

ANNA KARENINA

IN

101 PAGES

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This Fresh and Concise Interpretation

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Chapter 1

Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Commotion reigned at the Oblonsky house. Dolly Oblonsky, the wife, discovered that her husband Stepan was having an affair with a French girl, who had been a governess in their family, and Dolly announced that she could not go on living in the same house with him. It had now been three days since, and all the family members were painfully aware of this situation. Every person in the house felt that there was no sense in their living together and that stray people brought together by chance had more in common than they, the members of the family and household of the Oblonskys'.

Dolly did not leave her room; Stepan had not been home for three days. The children ran wild all over the house; the English governess quarreled with the housekeeper and was now looking for a new job. The cook quit just before dinner time.

Three days later, Prince Stepan Oblonsky, Stepan, as he was called in society, woke up at his usual hour, that is, at eight o'clock in the morning, not in his wife's bedroom, but on the leather-covered sofa in his office. He turned over his stout, well cared for body on the springy sofa, as though he would sink into a long sleep again; he vigorously embraced the pillow on the cold side and buried his face in it; but all at once he jumped up, sat on the sofa, and opened his eyes. He suddenly remembered that he was not sleeping in his wife's room, but his study and the smile vanished from his face.

"Ooh.." he muttered, recalling everything that had happened. And again, every detail of his fight with his wife was present in his mind, all the hopelessness of his position, and worst of all, his guilt.

Yes, she won't forgive me, and she can't forgive me. And the most awful thing about it is that it's all my fault, all my fault, though I'm not to blame. That's the point of the whole situation, he reflected. *Ooh!* He kept repeating in despair as he remembered the acutely painful sensations of the situation he found himself in.

Most unpleasant of all was the moment when, on coming home happy and in a good mood, with a huge pear in his hand for his wife, he did not find her in the living room or the office but saw her at last in her bedroom with the unfortunate letter in her hand, that revealed everything.

She, eternally preoccupied with household chores, dull-witted, as he considered her, this Dolly, sat motionless with the letter in hand, looking at him with an expression of horror and despair.

"What is this?" she asked, pointing to the letter.

Stepan found himself tormented less with the fact itself but more in his response.

Unexpectedly caught in a very disgraceful situation, he did not succeed in adapting his face to a position of hurt, denial, defense, begging of forgiveness, or even indifference.

Anything would have been better than what he did; his face utterly involuntarily assumed its habitual, good-humored, and therefore idiotic smile.

Catching sight of this smile, Dolly shuddered as if from physical pain, burst out, with her usual forcefulness, a stream of cruel words, and ran out of the room. Since then, she has refused to see her husband.

It's that idiotic smile that's to blame for it all! thought Stepan.

But what can I do now? What can I do? He desperately asked himself and couldn't find an answer.

Chapter 2

Stepan Oblansky was a man who was true to himself. He was incapable of self-deceit and couldn't be persuaded that he had truly been forgiven of his conduct. He couldn't accept how he, a handsome, likable man of thirty-four years old, was not in love with his wife, the mother of his five living and two dead children. His failure to hide his transgressions from Dolly, his wife, was what he regretted the most. He might have managed, more efficiently, to conceal his sins had he been able to anticipate how the knowledge of them would have affected her. He had never clearly thought it out but had vaguely conceived that she must have long ago suspected him of being unfaithful to her and shut her eyes to the fact. He had even supposed that she, a worn-out woman, no longer young or beautiful and in no way remarkable or interesting, merely a good mother, should, out of a sense of fairness, indulge him. It turned out quite the opposite.

Oh, it's awful, awful! Stepan kept repeating to himself and could think of nothing that could be done. *And how well things were going till now! How well we got along! She was content and happy with her children; I never interfered. I let her manage the children and the house how she liked. Sure, there's something vulgar about flirting with one's governess, but what a governess she was!* (Vividly recalling her eyes and smile). *At least, while she was in the house, I kept my hands to myself. What should I do now?*

There wasn't an answer other than the universal solution to all of life's questions, including the most complex and unsolvable. The answer is this: one must live in the present moment and take care of the needs of the day. That is it!

Then we shall see, Stepan said to himself, and getting up, he put on his robe, drew in a deep breath of air into his broad chest, and walked to the window with his usual confident step. He pulled up the blinds and rang the bell loudly. It was at once answered by his old friend and valet, Matvey, who was carrying his clothes, boots, and a telegram. Following Matvey was the barber with all the necessities for shaving.

"Are there any papers from the office?" asked Stepan, taking the telegram and seating himself in front of the mirror.

"On the table," replied Matvey, glancing with inquiring sympathy at his master, and after a short pause, a sly smile came across his face.

Stepan's eyes met Matvey's in the mirror, and it was clear they understood each other. Stepan's eyes said, "No jokes. Don't you know what I'm going through?"

Matvey put his hands in his jacket pockets, thrust out one leg, and gazed silently, good-humoredly, with a faint smile, at his master.

Stepan saw that Matvey wanted to make a joke and attract attention to himself. Tearing open the telegram, he read it through, guessing at the words, misspelled as they always are in telegrams. His face lit up.

“Matvey, my sister Anna Karenina will be here tomorrow.” He said, stopping for a moment to notice the plump hand of the barber, cutting a tan path through his long, curly whiskers.

“Wonderful!” said Matvey, showing by this response that he, like his master, realized the significance of this arrival, that is, that Anna, the sister he was so fond of, might aid in reconciling Stepan’s marriage.

“Is she coming alone or with her husband?” inquired Matvey.

Stepan could not answer as the barber was working on his upper lip. Instead, he raised one finger. Matvey nodded in the mirror.

Stepan was already shaven and washed and ready to be dressed when Matvey, stepping deliberately in his creaky boots, came back into the room with a new message. The barber had gone.

“Dolly told me to inform you that she is going away.” Stepan was silent a minute, and then a good-humored smile showed itself on his handsome face.

“Huh, Matvey?” he said, turning his head.

“It’s all right, sir; she will come around,” said Matvey.

“Who’s there?” asked Stepan, hearing the rustle of a woman’s dress at the door.

“It’s I,” said a firm, pleasant woman’s voice, and a stern, pockmarked face of Matrona, the nanny, was revealed from behind the doorway.

“Well, what is it, Matrona?” asked Stepan, going up to her at the door. Although Stepan was completely in the wrong regarding his wife and was conscious of this, almost everyone in the house (even the nanny) was on his side.

“Go to her, sir; ask forgiveness, maybe God will help. She is suffering so, it’s sad to see her, and besides, everything in the house is in commotion. Have pity, sir, on the children.”

“But she won’t see me. Go that’ll do, you can go,” said Stepan, growing embarrassed. “Do dress me,” he turned to Matvey, who was already holding up his shirt.

Chapter 3

Having dressed, Stepan sprayed a touch of cologne on himself, pulled down his shirt cuffs, attached his pocket watch with its double chain and seals, and shaking out his handkerchief, felt clean, healthy, fresh, and physically at ease, in spite of his unhappiness. He walked with a slight quiver into the dining room, where hot coffee was already waiting for him, along with letters and papers from the office.

He read the letters, one of them was very unpleasant, from a real estate investor, who purchased property with his wife's estate. He now needed to sell it but could not because they had since separated and were not able to discuss the issue or come to terms on a selling price. Most troublesome to Stepan was that pecuniary interests played a role in a potential reconciliation. Stepan did not like the idea that he might seek a reunion with his wife in order to sell the property.

When he had finished reading his letters, Stepan moved the office papers closer to him, rapidly looking through the items of business, making a few notes with a large pencil, then pushed the papers away and turned to his coffee. As he sipped his coffee, he opened a still damp morning paper and began to read.

Stepan subscribed to a liberal newspaper, not an extreme one, but one that advocated the views held by the majority. And despite the fact that he had no particular interest in science, art, or politics, he firmly held views on these subjects that were the same as those held by the majority. He only changed them when the majority changed them, or more strictly speaking, he did not change them, but they changed imperceptibly in him.

Stepan did not choose his political opinions, but they had come to him by themselves, just as he did not choose the shape of his hat or style of his coat but simply wore what everyone else was wearing. If there was a reason for his preferring liberal to conservative views, which were also held by many of his circle, it arose not because liberalism was more rational but because he considered it in closer accordance with his manner of life.

The liberal party believed that in Russia, everything was wrong, and certainly, Stepan had a lot of debts and was always short of money. The liberal party said that marriage, as an institution, is outdated and in need of reconstruction. Family life certainly afforded Stepan little gratification and forced him into lies and hypocrisies, which was so repulsive to his nature. The liberal party said, or at least allowed to be understood, that religion is merely a bridle to our barbarous nature. Stepan could not get through even a short service without his legs aching from kneeling down and could never make out the purpose of all the terrible and pompous language about another world when life in this world could be so satisfying and fun. Stepan, who enjoyed a joke, was fond of telling the anti-evolutionists that if we pride ourselves on our origins, we ought not to disown the first founder of our family, the monkey. And so, liberalism had become a part of Stepan, and he liked his newspaper, as he did his cigar after dinner, for the slight haze it produced in his brain.

Having finished the paper, a second cup of coffee and a roll with butter, he got up, shook the crumbs from the roll off his pants and squared his broad chest and smiled happily; not because there was anything particularly joyous in his soul, but the smile was evoked by the pleasant breakfast.

But this joyous smile reminded him of everything he was going through, and his mood changed.

The voices of two children, Grisha, his youngest son, and Tanya, his oldest daughter, were heard outside the door. They were carrying something and dropped it.

“I told you not to put the passengers on the roof,” screamed the girl, “you have to pick them up now!”

“Everything is out of order,” thought Stepan, “the children are running everywhere, wildly.” Going to the door, he called them. They threw down the cardboard box they had fashioned into a passenger train and came to their father.

The little girl, father’s favorite, ran up eagerly, embraced him, and hung her arms joyfully around his neck, savoring as she always did the smell and texture of his whiskers. At last, the little girl kissed his face, loosened her hands, and was about to run away again; but her father held her back.

“How is mama?” he asked, passing his hand over her little neck.

“Good morning,” he said, smiling at the boy, who had come up to greet him. He was conscious that he loved the boy less and always tried to be fair, but the boy felt it and did not respond with a smile.

“Mama? She is up,” answered the girl.

Stepan sighed. “That means she was up all night again,” he thought.

“Well, is she happy?”

The little girl knew that there was tension between her father and mother, and that her mother could not be happy, and that her father must be aware of this, and that he was insincere when he asked about it so nonchalantly.

“I don’t know,” she said. “She said we could skip our homework and go for a walk to Grandma’s.”

“Well, go, Tanya, my doll. Oh, wait a minute, though,” he said, still holding her hand.

He took from off the mantel, where he had put it yesterday, a small box of chocolates, and gave her two, picking out her favorites. He kissed her on the head and let her go.

“The carriage is ready,” said Matvey.

Stepan grabbed his hat and stopped trying to remember if he had forgotten anything, except what he wanted to forget, his wife.

“Ah, yes!” He bowed his head, and his handsome face assumed an annoyed expression. *To go, or not to go!* he said to himself, and an inner voice told him that he must not go, that nothing good could come of it; that to mend their relationship was impossible because it was not possible to make her desirable again. Except for deceit and lying, nothing could come of it now, and deceit and lying were against his nature.

I can't go on like this, he said, trying to give himself courage. He squared his chest, took out a cigarette, took two puffs of it, flung it into the ashtray, and with quick steps, walked through the living room and opened the door into his wife's bedroom.

Chapter 4

Dolly, wearing a blouse, and with her thinning hair, once thick and beautiful, pinned up to the back of her head in a braid, with a sunken, thin face and large startled eyes, which looked out prominently from the thinness of her face, was standing in her messy room. Hearing her husband's steps, she stopped, looked towards the door, and tried in vain to give her features a serious, scornful expression. Dolly felt she was afraid of him and the upcoming confrontation. She was attempting to do what she had attempted to do ten times already in the last three days, to sort out the children's things and her own to take them to her mother's. Each time she could not bring herself to do it, but now, as before, she said to herself, things cannot go on like this, she must take this step to punish him, put him to shame, avenge on some level the suffering he had caused her. She continued to tell herself that she would leave him, fully aware that this was impossible because he was her husband, and she loved him. Besides this, she realized that she could hardly manage to look after their five children properly without him.

Seeing her husband, she dropped her hands into her drawer as though she were looking for something. Her face, to which she tried to give a resolute expression, portrayed loss, and suffering.

