciously or unconsciously—makes every man who meets her fall in love with her; however, Vronsky's affection is fading. Anna is waiting in suspense to hear whether or not Karenin will grant her the divorce.

Very early the next morning, Kitty goes into labor. Even though he's a nonbeliever, Levin finds himself instinctively praying. He dashes out in search of the midwife and the doctor, who feel no rush to return back quickly. Kitty's labor is long and difficult, and Levin wanders around in an extremely emotional, helpless state the whole time. Just as when Nikolai died and Levin was paralyzed with his strong feelings, he finds himself similarly unable to do anything but become an emotional wreck during Kitty's labor. When Mitya, their son, is finally born, Levin sees the son himself as superfluous to the fact that Kitty has emerged alive and well.

The Oblonskys have no money left, and Oblonsky resolves to get a new, more well-paid bureaucratic position. He goes to speak with Karenin both about the position and about the situation with Anna. Oblonsky tells Karenin that Anna no longer demands custody of Seryozha and simply wants a divorce. Before Karenin makes his decision, however, he and Countess Lydia consult with Jules Landau, a French psychic

who is supposedly clairvoyant. Oblonsky sits in on the séance, and the session confuses him so much that he's uncharacteristically at a loss for words. The next day, Karenin says that based on what Landau uttered in his trance, Karenin will not grant Anna the divorce.

Meanwhile, Anna and Vronsky's relationship has disintegrated: Anna clings desperately to him, and Vronsky yearns for freedom. They bicker constantly. Anna is hysterically, irrationally paranoid. They agree to go to the country, but when Vronsky says he must visit his mother first, Anna flies into a jealous rage. They have a quarrel that lasts longer than a day, which is unprecedented for them, as they typically fight intensely and often but briefly. Anna sends a flurry of complicated and somewhat contradictory **messages** to Vronsky, only some of which he receives.

Anna goes to visit Dolly. When Anna looks in the mirror, she doesn't recognize herself. On the journey to Dolly, her thoughts are fractured, and she resolves that she will leave Vronsky. Kitty is also visiting Dolly. Though Kitty avoids Anna at first, and though Anna is somewhat cruel to her, Kitty realizes that Anna is not in her right mind and treats her with compassion. Anna returns home to find a note from Vronsky saying that he will come soon, but not immediately—he's only responding to the telegram of her that he saw—and she resolves to go and meet him at the **train** station. Because Anna herself is so hysterical and miserable, she sees everyone around her as in despair as well. She sees a peasant working by the train tracks who looks like the dirty peasant of her recurring **nightmare**. In utter misery, Anna kneels on the train tracks in front of the oncoming train.

It is two months after Anna's death. Koznychev has finally published the book on workers' rights that he's spent six years writing, but nobody cares about it. Instead, the topic on everybody's lips is the Serbian emancipation--that is, the movement to liberate the Slavs—and Koznyshev hurls himself into this issue with great zeal. He and Katavasov decide to visit Levin in the country. The **train** they take is full of volunteers for the Serbian effort; among the volunteers is Vronsky. Vronsky has been thrown into complete despair by Anna's suicide, but the Serbian effort gives him some renewed purpose in life. Katavasov talks to the volunteers and finds out that they're all just young men who want to escape their lives in Russia, but Koznyshev is determined to believe in the heroism of the cause.

Kitty greets Koznyshev and Katavasov; Dolly, the old Prince, Agafya, and Dolly's children are also present. Kitty is comfortable and at ease with all aspects of the household. Unlike Anna with her daughter, Kitty breastfeeds Mitya and has an obvious emotional connection with her son. Levin is in an existential funk: he has been reading many philosophers and wracking his brains, but he cannot find any purpose in life. Kitty hopes that the guests will pull Levin out of himself for a little while.

The day that Koznyshev and Katavasov arrive is one of Levin's most tormenting days. However, Levin sees a peasant who tells him that he lives for his soul; this idea of living for one's soul is an epiphany for Levin, who undergoes a sudden religious transformation. The previously nonbelieving Levin suddenly has a deep faith in God, and this realization makes him joyful. Although he is not perfect—indeed, he still becomes irritable and anxious—the existential despair is over. Levin realizes that instead of worrying about humanity, he can only take care of himself and his family; he should act instead of think.

Levin takes the visitors to see the bees. Kitty and Mitya go into the **forest** to avoid the heat of the house. A disagreement about the Slavic question breaks out among the men, but before it gets too intense, Levin sees the approaching storm and hurries everyone home; they arrive just in time, and Levin dashes to the forest to check on Kitty and Mitya. He sees lightning hit their favorite tree, but luckily, Kitty and Mitya were in the opposite corner of the woods. Levin looks up at the sky and rejoices in his epiphany of faith in God.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Anna Arkadyevna Karenina – Anna is a beautiful, aristocratic, sharply intelligent, intensely charismatic woman. Nearly everyone--male, female, young, old--is magnetically attracted to her, and at the beginning of the novel, she is the brilliant center of society. However, her relentless pursuit of love and her extramarital affair with Vronsky cause her to be cast into social exile: she falls from an object of worship to a pariah. Anna believes deeply in love: her love for Vronsky, her desire to reconcile Dolly and Oblonsky, her love for her son, Seryozha. Anna is also deeply jealous, particularly later in the novel: she clings furiously to Vronsky when she can sense that their relationship is souring. Anna comes to hate her husband, Karenin, because she sees his ambition as maintaining his reputation in society rather than following his passions. As the novel progresses, she becomes increasingly passionate and dominated by strong torrents of emotion. Even though Anna is deeply flawed—she commits adultery and abandons her children—the reader nevertheless identifies with her. The reader comes under Anna's charismatic spell, and even though the other characters and even the narrator disapprove of her actions, the reader remains sympathetic with Anna throughout, despite her faults.

Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky – Vronsky is a dashing young military officer whom Anna falls in love with. Their passionate affair causes Anna to leave her husband, Karenin; eventually, the affair spirals into despair, and Anna commits suicide due to the tumultuous consequences of obsession. Vronsky is a fine physical specimen who takes pride in his vitality. He enjoys the

trappings of society. Tolstoy does not give the reader much insight into Vronsky's psychology: we do not know why exactly he jilted Kitty, for example, nor are we quite sure how he feels about his relationship with Anna. Yet even though Vronsky is somewhat two-dimensional, Tolstoy depicts him as a characteristic romantic protagonist, a strapping officer who lives by his passions, but does not get so deeply attached to anything that it consumes and destroys him. Indeed, one of the reasons Tolstoy does not let the reader know too much about Vronsky or become too attached is because Vronsky himself remains a slightly aloof figure throughout. Vronsky lacks desire for commitment and does not seem to want to settle down and establish a family; rather, he remains fundamentally single, even throughout his long relationship with Anna. Although he does seem to begin to desire children and a family toward the end of the novel, when he begins pressing Anna for a divorce so any future children can belong legally to him, Vronsky is primarily a lone figure, not a family man; for example, he never seems to display fatherly tendencies toward his daughter, Annie.

Count Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin – Karenin, Anna's husband, is a high-ranking, wealthy government official. His primary concern throughout the novel is to uphold his reputation in society: he would rather remain in a loveless marriage that appears fine from the outside, even if it's crumbling from within, than risk his reputation with divorce and scandal, even if that is the more emotionally honest route to take. Whereas Vronsky is youthful, vigorous, and handsome, Karenin is older and stiffer: for example, he has bad teeth and ears that stick out, while Vronsky's robust teeth show that he is at the pinnacle of health. Karenin is also deeply superstitious and is swayed by Countess Lydia's hocus-pocus spiritualism. Although Karenin is often cold and emotionless, and although Anna views him as a hypocrite, Karenin does prove to have some dignity and pride: he forgives Anna when she has baby Annie and adopts the daughter as legally his own, even though she is Vronsky's child.

Prince Stepan (Stiva) Arkadyevich Oblonsky – Anna's brother and Dolly's husband, Stiva Oblonsky, is a well-liked, social, merry aristocrat. Even though he has had an affair at the beginning of the novel, and even though his servants know that they should all be on Dolly's side, they can't help but still remain loyal to Oblonsky because of his joy in life and good humor. Even though Oblonsky himself knows he should feel guilty—he tries his hardest to feel guilty—he's too constitutionally merry and loves life too much to become obsessively buried by consequences and anxiety. Oblonsky can smooth over nearly any awkward social situation. He lives for pleasure and spends beyond his means. Oblonsky does not have many moral scruples, but he's not a bad person: he simply doesn't seem to feel anything extremely deeply, content to live always on a sparkling surface.

Princess Darya (Dolly) Alexandrovna Oblonsky – Oblonsky's wife, Kitty's sister, and Anna's sister-in-law, the long-suffering Dolly has perhaps the most realistic version of marriage and motherhood that Tolstoy depicts throughout the novel. Dolly is emotional, but ultimately, she takes a pragmatic approach to life. At the very beginning of the book, she must cope with Oblonsky's adultery; although she is furious and nearly hysterical, she rallies and pulls herself together for the sake of her children. Dolly is always plagued with money troubles: Oblonsky's lavish ways stretch their modest means, so she is the one who must figure out how to make ends meet. Dolly is one of the few characters to remain loyal to and sympathetic with Anna throughout. Even though Dolly's married life is by no means perfect, she makes her choices for the sake of her family, and she ultimately seems to be content with her life.

Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin – Levin, the other main protagonist of the novel (besides Anna), is a landowner who is primarily concerned with farming, agricultural, and rural life. He is socially awkward: he feels much more at home working on his farm or being outdoors than in the complex political affairs and dramas of city life. Unlike his brothers, Levin is not a natural intellectual and debater; rather than arguing indoors, he feels more instinctively at home working outside. Levin is frequently anxious and constantly arguing, since he wants to think everything through. He doesn't want to westernize Russian society, as many aristocrats do, simply for the sake of elegance; however, he also doesn't want to cling blindly to old ways in regards to farming, but instead promotes efficiency and agricultural reforms. Levin falls in love with Kitty, and though his proposal fails the first time, causing him great embarrassment and self-loathing, eventually they consummate their relationship in what ultimately turns out to be the happiest marriage of the three main marriages in the novel. Levin spends a great deal of time writing and thinking about large questions of agriculture and humanity, but he ultimately concludes that everyone must concern themselves with taking care of their own individual affairs rather than becoming sucked into huge existential crises. Levin is also deeply atheistic throughout almost the entire novel, but at the end, he undergoes a religious epiphany after an encounter with a peasant. Levin's transformation from an atheist to a believer mirrors Tolstoy's own transformation. Levin is perhaps the closest character to Tolstoy himself in the novel, who believed fervently in working on the land and connecting to one's own individual labor rather than striving to achieve recognition in hypocritical city society.

Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky – Kitty, Dolly's younger sister, is a sensitive, excitable, somewhat high-strung young girl who begins the novel in love with Vronsky. After he rejects her in favor of the dazzling Anna, she spirals into a depression. But when she goes to the German spa, she has a realization: she must be true to herself. She marries Levin and settles into the model of a loving wife and caring mother.

When Levin's brother Nikolai is sick, Kitty is able to maintain a level head and care expertly for him, even though Levin is thrown into so much emotional turmoil that he becomes paralyzed. Similarly, Kitty is calm and happy in her pregnancy and labor, since she understands what to do. Kitty and Levin are in sync with each other's thoughts and feelings. Their marriage is an equal partnership. Kitty matures from a high-strung girl into a loving and honest wife and mother.

Nikolai Dmitrich Levin – Levin's brother, Nikolai, has fallen prey to gambling and alcohol addictions and is quite sick, ultimately dying a protracted death. Though Nikolai has passionate political and intellectual views, they fade into the background when his illness takes over. Nikolai's death makes Levin deeply troubled as he tries to grapple with existential questions of life and death.

Sergei Ivanovich Koznyshev – Koznyshev, Levin and Nikolai's half-brother, is an intellectual who immerses himself zealously in all the most current political activities. He follows all the intellectual trends and fads rather than developing his own points of view. For all his political energy and enthusiasm, however, he cannot settle down and commit to a deep relationship and a family life, as he is unable to propose to Varenka.

Sergei Alexeich (Seryozha) Karenin – Anna deeply loves her son, Seryozha, who is her child with Karenin. Anna does not want to give up custody of Seryozha, which she would have to do if she and Karenin officially got divorced, since this is Karenin's primary stipulation. But as her relationship with Vronsky intensifies, Anna abandons Seryozha. Seryozha still loves Anna, despite everything. However, as Seryozha grows up, he focuses instead on his relationship with his father. Anna visits him briefly, which reminds Seryozha how much he loves her. However, he ultimately tries to repress his emotions, pushing away his feelings of loss and rejection and committing himself to his own life, that is, one without his mother. Although she abandons him, Anna still feels a much deeper emotional bond with her son than with Annie, her daughter.

Princess Betsy Tverskoy – Princess Betsy is the center of Anna's brilliant, high-class social circle in Petersburg. She is graceful, liked by all, and canny, as she knows all the intricacies of her complicated network. Betsy's social circle is elite but ethically relaxed; however, when Anna and Vronsky's affair becomes highlighted publically, Betsy hypocritically snubs Anna, even though Betsy herself has a reputation for moral laxity and is not exactly faithful to her own husband.

Countess Lydia Ivanovna – Lydia is a sanctimonious, pious, upright woman; she professes to be extremely religious but only uses Christianity for her own self-serving needs. Lydia preys on Karenin, attaching herself to his side when he is vulnerable and convincing him to follow her lead in terms of her spirituality and in terms of his separation from Anna. Lydia also tells Seryozha that his mother is dead, further attempting to cut Anna completely out of the boy's life.

Serpukhovskoy – Serpukhovskoy and Vronsky grew up with parallel lives in the regiment, but Serpukhovskoy has overtaken Vronsky career-wise: while Vronsky was focusing on his affair with Anna, Serpukhovskoy was moving forward with his ambitions. He represents a sort of parallel version of Vronsky, or what Vronsky would have been like had he not had the affair with Anna.

Annie – Anna and Vronsky's daughter, Annie, remains a baby; Tolstoy never shows events from Annie's perspective. Anna loves her son Seryozha more than her daughter: whereas she feels real passion for her son, Anna does not have the same emotional connection with her daughter and is out of touch with her needs and desires. Though Anna lavishes Annie with every material comfort, she does not give her true love.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Prince Shcherbatsky – Kitty, Dolly, and Natalie's father, the old Prince, never trusts Vronsky, instead much preferring Levin as a match for Kitty. He sees through the hypocrisies of fashionable society.

Princess Shcherbatsky – Kitty, Dolly, and Natalie's mother, the old Princess, is eager to please fashionable society. She initially prefers Vronsky to Levin and enjoys the finer aspects of life. Unlike her husband, she is somewhat oblivious to hypocrisy.

Varenka – Kitty's friend at the German spa. Varenka is humble, loyal, and good. She and Levin's brother, Koznyshev, almost get engaged, but the moment passes and the potential relationship fizzles.

Petrov – Petrov is a painter at the German spa. Varenka has an innocuous friendship with him, but although Kitty naively tries to do the same, she finds that Petrov is falling in love with her, despite her attempts not to flirt.

Katavasov – Vronsky's friend who becomes involved in the Slavic question and political affairs later in the novel.

Princess Varvara Oblonsky – Anna's and Oblonsky's elderly aunt, Princess Varvara, is notorious for living off other people's largess. She rationalizes Anna and Vronsky's affair because she wants to keep benefitting from their luxurious lifestyle, but towards the end of the novel, even she abandons Anna.

Petritsky – Vronsky's roommate and friend in the regiment; a rash, carefree young officer.

Marya – Nikolai's mistress, Marya, is a prostitute, but she cares for Nikolai as though she were his legal spouse.

Agafya Mikhailovna – Agafya was Levin's childhood nurse, and he is loyal to her. She has stayed with Levin and worked for him throughout his life, and she comes to work for Levin and Kitty when they marry.

Golenishchev – Golenishchev is one of Vronsky's friends;

although relations between Golenischev and Vronsky have been somewhat strained in the past, they get along in Italy, especially since Golenischev doesn't judge Anna and Vronsky's relationship.

Veslovsky – A young society dandy and friend of Oblonsky's whom Oblonsky brings along when he visits Levin. Veslovsky is an abysmal hunter and he flirts shamelessly with Kitty, yet he is ultimately affable and pleasant.

Madame Stahl – Madame Stahl, a woman at the German spa whom Varenka takes care of, is—unlike Varenka—a hypocrite, professing to be extremely spiritual when in fact she operates in an entirely vain, self-serving fashion.

Sviyazhsky – Levin's friend, a landowner, whose cruel actions towards his peasants go against his stated enlightened opinions about them.

Prince Lvov – Natalie's husband and Levin's brother-in-law. Levin feels comfortable around the affable Prince, who has raised his children well.

Princess Natalya (Natalie) Alexandrovna Lvov – Dolly and Kitty's sister, Natalie, is a pleasant woman with a happy family life.

Metrov – A scholar whom Levin visits in Moscow.

Jules Landau – Landau is a French clairvoyant whom Lydia, in her sanctimonious spiritualism, consults for advice. Tolstoy portrays him as a bogus fraud. Lydia uses Landau's advice to declare that Karenin should not divorce Anna.

Mitya – Mitya (a diminutive form of the name Dmitri) is Levin and Kitty's baby. At the end of the novel, Mitya recognizes his parents, showing that they are a solid, happy family unit.

Countess Vronsky – Vronsky's mother, Countess Vronsky, is another example of a hypocritical society lady.

Frou-Frou – Vronsky's excitable horse. When Vronsky isn't paying enough attention to the steeplechase and grows over-confident, the horse falls and breaks its back and must be killed out of mercy.

Laska – Levin's hunting dog, who can sense Levin's moods.

Mikhailov – Mikhailov is the talented painter in Italy who paints Anna's portrait. Unlike Vronsky, who dabbles in art but does not display any real passion for it, Mikhailov has true skill, and he captures Anna's charisma.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

"All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Beginning with this famous opening line, Anna Karenina is an exploration of the complications of family life. Early nineteenth-century Russian novels often featured idealized portrayals domestic bliss. Family life and individual freedom might seem initially to be contrasting forces throughout the novel, but even though characters may think they will have more freedom if they reject all of the conventions of family life, these choices can ironically give them the least amount of personal control and autonomy.

Anna Karenina challenges the conceptions both of individual freedom and of marital bliss, showing how complex family life can be by offering parallel portraits of several intertwined families. The three main family units in the novel are the Oblonskys, the Karenins, and the Levins. Each of the three main family units offers a very different option for the evolution of family life: the fulfilled, happy marriage; the marriage that sticks together in spite of troubles; and the dissolved family.

The Levins begin unattached but end in marriage and a stable family life. Kitty is initially in love with Vronsky and refuses Levin's first proposal, which crushes him, but then Kitty is crushed when Vronsky rejects her to pursue Anna. However, they eventually reconcile and wed. Levin's second proposal to Kitty is at the structural and emotional center of the novel. Levin and Kitty communicate through code, showing that they are already united before they even need the words to prove it. Although in the initial period after they marry, Levin is afraid that his individual freedom has been compromised when Kitty comes to live with him on in the country, they develop a deep, tender family life together, first by caring for Levin's dying brother and then through the birth of their child.

The Oblonsky family is a story of sticking together: even though their relationship is shaken by infidelity, the Oblonsky family remains constant throughout the novel. Like the Levins, the Oblonsky family also ends happily in that it remains intact, but this intactness comes at a steep price, and many tensions remain. At the beginning of the novel, the Oblonsky family appears to be at the breaking point. Oblonsky Oblonsky, Anna's brother, is married to Dolly but has an affair with the governess. But even though Dolly knows that Oblonsky has been unfaithful, she decides not to leave him––she salvages the marriage for the sake of the family. The Oblonskys reconcile themselves through compromise.

The Karenin family comes to a tragic end over the course of the novel as their initial family unit falls to pieces. Anna runs away with Vronsky, but Karenin refuses to grant her a divorce. Even though she has been unfaithful and her reputation is eventually ruined, Karenin does not want to compromise his own position in society. Eventually, both her relationships as well as her position in society crumble. After Anna's suicide, Karenin

accepts custody of Annie, Anna's daughter by Vronsky, thus providing a glimmer of hope for the shattered family to rebuild in the future.

ADULTERY AND JEALOUSY

Anna Karenina begins with adultery: Anna's brother, Oblonsky, has had an affair with the family's governess, and his household is in turmoil. This opening scene establishes adultery as a driving force throughout the novel. Although adultery certainly has moral and religious consequences in the novel, the main causes and effects of acts of unfaithfulness are explored in terms of societal issues. Feelings of social suffocation propel Anna to have an affair, and characters make decisions based on how they perceive their choices will play out in society.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND MOVEMENT

Anna's betrayal of her husband and her affair with Vronsky is the central plotline of *Anna Karenina*. The relationship is marked with a bad omen from the start: when Anna and Vronsky meet, a railway worker falls on the train tracks and is killed, foreshadowing both the doomed nature of the relationship and Anna's own tragic end. Anna and Vronsky's love affair escalates quickly and passionately, but it soon sours. Anna becomes incapable of trusting anyone, especially her lover, and she tries to assert her control over Vronsky in an increasingly hectic fashion. Anna's husband, Karenin, remains stoic throughout the entire affair, even forgiving Vronsky when Anna is ill during childbirth. Karenin's primary concern is how the relationship appears to the public: he does not want to look like a foolish cuckold, and he does not want to sully the family name. Anna runs off with Vronsky, but she has been disgraced, and she's ostracized by Russian high society. Anna and Vronsky try to flee the social repercussions of their affair by traveling to Italy and by going to Vronsky's luxurious country estate, but their relationship falls apart. The more that Anna clings to Vronsky, the more jealous she becomes of him, and the more suffocated he feels. Meanwhile, Dolly decides to stay with Oblonsky, even though he's been unfaithful, for the sake of keeping their family together. Though adultery is condemned throughout the novel, readers can often see the forces that drive characters to infidelity and can empathize with these choices.

Tolstoy's characters lead vigorous lives in *Anna Karenina*. Tolstoy himself was famous for his abundant zeal, which he called *thumos*, the ancient Greek term for "spirit." Tolstoy raised a large family, wrote many books on a huge variety of topics, and was an advocate of physical labor. Tolstoy prizes *thumos* in both his personal life and in his characters, and the reader is often asked to forgive many sins if the characters display enough vigorousness. For example, Oblonsky describes his love affairs with contagious energy and an abundance of passion, and readers are charmed by his actions, despite the fact that they are morally reprehensible.

Many of the crucial moments in the novel take place when characters are in transportation or are engaged in some sort physical activity. Levin is first introduced while he is skating, showing him in his physical prime and performing at his highest capacity. Vronsky is frequently described as having strong teeth, demonstrating his physical prowess. Anna and Vronsky meet at a train, and the ominous movement of the train that kills the railway worker foreshadows Anna's death. Tolstoy was very suspicious of railroads, as he believed that they were an unnatural force causing too much industrialization and choking the natural Russian lifestyle. Trains are therefore an *excess* of motion: people should carry themselves on horseback or on their own speed, not in these artificial demonic iron machines. Vronsky buys and cares for his beloved racehorse Frou-Frou, but during a race, a riding error causes Frou-Frou to fall, and she is seriously wounded. Vronsky's racehorse is symbolic of his relationship with Anna: he believes that he has everything under control, but at a single misstep, everything comes crashing down. Levin feels happiest when he is haying on the farm.

Even though *Anna Karenina* is undeniably long, Tolstoy keeps events moving forward at a quick clip. He captures scenes and events at the psychologically and physically crucial moment, and he typically uses one key detail to trigger a whole world of events. For example, at the beginning of the novel, an enormous pear becomes a symbolic detail representing Oblonsky's extramarital affairs. Tolstoy uses different perspectives to show how various characters see the world, but the novel moves not from thought to though but from action to action. We know how characters perceive the world by what they do and how they act, rather than by pausing the action to dwell on interior thought.

SOCIETY AND CLASS

During the 1870s, while Tolstoy was writing *Anna Karenina*, Russia was undergoing a great deal of political and societal change. *Anna Karenina* takes place against the backdrop of liberal reforms introduced by Emperor Alexander II in the 1860s. These reforms included rapid growth of industry, building of railroads, introduction of local government in the form of the *zemstvo*, military reforms, and a freer press. Throughout the novel, there is a growing tension between the old, patriarchal aristocracy and the rise of a new, freethinking middle class. There is a great deal of tension in the countryside between modernity and tradition. Levin participates in the *zemstvo*, where we see many debates unfold between new innovation and established methods.

Emperor Alexander's reforms are huge topic of discussions for

the characters throughout the novel. Women's rights fall under particular scrutiny, both by the characters themselves and by the readers as they watch these debates unfold. During Oblonsky's dinner party, for example, characters vigorously debate the various nuances and merits of feminism. Traditions are beginning to fade and change, but not without a fight. Dolly and Anna feel suffocated in their marriages and have very few escape options, demonstrating that feminism has yet to take hold in any sort of practical way, even though more and more people may be beginning to embrace some liberal concepts in the abstract. Princess Shcherbatskaya is horrified when Kitty wishes to choose her husband rather than submit to an arranged marriage. And it is certainly no coincidence that Anna and Oblonsky suffer very different levels of consequences for their separate adulteries.

In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy also exposes what he saw as the artifice and vanity of 19th century Russian aristocratic society. The urban world is full of scandal and deception, gossip and rumor. Events in the city are treated on the basis of their societal repercussions. For example, Anna's adultery is treated primarily as a social sin, not a religious one, and its repercussions are weighted in the matrix of how it will play out in society rather than the personal, individual ramifications. The landed aristocracy is decaying, and a new, rich, bourgeois middle class is taking its place. Tolstoy himself wrote treatises on education and philosophy. After *Anna Karenina*, he founded utopian communities based on his anarchist ideas that individuals, rather than bureaucratic agencies, should take care of each other and work for the greater good.

FARMING AND RURAL LIFE

Although Tolstoy grew up in aristocratic society, he became disillusioned by the artifice and pettiness that dominated this world. While Tolstoy was writing *Anna Karenina*, he was developing his own philosophies of nonviolence and anarchism: he believed that people, not government bureaucracies, should take care of each other. Throughout his later life, the wealthy Tolstoy rejected his Russian noble background and dressed in peasant clothes. In the discussions of farming and peasant life that form a large part of *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy the philosophical and political turmoil in the rapidly shifting landscape of 19th century Russia.

Tolstoy devotes long passages of *Anna Karenina* to descriptions of Levin's farm and the routines of rural life in 19th century Russia. These sections of the novel serve as a sharp contrast to the urban world that *Anna Karenina* inhabits. Tolstoy gives many technical details about agricultural practices, depicting farmers' daily customs and describing the social, political, and historical background of farming life. The peasants in *Anna Karenina* symbolize the native Russian spirit, and Levin finds great joy when he works with his hands. However, Levin clashes with his peasants when he tries to introduce new Western methods of farming: his peasants turn against him, claiming that the old Russian ways are still the best.

The rural idyll has been a common genre since ancient times, and writers throughout the ages have often favorably compared the simplicity of the country to the artifice of the city. By cultivating the land, farmers contribute to the cycles of the earth, working towards a greater good rather than focusing solely on their individual desires. Tolstoy gives so many rich details about pastoral life because he wants to emphasize the power of a connection to nature and working with one's hands over the false nature of urban life. Farmers must work hard, but they also have to trust the fortunes of nature. However, the pastoral life in *Anna Karenina* is by no means perfect, and tensions between the rural idyll and the forces of the city come to dominate many of the political and philosophical questions throughout the novel.

Farming broadens Levin's perspective and makes him come to appreciate history, nature, and his culture. Similarly, the presence of so many lengthy passages about pastoral life in *Anna Karenina* broaden the scope of the novel, expanding it from a story of adultery to a nationalistic epic of 19th century Russian life. Levin joins the *zemstvo*, or local council, to argue that reform needs to happen on a personal scale: rather than introducing grand, sweeping, state-funded projects that the peasants may end up rejecting, estate owners should make improvements on an individual, local basis. The passages about farming throughout *Anna Karenina* play out the debate between abstract ideas about society and nationhood and tangible, personal good works and improvement. Though Tolstoy has grand plans for structural, sweeping change, he believes that this must be accomplished on an individual basis from the ground up.

COMPASSION AND FORGIVENESS

The Biblical epigraph to *Anna Karenina* is "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." Despite this mentality of revenge underpinning the novel, forgiveness and vengeance are both core components in how characters approach their various situations. In *Anna Karenina*, characters are neither wholly good nor entirely bad. Everyone has a mixture of admirable qualities and shameful flaws, so all individuals need to be understood and treated on their own terms rather than judged and dismissed. Although compassion has a strong Christian underpinning throughout the novel, characters are primarily driven to forgive not by their desire to fulfill an abstract, higher Christian law but by their empathy for others on an individual, human level. When Anna has her daughter, Annie, she becomes seriously ill in childbirth. She asks Karenin for compassion as she sobs bitterly, exclaiming that she knows she does not deserve his compassion. Karenin forgives her, compelled rationally by his sense of Christian morality but convinced emotionally by the physical presence of

Anna's grief. However, when Anna recovers, she still leaves with Vronsky rather than remaining in her stifling marriage. Though Karenin forgives Anna when she appears to be on her deathbed, his compassion does not extend toward granting her the divorce she desires. Ultimately, Karenin accepts Anna's daughter after Anna commits suicide, thus sealing their relationship in forgiveness rather than bitter enmity for the future.

Forgiveness spreads from individual to individual throughout *Anna Karenina*: characters often come to respect each other by being able to understand and forgive others. Compassion for another human being strengthens the relationship between Kitty and Levin. Although they have a difficult time at first adapting to marriage and life together on the farm, by caring together for Levin's sick brother, Nikolai, they come to develop forgiveness for each other's flaws as well. When Dolly reluctantly decides to forgive Oblonsky, she tells Anna, "If you forgive, forgive completely," explaining that complete forgiveness resulting in a blank slate is the only way her marriage can ultimately heal.

Not only does Tolstoy describe how other characters develop forgiveness for each other throughout the novel, the reader is compelled to feel compassion and empathy for characters themselves, even when these characters have made terrible mistakes or have committed hurtful actions. Tolstoy uses the technique of the interior monologue to describe what's going on inside the characters' heads. Readers see the world directly as the characters see it. When the reader knows exactly how the characters perceive the world, they are more inclined to feel sympathy towards and forgive these characters, even when their deeds put them in the wrong. Although Anna's adulterous actions are objectively wrong, for example, readers empathize with her decisions because they see the world through her suffering.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

TRAINS

Anna and Vronsky's entire ill-fated relationship is framed by their interactions on **trains**. Anna meets Vronsky on a train platform; when they meet, she sees a man killed upon being run over by the train, which is a gruesome foreshadowing of her own suicide. The train also becomes representative of Anna and Vronsky's affair: though it is slow to begin and seems manageable at first, it soon gathers momentum and begins travelling at a speed far beyond Anna and Vronsky's control, and the only thing that they can do is cling to it in increasing desperation. Trains are also a symbol of Russia's connection with Western Europe and fashionable society. Tolstoy is skeptical about trying to graft European philosophies and ideas into Russian life. The trains represent life that moves at a speed faster than the natural course of events. While Tolstoy is in favor of efficiency and integrating new methods that have grown organically from Russian needs and will serve to make the country work in harmony, he is deeply skeptical about modernity for the sake of keeping up appearances and about ideas that come from the desire to remain in fashion rather than fulfilling society's actual needs. At the end of the novel, trains also become important as the connection between Russia and Serbia, as Vronsky and others join the war to defend the Slavs.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE, FOREIGN LANGUAGE, AND COMMUNICATION

For all of the novel's verbosity, Tolstoy ultimately distrusts **language**, believing that actions speak louder than words. When Levin proposes to Kitty, they have such a deep connection that they do not even need to speak the words: he presents her with a code, and she replies in kind. In contrast, Anna and Karenin send letters back and forth about the divorce, but each written correspondence only heightens their failed communication. Anna also writes hectic notes to Vronsky with increasing frequency as their relationship disintegrates. The language in which characters speak also indicates their level of hypocrisy: when people want to pretend they're members of high society, they speak in French, the intellectual and cultural language of Western society, rather than in their own native Russian. Tolstoy's distrust in the written word is also apparent with Levin's book project: although Levin spends a great deal of time writing about the state of the Russian peasant, agriculture, and humanity in general, he ultimately realizes that attending to his own family's needs and dealing with the practical, pragmatic, physical considerations of his individual life are more important than writing about grand philosophical concerns.

NATURAL WORLD

The characters' relationship with the **natural world** is symbolic throughout the novel: the more that characters are in touch with nature, the happier they are, but characters who are hypocritical are less connected to the natural world. When Vronsky is riding with Frou-Frou in the race, he grows over-confident. As in Greek mythology, when Icarus flies too close to the sun and falls, when Vronsky does not pay attention to the natural rhythms of his horse and his connection with the animal, Frou-Frou falls and must be killed. Frou-Frou is symbolic of Vronsky and Anna's relationship: although Vronsky believes he can ride past everyone and succeed in both the horserace and his affair, he does not quite

situate himself correctly, and both horse and affair ultimately collapse. Vronsky and Anna are out of touch with the natural rhythm of things: although they surround themselves with luxuries, they do not have an emotional bond with their child, and their own relationship only fractures and weakens instead of taking root and growing stronger. Levin is the main character who is the most in touch with nature throughout the novel. He is deeply attuned to the signals of the natural world, feeling happy when he sees sticky little leaves and buds on the trees. Tolstoy also even provides a few scenes from the perspective of Laska, Levin's hunting dog, as a counterpoint against the hypocrisy of many of the humans in the novel. The weather often mirrors characters' moods. For example, at the end of the novel, when Koznyshev gets into an argument on Levin's estate, storm clouds gather and darken; the storm clouds at this point also signify potential danger for Kitty and Mitya in the forest, but when Levin finds his wife and son safe and sound, the rain clears.

DREAMS AND SPIRITUALISM

True faith and religious belief are a serious theme throughout *Anna Karenina*, and Tolstoy takes questions of religion seriously. However, Tolstoy is much more skeptical about dreams and spiritualism. Dreams in particular are bad omens throughout the novel. Dreams and daydreams offer the appearance of escape for a fleeting moment, but this path of escape is always a fantasy, never a reality. Anna and Vronsky have the same recurring **dream** of a dirty peasant figure who speaks ominously in French. Unlike Levin and Kitty, who are in sync in their daily life and whose communication works best on a level deeper than words, Anna and Vronsky's shared nightmare does not strengthen their bond for good, but rather intertwines them parasitically together. This recurring symbol of the peasant figure suggests that they are out of touch with the natural course of life. Rather than allowing their love to flourish honestly, or rather than cutting off their affair for the sake of their families, Anna and Vronsky try to put off consequences and live for themselves in the moment; however, this recurring dream figure, with his amorphous yet increasingly ominous threatening presence, suggests that they are ultimately doomed to fracture.