"Dolly!" he said in a subdued and timid voice. He bent his head towards hers and tried to look pitiful and humble but was radiant with health and vigor. In a rapid glance, she scanned his figure that was beaming, fresh. *Yep, he is happy and content!* she thought, *while I....And that disgusting good nature, which everyone likes him for and praises, I hate that good nature of his,* she thought. Her mouth stiffened, and her cheek muscles contracted on the right side of her pale, nervous face.

"What do you want?" she asked in a rapid, deep, unnatural tone.

"Dolly!" he repeated, with a quiver in his voice. "Anna is coming today."

"Well, what does that have to do with me? I won't see her!" she cried.

"But you must, really, Dolly...."

"Go away, go away, go away!" she shrieked, not looking at him.

Stepan could be calm when he thought of his wife, could hope that she would come around, as Matvey expressed it, and could quietly go on reading his paper and drinking his coffee; but when he saw her tortured, suffering face and heard the tone of her voice, so full of despair, his eyes began to shine with tears.

"My God! What have I done? Dolly! For God's sake!..... You know..." He could not go on; there was a lump welling in his throat.

She shut the drawer with a slam and glanced at him.

“Dolly, what can I say?” One thing: forgive...Remember, can’t nine years of my life atone for an instant...”

She dropped her eyes and listened, anticipating what he would say.

---instant of passion?” he said, and would have gone on, but at that word, her lips stiffened, and the muscles of her right cheeked starting working again.

“Go away, get out of my room!” she shrieked still more shrilly, “and don’t talk to me about your passions.”

She tried to go out but stumbled and clung to the back of a chair to support herself. His face relaxed, his lips quivered, his eyes swimming with tears.

“Dolly!” he said, sobbing now; “for mercy’s sake, think of the children; they are not to blame! I am to blame, punish me, tell me how I can atone for my sins. I am ready to do anything! No words can express how I feel. Dolly, forgive me!”

She sat down and tried several times to begin to speak, but could not. He waited.

“You think of the children, Stepan, to play with them, but I also think of them and know that this means they are ruined,” she said, obviously one of the phrases she had more than once repeated to herself the last few days.

He moved to take her hand, but she drew back with disdain.

“I think of the children and would do anything in the world to protect them, but I don’t know how to. By taking them away from their father or leaving them with a vicious father, yes, an immoral father. Tell me, after what...has happened, can we live together? Is it even practical? Tell me, is it possible? She repeated, raising her voice, “after my husband, the father of my children, has an adulterous affair with his own children’s nanny?”

“What can I do? What can I do?” he kept repeating in a pitiful voice, not knowing what he was saying, as his head sank lower and lower.

“You are loathsome to me, repulsive!” she screamed, getting more and more heated. “Your tears mean nothing! You have never loved me; you have no heart or soul. I hate you. You are disgusting, a stranger, yes, a complete stranger!”

He looked at her, and the fury in her face alarmed him. He had not understood how his pity tormented her. She saw in him sympathy for her present state but not love. *No, she hates me. She will not forgive me*, he thought.

At that moment, in the next room, a child began to cry. Dolly listened, and her face softened. She seemed to be pulling herself together for a few seconds, as though she did not know where she was and what she was doing. Getting up quickly, she moved towards the door.

Look how much she loves my child, he thought, noticing the change in her demeanor as she responded to the crying child, *she loves my child; how can she hate me?*

“Dolly, one more thing,” he said, following her.

“If you come near me, I will call in the servants and the children. They will all find out you are a scoundrel! I am leaving at once, and you may live here with your mistress!”

And she left, slamming the door.

Stepan sighed, wiped his face, and with a light tread, walked out of the room. *Matvey says that she will come around, but how? I don't see it happening. Ah, how terrible this is! And how emphatically she shouted*, he said to himself, remembering her scream and the words, “scoundrel” and “mistress.” *And very likely, the maids were listening! Horribly offensive! Horrible!* Stepan stood a few moments alone, wiped his face, squared his chest, and walked out of the room.

It was Friday, and in the dining room, the German watchmaker was winding up the clock. Stepan remembered his joke about this punctual, balding watchmaker, *This German was so wound up that the watches were even impressed*, and he smiled. Stepan was fond of a good joke: *And maybe she will come around! That's a good expression, "come around,"* he thought. *I must repeat that.*

“Matvey!” He shouted. “Arrange for the arrival of Anna Karenina,” he said to Matvey when he came in.

“Yes, sir.”

Stepan put on his fur coat and went out onto the steps.

“You won't dine at home?” said Matvey, seeing him off.

“We'll see how it goes,” he said. “That will be enough.”

Dolly, meanwhile, having calmed the child, and knowing from the sound of the carriage that he had gone, went back again to her bedroom. It was her solitary refuge from the household cares which dominated her time. Even now, in the short time she had been in the nursery, the governess and nanny had succeeded in asking her several questions: “What were the children to wear on their walk? Should they have breakfast before they leave? Shouldn't a new cook be hired?”

“Ah, leave me alone, leave me alone!” She said, and going back to her bedroom, she sat down replayed their conversation. *No, no, reconciliation is impossible. Even if we remain in the same house, we are strangers, strangers forever! Oh, how I loved him! My God, how I loved him! How I loved him! And now don't I love him? Don't I love him more than before? The most horrible thing is.....* she began but did not finish her thought because Matrona, the nanny, put her head through the door.

“Let’s send for my brother. At least he can cook,” Matrona said; “He’ll get dinner ready, or else the children won’t eat until late again, like yesterday.”

“Very well,” and Dolly plunged into the duties of the day and drowned her grief in them for a time.

Chapter 5

Stepan learned quickly at school, thanks to his exceptional talent and abilities. Still, he was lazy and mischievous and finished at the bottom of his class. But despite his riotous ways, inferior grades, and relative youth, he occupied the honorable and lucrative position of president of one of the government boards in Moscow. He received this position from his sister Anna's husband, Alexey Karenin, who held one of the most important positions in Moscow. He needed this job, together with the salary of six thousand, as his affairs, despite his wife's considerable property, were in a poor and embarrassing shape.

Half of Moscow and Petersburg were friends or relatives of Stepan. He was born amid the powerful ones of this world. One-third of the men in government, the older men, had been friends of his father's. Another third were his intimate chums, and the remainder were friendly acquaintances. Consequently, the distributors of earthly blessings were all friends; Oblonsky had no need to make any particular exertion to receive his lucrative post. All he had to do was not show jealousy, not be quarrelsome or take offense and not refuse assignments, all of which, from his characteristic good nature, he never did. It would have seemed ridiculous to him not to have received the position and salary he needed, especially since he didn't demand anything extraordinary. Stepan only wanted what the men of his age and standing get, and he considered himself no worse qualified for performing his duties than any other man.

Stepan was not merely liked by all who knew him for his good humor but for his bright disposition and unquestionable honesty. In his handsome face, sparkling eyes, dark hair and eyebrows, and genial countenance, there was something that produced a physical effect of kindness and good nature on the people who met him. "Ah, Stepan Oblonsky! What a guy!" was almost always said with a delightful smile when meeting him. It often was the case that nothing extraordinary happened while being with him, yet, everyone was glad to see him.

After serving for three years at the post of president of one of the government boards in Moscow, Stepan Oblonsky had won respect and liking from his fellow officials, subordinates, superiors, and all who had business with him. The principal qualities in Stepan that helped him gain this universal admiration consisted in the first place of his extreme interest in others, founded in large part on the consciousness of his own shortcomings; secondly, of his liberalism, not the liberalism he read of in the paper, but the liberalism that was in his blood, by which he treated all men perfectly equal and exactly the same, whatever their fortune or calling may be; and thirdly, the most crucial point, his complete indifference to his career; as a result he was never carried away by stress or anxiety and rarely made mistakes.

Stepan was now standing at the top of the stairs. His good-natured beaming face rose above the embroidered collar of his uniform, and his face beamed more than ever when he recognized the man coming up.

"Why, it's actually you, Levin, at last!" he said with a friendly smile, scanning Levin as he approached. "How did you find me here? Have you been here long?" asked Stepan. Not content with shaking hands, he kissed his friend.

“I have just arrived and very much wanted to see you,” said Levin, looking timidly around and seemingly uneasy and even angry.

“Well, let’s go into my room,” said Stepan, who knew about his friend’s social anxiety, and taking his arm, drew him along as though guiding him through danger.

Levin was almost the same age as Stepan, and they had been friends since early in their childhood. They were fond of one another, as friends of youth remain, in spite of the difference in their characters and tastes. However, it seemed to each of them that the life and career he led for himself was the only real life, and the life led by his friend was empty. Stepan could not refrain from a slight mocking smile at the sight of Levin. How often had he seen him come up to Moscow from the country, always excited and in a hurry, never still or at ease? Stepan laughed at this and liked it. Levin despised city life and his friend’s official duties, which he too laughed at but with more spite and angst.

“Where shall we meet, Stepan? You know I very much want to talk to you,” said Levin.

“I’ll tell you what,” Stepan said, pondering. Let’s go to lunch, and there we can talk.”

“No,” answered Levin, without even thinking, “I have somewhere else to go.”

“I have only a few words to say and a question I want to ask you, and then we can talk later. It’s this”, said Levin, his face all at once took an expression of anger. Levin blushed and was furious with himself for blushing, “I have come to make your sister-in-law an offer of marriage.”

Stepan had long known that Levin was in love with his sister-in-law, Kitty Sherbatsky, and gave a barely perceptible smile.

The Levins and the Sherbatsky families were longtime noble Moscow families and had always been intimate friends. This friendship had grown during Levin’s student days. He had studied for and prepared for the University with the young Prince Sherbatsky, the brother of Kitty and Dolly. He had entered at the same time with him. During this time, Levin was often in the Sherbatsky’s house and was in love with the Sherbatsky household. Strange, as it may seem, it was with the household, the family, that Levin was in love, especially with the feminine half of the household. Levin did not remember his own mother, and his only sister was older than he was, so it was in the Sherbatsky’s house that he saw for the first time the inner life of a cultured, honorable family of which he had been deprived because of the death of his father and mother. All the members of that family were pictured by him, as it were, wrapped in a mysterious poetic veil, and he perceived no defects whatever in them. Levin assumed the existence of the loftiest perfection. As a student, he had all but been in love with the oldest, Dolly, but she was soon married to Stepan Oblonsky. Then he began falling in love with the second. He felt that he had to be in love with one of the sisters, but he could not quite make out which. But the second, Natalia, married a Russian diplomat. Kitty was still a child when Levin graduated, and Levin’s relationship with the Sherbatskys’ faded. But when early in the winter of this year, Levin came to Moscow, after a year in the country, and saw the Sherbatskys, he realized which of the three sisters he was indeed destined to love.

One would have thought that nothing could be easier than for him, a man of a good family, richer than he is poor, and thirty-two years old, to make the young Princess Sherbatsky an offer of marriage; in all likelihood would have been a good match. But Levin was in love, and it seemed to him that Kitty was perfect in every respect; far above everything earthly; and that he was a creature so low and so earthly that it could not even be conceived that she could regard him as worthy of her.

So, after spending two months in Moscow in a state of enchantment, seeing Kitty almost every day in society, he abruptly decided that it could not be and moved back to the country.

Levin's conviction that it could not be was founded on the idea that in the eyes of her family, he was an unworthy match for the charming Kitty and that Kitty herself could not love him. In her family's eyes, he had an ordinary career as a country gentleman, occupied in breeding cattle, shooting game, and building barns, a fellow of no ability, while his peers by this time were a colonel, a professor, and a director of a bank.

The mysterious, enchanting Kitty could not love such an ugly person as he conceived himself to be, and, above all, such an ordinary and in no way striking person. Moreover, his relationship with Kitty in the past, more of an older brother, seemed to him yet another obstacle to love. An ordinary-looking, good-natured man, as he considered himself, might, he supposed, be liked as a friend, but to be loved as much as he loved Kitty, one would need to be handsome and more distinguished.

He had often heard that women do care for unattractive and ordinary men, but he did not believe it. He saw this for himself as he could not have loved any but beautiful, mysterious, and exceptional women.

But after spending two months alone in the country, he was convinced that he could not rest with this passion and that he could not live without resolving the question, whether or not she would be his wife. This despair arose only from his own thoughts; he had no proof that he would be rejected. And now, he had come to Moscow with a firm determination to make an offer and get married if he were accepted. Or...he could not conceive what would become of him if he were rejected. So, the first thing to do to set his heart at rest was to accomplish what he had come to Moscow for, and he drove to the place where he had been told he might find Kitty.

Chapter 6

At four o'clock, conscious of his beating heart, Levin stepped out of the cab at the Zoo and turned along the path towards the skating rink, believing that he might find her there, as he had seen the Sherbatsky's carriage at the entrance.

It was a bright, frosty day. Rows of carriages, sledges, cab drivers, and policemen were standing near the entrance. Crowds of well-dressed people, with hats brightened by the sun, swarmed about.

He walked along the path towards the skating rink and kept saying to himself, *you mustn't be nervous. You must be calm. What's the matter with you? Be still, stupid brain*, he muttered in his heart. The more he tried to compose himself, the more anxious he became. An acquaintance ran into him and called him by his name, but Levin didn't notice him. He kept walking towards where he heard the clanking of blades on ice and the sounds of happy voices. Soon, the skating rink lay before his eyes, and at once, amidst all of the skaters, he recognized her.

He knew she was there by the joy and terror that seized his heart. She was standing on the opposite end of the rink, talking to a lady. There was nothing obviously striking in her dress or appearance, but for Levin, she was as easy to find in that crowd as a rose among thistles. Everything was brightened by her. She was the smile that shed light to brighten the dreary day. *Can I possibly go over there on the ice, go to her?* He thought. The place where she stood seemed to him a holy shrine, unapproachable. For a moment, he almost retreated, being so overwhelmed with terror. He had to regain control and remind himself that all kinds of people were there and that he too had a right to be there, to skate. He walked closer, avoiding looking at her as he would the sun, but he saw her, without looking, as one does the sun.

On that day of the week and at that time of day, the rink was reserved for this same group of skaters, all acquaintances or friends. There were highly skilled skaters there, showing off their moves, learners clinging to their chairs with timid, awkward movements, young and old, skating for exercise. They seemed to Levin an elect band of blissful beings because they were here, near her. All the skaters seemed, with perfect unawareness, to skate towards her, by her, and even speak to her, and enjoy themselves utterly independent from her, delighting in the groomed ice and favorable weather.

Nikolay Sherbatsky, Kitty's cousin, wearing a short jacket and tight trousers, was sitting on a garden seat with his skates on. Seeing Levin, he shouted to him, "Ah, the first Russian skater! Have you been here long? First-rate ice, do put your skates on."

"I haven't got my skates," Levin answered, marveling at this boldness and ease in her presence and not for one second losing sight of her, though he did not look at her. He felt as though the sun were coming near him. She was in a corner. She turned her slender feet in their skates and skated towards him. A small boy in a Russian overcoat, desperately waving his arms, overtook her. She skated around the boy with a graceful counter maneuver, and looking towards Levin, whom she recognized, she smiled at him and at her own anxiety. When she had rounded the turn, she pushed off with one foot and skated

straight up to Nikolay. Clutching at his arm, she nodded, smiling at Levin. She was more splendid than he remembered or imagined her.

When he thought of her, he could call up a vivid picture to himself, her charm, so full of childish brightness and good humor. The innocence of her expressions, together with the delicate beauty of her figure, made up her special charm. But what always struck him most was the expression of her eyes, soft, serene, and sincere, and above all, her smile, which transported Levin to an enchanted world, where he felt himself softened and tender, as he remembered himself as a child.

“Have you been here long?” She asked, giving him her hand. “Thank you,” she added as he picked up the handkerchief that had fallen out of her muff hand warmer.

“I? I’ve not long...yesterday...I mean today...I arrived,” answered Levin, who in his emotional state didn’t understand her question. “I meant to come and see you,” he said, and then, remembering his intention upon seeing her, was promptly overcome with embarrassment and blushed.

“I didn’t know you could skate and skate so well.”

She looked at him earnestly as though wishing to figure out the reason for his embarrassment.

“Your praise means a lot. Rumor has it that you are the best of skaters,” she said, with her little black-gloved hand brushing the frost off her muff hand warmer.

“Yes, I once was passionate about skating. I wanted to become perfect at it.”

“You do everything with passion, I think,” she said, smiling. “I should so like to see you skate. Put on some skates, and let’s skate together.”

Skate together! Is this really happening? thought Levin, gazing at her.

“I’ll put them on right away,” he said. And off he went to get skates.

“It’s been a while since we’ve seen you here, sir,” said the skating attendant, supporting his foot and screwing on the heel of the skate. “You’re the only male first-rate skater out here. Will that be all right?” He said, tightening the strap.

“Oh, yes, yes; hurry, please,” answered Levin, trying to restrain the smile that had involuntarily appeared on his face. *Yes, he thought, this is life, this is happiness! Together, she said, let us skate together! Speak to her now? I’m afraid to speak, I’m happy now, happy in hope, anyway....And then what? But I must! I must! I must! Leave me cowardice!*

Levin rose to his feet, took off his overcoat, and scurrying over the rough ice, entered the smooth ice and skated without effort, as it were, by muscle memory, increasing and slackening speed and turning course towards her. He approached her cautiously, but again her smile reassured him.

She gave him her hand, and they set off side by side, going faster and faster, and the quicker they moved, the more tightly she grasped his hand.

“I need to learn from you; I somehow feel confident with you,” she said to him.

“And I have confidence in myself when you are leaning on me,” he said but was at once panic-stricken at what he had said and blushed. And indeed, no sooner had he uttered these words, when all at once, like the sun going behind a cloud, her face lost all of its friendliness, and Levin detected the familiar change in her expression that denoted the working of a thought; a crease showed on her smooth brow.

“Is there anything bothering you? Though I’ve no right to ask such a question,” he added hurriedly.

“What?...No, nothing is bothering me,” she responded coldly, and she added immediately: “Have you seen Mademoiselle Linon yet?”

“Not yet.”

“You should talk to her; she likes you very much.”

What’s wrong? I have offended her. Lord help me! thought Levin, and he flew towards the old Mademoiselle Frenchwoman with the graying hair, who was sitting on a bench. Smiling and showing her false teeth, she greeted him as an old friend.

“Yes, you see we’re growing up,” she said to him, glancing towards Kitty, “and growing old. Tiny bear has grown big now!” pursued the Frenchwoman, laughing. She reminded him of his joke about the three young ladies whom he had compared to the three little bears in the nursery rhyme. “Do you remember that’s what you used to call them?”

He remembered absolutely nothing, but she had been laughing at the joke for ten years now and loved it.

“Now, go and skate, go and skate. Our Kitty has learned to skate nicely, hasn’t she?”

When Levin darted up to Kitty, her face was no longer serious; her eyes looked at him with the same sincerity and friendliness, but Levin could tell that there was a reserved composure in her friendliness. And he felt depressed. After talking a little about her old nanny and her peculiarities, she questioned him about his life.

“Surely, you must be bored in the country in the winter, aren’t you?” She asked.

“No, not bored, I am very busy,” he said, feeling that she was holding him in check with her composure, which he would not have the force to break through.

“Are you going to stay in town long?” Kitty questioned him.

“I don’t know,” he answered, not thinking of what he was saying. He thought that if he succumbed to this tone of calm friendship of hers, he would leave again, having accomplished nothing. He resolved to fight against it.

“How is it, you don’t know?”

“I don’t know. It depends upon you,” he said and was immediately horror-stricken at his own words.

Whether it was that she heard his words or that she did not want to hear them, she seemed to stumble, recompose herself, and hurriedly skated away from him.

She skated up to the old Mademoiselle Frenchwoman, said something to her, and moved towards the pavilion where the ladies took off their skates.

My God! What have I done! Merciful God! Help me, guide me, said Levin, praying inwardly, and at the same time, feeling the need for rigorous exercise, he skated about leaving a trail of inward and outward circles in the ice.

At this moment, a young man, one of the best skaters of the day, came out of the coffee house in his skates. Taking a run, he dashed down the steps in his skates, thundering and bouncing all the way down and, without even changing the position of his hands, skated away over the ice.

“That’s a new trick!” said Levin, and he promptly ran up to the top of the stairs to attempt it.

“Don’t break your neck! It needs practice!” Nikolay Sherbatsky shouted after him.

Levin went to the steps, took a run from above as best as he could, and dashed down, preserving his balance by moving his hands. On the last step, he stumbled, but barely scraping the ice with his hand, recovered himself, and laughing, skated on.

“How impressive that is!” Kitty thought as she came out of the pavilion with the Frenchwoman Linon and looked at him with a smile of quiet affection, as though he were a favorite brother. *Is it my fault? Have I done anything wrong? They talk about being flirtatious, but I know it’s not him that I love, but still, I have a fun time with him, and he’s so great. Except, why did he say that?* she thought.

Catching sight of Kitty leaving and her mother meeting her at the steps, Levin, exhausted from his skating, stood still and pondered for a minute. He took off his skates and caught up to the mother and daughter at the entrance.

“We would be delighted to have you over,” said Princess Sherbatsky, Kitty’s mother. “We are home every Thursday.”

“Today, then?”

“We would be pleased to see you,” the princess said stiffly.

This stiffness hurt Kitty, and she could not resist her desire to smooth over her mother's coldness.

She turned her head, and with a smile, said, "See you tonight."

At that moment, Stepan Oblonsky, his hat cocked to one side, with beaming face and eyes, strode into the entrance like a conquering hero. But as he approached his mother-in-law, the Princess Sherbatsky, he responded in a mournful tone to her inquiries about Dolly's well-being. After a short and subdued conversation with his mother-in-law, he puffed out his chest again and put his arm in Levin's.

"Shall we go?" He asked. "I've been thinking about you this whole time, and I'm very glad you've come," he said, looking him in the eyes with a consequential gaze.

"Yes, come along," answered Levin, still in ecstasy from hearing the sound of that voice saying, "see you tonight," and seeing that smile with which it was said.

"To the England or the Hermitage?"

"I don't mind which."

"All right then, the England," said Stepan, selecting that restaurant because he owed more there on his tab than at the Hermitage and consequently considered it wrong to avoid it.

"Do you have a cab, or should I send for a carriage?"

The friends hardly spoke the whole way there. Levin wondered what the change in Kitty's expression meant, assuring himself that there was hope, then falling into despair when realizing his hopes were unfounded. Yet, all the while, he felt himself a new man, utterly unlike what he had been before she smiled and said the words, "See you tonight."

Stepan was absorbed in thinking about dinner and the menu.

"You like trout, don't you?" He asked Levin as they were arriving.

"Huh?" responded Levin. "Turbot? Yes, I'm awfully fond of turbot."

Chapter 7

While at the restaurant with Stepan Oblonsky, Levin could not help but notice a certain peculiarity of expression, a restrained radiance, about the face and figure of Stepan. Levin's whole soul was filled with memories of Kitty, and there was a smile of triumph and happiness shining in his eyes. Oblonsky began speaking of a subject that at once drew his attention.

"So, are you going tonight to our people, the Sherbatskys, I mean?" He asked, his eyes sparkling significantly as he pushed away the empty clam shells and drew the cheese towards him.

"Yes, I will certainly go," replied Levin, "though I felt that the princess was not very warm in her invitation."

"Nonsense! That's her issue. Oh, what a lucky fellow you are!" Broke in Stepan, looking into Levin's eyes.

"Why?"

"I know a gallant steed by tokens sure, and by your eyes, I know a youth in love," proclaimed Stepan. "Your future is bright, and mine already past."

"Why is it over for you already?"

"No, not over exactly, but the future is yours, and the present is mine, and the present, well, it's not all that it might be."

"How so?"

"Oh, things go wrong. But I don't want to talk about myself, and besides, I don't understand it all," said Stepan. "Let's talk about why you have come to Moscow instead."

"What advice would you give me?" asked Levin in a quivering voice, feeling that all the muscles of his face were quivering too. "What do you think of this situation? Do you think I have a chance?"

Stepan slowly emptied his glass of white wine, never taking his eyes off Levin.

"Me?" said Stepan. "There's nothing I desire more. A chance? Of course, you have a chance."

"Really? Do you think it's possible? Tell me everything. If she's going to refuse me, please tell me."

"Why should you think that?" said Stepan, smiling at his excitement.

"Sometimes, it just seems that this will end up badly for me and for her too."

Stepan smiled. He knew so well what Levin was feeling. The world was divided into two classes; one class - all the girls in the world except for her, ordinary and plain; the other class - she alone, having no flaw of any sort higher than all of humanity.

“Have some sauce,” he said, handing Levin some sauce. Levin obediently helped himself to the sauce but would not let Stepan go on with his dinner.