BLUSHING

Throughout the novel, blushing is an important sign of emotion: even though characters might not be able to say what they're feeling, their actions speak louder than words, and their appearance reveals deep physical sensations. Characters blush out of embarrassment—when Levin is courting Kitty, for example, and he first confesses his love for Kitty to Oblonsky, he is deeply embarrassed and awkward, and the blushing reveals that his emotions run deep. When Levin develops a crush on Anna later in the novel, his blush guiltily gives him away to Kitty before he can confess verbally. Blushing demonstrates true emotion that runs in the blood and cannot be masked, despite the demands of society. Although Karenin wants to remain composed and collected throughout Anna's affair, his blushing gives away the fact that he does have emotions under his chilly exterior. However, sometimes blushing is a false positive, or a holdover from a prior emotional state. When Kitty and Levin are happily married, Kitty sees Vronsky and blushes, but the reddening is more from embarrassment at the conduct of her former self than due to any new sensations.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Viking edition of *Anna Karenina* published in 2000.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 1

Explanation and Analysis

The famous opening line of the novel sets the novel's tone. Rather than launching straight into the plot itself, or allowing one of the characters to begin speaking right away, Tolstoy poses a philosophical generalization that sets the stage for the events that are to follow. The opening line also recalls the genre of the family novel, a type of literature popular in Russia during the nineteenth century but seen as old-fashioned by the time Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina*. Tolstoy is riffing on the traditional form of the family novel, but expanding it into a philosophical and political meditation.

This opening line establishes the complex relationship to happiness and morality that the novel will present throughout. On the one hand, happiness is of course a state to be desired over unhappiness. On the other hand, there would be no novel if there were no unhappiness—or, at least, the very novel we're reading wouldn't be able to exist. Every family in *Anna Karenina* has its share of deep unhappiness, but that unhappiness is also what makes the family different and intriguing. The relationship between happiness and unhappiness is hardly a simple binary: in many ways, unhappiness is actually the more desirable state.

This opening has also been adopted in popular culture. The "Anna Karenina principle," for example, which has been widely applied in social sciences, ecology, and statistics, describes a situation in which a failure in any one of a number of categories will cause the whole enterprise to fail.

Part 1, Chapter 18 Quotes

In that brief glance Vronsky had time to notice the restrained animation that played over her face and fluttered between her shining eyes and the barely noticeable smile that curved her red lips. It was as if a surplus of something so overflowed in her being that it expressed itself beyond her will, now in the brightness of her glance, now in her smile.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina, Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 61

Explanation and Analysis

Vronsky first sees Anna Karenina at a train station, which foreshadows her eventual tragic end. On the one hand, their first glance has all the hallmarks of stereotypical "love at first sight": even though they lock eyes only for a moment, both have the impression of being profoundly changed. Anna's "shining eyes" and "red lips" are common characteristics of a beautiful woman in love. However, the relationship between Vronsky and Anna also has a spiritual dimension that goes beyond the mere cliché. Behind Anna's expression is a "surplus of something," suggesting a spiritual dimension that is beyond the capacities of language to express. The limitation of language is a common theme throughout *Anna Karenina*: the most powerful forces are not ones that can be stated in words, but rather exceed the constraints of speech.

The word "animation" is also crucial throughout the novel as signifying the life force or inner spirit within everyone. The fact that Anna must keep her animation "restrained" suggests that she is being constrained by the conventions of Russian society. From the very beginning, the animation between Vronsky and Anna must be outwardly restrained due to the laws and customs of their society. However, the tension between the outward restraint and the inner emotion only makes their love burn more strongly. Indeed, without the tension that the restraint provides, the animation itself might warp or dim.

Part 1, Chapter 22 Quotes

Kitty had seen Anna every day, was in love with her, and had imagined her inevitably in lilac. But now, seeing her in black, she felt that she had never understood all her loveliness. Now she understood that Anna could not have been in lilac, that her loveliness consisted precisely in always standing out from what she wore, that what she wore was never seen on her. And the black dress with luxurious lace was not seen on her; it was just a frame, and only she was seen – simple, natural, graceful, and at the same time gay and animated.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina, Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky

Related Themes:

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

Anna is so full of inner "animation" that her clothes exist only as a backdrop to her own fire and passion. She is an object of desire not because of the clothes she wears, but because she exudes such a force of character that the clothes "frame" her. Kitty's description of Anna also illustrates Tolstoy's ability to slip in and out of the minds of various characters throughout the novel—a technique known as "free indirect discourse." In this depiction, the reader sees Anna as Kitty sees her, with all of Kitty's particular opinions and biases. If Kitty were viewing Anna unfavorably, she might have chosen to criticize her outfit as seeming too alluring or too suggestive. Anna's choice to wear a black, revealing dress, rather than an outfit in a more demure color, emphasizes that she wishes to be viewed as a sexually desirable woman. But because Kitty sees Anna with admiration, the reader admires her, too.

Part 1, Chapter 29 Quotes

Anna Arkadyevna read and understood, but it was unpleasant for her to read, that is, to follow the reflection of other people's lives. She wanted too much to live herself.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 100

Explanation and Analysis

Ironically, Anna, the titular character of a novel dedicated to delving into its characters' psychologies, does not trust the experience of reading about people, instead insisting on action. However, Anna does not object to reading because she finds it to be a pale comparison of life. On the contrary, reading over-stimulates her emotions, forcing her to spin around and around her decisions with intense scrutiny instead of moving forward.

In her desire to act rather than to read, Anna mirrors Levin. The nervousness and overstimulation that reading produces within her foreshadows Levin's anxiety when he speaks with his brother about societal concerns. When both characters live too much in the world of words and artificially created structures, they grow overly self-critical and nervous. Anna and Levin both feel restored and calmed by coming back into contact with the natural world. Anna steps outside into the icy air, which exhilarates her and helps lift her feelings of shame and paranoia.

Part 1, Chapter 32 Quotes

❝ And the son, just like the husband, produced in Anna a feeling akin to disappointment. She had imagined him better than he was in reality. She had to descend to reality to enjoy him as he was.

Related Characters: Count Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin, Sergei Alexeich (Seryozha) Karenin, Anna Arkadyevna Karenina

Related Themes:

Page Number: 107

Explanation and Analysis

The version of the world that exists in Anna's imagination and the world that she actually lives in are not always parallel. Indeed, over the course of the novel, the gap between Anna's mind and the physical world grows and grows until, in the end, she is consumed by warped perceptions and jealous thoughts. Anna has constructed a vision in her head of how she thinks the world ought to be and how she believes she should feel, and when that vision of herself does not match reality, she has to figure out which version of herself she trusts.

Although imagination initially seems to be more majestic than the real world, once Anna returns to reality and interacts with the real version of her son, she finds that his physical presence soothes her and produces a sense of "moral ease." Reality and the physical world are much more trustworthy than imagination throughout the novel. Even though Anna initially thinks that the paragon of her son in her mind's eye is superior to real life, living in a fantasy of ideal figures is unsustainable, and coming down to reality is not a letdown, but an act that is morally and emotionally grounding.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ "Don't you know that you are my whole life? But I know no peace and cannot give you any. All of myself, my love...yes. I cannot think of you and myself separately. You and I are one for me. And I do not see the possibility of peace ahead either for me or for you. I see the possibility of despair, of unhappiness... or I see the possibility of happiness, such happiness!...Isn't it possible?" he added with his lips only; but she heard him.

Related Characters: Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky (speaker), Anna Arkadyevna Karenina

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 139

Explanation and Analysis

In this scene, Vronsky and Anna communicate through a mixture of directly saying what they believe and letting many things go unsaid, but they both understand exactly what the other one is thinking. The bond between Anna and Vronsky is so strong that they can communicate with each other through gesture and thought, rather than merely through words. Although Anna and Vronsky often say out loud what they believe they should say to each other, what goes unsaid is more powerful than what they are pretending to say. Anna and Vronsky give lip service to the idea that they should separate and that Vronsky should try to make things right with Kitty, but their actions speak louder than their words, and the bond between them is stronger than societal conventions. When Vronsky articulates the love between Anna and himself, he says out loud that they are probably doomed to despair and unhappiness, but he and Anna both believe in the possibility that he does not say, which is the (unlikely) hope that they can be happy together.

She strained all the forces of her mind to say what she ought to say; but instead she rested her eyes on him, filled with love, and made no answer.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 140

Explanation and Analysis

Anna recognizes that according to all the conventions of the world around her, she should cut off her relationship with Vronsky: she is married, and entering an affair with him would be disgraceful and socially damaging. However, her emotions are too strong, and they override what she believes she ought to say. Instead of saying anything, she looks at Vronsky, and––as is the case throughout the novel––actions speak louder than words. The look that Anna gives Vronsky echoes the first time that they saw each other at the train station, when their momentary glance instantaneously cemented the connection between them. From the first time Vronsky saw Anna, he recognized the tension between the animation within her and the restraint that society placed on her emotions. Now, the animation spills over the restraint.

Part 2, Chapter 11 Quotes

And he felt as a murderer must feel when he looks at the body he has deprived of life. This body deprived of life was their love, the first period of their love... Shame at her spiritual nakedness weighed on her and communicated itself to him. But, despite all the murderer's horror before the murdered body, he had to cut this body into pieces and hide it, he had to make use of what the murderer had gained by his murder.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina, Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky

Related Themes:

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

Just after Anna and Vronsky have sex for the first time, Vronsky compares the act to murdering the first stage of their relationship. Tolstoy does not describe the scene in which Anna and Vronsky consummate their relationship. Instead, he places a row of ellipses in the novel, which lets the reader know that they have made love, but also makes the reader responsible for assuming that they did so and for imagining the details of how this action occurred (and allows Tolstoy to escape the censorship of his time).

After Vronsky and Anna have had sex, the nature of their relationship changes. Although the couple are still bonded, and, in some ways, more closely tied together than ever, they have also confirmed their guilt through concrete action. There is no turning back at this point. Anna and Vronsky have objectively committed a societal trespass, and now their relationship moves from one of innuendo and possibility to one of dealing with real consequences.

"Not a word more," she repeated, and with an expression of cold despair on her face, which he found strange, she left him. She felt that at that moment she could not put into words her feeling of shame, joy, and horror before this entry into a new life, and she did not want to speak of it, to trivialize this feeling with imprecise words. But later, too, the next day and the day after that, she not only found no words in which she could express all the complexity of these feelings, but was unable even to find thoughts in which she could reflect with herself on all that was in her soul.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina (speaker), Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 150

Explanation and Analysis

Throughout the novel, events that go unspoken typically carry far more emotional weight than events that occur in words. On the one hand, Anna does not want to trivialize her experience with Vronsky by bringing it into the realm of mere language. She wants, instead, to retain the full mystery and complex nature of the event. Bringing the event into spoken language would also force Anna to reckon with the full consequences of her actions.

Anna does not want to process all of the complicated emotions she has as a result of having consummated her relationship with Vronsky, because that would force her to make choices that she does not want to make. When Vronsky and Anna had not slept together, their relationship could still dwell in the realm of plausible deniability. Anna

rationalizes to herself that she is not processing their relationship fully by claiming to herself that she will do so in the future, but she continues to make more and more excuses for herself. Rather than letting the full weight of their action become something that Anna confronts and reckons with, the action becomes more and more powerful the longer it remains in the realm of the secretive and unspoken. When an action or emotion is put into words, it is abbreviated and made weaker, but when it goes unspoken, it can contain everything, so it gets stronger, for either good or for ill.

Part 2, Chapter 12 Quotes

The old grass and the sprouting needles of new grass greened, the buds on the guelder-rose, the currants and the sticky, spirituous birches swelled, and on the willow, all sprinkled with golden catkins, the flitting, newly hatched bee buzzed.

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 153

Explanation and Analysis

Anna Karenina is famous for the grand, sweeping scope of its narrative, as the novel manages to intertwine several family dramas into its shifting political and religious landscape. Tolstoy is also notorious for his vivid characters. Yet in the midst of the enormous, ambitiously wide-ranging field of vision that the novel encompasses, Tolstoy retains the control to concentrate on tiny, vivid details of life. Even though Levin is sad about his failed affair with Kitty, the world continues to revolve, and spring comes again. Tolstoy's attention to the buds on the trees also foreshadows that Levin's relationship with Kitty might yet revive, just as the natural world can renew itself year after year. While there is life in nature, there is hope for Levin.

These sticky little buds on the trees provide a contrast again Anna and Vronsky's affair. For the earth, spring is a time of natural, joyful rejuvenation. But Anna and Vronsky are too focused on themselves and their desires to pay attention to the rhythms of the world around them.

Part 2, Chapter 25 Quotes

She flew over the ditch as if without noticing it; she flew over like a bird; but just then Vronsky felt to his horror that, having failed to keep up with the horse's movement, he, not knowing how himself, had made a wrong, an unforgivable movement as he lowered himself into the saddle. ... The awkward movement Vronsky had made had broken her back. But he understood that much later.

Related Characters: Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky (speaker), Frou-Frou

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 199

Explanation and Analysis

The relationship between Vronsky and his horse serves as a symbol for the shifts that have occurred in his life as a result of his affair with Anna. Vronsky believes that he is a master of the universe, that he can do anything and he will always triumph. However, he is no longer in sync with his horse, Frou-Frou. Vronsky and the horse used to be as one. Now that Vronsky and Anna have consummated their bond, however, which causes a rupture in social as well as moral codes, Vronsky has experienced an existential fissure from his beloved animal. All it takes is one tiny slip, one moment in which Vronsky stops paying careful attention, and everything that he has taken for granted in his life is altered irrevocably.

Throughout the novel, characters' relationships with the physical, natural world serve as a good barometer for their inner harmony and the state of their own moral contentment. When Vronsky loses his deep connection with his horse, making the fatal error here, it is not because he makes a huge, deliberate mistake, but because his perception of the universe and the physical world he inhabits are different in a way that he cannot see but is deeply significant. Frou-Frou's fall foreshadows the irrevocable crack in Vronsky and Anna's relationship that will only continue to widen and deepen.

Part 3, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ He thought of nothing, desired nothing, except not to lag behind and to do the best job be could. He heard only the clang of scythes and ahead of him saw Titus's erect figure moving on, the curved semicircle of this mowed space, grass and flower-heads bending down slowly and wavily about the blade of his scythe, and ahead of him the end of the swath, where rest would come.

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 250

Explanation and Analysis

When Levin speaks with his brother about societal affairs and intellectual concerns, he feels anxious and worried. When he reconnects with nature, however, he feels restored. Levin's initial physical awkwardness yields when he can forget the cares of the world and succumb to the rhythms of the farm, as in this famous mowing scene. The dissipation of Levin's awkwardness as he immerses himself in manual labor foreshadows his conclusion at the end of the novel that to be happy, people have to let go of their worldly cares and surrender themselves to faith.

Levin and Titus share unspoken communication, bonding through their physical actions and needs rather than expressing themselves through words that may be misinterpreted or imperfectly suited to their needs. Although the two are of very different social statuses, when they can connect without using language, they become equal. Though Titus is a peasant on Levin's land, in the field Titus becomes the master because he has far more experience with nature.

Part 4, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ "What was that? What? What was that terrible thing I saw in my dream? Yes, yes. The muzhik tracker, I think, small, dirty, with a disheveled beard, was bending down and doing something, and he suddenly said some strange words in French. Yes that's all there was to the dream," he said to himself. "But why was it so horrible?"

Related Characters: Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 355

Explanation and Analysis

Although Vronsky pretends to put on a brave face to the outside world, he feels increasingly fraught with an impending doom that he perceives looming over his life, and he projects this fear into the interpretation of his night visions. Rather than brushing aside dreams, Vronsky takes them seriously. The fact that Vronsky cannot interpret the words of the muzhik (Russian peasant) in his dream fills him with dread. Tolstoy frequently underscores the inability of language to express great emotions throughout the novel: when characters want to express something truly profound or moving, they say nothing at all. However, the inability to understand a spoken language triggers a different set of emotions: fear, anxiety, and dread. When the unspoken is mutually understood, the non-verbal communication creates a shared language between the speakers. But since Vronsky cannot understand what the muzhik is saying, he creates the worst possible scenario in his imagination.

The muzhik's use of unintelligible French also creates the sense that the social order has been unsettled. In nineteenth-century Russia, French was the language of high culture, and people spoke in French to elevate their positions in society. However, in the dream, the peasant is speaking the language of the aristocracy that Vronsky can no longer understand, which ominously portends Vronsky's own fall from grace.

Part 4, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ "And this something turned, and I saw it was a muzhik with a disheveled beard, small and frightening. I wanted to run away, but he bent over a sack and rummaged in it with his hands..." And she showed how he rummaged in the sack. There was horror on her face. And Vronsky, recalling his dream, felt the same horror filling his soul.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina (speaker), Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 361

Explanation and Analysis

Vronsky and Anna have shared the shame dream. When Anna tells Vronsky about her dream of the French-speaking, bearded muzhik rummaging in a sack, unbeknownst to her, she is describing the same person that Vronsky saw in his nightmare. The two lovers are seemingly so bonded that they share a subconscious mind, but the figure in their shared dream arouses horror within both of them. Anna tells Vronsky that Karenin has read the dream to indicate that she will die in childbirth. Karenin's role in the relationship is already quite shaky: he keeps up the façade of their marriage because he doesn't want to ruin his reputation, yet he knows that this sham cannot last forever, and so he perceives the vision as causing an end to this fragile state of affairs. The fact that Anna is relaying Karenin's version of the dream to Vronsky and seeking Vronsky's reassurance underscores the complicated power dynamic between all of them: though Anna is psychologically and physically bonded with Vronsky, she is still socially bound to Karenin.

However, when Anna is telling Vronsky about the dream, she feels the first stirrings of her child kicking inside her, and her emotions change suddenly from horror to joy. Since Vronsky cannot share the physical cause of her joy, he is puzzled by her sudden shift. Despite the ominous nightmare, Anna, at this point, is still capable of experiencing happiness brought on by the physical world: though she is worried and superstitious, she hasn't yet surrendered herself completely to omens and dreams.

Part 4, Chapter 12 Quotes

"I cannot forgive, I do not want to, and I consider it unjust. I did everything for that woman, and she trampled everything in the mud that is so suitable to her. I am not a wicked man, I have never hated anyone, but I hate her with all the strength of my soul, and I cannot even forgive her, because I hate her so much for all the evil she has done me!"

Related Characters: Count Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin (speaker), Anna Arkadyevna Karenina

Related Themes:

Page Number: 394

Explanation and Analysis

Karenin's outburst against Anna arises as the culmination of emotions that he has kept bottled up for a long time. As the affair between Vronsky and Anna builds, Karenin becomes more and more uncomfortable talking about Anna, because he feels ashamed and cuckolded. At a dinner party at Oblonsky's house, the men start discussing infidelity, which makes Karenin deeply uncomfortable. Karenin would rather not talk at all about Anna, preferring instead to maintain the façade of social respectability on all accounts, but when Dolly begs him to have a conversation with her about Anna, Karenin finally cracks and does so, revealing the deep anger brewing under his stoic surface.

Dolly pleads on Anna's behalf to Karenin, begging him to forgive Anna and to do anything but divorce her. Dolly appeals to Karenin's sense of fairness and rationality, arguing that because Anna had helped Dolly through Oblonsky's infidelity, and because Anna had saved Dolly's life, Karenin should pay the gesture forward and forgive Anna. Karenin is typically a man of reason and logic, and such arguments should have worked. However, in this situation, Karenin's own irrefutable emotions override rationality. Even though he wants to keep up appearances, he also has a deeply stubborn streak, and because he feels he has been wronged, he cannot bend his own sense of the situation. Karenin's outburst of emotion is surprising, because he typically does not reveal such passion, but in other ways, it is also comes as something of a relief, as it breaks the tension and reveals Karenin as a fully dimensional character capable of being hurt, rather than putting up with anything to maintain his reputation.

Part 4, Chapter 13 Quotes

"Here," he said, and wrote the initial letters: w, y, a, m: t, c, b, d, i, m, n, o, t? These letters meant: "When you answered me: 'that cannot be,' did it mean never or then?" ... She wrote, t, I, c, g, n, o, a ... And he wrote three letters. But she was reading after his hand, and before he finished writing, she finished it herself and wrote the answer: "Yes."

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin, Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 397-398

Explanation and Analysis

Oblonsky's dinner party is ostensibly an event that brings people together for a single, united purpose. However,

Tolstoy uses the occasion to explore all the various subplots and conversations swirling under the surface of the event. At the same dinner party in which Karenin explodes to Dolly in a rage against Anna, revealing the passions that had been building unspoken inside of him, Levin and Kitty are developing their own relationship, revealing to both themselves and each other the bond that has grown between them. Throughout *Anna Karenina*, language is a weak tool for communication, and the deepest bonds are revealed when people can connect without words.

Levin's proposal to Kitty is almost a parody of the extent to which words are superfluous when two people are deeply in love. Levin presents Kitty with an abbreviated code of initial letters, rather than full words, to express his hope that she can forgive him. The fact that they communicate in written code, rather than spoken word, also deepens the power of their unspoken communication. Not only do Levin and Kitty have a coded interaction happening on the page in front of them, they are physically very close to each other, so they are having an unspoken physical conversation that reinforces the unspoken written conversation.

Levin's proposal and Kitty's acceptance also have an air of superstition. The emotions are so fraught and fragile that bringing them out into the open air might make the whole situation doomed. Instead, Levin writes them in code, so that they can be unheard and therefore more profoundly understood for their true nature. Tolstoy translates the code between Levin and Kitty for the reader. The reader must experience their love through the secondhand, imperfect medium of words, and the reader can watch but not enter the bond between Levin and Kitty.

Part 4, Chapter 15 Quotes

❝ All that night and morning Levin had lived completely unconsciously and had felt himself completely removed from the conditions of material life. He had not eaten for a whole day, had not slept for two nights, had spent several hours undressed in the freezing cold, yet felt not only fresh and healthy as never before but completely independent of his body.

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 402

Explanation and Analysis

When Levin proposes to Kitty and she accepts him, the world seems to align itself to Levin's benefit. Here, the natural world is not a mirror of Levin's mood, but instead, he sees his own happiness reflected in the world around him. Even the most mundane sights, like pigeons flying in the sun and cabbies waiting to drive people home, appear to be imbued with significance and joy.

Yet Levin's emotions, wonderful as they may be, are not sustainable. Levin is so filled with joy that he doesn't notice the cold weather, or that he might be hungry or tired; instead, he ignores his responses to the natural world in favor of celebrating his pure joy upon a triumphant proposal to Kitty. On the one hand, transcending the needs of the body is exhilarating, and Levin indulges in his excitement. However, at some point Levin will have to live in the real world, and he must learn how to balance his emotional and his bodily sensations.

Part 5, Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ Often and much as they had both heard about the belief that whoever is first to step on the rug will be the head in the family, neither Levin nor Kitty could recall it as they made those few steps. Nor did they hear the loud remarks and disputes that, in the observation of some, he had been the first, or, in the opinions of others, they had steps on it together.

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin, Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky

Related Themes:

Page Number: 457

Explanation and Analysis

Even though Levin and Kitty did not immediately seem as though they were destined for matrimonial bliss, their relationship takes a happy trajectory over the course of the novel. If Dolly and Oblonsky's marriage is unhappy yet remains content, and Anna and Karenin's unhappy marriage falls apart, Kitty and Levin work through failed courtships and the unhappiness of separation to achieve, ultimately, a happy marriage.

Kitty and Levin's marriage ceremony demonstrates the equality that they will have throughout their relationship. The first one who steps on the pink silk at the altar is supposedly the symbolic head of the household, yet neither one of them, nor anyone at the ceremony, can tell who stepped first. Like Adam and Even leaving Eden hand in hand at the end of *Paradise Lost*, Levin and Kitty enter into

their marriage with the same (symbolic, but not necessarily social) power. No one has stepped on the rug first, so they both have equal footing in their partnership. The fact that different spectators have different opinions about what occurred during the marriage ceremony also foreshadows some of the squabbles that they will have in their relationship. Equality, however, does not always mean perpetual harmony. Levin will still get jealous and possessive of Kitty, and Kitty might grow restless at times in the country. Yet ultimately, Levin and Kitty have a solid, loving partnership.

Part 5, Chapter 20 Quotes

The sight of his brother and the proximity of death renewed in Levin's soul that feeling of horror at the inscrutability and, with that, the nearness and inevitability of death, which had seized him on that autumn evening when his brother had come for a visit. The feeling was now stronger than before; he felt even less capable than before of understanding the meaning of death, and its inevitability appeared still more horrible to him; but now, thanks to his wife's nearness, the feeling did not drive him to despair: in spite of death, he felt the necessity to live and to love. He felt that love saved him from despair and that under the threat of despair this love was becoming still stronger and purer.

Related Characters: Nikolai Dmitrich Levin, Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky, Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 504

Explanation and Analysis

Nikolai's death in the novel is the culmination, on the one hand, of tragedy and grief. However, his passing is ultimately part of the natural cycle of life, and it paves the way for rejuvenation and happiness. Tolstoy pairs Nikolai's death with Kitty's discovery of her pregnancy to celebrate the cycle of life. Levin can tolerate his brother's passing because he has found his larger place within the natural world. When he had only his brother to cling to as a family figure, Levin tied his own self-worth with his brother's illness. However, because he now has Kitty's love, and because he loves Kitty, Levin does not fall into an abyss of despair over his brother's passing. Instead, Levin grieves for Nikolai in a mature, balanced fashion, discovering that his grief can be balanced in an equal and opposite way by his emotions towards Kitty. Nikolai's death crystallizes Levin's deep bond with Kitty. Kitty helped care for Nikolai on his deathbed, easing one person out of the world as a new life, unbeknownst to her, began to quicken in her womb.

Part 6, Chapter 10 Quotes

But it was an unlucky day; he missed, and when he went to look for the one he had shot, he could not find it either. He searched everywhere in the sedge, but Laska did not believe he had shot it, and when he sent her to search, she did not really search but only pretended.

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin, Laska

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 584

Explanation and Analysis

Tolstoy often gives descriptions in *Anna Karenina* filtered through particular characters' perspectives. Here, Tolstoy presents the hunt from the point of view of Levin's dog, Laska. Levin feels as though his power has been stripped away from him because Oblonsky has managed to saddle him with Veslovsky, a society dandy who flirts with Kitty. Even when Levin has managed to give Veslovsky the slip, he still feels frustrated and helpless, since he is jealous that Veslovsky will steal Kitty away.

Although Levin tries to hide his frustration and discontent from himself, he cannot hide his feelings from his dog. Throughout the novel, Tolstoy uses connections with the natural world to suggest characters' genuine emotions. When Levin can be away from societal pressures on his farm, he is calm and composed enough to hunt successfully. However, Oblonsky brings the rules of society to Levin's farm, which disarms Levin and throws him out of balance and off his game.

Part 6, Chapter 16 Quotes

But even without looking in the mirror she thought it was still not too late. She remembered Sergei Ivanovich, who was especially amiable to her, and Stiva's friend, the kindly Turovtsyn, who had helped her take care of her children when they had scarlet fever and was in love with her. And there was also one quite young man who, as her husband had told her jokingly, found her the most beautiful of all the sisters. And Darya Alexandrovna pictured the most passionate and impossible love affairs.

Related Characters: Princess Darya (Dolly) Alexandrovna Oblonsky (speaker), Prince Stepan (Stiva) Arkadyevich Oblonsky

Related Themes:

Page Number: 608

Explanation and Analysis

Dolly has made the choices in life that uphold her reputation and her husband's reputation in society. When Oblonsky cheated on her, she did not leave him. Instead of having an affair or getting a divorce, she chose to save their marriage, remain faithful, and maintain their social status. Even though Dolly has made what society would deem to be the proper choice, she views Anna's sexual prowess with envy and jealousy. Dolly wonders if she has squandered her youth and her ability to make men fall in love with her. Rather than chastising Anna, Dolly projects herself into Anna's position.

Though Anna seems to have taken the less moral road, and though Dolly has made the choices that seem more ethically upstanding, Dolly has not found happiness. Dolly romanticizes Anna's choice of love over societal conventions, and she imagines a glamorous fantasy of herself as a woman to be worshipped and desired by men. The difference between Dolly's fantasy and Anna's, however, is that Dolly's vision of herself as having a wonderfully romantic affair remains squarely in the imagination, whereas Anna turns her love affair into reality. Even though Dolly gets to have all the benefits of her fantasy without any of the drawbacks of dealing with the negative repercussions of real life, she doesn't get the pleasures of real life, either—while Anna, for her part, turns her fantasy into reality, and experiences all the not-so-romantic consequences.

Part 7, Chapter 14 Quotes

He knew and felt only that what was being accomplished was similar to what had been accomplished a year ago in a hotel in a provincial capital, on the deathbed of his brother Nikolai. But that had been grief and this was joy. But that grief and this joy were equally outside all ordinary circumstances of life, were like holes in this ordinary life, through which something higher showed. And just as painful, as tormenting in its coming, was what was now accomplished; and just as inconceivably, in contemplating this higher thing, the soul rose to such heights as it had never known before, where reason was no longer able to overtake it.

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin (speaker), Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky, Nikolai Dmitrich Levin

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 713

Explanation and Analysis

Levin sees both the death of Nikolai and the birth of his child as events that stand outside the scope of his normal life. At this point in the novel, Levin has proceeded throughout most of his daily activities without giving much thought to a higher power. However, in moments of extreme emotion, Levin embodies the cliché that "there are no atheists in foxholes." When he finds himself in the presence of birth or death, and feels powerless to make any change happen by his own physical means, Levin finds himself repeating a prayer over and over. He feels so deeply connected to Kitty that their bond transcends reason and logic and makes him aware of a force beyond the realm of ordinary existence.

Levin's transformation from a staunch atheist into an avowed believer mirrors Tolstoy's spiritual journey. When Tolstoy was a young man, he was a firm atheist, but by the end of his life, he had converted and become an extremely spiritual person. Levin's deep connection with the natural world through his farm is paralleled by his growing connection to the supernatural world through faith.

Part 7, Chapter 24 Quotes

"Respect was invented to cover the empty place where love should be. But if you don't love me, it would be better to say so."

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina (speaker), Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 744

Explanation and Analysis

When Vronsky wants to delay traveling and getting married for a few days so that he can take care of business for his mother, Anna becomes hysterical, accusing Vronsky of using respect as an excuse to avoid committing himself to her. The leap of logic between Vronsky's accusation that she doesn't respect his mother and Anna's assertion that Vronsky doesn't love her makes little sense. Anna herself realizes that she's going too far in making this link, but she cannot stop herself, even though she knows that she is going beyond the bounds of reason. Anna's jealousy has warped her love for Vronsky into irrational, addictive possessiveness.

Tolstoy often uses the ability, or lack thereof, of characters to communicate without words as a barometer that demonstrates the strength of their relationship. In the beginning of their relationship, Anna and Vronsky hardly needed words at all to communicate, since their thoughts and emotions were in sync. With just the flicker of a glance across the platform at the railway station, they understood their love for each other and their bond to each other. However, as the novel progresses, Anna grows increasingly jealous and increasingly anxious about her relationship with Vronsky. She reads every situation as an opportunity to find a demonstration of how his love for her has dimmed.

Part 7, Chapter 30 Quotes

"No, you're going in vain," she mentally addressed a company in a coach-and-four who were evidently going out of town for some merriment. "And the dog you're taking with you won't help you. You won't get away from yourselves."

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 762

Explanation and Analysis

As Anna is preparing to commit suicide at the train station, she projects her own despair onto her surroundings. Anna uses the sight of the innocent carriage-riders to express her own perturbed state of mind. She laments that these unknown travelers will never get away from themselves, which only underscores the all-consuming, self-centered nature of her own tragedy. Anna addresses the travelers in her mind, but it is really herself that she's addressing. Anna can no longer perceive any other state of mind or emotion beyond that of her own despair. Anna's misery has turned into a vortex that sucks in and distorts everything she sees.

Anna's belief that everything in life is in vain mirrors Levin's belief that everything humans do is in vain, but her approach is from a very different perspective. Anna has sacrificed everything in her life to feed her own desires, but she realizes that she can never get away from herself, and she concludes that her only option is to commit suicide. Levin, on the other hand, recognizes that even though life is futile, he can be happy by not attempting to rationalize everything, but instead accepting what life will offer him and living via faith and action. Anna's solution to the futility of life rejects the idea of a higher power, but the fact that the novel continues after her death, and that it ends with Levin, not Anna, suggests that Tolstoy offers a worldview to the reader that promises redemption, despite Anna's totalizing misery.

Part 7, Chapter 31 Quotes

And just at that moment when the midpoint between the two wheels came even with her, she threw the red bag aside and, drawing her head down between her shoulders, fell on her hands under the carriage, and with a light movement, as if preparing to get up again at once, sank to her knees.

Related Characters: Anna Arkadyevna Karenina (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 768

Explanation and Analysis

When Anna succeeds in committing suicide, she does not leap wildly; rather, her fall is premeditated, and she kneels before the train, as though in prayer, or as though she is about to be married. Kneeling suggests that Anna is submitting herself to a higher power. The "red bag" is an important detail in this scene, as it symbolically references

many previous aspects of the plot. The red bag gets in the way when Anna initially tries to jump into the tracks, just as Vronsky's gun got in the way when he attempted to commit suicide and he misfired.

Although the red bag prevents Anna from jumping in front of the first carriage, she does not take its role as a shield to be a sign that she should not go through with her action. Instead, she tosses the protective bag aside and prostrates herself in front of the next carriage. Red is the color of love and of blood: with the bag on her arm, Anna is symbolically wearing her heart on her sleeve. The color also recalls Anna's red lips when she saw Vronsky at the train station at the beginning of the novel. At the beginning of the novel, red signified desire and lust; while it still signifies desire here, this passion pulls Anna toward death, not love.

Part 8, Chapter 19 Quotes

"I'll get angry in the same way with the coachman Ivan, argue in the same way, speak my mind inappropriately, there will be the same wall between my soul's holy of holies and other people, even my wife, I'll accuse her in the same way of my own fear and then regret it, I'll fail in the same way to understand with my reason why I pray, and yet I will pray – but my life now, my whole life, regardless of all that may happen to me, every minute of it, is not only meaningless, as it was before, but has the unquestionable meaning of the good which is in my power to put into it!"

Related Characters: Konstantin (Kostya) Dmitrich Levin (speaker), Princess Katerina (Kitty) Alexandrovna Shcherbatsky

Related Themes:

Page Number: 817

Explanation and Analysis

Levin's statement at the end of the novel is an opposite but mirrored image of the conclusion that Anna draws about the world. Like Anna, who projects her self-centered despair onto everything else around her, Levin finds evidence to support his frame of mind in the world around him. But unlike Anna, who perceives everything around her as evidence that she will never be able to get outside of herself, Levin sees the world as evidence of the power and potential of the essential good inside him. Anna sees herself as ultimately destructive, but Levin sees himself as ultimately productive and redemptive.

Anna's story and Levin's story are intertwined throughout the novel as point and counterpoint. Anna's trajectory is tragic, as the fatal flaw of her jealousy consumes her entire world and leads her to despair. Levin's trajectory, in contrast, is comic (in the dramatic sense, not in the sense of "amusing"), as his story concludes with a happy marriage and a harmonic resolution. Levin, not Anna, has the book's closing lines, suggesting that Levin's perspective is the one that the reader is suggested to leave the novel with. Tolstoy opens the novel with his own philosophy, but he lets Levin have the final word, suggesting that the character has—at least in some ways––caught up to the narrator.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1, CHAPTER 1

"All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way," the novel begins. The Oblonsky household is in turmoil: Stiva Oblonsky has been having an affair with the children's former governess, and his wife, Dolly, has found out and has announced that she will not live in the same house with him.

The first line of Anna Karenina is one of the most famous lines in literature and helps to establish that not only is the book a story about particular people, it is a philosophical exploration of life and the organization of humanity. The first line can also be read as ironic. Of course it is not true that all happy families are alike—it just seems *that way to those who are unhappy.*

Ever since the fight, Dolly has refused to leave her rooms. On the third day after the quarrel, Oblonsky wakes up on his sofa in the study, having just had a **dream** about a wonderful dinner party. He remembers the moment when Dolly found out about the affair: he was coming back from the theater carrying a luscious pear as a gift for her, but she waved an incriminating note in front of him, and all he could do was smile involuntarily and stupidly.