“No, stop a minute, stop a minute,” he said. “Please understand that for me, this is a question of life and death. I have never spoken to anyone about this. I can’t talk to anyone but you about this. You know we’re completely different, unlike each other in every way, different tastes and views and everything, but I know you’re fond of me and understand me, and that’s why I like you so much. But, for God’s sake, be straight with me.”

“I’ll tell you what I think,” said Stepan, smiling. “I’ll tell you more than that. My wife is a wonderful woman...” Stepan sighed, remembering the position he is in with his wife, and after a moment of silence, resumed. “She has a gift to foresee things. Dolly sees right through people, and that’s not all; she knows how relationships will turn out, especially in the way of marriages. And she’s on your side.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s not only that she likes you; she says that Kitty is certainly going to be your wife.”

At these words, Levin’s face lit up with a smile, a smile not far from tears of emotion.

“She said that!” cried Levin. “I always said she was wonderful, your wife. There, that’s enough, enough said about it,” he said, getting up from his seat.

“You must understand,” he said, “it’s not love. I’ve been in love, but it’s not that. It’s not a feeling but a force outside of me that has taken possession of me. I left Moscow, you see, because I was convinced that it could never be, but I couldn’t give it up, and there’s no life without it. It must be settled.

“You can’t imagine what you have done for me by what you said. I’m so happy that I’ve become nauseated. Here, you are married, you know the feeling, it’s awful that we, old with a past, not of love, but of sin, are brought all at once so near to a creature pure and innocent; it’s loathsome, and that’s why one can’t help but feel unworthy.”

“Oh, well, you don’t have many sins on your conscience,” cut in Stepan.

“Still, it’s all the same,” said Levin. “When with loathing I review my life, I shudder and curse and bitterly regret it.”

“What can we do? This is life,” said Stepan. “The one comfort I have, my consolation is in this prayer: Forgive me not according to my merit, but according to thy mercy and loving-kindness. That’s the only way she’ll forgive me.”

Chapter 8

Levin emptied his glass, and they were silent for a while.

“There’s one other thing I ought to tell you. Do you know Vronsky?” Stephen Oblansky asked Levin.

“No, I don’t. Why do you ask?”

“Give us another bottle,” Stepan directed the waiter, who was filling their glasses and fidgeting around them when he was not wanted.

“You should know that Vronsky is one of your rivals.”

“Who’s Vronsky?” asked Levin, and his face was suddenly transformed from childlike ecstasy to an angry and unpleasant one.

“Vronsky is one of the sons of Count Kirill Ivanovitch Vronsky and one of the finest specimens of the golden youth of Petersburg. I met him in Tver when I was there on official business. Fearfully rich, handsome, great connections, a military officer, and with all that, a very nice, good-natured fellow. But he’s more than that. I find him to be cultured and very intelligent; he’s a man that will make his mark.”

Levin frowned and said nothing.

“He turned up here soon after you left, and as far as I can see, he’s head over heels in love with Kitty, and you know that her mother....”

“Excuse me, but I know nothing,” said Levin, still frowning gloomily.

“Hold on,” said Stepan, smiling and touching his hand. “I’ve told you what I know, and as far as I can tell, the chances are in your favor.”

Levin slumped in his chair, his face pale.

“I would recommend that you settle this thing as soon as you can,” pursued Stepan, filling up his glass.

“No, thanks, I can’t drink anymore,” said Levin, pushing away his glass. “I’ll get drunk. Tell me about you now?” He continued, obviously anxious to change the conversation.

“One word more, I think you should settle this soon. But don’t do it tonight,” said Stepan. “Wait until tomorrow morning, then make your offer, and God bless you....”

Chapter 9

The young Princess Kitty Sherbatsky was eighteen. It was the first winter that she had been off on her own. Her success in society had already been greater than that of either of her older sisters and even greater than her mother had anticipated. To say nothing of the young men who danced at the Moscow balls, all being in love with Kitty, two serious suitors had already this first winter made their appearance: Levin, and immediately after his departure, Count Vronsky.

Levin's appearance at the beginning of winter, his frequent visits, and evident love of Kitty led to the first serious conversations and disputes between Kitty's parents as to her future. The prince was on Levin's side; he said he wished nothing better for Kitty. The princess, for her part, maintained that Kitty was too young, that Levin had done nothing to prove he had serious intentions and that Kitty felt no great attraction to him. But her main issue is that she wanted a better match for her daughter and that Levin just was not to her liking. When Levin abruptly departed, the princess was delighted and said to her husband triumphantly: "You see, I was right." When Vronsky appeared on the scene, she was still more delighted, confirming her opinion that Kitty was not to settle for a good but a perfect match.

In the mother's eyes, there was no comparison between Vronsky and Levin. She disliked Levin because of his strange and uncompromising opinions and his social anxiety, based, as she supposed, on his pride and his country life absorbed in cattle and peasants. She did not like that he, who was in love with her daughter, kept coming to her house for six weeks, as though he was waiting for something, inspecting, as though he were afraid to make an offer. And suddenly, without making his intentions clear, he disappeared. *It's just as well; he's not attractive enough for Kitty to have fallen in love with him*, thought the mother.

Vronsky satisfied all the mother's desires. Very wealthy, clever, of an aristocratic family, on the high road to a brilliant career in the army, and a fascinating man. She couldn't wish for anyone better.

Vronsky openly flirted with Kitty at balls, danced with her, and visited the house often. There could be little doubt as to the seriousness of his intentions. But, in spite of that, the mother had spent the whole winter in a state of terrible anxiety and worry.

Princess Sherbatsky had herself been married thirty years ago, her aunt arranging the match. Her husband came, looked at his future bride, and was inspected by the matchmaking aunt who communicated their mutual impression. The impression was favorable. Afterward, on a day fixed beforehand, the expected offer was made to her parents and accepted. Everything moved smoothly and easily. So it seemed, at least, to the princess. But she felt how far from simple the business of marrying off one's daughters was. The anxiety attacks they lived through, the thoughts they brooded over, the money wasted, and the arguments with her husband over marrying the two older girls, Dolly and Natalia. Now, with the youngest, she was going through the same terrors, doubts, and violent quarrels with her husband. The old prince, like all fathers, was exceedingly particular about the honor and reputation of his daughters. He was irrationally

overprotective of his daughters, especially over Kitty, who was his favorite. The Princess recognized that much had changed in society with Kitty's generation and that a mother's role had become more complicated. She saw the girls of Kitty's age band together, raise their voices, mix freely with men in society, drive about the streets alone, many of them did not curtsy, and, most importantly, all the girls were firmly convinced that to choose their husbands was their own affair, and not their parents.

And so, the princess worried more about Kitty than she had about the older sisters.

Now, she was afraid that Vronsky might only flirt with her daughter with no intention to marry her. She saw that her daughter was in love with him and tried to convince herself that he was an honorable man. But at the same time, she knew how easy it is, with the freedom of modern society, to turn a girl's head and how lightly men regarded such a crime. The week before, Kitty told her mother of a conversation she had with Vronsky that reassured the princess. Vronsky told Kitty that he was so used to listening to his mother's advice and obeying her that he never made up his mind about any significant undertaking without first consulting her. "And just now, I am impatiently waiting for my mother to arrive from Petersburg," he told her.

Kitty had repeated this without attaching any significance to the words. But her mother saw them in a different light. She knew that Vronsky's mother was expected any day and that she would be pleased with her son's choice. As bitter as it was for the princess to see the unhappiness of her oldest daughter, Dolly, on the verge of leaving her husband, her anxiety over her youngest daughter's fate engrossed all of her feelings. Today, with Levin's reappearance, a fresh source of anxiety arose. She was afraid that her daughter, who had at one time, as she perceived, had some feelings for Levin, might, from an extreme sense of loyalty, refuse Vronsky. Levin's arrival might generally complicate and delay all of her plans.

"Has he been here long?" the princess asked about Levin as they returned home.

"He came today, mamma."

"There's one thing I want to say..." began the princess, and based on her serious tone, Kitty guessed what she might say.

"Mamma," she said, feeling her face flush and burn and turning quickly to her, "please, please don't say anything about that. I know, I know all about it."

She wished for what her mother wished for, but her mother's motives offended her.

"I only want to say that to increase your chances..."

"Mamma, please, don't talk about it. I can't listen to this."

"I won't," said her mother, seeing the tears in her daughter's eyes, "but one thing, my love; you promised me that you wouldn't keep any secrets from me. You won't, right?"

“Never, mamma, none,” answered Kitty, and looking at her mother straight in her eyes, “but there’s no use in my telling you anything, and I..I..if I wanted to, I don’t know what to say or how...I don’t know.”

No, she could not lie with those eyes, thought the mother, smiling at her excitement.

Chapter 10

After dinner, and until the beginning of the evening, Kitty felt a sensation similar to what a soldier faces before a battle. Her heart throbbed violently, and her thoughts fluttered about.

She felt that this evening would be a turning point in her life. She was continually picturing both of them, at one moment separately and then together. With pleasure and tenderness, she thought of the memories of her relations with Levin. The memories of childhood and of Levin's friendship with her now-deceased brother added a special poetic charm. His love for her, of which she felt certain, was flattering and delightful; she thought fondly of him. In her memories of Vronsky, there was always a particular element of awkwardness, though he was in the highest degree well-bred and at ease, there was something off, phony, not in Vronsky, he was very simple and nice, but in herself. While with Levin, she felt perfectly at ease. On the other hand, when she considered a future with Vronsky, she was filled with brilliant happiness; with Levin, the future seemed misty.

When she went upstairs to dress for the evening and look in the mirror, she joyfully noticed that it was one of her good days. She was in control of her faculties, which she very much needed for what lay ahead.

At seven-thirty, she had only just gone down into the drawing-room when the footman announced, "Konstantin Dmitrievitch Levin." The princess was still in her room, and the prince had not come in. "And so it is," thought Kitty, and all of her blood rushed to her heart. She glanced at a mirror and was horrified at her paleness. She knew right away that he had come early on purpose, to find her alone and to make her an offer. And only then, for the first time, she saw a new perspective; she realized that his offer did not only affect her but that she had the potential at that moment to wound a man whom she liked. And to wound him violently. And for what? Because he, dear fellow, loved her, was in love with her.

Oh, God! Do I really have to tell him? she thought. *Can I tell him I don't love him? That is a lie. What do I say to him? That I love someone else? No, that's impossible. I'm leaving, I'm leaving.*

She reached the door when she heard him come. *No! It isn't fair. I have done nothing wrong. Why am I so scared? What is to be, will be! I'll tell the truth. And with him, I will be at ease. Here he is,* she said to herself, seeing his powerful, shy figure, with his gleaming eyes fixed on her. She looked directly at him as though imploring him to be merciful and spare her and held out her hand.

"I think I'm early," he said, glancing around the empty drawing-room. When he saw that his intentions were realized and no one was around to prevent him from opening up, he lost confidence.

"Oh, no," said Kitty, and she sat down at the table.

"But this is just what I wanted, to find you alone," he began, not sitting down and not looking at her, as not to lose courage.

“Mamma will be down shortly. She was very tired from yesterday.”

She mumbled on, not knowing what her lips were uttering and not taking her supplicating and caressing eyes off of him.

He glanced at her; she blushed and stopped talking.

“I told you that I do not know whether I will be here long...that depends on you..”

She dropped her head lower and lower, not knowing how to answer what she anticipated was coming.

“That it depends on you,” he repeated. “I meant to say...I meant to say...I came for this...to marry you!” He unloaded, not knowing what he was saying, but feeling that the most terrible thing was said, he stopped short and looked at her.

She was breathing heavily, not looking at him. She was filled with ecstasy, and her soul was flooded with happiness. She had never anticipated that the utterance of love would produce such a powerful effect on her. But it lasted only an instant. She thought of Vronsky. She lifted her clear, sincere eyes, and seeing his desperate face, she answered without delay:

“That cannot be...forgive me.”

A moment ago, and how close she had been to him, and now how distant.

“It was bound to be so,” he said, not looking at her.

He bowed and intended to leave.

Chapter 11

But at that moment, the princess came in. There was a look of horror on her face when she saw them alone. Levin bowed to her and said nothing. Kitty did not speak or lift her eyes. *Thank God, she has refused him*, thought the mother, and her face lit up and returned to the form of her habitual smile with which she greeted her guests every Thursday. She sat down and began questioning Levin about his life in the country. He sat down too, waiting for other visitors to arrive, so he could leave unnoticed.

A lady came into the room, and Levin got up, noticing an officer who came in behind the lady.

That must be Vronsky, thought Levin, and, to be sure of it, he glanced at Kitty. She had already had time to look at Vronsky, then at Levin. And simply from the look in her eyes that grew brighter, Levin knew that she loved that man, knew it as surely as if she had told him. But what sort of a man was he? Whether right or wrong, Levin could not leave; he must find out what the man she loved was like.

There are people who, on meeting a successful rival, no matter in what, are at once disposed to dismiss everything good in them and to see only what is bad. On the other hand, some people desire to find in that lucky rival the qualities that make them superior. Levin belonged to the second class. He had no difficulty in finding what was good and attractive in Vronsky. It was apparent at first glance. Vronsky was a squarely built, dark but not extremely tall, with a good-humored, handsome, and exceedingly calm and resolute face. Everything about his face and figure, from his short-cropped black hair and freshly shaven face down to his fitted, brand-new uniform, was simple and at the same time elegant. Vronsky went up to the princess and then to Kitty.

As he approached her, his beautiful eyes shined with a specially tender light, and with a faint, happy, and modestly triumphant smile (so it seemed to Levin), bowing respectfully towards her, he held out his small broad hand to her.

Greeting and saying a few words to everyone around him, he sat down without once glancing at Levin, who hadn't taken his eyes off him.

"Let me introduce you," said the princess, "Konstantin Dmitrievitch Levin, Count Alexey Vronsky."

Vronsky got up and, looking cordially at Levin, shook hands with him.

"I believe I was to have dined with you this past winter," he said, smiling his simple and open smile, "but you unexpectedly left for the country."

"Levin despises and hates the city and us city people," said Countess Nordston, who was sitting near.

"My words must make a deep impression with you since you remember them so well," said Levin, slightly embarrassed.

Vronsky looked at Levin and Countess Nordston and smiled.

“Are you always in the country?” he inquired. “It must be boring there in the winter.”

“It’s not boring if one has work to do, and it’s not boring being alone,” Levin replied sharply.

“I am fond of the country,” said Vronsky, noticing but trying not to notice Levin’s tone. “I never longed for the country more, the Russian country, then when I spent a winter with my mother. It’s as though.....”

He talked on, addressing both Kitty and Levin, turning his serene, friendly eyes from one to the other and saying whatever came into his head.

Levin wanted to, and could not, take part in the general conversation; repeating to himself, “Now go,” he still did not go, as though waiting for something.

Countess Nordston began talking of the great ball that was going to be put on next week.

“I hope you will be there?” Vronsky said to Kitty.

Levin finally left unnoticed, carrying with him the last impression of the evening, a happy Kitty answering Vronsky’s request to attend the ball together.

Chapter 12

When the evening was over, Kitty told her mother of her conversation with Levin. In spite of the pity she felt towards Levin, Kitty was glad that she received an offer of marriage. She had no doubt that she acted well in her response. But, after she went to bed, for a long time, she could not sleep. One thought pursued her relentlessly. It was Levin's face, with his scowling brows and kind eyes, dejected as he sat listening to the conversation of those at dinner, trying to intervene but unable to. She felt so sorry for him that tears came. Then she thought of who she exchanged him for. She vividly recalled his manly, resolute face, his noble self-confidence, and his good-natured kindness towards everyone. This brought gladness to her soul, and she lay on her pillow, smiling with happiness. *I'm sorry, I'm sorry; what could I have done? It's not my fault,* she said to herself; but an inner voice told her otherwise. She did not know whether she felt remorse at having won Levin's love or at having refused him. But her happiness was tempered with doubt. "Lord, have mercy on me; Lord, have mercy on me; Lord have mercy on me," she repeated until she fell asleep.

Meanwhile, in the library, an oft-repeated scene between her parents was brewing.

"What? I'll tell you what!" shouted the prince, waving his arms and wrapping his gown around him again. "You have no pride or dignity, and you are disgracing and ruining your daughter with this vile matchmaking!"

"For mercy's sake, Prince, what have I done?" said the princess, on the verge of tears.

Being pleased and happy after her conversation with her daughter, she had gone to the prince to say goodnight as usual. Though she had no intention of telling him about Levin's offer and Kitty's refusal, still she hinted to her husband that things were practically settled with Vronsky and that he would propose as soon as his mother arrived. This was when the prince had flown into a passionate rage, using unseemly language.

"But what have I done?"

"Why you've..." The prince cried out in anger.

"What have you done? You're hunting eligible gentlemen, and all of Moscow will be talking about it, and for good reason. If you have evening parties, invite everyone, not just the most eligible bachelors. Invite all the young bucks. Hire a piano player, let them dance. Don't hunt matches. It makes me sick, sick to see it. Levin's a thousand times the better man. I see a man who has serious intentions; that's Levin. With Vronsky, I see a peacock, a feather-head who is only amusing himself. Just remember my words before it's too late, as it is with Dolly."

"That's enough," the princess stopped him, remembering Dolly and her pathetic situation. "By all means, good night!"

And signing each other with the cross, the husband and wife parted with a kiss, each remaining with their own opinion.

The princess had been quite certain that the evening had settled Kitty's future and that there could be no doubt of Vronsky's intentions, but her husband's words disturbed her. Returning to her own room, anxious about the unknown future, she, like Kitty, repeated several times in her heart, *Lord have mercy; Lord have mercy; Lord have mercy.*

Chapter 13

Vronsky never had a real home life. His mother had been in her youth of the high society. She had, during her married life, many love affairs and was notorious in all social circles. His father he scarcely remembered.

Leaving school very young as a brilliant officer, he immediately was introduced into the circle of wealthy Petersburg military men. Although he belonged in the Petersburg society, his love affairs had always been outside of it.

Now in Moscow, he felt for the first time, after his luxurious but rough life in Petersburg, all the charm and intimacy with a sweet and innocent girl of his same class, who cared for him. It never entered his mind that there could be any harm in his relationship with Kitty. At balls, he danced primarily with her. He constantly visited their home. He talked to her as people commonly talk, all sorts of nonsense, but it had special meaning to her. Although he said nothing to her that he could not have said to anyone, he felt that she was becoming more and more dependent on him. The more Vronsky felt this, the more uneasy he became. Tender feelings increased for her, yet he did not know that courting young girls with no intention of marriage was evil. It seemed to him that he was the first to discover this pleasure, and he was enjoying his discovery.

If he could have listened to what her parents said that evening and heard that Kitty would be unhappy if he did not marry her, he would have been greatly astonished and would not have believed it. He could not believe that what gave him and especially her such great satisfaction could be wrong. Even more, he could not believe that he ought to get married.

Marriage had never presented itself to him as a possibility. He not only disliked family life, but a family, and especially being a husband, was conceived as something alien, repellant, and above all ridiculous. This in accordance with the views he held as a bachelor in the world in which he lived.

Even though Vronsky didn't have the slightest suspicion about what her parents were saying, he felt that the spiritual bond which existed between him and Kitty had grown so much stronger that evening, and some next step must be taken. But what step could and should be taken, he did not know.

What is so exquisite, he thought, as he returned from the Sherbatkys', taking with him, as he always did, a delicious feeling of purity and freshness, arising partly from the fact that he did not smoke for a whole evening, and with it a new feeling of tenderness because of her love for him. *What is so exquisite is that not a word has been said by me or by her. Still, we understand each other so well in this unseen language of looks and tones that she has communicated her love for me this evening more clearly than ever. And how secretly, simply, and trustworthy. I feel better, purer. I feel that I have a heart, and there is a great deal of good in me. Those sweet, loving eyes! Well, now what? Oh, nothing. It works for me, and it works for her.* And he began wondering how to finish the evening.

He reviewed in his mind a few places he might go. *The club, a game of cards, champagne with friends? Nah, I'm not going. Chateau des Fleurs; there I shall find Stepan Oblonsky,*

songs, dancing. Nah, I'm sick of it. I am improving myself, and that is why I like the Sherbatskys'. I'm improving myself. I'll go home.

He went straight to his room at Dussot's Hotel, ordered supper, and then undressed, and as soon as his head hit the pillow, he fell into a sound sleep.

Chapter 14

At eleven o'clock the following day, Vronsky drove to the Petersburg railway station to meet his mother. The first person he ran into on the great flights of stairs was Stepan Oblonsky, who was expecting his sister on the same train.

"Ah! Your excellency!" cried Oblonsky, "who are you meeting here?"

"My mother," Vronsky responded, smiling, as everyone did who met Oblonsky. He shook hands with him, and together they ascended the steps. "She's coming from Petersburg today."

"I was looking for you until two o'clock last night. Where did you go after the Sherbatskys'?"

"Home," answered Vronsky. "I felt so at peace after the Sherbatskys' that I didn't feel like going anywhere."

"I know a gallant steed by tokens sure, and by your eyes I know a youth in love," proclaimed Stepan, just as he had done with Levin.

Vronsky smiled with a look that seemed to say that he did not deny it, but he promptly changed the subject.

"And who are you meeting?" He asked.

"I've come to meet a pretty woman," said Stepan.

"You don't say!"

"Shame on you! It's my sister Anna."

"Ah! That's Madame Karenina," said Vronsky.

"You know her?"

"I think I do. Or perhaps not...I really am not sure." Vronsky answered with a vague recollection of something stiff and tedious evoked by the name Karenina.

"But Alexey Karenina, my celebrated brother-in-law, you surely must know him? All the world knows him."

"I know him by reputation. I know that he's clever, learned, religious somewhat..."

"Yes, he's a very remarkable man; rather a conservative, but a splendid man," observed Stepan, "a splendid man."

"Good for him," said Vronsky smiling.

“Did you make the acquaintance of my friend Levin?” asked Stepan.

“Yes, but he left rather early.”

“He’s a fine fellow,” pursued Stepan. “Don’t you think?”

“I don’t know why,” responded Vronsky, “in all Moscow people, present company excluded, of course, there’s something uncompromising. They are all on the defensive, lose their tempers, as though they all want me to feel something.”

“Yes, that’s true,” said Stepan, laughing good-humoredly.

Stepan felt a great inclination to tell Vronsky of Levin’s intentions in regards to Kitty.

“You are right on about Levin. He’s a very nervous man and sometimes lacks humor, it’s true, but then he is often very nice. He has such a sincere, honest nature and a heart of gold. But yesterday, there were special reasons,” continued Stepan, feeling sympathy for both Levin and Vronsky. “Yes, there were reasons why he could not help being both very happy and particularly unhappy.”

Vronsky stood still and asked directly: “Why do you say that? Do you mean that he made your sister-in-law Kitty an offer of marriage yesterday?”

“Maybe,” said Stepan. “He’s been so long in love, and I feel very sorry for him.”

“So that’s it! I should have guessed, though, she might hope for a better match,” said Vronsky, drawing himself up and walking about again, “but I don’t know him, of course,” he added, “Here’s the train.”

The engine had already whistled in the distance. A few moments later, the platform was rattling, and with puffs of steam hanging low in the air from the frost, the engine rolled up and stopped at the platform. A guard jumped out, gave a whistle, and following him one by one; the impatient passengers began rolling out.

Vronsky, standing by Stepan, watched the passengers, forgetting for a moment that he was picking up his mother. What he had just heard about Kitty excited and delighted him. Unconsciously he arched his back and puffed his chest. He felt like a conqueror.

“Countess Vronskaya is in that room,” said the guard, going up to Vronsky.

The guard’s words roused him and forced him to think of his mother and his upcoming meeting with her. In his heart, he did not respect his mother. Without acknowledging it to himself, he did not love her, though, in accordance with his education and ideology, he was, in the highest degree, respectful and obedient. Though the more externally obedient and respectful he was, the less in his heart he respected and loved her.

Chapter 15

Vronsky followed the guard to the carriage, and at the door of the compartment, he stopped short to make room for a lady who was coming out.

With the insight of a man of the world and from one glance at this lady's appearance, Vronsky classified her as belonging to the upper levels of society. He begged her pardon and was moving toward the carriage, but felt he must glance at her once more; not because she was overly beautiful, not because of any elegance or grace, but because in the expression of her charming face, as she passed close by him, there was something caressing and soft. As he looked at her, she too turned her head. Her shining eyes with thick lashes rested familiarly on his face, as though she recognized him, and then promptly turned away to the passing crowd, as though looking for someone.

Vronsky stepped into the carriage. His mother, a withered-up old lady with black eyes and ringlet curls, lifted her eyes, scanned over her son, and smiled slightly with her thin lips. Getting up from the seat and handing her maid a bag, she gave her little wrinkled hand to her son to kiss, and lifting his head from her hand, kissed him on the cheek.