Dolly won't leave her rooms, so Oblonsky is consigned to the study. Although he feels guilt and remorse, the vigorous and energetic Oblonsky still loves life. He knows what he did is wrong, but he cannot help but be exuberant. The pear is a characteristic Tolstoy detail: one specific, realistic object that carries much symbolic weight.

PART 1, CHAPTER 2

Oblonsky can't trick himself into pretending that he feels guilty about his behavior: he only feels guilty that he got caught. He rationalizes to himself that one has to live life to the fullest, and though he realizes that perhaps sleeping with the governess had taken things a bit too far, he is surprised that Dolly should be so shocked.

Oblonsky doesn't feel guilty about his actual deeds: he only feels remorse that he was found out. Oblonsky is much more motivated by exterior fashions and is ruled by the context in which his actions appear rather than an internal sense of morals or convictions.

Oblonsky's valet comes in with the barber, who shaves Oblonsky. A telegram arrives to say that Oblonsky's sister, Anna, is coming to visit, which delights everyone: perhaps Anna will help Oblonsky and Dolly reconcile. The servants know all about the domestic quarrel, and even though they know Oblonsky is in the wrong, they can't help but be on his side, and they want to save the marriage.

Oblonsky is pleasant with his servants and good friends with his valet. Oblonsky's exuberance for life and his abundant love of pleasure overflows to affect the servants. Even though the whole household is on Dolly's side rationally, they are all on Oblonsky's side emotionally, and they want to reconcile the family to go back to the old, happy ways.

PART 1, CHAPTER 3

Oblonsky opens his mail and his newspapers. He reads the liberal newspapers because the fashionable society that he associates with adopts liberal views: he likes the "slight haze" that the liberal tendency produces in his head.

Just as Oblonsky only feels guilty that he has been caught in the affair, not for having an affair in the first place, so he picks his politics based on how they make him feel in society, not on any deep-rooted internal convictions.

Two of Oblonsky's children come into the study, and he gives his eldest (his favorite child) chocolates to share with her little brother. After lingering more over business, Oblonsky realizes that can't put it off any longer: he has to go in and see his wife.

Although his eldest daughter is Oblonsky's favorite, he tries to be a good father to all his children, but the son still feels that his father loves him less. Even though he wishes he could let things go on as they are, he breaks the ice to visit Dolly.

PART 1, CHAPTER 4

Dolly is in the middle of packing, but she is so upset and anxious that she can't make up her mind which action she wants to take. She knows that she should punish Oblonsky, yet she still loves him and feels that it would be impossible to leave him.

Dolly's internal struggle is reflected in her external indecision. She cannot decide what course of action is best in these circumstances.

Oblonsky comes in and tries to look penitent and guilty, but he can't help but radiate health and kindness. Oblonsky asks Dolly to forgive him, but Dolly realizes that he does not love her: he only pities her. She screams at him to leave. He does so, and Dolly tries to distract herself by organizing things for the children.

Even though Oblonsky knows rationally that he should feel guilty, his body betrays him, as he still feels energetic. Oblonsky recognizes that his actions could tear his family apart, but his lively spirit overrides his guilt.

PART 1, CHAPTER 5

Oblonsky got his job through Anna's husband, Karenin, though he wouldn't have had a difficult time finding a similar post in many places, because he is well-connected and well-liked. He does not quarrel, treats everyone equally, and is always cheerful, which makes people happy to be in his presence.

Oblonsky owes his whole position in life to his connections and to being well liked. He is genial and affable, and is generally comfortable with his lot in life, not ambitious for anything more.

Levin comes to Oblonsky's office, interrupting a council meeting. Levin and Oblonsky are friends from childhood, but they have led very different lives. Levin lives in the country and is awkward and shy, whereas Oblonsky is self-assured and socially at ease in the urban world.

Levin is awkward in the city, since he is much more suited to a rural life. In contrast, Oblonsky knows how to navigate Moscow and feels at ease in urbane surroundings.

Oblonsky introduces Levin to his partners, saying that Levin works for the zemstvo, or village advisory board, but Levin says that he has quit. Oblonsky points out that Levin is wearing a new suit, which makes Levin self-conscious. Levin tells Oblonsky that he has an important, private matter to discuss with him. Oblonsky suggests they meet for dinner, but Levin says that he doesn't have that much to say.

Levin's expression of his disillusion with the zemstvo to Oblonsky and his business partners foreshadows the debate and controversy surrounding this issue that Tolstoy will introduce later in the novel. Levin is bashful about bringing up his feelings for Kitty, but Oblonsky knows them already.

Blushing furiously, Levin asks Oblonsky how the Shcherbatskys––Oblonsky's in-laws––are doing. Oblonsky knows that Levin is in love with Kitty, Dolly's younger sister.

Blushing is a telltale sign of emotion throughout the novel, as it is literally the display of emotion through the surface of the skin. Levin cannot hide his passions.

Oblonsky forms a plan: he tells Levin to go to the Zoological Gardens, where Kitty goes skating, and that he will pick Levin up for dinner from there. Levin rushes away, forgetting to say goodbye to Oblonsky's colleagues, one of whom remarks that Levin has eight thousand acres of land.

Levin is so preoccupied with his thoughts of Kitty that he forgets the formalities of Moscow society. But even though Levin is a country bumpkin, he is well off.

PART 1, CHAPTER 6

The Levins and the Shcherbatskys are two Moscow families that have always been friendly. While he was growing up, Levin spent a great deal of time at the Shcherbatsky house and fell in love with the whole family. He began to fall in love with Dolly, the eldest sister, but she married Oblonsky. Then, he began to fall in love with Natalie, the middle sister, but she married a diplomat. After spending a year in the country, Levin returns to Moscow and realizes that he has been destined to fall in love with Kitty.

Levin loves Kitty, but what he really loves is the whole Shcherbatsky family and the elegance and glamour that their lifestyle represents. He believes that he was "destined" to fall in love with Kitty, but he likely would have fallen for any eligible Shcherbatsky sister, since his passion spreads for their entire world and way of life.

Levin is convinced that he cannot possibly be worthy of Kitty, since he does not have a high-ranking position in society. However, after spending two months alone in the country, he still pines for Kitty, and so he has returned to Moscow to ask for her hand in marriage.

Even though Levin and Kitty are well suited for each other, because Levin places Kitty and her entire family on such a high pedestal in his mind, he cannot see their relationship in an unbiased light.

PART 1, CHAPTER 7

While in Moscow, Levin stays with his half-brother, Koznyshev, a philosophical writer whose dense conversation sometimes confuses Levin. When Levin comes home after talking to Oblonsky, Koznyshev is having a debate with a philosophy professor over whether or not there is a difference between psychic (thought-based) and phenomenological (perception-based) existence. Levin asks if he will have no further existence after his body dies, and the professor leaves without answering.

Even though Levin appears to be a country bumpkin, he gets right to the heart of the jargon-filled debate between Koznyshev and the professor, and the professor cannot answer Levin's question directly, since it is the key puzzle at the center of their argument.

PART 1, CHAPTER 8

Koznyshev and Levin chat. Koznyshev thinks that zemstvos are very important theoretically, but Levin has been disenchanted by seeing how they work in reality. Koznyshev says that their sickly older brother, Nikolai, is back in Moscow and has sent Koznyshev a note telling the younger brothers to leave him alone. Despite the note, Levin resolves to see him, but before doing so, he goes to find Kitty.

Nikolai, Levin's brother and Koznyshev's half-brother, is a ruined man whose physical illness reflects his state of demise. He has squandered most of his fortune and associates with the underbelly of society.

PART 1, CHAPTER 9

Levin goes to the Zoological Gardens, where, as expected, he finds Kitty skating. Kitty skates unsteadily towards him, and Levin finds himself **blushing** and stammering. Levin rents skates and takes the ice with Kitty. He is an excellent skater. Levin tells Kitty that he is more confident when she leans on him, which makes Kitty back away and become chilly towards Levin.

Levin's physical vigor in skating reflects his robust character and zest for life. He is initially awkward around Kitty, whom he adores and reveres, but when he can be engaged in physical activity, he becomes bold, but this is too much of an advance for Kitty.

Levin sees a young skater doing a new jump, and he tries it himself, pulling it off successfully. Kitty, watching him, regrets to herself that she is not in love with him. Levin goes off to dinner with Oblonsky, conflicted by his encounter. He is worried about Kitty's turn of mood toward him, but he is buoyed when she says, "See you soon," and because of his inner conflict, he can barely listen to Oblonsky's chatter.

Levin's skating prowess proves his vigor and shows that he is in the prime of life. Tolstoy switches into Kitty's point of view briefly to show that she enjoys flirting with Levin and likes his company but does not think she loves him. Levin is so lovesick that he cannot pay attention to Oblonsky.

PART 1, CHAPTER 10

At the restaurant, everyone is happy to see Oblonsky. Oblonsky orders an elaborate meal, speaking in Russian rather than **French**. Though Levin eats the meal, he would have been more comfortable with plain bread and cheese. Levin wants Oblonsky's advice about Kitty, but doesn't want to soil his relationship by talking about it with so many strangers chattering around him; instead, he talks about the ills of urbane society.

French is trendy in Russian society, but Oblonsky paradoxically asserts his dominance over the waiter by refusing to respond in French. Tolstoy slips into Levin's point of view to show his perspective on the meal: Levin is awkward both with the fancy feast and with the crowded atmosphere.

PART 1, CHAPTER 11

Oblonsky tells Levin that a rival suitor is courting Kitty: Count Vronsky, a rich, handsome charming military officer. Oblonsky advises Levin to propose to Kitty the next morning. Levin becomes self-conscious and tries to change the subject.

Oblonsky's description of Vronsky represents everything Levin wishes he were. Levin is ashamed because he thinks that his love for Kitty has become soiled through discussion—he is much more a man of action than speech.

Oblonsky broaches a hypothetical discussion of infidelity to Levin that mirrors his own actual situation. Suppose a man with an aging wife had an affair with the governess in the house: doesn't the young woman deserve recompense? Levin replies that according to Plato, there can be no drama between the love of soul mates and that the fallen woman deserves no recompense. After the two men sit for a bit longer, Levin leaves to call on the Shcherbatskys.

Levin has a pure, uncomplicated idea of love: he believes that when people are meant to be together, their love is clear and pure. Although Levin and Oblonsky have bared their souls to each other, the two feel more estranged than connected.

PART 1, CHAPTER 12

Kitty Shcherbatsky is eighteen years old and has just been formally introduced in Moscow society. Though all the men are in love with her, Kitty's two serious suitors are Vronsky and Levin. Kitty's mother, Princess Shcherbatsky, strongly favors Vronsky; however, it is no longer the custom in Russian society for parents to decide matches for their children, and Kitty will choose for herself.

Though the Princess strongly favors Vronsky and is somewhat confused by Lenin's rural, awkward ways, she cannot express her feelings too strongly, since the final decision, as is reflective of the changing times, will be made by Kitty rather than by the parents.

Princess Shcherbatsky knows that Kitty loves Vronsky and is worried that Vronsky is just flirting with Kitty. Kitty tells the Princess that Vronsky's mother is coming soon, which seems to signify that a proposal might be on the way. The Princess is worried, however, that Kitty might accept Levin if Levin proposes.

Even though the Princess favors Vronsky, she worries that he is toying with Kitty's heart. She hopes that Kitty will follow her own heart (i.e., wait for Vronsky) rather than accept the first proposal (i.e., Levin's) that comes her way.

PART 1, CHAPTER 13

While preparing for the party in which she knows she will likely receive a marriage proposal, Kitty is compared to a young man preparing for battle. Levin sits down with Kitty and proposes to her. Love floods through her for a moment, but then she remembers Vronsky and says, "It cannot be...forgive me."

Tolstoy likens the preparations of a woman getting ready for marriage to a soldier approaching war. Although Kitty is instinctively filled with love when Levin proposes, she believes that she is in love with Vronsky, so she refuses him.

PART 1, CHAPTER 14

Princess Shcherbatsky enters the room, senses that Kitty has refused Levin's proposal, and, relieved, begins to ask Levin about life in the country. Countess Nordston also enters: the Countess and Levin are supposedly friendly but in actuality despise each other.

Levin is in an awkward position but finds himself trapped, unable to escape the party which has become so miserable to him.

Vronsky arrives and they all discuss the merits of city versus country life. They then move into a discussion of spiritualism, in which the Countess Nordston wholeheartedly believes. Levin talks about electricity a little bit too passionately for the others' taste. Levin is constantly on the verge of leaving, but is also curious about Vronsky and finds him as charming and handsome as advertised.

Levin trusts sensations and scientific facts of earth rather than believing in fates and spirits. Although Levin has been cut out of the party by Kitty's refusal, he is still an invited guest and therefore awkwardly remains, glumly comparing himself to Vronsky.

PART 1, CHAPTER 15

After the party, Kitty is distressed about the situation with Levin, but concludes that she acted as she had to because she is still waiting for Vronsky's proposal. Her parents get into an argument. The Prince favors Levin because he believes that Vronsky isn't really in love with Kitty, and the Princess Shcherbatsky, who still favors Vronsky, begins to feel a bit troubled.

Even though Kitty is upset over the hurt she knows she has caused Levin, she believes that she and Vronsky are meant to be together and thus that she has done the right thing. The Prince, however, sees through Vronsky's flirtations and believes that Levin is the man for Kitty.

PART 1, CHAPTER 16

Vronsky has never had a family life; he essentially grew up in the Corps of Pages, where he became a brilliant officer. He is not aware that he has been leading Kitty on, since marriage doesn't seem like a possibility to him. Since he has been having a fun time with Kitty, he assumes that she has been having fun as well, and he hasn't considered that there might be deeper expectations or consequences.

Vronsky is rich, handsome, and brilliant––but he has never thought about settling down to raise a family, and indeed, he has never considered what the consequences of his actions might be. As long as he is taking pleasure and everything seems to be going smoothly, he assumes that all is well for everyone else, too. He is not a villain, but his casual neglect of others can be harmful to others.

PART 1, CHAPTER 17

The next morning, Oblonsky and Vronsky both arrive at the **train** station: Oblonsky is there to fetch Anna, and Vronsky is coming to meet his mother.

Although they have met before, the train platform is the first place in the novel where Oblonsky and Vronsky come together.

Vronsky tells Oblonsky that he met Levin and found him somewhat angry and edgy. Oblonsky suggests that his moodiness might be because Levin had just proposed to Kitty, and Vronsky comments offhand that Kitty can do better. Meanwhile, the **train** arrives.

Levin sees Vronsky as deep competition for Kitty's hand, but Vronsky does not view the situation with the same sense of dire import. He is concerned about Kitty's fate, but does not seem intent on marrying her.

PART 1, CHAPTER 18

Vronsky enters the **train** car to look for his mother, but as he does so, a woman passes who causes him to do a double take: not so much because of her beauty, but because of her vivid features and the animation and passion flashing from underneath the surface. The woman also turns back to look at him.

Both Vronsky and Anna are drawn magnetically to each other. Anna Karenina's eyes light up when she sees Vronsky, and even though she deliberately tries to hide the passion, it flares back up unbidden.

Vronsky's mother, the Countess Vronsky, introduces her to him. The woman is Anna Karenina, Oblonsky's sister. The Countess tells Vronsky that the two women chatted about their sons for the entire **train** ride.

Almost immediately, Vronsky learns that the woman whom he has been captivated by is married and has a son.

As they all leave the station, a watchman is run over by a **train**. Anna is disturbed, viewing the death as a bad omen.

The death is, indeed, a bad omen: it foreshadows Anna's own end.

PART 1, CHAPTER 19

Ever since she found out about Oblonsky's affair, Dolly has remained alone with her children, isolating herself from society. Nevertheless, she has prepared the house carefully for Anna's arrival. Anna meets Dolly compassionately and tells Dolly that Oblonsky has told Anna about the affair. Though she does not attempt to take sides, Anna is deeply sympathetic towards Dolly.

While Oblonsky has continued merrily about his business since Dolly found out about the betrayal, Dolly has removed herself from the world, nestled in her grief. Anna does not take sides: she is sympathetic to Dolly, but she does not blame or judge Oblonsky.

Dolly tells Anna that she never thought that Oblonsky could be unfaithful. The worst part of the affair, in Dolly's perspective, was that it wasn't an act of torrid, uncontrollable passion but one of cool, deliberate deception. She has spent her beauty and youth on her husband and children, but for no reason, since Oblonsky has betrayed her.

An affair that seemed to have sprung unbidden from an uncontrollable, bodily passion would be something that Dolly could understand and rationalize, but Oblonsky's calculated deception indicates that this was not a one-time, reckless matter but a pattern.

Anna convinces Dolly to forgive Oblonsky if Dolly still has love in her heart. Dolly asks Anna if Anna could forgive adultery, and Anna says that she could forgive in such a way that she could go on as if it hadn't happened. Dolly is relieved and comforted by Anna's advice.

Anna's stance toward adultery––that even though things can never be the way they were, one can forgive as though it had never happened––ironically turns out to be the stance her husband will later take regarding Anna and Vronsky's affair.

PART 1, CHAPTER 20

Anna spends the whole day with Dolly and insists that Oblonsky dine at home. There is potential for reconciliation. After dinner, Kitty arrives. Kitty as well as all the Oblonsky children are mesmerized by Anna, drawn by her charm and vivacity. Kitty, and Anna discuss the upcoming ball; Kitty says that she pictures Anna in a lilac dress.

Kitty, like the Oblonsky children, is magnetically attracted to Anna's animation and charm. Kitty idolizes Anna and pictures her wearing a lilac-colored, showy, but innocent dress to the upcoming ball.

Anna mentions that she met Vronsky at the **train** station, and Kitty **blushes**. Anna talks about Vronsky's mother, and Anna says that she will call on her tomorrow.

Blushing throughout the novel is a sign of uncontrollable, unbidden emotion, and even though Anna speaks casually about Vronsky, Kitty's blush gives the girl's emotion away.

PART 1, CHAPTER 21

Dolly and Oblonsky seem to have reconciled. Everyone has tea. Anna goes to her room to fetch a picture album. While she crosses the landing, a visitor arrives: it is Vronsky. They glance at each other and feel both pleasure and fear. Vronsky finds out the details of an upcoming dinner and leaves without coming inside. Even though there is nothing explicitly strange in the episode, the situation feels tense.

Many of the deepest emotions throughout the novel happen under the surface. Dolly and Oblonsky reconcile without needing to make huge speeches; instead, they simply resume their normal rhythms and spousal patter. Vronsky and Anna's glances contain deep passion that has not yet bubbled to the surface.

PART 1, CHAPTER 22

Kitty arrives at the ball, beautifully dressed in pink and bedecked with roses and a black velvet ribbon. Vronsky dances the first dance with her. Anna arrives in a low-cut black velvet dress, and even though Kitty had imagined her in lilac, Kitty realizes that Anna's loveliness relies on standing out from what she wears, not standing out because of a bold color.

Kitty and Anna are contrasted by their ball dresses: while Kitty is youthful and pretty in her rose-colored attire, Anna stands out from the crowd not because of what she wears but due to her internal passion and fire.

An officer asks Anna to dance, and she initially refuses. Vronsky approaches and bows to her, but Anna does not respond to the bow, turning to the other officer and dancing with him instead. Kitty is puzzled. As Vronsky and Kitty prepare to waltz, Kitty looks lovingly at him, but he does not respond to her gaze.

Anna dances with the other officer to make Vronsky jealous, rebuffing Vronsky's advances. Anna plays the game to perfection. The earnest Kitty, meanwhile, looks with all her heart at Vronsky, but he does not return the glance, indicating that he does not love her as she loves him.

PART 1, CHAPTER 23

Kitty and Vronsky dance several waltzes together, and Kitty turns down five invitations for the final mazurka, the most important dance at the ball, because she is waiting for Vronsky to ask her. Kitty sees Anna and Vronsky dance together, and Anna looks triumphant. Kitty perceives that Anna has achieved the conquest of one man, not simply the admiration of many.

Kitty has shown her feelings to Vronsky, but he does not return her advances, and instead of choosing her for the most important dance, he has chosen Anna. Kitty's ill-advised choice has caused her to turn away other eligible suitors. Vronsky has fallen in love with Anna, not Kitty.

When the final mazurka arrives, Kitty has no partner; at the last moment, she is saved from being a wallflower, but the evening is ruined. Kitty is crushed and broods on the interaction between Anna and Vronsky. Instead of admiring Anna wholeheartedly, Kitty now sees something threatening in her.

Kitty used to idolize Anna, just as the Oblonsky children do. However, now that she sees Anna as a rival, she perceives something threatening, alien, and not altogether wholesome about Anna's enchanting qualities.

PART 1, CHAPTER 24

After his stint in Moscow society, Levin feels worthless and ill at ease. He goes to visit Nikolai, his troubled brother, and finds him thinner and sicklier than when they last saw each other. Although Nikolai is gruff at first, Levin's timidity softens him. Nikolai introduces Levin to Marya, his mistress and de facto wife, whom he took from a whorehouse.

Levin's misery is internal, but Nikolai's ruin has extended to his external circumstances. Nikolai's relationship with the former prostitute is another type of companionship: though it is outside of societal convention, Nikolai treats Marya as his wife.

PART 1, CHAPTER 25

As Nikolai tells Levin about his work and political life, Levin finds it difficult to listen because Nikolai looks so consumptive. When Nikolai steps out of the room for a moment, Marya tells Levin that Nikolai's drinking has gotten worse.

Though Nikolai is more passionate than ever about his political activities, his health is failing. Even though Marya is not legally his wife, she devotedly takes care of him.

Over dinner, Nikolai discusses his socialist views, growing heated in his dismissal of institutions, and Levin is uncomfortable when he recognizes his own views coming out of the mouth of his brother. When Levin leaves, he privately tells Marya to write to him if things get worse and to persuade Nikolai to live in the country with Levin.

Levin is discomfited to hear socialist views that he himself has expressed sounding ridiculous when they come out of Nikolai's mouth. Although Nikolai doesn't want to be saved by his brother, Levin wants to save him.

PART 1, CHAPTER 26

As soon as Levin returns to the country, he feels like himself again. His **dog**, Laska, runs to greet him, and his servants are happy to see him home. Levin tries to cheer himself up with exercise. The steward announces that the new kiln, which Levin had designed, had slightly burned the buckwheat; on the bright side, however, Levin's best cow has calved.

Levin is constitutionally suited to the countryside and not himself in the city. Returning to the affairs of his estate, Levin is in command and is master of his domain, unlike his stint in the city, in which he was always ill at ease.

PART 1, CHAPTER 27

Even though Levin's house is large, he heats and occupies all of it. He wants to recreate the house to be exactly as it was when his mother was alive, and marriage is the center of his plan; now that Kitty has refused him, however, he feels he must renounce all his hopes. Agafya, Levin's old nurse and now his housekeeper, tells him the neighborhood gossip, and he begins to think about the scientific reforms he wants to implement. Laska nuzzles him, and he begins to think things will be all right again.

Levin idolizes his mother and lives on his estate in accordance not with his present state of being but with his future hopes: since he wants to have a family and run a grand household, he already is beginning to conduct himself in this manner. Even though he is initially despondent upon his return, he soon get settled in again.

PART 1, CHAPTER 28

The morning after the ball, Anna makes arrangements to leave Moscow for Petersburg. Dolly's children, who previously adored Anna, have intuitively and inexplicably started to ignore her. Dolly asks Anna why, saying that Anna has a good heart, but Anna says that all people have skeletons in their closets.

After the ball, things are not quite as they had been between Anna and the others: even the children can sense the change. Dolly is the only one who remains oblivious to the reason behind the shift in the winds.

Anna tells Dolly that Kitty is jealous of Anna because of Vronsky's attentions to Anna at the ball, but Anna emphasizes that nothing serious is going on between herself and Vronsky, and she hopes that the relationship between herself and Kitty will not be spoiled. Dolly refers to Anna as her best friend.

Anna claims that there is nothing serious going on between herself and Vronsky, and it is difficult to tell whether or not she herself believes this. Dolly, for her part, trusts Anna wholeheartedly.

PART 1, CHAPTER 29

Anna is relieved to be on the **train** leaving Moscow. She begins to read an English novel, but she cannot concentrate. Rather than read about other peoples' lives, she wants to live her own. As she reads, she begins to feel ashamed, recalling her time with Vronsky. Because of the **snowstorm** outside, objects in the train take on strange shapes, and she begins to feel over-stimulated and somewhat paranoid. She steps outside, where things right themselves in the fresh air.

Just as Anna wore the black dress so that she stood out against her clothing rather than the other way around, so she feels ambivalent toward novels, because she wants to be the star of her own life. The events in the novel remind her of what has happened with Vronsky, and she begins to feel ashamed and paranoid. The fresh air, however, revives her.

PART 1, CHAPTER 30

As Anna stands on the **train** platform in the **snowstorm**, Vronsky suddenly appears. He has followed her from Moscow. The news both terrifies and thrills her: she is proud and excited by her power over him, yet she is also frightened by the danger inherent in their burgeoning relationship and cannot sleep.

Although Anna believes she is leaving Moscow to escape Vronsky, he has followed her, and her power over him, and the passion he has for her, thrills her, even though she also recognizes the danger in this electric relationship.

The first face Anna sees when the **train** pulls into Petersburg is her husband's, and the first thing she notices are his unsightly ears. She is painfully aware of her dissatisfaction with both Karenin and herself.

Anna does not love her husband, Karenin, and her passion for Vronsky makes this previously latent fact painfully obvious to her.

PART 1, CHAPTER 31

Vronsky has not slept on the **train** either, but he feels invigorated and pleased with the impression that Anna has made on him. Other people look like distant objects to him. When the train arrives at Petersburg and Anna disembarks, Vronsky is somewhat surprised to see an actual husband in the flesh, but Vronsky can tell that she does not love Karenin.

Although Anna feels a pleasure tinged with guilt and fear, Vronsky's excitement is purely invigorating. The realities of Anna's life do not yet touch him––he considers their relationship alone, rather than its consequences on others. Vronsky does not consider how his actions impact others: he acts for himself.

Anna introduces Vronsky and Karenin to each other, and Vronsky asks if he might call on the Karenins. Karenin agrees, somewhat chillily. Karenin suggests that Anna pay their friend Countess Lydia Ivanovna a visit. Karenin sends Anna home in a carriage and returns to work.

Vronsky begins to insert himself into the Karenin household. Karenin does not like Vronsky, but he has no reason to distrust him yet. The Countess is one of the most important figures in Petersburg society.

PART 1, CHAPTER 32

Anna is somewhat disappointed to see her son, since she has imagined him as an ideal and must descend into reality to enjoy his charms. Countess Lydia arrives and tells Anna all the church gossip, but Anna is suddenly bored with what now seem to be petty affairs.

Although Anna loves her son, his physical reality does not match the version of him in her imagination, so she is disappointed. She cannot bring herself to be interested in her old life.

However, after the Countess Lydia leaves and another acquaintance comes and goes, Anna begins to feel less agitated. She tells herself that nothing has really happened with Vronsky and that there is nothing, therefore, to tell her husband about.

However, when Anna has readjusted to her position, she begins to feel re-centered, just like Levin's readjustment back to life in the country upon returning from Moscow.

PART 1, CHAPTER 33

Karenin is an extremely busy and punctual man. He and Anna typically dine with several people. Anna does not go out or to the theater because the dressmaker has not finished altering some dresses; instead, she spends the evening at home with her son, and feels very pleased with herself that she has spent the evening so well.

Karenin lives his life like clockwork: his business and his position in society are extremely important to him, and he follows both the letter and the spirit of the law. Rather than meet the engagements she was supposed to attend, Anna instead stays away from society and feels virtuous for having done so.

When Karenin returns home, she tells him about her journey to Moscow. Karenin says that he cannot excuse Oblonsky's actions, even though Oblonsky is Anna's brother, and Anna likes this feature in Karenin. Karenin reads to keep up on all the latest intellectual discussions, and Anna listens to him tell her about what he is learning. Exactly at midnight, they go to bed. Even though Anna is fond of her husband, she cannot help noticing his ears again.

Anna admires and likes Karenin's honesty about his ethics and moral righteousness. The two are a compatible pair, even though there is little physical passion between them. Yet Anna's sudden heightened awareness of his ears reflects her unconscious physical preference for Vronsky.

PART 1, CHAPTER 34

Vronsky had lent his Petersburg apartment to his friend and comrade Petritsky, a young, carousing lieutenant. When Vronsky returns home, Petritsky, his mistress, and the cavalry captain are entertaining each other. After a moment of initial shock, Vronsky slides easily back into his Petersburg social circle. He chats with his friends before leaving to pay several visits in the hopes of finding Anna.

In Petersburg, Vronsky's friends are young and dashing: he is at the epicenter of the flashy, brilliant social scene. Vronsky slides quite easily back into his position in Petersburg, and he sets off to find Anna again.

PART 2, CHAPTER 1

Kitty's health, which has been declining all winter, worsens as spring approaches. The family calls in a famous doctor, who insists on examining Kitty naked. The doctor prescribes a trip abroad to take the waters at a spa––not necessarily because it will help, but because it will do no harm. Princess Shcherbatsky, Kitty's mother, leaps at the opportunity for a trip abroad, and Kitty pretends to be excited.

Tolstoy portrays the famous doctor as a charlatan, more interested in leering at Kitty than presenting her with sound medical advice. Kitty's mother laps up every word that the doctor says, and even though she knows that no pills will cure her heartbreak, Kitty pretends to be cheered up.

PART 2, CHAPTER 2

Dolly has recently given birth to a daughter, and another child has fallen ill. Dolly is stressed and anxious, constantly suspicious of Oblonsky, but the pain is familiar, rather than debilitating.

Dolly's own married life is far from perfect, but she has committed herself to her relationship for the sake of her family, and she puts her own pain aside to tend to her sister.

Though Princess Shcherbatsky still believes that medicines might cure Kitty, the Prince blames his wife for trusting Vronsky in the first place. Dolly believes that Kitty is so unhappy because she refused Levin and trusted Vronsky.

Dolly sees that much of her parents' and Kitty's anguish stems from placing too much trust in Vronsky. Kitty sees that should never have fallen so wholeheartedly for him and ignored Levin.

PART 2, CHAPTER 3

Kitty's room is cheerful, pink, and filled with dolls. When Dolly asks about Kitty's relationship with Vronsky, at first Kitty bitterly cries that she could never stay with a man whom she knew to be unfaithful, but she soon breaks down and cries, expressing her grief to Dolly. Kitty visits Dolly to help nurse Dolly's children through scarlet fever, but this does not cure Kitty's heartbreak, and she and her mother go abroad once Dolly's children are well.

Though Kitty's room reflects a cheerful girl, Kitty has grown over the past few months into an anguished woman. Even though Kitty wants to maintain moral superiority over Dolly, she breaks down and allows Dolly to be both a sisterly and motherly source of comfort. Kitty, in turn, helps Dolly through her troubles as well.

PART 2, CHAPTER 4

Anna is part of the best social circle in Petersburg and has particular friends in three subdivisions: Karenin's official career social group; the unattractive but virtuous group with Countess Lydia at its center; and society proper, the people who hold lavish balls, with Princess Betsy Tverskoy at its center.

Anna is directly in the center of all the best levels of Petersburg society: she maintains her place at the center of both the most politically well-connected and the most socially brilliant aspects of Petersburg life.

When Anna returns to Petersburg from Moscow, she begins spending more and more time with Princess Betsy's set, which entails spending more and more time with Vronsky, as this is his group. One night, they all go to the French Theater to see an opera. Vronsky feigns slight embarrassment about his constant presence with Anna, but knows that he will be admired, rather than ridiculed, for attaching himself to a married woman.

Anna openly allies herself more and more with Vronsky by subtly shifting how she proportions her time within each subdivision of society. Vronsky, knowing that his reputation will not be tarnished, does not hide his intimacy with Anna.

PART 2, CHAPTER 5

At the French Theater, Vronsky tells Princess Betsy a titillating story about two officers, Petritsky and a friend, who are in Vronsky's regiment. While drunk, the officers chase a pretty young woman up to her apartment; however, her husband, a Titular Councilor, emerges and yells at the officers, and Vronsky must attempt to broker peace between the Councilor and the officers. The regimental commander is angry with the officers at first, but Vronsky's story amuses him.

The bawdy story that Vronsky tells as well as everybody's amused reactions stand in stark contrast to Kitty's humiliation. Kitty is ashamed when the doctor examines her naked, but Princess Betsy only laughs, unconcerned, at Vronsky's tale. Raunchy behavior by young men is standard practice in Vronsky's society.

PART 2, CHAPTER 6

After the opera, Princess Betsy hosts her social set at her house. Before Vronsky, Anna, and Karenin arrive, several people gossip about the love triangle. Another society lady defends Anna, deriding Karenin as stupid, and saying that it's not Anna's fault if everyone falls in love with her.

Petersburg society is well aware of the complex relationship between Anna and Vronsky, but neither of their reputations is tarnished; on the contrary, Karenin is seen as somewhat stupid, and Anna praised as irresistible. The social circle accepts a certain level of flirtatious—or even more—behavior.

Vronsky arrives from the "Bouffe," or the French comic opera, which is more entertaining but a less respectable show than the opera.

Vronsky chooses to lead an entertaining but less respectable lifestyle.

PART 2, CHAPTER 7

Anna arrives at Princess Betsy's. Vronsky and an ambassador's wife begin to argue about love and marriage: she says the only happy marriages are arranged, while he argues for passion. Princess Betsy asks Anna for her opinion, and Anna says that there are many kinds of love.

Anna's comment seems to be double edged. Her acknowledgment of many different kinds of love may suggest that she is open to a relationship of passion with Vronsky or is satisfied with her non-passionate marriage to Karenin.

Anna tells Vronsky that she has received word that Kitty is ill. She and Vronsky go to a private corner, where Anna rebukes him for the way he acted toward Kitty. Anna says that she wants Vronsky to go to Moscow and beg Kitty's forgiveness. Vronsky says that Anna doesn't want that. Instead of protesting, she looks at him with her eyes filled with love.

Although Anna knows that she should reproach Vronsky for his behavior toward Kitty, and although she knows that she should encourage him to return to Kitty, she cannot say the right thing. She says nothing at all, but her expression of love is far more powerful than words.

Karenin arrives at the party, but Vronsky and Anna continue to sit apart. The entire room gossips about Vronsky and Anna; only Karenin appears not to notice. Karenin tries to get Anna to go home with him, but Anna says that she is going to stay for supper, and Karenin leaves.

The only person who does not see Karenin as a cuckold is Karenin himself. Anna is fairly careless of her reputation, remaining ensconced in private conversation with Vronsky even after her husband arrives.

After supper, Vronsky tells Anna that he wants her love, not her friendship. She tells Vronsky that the word "love" means much to her.

Anna does not accept or refuse Vronsky's advance verbally, but her silence speaks volumes.

PART 2, CHAPTER 8

Although Karenin found nothing improper with his wife and Vronsky sitting privately, he realizes that everyone else thought it was peculiar, and so he resolves to have a talk with his wife. Karenin is not a jealous man, but for the first time, he begins to realize that there is a possibility that his wife is falling in love with someone else, and he is horrified.

Karenin only thinks that there may be something improper in the relationship between Vronsky and Anna after realizing how the rest of society perceives the situation. He is not by nature jealous, but he is very conscious of how others perceive him.