"Did you have a good trip?" said her son, sitting down beside her and overhearing a woman's voice from outside of the cabin. He knew it was the voice of the lady he had met at the door.

"Goodbye, Ivan Petrovitch. And could you see if my brother is here and send him in?" said the lady in the doorway, stepping back again in the compartment.

"Well, have you found your brother?" asked Countess Vronskaya, addressing the lady.

Vronsky understood now that this was Madame Karenina.

"Your brother is here," he said, standing up. "I'm sorry that I did not recognize you. Our earlier acquaintance was so short it is likely you don't remember me as well."

"Oh, no," she said, "I should have recognized you because your mother and I have been talking of nothing but you the whole way here." As she spoke, she let the eagerness of a smile show. "Still no sign of my brother."

Vronsky stepped out onto the platform and shouted:

"Stepan! Over here!"

Madame Karenina, however, did not wait for her brother, but seeing him, she ventured out with a light, resolute step. And as soon as her brother reached her, with a gesture that struck Vronsky by its determination and grace, she flung her left arm around his neck, drew him rapidly to her, and kissed him warmly. Vronsky gazed, never taking his eyes off of her, and smiled, though he could not say why. But remembering that his mother was waiting for him, he went back into the carriage.

“She’s very sweet, isn’t she?” said the countess regarding Anna Karenina. “Her husband connected us together, and we talked the whole way. And so you, I hear...Are living love’s perfect dream.”

“I don’t know what you are referring to, mother,” he answered coldly. “Come, mother, let us go.”

Madame Karenina entered the carriage again to say goodbye to the countess.

“Well, countess, you have met up with your son, and I, my brother,” she said cheerfully. “I have told you all of my stories and have nothing left to share.”

“Oh, no,” said the countess, taking her hand. “I could travel the world with you and never be bored. You are one of those delightful women in whose company I am content to be silent or talk. Now, please don’t fret over your son; you can’t expect to never be apart.”

Anna stood quite still with her eyes smiling.

“Anna Karenina,” the countess said as an explanation to her son Vronsky, “has an eight-year-old son, and she has never been without him before.”

“Yes, the countess and I spent most of our time talking, I of my son and she of hers,” said Anna, and again a smile lit up her face, a caressing smile intended for Vronsky.

“I’m afraid you must have been dreadfully bored,” he said, promptly picking up a hint of flirtatious exchange. But apparently, she did not care to pursue the conversation in this tone, and she turned to the old countess.

“Thank you so much. The time has passed so quickly. Goodbye, Countess.”

“Goodbye, my dear friend,” answered the countess. “Let me kiss your pretty face. I speak openly, at my age, and I tell you simply that you have stolen my heart.”

Cliche, though the phrase may be, Anna obviously believed it and was flattered by it. Her face flushed with embarrassment, she bent down slightly, and put her cheek to the countess’s lips, stood up again, and with the same smile fluttering between her lips and her eyes, she gave her hand to Vronsky. He held the little hand and was delighted, as though it was a gift of something special, by the energetic squeeze with which she freely and vigorously shook his hand. She left with an energetic step that carried her pretty full body with such lightness.

“Very charming,” said the countess.

That was just what her son was thinking. His eyes followed her until her graceful figure was out of sight. He saw out of the window how she approached her brother, put her arm in his, and began eagerly talking to him, though obviously not about Vronsky, which annoyed him and made him slightly jealous.

Vronsky gave his mother his arm, but just as they were getting out of the carriage, several men ran suddenly by with panic-stricken faces. Obviously, something unusual had happened. The crowd that had just left the train was running back again.

“What.... “Where....” Flung himself!.... “Crushed!” was heard among the crowd. Stepan, with his sister Anna on his arm, turned back. They, too, looked scared as they moved, trying to avoid the crowd. The ladies entered the carriage while Vronsky and Stepan followed the crowd to try to figure out what happened.

A guard, either drunk or muffled by his snow cap and earmuffs, had not heard the train moving back and was crushed.

Stepan and Vronsky both saw the mutilated corpse. Stepan was visibly upset and was on the verge of tears.

“Ah, how awful! Anna, you are lucky you didn’t see it! How awful,” he said.

Vronsky did not speak; his handsome face was serious but composed.

“Oh, if you had seen it, countess,” said Stepan. “And his wife was there. It was awful to see her! She flung herself on the body. They say he was the only breadwinner in the family. How awful!”

“Can’t somebody do something for her?” asked Anna in an agitated whisper.

Vronsky glanced at her and immediately exited the carriage.

When he returned and just as soon as they were about to leave the train station, the station master caught up to Vronsky.

“You gave my assistant two hundred roubles. Would you please explain who this is for?”

“For the widow,” said Vronsky, shrugging his shoulders. “that should have been self-explanatory.”

“You gave them that much?” cried Stepan, “Very nice, very nice! Isn’t he a splendid fellow? Goodbye, Countess.”

Vronsky’s carriage left, and people were still talking about what happened.

“What a horrible death!” said a gentleman, passing by. “They say he was cut in two pieces.”

“On the contrary, I think it’s the easiest. It was instantaneous,” observed another.

“How is it they don’t have proper precautions in place?” said a third.

Madame Anna Karenina seated herself in the carriage. Stepan saw that her lips were quivering, and she was holding back tears.

“What is it, Anna?” he asked after they had driven a few hundred yards.

“It’s an omen of evil,” she said.

“That’s nonsense!” responded Stepan. “You have arrived. That’s the important thing. You have no idea how much it means to me that you are here and how much I’m relying on you.”

“Have you known Vronsky very long?” she asked.

“Yes. You know we’re hoping that he will marry Kitty.”

“Really?” said Anna softly. “Come now, let us talk about you,” she added, shaking her head as if to physically shake off something that bothered her. “Let us talk about your life, I received your letter, and here I am.”

“Yes, I hope you can help me,” said Stepan.

“Well, tell me all about it.”

And Stepan Oblonsky began to tell his story.

Upon arriving home, Oblonsky helped his sister out of the carriage, sighed, and set off to his office.

Chapter 16

When Anna arrived at the Oblonskys', Dolly was sitting in the living room with her son, reading. Dolly was crushed by her sorrow, utterly swallowed up by it. Still, she did not forget that Anna, her sister-in-law, was the wife of one of the most important people in Petersburg. And, given the circumstances, she did not carry out the threats she made to her husband. *After all, Anna is in no way to blame, thought Dolly. She has been nothing but good to me.*

It was true that as far as she could recall her impressions of the Karenin's, she did not like their household; there was something artificial in the whole framework of their family life. *But why should I not accept her? As long as she doesn't try to console me!* thought Dolly. *All of the consolation and counsel and Christian forgiveness, all that I have tried over a thousand times, and none of it helps.*

Dolly spent all of her days alone at home with her children. She did not want to talk about her depression, but she also couldn't talk about much else, because of it. She knew that in one way or another, she would tell Anna everything, and she was happy about the thought of speaking freely, yet upset and humiliated that she had to tell her. She didn't want to hear the prepared and ready-made phrases of comfort and advice. She had been on the lookout for her, glancing at her watch every minute, and, as so often happens, let time slip at the minute her visitor arrived, so she did not hear the doorbell.

Hearing the sound of a dress and light steps at the door, she looked around, and her care-worn face unconsciously expressed not gladness but surprise. She got up and embraced her sister-in-law.

"What, here already!" she said as she kissed her.

"Dolly, how happy I am to see you!"

"I am happy too," said Dolly, faintly smiling, trying to decipher by the expression of Anna's face whether or not she knew. *Most likely, she knows, she thought, noticing the sympathy in Anna's face.* "Well, come along, I'll take you to your room," she continued, trying to defer as long as possible the conversation.

"Dolly," Anna said, "he told me."

Dolly looked coldly at Anna; she was waiting for conventional phrases of sympathy, but Anna said nothing of the sort.

"Dolly, dear," she said, "I don't want to speak for him, nor to try to comfort you; that's impossible. But darling, I'm simply sorry, sorry from the bottom of my heart for you!"

Under the thick lashes of her shining eyes, tears suddenly glittered. She moved closer to her sister-in-law and took her hand. Dolly did not shrink away, but her face retained its frigid expression.

She said, "To comfort me is impossible. Everything is lost after what has happened. Everything is finished!" As soon as she said this, her face suddenly softened.

Anna lifted the thin hand of Dolly, kissed it, and said, "But, Dolly, what can we do, what can we do? What is the best thing to do in this position?"

"It is done, and there's nothing more," said Dolly. "And the worst of all, as you can see, is that I can't throw him out; there are the children, I am bound to him, and yet I can't live with him! It's torture for me to even look at him."

"Dolly, darling, he has told me, but I want to hear it from you. Please tell me about it."

Dolly looked at her inquisitively. Sympathy and love unfeigned were visible on Anna's face.

"Very well," she said, "but I will start from the beginning. You remember how I was when I got married. I was ignorant and uneducated. I was stupid. Stepan told me nothing of his former life, his life before me. You might not believe it, but until now, I imagined that I was the only woman he had ever known. I lived this way for eight years. You must understand that I was so far from suspecting infidelity. I thought it was impossible, and then, try to imagine it, to find out suddenly all the horror. Please understand, to be fully convinced of one's happiness, and then all at once...." continued Dolly, holding back her sobs, "to get a letter...his letter to his mistress, our nanny. No, it's too awful!" She hastily pulled out her handkerchief and hid her face in it. "I can understand being carried away by infatuation," she went on after a brief silence, "but deliberately, secretly deceiving me....and with our nanny? To go on being my husband while at the same time being with her....it's awful! You can't understand..."

"Oh, yes, I understand! I understand! Dolly, dearest, I do understand," said Anna, holding her hand.

"And do you think he understands what he has put me through?" Dolly resumed. "Not in the slightest! He's happy and content."

"Oh no!" Anna interposed quickly. "He's weighed down by remorse, and I feel sorry for him..."

"Is he capable of remorse?" Dolly interrupted, gazing intently into her sister-in-law's face.

"Yes, I know him. I could not look at him without feeling sorry for him. We both know him. He's good-hearted, but he's proud, and now he's humiliated. What touched me most...." (and here Anna guessed what would touch Dolly the most) "he's tortured by two things: that he is ashamed for the children's sake, and that, he loves you, yes, yes, loves you more than everything on earth."

Dolly stared past her sister-in-law as she listened to her words.

"Yes, I can see that he is in a terrible position; it's worse for the guilty than the innocent," Dolly said, "if he truly feels remorse for his actions. But how am I to forgive him? How am

I to be his wife again after her? I can't forgive him now just because I love my past love of him. To be with him is torture..."

Sobs cut short her words. Each time she was softened, she began again to remember why she was so heartbroken. "She's young, you see, she's pretty," she went on. "Look at me, Anna, my youth and beauty are gone, taken by whom? By him and his children. I have worked for him, served him, and now, of course, a fresh, vulgar creature is more charming to him."

"No doubt they talked about me when together, or, worse still, they were silent? Do you understand?"

Again her eyes glowed with hatred.

"It is finished, everything that once comforted me, the reward of my work and my sufferings. I was reading with my son just now; this used to bring me joy, now it is torture. What do I strive and toil for? Why are the children here? All at once, my heart has turned; instead of love and tenderness, I have nothing but hatred for him; yes, hatred. I could kill him."

"Darling Dolly, I understand, but don't torture yourself. You are distressed and aren't seeing everything clearly."

Dolly calmed down, and for two minutes, both were silent.

Anna cut in, kissing her hand once more.

"I know more about the world than you do," she said. "I know how men like Stepan look at it. They never talked about you. These kinds of men are unfaithful, but their home and wife are sacred to them. They draw a sort of line that can't be crossed between them and their families. I don't fully understand it. But it happens this way."

"Yes, but he has kissed her..."

"Dolly, hush, darling. I saw Stepan when he was in love with you. I remember the time he cried to me, talking of you and all the poetry and loftiness of his feelings for you. You know we make fun of him for always saying, 'Dolly's a marvelous woman.' You have always been divine to him, and you are that still, he has not been unfaithful in his heart."

Chapter 17

The rest of that day Anna spent at home, that's to say at the Oblonsky's. She spent the whole morning with Dolly and the children. She sent a brief note to her brother that he'd better make it home for dinner. "Come, God is merciful," she wrote.

Stepan did dine at home. The conversation was kept very general, and his wife, when speaking to him, addressed him informally as "Stiva," which she had never done before. In their relationship as husband and wife, the same estrangement remained, but there was no talk for now of separation. Stepan saw the possibility of explanation and reconciliation.