Karenin paces back and forth, trying to figure out what to say. He composes a speech as though making a political resolution and cracks his knuckles. When he hears Anna arrive, he is pleased with his speech but nervous about the talk he is about to have.

Karenin treats his personal relationship with his wife as a business matter to be dealt with. The tic of cracking his knuckles indicates his physical discomfort and his desire to maintain control.

PART 2, CHAPTER 9

When Anna returns home, she remarks to Karenin that she is surprised he isn't in bed. Karenin says that they must talk. Although Anna lies with apparent ease and does not seem anxious, Karenin sees that she has closed her soul to him.

Although Anna pretends to be relaxed, Karenin realizes that something has changed: she has become impenetrable and distant from him, even though she seems the same on the outside.

Karenin warns Anna that she has been too carefree and animated in her interactions with Vronsky. Anna lightly mocks him, but Karenin continues seriously, saying that he loves her and that their lives are bound together by God. Karenin asks her to tell him if she has feelings for Vronsky, and Anna says that there is nothing to tell. They go to bed, but Anna lies awake, thinking of Vronsky.

Karenin is quite serious in his talk with Anna, and although she pretends to take everything very lightly, she is secretly pleased that he does not accuse her outright or appear to know the full depth of her desires. Anna maintains the façade of her marriage but dreams of Vronsky.

PART 2, CHAPTER 10

The argument between Anna and Karenin has marked a change in their relationship. Anna spends more and more time with Princess Betsy and Vronsky. Karenin feels powerless but cannot speak seriously to Anna.

After the argument, there is a wall between Anna and Karenin: she continues to see Vronsky everywhere, but Karenin cannot express his feelings to her.

The chapter ends with two lines of ellipses, marking a large break between what has come before and what happens next.

Even though Anna Karenina *is full of words and dialogue, many of the most important changes and messages occur in nonverbal moments.*

PART 2, CHAPTER 11

During the ellipses that mark the break after chapter 10 and before chapter 11, Anna and Vronsky sleep together, although there is no explicit description of the event.

Many of the most important parts of Anna Karenina *occur not in words but in silences, as in the critical break in the narrative in which Anna and Vronsky sleep together.*

Anna is sobbing, wracked with shame, guilt, and humiliation. Vronsky feels like a murderer contemplating the body he has just murdered. Anna tells Vronsky that she has nothing left but him.

Sex is compared to murder: Vronsky looks upon Anna's body as though it is a corpse he has killed, and Anna feels ashamed and horrified, but clings to Vronsky.

Anna tells herself that she will contemplate her relationship with Vronsky and the mixture of shame, joy, and horror later, when she has more time, but that calm moment never comes.

Although Anna tries to tell herself that she will sort through her emotions at some point, she never does.

Anna has a recurring **dream** in which she is married to both Karenin and Vronsky, and though the situation seems wonderful in the dream, it haunts her like a nightmare when she wakes.

Anna longs to exist peacefully in both her married life and her affair with Vronsky, but she cannot, and she feels guilty about her deeds.

PART 2, CHAPTER 12

Levin is still dejected and embarrassed over Kitty's rejection of him, but he continues to keep up his work on the farm. He receives a **letter** saying that his brother Nikolai is ill, and Levin persuades Nikolai to go to a foreign spa.

Although Levin is despondent and ashamed at the failed outcome of his proposal to Kitty, he continues to take charge of his normal life and duties.

Meanwhile, **spring** has returned to the farm, with sticky new buds on the birches and baby animals. Levin begins writing a book on farming, praising the "known, immutable character of the worker."

Though Levin is sad, life continues around him, and the world goes on blooming. Levin's book on farming is in contrast to the extravagant lives Anna and Vronsky lead.

PART 2, CHAPTER 13

It's spring, and Levin is full of new energy and plans, just like his plants and animals. But he becomes very frustrated by the carelessness of his workers, who have not made the necessary winter repairs throughout his estate.

The repairs that were neglected on the estate during the winter parallel Levin's own state of mind: he was too heartbroken over Kitty to pay attention to other problems.

Levin tries to order his steward to fix the situation––hire more workers, plant earlier, fix the cart––but the steward shrugs and says, "As God grants." Levin realizes that he can only fight the forces of nature so far, and he must stifle some of his irritation. Despite his anger, it is a beautiful spring, and he cannot help but have some hope.

Although Levin has great ambitions and dreams for his estate, he must also combat others' laziness and come to terms with the reality of the situation. Even though Levin is angry at the workers, however, he is still cheered up by the arrival of spring and the promise of change.

PART 2, CHAPTER 14

Oblonsky pays Levin an unexpected visit at his estate, and Levin is pleased to see him. Oblonsky has arrived to do some shooting, see Levin, and sell a **forest**. Levin tells Oblonsky about his book on farming and deliberately tries not to ask about Kitty directly. Oblonsky essentially admits to continued cheating on his wife, comparing his actions to desiring sweet rolls as well as bread.

Levin is happy to see Oblonsky, and he wants to ask for news of Kitty but is ashamed to do so directly. Although Levin and Oblonsky are friends, they lead very different lives: Oblonsky visits the country, but his natural habitat is the city, and the opposite is true for Levin.

PART 2, CHAPTER 15

Levin and Oblonsky go shooting, and Levin finally works up the courage to ask Oblonsky directly whether or not Kitty is married. Oblonsky replies that she is not married and that she is ill.

While he is shooting and in his natural habitat, Levin can finally work up the courage to ask the question that has been on his mind the whole time.

Laska, the **dog**, sees a snipe and thinks that the men will miss it because of their talk, but at the last minute, both men see the snipe and hit it.

Tolstoy writes from the perspective of all different characters, including Levin's dog. Both men hitting the snipe suggest how victorious they each feel in terms of love.

PART 2, CHAPTER 16

Levin begins to ask Oblonsky for details about Kitty's situation but then cuts him off, saying he has no right to know. He changes the subject to the **forest** that Oblonsky is selling. Levin knows that Oblonsky is getting a bad deal and is scornful of city folk who think they understand country life. Despite feeling bold after asking Oblonsky about Kitty, Levin now starts to sink into a bad mood.

Although Levin finally worked up the courage to ask about Kitty while the men were safely in the woods, when they begin to return to the world, he gets embarrassed again and sinks into a terrible mood. However, he does feel superior to city people who think they understand the country.

Levin dislikes the dealer who is buying Oblonsky's wood. The dealer tries to bargain down the price, but when Levin says that he'll buy the **forest** himself, the dealer sticks with the original deal.

Levin is irritated by the dealer, whom he knows is attempting to swindle Oblonsky, and Levin demonstrates his superior knowledge of country matters.

PART 2, CHAPTER 17

Oblonsky is cheerful after the sale of his wood, but Levin is even more out of sorts: he has become extremely agitated by the news that Kitty is not married.

Levin's agitation over Kitty combined with his frustration that the dealer has swindled Oblonsky make him irritable.

Even though Oblonsky recognizes that he might have gotten a bad deal on his land, he doesn't care, because that's the way of the world: noblemen spend money somewhat carelessly. Levin, however, is irritated. He thinks that it's all right for noblemen to spend lots of money and for peasants to work their way up, but he hates the idea that noblemen get swindled through their own ignorance.

Oblonsky doesn't seem to concern himself with social commentary, but Levin is deeply concerned about the interaction between nobles and peasants. Oblonsky is bemused by the quaint country ways, whereas Levin can see that the country people are not simply the amusing, childlike folk that Oblonsky thinks they are.

Levin asks Oblonsky about Vronsky. Oblonsky says that Vronsky is the perfect aristocrat, and Levin disagrees, saying that Vronsky's family is wily and hedonistic. Oblonsky remains in a good mood, however, and enjoys Levin's animation.

Levin doesn't believe in the Vronsky nouveau riche model of aristocracy; instead, he is conservative: he wants the aristocrats to come from noble families. Levin also is so worked up because he is angry at the way Vronsky treated Kitty.

PART 2, CHAPTER 18

Ever since the affair with Anna, Vronsky's external life has continued in exactly the same fashion as before: he spends time with his regiment, and they continue to love and respect him. All of Petersburg high society knows about the affair, and they are waiting with bated breath for the right moment for mudslinging against Anna to begin.

Though Vronsky's inner life has exploded in his affair with Anna, externally, there are no repercussions; indeed, his regiment officers, if anything, respect him more. Though everyone in Petersburg knows about the scandal, nothing has been said aloud yet, and the worst consequences will be for Anna, not Vronsky.

Vronsky's mother is initially pleased with the liaison, but is disappointed when she realizes that the passion is interfering with Vronsky's political ambitions. Vronsky's passion for Anna does not, however, interfere with his passion for horses, and he eagerly anticipates an upcoming race.

Vronsky's mother disapproves of the affair on the grounds of ambition and politics, not morals. Vronsky's other great passion in life, horses, provides a counterbalance to his romantic life.

PART 2, CHAPTER 19

On the day of the race, Vronsky eats lunch alone and schemes about how he can visit Anna to ask if she will come with him to the races. Though Vronsky is irritated when two younger officers speak to him, he welcomes the cavalry captain, a handsome, immoral man who is Vronsky's best friend in the regiment; after lunch, the two men go to Vronsky's for a drink.

Vronsky does not treat all people equally: he is short with his inferiors, yet when his immoral, handsome friend comes over, he fawns on him. Vronsky is preoccupied with himself and his own needs and desires rather than those of others.

PART 2, CHAPTER 20

Vronsky lives in a cottage with Petritsky, his young, carousing friend; Petritsky is still asleep in the midafternoon when Vronsky and the captain arrive. The captain requests a drink, but Vronsky says that he has to get to the stables, although he and his friends both know that he is also going to visit Anna. First, however, Vronsky reads a **letter** from his mother reproaching him for not visiting and a note from his brother that says that he wants to speak with him.

Vronsky lives with his young, irresponsible friends, rather than leading a settled, stable lifestyle. Although Vronsky does not say to his friends that he is going to see Anna before the race, he doesn't need to––they all know the subtext. Vronsky has also been ignoring his family in favor of his social life.

PART 2, CHAPTER 21

Vronsky visits Frou-Frou, his new mare; the horse gets more agitated as Vronsky comes near, and he discusses the horse in English with the Englishman who owns the stable. Vronsky is pleased with Frou-Frou because he believes she has good blood and a lively spirit, and he believes that he's plucky enough to handle her.

Although Frou-Frou isn't physically perfect, Vronsky loves the sense of barely restrained animation that he sees in her. He and the horse both have a great deal of excitement that lies just below the surface, as does Anna.

Vronsky tells the Englishman that he is going to visit a fellow officer before the race; although he does not say he is also meeting Anna, the Englishman warns him to be calm before the race. In the carriage ride, Vronsky reads the **letters** from his mother and brother, and for the first time since the start of the affair, he feels determined to drop all the lies and be alone together with Anna.

Again, even though Vronsky doesn't say explicitly that he is going to see Anna, everyone seems to know tacitly about his motives. This is also an important moment: although the letters from his mother and brother don't say anything that he hasn't heard before, Vronsky is finally determined that his external and internal lives must match.

PART 2, CHAPTER 22

Vronsky arrives at Anna's country house and enters through the garden. He is excited to see her, but then he thinks about Seryozha, her son, and feels uneasy: the relationship between himself and Seryozha is awkward and strained. Today, however, Anna's son is absent, and she is alone in the garden.

Although Vronsky is eager to see Anna in the flesh, not just in his imagination, he feels uncomfortable around Anna's son, as the son is a constant reminder of Anna's legitimate marriage.

Vronsky speaks to Anna in **French**, as "you" in Russian is either too intimate or too cold. He asks Anna what she is thinking about, as she is clearly preoccupied; a leaf she holds in her hand is shaking. She debates telling him, but finally admits that she is pregnant.

Vronsky and Anna have a private, shared, intimate language. The leaf shaking in Anna's hand emphasizes her nervousness: like Frou-Frou, who is animated and lively just under the surface, Anna's emotions are barely contained.

Anna thinks that Vronsky will understand the significance of the event in the same way that she does, but Vronsky interprets events differently: Vronsky sees it as a sign that they must stop living a lie, but Anna says that she is still her husband's wife.

Anna believes that Vronsky will be compassionate and care for Anna's well-being, but Vronsky takes the pregnancy as a sign that they should stop living a lie, even though this would ruin Anna's reputation. This is important to recognize: Russian society doesn't care about Vronsky and Anna's relationship as long as they keep it discrete, despite the fact that everyone actually knows about it. But if they were to openly acknowledge their love, their true selves, Anna would be ostracized (though Vronsky wouldn't). Their society pushes them to hypocrisy.

PART 2, CHAPTER 23

Vronsky stresses to Anna that he thinks she should confess everything to Karenin and leave him. Anna does not want to run away, however, because she does not want her son to have a mother who abandons his father. Anna hears Seryozha returning, kisses Vronsky goodbye, and tells him to return at one that night.

Vronsky thinks only of what would be best for him, *that is, that Anna run away from her family and join him. Anna knows that the situation is much more complicated, but she still wants to maintain the secret affair.*

PART 2, CHAPTER 24

Although he is late, Vronsky manages to visit his officer friend and make it back to the racetrack just in time for his race. The Englishman warns him once again not to get excited. Vronsky changes unhurriedly and slips into the crowd, deliberately avoiding Princess Betsy and Anna. Vronsky's brother tells him to answer his mother's **letter**. Vronsky sees his only real rival in the race, a huge stallion named Gladiator. Vronsky does not look to the pavilion where Anna is seated. As Vronsky mounts Frou-Frou, he and his horse are both agitated. As they make their way to the starting line, Frou-Frou is tense, high-strung, and difficult to control.

Despite his inner emotional turmoil, Vronsky manages to maintain external appearances by arriving just on time for his steeplechase. Although Vronsky tries to maintain his composure, he and Frou-Frou are both nervous. The Englishman's warnings to Vronsky to not get excited foreshadow the dire agitation that parallels the news of the affair and plagues the race. Frou-Frou is high-strung and jittery, and because Vronsky himself is keyed up, he cannot control her.

PART 2, CHAPTER 25

The steeplechase begins. Despite a shaky start, Frou-Frou overtakes all the other horses except Gladiator. Near the end, Frou-Frou, jumping beautifully, passes Gladiator. Only one simple ditch remains and Vronsky, concentrating on trying to beat Gladiator by a long margin, doesn't pay attention to the easy jump. Vronsky shifts in the saddle, and suddenly he realizes that he's made a terrible mistake, and Frou-Frou can't clear the jump: she's broken her back and must be shot. To his dismay, Vronsky is himself uninjured.

Vronsky and Frou-Frou are nervous at the beginning of the race, but they overcome a shaky start and seem like they're going to be as triumphant as everyone predicted. However, at the very last simple jump, Vronsky isn't paying attention to what is in front of his nose, instead thinking of future glory. The downfall foreshadows oncoming disaster in his relationship with Anna.

PART 2, CHAPTER 26

Externally, the relationship between Karenin and Anna appears the same as ever. Internally, however, he is vexed and feels chilly toward her. Even though Karenin is extremely subtle and intelligent in his business affairs, he puts blinders on in terms of regarding his relationship with his wife. Countess Lydia, who spends the summer in the same country area as the Karenins, refuses to visit Anna and hints to Karenin about the inappropriateness of Anna's relationship with Vronsky.

Like Vronsky, who is able to maintain external appearances despite inner turmoil, the relationship between Anna and Karenin appears the same on the outside although it has changed internally. Karenin is very subtle and smart about matters of business, but not about manners of love. Countess Lydia, whom Anna has slighted in favor of Betsy, is jealous and is poised for the scandal to break out.

Karenin makes it a point to go to the country once a week. He also makes it a point to go to the races to keep up appearances. Unconsciously, however, he has made it a point to have a third party present during interactions with his wife. In the morning, before he leaves the city for the country, a doctor tells Karenin that he is too stressed and says that Karenin will reach a breaking point soon.

Karenin's primary concern is keeping up appearances and maintaining his reputation in society at all costs. However, relations between himself and Anna are decidedly strained. And although Karenin keeps up appearances, all is not well: unhealthy stress lurks just below the surface.

PART 2, CHAPTER 27

Just before the race, Anna is getting ready, and she is surprised to see Karenin appear at the country house. Anna asks Karenin to spend the night, although she doesn't want him to. Karenin tells her about his visit with the doctor, and Anna urges him to stay in the country, but they both know that she doesn't mean it. She shudders after he kisses her on the hand.

Karenin's surprise appearance throws off Anna's plans, as she has plotted a rendezvous with Vronsky for that night. Out of guilt, she immediately asks Karenin to spend the night at the country house, and she urges him to stay, although his ill health is the last of her concerns, as they both know.

PART 2, CHAPTER 28

Anna is already at the races when Karenin arrives, and though she pretends not to see him, Princess Betsy calls him over, and Karenin sits with them in the pavilion. Anna hates deceit, but as she listens to her husband speak about horseracing to a colleague, she reflects that all Karenin wants is to get ahead in his career and has no trouble lying, and she is disgusted.

After presenting the race from Vronsky's perspective, Tolstoy also writes the steeplechase scene from Anna's point of view. Anna hates that she is lying to her husband, but everything about him now is physically and morally grating to her—all of his flaws appear magnified to her now the he stands between her and Vronsky.

During the officers' steeplechase, Karenin only has eyes for Anna, but Anna only has eyes for Vronsky, and despite not wanting to know her true feelings, Karenin reads with horror Anna's love for Vronsky written all across her face. Anna is only concerned for Vronsky's safety; when one of the other men falls, the crowd reacts, but Anna does not. Anna can feel Karenin's eyes on her, but the only person she cares about is Vronsky.

The direction of each person's gaze during the steeplechase reflects the love triangle. Karenin watches Anna, Anna watches Vronsky, and Vronsky barrels forward carelessly. Anna knows that Karenin is watching her, but she cannot force herself to care—her entire attention is focused on Vronsky.

PART 2, CHAPTER 29

When Vronsky falls, Anna is extremely shaken and feels like a trapped bird. She begins to weep. An officer says that Vronsky is unhurt, and Anna continues to sob, but now out of relief. She wonders if Vronsky will still come to see her tonight.

Anna's reactions at the race are entirely tied to Vronsky's well being as it relates to her. When he falls, she feels trapped, and when he is well, her first thought is to wonder if she will still see him that night.

During the carriage ride home, Karenin rebukes Anna for behaving improperly. When Anna does not respond for a moment, Karenin thinks she will laugh away his suspicions. However, she confirms Karenin's accusations, telling him that she is Vronsky's mistress, that she is in love with Vronsky, and that she hates Karenin.

When Anna does not respond to Karenin immediately, it is not because his accusations are false but because she can only think about Vronsky. Anna cannot lie outright: she tells her husband the truth about the affair and her emotions.

Karenin stiffly asks Anna to keep up appearances. Anna receives a note from Vronsky saying that he would still come that night, and her husband seems like a dim recollection.

Karenin wants to maintain his social reputation at all costs, even though his actual marriage is crumbling. Anna only has thoughts of Vronsky.

PART 2, CHAPTER 30

Meanwhile, Kitty and her mother are at a spa town in Germany. The social hierarchy among the international vacationers is extremely crystallized, and once the pecking order has been firmly established, Kitty is bored with it. She is intrigued by a Russian girl named Varenka, who has the physical qualities of beauty but lacks Kitty's restrained fire of life. Kitty idolizes Varenka because she is always busy doing things for others.

Kitty does not care about the superficial trappings of society; instead, she wants to get to know people for who they are. Animation hidden just under the surface is an extremely important characteristic in Tolstoy's descriptions. Kitty sees a care for others and a purpose in Varenka's life that she feels her own lacks.

Another Russian couple arrives at the spa, and although Kitty likes them from afar, she is repulsed when she discovers who they are: Nikolai, Levin's brother, and Marya, the prostitute he treats as a wife.

Although Kitty imagines the best in people, she is extremely uncomfortable when Levin's ne'er-do-well brother and disreputable mistress arrive.

PART 2, CHAPTER 31

Kitty asks her mother if she can be friends with Varenka, who is Madame Stahl's companion (Madame Stahl is an invalid). Her mother is resistant at first, but when she learns that Varenka has intervened to salvage Nikolai's reputation, she allows Kitty to befriend the girl. Kitty is delighted.

Kitty's mother is reluctant to allow Kitty to befriend Varenka because Varenka is of a lower social status, but when she sees Varenka's good example, she recognizes her worth.

PART 2, CHAPTER 32

Madame Stahl is an invalid who raised Varenka as her own daughter. Varenka is beloved by everybody for her good manners and fine upbringing, and she charms Kitty and the Princess, Kitty's mother.

Even though Varenka is not Madame Stahl's natural daughter, she has become beloved by all for her impeccable manners and lovely demeanor.

One day, Varenka is singing as Kitty accompanies her, and she hesitates before singing a particular song; she later reveals that that is the song she sang to her lover. They were planning to be married, but his mother called off the wedding. Kitty asks about the situation, obviously asking about herself, and Varenka tells Kitty that there are more important things than insults: what matters is whether or not Kitty still loves the man.

Varenka, like Kitty, has also had heartbreak in her life: her lover's mother forbade him lover from marrying her because of Varenka's lower social status. Unlike Kitty, who is still deeply ashamed of her episode with Vronsky, Varenka has attempted to put the insult behind her and move on.

PART 2, CHAPTER 33

Madame Stahl gives Kitty religious instruction. Despite Madame Stahl's compassion, Kitty doubts whether or not she is fully sincere in her Christian morals; however, Kitty never doubts Varenka's goodness. Kitty begins to imitate Varenka's example as well as her physical mannerisms.

Kitty sees through some of Madame Stahl's falseness: though Madame Stahl professes piety, she is not always sincere. Kitty is so smitten with Varenka's example that she mimics her every move.

Under Varenka's patronage, Kitty befriends an ill painter named Petrov. At first, Petrov's family adores Kitty, but eventually, Petrov's wife becomes jealous of Kitty's attachment to her husband and son. Petrov is too warm to Kitty, his wife is too chilly to her, and the situation becomes awkward.

Kitty tries to follow Varenka's example by befriending the ailing painter, but the situation goes awry when her attachment to the painter and his son grows too close for his wife's comfort. Perhaps Kitty is more naturally flirtatious or more beautiful than Varenka, but this moment suggests the tension in the novel between intention and impact—you can mean and intend one thing, but it is somewhat out of your control how those around you, or society at large, will respond.

PART 2, CHAPTER 34

The Prince, Kitty's father, comes to visit Kitty and the Princess at the spa town. Unlike Kitty's mother, who tries to act Continental while abroad, the prince deliberately emphasizes his Russian habits. At first, Kitty's father is jealous of her new friendships, but he is soon delighted that her friends are making her happy.

Kitty's mother fancies herself among the elite of European society, whereas her father thinks the trappings of Continental ways are ridiculous and wants to be Russian. The idea of the importance of Russians staying connected to Russian tradition and culture is important in the novel.

Kitty's father first meets Varenka and likes her. He then meets Petrov and his wife. Petrov awkwardly asks Kitty why she hadn't come to visit the day before, and he and his wife argue. The prince and Kitty then see Madame Stahl. Kitty's father has known Madame Stahl for a long time. He tells Kitty that Madame Stahl is less purely devout than she seems; also, Madame Stahl isn't a real invalid, but just has stumpy legs and hides them in a wheelchair. Kitty's idealized version of Madame Stahl dissolves with her father's revelations, and she sees through her.

Kitty's father is just as charmed by Varenka's goodness as the rest of his family is. Petrov and his wife argue; clearly the wife is jealous of Kitty. When the prince reveals more of Madame Stahl's past to Kitty, her idealism is shattered in much the same way that Vronsky's inattention to her shattered her idealism about love. Kitty is growing up.

PART 2, CHAPTER 35

The Prince makes everyone around him lighthearted. However, because he revealed the sinister side of Petrov's family as well as Madame Stahl, Kitty feels as though her new, happy life has been infected. The Petrovs are packing to leave, and Kitty wants to go with Varenka to help them pack, but Varenka tells her not to go.

Even though Kitty's father is merry, his presence has pulled the wool from Kitty's eyes and made her realize both the falsity of Madame Stahl as well as the trouble in her relationship with the Petrov family. Varenka urges her not to cause any more rifts by appearing at the Petrov house.

Kitty has a fit, claiming that she is a bad person and that she can only live by her heart. Varenka thinks Kitty is chastising her, but Kitty says she is only blaming herself. Kitty and Varenka make up, but Kitty is forever changed. She realizes that that she cannot make everyone love her. When she and her family return to Moscow, she is no longer a carefree young girl, but she is at peace with herself.

Kitty, in a spasm of emotion, realizes that she lives by her heart and that she can't deceive those around her. Although she seems to blame Varenka at first, Kitty is actually only speaking about herself. Her father's cynical view of her friends at the spa has made Kitty realize she must lead her own life, not imitate another's, and that not everyone will love her.

PART 3, CHAPTER 1

As a rest from his intellectual life, Koznyshev, Levin's half-brother, decides to visit Levin in the country. Levin feels awkward in the country with Koznyshev, because Koznyshev sees the country as a respite and haven from work, whereas Levin views it as the exact opposite. Also, Koznyshev idolizes the peasants as a pure but separate class, whereas Levin does not draw delineations between himself and the peasants: he sees everyone in the country is united toward the same common goal. Levin finds himself unable to say whether or not he loves the peasants: they're simply people, not a group to love or hate.

Though Levin loves Koznyshev, he feels uncomfortable because his half-brother's perspective on country life does not match his own. Koznyshev sees the country as an idyllic haven from the city and the peasants as simple, pure folk, whereas Levin sees the country as a place of labor and the peasants as humans, neither good nor bad as a class but complex and all involved in the same work.

Koznyshev sees Levin as good-hearted, but too prone to contradictions; Levin sees Koznyshev as an intellectual who lacks life force and heart. Koznyshev likes to idle and relax, but all Levin can think about is going back to work in the **fields**.

Though Koznyshev and Levin like each other, each looks down on the other as lacking in the essence of what makes a man most successful in life.

PART 3, CHAPTER 2

Agafya, Levin's old nurse and current housekeeper, dislocates her wrist, and Koznyshev befriends the attending doctor, who tells Koznyshev about local politics. Koznyshev asks Levin to take him fishing, and though Koznyshev wants to linger all day in the **fields**, Levin is eager to get back home to make plans for mowing and harvesting.

Koznyshev takes a liking to country life––at least, the relaxing, gossiping parts of country life. To Koznyshev, the countryside means fishing, relaxing, and leisurely intellectual conversations; to Levin, however, it means work.

PART 3, CHAPTER 3

Koznyshev lectures Levin for withdrawing from the local district affairs, but Levin is more concerned with the ploughing of his **fields** than the welfare of the peasants. Levin admits that he doesn't care about the "common cause." He doesn't see a need for schools that the peasants don't want and he doesn't need. Levin believes in the natural order of things and doesn't want to bother with elaborate reforms.

Levin cannot become politically engaged with concerns of peasant welfare because he does not think of the peasants as a separate class that needs to be helped. Levin doesn't see the need for reform; he believes that everyone should simply do his or her work.

Levin argues that even though zemtsvo institutions sound good philosophically, in practice, they are unnecessary: schools will not make the roads better, and elaborate institutions will not improve lives. Moreover, Levin doesn't need the institutions himself.

Levin doesn't see any personal benefit to establishing institutions for the peasants; he believes that education is a waste of time for working people.

When Koznyshev points out that the emancipation of the serfs was contrary to self-interest but was still a good thing, Levin retorts that the emancipation was a matter of lifting the yoke of the noblemen, but that this was not the same thing at all as building unnecessary civic infrastructure. Koznyshev asks Levin if he would rather be tried by jury or by the old criminal courts, and Levin replies that the question is irrelevant because he's not going to trial.

The emancipation of the serfs—who then became peasants but were no longer bound by law to noblemen who essentially owned them—was a major political issue in 19th-century Russia; indeed, all the issues that arise in the argument between the brothers were major concerns in the political landscape of Tolstoy's era. At this time, peasants in Russia were starting to gain more rights, and widespread reforms were changing the nature of Russian country life.

PART 3, CHAPTER 4

During the argument with his brother, Levin has been distracted by the question of whether or not he should mow alongside the peasants this year, as he did last year. He decides to mow because he needs the physical labor to feel fulfilled. Levin gets his mower re-sharpened. Although he begins clumsily, Levin gradually adjusts to the work and begins to enjoy it tremendously.

Levin's argument with Koznyshev has made him uncertain whether or not it is proper for him to mow with the peasants, but he dismisses these concerns from his mind. His initial awkwardness attests to how he has been separated from the land and physical labor, and his gradual growing comfort shows how one can reconnect and how labor itself has a kind of dignity to it that is more fluid and peaceful than all the "thinking" going on in the city.

PART 3, CHAPTER 5

After breakfast in the house, Levin returns to the **fields** to mow. The longer he mows, the more natural he feels. The only parts that remain difficult are when he has to mow around something unusual, forcing him to break his rhythm and think. Levin joins the peasants in their dinner. After a nap, Levin looks around, is impressed by all the work they have done; he is eager to mow even more.

Levin continues to be absorbed by the mowing; he feels in his element in the unconscious physical labor, only coming back to reality when the job forces him to think. Although he left the peasants for breakfast, he joins them for dinner. Levin is impressed by the work and eager to continue.

PART 3, CHAPTER 6

They finish mowing the meadow. Levin reluctantly returns to his house and boasts to Koznyshev about finishing the meadow. Levin eats a late supper, and Koznyshev gives Levin a **letter** from Oblonsky, which asks Levin to help Dolly on her country estate. Koznyshev tells Levin that he solved two chess problems that day.

Levin does not want to leave the peasants, preferring to stay in the fields. Dolly is on her country estate, and nothing is going right, but Levin, well versed in country things, can help. While Levin has been working all day, Koznyshev solved chess problems—he used his mind but did not work.

Koznyshev says that the main disagreement between Levin and himself is that whereas Levin takes personal interest as the main motive, Koznyshev thinks that education makes people interested in the common good. Levin, however, isn't paying attention. Suddenly, Levin realizes he's forgotten to ask about Agafya's arm, which Kozynyshev says is better; Levin runs to check on her.

Koznyshev has continued to intellectualize and categorize the brothers' disagreement over the peasants, but Levin has put the argument out of his mind, instead focusing on the physical efforts of the country. Levin breaks out of his gloating over the mowing to remember Agafya.

PART 3, CHAPTER 7

Oblonsky is in Petersburg, and Dolly has moved with the children to their country estate for the summer. Although Oblonsky was supposed to make sure that the necessary repairs were done, he only saw that the house was decorated well, and Dolly is in despair. The house is leaking, there are no eggs or milk, and everything is in disorder. However, thanks to the help of the children's nurse, things gradually get fixed. With six children, Dolly cannot completely fall to pieces, since she must take care of their health.

Oblonsky thinks he has taken care of the country estate by adding nice curtains and flowers, but he doesn't take care of any of the major structural problems. Although Dolly is utterly distressed, with the help of the children's nurse and for the sake of the children, she takes care of things. The situation with the house mirrors the Oblonsky's marriage: Oblonsky thinks by making things look all right, they will be better, but Dolly does the major repair work.

PART 3, CHAPTER 8

Dolly decides to take her children to communion to set a good example for them, and with the help of the children's nurse, the task of making sure the children's clothing is ready is completed. All goes well, except that one son is forbidden cake for disobeying the governess; when his sister sneaks him part of her dessert, however, Dolly finds the scene lovable. Everyone goes to the bathing house. Dolly bonds with some of the peasant women by talking about their children and domestic affairs.

Although Dolly is not sure how much she herself believes in the church, she wants to set a good example for her children. Tender domestic scenes ensue, and the children appear to be well and thriving—they all care about each other. Dolly finds herself connecting with the peasants through their shared experiences raising children and managing households.

PART 3, CHAPTER 9

Dolly and the children return from the bathing house to find that Levin has arrived. Although Levin feels somewhat uncomfortable that Oblonsky has sent him, he is tactful, and Dolly is happy to see him. The children all like and trust Levin. After dinner, Dolly tells Levin that Kitty is coming to spend the summer; although they then talk about cows, it is clear they both want to talk about Kitty.

When Levin arrives, he feels awkward that Oblonsky has sent him, but Dolly is happy that he has come, particularly because he can see she is managing well. The children see that Levin is an honest man without pretense; children in the novel have a kind of no-nonsense ability to see who deserves their love. When Levin hears that Kitty is coming, she immediately begins to preoccupy his thoughts.

PART 3, CHAPTER 10

Dolly broaches the subject of Kitty, and Levin's hope begins to re-emerge. Dolly thinks that Kitty's refusal of Levin's proposal at the time does not mean that Kitty will refuse Levin forever. Levin, however, gets angry and thinks that Dolly is giving him false hope. Dolly's daughter comes in, and Dolly speaks **French** with her, which makes Levin think that she's being insincere. After tea, Dolly is no longer cheerful; another spat between her children has occurred, and it no longer seems adorable to her. Levin leaves, and she doesn't try to keep him.

Levin hope mixes with despair based on past experience. French was considered by the Russia elite to be a more sophisticated and intellectual language than Russian. Yet Levin, a man of the country (which can also be read as a man connected to the land of Russia), finds he can't trust anyone speaking French. Levin, and the novel, suggest that Russians should use Russian things, and not look to foreign culture or language for sophistication.

PART 3, CHAPTER 11

Levin manages his sister's estate as well as his own, and he has to make sure that the peasants are not cheating him. He insists that they re-calculate his share of the hay, since he is suspicious that they are trying to cheat him. Levin begins talking to an old beekeeper. He becomes absorbed in watching a young, strong peasant couple in love.

Levin is very careful about his estates; when he is suspicious that peasants are cheating him, he personally checks to ensure that he is not being swindled. Unlike Oblonsky, he sweats the details. However, he deeply loves country life and is absorbed by the honest, physical labor and love that the peasants have.

PART 3, CHAPTER 12

Levin feels enveloped in simultaneous merriment and yearning when he hears the peasants' singing. He wonders if marrying a peasant girl is the best way to join this lifestyle. As he muses, he sees Kitty go by in a passing carriage, and his love for her returns. No matter how tantalizing the life of the peasant seems, he still desires Kitty.

Levin longs to be part of the peasants' life, although as a noble he cannot fully integrate himself. Just as he begins to idly dream of marrying a peasant woman, Kitty goes by, and he cannot help but feel the old surge of love, and he knows he cannot abandon his current life.

PART 3, CHAPTER 13

The normally cool and collected Karenin loses all ability to reason when he watches a woman or child cry. When Anna weeps on the way home from the races, Karenin refuses to look at her, which makes him look like death to Anna. He feels strangely liberated, like a man who has just had an aching tooth pulled out.

Karenin is touched by tears, proving he has a heart under his cold exterior, but he refuses to allow himself to empathize with Anna. The comparison of Karenin's removal of pain to a tooth removed is one of the many very physical, embodied descriptions Tolstoy uses.

Karenin muses about female infidelity in society. He dismisses the idea of a duel with Vronsky. Karenin also dismisses separation or formal divorce, because of the societal scandal that would ensue. He decides that the best solution is to make Anna stop seeing Vronsky and for the marriage to continue; he believes that Anna and Vronsky should not be allowed to be happy, because they are guilty.

Karenin plays through all the possible options in his head, somewhat mechanically. Saving his social reputation is extremely important to him, but he also does not want Anna and Vronsky to be happy, as this seems unjust to him and in his righteousness (which Anna earlier admired) he believes the guilty must be punished.

PART 3, CHAPTER 14

When he arrives in Petersburg, Karenin goes straight to his study and writes Anna a **letter** in **French**, requesting that she return to Petersburg and enclosing money. He sends the letter to be delivered and sits down with a French book, but he is distracted by Anna's portrait. However, after solving a complicated business problem, he is no longer as distressed.

Karenin addresses his letter in French, the same intimate, intellectual language that Anna and Vronsky use, but Karenin's request is formal and cold rather than warm and loving. While Karenin is distracted at first, he becomes absorbed again in his business, which allows him to detach from the affair.

PART 3, CHAPTER 15

Despite the pain, and despite what is to come, Anna is glad that she confessed the affair to Karenin and relieved that she will not need to lie. However, the next morning, she is horrified. She did not tell Vronsky that she'd told Karenin, and she feels paralyzed with shame.

Although Anna is initially relieved to have confessed and removed the need for deceit between herself and Karenin, she did not confess to Vronsky that she'd confessed, and she feels deep shame and guilt from all sides of the affair.

Anna is distracted and distraught, but the maid says that her son is waiting for her for breakfast, which snaps her into a sense of purpose. Anna decides that she and Seryozha will go to Moscow that day, taking only themselves and Seryozha's nurse. Anna writes a note to Karenin explaining that she is leaving for Moscow with their son. She begins a **letter** to Vronsky but tears it up.

Anna feels utterly hopeless and adrift and cannot decide what she should do. However, seeing her son makes her take action, and she decides to run away from the situation and take Seryozha to Moscow rather than face the painful consequences of her actions directly.

PART 3, CHAPTER 16

As the house is preparing for Anna to leave for Moscow, Karenin's **letter** arrives, and Anna is horrified when she reads that he demands that she return to Petersburg and that they lead their life as a married couple. Anna is furious that society will see her as vile and Karenin as noble. She sits at the desk to write a reply, but instead sobs. The footman asks for a reply, but her response is merely that she has received his letter––she says nothing one way or the other. Instead of going to Moscow, Anna decides to visit Princess Betsy, who is throwing a croquet party.

Karenin has tied Anna to himself and to their loveless marriage without divorcing her because he wants to maintain a proper façade in Petersburg society: the most important aspect of the marriage, for Karenin, is its public face, not the private emotions. Anna refuses to acknowledge to Karenin that she is doing something wrong, so she thrusts herself back into society and asserts her freedom in order to push away from his commands.

PART 3, CHAPTER 17

At Princess Betsy's party, two ladies are present who are part of a new, elite social group in Petersburg that is openly hostile to Anna's social circle. Anna knew that these ladies would be there, but she wanted to go to the party to see Vronsky. However, after she arrives, she sees Vronsky's footman deliver a note and remembers too late that Vronsky had said he was not coming to the party.

Although Anna thinks she is entering a hostile social circle when she goes to Betsy's party, the ladies flock to her; she is still the belle of the ball. Anna is adored by society when she doesn't cling to what they think. Her attention is focused on Vronsky's whereabouts, not on the opinions of the other women.

Betsy tells Anna that Vronsky is not coming to the party. Betsy writes a note to give to Vronsky's footman, and when she **leaves** the room for a moment, Anna adds at the bottom that she needs to see Vronsky and arranges a meeting-place. Betsy tells Anna that Liza, one of the ladies in the hostile social circle, admires Anna. Betsy also tells Anna not to take everything so seriously and tragically.

Betsy advises Anna to treat society more like a game and to loosen up about having an affair. Anna, however, still has deep emotions and cannot treat everything in a completely cavalier fashion. This is one of the interesting tensions in the novel. Russian society is prepared to accept Anna's affair as long she sees it as a frivolity. What Russian society won't accept is an affair based on love.

PART 3, CHAPTER 18

The ladies at Betsy's party are beautiful and brilliant, with gorgeous clothes. Anna finds Liza more attractive than the others. Liza confesses to Anna that she's bored and asks Anna to tell her her secret, as Anna never appears to be bored. Although Anna is at ease being the sparkling center of this company, she knows that Vronsky is waiting at the rendezvous she has arranged on Betsy's **note**.

Among the other beautiful ladies at Betsy's party, Anna shines. Anna is not dependent on the other women's opinions for her power and charm; rather, she maintains her charisma precisely because she doesn't appear to need them. The fire of the secret affair allows her to remain a bit aloof from the cares of others.

PART 3, CHAPTER 19

Even though Vronsky appears to be a frivolous social gadabout, he actually keeps his affairs in scrupulous order, and to do so, he goes into seclusion about five times a year and straightens out all his accounts. According to the in-depth explication of Vronsky's financial situation, he is in debt. Moreover, his mother has been withholding money, because she does not approve of his affair with Anna. Instead of asking his mother for money, he resolves to borrow money from a moneylender and to sell his racehorses.

Although Vronsky is treated in much of the novel as a fairly stereotypical handsome rake, he does have an extremely scrupulous, calculating, businesslike side, much like Karenin himself. Tolstoy never allows the reader to come as close to Vronsky as to Anna: his motives remain somewhat opaque throughout.

PART 3, CHAPTER 20

Vronsky has very clear codes of conduct that he follows throughout his life. His relationship with Anna is clear: he will treat her with respect; no one in society whispers a word of slander; and the husband is superfluous. However, Anna's pregnancy throws off his rules, and he doesn't know how to proceed.

Vronsky has set clear rules for himself governing how he should live, much as Karenin has done; Anna's pregnancy impacts him insofar as it alters how his relationship with Anna fits into the scheme of his life. Vronsky is governed by his own ambitions, not by passion.

Vronsky also realizes that his affair with Anna has distracted him from his career ambitions. His childhood friend Serpukhovskoy has just received promotions and awards, although he and Vronsky had been of the same rank. However, Vronsky decides that he cannot envy Serpukhovskoy because he has Anna's love.

Vronsky has spent his life grooming himself for his own ambitions and desires. Although Anna appears as though she may derail him, he weaves her into his own selfish motivations: Vronsky thinks about Anna's impact on him as a marker of private status.

PART 3, CHAPTER 21

Petrisky comes into the cottage that he and Vronsky share and says that Serpukhovskoy has arrived; there is a raucous party for Serpukhovskoy at the commander's house. Serpukhovskoy argues to Vronsky that women are the main obstacle in a man's career and drive for ambition. Vronsky replies that Serpukhovskoy has never been in love. Vronsky then receives Betsy's note and says that he must leave.

Once Vronsky has rationalized that Anna's love for him is an extremely powerful tool that fits within the organization of his ambitions, he is able to remain aloof. Just as Anna commands charisma at the party by cherishing her secret with Vronsky, so Vronsky is not affected by Serpukhovskoy's success because he has his secret with Anna.

PART 3, CHAPTER 22

So as not to be recognized, Vronsky uses another man's hired carriage instead of his own to meet Anna. He is joyful and eager to see her. Anna informs Vronsky that she has told Karenin everything. Vronsky immediately believes that a duel is inevitable, but Anna misinterprets his stern expression and believes that she has offended him.

Vronsky and Anna don't communicate well silently, which, in the novel, is a sign that the relationship lacks a fundamental core, as Tolstoy always trusts nonverbal communication over words.

Vronsky says that Anna must divorce Karenin. Anna says that this is impossible because of her son. Anna and Vronsky both feel wretched and at fault for the whole affair.

Vronsky doesn't care about the social implications of a divorce for Anna: he only thinks about how the relationship will work best for his own needs.

PART 3, CHAPTER 23

Karenin successfully has his proposal approved at the commission meeting, and the entire office can talk of nothing but his triumph. The next day, however, Anna enters his study to say that she feels they cannot live as husband and wife. Karenin tells her that she doesn't have to perform her wifely duties, but that he never wants to see Vronsky in the house so that neither society nor the servants can ever accuse her.

Karenin is doing extremely well in his career, but his personal life is falling apart. To Karenin, the most important aspect of the marriage is social reputation: as long as they maintain the façade of their marriage in society, he does not care what happens privately. Anna and Vronsky's affair seems to have a clear path, so long as Anna is willing to fit it into the confines allowed by Russian high society: that it remain hidden and that she not take it so seriously.

PART 3, CHAPTER 24

After his night on the **haystack**, Levin now loathes the farming he once loved: by spending time as one of the peasants, he is thoroughly angered by their struggle against his reforms. Levin wants to help the peasants with innovations to ease their labor, but the peasants don't want to change how they've always done things.

Though Levin has ambitious plans for innovations in farming that seem terrific in theory, in practice, they don't work: the peasants want to live their lives the way they know how and Levin is, ultimately, an outsider in their world.

Levin is also uncomfortable because Kitty is just twenty miles away, and he wants to see her but cannot. He refuses to be Kitty's second choice. Dolly tries to scheme a meeting between them by asking Levin to bring over a side-saddle, but Levin sees through the plot and sends over the saddle with no note. To distract himself, he goes to visit his friend Sviyazhsky to go snipe-shooting in the **countryside**.

Unlike Vronsky, who cares for himself only, or Oblonsky, who can freely forget about Dolly when other pretty women are nearby, Levin's emotions are constantly keyed to Kitty. However, his pride and embarrassment are just as strong as his desire.

PART 3, CHAPTER 25

On the way to Sviyazhsky's house, Levin stops at the home of a wealthy peasant so his horses can feed. The old peasant has expanded his land to a thriving farm through years of prudent, wise decisions. The old peasant is also not against innovations. The household is happy, and Levin feels cheered by it.

The old peasant's prudent, thriving lifestyle cheers Levin: unlike the peasants around the haystack, Levin sees the role model of the kind of successful household he craves in the wealthy old peasant.

PART 3, CHAPTER 26

Levin has not visited Sviyazhsky in some time because his friend has a sister-in-law whom he wants Levin to marry, which makes Levin uncomfortable. However, Levin wants to measure his feelings against her. Sviyazhsky is something of a contradiction: even though he looks down on peasants as a class, for example, he supports individual peasants at elections. The snipe-shooting that day is not very good. At tea afterwards, Levin **blushes** and feels awkward around the sister-in-law, who is wearing a dress with a plunging neckline.

Levin visits his friend to distract himself from his emotions about Kitty, but the visit backfires when his friend's sister-in-law comes out with her plunging cleavage and clear desires to ensnare a husband. Levin is embarrassed around Kitty, but he's not looking for a substitute bride. Unlike his friend, who freely practices hypocrisy, Levin is too emotionally honest to say one thing and do another.

PART 3, CHAPTER 27

Sviyazhsky, Levin, and two old-fashioned landowners discuss farming and peasant life. One of the landowners says that he uses a system of loaning the peasants money in exchange for work; emancipation, he says, has ruined Russia. Under serfdom, landowners could force peasants to accept innovations, but now, the system is crumbling. Even if Levin doesn't completely agree with the landowner's rationale, he agrees that farming in Russia is on the decline.

Many of the landowners, like Sviyazhsky, agree that the Russian feudal system is theoretically broken, but in practice, they don't want to change anything. Levin, on the other hand, thinks things are wrong both in theory and in practice, and he doesn't understand how the men can be so hypocritical.

Sviyazhsky says that Russia should adopt some of the new forms that have taken off in Europe. Levin argues that Russia should develop Russian forms. But before Levin can probe too much into Sviyazhsky's mind, the landowners leave and Sviyazhsky ends the conversation.

Throughout the novel, Tolstoy is suspicious about foreign viewpoints being imported artificially into the Russian landscape: all the affected, hypocritical society people speak French rather than Russian, for example. In Tolstoy's view, too much Western culture is often antithetical to Russia's own needs .

PART 3, CHAPTER 28

Later, Levin starts up the discussion of peasant reforms again with Sviyazhsky. Sviyazhsky says he doesn't know why Levin is surprised at the peasants' resistance to innovation, since the peasants need to be educated. Schools, says Sviyazhsky, might be terrible, but they will give the peasants different needs than they have now. But when Levin makes a practical argument against schools, Sviyazhsky backs away: he is only interested in hypothetical reasoning, not in following through with any of his ideas.

Sviyazhsky puzzles Levin because he says one thing and does something completely different, whereas Levin is a terrible prevaricator: if Levin feels something, he cannot tell a lie, and his actions always align with his thoughts, even if this isn't the most politically savvy way to proceed. Put another way, Levin's inside feelings and outside appearance and actions always align. Anna is similar, and part of the tragedy of the novel is that Russian society punishes Anna for it.

That night, as Levin tosses and turns, he realizes that farming only works when the peasants are incentivized to work for their own good, and he determines to overturn all his own management.

Levin realizes that people will only want to work when they are working for themselves and their own good, not for some ideals or the theoretical benefit of others. This realization is echoed much later in the novel, when he finds spirituality.

PART 3, CHAPTER 29

Executing his plan is difficult. Levin tells the peasants that they will get to keep shares of the profits on the land that they work, but the peasants are so busy that they don't react to his speech, and their instinct is always to mistrust the wealthy landowner. Despite the fact that the peasants don't listen to him and refuse to take up his innovations, Levin keeps working doggedly on his project, and this––as well as reading books on political economy and socialism as he works on his book about farming––occupies his whole summer.

The peasants lead their lives without thinking about what would be best for them in theory—instead, they live day by day. Though Levin reacts against this, throwing himself vigorously into trying to solve all their problems through philosophy and theory, he also realizes that the solutions must work in practice, not just on the page. He also uses his research into peasant life as a way to distract himself from moping about Kitty.

PART 3, CHAPTER 30

At the end of September, Levin's plan appears to be working, and he is eager to disseminate his ideas throughout Russia by finishing and publishing his book. Levin prepares himself to go abroad soon. He sits down to work on his book, but finds himself thinking of Kitty. Agafya tells Levin that he should be married, which frustrates Levin. A guest arrives.

Though Levin's peasant reforms are successful on his land, proving that he practices what he preaches, in the back of his mind, all his labors are for naught if he cannot himself lead a fulfilled and fulfilling life.

PART 3, CHAPTER 31

The guest is Levin's brother Nikolai, who is thin and wasted, although he claims that his health is improved. Nikolai says that he is no longer with Marya, the prostitute, and Levin tells Nikolai about his farm improvements; what neither brother says is that Nikolai is dying. When Levin goes to bed, all he can think of is death and his inability to help his brother.

All of Levin's improvements around the farm and his investment in his peasants' lives seem utterly unimportant when faced with the physical reality of his brother's illness: instead of thinking about the greater humanity, Levin is overwhelmed by his own emotions. He does not separate his feelings from his thoughts.

PART 3, CHAPTER 32

The next morning, Nikolai is irritable. Levin wishes that he and Nikolai could have a frank conversation about Nikolai's inevitable death. Nikolai provokes an argument about communism, which ends in Nikolai leaving; just before he leaves, however, in a moment of unprecedented sincerity, Nikolai tells Levin not to think badly of him. Three days after Nikolai leaves, Levin himself goes abroad. At the **railway** station, he meets Kitty's cousin and says that he knows mortality is near. Work, feels Levin, is the only thing guiding him through life.

Though Levin and Nikolai bicker on the surface, Nikolai clearly feels deeply attached to Levin, and there is a deep bond between the brothers that becomes illuminated by Nikolai's mortality. In the face of Nikolai's impending death, Levin clings to his work as something that can still provide meaning to life.

PART 4, CHAPTER 1

Though Anna and Karenin continue to live together formally, they are completely estranged; Vronsky never visits the Karenin house, but Anna continues to see him. The situation is painful, but all three think that it's temporary, though for different reasons.

Karenin only cares about maintaining a correct social façade, even though the marriage is a sham. Anna is convinced that if she plays her cards correctly, she can continue in her accustomed lifestyle while carrying on the affair with Vronsky.

That winter, Vronsky has to escort a foreign prince for a week around Petersburg and show him the Russian pleasures. Although the prince adores the carousing, the amusements that were once fun to Vronsky now seem burdensome, and Vronsky is embarrassed to think that he acts as arrogantly as the prince.

Vronsky's discomfort with the foreign prince and his irritability with Russian society demonstrates a shift in the balance of power in Vronsky's interior life. Society is no longer a glittering game to him; rather, he is stressed and bored by the amusements that once seemed light and easy. The suggestion is that his love for Anna has caused this shift in him.

PART 4, CHAPTER 2

Vronsky receives a note from Anna one evening requesting that he meet her at her home while Karenin is out. Before the rendezvous, Vronsky falls asleep and has an ominous **dream** about a peasant with a dirty beard who speaks in **French**. Because of the dream, Vronsky is late to see Anna, and he runs into Karenin when he arrives at the house. Karenin gives him one icy stare and leaves; Vronsky wishes Karenin would have it out once and for all and challenge him to a duel.

In another attempt to lash out against Karenin's constrictions and to demonstrate her own freedom, Anna tells Vronsky to meet at her house, despite Karenin's express wishes to the contrary. Vronsky has the dream that Anna also has, and this nonverbal link demonstrates a deep bond between them, even if this bond—which seems to suggest a Russia that has lost itself in the form of a destitute peasant speaking a non-Russian language— is fated to come to an ominous ending.

Vronsky does not believe that his relationship with Anna will come to an end. His career ambition has receded into the background. Anna is hectic when she sees him, but says she won't quarrel.

Vronsky is still ambitious, but his world centers on his relationship with Anna: he is self-centered, but his internal axis has shifted so that his ambitions involve her rather than his career.

PART 4, CHAPTER 3

Anna is jealous that a particular actress was at a party Vronsky had attended, which makes Vronsky feel less affectionate toward her. Anna's beauty has faded since they first met, both morally and physically; however, he recognizes that they have an unbreakable bond between them. Anna knows that jealousy is a character flaw that emerges unbidden (she and Vronsky call it "the demon"), and she tries to quash it. Anna can imitate Karenin flawlessly, which makes them both laugh. She calls him a puppet, not a man.

Anna's pregnancy means that she can no longer rely on her physical beauty as a magnet for Vronsky, and since her appearance is so central to her conception of herself and the bond she feels she has over Vronsky, she becomes increasingly jealous of Vronsky's actions around other women: she knows that they are more beautiful than she right now, and she feels powerless against them, which makes her jealousy grow.

Anna says that the baby will arrive soon, but she also says that she will die in childbirth. Anna describes a **dream** she had about a peasant with a dirty beard who speaks in **French**, just like Vronsky's dream. Although she is horrified, all at once her face changes from horror to bliss as the baby stirs inside her.

Anna and Vronsky's shared dream indicates both that there is a deep bond between them but that this bond is doomed to despair. Despite the omens of doom, Anna does feel joy when the baby quickens inside her. At the same time, the pregnancy is a visible sign of the affair, while earlier the suggestion has been that Russian society will accept the affair so long as it is kept out of sight.

PART 4, CHAPTER 4

After Karenin sees Vronsky, Karenin goes to the opera, is seen by the requisite members of society, and returns home, but he cannot sleep, as he is extremely angry that Anna has disobeyed his orders. The next morning, Karenin goes into Anna room and snatches Vronsky's **letters** away from her. Karenin speaks cruelly to Anna, and she protests, but he is telling the truth.

Karenin makes his social appearance for the sake of his reputation, but at home, he is wracked by wrath and indignation. It is not Anna's infidelity so much that has sparked the anger but rather the fact that she disobeyed him and brought Vronsky to the house, thus breaking the rule about maintaining a normal public façade.

Karenin is so furious that he can barely speak. He finally manages to tell Anna that he is leaving for Moscow and taking Seryozha with him. Anna begs Karenin to leave Seryozha, but Karenin **blushes** and leaves the room.

Karenin tells himself that his rage comes from Anna's violation of his desire to maintain the public face of the marriage; however, his emotions are too heated to be exclusively in the realm of the public, and his anger demonstrates that he does care for Anna on some level.

PART 4, CHAPTER 5

Karenin goes to a famous Petersburg lawyer. Although the waiting room is full, when Karenin presents his card, the lawyer immediately meets with him, as he recognizes Karenin's name from public office. The lawyer is triumphantly delighted that Karenin has confessed Anna's adultery to him. He says that adultery by mutual consent would be the simplest solution, but Karenin refuses. If Karenin wants to prove adultery, says the lawyer, he will need witnesses, not just the love **letters** Karenin took from Anna. Karenin says he will inform the lawyer soon of his decision, and the lawyer is joyful.

Karenin doesn't want his own reputation to be besmirched by Anna's infidelity, so even when the lawyer says that adultery by mutual consent would be the fastest route to a divorce, Karenin still has his pride and refuses to lie for the sake of a smooth transition. The lawyer is transparently filled with schadenfreude about Karenin's fall from grace: he is delighted to see that an apparently successful state official's life is so seamy on the inside.

PART 4, CHAPTER 6

A commission report supports Karenin's political views, but a rival of Karenin's proposes an extreme version of Karenin's ideas, which turns people against Karenin. Karenin decides to go to the distant provinces to investigate the matter himself. On the way, he stops in Moscow, where Oblonsky and Dolly see him in the street. They invite him over for dinner. Karenin is awkward and abrupt throughout the interaction.

Karenin uses a political rivalry as an excuse to visit the provinces and thus escape from his uncomfortable domestic situation. When he runs into Oblonsky in the street, he is uncomfortable because he knows he cannot hide behind a polished veneer, since the Oblonskys know about Anna's infidelity.

PART 4, CHAPTER 7

The next day, Oblonsky goes to a ballet rehearsal to give a dancer a necklace, then goes to the market to shop for the dinner party. Along with Karenin, Levin and Kitty will be coming to dinner; Koznyshev will be there as well, and Oblonsky looks forward to political fireworks between him and Karenin. Oblonsky can tell by Karenin's awkwardness that relations are strained between Anna and Karenin. Oblonsky has had a difference of opinion with his superior at work, but feels it will all shape up.

Oblonsky is still openly carrying out affairs, but he is also devoted to his family life. Unlike Karenin, who feels like he has to maintain a proper social face by pretending that the marriage is going well, Oblonsky feels free to conduct infidelities openly, flirting for all the world to see. Oblonsky is an eternal optimist, convinced that everything will turn out for the best.

Oblonsky speaks briefly with Levin, who begins telling him all about workers in Europe, saying that there is no worker problem in Russia, but that the issue is that the peasants' relation to the land is crumbling. Oblonsky seems attentive, but only hears what he wants to hear––that is, that everyone seeks pleasure.

Levin and Oblonsky obtain two entirely different impressions from their conversation, showing Tolstoy's mistrust of verbal communication: even when Levin thinks he is communicating his ideas passionately, Oblonsky only hears what he already thinks.

PART 4, CHAPTER 8

That morning, Karenin receives a delegation from the racial minorities in the provinces; he also writes a **letter** to the lawyer to act at his discretion, enclosing the love letters from Vronsky to Anna. Oblonsky arrives, and Karenin turns down the dinner invitation, telling Oblonsky that he is starting divorce proceedings against Anna. Oblonsky insists that Karenin talk the matter over with Dolly, and Karenin finally agrees, also agreeing to come to dinner. They talk about Oblonsky's superior, whom Karenin feels has been promoted too highly too quickly.

Karenin treats his internal affairs as though they are a political knot he has to untangle, proceeding with his letter to the lawyer with the same cool efficiency that serves him well in political matters. Because Karenin knows that Oblonsky knows about his marital turmoil, he feels uncomfortable around him, but when he realizes that Dolly might be able to help Anna change her behavior, he agrees to put himself in the potentially awkward dinner party.

PART 4, CHAPTER 9

Oblonsky is late to his own dinner party; when he arrives, things seem stiff and awkward, but Oblonsky mingles and puts people at ease. When Levin arrives, all he can concentrate on is seeing Kitty again, whom he hasn't talked to since the failed proposal, and they are both very emotional. Oblonsky takes Levin to meet Karenin, but Levin and Karenin, as it happens, had met previously once, on a **train**. Kitty asks Levin about bear hunting and gives Levin an opportunity to show off his physical prowess while looking at him adoringly. Levin tells the story of how he and Karenin met, and he feels as though he has grown wings; Koznyshev watches his half-brother in wonder.

Oblonsky is the only one who can make the dinner party function smoothly. He is the social lubricant: without him, no one understands how to act, but when he is around, conversations run smoothly, and people become comfortable again. Karenin and Levin are contrasted: whereas Karenin hides all his emotions, even from himself, Levin is extremely excited by seeing Kitty and cannot hide his emotions. And Kitty is the same: though she does not say it aloud, her body language suggests that she loves him, and Levin is radiant.

PART 4, CHAPTER 10

Karenin, Koznyshev, and another guest continue their discussion of politics. They also debate the merits of a classical education versus a scientific education. The discussion turns to women's education. Koznyshev and the other guest are for it, whereas Oblonsky and Karenin voice doubts.

Karenin is against women's education because he wants to maintain traditional Russian societal hierarchies and structures, whereas Oblonsky is against it because he enjoys the comfortable society of which he knows how to be master.

PART 4, CHAPTER 11

Meanwhile, Kitty and Levin have their own conversation, though the general one should have interested them. Levin says that he saw her the year before in a carriage; they discuss a society man who helped Dolly when her children had scarlet fever.

Levin and Kitty are engrossed in their own little world. Though they make conversation, they are more wrapped up in the fact of being together than in what they're talking about.

PART 4, CHAPTER 12

After dinner, the men's conversation turns to infidelity, which makes Karenin uncomfortable. He and Dolly have a private discussion, and she begs him to talk to her about Anna. Karenin insists that he will divorce her, and though Dolly pleads with him to relent, he does not; instead, he bids her goodnight.

Though Dolly tries to make rationalizations for Anna, Karenin refuses to acknowledge any arguments on his wife's behalf: he needs to insist to himself that he is unequivocally right and that Anna is unequivocally wrong.

PART 4, CHAPTER 13

After the men talk, Levin goes to the drawing room, where he knows Kitty is, and they communicate in a nearly wordless fashion. Levin writes the initial **letters** of each word of a sentence on the table in chalk. Kitty understands him precisely and replies in the same fashion. In the same, nearly wordless but deeply understood way, Levin and Kitty admit their love for each other. Levin proposes and Kitty accepts. Though very little was said in words, everything important was communicated and understood fully.

Though Tolstoy is rather verbose in his writing, he distrusts excessive use of language, and his characters are most truly in sync with each other when they can communicate wordlessly. Levin proposes in code, and Kitty understands him so deeply that she replies in code. Their love is so deep that it goes beyond language.

PART 4, CHAPTER 14

Levin is extremely happy. In a daze, he goes to a council meeting with Koznyshev, where everyone seems sweet in his eyes, because he is in such a thrilled mood. Sviyazhsky invites Levin over for tea, and Levin talks so much that he bores the company terribly; he even talks a servant's ear off with his own happiness. Levin is so excited that he can't sleep.

Once Levin has become engaged, the entire world seems wonderful to him; in contrast, at the end of the novel, Anna's depression makes the entire world appear terrible to her. Levin becomes completely tone-deaf to how society perceives him because he's so carried away by his emotions, which is something Karenin would never do.

PART 4, CHAPTER 15

At **dawn**, Levin walks to Kitty's house, feeling wonderful. He and Kitty kiss. Upon hearing the news, Prince Shcherbatsky and Princess Shcherbatsky are delighted.

Levin projects his mood onto the world around him: he's happy, so nature also seems to be happy.

PART 4, CHAPTER 16

The Princess begins to discuss the logistics of the marriage, which feels strange and almost painful in the ecstatic moment. Levin thinks they should be wed immediately, but the Princess insists on proper preparation, and everyone begins discussing arrangements.

Levin has difficulty dealing with mundane details when he is swept up by his emotions. His overwhelming love for Kitty makes him unable to care about trivial, concrete details; later, when his brother is dying, he also cannot concentrate on pragmatic logistics.

Levin has decided that even though it's painful for him, he must tell Kitty that he is not a virgin and that he is not a believer. He discusses both of these with the Prince, and with the father's permission, he gives Kitty a **diary** that explains both of these matters. Kitty accepts him, though tearfully, and Levin feels even more unworthy of her.

Levin's written confession to Kitty parallels Tolstoy's own confession to his wife: he supposedly had his wife read his diary, which exposed all the sins of his youth. Yet it is also a sign of deep trust and openness. Levin and Kitty trust each other and bond at a level beyond words.

PART 4, CHAPTER 17

After the dinner party, Karenin broods over the interaction with Dolly and the conversation about infidelity, in particular one man's praise of dueling. A valet brings Karenin two **telegrams**. One tells him that a rival of his at work has received the promotion Karenin wanted, and the other is from Anna, saying that she is dying and begging Karenin's forgiveness.

Karenin often receives information about his work life and his home life in parallel course. This time, two telegrams that appear identical on the outside—thus maintaining Karenin's longing for an unblemished reputation—contain two very different types of news: while work is going better than ever, Anna is dying.

Though Karenin initially thinks Anna is lying just to get him to legitimize the child she is bearing, he decides to return home. When he arrives home, a servant says that Anna has had a baby girl, and that she is alive, but only barely. Karenin realizes that he still loves her. Vronsky is there as well, weeping. Karenin goes into the bedroom, where Anna speaks deliriously to him, not realizing that he's there. Karenin feels bliss in the idea that he could forgive her.

Despite Anna's infidelity, underneath his cold veneer, Karenin does still love her deeply, which he realizes through his reaction to her when he sees her dying. He lets go of the bitter grudge against her through his love for her, ultimately, rather than through a need for societal justification. And in his selfless action, Karenin finds joy and bliss.

Anna calls for Vronsky, who enters hiding his face in his hands. Anna asks Karenin to forgive them both, which he does. Anna cries out for morphine, thrashing in pain. After three touch-and-go days, the doctors finally say that there is some hope for Anna to live. Vronsky asks Karenin to forgive him. Karenin says that when he saw Anna on the verge of death, he forgave her, and has thus also forgiven Vronsky. Karenin feels lofty and buoyed by his capacity for forgiveness.

The anger and bitterness that Karenin had held against Anna and Vronsky disappears in the face of Anna's crisis: her hour of desperation brings out his true feelings about her, and, as it turns out, he truly does love her, which enables him to detach himself from the whole sordid situation, rather than get pulled into a raging, jealous battle against Vronsky..

PART 4, CHAPTER 18

Vronsky feels humiliated. According to the rules by which he leads his life, the cuckolded husband is a pathetic creature, but Karenin has acted nobly and with dignity. Vronsky feels that he has been made ridiculous, and yet he is more in love with Anna than ever.

Karenin doesn't act in accordance with the way Vronsky sees the world, which forces Vronsky to recalculate his entire world view: if Karenin has dignity still, what does that make Vronsky?

When Vronsky goes home, he is unable to sleep; events with Anna and his humiliation turn around and around in his mind. Vronsky picks up a loaded revolver, holds it his chest, and pulls the trigger; he wounds himself but fails in his effort to kill himself.

When Karenin, not Vronsky, seems to be the hero of the situation, Vronsky feels he has nothing left to live for, but unlike Anna, who eventually succeeds in her suicide, the suggestions here is that Vronsky does not have passionate enough emotions to carry the deed to fruition.

PART 4, CHAPTER 19

Anna survives. Karenin had not considered that Anna might not die, but he still retains the spiritual joy that comes with his forgiveness. He forgives Anna, Vronsky, and the baby girl. However, he realizes that his relations with his wife are strained. Anna cannot look Karenin in the eye. Anna's daughter, also named Anna, falls ill. Princess Betsy comes to visit, which disturbs Karenin, as he feels that society women have taken too much interest in Anna since her illness.

Once the scare that Anna might die has gone away, Karenin's emotions recede to their normal coolness, but he still feels spiritually superior (and he always enjoys feeling superior). Meanwhile, Anna feels deeply ashamed and guilty, both because of the concrete manifestation of her infidelity (in other words, the baby) and because Karenin takes the moral high road.

The baby may just have been hungry due to a dry wet nurse, which irritates Karenin, since he thinks Anna should be taking better care of her daughter. Karenin overhears Anna and Betsy having a conversation about Vronsky; he enters the room, and Anna tells them both that she has refused to allow Vronsky to call. Betsy tells Karenin that she thinks he should allow Vronsky to visit, but Karenin says that it's Anna's decision.

Anna does not have the same kind of bond with her daughter that she does with her son, demonstrating some shakiness in her bond with Vronsky as well: if she truly was meant to be with Vronsky, they should form a seamless and natural family unit, rather than a complicated one in which Karenin and Vronsky are somehow both the baby's father.

PART 4, CHAPTER 20

When Karenin returns from talking to Betsy, Anna has been crying. He tells her that he is grateful that she has decided not to receive Vronsky. Anna learns about the business with the wet nurse, and she is indignant that she is not allowed to nurse the baby. She begins lashing out, and Karenin feels powerless in the face of her erratic emotions.

Anna lashes out against Karenin, but her frustrations are actually directed against herself: she is upset that she hasn't bonded with her child, and she needs someone to blame, so she takes out her anger on Karenin.

PART 4, CHAPTER 21

Princess Betsy bumps into Oblonsky, who flirts with her, and they discuss Anna. They agree that Anna is wasting away and that Karenin is stifling her. Oblonsky is in a merry mood, but when he goes to visit Anna, he finds her in tears. Anna tells Oblonsky that she hates Karenin for his virtues and cannot live with him; she says that she feels lost.

Oblonsky doesn't take flirting and fidelity too seriously; his chief talent and main goal in life is making people feel at ease, and he wants people to enjoy life, rather than fall too much into the throes of passion or to live too stoically.

Oblonsky tells Anna that she made a mistake in marrying an older man, and that there is one central question: can she live with her husband? Oblonsky is of the opinion that a divorce will solve everything.

Oblonsky doesn't understand that Anna might have lingering emotions that would plague her decisions in life, since emotional consequences do not weigh heavily on Oblonsky.

PART 4, CHAPTER 22

Oblonsky feels, unusually for him, embarrassed when he goes to talk to Karenin. Oblonsky begins to talk about Anna, but Karenin hands him a **letter** that says that even though it is extremely painful, he will grant Anna whatever she wants to make her happy. Oblonsky is astounded by Karenin's magnanimity and tells Karenin that his high-mindedness is crushing Anna by making her feel too guilty. Oblonsky recommends divorce, but Karenin says that he cannot, because this would disgrace him as well. To Karenin, granting Anna a divorce would sanctify her illegal relationship with Vronsky and force their son into a depraved family. Oblonsky keeps pressuring Karenin, and finally, Karenin relents, telling Oblonsky to do whatever he thinks best: Oblonsky's aggressive niceness has broken Karenin.

Oblonsky's great talent in life is to put social situations at ease, but when it comes to confronting Karenin face to face, he cannot help but feel awkward and nervous. Just as Levin confessed his sins to Kitty in writing, so Karenin puts his painful feelings in a letter rather than words. Karenin is willing to do anything to allow Anna her happiness so long as it does not harm Karenin. But to grant a divorce would be a public acknowledgment of a failed marriage, which would cause his reputation harm. Further, Russian laws would mean that a divorce would affect the status of his son, and connect his son to a family that would now be considered tarnished. Still, Oblonsky's unrelenting positivity ultimately wins out.

PART 4, CHAPTER 23

Vronsky's wound missed the heart, but it was still dangerous; he is touch-and-go for a while, but he eventually becomes conscious again. He no longer feels so humiliated, but he does realize that he can no longer stand between Anna and Karenin: they must reconcile. He accepts a new post in the middle of Russia and prepares to leave.

Vronsky's heart is still intact, both emotionally and physically. Like Anna, he almost dies, but ends up recovering. The failed suicide makes him realize that he has no place in Anna and Karenin's existence as a married couple.