Immediately after dinner, Kitty came. She knew Anna Karenina, but only very little, and she came to her sister Dolly's with some trepidation at the prospect of meeting this fashionable Petersburg lady, whom everyone spoke so highly of. But Kitty made a favorable impression on Anna, and she noticed that at once. Kitty also fell for Anna's charm and felt that she was perfectly simple, yet complex and poetic.

"I know something. Stepan told me, and I congratulate you. I liked him so much," Anna continued. "I met Vronsky at the train station."

"Oh, he was there?" asked Kitty, blushing. "What was it that Stepan told you?"

"Stepan gossiped about everything. I traveled with Vronsky's mother," she continued, and his mother talked non-stop about him. He's her favorite. I know mothers are partial, but...."

"What did his mother tell you?"

"Oh, a great deal! And I know that he's her favorite; one can see how chivalrous he is...For instance, she told me he wanted to give up all of his property to his brother, also that he saved a woman who was drowning when he was still a child. He's a hero, in fact," said Anna, smiling and remembering the two hundred roubles he had given out to the widow at the train station.

But she did not tell Kitty about the two hundred roubles. For some reason, she didn't like to think about it. She felt that something in it had to do with her, a feeling that she wishes she could shake.

"Stepan has been in Dolly's room for a long time, thank God," Anna added, changing the subject.

"No, I'm first! No, I am!" screamed the children, who had finished dinner and were running up to their Aunt Anna. Anna ran laughing to meet them and embraced and swung the throng of swarming children around while they shrieked with delight.

Chapter 18

Dolly came out of her room to join the adults for tea. Stepan did not come out. He must have left his wife's room through a different door.

"I'm afraid you'll be cold upstairs, observed Dolly, addressing Anna: "let's move you downstairs, and we will be closer to you."

"Oh, please don't worry about me," answered Anna, looking intently into Dolly's face, trying to make out whether there had been a reconciliation or not. "I assure you that I can sleep anywhere."

"What's going on?" inquired Stepan, coming out of his room and addressing his wife. From his tone, both Kitty and Anna knew that a reconciliation had taken place.

"I want to move Anna downstairs, but we must hang up blinds. No one else knows how to do it, so I'll do it myself," answered Dolly.

God only knows whether they are fully reconciled, thought Anna, hearing her tone, cold and composed.

"Oh, nonsense, Dolly, always making things difficult," answered her husband. "Come on. I'll do it if you'd like...."

Yes, they must be reconciled, thought Anna.

"I know how you do things," answered Dolly, her sarcastic smile curved the corners of her lips.

Full, full reconciliation, full, thought Anna; *Thank God!* And rejoicing that she was the cause of it, she moved towards Dolly and kissed her.

That whole evening Dolly was, as always, a little mocking in her tone to her husband, while Stepan was cheerful and happy, but not too much to show he hadn't forgotten his sins.

A ring was heard in the hall.

"Who can that be?" asked Dolly.

Anna glancing down at once, recognized Vronsky, and a strange feeling of pleasure and at the same time dread of stirred in her heart. He raised his eyes, caught sight of her, and was filled with noticeable embarrassment and dismay.

Kitty blushed. All of them looked at each other, saying nothing.

Chapter 19

The ball was only just beginning as Kitty and her mother walked up the grand staircase, flooded with light and lined with flowers and footmen in red coats. A beardless young man, one of those society lads that the old Prince Sherbatsky called “young bucks,” bowed to them, and after running by, came back to ask Kitty to dance. As the first dance had previously been promised to Vronsky, she had to reserve this young man the second. An officer, buttoning his gloves, stood in the doorway and stroking his mustache, admired Kitty.

It was one of Kitty’s better days. Although her dress and all the preparations for the ball took much effort and caused Kitty great anxiety, at this moment, she walked into the ballroom in her elaborate lace dress as easily and simply as though she had been born in it. Her hair was done up high on her head, and a rose and two leaves adorned the top of it. Her bare shoulders and arms gave Kitty a sense of chilled marble, a feeling she particularly liked. Her eyes sparkled, and her rosy lips could not keep from smiling.

Igor Korsunsky, a married man and teacher of dance and director of this ball, handsome and well built, caught sight of Kitty entering and flew up to her with an easy stride. Without even asking her if she cared to dance, he put out his arm and encircled her slender waist. She looked around for someone to give her fan to, and their hostess, smiling, took it.

“How nice you are here on time,” he said to her, embracing her waist. “It’s a pleasure to waltz with you,” he said, as they fell into the first slow steps of the waltz, “such lightness, precision.”

She smiled at his praise and continued to look around the room over his shoulder. She was not the girl at her first ball, for whom all the faces in the ballroom melt into one vision of a fairyland. And she was not a girl who had grown stale from a round of balls, with every face in the ballroom grown familiar and tired. But, she was in the middle stage of these two; she was excited, and at the same time, had sufficient experience to observe and not be caught up in the emotion of the evening.

Scanning the room, she caught sight of Stepan and with him the exquisite figure and head of Anna, wearing a black velvet gown. And HE was there. Kitty had not seen HIM since the evening she refused Levin. Even from a distance, she knew him at once and was aware that he was looking at her.

“Another dance? Are you tired?” asked Igor, a little out of breath himself.

“No, thank you!”

“Where shall I take you?”

“Madame Anna Karenina is there.....take me to her.”

“Wherever you command.”

And Igor began waltzing with measured steps straight towards the group in the left corner, continually saying, "Pardon, mesdames, pardon, pardon, mesdames"; steering his course through the sea of lace, dress, and ribbon and disarranging even a feather.

Kitty looked around, seeking Anna. Anna was not in lilac, as Kitty had hoped, but in a black, low-cut, velvet gown, showing her full throat and shoulders, that looked as though carved in old ivory, and her rounded arms, with tiny, slender wrists. On her head, among her black hair, her own with nothing added was a little wreath of pansies. Her hairdo was not striking. Kitty had seen Anna every day; she adored her and had pictured her in lilac. But now, seeing her in black, she felt that she had not fully seen her charm. The black dress was just a frame holding something simple, graceful, and natural and at the same time something lighthearted and vibrant. She saw her now as someone entirely new and somewhat mysterious.

She was standing, straight and tall, as always, when Kitty drew near their group.

"This is one of my most faithful supporters," said Igor, bowing to Anna Karenina. "Princess Anna always helps make these balls fun and successful. "Anna, a waltz?" he asked, bending down to her with hand outstretched.

"I don't dance when it's possible not to dance," she responded.

"But tonight, it's impossible," answered Igor.

At that instant, Vronsky approached the group.

"Well, since it's impossible, let's dance," Anna said, ignoring Vronsky's bow, and she hastily put her hand on Igor's shoulder.

Why is she upset with him? thought Kitty, noticing that Anna had intentionally not responded to Vronsky's bow. Vronsky went up to Kitty, reminding her of their promised first dance and expressing his apologies that he failed to find her until now. Kitty gazed in admiration at Anna waltzing and listened to him. She wanted him to ask her to dance, but he did not, and she glanced curiously at him. He blushed and quickly asked her to waltz, but he had only just put his arm around her waist and taken the first step when the music stopped suddenly. Kitty looked into his face, which was so close to her own, and for a long time afterward, even several years later, her look so full of love, to which he did not reciprocate, cut her heart to its core.

Chapter 20

Vronsky and Kitty waltzed several times around the room. After one waltz, Kitty went to talk to her mother and had hardly said a few words when Vronsky came up again and again asked to dance. During the dance, nothing of any significance was said. There was some disjointed talk about friends and acquaintances; one time, the conversation touched her emotionally when he asked her about Levin, whether he was here, and added that he liked him.

Kitty did not expect much from the waltzes. She looked forward with a thrill in her heart to the mazurka (a Polish dance that concludes the evening). She believed that the mazurka would determine everything and was sure she would dance the mazurka with him, as she had done at former balls. She even refused five young men's offers, saying she was already taken.

On the last waltz, she was tired and begged for a rest but relented to dance with a young man she could not refuse. She happened to be dancing next to Vronsky and Anna. She hadn't seen Anna since the beginning of the evening. Kitty noticed now that she was intoxicated with admiration and delight. It was exciting to see. She knew that feeling and its signs and saw them in Anna; saw the quiver in her lips, light in her eyes and smile of happiness and excitement along with her deliberate grace, precision, and lightness of movement in their dance.

No, it's not the admiration of the crowd that has intoxicated her, but the adoration of one. Kitty asked herself, not joining in on the one-way conversation with the young man who asked her to dance. *And that one? Can it be him?*

Every time he spoke to Anna, the light of joy flashed in her eyes, and the smile of happiness curved her red lips. She seemed to make an effort to control herself, to keep these outward signs of delight to herself, but they couldn't be controlled. Every time he turned her, he bent his head as though he would have fallen at her feet, and in his eyes, there was nothing but submission and fear. *I will not hurt you.* His eyes seemed to be saying. *I want to control my emotions, but I don't know how.* His face showed a look Kitty had never seen before.

They talked about the most trivial things, but to Kitty, it seemed that every word they said was determining their fate and hers. The whole ball, the whole world, everything seemed lost in the haze of Kitty's soul. Nothing but the stern discipline of her upbringing supported her and forced her to do what was expected of her, to keep dancing.

As they began rearranging the chairs in anticipation of the mazurka, a moment of despair and horror came over Kitty. She had refused five partners, and now she was not dancing the mazurka. There was no longer a hope that she would be asked. She would have to tell her mother that she fell ill and needed to go home, but she didn't even have the strength to do this. She felt crushed. She went to the farthest end of the room and sank into a low chair. Her heart ached, and her soul burned.

“Kitty, what’s wrong?” asked Countess Nordston, stepping noiselessly over the carpet towards her. “I don’t understand.”

Kitty’s lower lip began to quiver; she got up quickly.

“Kitty, you’re not dancing the mazurka?”

“No, I’m not,” said Kitty in a voice shaking with tears.

“He asked her to dance the mazurka, not me.”

Chapter 21

In the morning, Levin left Moscow, and towards evening, he reached home. On the journey back to the country, he talked to those next to him about politics and the new railways. Just as in Moscow, he was overcome by a sense of confusion and dissatisfaction with himself. But when he got out at his own train station, when he saw his one-eyed coachman and his own carriage with his own horses and their tails tied up, he felt little by little his confusion was clearing up. His embarrassment and shame were melting away. When he put on his work clothes and pondered the work that lay before him in the village, he began to see what happened to him in a different light.

He felt like himself again and did not want to be anyone else. All he wanted now was to be better than before. In the first place, he resolved that from that day on, he would give up hoping for any extraordinary happiness, such as marriage. Secondly, he would never again let himself give in to a revolting passion. The memory of what he had just been through tortured him so. He also felt the injustice of his own abundance compared to the poverty of the peasants, and now he determined that he would have and indulge less in luxury. With a resolute feeling of hope in a new, better life, he reached home before nine o'clock that evening.

His house was big and old-fashioned, and Levin, though he lived alone, had the whole house heated. He knew this was wrong and probably stupid and contrary to his reworked goals for more providential living, but this house was a whole world to Levin. It was the world in which his father and mother had lived and died. They had lived an ideal life, one of perfection, one that made him dream of being married, having a wife, and family.

Levin barely remembered his mother. His conception of her was from sacred memory, and his future wife was bound to be in his imagination a reincarnation of that exquisite, holy ideal of a woman that his mother had been. For Levin, getting married and having children were the chief goals of life, on which all happiness turned. And now he had to give that up.

Chapter 22

The morning after the ball, Anna Karenina sent her husband a telegram that she was leaving Moscow that same day.

“No, I must go, I must go,” she explained to Dolly. Stepan did not dine at home, but he promised to come and see his sister off at seven o’clock.

Kitty, too, did not come, sending a note that she had a headache. Dolly and Anna ate alone with the children and the nanny. Whether the children were fickle or had acute senses and felt that Anna was quite different that day, they had abruptly stopped playing with her. They didn’t care that she was leaving. Anna was absorbed the whole morning in preparing to go. She wrote notes to her Moscow friends, closed her accounts, and packed. Dolly sensed that something was agitating Anna, and after dinner, Dolly followed her up to her room.

“You are acting strange today!” Dolly said to her.

“I am? Do you think so? I don’t feel strange, just down. I get like this sometimes. I keep feeling like I could cry, but it’ll pass,” said Anna quickly, and she reached into her tiny bag and pulled out a handkerchief. Her eyes were bright and swimming in tears. “The same way I didn’t want to leave Petersburg, now I don’t want to leave here.”