Betsy tells Vronsky that Karenin is granting Anna a divorce, and Vronsky rushes to visit the Karenins' house. He and Anna embrace. However, later, Anna believes there is something terrible in their happiness, and she tells Vronsky that Karenin is being too generous with her and they she cannot accept his offer of divorce. Vronsky refuses the position in central Russia and resigns his commission. Anna and Vronsky go abroad to Italy, leaving Seryozha in the house alone with Karenin.

When Vronsky thinks that Karenin will divorce Anna, he sees a clear mode of existence for himself and Anna as a couple, and he abandons his career ambitions, choosing instead to follow his selfish societal and emotional ambitions. Vronsky always decides to live his life for his own benefit and by what he desires. Yet Anna experiences Karenin's generosity as a kind of affront, and so refuses his offer.

PART 5, CHAPTER 1

Princess Shcherbatsky, Kitty's mother, agrees to hold the wedding before Lent and begins preparing part of the trousseau at once. Levin's bliss persists. To get married, Levin must take communion, which involves an elaborate ordeal of prayers, and Levin feels uncomfortable, because he is not really a zealous believer. Levin confesses to the priest that he has doubts about religion, and the priest says that he should think of his future children. Levin is pleased that he did not have to lie during his confession and that he doesn't have to think much more about it.

As a staunch atheist, the only fly in Levin's blissful wedding preparations is that he must go through an elaborate cycle of prayers and confessions, but he realizes that the rituals don't necessarily mean that he himself has to believe, or even that he's being hypocritical, because everything is for the sake of his family and future children—he can still believe whatever he chooses without feeling as though he is lying to everyone.

PART 5, CHAPTER 2

On the day of his wedding, Levin is not allowed to see Kitty, so he dines with three bachelor friends. The men tease Levin about his loss of freedom, but Levin is so happy that he doesn't see any loss because he loves Kitty so much. After the men leave, Levin panics, thinking that Kitty is only marrying him to get married, not because she loves him. He runs to see her, and she tells him that she loves him; five minutes later, everything is fine. Levin returns home, late, to prepare for the wedding.

Levin is highly sensitive and emotional; even the slightest teasing can send him swirling from bliss to panic attack. However, the benefit of Levin's volatility is that his fear is easily assuaged, particularly as there is no reason for him to have any jealousy—he and Kitty share a deep, nonverbal bond.

PART 5, CHAPTER 3

The church is filled with guests, and everything looks beautiful. The bride and groom are expected at any moment, but they do not enter. Kitty has been ready for a long while, but Levin paces back and forth. As it turns out, Levin's valet has forgotten a clean shirt. Finally, the servant brings back a shirt, and all is well.

This is a comic moment highlighting the ways that appearance can't always be trusted. To the guests it seems as if there is some issue that might stop the marriage from occurring. In reality, the bond between Kitty and Levin is as strong as ever and the issue is something minor.

PART 5, CHAPTER 4

Everyone says that Kitty looks far less pretty than usual at the altar, but Levin thinks she looks beautiful. Levin's lateness is forgiven by all when he explains the shirt story. The wedding is lovely. Levin and Kitty are so carried away in their happiness that they occasionally are mistaken in what they have to do, but the ceremony is beautiful. Kitty and Levin have nothing but joyous expectation for their new life together.

Levin and Kitty don't have the most beautiful wedding in the conventions of society—there are a few hiccups in the ceremony—but their love is so sincere that they don't even notice the flaws. Kitty looks more homely than usual in the eyes of the society ladies, but this is perhaps because her beauty has been unconsciously toned down to match Levin's homespun, country appearance..

PART 5, CHAPTER 5

The women gossip about the ceremony; they agree that Kitty does not look well, but that Levin does not deserve her. Dolly recalls other beautiful weddings of first innocent love, including her own and Anna's.

Though Dolly's and Anna's weddings were far more beautiful than Kitty's, their marriages have turned sour: they prepared for the wedding day rather than for the long-term relationship, they focused on the surface rather than the depth.

PART 5, CHAPTER 6

After the betrothal, pink silk is laid in front of the lectern. Whoever steps first on the cloth is supposedly the head of the family, but no one can tell who stepped on it first. Levin and Kitty are joyous through the prayers. After the wedding supper, the couple leaves for the country.

Levin and Kitty have a symbolically harmonious union: theirs is a marriage of equals, unlike the two other main marriage relationships that anchor the novel.

PART 5, CHAPTER 7

Vronsky and Anna have been traveling through Europe for three months, and they have arrived at a small Italian town, where they decide to stay for a while. Vronsky is delighted to see his old comrade Golenishchev; they had parted badly, but Vronsky needs someone to break the boredom of his life. To hide his conversation from the servants, Vronsky speaks to his friend in **French**, saying that he is traveling with Anna; the friend looks at it in the right way, meaning he acts indifferent rather than making a big fuss out of the whole setup.

Vronsky needs to feel some connection with his former life in society so desperately that he clings to an old acquaintance with whom he hadn't even previously been terribly friendly. Vronsky tests out the mention of Anna to see how Golenishchev will react, but his friend takes things in stride, so Vronsky can relax, knowing that Golenishchev will not make the situation feel awkward by taking a moral high road.

Golenishchev is struck by Anna's beauty and the simplicity that Anna displays in her acceptance of the situation. He says that she looks like a Tintoretto in the palazzo Vronsky has just rented, and they go to look. Golenishchev begins talking about his book, which makes Vronsky uncomfortable, because Golenishchev seems too passionate about it. Anna is pleased that the palazzo has a studio so that Vronsky can paint.

Golenishchev's excitement about his intellectual life and his exhibition of passion rankle Vronsky, as Vronsky feels passion for nothing; rather, Vronsky feels suffocated in his claustrophobic relationship with the increasingly cloying and clingy Anna.

PART 5, CHAPTER 8

In her liberated, recovered state, Anna feels joyful: the whole situation with her husband seems like a feverish **dream**. She has transferred her former love for her son onto her daughter, and she is infatuated with Vronsky. She fears losing him and thus never leaves his side. Vronsky, however, feels trapped, and he seizes at any and all new activities to fill the days; painting is his latest fancy. Vronsky is good at imitating art, but he is only inspired by art, not by life. He likes the showy French school and begins painting a portrait of Anna in this style that everyone admires.

Anna is hectically blissful in Italy: she has regained her health and beauty and wants to envision herself, her daughter, and Vronsky as her new family unit. However, Anna doesn't fully trust Vronsky (who had an affair with her, after all), and her jealousy makes her insist he stay nearby. She is also obsessed with maintaining her appearance so that Vronsky's eye won't wander. Vronsky needs a project to occupy his mental energies, since he can't go out into society with Anna keeping him on such a tight leash.

PART 5, CHAPTER 9

The palazzo that Anna and Vronsky have moved into helps Vronsky enter into the role of a cosmopolitan artist rather than a Russian landowner. Golenishchev visits one morning, and they discuss Mikhailov, a Russian painter in town. Vronsky muses that Mikhailov could do a portrait of Anna, but Anna wants him to paint Annie, her daughter. Though Golenishchev scorns Mikhailov for being impoverished, Anna and Vronsky are intrigued by the idea of the painter's talent, and they decide to visit.

Vronsky is good at playing the role of a dilettante amateur painter, since he knows exactly what to do to look the part and pretend to fill that niche in society, but since he lacks deep emotional passion that overtakes him, he will never be a great artist. However, he can still recognize true talent when he sees it, suggesting a hint of a soul under Vronsky's two-dimensional veneer.

PART 5, CHAPTER 10

When Vronsky's and Golenishchev's calling cards arrive at Mikhailov's studio, he is working hard; he has had a fight with his wife, which is always an excellent catalyst for painting. He finishes the drawing, makes up with his wife, and greets his guests. Though anxious about others' opinions, what strikes him most deeply is Anna standing in the doorway and the play of shadows and light around her. He is an ordinary, stocky, rumpled figure who doesn't appear to care what he looks like.

Though Mikhailov is an unpleasant, temperamental figure who does depend on the opinions of the outside world, he views the world through the eyes of an artist, not just a man playing the role of one or trying to look like one, as Vronsky is doing. Since Mikhailov is not physically attractive, Vronsky doesn't see him as a threat for Anna's affections.

PART 5, CHAPTER 11

Mikhailov assumes that his visitors are wealthy Russians who pretend and presume to know a great deal about art. Mikhailov shows them a scene of the admonition of Pontius Pilate. Golenishchev compliments Pilate's expression, seeing him as a kindly but ignorant bureaucrat. Mikhailov is thrilled, as this was what he intended. Anna compliments Christ's expression, seeing the pity in it; Mikhailov is again delighted. Vronsky, however, compliments an aspect of technique, and Mikhailov is dejected, as the praise is only technical, not emotional. The painter and Golenishchev begin arguing about the historical Jesus.

Mikhailov sees through any other roles Vronsky might be trying to play and views the visitors simply as Russians trying to sound Continental in their opinions. Mikhailov wants to be complimented not for his technical prowess but for his skill in depicting emotions: anyone can put on the right role and pretend to be a painter, but one cannot feign a soul. Vronsky only understands the technical excellence in painting, not the emotion behind it.

PART 5, CHAPTER 12

Anna and Vronsky admire a small painting, which Mikhailov says he had forgotten about; it is out because it has been put out to be sold. When the visitors leave, Mikhailov continues to work on the Pilate painting. Vronsky, Anna, and Golenishchev discuss the small painting, which Vronsky says he will buy.

Because Vronsky cannot assert his masculinity and talent in Mikhailov's studio through artistic prowess, he asserts his dominance through purchasing power, insisting on buying the small, forgotten painting that he and Anna like.

PART 5, CHAPTER 13

Vronsky buys the small painting and commissions Mikhailov to do Anna's portrait. The painter captures Anna's special beauty, but Golenishchev still looks down on him because he lacks education. Mikhailov is unpleasant and reserved at the palazzo. After Mikhailov finishes, Vronsky stops his own portrait of Anna, and soon he stops painting entirely. He and Anna decide to spend the summer on Vronsky's family estate in Russia.

Mikhailov is unpleasant and does not try to charm anyone, but despite his lack of education, he has far more real talent than Vronsky, and Vronsky knows it. Vronsky can never finish his own portrait of Anna, since that of the real painter will always be superior. Italy suddenly seems unbearably flat and unromantic when Vronsky cannot even pretend to himself that he's an artist.

PART 5, CHAPTER 14

After being married for three months, Levin is happy, but the reality of marriage is nothing like the way he'd imagined it, which was as nothing but the enjoyment of love. But Kitty, like Levin, needs to work, and she hurls herself into domestic tasks. He and his old servants chuckle at her zeal. Kitty and Levin quarrel often and over extremely small things, which tortures him. However, after three months, things are beginning to run more smoothly.

Levin has to learn how to live in the real world again, not in the state of a constant paroxysm of emotion—being passionately in love is terrific, but it's not a sustainable way to live. Levin must also adjust his way of life to work with the rhythms of another human being. He is comfortable with the state of being in love, and he is comfortable living alone, but living permanently with a partner takes adjustments.

PART 5, CHAPTER 15

Kitty and Levin have just returned from a trip to Moscow, and they are in the study. Levin is writing a chapter in his book, claiming that Russia's poverty is due to importing European infrastructure and that urban growth is stunting Russian agriculture; **trains**, he argues, should help contribute to farming across the country, rather than concentrate all energy in a few industrial hubs.

Levin argues that importing Continental methods and transplanting them wholesale into Russia is a mistake; instead, Russia needs to pay attention to how the country itself should be organized, what its unique Russian needs are. Levin doesn't approve of Russian people putting on artificial European airs, and he doesn't want Russia to blindly copy other countries.

Kitty thinks that Levin is jealous of a prince who flirted with her in Moscow. She looks at the nape of his neck; he turns around, and they kiss. Levin thinks that his married life is somewhat indulgent—he hasn't done serious work in three months, and he thinks Kitty never does serious work at all. He does not understand that Kitty is preparing to have a baby.

While Levin tries to concentrate on his theories and political treatises, Kitty is concentrating on the work of pregnancy. Still new to married life and women, Levin doesn't understand at this point how to recognize the work that a woman is doing. He and Kitty share a deep bond, but he still has much to learn.

PART 5, CHAPTER 16

At tea, Kitty reads a **letter** from Dolly. Levin has a letter from Marya, Nikolai's on-again mistress, saying that Nikolai is very ill. Levin is determined to go to Moscow at once. Kitty wants to go with him. Levin thinks she will be a hindrance and wants to shield her from the evil ways of Nikolai's mistress, but Kitty insists, and, to Levin's displeasure, it is decided that she will go.

Neither Levin nor Kitty is the head of the household—they have equal power, as was symbolized during their marriage ceremony, when they stepped on the pink silk at the same time. As such, when Nikolai is in distress and Levin must go to him, it is unthinkable to Kitty, as Levin's partner, that she should not accompany him. Levin at this point, though, thinks that a woman is not up to facing such difficulties.

PART 5, CHAPTER 17

The hotel where Nikolai and Marya are staying is pretentious yet dirty and dingy. Marya is embarrassed by the sight of Kitty. Levin goes in to see him first alone. Nikolai looks terrible: the room is disgusting, and Nikolai has entirely wasted away. As soon as he can, Levin leaves to see Kitty, and Kitty insists on coming with him to see Nikolai. When she does, she immediately takes over the situation, insisting that the room be cleaned. Levin has been thoroughly shaken, but Kitty remains completely collected and in command.

The hotel is all the worse for pretending to have the best that modern society offers, rather than the honest dirtiness of an old-fashioned place. The dilapidated, disgusting grandeur mirrors the state of disgrace that Nikolai has fallen into. Marya is ashamed and embarrassed by the presence of an honest wife in a socially accepted relationship. Meanwhile, Levin's belief that Kitty won't be able to handle the situation is the absolute opposite of the situation.

PART 5, CHAPTER 18

Levin can't bear to be with Nikolai, but he can't bear to not be there. Kitty, on the other hand, takes an extremely practical approach: she cleans the sick room, sends for the doctor, and makes sure all necessities are dealt with. Nikolai comes to adore Kitty. When Nikolai holds Levin's hand and kisses it, Levin is overcome.

Unlike Levin, who cannot handle pragmatic affairs in an emotional crisis, Kitty remains calm and at ease. Levin gets too overcome with passion in all extremes of his life to be any good at sorting through logistics, but crisis has the opposite effect on Kitty, as it makes her more mature. There is also a sense here that Tolstoy is suggesting that women operate more comfortably and capably in these domestic situations than men do—that women have a domestic strength that men lack.

PART 5, CHAPTER 19

Although Levin thinks he is more intelligent than Kitty or Agafya, he realizes that they have a deep wisdom about death that he will never have. Levin is extremely uncomfortable around Nikolai and cannot face the fact of his brother's death, but Kitty is able to take care of him. Whereas Levin can do nothing, Kitty is extremely practical and active, like a soldier preparing for battle. Kitty and Levin discuss Nikolai's religious necessities.

Tolstoy frequently uses metaphors of battle to depict when certain characters come into their elements. Vronsky shines in the competitive atmosphere of the horserace; Anna vanquishes all at the first ball. Kitty's triumph comes in taking care of others: though she may appear somewhat silly and flirtatious in other aspects, in a domestic crisis, she rises to the top.

PART 5, CHAPTER 20

When Nikolai is given the last rites, he feels much better for a moment, but the illusion does not last long; indeed, Nikolai confesses that the apparent recovery was a ruse for Kitty's sake. That evening, Marya tells them that Nikolai is dying, and Levin and Kitty rush over. Levin stays by his brother's side all night; however, Nikolai does not die that night, nor the next, nor the next, but his suffering increases.

Nikolai cannot die a clean, pure, painless death; instead, he lingers even after the priest has given the last rites, hovering in the horrible state between life and death. Nikolai's entire life has sunk into a miserable, wretched, disgraceful state, and his death is no different.

Ten days after Levin and Kitty have rushed over, Kitty become sick and vomits. That night, she visits Nikolai. Marya predicts that this is the night he will die, and so he does. After this mystery of death, the doctor confirms that Kitty is pregnant.

The night after Kitty has her first morning sickness, Nikolai finally does die. Kitty is pregnant. Tolstoy's parallel construction emphasizes that life and death work very closely together, are part of the same cycle, one always following the other.

PART 5, CHAPTER 21

Karenin has acquiesced to all of Anna's wishes, and he finds himself abandoned and disgraced in Petersburg. Although he tries to suppress his misery, he becomes utterly despondent when a clerk asks him where to send a bill for Anna's clothes. Karenin doesn't have any close friends with whom he can commiserate: he is utterly alone in his grief, since he has lots of business acquaintances and no real friends. His attachment to Anna was his one deep personal relationship.

Karenin wasn't only clinging to his relationship with Anna out of pride and his reputation: his marriage with Anna was an anchor in his life, and without this central force, his whole world has crumbled. Even though he convinced himself about the importance of society and his role in the political world, the entire center of his life was his relationship with Anna.

PART 5, CHAPTER 22

Countess Lydia calls on Karenin and offers herself as a confidant. Karenin is clearly in grief. She offers many trite pieces of mystical Christian advice. Lydia tells Seryozha that his father is a saint and that his mother is dead. Lydia offers to manage Karenin's household affairs, but the real one who ends up doing everything is Karenin's valet. Lydia's presence distracts Karenin from his grief, and she attempts to convert him to a new kind of Christianity that is popular in Petersburg. Karenin doesn't believe in it, but it makes him feel loftier than others, so he accepts it for now.

Countess Lydia swoops in to offer herself as a source of comfort for the clearly miserable Karenin: she takes advantage of his weakened state to portray herself as a sort of ministering angel, lifting him out of darkness and converting him. But Lydia is actually manipulating the entire household to her benefit, hoping to cut Anna out entirely and assert her own influence over Karenin (and, presumably, Karenin's money).

PART 5, CHAPTER 23

Countess Lydia was given in marriage when she was very young, and she genuinely loved her husband, but he left her inexplicably; they're separated, though not divorced. Lydia falls in love with distinguished men all the time; now, she's in love with Karenin. Lydia discovers that Vronsky and Anna are in Petersburg, but hides the fact from Karenin. Anna sends Lydia a **letter** asking Lydia to arrange a meeting between Anna and Seryozha. Lydia is irritated and tells the messenger that there is no reply. She arranges to speak with Karenin at the royal birthday reception.

Lydia preys on wealthy, distinguished men of society, sponging off their money and reputation. Lydia wants all of Karenin's attentions to be focused on herself, not on Anna, so when Anna writes to Karenin through Lydia, Lydia doesn't tell Karenin, as she wants to erase Anna from Karenin's and Seryozha's lives.

PART 5, CHAPTER 24

At the royal birthday reception, people gossip about Karenin: although he has just received an award, he has reached the cessation of his upward movement in his career. Karenin, however, is ignorant that he's reached the pinnacle of his professional life and that it all has to be downhill from here; on the contrary, he thinks he's more important than ever. Lydia has dressed carefully to look her best for Karenin. They discuss Seryozha's education. Lydia tells Karenin that Anna is in Petersburg and he blanches, horrified, which makes Lydia more infatuated than ever.

Though Karenin has achieved great heights politically, everyone except him realizes that he has, as we might say today, jumped the shark. Although his political career had been on the rise as his domestic life crumbled, now that his domestic life has completely fractured, his political achievements have also stalled. New trends and new people are coming into power, sweeping Karenin to the side.

PART 5, CHAPTER 25

Lydia shows Karenin Anna's **letter**, and Karenin is willing to grant Anna's request, but Lydia talks him out of it. Lydia writes Anna a stinging **note** of refusal in **French**, and the letter deeply offends Anna. Karenin feels miserable at home, though he is soon able to feel self-righteous again.

Karenin defers all personal matters to Lydia, putting up a wall and shutting himself away from his emotions, which Lydia is all too happy to help him do.

PART 5, CHAPTER 26

Seryozha chats with the hall porter. He is merry: the next day is Seryozha's birthday, and Karenin has just won an award. Seryozha **daydreams** about his father winning two awards even higher than the one he has won, and he has trouble concentrating on his lessons. His tutor doesn't seem to be paying attention to him, and Seryozha wonders why adults always seem to push him away from them.

Seryozha is a sensitive, emotional boy who idolizes his father and reveres his mysteriously absent mother. He remains untainted by society, isolated in the world of his own daydreams. Yet somewhere in the back of his consciousness, he is dimly becoming more and more aware that he might be a pawn in adults' social schemes, further highlighting the difference between the "honesty" of childhood and hypocrisy of much of adult society.

PART 5, CHAPTER 27

Seryozha doesn't believe that Anna has actually died, and whenever he goes for a walk, he looks for her: his nanny has confirmed that Anna is still alive, and he loves her too much to think that she's bad. Karenin speaks almost abstractedly to Seryozha, as though addressing an imaginary boy, and gives him his religious lesson––verses from the gospels and the Old Testament. Although Seryozha knows the verses well, he gets lost in **daydreams** and can't concentrate. Seryozha refuses to believe in death. That night, for his birthday, Seryozha makes a secret prayer that his mother will return.

While Karenin walls himself in his work and the façade of social ambitions, Seroyzha lives willfully in the bubble of his dreams, refusing to accept a reality other than the one he has constructed for himself. Karenin interacts with Seryozha as though his son were an imaginary, idealized boy, not the real, physical individual that he is.

PART 5, CHAPTER 28

Vronsky and Anna stay in separate hotel suites in Petersburg. Vronsky has been deluding himself regarding how Russian society will treat Anna. Although society will still receive Vronsky, everybody ostracizes Anna. Even those closest to her, like Betsy, refuse to speak with her until there is an official divorce. Vronsky hopes his sister-in-law, Varya, will visit Anna, but Varya refuses on grounds of societal impropriety. Vronsky and Anna spend their stay in Petersburg as though it is a foreign city. Karenin's name seems to arise everywhere.

Upon Vronsky and Anna's return to Petersburg, Anna no longer has a place in Petersburg society: any social clout she once held has come crashing down, now that her "secret" affair with Vronsky has been made public, and since she has explicitly flouted conventions, Anna has been shunned. Vronsky, on the other hand, is treated normally: men do not face the same stigma as women.

PART 5, CHAPTER 29

Anna's main goal in Petersburg is to see Seryozha, but she realizes that her position as an outcast in society will make this extremely difficult to do. Anna, learning that Lydia and Karenin are close, writes Lydia the **letter**, but Lydia sends no reply, which hurts Anna; the eventual reply makes her angry. Anna resolves that on her son's birthday, she will go to the house and bribe the servants so that she can see him; she buys a great quantity of toys for him. The porter lets her in. Anna is amazed at how much her son has changed, as she had imagined him as a four-year-old boy still. Seryozha is thrilled, saying that he knew she would come for his birthday.

Though Anna recognizes that society has shunned her, her desire to see her son overrides the awkward position and embarrassment that their meeting could create for him. Anna still wants to believe that her world has not changed, despite the fact that she knows she's been shunned from her previous life. In her vision of the life she still clings to in her memory and fantasy, she still thinks of Seryozha as a little boy. She and Karenin both have idealized versions of their son.

PART 5, CHAPTER 30

When Seryozha's tutor figures out who Anna is, he doesn't know what to do, but hearing their happy reunion, he decides to let them be; the servants are also gossiping about Anna's return. Seryozha's nanny comes in, and Anna knows she must leave, but she can't say goodbye. Seryozha realizes that his mother and father cannot meet, but he doesn't understand why. Anna tells him to love his father, and they weep. Karenin comes in as they are saying goodbye, and though she has just told Seryozha that Karenin is a good person, Anna is filled with loathing for her husband, and she runs out of the room without unpacking the toys she'd bought for him.

Anna shares a much deeper bond with Seryozha than she does with Annie. However, Anna also recognizes that society is structured such that Anna and Seryozha cannot live together without Karenin's permission and that she is the one who has broken the laws of this world. Even though Anna tries to pretend for her son's sake that he should love his father, she still has a visceral reaction against him, and she must physically run out of the room to escape feeling as though she's under Karenin's control again.

PART 5, CHAPTER 31

Anna hadn't anticipated the strong effect that seeing Seryozha would have on her. Her love for her daughter is weak in comparison. She knows that she and her son are bound together physically and spiritually. She takes out an album of photographs of her son. She thinks of Vronsky, and though she feels a surge of love, she is also angry that he has left her alone. When Vronsky writes back that a prince is visiting, Anna worries that Vronsky doesn't love her anymore.

Anna's bond with Annie is nothing in comparison to her bond with Seryozha, suggesting also that her relationship with Vronsky rests on tenuous grounds. She does not trust Vronsky implicitly and instinctively; rather, she feels as though she must work all the time to keep him close to her, rather than believing that there is an inherent force tying them together.

When Vronsky and the guest arrive, Vronsky looks at the pictures of Seryozha, but Anna quickly takes the pictures away. Anna invites the prince to dinner. Anna asks Vronsky when they will leave Petersburg, and he says that they will soon––life is painful there for him as well, he says.

Anna's visit with her son reawakens the strong bond she feels for him; though she has tried to replace this bond with affection for her daughter, her love for Annie is like that of a child with a doll, not a mother with a daughter. Her family life with Vronsky and Annie appears lovely from the outside, but is weak within. It is a show, something put on, not a deep connection.

PART 5, CHAPTER 32

Vronsky returns home to find that Anna is out with a lady. Her behavior has seemed strange to him lately, and he resolves to have a talk with her. Anna returns with Princess Varvara, her aunt; Anna seems to be acting somewhat peculiarly. They report that Princess Betsy won't say farewell to Anna. Anna requests a box at the opera for the evening and flirts with other men while at dinner. Vronsky tries to persuade Anna not to go to the opera, but she is in denial that she has become a pariah in society.

Anna hectically tries all tactics to keep herself looking as beautiful and desirable as possible so that Vronsky won't be tempted to stray––though she has no concrete reason to believe that he is interested in other women, their entire relationship has been built on the ties of flirtation and excitement rather than deep love.

PART 5, CHAPTER 33

Vronsky is vexed that Anna appears to deliberately refuse to understand her position in society. Appearing at the opera in society as a ruined women, he thinks, is to renounce society forever. After much hair-pulling, however, he decides that he must also go to the opera.

Instead of keeping her head low so that society might accept her again one day in the future, Anna's visit with Seryozha has made her determined to re-enter Russian society and prove that she is not an outsider. However, Vronsky, like Karenin, would prefer to keep his reputation intact.

At the opera, all eyes are on Anna. In the box next to Anna's are acquaintances of Anna's. The wife appears quite agitated and leaves; it is clear that she is humiliated to be seen near Anna. Vronsky goes to his brother's box to find out what exactly is happening. Vronsky's mother says that the woman insulted Anna. Everyone has forgotten the singer and is looking at Anna, says his mother.

The real drama at any theatrical event in Petersburg never takes place on stage: people go to the opera to see and be seen, and this time, Anna is the center of the show. Anna's charisma was once a magnet that drew everyone to her, but now it is a magnet that pushes everyone away. Where once she stood at the center, now that she has let her love be seen explicitly and ceased to hide her affair, Russian society sees her as a laughingstock. Put another way, Russian society seems to see any kind of sincerity, or true external representation of inner feelings, as something both silly and dirty.

When Vronsky returns home, Anna has already arrived. She says that the woman in the box next to hers told Anna it was a disgrace to be seated next to her, and that if Vronsky had loved her, he wouldn't have driven her to attend the opera. Instead of arguing, Vronsky gives her assurances of his love, and the next day, they leave Petersburg and go to the country.

Anna refuses to face the truth about the reason for everyone's insulting glares; even though she knows deep down that society has turned on her because of her affair (which it would have accepted if only she herself had seen it as an amusement rather than love). She blames Vronsky, as it is easier for her to lash out against him rather than examine herself.

PART 6, CHAPTER 1

Dolly and Oblonsky's country house has fallen apart due to lack of money and attention, Dolly and the children are spending the summer with Kitty and Levin. Kitty is pregnant. Kitty and Dolly's mother, as well as Kitty's friend Varenka, are also staying at the estate, as is Levin's half-brother, Koznyshev. Koznyshev and Varenka go mushroom hunting, which makes Kitty and Dolly delighted.

Dolly and Oblonsky's ruined country estate is symbolic of their marriage, which has been shown to be built on shaky foundations; Kitty and Levin have a stronger relationship. Koznyshev asks Varenka to go mushroom-hunting, which Kitty and Dolly see as nearly akin to a proposal.

PART 6, CHAPTER 2

The women are making jam, and they chat about their marriage proposals. Dolly says that Kitty was lucky that Vronsky met Anna, while this event was unfortunate for Anna; Kitty, however, says she refuses to think about this. Levin comes in, and he and Kitty join the mushroom-hunting expedition.

The women have their own "women's kingdom" on the terrace. Kitty feels part of the club of married ladies as she adds the story of her marriage proposal to the rest.

PART 6, CHAPTER 3

Kitty asks Levin what he thinks about the possibility of Koznyshev and Varenka as a match. Levin says that Koznyshev had fallen in love with a girl who died, and that ever since, he has purely followed a spiritual life; even Varenka might not be able to pull him down to earth. Kitty and Levin can leave things unsaid and frequently speak in shorthand because they are so intimate.

Nikolai, Levin, and Koznyshev are all monogamous, though in quite different ways: Marya, the prostitute, is effectively Nikolai's wife, though they couldn't actually wed (an interesting echo of the social rules that restrict Anna's life as well); Levin devotes himself to Kitty; and Koznyshev remains faithful to the memory of his dead love.

Levin says that he is happy in marriage but dissatisfied with his own work; though he is envious that Koznyshev puts society above himself, Levin wouldn't change places with his half-brother. He and Kitty pull daisy petals to count off whether or not Koznyshev will propose, but since they can't agree on whether or not a little petal counts, the counting-off does not produce any results.

Levin is somewhat envious that Koznyshev has devoted his life to his work rather than his love, but he is too wrapped in his own happiness to be truly discontent. He and Kitty, like children, use a counting-off game to predict the proposal, but just as no one could agree who stepped on the silk first at their wedding, the conversation ends with both sides winning, not with one opinion dominating.

PART 6, CHAPTER 4

Varenka is excited by the charged atmosphere of possible proposal, and Koznyshev realizes he has intense feelings for her. He goes off to gather mushrooms on his own and deliberate. He determines that Varenka is everything he wants in a wife. Seeing her in the distance, he throws his cigar away and advances purposefully toward her.

Everything is set up perfectly for Koznyshev to propose to Varenka: they are alone together gathering mushrooms, which gives Koznyshev time to gather his thoughts and muster his courage.

PART 6, CHAPTER 5

Koznyshev rehearses his proposal to Varenka in his head. Although it is clear that marriage is on both their minds, they discuss mushrooms. Koznyshev opens his mouth portentously, but asks a question about mushroom; Varenka replies about mushrooms, and the moment has passed. On the way home, Koznyshev thinks that his reasoning about Varenka had been wrong, and that he should not betray his old love, the girl who died. When they return, Kitty can tell immediately by Varenka's calm manner that they are not engaged, and she says so to Levin.

But the perfect setup falters. Tolstoy shows the reader that even matches where the stars seem perfectly aligned might not come to fruition, whereas others that don't seem to work at all—i.e., Dolly and Oblonsky—continue to persist and somehow thrive. Koznyshev and Varenka do not share a subverbal, coded bond: when they talk about mushrooms, they are actually just talking about mushrooms.

PART 6, CHAPTER 6

During the children's tea, the adults talk. Oblonsky is expected on the **train**, and Kitty's father might be coming as well, though likely not. Kitty's mother is sad that she has no more children left in the house. Levin leaves to give Grisha, one of the Oblonsky children, his Latin lesson; after having been chastised for trying to teach Grisha his own way, Levin now goes by the book.

The excitement has gone out of the air now that the anticipation of a new proposal has fallen flat. Just as Levin tries to explain his agricultural ideas frequently throughout the novel without much success, he also has trouble giving the children Latin lessons. He's a born doer, not a born teacher.

Oblonsky arrives: not with the Prince, however, but with a handsome young man named Veslovsky. Levin is jealous and unhappy that Kitty is smiling and seeming to enjoy the handsome stranger's company.

Veslovsky's arrival triggers all of Levin's jealousies: he sees Veslovsky as another handsome, Vronsky-esque figure, and he still smarts from Kitty's first rejection of him.

PART 6, CHAPTER 7

The men make plans to go shooting the next morning. Veslovsky says he's been to see Anna and that she and Vronsky are just fifty miles away. Levin interprets every innocuous move Kitty makes as being a sign of her love for Veslovsky. Later that night, in their bedroom, Kitty asks Levin why he's so irritable, and his jealousy comes flooding out, but as soon as it does, he realizes how insane he sounds, and he and Kitty make up.

Even though Kitty has given him no reason for suspicion, Levin grows more and more jealous: any handsome stranger triggers old feelings of rivalry and frustration, especially because the stranger who has seen Vronsky recently, and "Vronsky" is always the magic word that sets Levin off into a tirade. However, Levin and Kitty communicate all their feelings so well that they can forgive each other.

PART 6, CHAPTER 8

Early the next morning, before the ladies wake up, the men go out for their shooting expedition. Veslovsky wears brand-new clothes to go with his brand-new gun; Oblonsky has the well-weathered clothes and excellent gun of a seasoned hunter. Levin, late to leave because he keeps talking to Kitty, is very excited and eager for the shooting, and now he enjoys Veslovsky's company, as Veslovsky is a well-bred dandy.

The world here is split into men's and women's domains: the women make jam on the terrace, the men go shooting. While Veslovsky dresses to act the part of the hunter, even though he clearly has no experience (a kind of comic exaggeration of Vronsky's play-acting at being an artist in Italy), Oblonsky's attire demonstrates his skill. Levin is now very animated, almost to the point of overeagerness, as he knows he's good at hunting.

PART 6, CHAPTER 9

They come to a small **marsh** and Levin wants to continue, but the other men insist on shooting there; Levin waits with the carriages, and the others hit nothing. Veslovsky stupidly misfires his gun. At the next marsh, when Levin finally gets a turn to shoot, not only does Veslovsky interrupt his shot, but he accidently lets the horses get stuck in the mud, and Levin pulls them out himself. After lunch, Veslovsky merrily insists on driving the horses to make up for his clumsiness.

The geographical bickering among the men makes Levin feel emasculated, since they override his opinions, even though he knows the countryside best. Veslovsky disrupts Levin's accustomed way of proceeding just as he has disrupted his peace of mind and made him feel jealous.

PART 6, CHAPTER 10

Veslovsky drives the horses too fast, and they arrive at the big **marsh** while it's still too hot to shoot. Both Levin and Oblonsky plot separately how they might rid themselves of the bumbling Veslovsky; Oblonsky manages to saddle Levin with Veslovsky. Levin's first shots go badly, and he shoots poorly for the rest of the day; even Laska gets frustrated and sloppy. Some peasants invite them to drink vodka, and Levin tells Veslovsky to go with them, which he does, but even without Veslovsky, Levin shoots poorly. When he and Oblonsky met again, Oblonsky has been much more successful.

Oblonsky smoothly uses his master manipulation skills to steer the hunting situation to his advantage, which makes Levin feel powerless and yet more frustrated than before. Even Levin's dog, Laska, can sense his anger, and she responds to him in kind, mirroring his own frustrations. Just as Veslovsky has thrown Levin off his rhythms at home, he has thrown him off his game in the snipe marsh.

PART 6, CHAPTER 11

Levin and Oblonsky join Veslovsky at a peasant's cottage, where Veslovsky is enjoying himself tremendously. They discuss wealth and class. Levin argues that money earned without working is dishonest, while Oblonsky argues that Levin isn't making a clear point. Levin says that it's unjust that he himself makes so much more money than his peasants, but Oblonsky observes that Levin is not going to give the peasant his property. Veslovsky wants to flirt with the pretty farm girls, and he and Oblonsky go to have a rousing time with the women, but Levin stays behind to try and sleep, although he is distracted and anxious.

Veslovsky is charmed by what he sees as the quaint peasant life, while to Levin it is actual normal life, as real and dignified as city life. Oblonsky and Levin seem to be antagonistic just under the surface, which has been characteristic of their relationship of late: though they do not argue openly, Levin does not agree with Oblonsky's somewhat loose morals and hypocrisies. Levin is completely faithful to Kitty, eschewing any temptations of the peasant maidens; indeed, he doesn't even register that sleeping with other woman is a possibility for him to consider, even though he's able to be jealous of Kitty.

PART 6, CHAPTER 12

The next morning, Levin wakes up early, but he can't wake up the other two men, so he goes out hunting by himself. Levin and Laska search for snipe through the **marsh**; they are in perfect sync as they hunt, and Levin is able to snag several birds, particularly after a little boy runs up to him and says that duck had been spotted there yesterday.

When Levin is able to commune with the marsh by himself, without the distractions of society, he feels like himself again. Tolstoy provides a poetic meditation on the marsh and the communion between Levin and his dog, and Levin hunts well when he is at one with nature, when thinking and putting on airs are no longer interfering and distracting him.

PART 6, CHAPTER 13

After a successful early morning hunt, Levin returns to camp, very pleased with his success; his pleasure is underscored when he discovers that a note from Kitty awaits. Levin remains cheerful even though Veslovsky has overstrained the horses and eaten all the food. Veslovsky remains in a cheery mood, and despite everything, Levin feels quite friendly toward Veslovsky.

Levin always projects his own moods onto the landscape. When Levin is happy, the whole world appears cheerful; when Levin is glum, everyone seems to be turned against him. Even though Veslovsky makes the same types of mistakes today as yesterday, Levin has had a good morning, so he is inclined to think benevolently of all those around him.

PART 6, CHAPTER 14

The next morning, Levin shows Veslovsky around the estate, after which Veslovsky speaks to Kitty in the drawing room, which irks Levin. The Princess, Kitty's mother, tries to discuss the preparations for Kitty's baby with Levin, but he is uncomfortable and awkward with the discussion: he finds talking about something so mysterious and extraordinary in such ordinary terms to be deeply humiliating.

Even though Levin's jealousy had been masked over by his good mood in the swamp, when he sees Veslovsky with Kitty, all the old jealousies flare up: Levin can't help but recall subconsciously his old rivalry with Vronsky. Levin is ruled by passions, not pragmatics, and he finds it impossible to discuss deep emotions in normal terms, because these passions occur on a subverbal level.

Veslovsky discusses Anna's situation with Kitty, which makes Kitty feel very unpleasant, because she can't help but feel guilty, and she knows that Levin will interpret their interaction negatively—which he does. Kitty and Levin go into the garden to discuss their trouble, and though they appear extremely tragic, in just a few minutes, they have agreed that Veslovsky has made advances to Kitty, have made up, and are radiant.

Even though Veslovsky's conversation with Kitty is innocent, Kitty is in such sync with her husband that she knows he will become jealous, so she feels guilty despite the fact that she's done nothing wrong. Kitty and Levin's emotions swing on an enormous, rapid pendulum: one minute, they're in tragedy, and the next, domestic bliss.

PART 6, CHAPTER 15

Levin finds Dolly, who is punishing her daughter for some misdemeanor. Dolly says that everyone has noticed that Veslovsky has been flirting with Kitty. Levin tells Veslovsky that a carriage is waiting and that he must leave. Veslovsky asks for an explanation, but seeing Levin's bulging muscles, he scurries away like the society dandy he is. Everybody except Kitty's mother, who thinks Levin has been unspeakably rude, becomes quite merry once Veslovsky has left.

Once Dolly confirms Levin's suspicion that Veslovsky is flirting with Kitty, he becomes calmer and more pragmatic about his jealousy. When it was his own secret emotion, it was too much to deal with, but when it's an objective fact, he can act on it, and Levin is much happier when he is active than when he is brooding.

PART 6, CHAPTER 16

Dolly goes to see Anna, using Levin's carriage (Levin insists, as a good host). During the drive, she has time to think about her life, which is typically occupied from morning to night with her children. All she has done during her marriage, she feels, is be pregnant and raise children; she is no longer attractive, and their family is in a poor financial situation. Dolly envies the peasant women she sees. She begins to be jealous of Anna as well. Dolly **daydreams** about having an affair with another society man.

The carriage ride gives Dolly the rare opportunity for meditation on her circumstances, and Tolstoy narrates her reflections about her life. Dolly is jealous of every woman around her, even Anna, because they all seem to be living their lives to the fullest, whereas she is trapped in a loveless marriage (these reflections also serve to satirize the way that everyone has a tendency to think that other people have it better). Dolly fantasizes about having an affair of her own, imagining with glee that Oblonsky would be astonished and horrified. Yet Dolly only fantasizes, which creates a contrast between her and Anna.

PART 6, CHAPTER 17

When the coachman stops to ask a peasant for direction, four people on horseback appear: Anna, Vronsky, Veslovsky, and Princess Varvara (Anna's elderly aunt). Dolly is at first slightly taken aback to see Anna, a mature woman, on horseback. Anna is thrilled to see Dolly. Dolly is not pleased to see Princess Varvara, who is a notorious sponger. Vronsky's party has an elegant carriage, which forms a sharp contrast against Levin's ill-matched carriage that Dolly is riding in. Dolly and Anna ride in Dolly's carriage back to Anna's house, and the other continue alongside. Some peasants mistake Veslovsky for a woman because he rides sidesaddle.

Unlike Levin's house, in which everyone is comfortable with each other and all the relationships are based on families, the party at the Vronsky estate is comprised of people put together through a variety of socially questionable circumstances: the visitors are all there because they want to live off the fat of the land at the Vronsky estate, and Anna and Vronsky are not a jolly, happy matriarch and patriarch. Veslovsky is so much of a dandy that he can't even ride like a real country man; this is also similar to his entirely wrong, gleaming hunting outfit.

PART 6, CHAPTER 18

Anna looks at Dolly's thin face, with dust caught in its wrinkles, and remembers that she herself has become prettier—she shouldn't be happy in her indecorous situation, yet she is. Dolly says that she loves Anna: when you love people, you love them as they are, not who you want them to be. Vronsky's country estate is very luxuriously and lavishly appointed. Anna speaks in **French** to Vronsky and Veslovsky when they arrive, and though she apologizes for the quality of Dolly's room, it's extremely beautiful. Dolly says that she's been quite happy staying with Levin and Kitty.

Anna is vain to the point of obsession because she feels as though her beauty is the only thing of value she has left, and she is secretly glad that she has become prettier, not pinched-looking like Dolly. Though Anna attempts simplicity for Dolly's sake, Dolly can see through the attempt and knows that Anna has fallen into an affected, extravagant lifestyle. Dolly emphasizes the Levins' hospitality to remind herself and Anna of the pleasures that money cannot buy.

PART 6, CHAPTER 19

The maid who comes to help Dolly dress for dinner is more fashionably attired than she is, and Dolly feels ashamed of her patched clothes. Anna takes Dolly to see baby Annie in the luxurious nursery, which makes Dolly uncomfortable, because even though the child is surrounded by nice things, her governess is sour and Anna doesn't seem to pay the baby much attention (in contrast with the way she treated Seryozha). Anna knows that Dolly disapproves of the mooching Princess Varvara, but Anna thinks she's kind. Anna is wryly amused by the fight between Veslovsky and Levin, because Veslovsky, she says in **French**, seems so simple and nice.

Dolly feels embarrassed by her shabby clothes, just as she felt when she drove her ill-matched carriage near Vronsky's smart team. Although baby Annie is surrounded by lots of lovely material possessions, Dolly sees that the money is covering up the lack of love and attentiveness Anna has for her child: even though Dolly thinks her life is worse, she sees that she has a much more genuine bond with her own children than Anna does with Annie. Anna speaks about Veslovsky in French, the language of the dandy and the city life.

PART 6, CHAPTER 20

Princess Varvara speaks to Dolly in a very patronizing, condescending manner; she happily condones Anna and Vronsky's relationship. Dolly recognizes that Princess Varvara doesn't care what Anna and Vronsky are doing so long as she is able to reap the material benefits; Dolly, on the other hand, loves Anna in spite of her choices. Vronsky shows Dolly around a hospital he is building; he is happy to show it off to someone new and gets excited.

Princess Varvara is kind to Anna and Vronsky only in order to keep taking advantage of them, and Dolly sees right through her simpering ways. On the other hand, Dolly can see why everyone has fallen in love with Vronsky, as he is quite charming when he gets animated about the hospital project—she herself cannot help falling under his spell.

PART 6, CHAPTER 21

Vronsky asks Dolly to speak with him. He wants to legalize his arrangement with Anna; if they have more children, they are technically still Karenin's now, but Vronsky sees himself and Anna as bound together. Anna needs to write a **letter** to Karenin requesting a divorce, which she hasn't done yet. Dolly promises to talk to Anna.

Vronsky wants to make his relationship with Anna legal so that they can start to build an actual life together, rather than simply float in the neither-here-nor-there world of an affair. Anna has been avoiding the hard truth of facing Karenin to finalize the divorce, instead preferring to ignore reality and stay in her dream world.

PART 6, CHAPTER 22

They all change for dinner, though Dolly is already wearing her best dress. The dinner is extremely luxurious and formal. Dolly realizes that all of these elaborate preparations have taken a great deal of work, and she shrewdly recognizes that it is Vronsky, not Anna, who makes all the household arrangements, whereas Anna is the hostess who guides the conversation. Anna has added a certain flirtatiousness and false babyishness to her actions, which displeases Dolly.

Just as the men and women have separate spheres at Levin's estate, so Vronsky and Anna take different roles to maintain various aspects of Vronsky's estate, but the division of labor here is not based on warm, family groupings, but on appearance and affectation. Vronsky takes care of all the household practicalities, whereas Anna—not unlike her brother, Oblonsky—maintains the social atmosphere..

When the conversation turns to Levin, Dolly defends him. Vronsky has many responsibilities in government, to Anna's chagrin. Dolly feels uncomfortable during dinner; she also feels awkward when they play lawn tennis, as it seems like a fake activity, rather than a natural amusement.

Tolstoy emphasizes the contrast between the lawn tennis at Vronsky's and organic activities like mushroom hunting at Levin's estate.

PART 6, CHAPTER 23

When Dolly is about to go to bed, Anna comes in to talk about everything she had wanted to talk about during the day, but now that the time has finally arrived, Anna can find nothing to say. Finally, Anna asks about Kitty. Kitty has forgiven Anna, Dolly says, but she hasn't forgotten.

Though Anna has wanted to speak with Dolly alone all day, now that she finally has the opportunity, she loses her nerve. She still feels guilty about Kitty: no matter how happy Kitty is, there will always be a wound between the women.

Dolly raises the topic of divorce. There is an ellipsis in the text, during which Anna tells Dolly a secret. The text resumes, with Dolly completely appalled. Anna says that she has chosen to stay beautiful to keep Vronsky, rather than be pregnant and unattractive. Dolly thinks ruefully of her own lack of beauty, but realizes that if Vronsky is prone to having affairs, he'll have them: if Anna's beauty is her only means of keeping Vronsky, it won't work, since there will always be someone more beautiful out there. Dolly feels extremely distant from Anna.

Just as when Vronsky and Anna slept together in an ellipsis, Tolstoy again leaves unsaid the explicit fact that Anna has had an operation so she will have no more children. When she hears this, Dolly realizes that the foundations of Anna and Vronsky's relationship is hollow; instead of a partnership based on trust, it's a relationship based on fear and lies, and that if Anna's beauty is the thing that holds them together, the relationship will crumble.

PART 6, CHAPTER 24

Dolly continues to insist that divorce is necessary and that they should have a legal bond. Anna says that the thought of divorce drives her mad: even if she knows she should do it, she'll lose custody of her son. She wants to have both Seryozha and Vronsky, but this is impossible. When Dolly goes to bed, she is eager to see her home and children again; Anna, meanwhile, takes morphine before returning to her room. Vronsky wants to find out the result of her conversation with Dolly, but Anna tells him nothing.

Even though Dolly realizes that the ties between Vronsky and Anna are built on shaky grounds, she still wants Anna to get a divorce and marry Vronsky so that she will stop living in this unstable limbo world. Yet Anna's love for her son—perhaps the only pure love she has left in her life, though she idealizes even that—and her resulting desire to remain his legal mother, tie her hands. Stuck as she feels herself to be, Anna has begun to take drugs to block out the world, since her own imagination and willful thinking has not proven potent enough.

The next morning, Dolly returns to Levin's estate. During the ride home, her servants agree with her that the Vronsky estate is luxurious but extremely stiff. When Dolly comes home, she is so happy to be back that she can be sweet about Anna and Vronsky.

Dolly is relieved to return to her children: she's no longer jealous of other women, but instead realizes that though she may not have domestic bliss, she does have a home life based on love, not on the empty trappings of money and beauty.

PART 6, CHAPTER 25

Vronsky and Anna continue to spend the summer and part of the autumn in the same conditions, without moving toward a divorce. Anna spends her days primping and reading books and journals of all subjects, so when Vronsky has a question for her about anything, she has the answer. Vronsky continues in his projects and knows he is making, as opposed to losing, money. However, he does feel somewhat entangled and ensnared by Anna.

Anna's sole aim in life is to exist for Vronsky: not only does she beautify herself constantly so she can be attractive to him on the outside, she studies all the subjects that he finds interesting so that she can be fascinating to him in conversation as well. She is constantly putting on a show for Vronsky. But the result is not that Vronsky falls more deeply in love, but rather that he feels smothered by Anna.

Vronsky, Oblonsky, Levin, Sviyazhsky, and Koznyshev, among others, are all eligible to vote in the provincial elections. Vronsky and Anna come close to fighting when he goes to the elections, but they ultimately avoid a quarrel, and Vronsky is happy he has asserted his independence.

Vronsky and Anna rarely ever actually fight, though they pick at each other all the time. Even going to the provinces for the annual yearly elections, a ritual that all the men practice, threatens to launch Anna into a jealous tirade, so strong is her desire to keep her snares around Vronsky.

PART 6, CHAPTER 26

In September, Levin moves to Moscow for Kitty's confinement before she has her baby; he is bored and uncomfortable in the city. When Koznyshev invites Levin to the elections, Kitty orders the nobleman's uniform he needs and tells him to go. Levin must resolve affairs with his sister's estate, which prove to be caught in a bureaucratic nightmare, but he has become far less easily frustrated with others since his marriage. Even though Levin thinks the election is of no importance, he agrees to participate, and he listens to all the local issues and debates.

Anna doesn't want Vronsky to go to the elections, even though he loves it; meanwhile, Kitty's desire that Levin go despite his reticence demonstrates how healthy and strong their relationship is. Kitty understands that the best thing for Levin is to try and understand how society operates; besides, she's seen him in times of heightened emotions, and she knows he'll only get in the way during the final stages of pregnancy.

PART 6, CHAPTER 27

On the sixth day, after all the debates, the vote is held. The noblemen appear outwardly divided into old and young, but these divisions don't match with party lines. Levin doesn't completely understand what's going on, but he realizes that there is controversy over several nominations, including a man called Flerov who is "under investigation."

Surface appearances don't tell the full story of political intrigue: people who look like they're aligned with one party may express different views. Levin is extremely out of his element when dealing with this kind of hypocrisy.

PART 6, CHAPTER 28

As the men prepare to cast their votes, Levin realizes that there is some sort of heated debate around whether or not Flerov should be on the ballot. Levin feels uncomfortable and watches the movement of the servants instead. When it's Levin's turn to vote, he asks Koznyshev which way he should cast his ballot, but Koznyshev patronizingly tells him to make his own decisions. The ballot passes easily, and the new party emerges victorious, but Levin doesn't realize this until he unwittingly congratulates the former marshal.

Tolstoy uses Levin as a mirror for the reader: he drops this naïve character into the middle of the complicated political situation without any explanation of what's going on, and Levin and the reader must figure everything out from contextual clues. Levin feels more comfortable watching the rhythms of the waiters instead of the artificial debate, as this is the closest milieu he can find to the way life works in nature. Levin's confusion serves to highlight just how artificial the political intrigue is.

PART 6, CHAPTER 29

In the room for smoking and refreshments, the men are talking excitedly. Levin doesn't want to join in, and he doesn't want to talk to his own people, because Vronsky is with them. Levin sees a landowner of his acquaintance, whom he had met while visiting Sviyazhsky, and they discuss how obsolete and unimportant the elections seem to be. They also discuss how difficult farming is: they're always scrambling just to try not to lose money.

Levin only feels comfortable in conversation when he can talk about faming and peasant life, as the affairs of the city are anathema to his character. Ironically, the same Sviyazhsky whom Levin found hypocritical earlier now becomes a lifeline, a point of contact from the countryside in the political quagmire.

PART 6, CHAPTER 30

Sviyazhsky brings Levin back to their group. Levin knows so little about politics that when he asks who else he thinks will be in the election, he names Sviyazhsky and another man standing next to them, but both of these men have already been nominated and Sviyazhsky has lost. Oblonsky and Vronsky, on the contrary, love the election.

Levin blunders and puts his foot in his mouth during discussions of politics—his world is the natural one, not artificial human games. Oblonsky and Vronsky, in contrast, love the competitive thrill of elections, since they don't feel things as deeply and can discuss human affairs coolly and calculatedly.

The men scatter. Koznyshev chastises Levin for being so rude and bumbling. Levin thinks that he should know about some subtlety in the election, but instead, he's bored, and he gets dejected. Nevedovsky is elected the new provincial marshal.

All the other men are wrapped up in the political games and societal intrigue, but Levin is an outsider—he cannot even pretend to muster an interest in the nuances of the election, since he is deeply distrustful of this hypocritical world.

PART 6, CHAPTER 31

Nevedovsky and many others from the victorious party dine at Vronsky's that night. Vronsky is very pleased with his own political prowess: every nobleman besides Levin that he has met during the elections has become his ally, and he's flush with success. All the men—even Sviyazhsky, who has not been elected—are celebratory. The men send celebratory telegrams; Oblonsky sends one to Dolly, whose only thought upon receiving it is to muse ruefully about the telegram's extravagant cost.

While Levin is a fish out of water in political matters, Oblonsky and Vronsky thrive in this milieu. Vronsky is also thrilled to be operating on his own turf, among men, not hemmed in by Anna. Oblonsky's greatest talent lies in doing the right thing in society, even if this means doing the wrong thing domestically.

The men prepare to go out for more amusement after dinner. Vronsky's butler brings in a **letter** from Anna, which already annoys him, since he knows it will be a message that he should come home. Annie is sick, Anna says in the letter, and she wants Vronsky home at once; she also suggests that she herself could come out to the elections. Vronsky doesn't want to return to his gloomy home, but he gets on the next **train** that night.

Vronsky doesn't even need to read the contents of the letter to know what Anna is communicating—they do, therefore, share a certain bond, but this nonverbal communication is a burden, not a joy, to Vronsky. He doesn't want to return to the "gloomy, oppressive love," as Tolstoy puts it. Anna uses their sick daughter as an excuse to force him home. To keep Vronsky for herself, Anna denies him the opportunity to be himself, to do the things he loves to do.

PART 6, CHAPTER 32

Although Anna tries to remain composed and mature when Vronsky goes to the elections, the stern look he gives her before he leaves breaks her calm, since she interprets it as his love for her cooling off. She begins to consider seriously actually getting a divorce and marrying Vronsky. Vronsky doesn't return as anticipated after six days, and Annie falls ill, but Anna finds that she cannot pretend to love her daughter. That night, she writes to Vronsky in fear of losing him and sends the contradictory **letter** immediately; when she re-reads it the next day, she regrets the sentiment but is pleased that Vronsky is returning: even though she knows he's burdened by her, she wants him under her sight at all times.

Tolstoy switches to Anna's perspective to show what she has been thinking about while Vronsky was at the elections: just as he showed the horseracing scene several times from several different characters' perspectives, he rewinds time to allow the reader to see what Anna has been thinking while Vronsky has been away. Anna is of two minds: although her rational brain knows that she is being ridiculously, even counterproductively, obsessive and oppressive of Vronsky, her emotions take over, and she falls sway to the panic of her passions.

When Vronsky returns, she feels ashamed of her clinginess, but she's glad to have him back in her sights. She is beautiful, but her beauty is no longer a thrill for Vronsky. Annie has recovered. Anna tells Vronsky that she never wants to be separated from him again; if there's business in Moscow, she will go with him. Anna says she will write the **letter** to Karenin asking for a divorce. Although Vronsky says that he doesn't wish to be separated from her, his eyes belie his words, and they settle "like a married couple."

Anna lives from moment to moment: when Vronsky is away from her, she's constantly consumed with jealousy, but when he's in her grip again, she convinces herself that all is well. Though Vronsky says that he loves Anna, his expressions do not match, and for Tolstoy, actions always speak louder than words. Settling as though married may seem bucolic, but, as the beginning of the novel makes clear, marriage all too often spells unhappiness rather than bliss.

PART 7, CHAPTER 1

Although Kitty's baby is long overdue, Kitty is calm and happy, already in love with the child. Kitty's only concern is that Levin is anxious and jumpy in the city. In the country, Levin is constantly occupied, but in the city, he has nothing to do: he doesn't play cards, go to the club, or flirt. He also doesn't have the inspiration to work on his book. However, he and Kitty don't quarrel in the city.

Kitty is already in wordless sync with her child—her bond with the baby begins before it is born. In the country, Levin is busy with real labor; in the city, the artificial amusements have no pull for him, and he feels as though he has no purpose in life.

One evening, Kitty meets Vronsky again; though she **blushes** at first, she comports herself well. Although Levin is angry at first when she tells him, he quickly cheers up completely because he realizes that her rational behavior confirms that Kitty doesn't have feelings for Vronsky anymore.

For Tolstoy, a blush is always indicative of a deep physical passion that bubbles up to the surface, a representation of true and authentic inner feelings. At the same time, although Kitty and Levin can't control these instinctive emotions, they can control their reactions and what they do with these emotions.

PART 7, CHAPTER 2

Kitty tells Levin to call on friends, though Levin still dislikes making social calls. She also tells Levin she needs more money. Kitty asks whether they're doing something wrong, as the money seems to be going fast, which makes Levin displeased with himself, because he is the one doing all the spending. Levin asks Kitty how she feels, and Kitty says she is not afraid to have her baby. Kitty notes also that Dolly is completely in debt.

While Kitty is perfectly competent in an urbane setting, over and over again Tolstoy demonstrates that Levin is completely out of his element in the city. In the country, Levin can control his finances, suggesting that he has a clear understanding of how he manages his life, but in the city, the money seems to go of its own accord, operating within some system that Levin doesn't fully understand.

Levin drives into town to meet with Katavasov, a friend from his university days; Katavasov has promised to introduce him to Metrov, a famous professor of sociology, who will talk to him about his book. On the way, Levin thinks about how expensive city life is and how fast his savings have disappeared.

One thing that Levin does think he understands, however, is his book, and he is eager to get back to what he thinks of as his serious pursuit and a facet of his real work.

PART 7, CHAPTER 3

Katavasov introduces Levin to Metrov and tells Metrov about Levin's book on the natural conditions of the worker and that Levin is influenced by zoology. Levin is excited to discuss his ideas, but Merov only talks about his own theories. Merov only thinks about the Russian worker in terms of political-economic theory, which Levin thinks is ridiculous, but he doesn't argue with him. The three men attend a meeting of the Society of Amateurs. Merov offers to read Levin's manuscript, but Levin says no. At the meeting, Levin reflects that his ideas are just as important as Metrov's.

Levin is flattered that Merov is speaking with him, not realizing that Merov would bloviate to anyone and everyone. Merov is a stereotypical university professor, perfectly happy to expound upon his own theories but never really paying attention to what's actually going on in the society that he's purportedly studying. Tolstoy's caricature of Merov makes it clear to the reader his disdain for the cloistered nature of the ivory tower.

PART 7, CHAPTER 4

Levin goes to visit Prince Lvov, who is married to Kitty's sister, Natalie. The families are good friends. Levin likes their children as well. Natalie comes in, and she arranges to go to a concert and a public meeting with Levin. Levin remembers as they're all leaving the house that Kitty had wanted him to discuss Oblonsky with them, but they never quite get around to it.

Prince Lvov and Natalie are perhaps the only uncomplicated, truly happy marriage in the entire novel. Levin's comfort with them reminds the reader that at the beginning of the novel, Levin is really in love with the entire Shcherbatsky family, and this example of marital and familial bliss proves why.

PART 7, CHAPTER 5

At the concert, a new fantasia called "King Lear on the Heath" is performed, and Levin wants to form his own opinion of it, but as he listens, he feels like he's listening to a madman: there are whirling fragments of so many emotions that he is completely perplexed, as though he is a deaf man watching people dance. He argues with an acquaintance about Wagnerian music: Levin thinks that Wagner's mistake is trying to use music to express all of art and that different forms are best for describing certain things. The acquaintance disagrees, saying that it reaches its apex by uniting its forms. Levin sees a friend, whom, he remembers guiltily, Kitty had wanted him to visit.

Wagnerian music, with its atonalities and its extremely expressive nature, is becoming popular in Russia at this time. Tolstoy uses Levin's supposedly naïve, unbiased opinion about Wagnerian music to express Tolstoy's own point of view: each art form––like each person––should do what it is built to do and what it functions best at, not strive for some master unification of all the arts (for example, poetry shouldn't describe a face, because that's what painting does best). Tolstoy wrote a book on art (What Is Art?) *that expresses these views more fully. Tolstoy is likely also uncomfortable with the way that Russians have elevated non-Russian art (Wagner was German),*

PART 7, CHAPTER 6

Levin calls on Kitty's friend for as brief a time as possible and then goes to meet Natalie at the public meeting. He is starting to fade from exhaustion, however, and makes a blunder in conversation that vexes him for the rest of the time. After the meeting, and after dropping by to check on Kitty, Levin goes to the club.

Whereas Oblonsky gains strength and stamina through the small interactions of urban life, and while Kitty can navigate these social complications calmly, each exchange is a draining burden for Levin, who always feels completely out of his depth in the city.

PART 7, CHAPTER 7

Though Levin has not been to the club in a long time, the porter knows exactly who he is and who his friends are; he joins his crowd. Oblonsky arrives late, and they all relax and joke. Levin is even friendly and warm towards Vronsky and discusses breeds of cattle with him.

Even though Levin feels out of place in the city, he does have enough of a presence and enough social capital to have a fixed social sphere: he may not know how to navigate very well, but he is placed highly enough in the Russian hierarchy to gain easy access to the club.

PART 7, CHAPTER 8

Kitty's father asks Levin how he likes the idle life at the club. He points out all the old "sloshers," or men who have spent too much of their lives at the club. They go to the "clever room," where men are discussing politics, but Levin is bored and goes off to find Oblonsky and other friends. Oblonsky is discussing Anna with Vronsky, and Oblonsky insists that Levin and Vronsky be friends. After playing cards, Oblonsky insists that he and Levin pay a visit to Anna. Levin pays his bill and his gambling losses, and they leave.

Levin's amicability towards Vronsky suggests that Levin is finally, after all these years, learning to calm his emotions and to trust his marriage. The episode with Veslovsky allowed Levin to play out some of the old jealousies again, and his mastery over Veslovsky gave Levin confidence. Even though Levin claims to dislike the habits of the dandified, city lifestyle, he has still managed to rack up some gambling debts, demonstrating that he is not completely immune to the lures of urban life.

PART 7, CHAPTER 9

When Levin is in the carriage, he begins to have second thoughts about going to visit Anna, but Oblonsky reassures him that it will be fine. Anna's divorce has been dragging on for months; even Princess Varvara, the notorious sponger, has left, finding the situation improper. Dolly is Anna's only female visitor. To keep herself busy, Anna has been writing a children's book and is helping take care of an English family.

Levin's purported immunity to city life also shows some cracks when he's considering the social implications of visiting Anna: although Levin claims not to care what others think, he does realize that Anna is in disgrace and that everyone else ostracizes her, and he feels uncomfortable with the situation, despite the fact that she's, in a distant way, a family member and he should thus accept her.

Levin sees the portrait of Anna done in Italy by Mikhailov, the painter, and he is mesmerized by the woman's beauty. Anna appears, and though she is less dazzling in person, the reality of her beauty adds a new attractiveness.

Just as Levin was dazzled first by the idea of being in love and then by the physical reality of it, so too he is enamored with both the idealized portrait of Anna and—even more so—with the person herself, as Levin is always a person who trusts physicality more than theory.

PART 7, CHAPTER 10

Levin feels at ease in Anna's company. He praises paintings that prize realism rather than invention. Anna's other guest says that Anna should put her energy into educating Russian children, rather than the English family, but Anna argues that energy comes from love, and that it can't be ordered. Levin finds himself obsessed with Anna's every movement and fascinated by what she is thinking and feeling. When he regretfully takes his leave, Anna tells Levin to send Kitty her love. Levin **blushes**.

By praising realism in paintings in the abstract, Levin is actually praising the portrait of Anna as well as its model in specific. Levin has developed an enormous crush on Anna, and so he is embarrassed when Anna mentions Kitty because he knows how his crush on Anna will affect Kitty. Levin's blush tells all: the blush throughout the novel is always a sign of physical reactions that appear at a subconscious level.

PART 7, CHAPTER 11

On the way home, Levin obsessively thinks about Anna. He tells Kitty that he has reconciled with Vronsky, and admits, **blushing**, that he has seen Anna; she immediately can tell that he has fallen in love with her, and she bursts in to tears. They talk until three in the morning, when they finally reach enough of a truce to sleep.

As soon as Kitty learns he's seen Anna, the blush give him away: Kitty realizes at once that Levin has developed a crush on Anna. This is the second time that the man she loves has fallen for Anna––Vronsky, of course, being the first––and she is heartbroken and jealous at always playing second fiddle to Anna's charisma. And yet, just as when Levin was jealous of Veslovsky, the two of them do not hide their feelings but instead talk through them. And while everything is not solved, the foundation of their relationship remains strong because they don't hide things from each other.

PART 7, CHAPTER 12

Anna knows she's been successful in making Levin fall in love with her, as she's been successful with every young man she's come into contact with lately. The only man who does not seem swayed by her charms is Vronsky, who grows colder and colder to her. She is in a state of suspense: all she can do is wait to hear from Karenin.

Anna desperately tries to regain both her own self-esteem and to make Vronsky notice her by making all the men around her fall in love with her, but this does not work: the more and more attractive she becomes to the rest of the world, the more and more repulsive she becomes, like a magnet that works one way on everyone else but the other on Vronsky.

When Vronsky returns, Anna does not want to fight with him, but she inevitably enters into a quarrel about him staying at the club rather than coming home. She claims to be at the brink of disaster at any moment, which immediately makes Vronsky bow to her command, but Anna realizes that she can never use this weapon a second time, and that their relationship is defined not by love anymore but by strife.

Though Anna and Vronsky's relationship has fallen into a toxic pattern of constant quarrels, and though Anna must act as though she is constantly on the edge of a nervous breakdown to keep Vronsky by her side, neither one of them can break the pattern, and they stay locked in this noxious spiral. Note the contrast between Anna and Vronsky and Levin and Kitty—where Levin and Kitty talk through their issues, Anna and Vronsky's relationship is founded on silence and lies.

PART 7, CHAPTER 13

At five in the morning, Levin awakens to find Kitty walking around; she says she is fine, but two hours later, she asks for the midwife. She still claims to be calm and fine, but as he leaves to fetch the midwife and doctor, he hears her moan. Levin suddenly finds himself praying, even though he is an unbeliever. He sends the midwife to Kitty, and the midwife tells him to fetch some opium along with the doctor.

Levin proves that there are no atheists in foxholes: just as he involuntarily prayed to God when Nikolai died, he finds himself calling upon God again in Kitty's hour of need. Despite the fact that he considers himself a nonbeliever, some deep belief lurking inside Levin gets awakened during times of emotional crisis.

PART 7, CHAPTER 14

The doctor is not awake when Levin arrives, so Levin fetches the opium from the apothecary, then returns for the doctor; at this point, Levin is becoming more and more wild in his impatience. The doctor takes his time getting ready, which utterly infuriates Levin. Levin returns home, and he grows more and more anxious and upset throughout the day; he also finds himself praying to God, even though he's an unbeliever. Time seems to move both extremely slowly and extremely quickly. He feels the same frenetic, frenzied way he did when his brother, Nikolai, was dying: even though that was an occasion of grief and this is a time of joy, both lie on the extremes of normal human life.

Both Nikolai's death and Kitty's labor occur on either extreme of the bell curve of normal existence. Levin might be able to convince himself that he is a nonbeliever in the day-to-day activities that occupy his rational brain, but when emotional extremities take over and passion kicks in, Levin finds himself instinctively turning to a higher power. Tolstoy himself underwent a very similar spiritual conversion, moving from staunch atheist to a firmly spiritual person.

PART 7, CHAPTER 15

As Kitty's labor continues, Levin grows more and more frantic; after her final, loudest shrieks, all he wants is for the suffering to end. Suddenly, it does: her screams cease, and the midwife says that they have a baby boy. The baby starts to cry, and Levin marvels at the sudden joy of the ordinary. He's ecstatic—but he can't grasp yet that this child, who hadn't existed the day before, is now in his life. The son almost seems superfluous to the fact that Kitty is alive and healthy.

Levin grows more and more frantic and fraught with his own delirium as Kitty's labor continues—he is so empathetic with her that he cannot keep himself composed while she is in pain. Finally, when the pain abruptly ceases and the baby is born, Levin enters the normal world again, which seems like utter bliss now. Levin is so in sync with Kitty, and their bond is so deep, that the presence of their son is too much to comprehend at once: he has to regain his normal life one step at a time.

PART 7, CHAPTER 16

As Levin talks to Kitty's father and Oblonsky, all he can think about is Kitty and his son, Mitya (a nickname for Dmitri), and he leaps up to see them. The midwife cleans the baby and hands him to Levin, but Levin feels oddly squeamish and distant. He's so afraid for this new vulnerability that has entered his life that he barely notices the joy and pride he feels when the baby sneezes.

As when Levin fell in love with Kitty, or as when Nikolai died, Levin is thrown into an extreme state of emotional turmoil with the birth of his son, and it takes a long period of adjustment before he is able to consider the day-to-day practicalities of life again—even to adjust to the fact that he has a son.

PART 7, CHAPTER 17

Oblonsky essentially has no money at all, and he begins to search for a new government post with a higher salary. He goes to Petersburg to discuss the position with two ministers; while he's there, he has promised Anna to get an answer from Karenin about the divorce. Oblonsky asks Karenin to put in a good word about him to the influential ministers; when Oblonsky mentions the salary, Karenin launches into a long-winded lecture, so Oblonsky hastily tries to change tactics and says that he's the best man for the job because he's honest. Karenin doesn't seem interested in that, either. Oblonsky recalls having to wait for hours to discuss the position with one of the ministers, a Jew, which infuriated Oblonsky.

An odd moment in the waiting room reveals Oblonsky's anti-Semitism, allowing Tolstoy to show a glimpse of Russian society and the larger political issues at stake during this time. Even though the novel concentrates on domestic affairs, and the central plots revolve around marriages and affairs, there is a much larger political and social landscape with extremely turbulent and controversial issues brewing all around the stories of these individuals.

PART 7, CHAPTER 18

Oblonsky turns the subject to Anna and the divorce. Karenin says that he thought the matter was closed, since he refused to grant Anna custody of their son in a divorce. Oblonsky says that Anna feels suspended between life and death and that she no longer demands custody of Seryozha. Oblonsky begs Karenin to take pity on Anna and brings up Karenin's sense of Christian magnanimity. Karenin says he will give an answer by the day after tomorrow.

Oblonsky, ever the social manipulator, has arranged his visit in Petersburg to kill two birds with one stone: talking to Karenin will help advance his political career and get him the money he needs because he is so wasteful, and he can use the excuse to help smooth over his own troubles with Dolly by helping her help Anna. Karenin has no interest in opening up the issue with Anna, since his only concern is his political reputation and maintaining his social position––Anna is already out of his life––but Oblonsky's appeal to Karenin's Christianity does hit Karenin's Achilles's heel.

PART 7, CHAPTER 19

Before Oblonsky leaves, Anna's son, Seryozha (now called Sergei Alexeich), comes in; Karenin says that the boy was very ill after seeing his mother and tells Oblonsky not to mention Anna. Seryozha has been at school for the year, and he has repressed memories and emotions of his mother, so he finds it uncomfortable to see Oblonsky, whom he associates with Anna. Oblonsky eventually does ask Seryozha if he remembers Anna, and although he says no, it's obvious that he does. After Oblonsky leaves, Seryozha's tutor finds the boy angry and crying, demanding everyone to leave him alone and stop asking him about his mother.

Seryozha has grown up enough to be called by his real name, not a childish nickname. After Seryozha's extremely emotional and extremely brief reconnection with Anna, he has spent the past year trying to suppress all memories of his mother, as they always bring him to tears; instead, he wants to lead a stoic, manly, life. When he shed his nickname, he also shed his dream world and his rich imaginary life. However, Oblonsky has triggered many of the passions Seryozha has worked so hard to forget. Emotions may lie fallow in characters in Anna Karenina, *but they never fully disappear*

PART 7, CHAPTER 20

Oblonsky refreshes himself in Petersburg after the stuffiness of Moscow. In Petersburg, attitudes are much more relaxed about marriage, children, service, etc. Everybody carries enormous debts but lives luxuriously.

Oblonsky is quite comfortable with the "out of sight, out of mind" mentality that Petersburg allows him to cultivate: everyone lives on credit and reputation, but no one worries externally about it, which puts Oblonsky in his social element.

Oblonsky visits Princess Betsy and, flirts with her, but he starts inadvertently taking the flirting too far; luckily, Princess Miagky arrives to break the tension. Oblonsky says he is to call at the Countess Lydia's house to speak with Karenin that night, and Princess Miagky says that Jules Landau, a famous but possibly half-witted clairvoyant, will make the decision about Karenin's divorce, as Countess Lydia and Karenin now go to Landau for all their important advice.

Oblonsky is so at ease with the happy-go-lucky lifestyle of Petersburg that he finds himself flirting even more than he himself, the consummate flirt, feels comfortable with, since the other party actually seems to be beginning to take him seriously. Luckily, Oblonsky manages to avoid a potentially awkward situation by diverting himself with another set of social chores.

PART 7, CHAPTER 21

When Oblonsky arrives at Lydia's, Karenin and the clairvoyant, Landau, are there. Countess Lydia speaks to Oblonsky about Karenin's situation; Oblonsky makes a mental note to have Lydia put in a good word for him to the influential ministers. They discuss religion; Landau falls asleep. Lydia believes deeply in salvation, which makes Oblonsky, a non-religious man, rather uncomfortable, but he doesn't want to enter a full-blown argument and make Lydia feel insulted. Lydia says that true believers are not guilty of sin: their sins have been redeemed by belief She rises to read a pious religious text, written in English; its main point is that a believer can never be unhappy because he is never alone. She reads it to put Landau in a clairvoyant trance.

Lydia puts on a deeply spiritual pose, intoning her mystical mumbo-jumbo as deep truth. Tolstoy expresses his deep skepticism about false spirituality through Oblonsky's disapproval. But Oblonsky doesn't pick a fight with Lydia: she is an influential presence in Moscow society, and he wants her to help him get that government post, so he internalizes his disagreement. One of the ways in which Tolstoy expresses his deep scorn for Lydia's brand of mysticism is through Landau, the so-called psychic who appears to have zero actual spiritual abilities.

PART 7, CHAPTER 22

As Lydia reads, Oblonsky is baffled by the whole situation, and he begins to fall asleep. He snaps awake when Lydia says, "He's asleep," but she is speaking about Landau, not him. Through his sleep (or feigned sleep), Landau says, in **French**, that the person who came in last wants something and should leave. Oblonsky, completely perplexed and unnerved, leaves without asking either about his own promotion or about Anna's divorce. He goes to the French Theatre to adjust back to normal society. The next day, Karenin sends Oblonsky his definitive word that he will not divorce Anna, likely because of something Landau had said in his sleep or fake **dream-like trance**.

Landau uses the high-society language of French, which demonstrates Tolstoy's deep skepticism still further: not only is he communicating verbally, always a suspicious prospect, he is communicating in French, the language that people use when they're pretending to be in high-class society, instead of being true to themselves and using their native tongue. Even Oblonsky, who is usually perfectly at ease in every permutation of social setting, has no idea what to do in this scenario, which demonstrates how deeply unnatural and fake the whole séance is. And yet Karenin is completely under its sway.

PART 7, CHAPTER 23

For families to function well, the narrator tells the reader, spouses must either be in complete discord or complete harmony. Anna and Vronsky are in an uncomfortable middle state. Both want to leave Moscow and live in the country, but they can't get anything done. Anna thinks that Vronsky's love for her has diminished, and she's jealous: not of any individual other woman in particular, but of the diminishing love. She's afraid he may marry someone else, and she's most jealous of all when Vronsky says that his mother is trying to insist he marry a society princess. Her jealousy makes Anna blame Vronsky for everything difficult in her situation.

Anna and Vronsky have never built a deep, subconscious, bond with each other, and without a strong foundation that goes beyond words, they will never be able to function harmoniously as a family. Their dilemma is expressed physically by their geographic indecisiveness: neither wants to stay in Moscow, yet they cannot agree to go to the country, and so they remain in a physical and emotional purgatory.

Anna and Vronsky have quarreled over the education of the little English girl Anna is caring for. Vronsky calls Anna's interest in the girl "unnatural," which makes Anna furious, and she spirals into all the insecurities of her jealousy, thinking that Vronsky is behaving this way because he's in love with another woman. But eventually, Anna calms herself down, telling herself that Vronsky loves her and that the divorce will come.

Subconsciously, Anna is so zealous about the English girl in guilty compensation for not loving her own daughter enough and for abandoning Seryozha. Anna's nerves are in an extremely heightened emotional state, and everything Vronsky does sends her into paroxysms of jealousy—after a time, however, even she can recognize that her emotions are unwarranted.

PART 7, CHAPTER 24

When Vronsky returns, he and Anna are both in good spirits, but their moods quickly sour when they quarrel over when they should leave Moscow for the country. Anna is angry that Vronsky says he has to visit his mother and therefore see the young princess whom his mother wants him to marry. Anna says that respect was invented to cover up the empty place where love should be, and Vronsky is hurt.

Anna and Vronsky become worse when they're together, understanding each other less and less well. In contrast, Kitty and Levin don't work as well when they're apart, but when they're together, they function as a bonded domestic partnership, which is how marriages should work.

Anna storms off in a jealous rage, believing that Vronsky is in love with another woman because he wants to put off their departure for a few days. She comes to the realization that only her death will make Vronsky love her and resolve the shame of her relations with Karenin and Seroyzha. Vronsky returns and mollifies Anna, agreeing to everything; Anna's jealousy melts into a desperate tenderness.

Anna's irrational, emotional thinking leads her to thoughts of suicide, which is the first time in the novel that Tolstoy has shown Anna considering death actively as an option; though the man on the train tracks at the novel's beginning and the ominous recurring nightmare have signaled the possibility of death, now this consideration has bubbled into Anna's consciousness. It's interesting that Anna realizes that death will make Vronsky love her more. Their relationship has been founded on a kind of reckless love and also the emptiness of lies and evasions. Death is the ultimately emptiness; suicide the ultimate recklessness. And so suicide will pull Vronsky further into the toxic spiral he shares with Anna. And for Anna, who now exists solely to try to hold onto Vronsky's love, the logic that dying would let her keep is love (even if it means she is dead) begins to seem pretty sensible.

PART 7, CHAPTER 25

Anna begins preparing for departure; though she's in a good mood, Vronsky's mentioning that he's going to see his mother stings her. Vronsky receives a telegram and initially hides its contents from her. Although it's from Oblonsky, the concealment makes Anna imagine that he is communicating with other women by telegram. Anna begins quarreling with Vronsky: she is angry that, in her view, he only seems to want the divorce to protect any future children (which they will not have), and she makes cutting remarks about his mother.

Just as Levin's emotions color the way he sees the world—when he is happy, the world is happy; when he grieves, the world grieves—Anna, in her spiral of uncontrollable passion, sees the entire world as conspiring against her: she is so consumed in her jealousy and her paranoiac zeal that her brain turns everything into evidence of Vronsky's supposed infidelity.

Just as the argument escalates, a friend of Vronsky's arrives, and they all chat with a forced lightness about the friend's gambling habits. Before he leaves the house, Vronsky comes to Anna's room to talk to her, but she is still cold to him, and he leaves in a huff. When he returns that evening, he learns that Anna has told the maid that she doesn't want to see him.

Even in Vronsky and Anna's volatile relationship, they're usually able to reconcile at the end of the night and go to sleep at peace. This time, however, things are different. Anna has been at the brink of despair too often. Like the boy in the fable, she can only cry wolf so many times before Vronsky won't believe her anymore.

PART 7, CHAPTER 26

Anna and Vronsky had never before had a quarrel that lasted a whole day. Anna imagines that Vronsky says cruel words to her, and then she cannot forgive him, as if he had actually said them. When Vronsky returns home and goes to bed instead of going to see Anna, she tells herself that it's all over—even though she had given instructions for Vronsky not to see her, she wanted him to come in spite of it. Anna sees death as the only way to punish him and for him to love her.

Anna's son displayed his mother's propensity toward imagination when he imagined a world in which Anna would come back and they would live happily together. However, in Anna's highly hectic present state, the bright line between reality and the imagination has blurred to the point of vanishing. The only solution she can see is to remove herself entirely through death.

Anna drinks opium and imagines Vronsky's remorse if she were to die. She looks at him tenderly as he sleeps in his study. Anna has her recurring **nightmare** with the peasant muttering **French** words. When Anna wakes up, she initially feels better, but then she sees the young princess whom Vronsky's mother wants him to marry bringing a package to Vronsky, and she is gripped with anger again.

Opium, for Anna, allows her a form of escape, and she has been relying more and more on the drug to calm herself down. In her drug-addled state, she dreamily luxuriates in her vision of Vronsky mourning her death: death, to Anna, is rapidly becoming the only way she can see that will bind Vronsky to her.

Anna tells Vronsky that he is going to the country tomorrow. He says that they cannot live like this. Vronsky almost runs after her, but decides that the only thing he hasn't tried in response to Anna's hysterics is to pay her no attention, so he ignores her and leaves the house. As the carriage is prepared, Anna hears someone running back to the house, but it is Vronsky's valet.

Vronsky reasons that since he's tried every tactic under the sun to calm Anna down, the only thing left to do is to not pay any attention to her increasing hysterics, so he leaves, finally breaking Anna's ability to pull him back unequivocally with a hectic word.

PART 7, CHAPTER 27

Anna gives a servant a note to Vronsky, telling him that she is to blame and asking him to come back. She goes to the nursery and, in her confusion, is startled to see Annie instead of Seryozha. Anna waits for Vronsky to return, her frenzy mounting; she decides to fix her hair, and when she looks in the mirror, she doesn't recognize herself.

Anna's inability to recognize her own face in the mirror demonstrates not only that Anna is losing her mind, she is also becoming a person who is not herself, or, rather, not the person who she was at the start of the novel: the charismatic, self-possessed, caring woman whose beauty shone from within has become a brittle, hollow husk of her former self.

Anna's maid reminds Anna that she had wanted to go to Dolly's, but Anna is still distracted, waiting for Vronsky. The servant returns, holding Anna's note: he had been unable to catch Vronsky. She instructs him to take the note to Vronsky's mother's country estate. Anna also writes a telegram to Vronsky saying that she must talk to him and that he must return. The main advises Anna to go and visit Dolly.

Anna sends Vronsky a flurry of messages to try to get him to return, but this volley of futile notes is yet another reminder from Tolstoy not to trust the written word: if Anna and Vronsky can't communicate to each other subverbally, they do not have a true bond.

PART 7, CHAPTER 28

As Anna travels to Dolly's house, her rambling musings and thoughts are extremely disconnected and disjointed: the past mingles with the present, and she cannot keep track of time and space. She is reminded of Seryozha when she sees children playing on the street. She decides to leave Vronsky, even though leaving a second man will definitely mean that she is to blame and absolutely ruin her in society.

Anna's incoherent internal monologue as she goes to visit Dolly contrasts Dolly's rather well-ordered internal monologue when she had made the trip to visit Anna in the countryside. In her state of passionate emotion, the entire world seems to be mocking Anna, whereas she is actually the one tormenting herself.

Kitty is also visiting, but Dolly comes out alone to receive Anna. Anna asks to read the **letter** that Karenin sent Oblonsky refusing the divorce, but when she reads it, she says nothing. Dolly says that Kitty isn't hiding from Anna, but at that moment, Kitty appears; though Kitty had been struggling between animosity and sympathy for Anna, when she sees Anna, her hostility immediately disappears. Anna, cruelly, sends her regards to Levin, and Kitty **blushes**, but remains calm and compassionate.

Anna is so wrapped in her spiral of delusional jealousy that hearing Kitty's name makes her believe that Vronsky wanted to be with Kitty after all, not with her. Once Kitty sees Anna and recognizes the nadir to which she's sunk, she can only feel pity for her, even despite Levin's crush; the wound has gone away, and bitterness has melted into pathos.

PART 7, CHAPTER 29

On the way home, Anna convinces herself that Kitty despises her. A man in the street tips his hat to her before realizing he's mistaken Anna for an acquaintance; Anna, despondently, thinks that she doesn't even know herself. Everybody hates each other, she decides, and life is a lie.

Anna sees everything in the worst possible light—in her mind, Kitty hates her, the world hates her, she hates herself. Others don't recognize her; she cannot recognize herself. In her insanity, she trusts nothing.

At home, there is a telegram from Vronsky, saying that he cannot come before ten; not realizing he had only received the telegram and not her note, she decides she must go and see him herself. She decides to pack so that she can spend several days away: she hates the house and never wants to return. She goes to the railway station.

Due to miscommunication—after all, Anna has not learned the novel's key lesson that one should never trust verbal communication—she sets off for the train to fetch Vronsky. She is repulsed by herself and her surroundings and is determined not to come back to her life at the house—a wish that comes true all too permanently.

PART 7, CHAPTER 30

On the way to the station, Anna analyzes everyone she sees as hopeless and doomed. She determines that the zest is gone from her relationship with Vronsky, and she think he'll be glad that she's going to leave. While her love is growing more passionate and self-centered, his is fading: his love only comes out of duty, which she finds to be horrible. She can't envision any situation for herself that resolves happily.

Because she herself is so miserable, Anna sees everyone around her as miserable as well. Every vision of the future that she predicts for herself is a vision of despair: Anna is the tragic heroine of her own tale, and no happy ending is possible for her.

At the station, the coachman asks if he should get her a ticket. She gives him her money-purse but holds onto her red handbag. Anna goes to the first-class lounge and watches all the people go by; she is revolted by the sight of them.

The station is just another backdrop for Anna's self-loathing: no matter where she is, the landscape becomes a place on which she projects her own despair.

PART 7, CHAPTER 31

Anna boards the **train**. All the other passengers appear hideous to her. Outside the train, bending by the wheels, she sees a dirty peasant––who looks like the one from her recurring nightmare––working by the carriage wheels. Even the most innocuous conversations around her seem hideous and horrible. When she arrives at the platform, Vronsky's servant has a note for her from Vronsky, saying that he hadn't received Anna's first note and that he would be home by ten.

Anna is so despondent that everyone else appears hideous and ugly; even a couple carrying on an innocuous conversation seem to be plunged into despair, through Anna's tormented eyes. Vronsky's note is the final straw for Anna: she declares that she will not let herself torment herself anymore. She has gone utterly mad with jealousy, and she realizes the depth of her insanity.

Anna walks along the platform. She remembers the man who was run over by the **train** on the day that she met Vronsky, and she knows what she must do. She gets ready to jump under the first carriage, but her red bag gets in the way. She watches the wheels of the second carriage, and at exactly the right moment, throws her bag aside and sinks to her knees in front of the train. The little peasant is working nearby. The train rushes over her.

Anna takes her recollection of the man who fell in front of the train tracks when she first met Vronsky as a sign telling her what she must do. Just as Vronsky did not succeed on his attempt at suicide (the gun misfired, wounding but not killing him), Anna's handbag gets in the way; however, she is determined to carry her fate to what she perceives as its destined end. As though she is praying, Anna genuflects in front of the train; the last thing she sees is the little peasant, who looks just like the ominous creature from the recurring nightmare that she and Vronsky share. Anna and Vronsky's affair has come full circle, with the doom implied by the death of the train worker now giving way to Anna's own death.

PART 8, CHAPTER 1

It is two months after Anna's death. Koznyshev has published his book after six years' work. He expects it to cause a great stir in the scholarly world, but nothing happens: there's one review that makes fun of the book, but other than that, silence, and the book essentially is gone without a trace. Koznyshev realizes that everyone is talking about the Slavic question, not his workers' rights issues, and he pours himself into the popular cause. In July, he decides to visit Levin for a rest in the country. Levin's friend from university, Katavasov, joins him.

The fate of Koznyshev's book—so much work leading up to it, but then no comment once it finally appears—mirrors what the reader probably feels about Tolstoy's treatment of Anna's death at this point in the novel: the entire plot has built up to this great moment, but then when it happens, the book has moved on, and no one seems to care. So in the last section of the novel, Tolstoy plunges into another plotline, just as Koznyshev devotes himself to new research. The world marches on, despite the overwhelming intensity of each individual's life.

PART 8, CHAPTER 2

The railway station is crowded with volunteers supporting the Slavic movement. Koznyshev learns that Vronsky is on the **train**, having volunteered and now headed out to war. Someone makes a speech, and the crowd grows wild in support of the volunteers. Oblonsky sees Koznyshev and encourages him to make a speech as well, but Koznyshev says he's leaving to visit Levin at Levin's country place. Oblonsky tells Koznyshev to say hello to Dolly and to tell her that he's been appointed to the post that he'd wanted; he also says it's too bad that Koznyshev is leaving that day, since Oblonsky is throwing a dinner party.

Throngs of people are leaving to fight for the Slavs—including Vronsky himself, though Tolstoy only lets the reader see him from Koznyshev's perspective, so the reader can't tell exactly how Vronsky feels. Oblonsky is so estranged from Dolly that he is sending her messages through friends rather than communicating himself with her; his life now revolves in his Petersburg social circle, not in his household.

When Oblonsky sees Vronsky, he forgets about the Vronsky who sobbed over Anna's dead body and only sees Vronsky the military hero. The woman chatting with Koznyshev points out Vronsky; Vronsky turns and raises his hat, his face stony and sad, haggard with an unspoken grief.

Tolstoy only mentions Vronsky's grief over Anna's death in passing, instead focusing the description on Vronsky the soldier, but Vronsky's haggard appearance shows that his grief runs deep, even if it's unspoken. The very fact that it's unspoken may indeed demonstrate the actual depth of his despair due to Tolstoy's mistrust of verbal communication. It appears that Anna was right in her belief that her death would bond Vronsky to her more deeply than anything else. And Vronsky's act of going off to war suggests that he too may be putting himself in the way of death in response. Anna and Vronsky's relationship, founded on secrets, has always revolved around emptiness, and now revolves around death.

PART 8, CHAPTER 3

People are singing patriotic songs as Koznyshev and Katavasov board the **train**. Katavasov wants to observe the volunteers, so he goes into second class to make their acquaintance. He thinks that the new volunteers are spoiled young men out for an adventure rather than people devoted to the cause. He meets a seasoned old soldier and makes vague statements about the volunteers, trying to get the veteran military man's opinion, but the soldier, remaining carefully guarded, does not say anything negative. Katavasov reports back to Koznyshev that the volunteers are excellent fellows.

Though Russian society champions the Slavic cause and lauds volunteers as heroes, the actual young men who are on the train aren't heroes: they're just young gadabouts like Vronsky's old friends in the regiment who wants to escape their debts and any embarrassments they may have caused in Russian society. Katavasov sees right through their hypocrisies, but he doesn't spoil Koznyshev's idealistic fantasies.

PART 8, CHAPTER 4

During a train stop, Koznyshev walks past Vronsky's apartment and sees Vronsky's mother, though not Vronsky. She tells him that after Anna's death, for six weeks, Vronsky refused to speak to anyone and would only eat when his mother begged him to. They took away anything from him that he could have used to try and kill himself. Vronsky's mother says that on the night Anna died, she learned that a woman had thrown herself under a **train**, and she knew immediately that it was Anna. Though she wanted to keep the news from Vronsky, he found out, galloped off to the station, and came back looking like a dead man. Karenin took custody of the daughter. Vronsky's mother thinks that Anna is a terrible, irreligious woman and that Anna is entirely to blame for the whole situation. She also says that the Serbian war has essentially saved Vronsky's life, and she asks Koznyshev to go and speak with Vronsky.

Vronsky's mother's description of Anna's death is the first time that Tolstoy directly discusses events in the wake of Anna's suicide. Vronsky has been utterly despondent after Anna's death, sinking into a deep depression. Vronsky's mother completely blames Anna for the tragedy––flagrantly flouting the maxim to never speak ill of the dead. Karenin's adoption of Annie severs any ties that Vronsky might have had with Anna: now that she is dead and their daughter legally belongs to another man, Vronsky has no living bond left with Anna. Ironically, though Anna believed her death would be the only thing that would bond herself to Vronsky, after her death, no material manifestations of their relationship remain.

PART 8, CHAPTER 5

Vronsky is pacing and pretends not to see Koznyshev; Koznyshev thinks it is his duty to respect Vronsky for going to war. Koznyshev offers to write Vronsky a **letter** introducing him to influential people, but Vronsky says that his life has no value to him and that the only thing he's good for is physical energy. As he and Koznyshev walk, Vronsky's tooth begins to ache. A vision of Anna's corpse suddenly flashes before his eyes, and sobs distort his face for a few moments before he regains control to finish speaking with Koznyshev.

But Anna's death does have the emotional impact she desired: without her, although Vronsky presents a stoic front, he is crumbling on the inside. Vronsky used to have extremely strong, robust teeth, whereas Karenin was the one always getting the toothache. Teeth are an important marker of both physical and emotional vigor throughout the novel; Vronsky's toothache here mirrors his grief.

PART 8, CHAPTER 6

Kitty greets Koznyshev and Katavasov when they arrive at Levin's house. She is sitting with her father and sister, and Levin is not at home. She shows the dusty travelers where they can wash. She feels an influx of milk in her breast, meaning that the baby needs to be fed, and she goes to the nursery; though it takes a while, they finally get settled into a feeding. Kitty talks with Agafya, the old nursemaid; Kitty feels a spiritual bond with her son, even though the others in the family only see him as a creature with material needs.

The guests are dusty both from travel and the moral turpitude of the city, and they arrive at the country to be cleansed in body and soul. Kitty's family is fully integrated into the household, fulfilling Levin's initial dream of marrying not only a Shcherbatsky daughter but the whole family. As opposed to Anna, who gave Annie to a wet nurse and had essentially no bond with her daughter, Kitty's spiritual connection with her son is strengthened through breast-feeding.

PART 8, CHAPTER 7

Kitty hears the guests laughing and is somewhat vexed that Levin isn't there. Levin has been spending a great deal of time at the apiary with the bees. Kitty knows that his unbelief has been tormenting him and that he has been reading philosophy books all year without finding any answers. She reflects that he'll enjoy having guests, and thinking of guests reminds her to make sure that Agafya does not give them unwashed linen to sleep in; the idea makes her **blush**. Kitty would rather that Levin be an honest unbeliever than a hypocrite like Madame Stahl. She knows her husband is kind and good because of all his help with the Oblonskys' financial strain: he persuaded the desperate Dolly to sell part of her estate rather than divorce Oblonsky.

Bees have been a symbol since antiquity of industry and harmonious behavior. For instance, Virgil's Georgics, *his long poem on agricultural life, has an important section on bees. When Kitty thinks that her guests might receive unwashed sheets, she blushes, always a thing of some deep, instinctive emotion—this time, the emotion is shame for her humble household. Though Kitty might be frustrated at times with her modest surroundings, she ultimately believes firmly that an honest, non-hypocritical life is worth far more than material comforts. Meanwhile, Levin may be awkward in the city, but his knowledge of country life has helped Oblonsky to preserve his marriage (for at least a while longer).*

PART 8, CHAPTER 8

Ever since Nikolai's death, Levin has pondered life and death; he is afraid of his ignorance of death. Though marriage at first muffled these thoughts, after Kitty gave birth and while he was living in Moscow with nothing to do, he has been facing these existential questions. If he does not accept Christianity, thinks Levin, what does he accept? Levin pores through philosophy books for answers. Everyone around him is a believer. Even the people who are also unbelievers are not tackling the large questions he grapples with. Levin is also unsettled by his instinctive prayer during Kitty's labor.

Levin feels completely torn between his rational beliefs and his irrational instincts. He's a staunch unbeliever, but how can he continue to claim that he's an atheist when he apparently prays to God in his moments of greatest need? Levin is deeply against any kind of hypocrisy and so needs to be able to reconcile these apparently warring principles within himself. Further, he senses that there are great questions that his worldview does not provide him with any way of answering, and he desperately wants those answers.

PART 8, CHAPTER 9

Levin immerses himself in the classics of continental philosophy: Plato, Spinoza, Hegel, etc. While he's reading, Levin understands them, but as soon as he thinks about real life, the artificial edifice of philosophy collapses. Levin is briefly excited by the Church, but after reading two books that champion the Church while completely contradicting each other, he is disappointed. Levin thinks that without knowing what he is and why he is here, it is impossible to live, and because he cannot know these things, he cannot live. He is close to suicide and thinks he might shoot or hang himself, but he does not.

Many philosophies sound wonderful in theory, but as soon as Levin puts them into practice, they crumble, and Levin, unlike several of his friends, is not the kind of person who can ever feel comfortable saying one thing and doing another. Like Anna, Levin reaches the conclusion that the only logical conclusion to his existential dilemma is suicide; unlike Anna, Levin does not follow through, because while suicide sounds appealing in theory, in practice, he realizes how complicated it would be, how terrible for those he loves and who love him.

PART 8, CHAPTER 10

When Levin thinks about life, he falls into a paralytic despair, but when he just goes on living and caring for his household, he is fine. He abandons all his former concerns for the common good and focuses on his family. Thinking about Russia and mankind was all well and good, but the doing itself never worked, he realized. It's necessary for the family to live in the way that the family has always lived—by maintaining the family land. Levin knows not only what to do but how to do it: when he does not think but instead lives, he knows what to do instinctively.

Levin is a man of action, not of contemplation. Thinking too much makes him unable to do anything, but when he acts on instinct and pays attention to the practical concerns of his own life, he feels clearheaded. This is also part of the reason he doesn't like politics: trying to strategize too far about the future of humanity makes Levin feel muddled, whereas focusing on his own issues allows him to retain clarity in his life.

PART 8, CHAPTER 11

The day Koznyshev arrives is one of Levin's most tormenting days. It is one of the most pressing work seasons, and as Levin works on the farm and looks at the peasants working so hard to harvest the crops, he wonders what it's all being done for, as everyone will eventually die. Levin talks with a peasant who compares a stingy innkeeper with a kind man who lives for his soul. When the peasant mentions living for his soul, Levin has a revelation: *this* is the answer to his existential crisis.

Levin watches the peasants and wallows in existential despair; he projects his own despair onto the peasants. A peasant tells Levin a fable that ends with the injunction that one must live for one's soul. This simple, trite statement strikes a tremendous chord with Levin: the cliché is Levin's eureka moment.

PART 8, CHAPTER 12

Levin feels as though his conversation with the peasant has sparked his soul: when the peasant told him that one must should live for God, Levin realizes that he has known this all along. He had been looking for a miracle when the miracle had been around him the whole time. Reason could never have led him to this conclusion, because good is outside the chain of cause and effect. He believes that he now understands clearly: his life was good, but his thinking had been bad; now, however, he realizes that all of his troubles had come through the swindling that is part of reason, and that he should live for God.

The peasant's simple injunction—live for one's soul and for God—acts like Newton's fabled apple on the head for Levin. Tolstoy uses Levin's miracle to remind readers that the answer to their existential dilemmas might be around them at all times, if they would simply open their eyes and ears and pay attention to the world around them. Tolstoy believes deeply in the power of the natural world and in true spiritual connection with humanity and one's own physical existence.

PART 8, CHAPTER 13

Levin remembers watching Dolly's children gleefully roasting raspberries and squirting milk, thus wasting the food, and compares this shortsighted fun to philosophical theories: philosophers can only destroy because they are spiritually sated. Everything boils down to one belief, that is, faith in God, and one practice: serving good instead of one's own needs.

Like children who take being nourished for granted, the philosophers, Levin realizes, can only spin around playing their intellectual games because their deep spiritual needs have been satisfied, unbeknownst to them, by a higher power that we cannot and should not attempt to understand fully.

Lying on his back, Levin looks at the flat sky; even though he knows that space is infinite, all he can see is a blue vault. The experience, he thinks, is like faith: he has to believe in God, even without rational explanation.

Levin realizes that trust is the fundamental pillar of a happy life: he has to trust his relationship with God and then build the foundations of his whole existence on this unshakable belief.

PART 8, CHAPTER 14

Levin declares that he will never argue with anyone again and almost immediately snaps at the coachman. When he returns to the house, he sees Koznyshev, Katavasov, and Dolly; Kitty has taken Mitya, the baby, to the **forest** because of the heat in the house, despite the fact that Levin doesn't like it when she does this. Levin takes Koznyshev, Katavasov, Dolly, the old Prince (Kitty's father), and the children to the apiary. While watching the bees, he realizes that even though the cares of his life had been nagging him, his spiritual strength is intact.

Levin might have had a supreme spiritual revelation, but by no means does this make him divine; on the contrary, he still experiences all his very real and very flawed human emotions of irritation and impatience. The difference, however, is that even though he is always going to be human and therefore impacted by daily concerns, his inner strength—founded on trust and faith, in god and his family—will be able to sustain him through anything that happens.

PART 8, CHAPTER 15

They talk about the Serbian war; Dolly mentions that Vronsky is volunteering for the cause. The old Prince is skeptical of the Slavic cause, but Koznyshev and Katavasov leap to its defense, Koznyshev declaring that the oppression of the Slavs has gone on too long and that it's a question of helping humanity, not a question of whether or not there should be war. Levin and the Prince argue that they don't understand why everyone suddenly loves the Slavs so much.

Koznyshev is an idealist and a follower, eager to throw himself with zeal into the next political trend rather than decide exactly what he desires out of life. He and Katavasov represent a view of Russia that prizes new, Continental modes of thought. Levin and Kitty's father, on the other hand, represent an old Russia that prizes traditional ways.

Levin asks a peasant what he thinks about the war and whether or not he's heard the priests talk about it. The peasant says that the emperor will decide. Koznyshev says that the cause is right, but Levin says that people are just trying to escape their current situations and that they don't know what they're fighting for.

Levin's intuition that the political cause is a fad, not a deep pulse coursing through Russia, is illustrated both by the peasant's indifference to the issue and by the silly, roguish attitude of the young recruits on the train.

PART 8, CHAPTER 16

Koznyshev changes the subject to discuss the spirit of the people; he says that the intelligentsia are now all of one mind. The Prince argues that the newspapers all say the same thing, but that that doesn't necessarily express the will of the people. Levin pipes in to say that war with the Turks would mean that people wouldn't just be sacrificing themselves for their souls, they'd be murdering people. But Levin realizes that no matter what he says, even though he wants to argue, Koznyshev and Katavasov aren't going to change their minds. He points out that the **rain clouds** are gathering and that they should go home.

While Koznyshev thinks that the intelligentsia should be able to make decisions for all of Russia, as they follow public opinion and are much more well-informed than the peasants, the Prince and Levin argue that a small, lopsided group cannot represent the whole. Meanwhile, the weather seems to both mirror the argument, and also to put a halt to it.

PART 8, CHAPTER 17

They all make it home just in time: the **rain** starts as soon as they step on the porch. Levin asks Agafya where Kitty and Mitya are; Agafya says that they're still in the woods. As Levin runs to the forest, he thinks he sees them behind an oak tree just as lightning strikes the oak and it falls. He prays over and over that Kitty and the baby were not hit. He goes to Kitty's normal spot, but she is not there. But then, he sees Kitty and the nanny calling to him from the other end of the wood: the nanny, Kitty, and Mitya are all fine.

The natural world brings a convenient end to the political argument: nothing theoretical is so important as rain, and the storm will not be held off for the sake of philosophy. In the brief moment of crisis when Kitty and Mitya are missing, Levin finds himself instinctively praying to God again; this time, the prayer brings him comfort, not deep self-doubt.

PART 8, CHAPTER 18

Throughout the rest of the day, everyone—especially Levin—is in the best of spirits. Koznysehv expounds on political questions, and everyone listens delightedly; Levin doesn't understand completely, but he doesn't really care, since he's so transported by joy and reassurance. He goes to visit Kitty and Mitya in the nursery, and Kitty shows Levin that Mitya recognizes his parents. As an experiment, they bring in a maid, but Mitya still smiles for his parents, not for the maid. Levin says that during the **storm**, he realized how much he loved Mitya.

The burst of rain has broken the tension and the arguments. The prayer in the forest has also reaffirmed for Levin the power of God, which makes him cheerful and reassured in his answer. Though Levin shouldn't require external affirmation if he followed all the tenets of his faith to the fullest, a sign is a nice affirmation for him, suggesting, perhaps, that Levin might need to continue relying on these signs in the years to come.

PART 8, CHAPTER 19

Levin watches the **storm** as it fades into the distance: at each bolt of lightning, the Milky Way appears to disappear, but then it returns. He is still disturbed by the relationship of God to the rest of mankind, but then he realizes the he can't think about all of the incredibly small, intricate variables; rather, he has to just trust that God takes care of everyone. He hears Kitty and is about to tell her about his epiphany but decides that it's his own secret. He realizes that even though he is human and not flawless, his life has the unquestionable meaning of the good in it.

Just as with God, even though the galaxy might appear to disappear sometimes, Levin must have faith that it always continues to exist whether or not he can see it. Levin's turn to the skies allows Tolstoy, in the end of the novel, to open back into the rest of the world. He uses Levin's spiritual revelation to make the reader understand that though the story depicted here might appear to be a domestic tale of a few interwoven individuals, the emotional resonances and moral epiphanies are a part of the larger world of nature and of man.

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