“You came here and accomplished a good deal,” said Dolly, looking intently at her.

Anna returned her look, eyes wet with tears.

“Don’t say that, Dolly, I’ve done nothing and could do nothing. I often wonder why people spoil me with their words. What have I done, and what could I do? In your heart, there was love enough to forgive....”

“If it wasn’t for you, God only knows what would have happened!” said Dolly. “You have a heart that is pure and good.”

“Every heart has its skeletons, as the English say.”

“You don’t have any skeletons, do you? Everything about you is so clear to me.”

“I have!” Anna said suddenly, and, unexpectedly, her tears stopped.

“Do you know why I’m leaving today instead of tomorrow? This burden weighs on me; I want to confess this to you,” said Anna, letting herself drop into an armchair and looking straight at Dolly.

To her surprise, Dolly saw that Anna was blushing up to her ears, up to the curly black ringlets on her neck.

“Yes,” Anna went on. “Do you know why Kitty didn’t come to dinner? Because she’s jealous of me. I have spoiled...I’m the reason the ball was so torturous for her. But truly, truly, it’s not my fault, or only a little bit my fault,” she said, thinly reaching for the words “a little bit.”

At the very moment, she was uttering the words; she felt they were not true. She did not merely doubt herself, but she felt emotion at the thought of Vronsky and was leaving sooner than she had meant, so she did not have to see him again.

“Yes, Stepan told me that you danced the mazurka with him and that he....”

“You can’t imagine how absurdly it all unfolded. I only meant to be a matchmaker, and all at once, it turned out quite differently. Maybe against my will. However, I am certain it will all be forgotten, and with time, Kitty won’t hate me anymore.”

“All the same, Anna, to tell you the truth, I’m not really in favor of this marriage between Kitty and Vronsky. It’s better that it comes to nothing, especially if Vronsky is capable of falling in love with you in a single day.

“Oh heavens, that is silly!” said Anna, and again a deep surge of pleasure showed on her face when she heard what was consuming her put into words. “And here I am leaving, having made an enemy of Kitty, whom I liked so much! Ah, how sweet she is! You can make it right, can’t you, Dolly?”

Dolly couldn’t suppress a smile. She loved Anna but enjoyed seeing that she, too, had weaknesses.

“Remember, Anna, what you’ve done for me, I shall never forget. And remember that I love you and shall always love you as my dearest friend! Goodbye, my darling.”

Chapter 23

Thank God that is over with! was the first thought that came to Anna when she said goodbye for the last time to her brother, who stood waving at the station as she left. She sat down in her lounge and looked around in the twilight of the sleeping carriage. *Thank God! Tomorrow I will see my husband and son, and my life will go back to normal.*

Two ladies began talking to Anna. She answered a few words but not foreseeing any entertainment from the conversation. She asked her handmaid Annushka to get a lamp and hook it from the arm of her seat. Anna then took from her bag an English novel and began reading. She read and understood, but it wasn't interesting to her, that is, to follow the reflection of other people's lives. She wanted to live her own, but she forced herself to continue. Her mind started to wander.

She remembered the ball and Vronsky and his slavish adoration. She remembered dancing with him; there was nothing shameful done. And yet, at this point in her memory, the feeling of shame was intensified, as though some inner voice, just at the point of thinking of Vronsky, was saying to her, *warm, very warm, hot. Well, what is it?* She said to herself resolutely. *What does it mean? Am I afraid to look it straight in the face? What is it? Can it be that between me and this officer boy, there exists, or can exist, a relationship other than friendship?* She laughed contemptuously and picked up her book again, but now she was definitely unable to follow what she read.

"Do you want to go outside?" asked Annushka.

"Yes, I need some air. It's very hot in here." And she opened the door. The driving snow and the wind rushed to meet her and struggled with her against the door. But she enjoyed the struggle.

She opened the door and went out. The wind seemed like it was lying in wait for her to arrive.

The raging tempest rushed whistling between the wheels of the carriages. Two gentlemen with cigarettes approached her. She drew one more deep breath of the fresh air. She had just put her hand on the door to get back into the carriage when another man in a military overcoat, standing next to her now, stepped between her and the door.

She turned around and recognized Vronsky's face instantly. Touching his hand to the top of his cap, he bowed to her and asked, "Can I be of any service to you." She gazed rather a long while at him without answering. She saw, or at least thought she saw, both the expression of his face and his eyes. It was an expression of tamed ecstasy which had so worked upon her the day before. She didn't need to ask why he had come, as she knew as certainly as if he had told her.

"I didn't know you were coming. Why are you here?" she said, letting her hand fall from the grasped position on the door handle.

“Why am I here?” he repeated, looking straight into her eyes. “You know that I have come to be where you are,” he said, “I can’t help myself.”

At that moment, the wind, surmounting all obstacles, sent snow flying from the carriage roofs. All the awfulness of the storm seemed to her more splendid now. He said what her soul longed to hear, though she feared the words. She didn’t answer, and in her face, he saw conflict.

“Forgive me if you dislike what I said,” he said humbly. He had spoken courteously, deferentially, yet so firmly, so stubbornly, that for a long while, she could not answer.

“It is wrong what you said, and I beg you, if you are a good man, to forget what you’ve said, as I forget it,” she said at last.

“Not one word, not one gesture of yours shall I, could I, ever forget....”

“Enough, enough!” She cried, trying to portray a stern expression with her face.

Quickly she entered the corridor of her carriage. But in the room, she paused, going over in her mind what just happened. Though she could not recall all of her words or his, she realized instinctively that their conversation brought them fearfully closer; and she was panic-stricken and overjoyed.

She did not sleep all night. But in that nervous tension, and in the visions that filled her mind, nothing was upsetting or gloomy; on the contrary, there was something blissful, glowing, and exhilarating. In the morning, Anna sank into a doze and awakened when it was daylight, and the train was near Petersburg. Thoughts of home, of her husband and son, and the worries of the upcoming day filled her mind.

In Petersburg, as soon as the train stopped and she got out, the first person that attracted her attention was her husband. *Oh, mercy! Why do his ears look like that?* she thought, looking at his frigid and imposing figure, and especially the ears that struck her at the moment as propping up the brim of his round hat.

Catching sight of her, he came to meet her, his lips falling into their habitual emotionless form and his big, tired eyes looking straight at her. An unpleasant sensation gripped at her heart when she met his obstinate and weary glance, as though she had expected, or hoped, to see him differently. She was especially struck by the dissatisfaction she felt towards him. It was a familiar feeling, one that she had experienced often with her husband. But up until now, she had not taken note of the feeling, but now she was clearly and painfully aware of it.

“Yes, as you can see, your tender spouse, as devoted to you as the first year of our marriage, burning with impatience to see you,” he said in his deliberate, high-pitched voice.

“Is Sergey doing well? She asked him about their son.

“And this is your response,” he said, “to my romantic gesture? He’s doing fine....”

Chapter 24

Vronsky did not try to sleep that night. He sat in his armchair, watching the people who got in and out as if they were things. A nervous young man asked him for a light and tried to start a conversation, but Vronsky gazed at him exactly as he did at the lamp. He felt that he was a king, not because he believed that he had made an impression on Anna, but because of how she made him feel.

What would come of it all, he did not know. He didn't even think about that. All of his energy was centered on one thing, on one blissful goal. And he was happy about this. He only knew that he had told Anna the truth, That the meaning of life for him now lay in seeing and hearing her.

He was glad he told her because she now knew and could consider it. He did not sleep because he unceasingly replayed every word that she spoke, and his heart filled with emotion. He considered their possible future together.

When he got out of the train at Petersburg, he was as fresh as a cold bath even after the sleepless night. He paused, waiting for her to get out. *Once more*, he said to himself, *once more I will see her walk, her face; maybe she will say something, glance, smile*. But before he caught sight of her, he saw her husband, who was being escorted through the crowd. *Ah, yes! The husband*. Only now, for the first time, did Vronsky clearly realize that there was a person attached to her, a husband. He knew that she had a husband but had hardly believed in his existence, and only now, seeing his head and shoulders, legs in black trousers, did he fully believe. He saw this husband calmly take her arm as though she were his.

Seeing Alexey Karenin, Anna's husband, with his Petersburg face and forceful self-confident figure, with a round hat and strong back, now he believed in him and was aware of an unpleasant feeling, a muddying of the water. Karenin's manner of walking, with a swing of his hips and flat feet, particularly annoyed Vronsky. The sight of her affected him the same way, physically reviving him, stirring him, and filling his soul with euphoria. He saw this first meeting between husband and wife and noted with a lover's insight the signs of the slight reserve with which she spoke to her husband. "No, she does not love him and cannot love him," he decided.

As he approached Anna Karenina, he noticed too with joy that she was conscious of his being near, and seeing him, turned again to her husband.

"Did you have a nice night?" he asked, bowing to her and her husband together and leaving it up to Alexey whether he would accept this gesture or not, as he might see fit.

"Thank you, very good," she answered.

Her face looked tired, and there was not a play of eagerness in it, but for a single instant, as she glanced at him, there was a flash of something in her eyes, and though it died away, he was happy for that moment. She glanced at her husband to find out whether he knew

Vronsky. Alexey Karenina looked at Vronsky with resentment, vaguely recalling who this was. Vronsky's composure and self-confidence struck and sunk Alexey's confidence.

"Count Vronsky," said Anna.

"Yes! We have met before, I believe," said Alexey with difficulty, extending his hand.

"You set off with the mother, and now you return with the son," he said to Anna. "You're back from your vacation?" He said to Vronsky, and without waiting for a reply, he turned to his wife in his playful tone: "Well, were there many tears shed in Moscow when you left?"

By addressing his wife like this, he let Vronsky know that he wished to be left alone, but Vronsky turned to Anna.

"I hope I may have the honor of visiting you," he said.

Alexey glanced with heavy eyes at Vronsky.

"Delighted," he said coldly. "On Mondays, we're at home. Most fortunate," he said to his wife, dismissing Vronsky altogether. Alexey went on, no longer in a sarcastic tone. "You wouldn't believe how much I've missed..." Leading her by the hand, he helped her into her carriage.

Chapter 25

The first person to meet Anna at home was her son, Sergey. He dashed down the stairs to her despite the Nanny's call, and with desperate joy, shrieked: "Mother! Mother!" Running up to her, he hung on her neck.

And her son, like her husband, aroused in Anna a feeling something like disappointment. She had imagined him better than he was in reality. She had to let herself sink to reality to enjoy him as he really was. But even as he was, he was charming, with his blonde curls, his blue eyes, and his plump, graceful little legs in tightly pulled-up stockings. Anna experienced almost physical pleasure in the sensation of his nearness, touch, and moral soothing when she met his simple, confiding, loving glance and listened to his innocent questions.

Anna took out the presents that Dolly's children had sent for him and told her son about the little girl Tanya, and how Tanya could read, and even taught the other children.

"She's better than I am, isn't she?" asked Sergey.

"To me, you are the best person in the world," Anna replied to her smiling son.

At dinner time (there were always a few people dining with the Karenins), Anna went into the drawing-room to welcome her guests. Precisely at five o'clock, before the bronze Peter the Great clock had struck the fifth stroke, her husband Alexey came in, wearing a white tie and evening coat with two stars. Every minute of Alexey's life was measured and occupied. And to make time to get through all that lay before him every day, he adhered to the strictest punctuality. 'Without haste and without rest' was his motto. He came into the dining hall, greeted everyone, and hurriedly sat down, smiling at his wife.

At dinner, he talked a little to his wife about Moscow, and with a sarcastic smile, asked her about her brother Stepan. "One cannot exonerate such a man from blame, even if he is your brother."

Anna smiled. She knew that he said that simply to show that family relationships would not prevent him from expressing his honest opinion. She knew that about her husband and liked it.

He's a good man; truthful, good-hearted, and remarkable in his own way, Anna said to herself, finishing the evening and going back to her room, as though she were defending him to someone who had attacked him and said that he could not be loved. But why do his ears stick out so much? Maybe he just had a haircut?

Precisely at twelve o'clock, when Anna was still sitting at her writing table, finishing a letter to Dolly, she heard the sound of measured steps, and Alexey, freshly washed and combed, came into her room. "It's time, it's time," he said, with a measured smile, and he went into her bedroom. Undressing, she followed him, but her face had none of the eagerness that it had in Moscow, now the fire seemed quenched in her, hidden somewhere far away.

Chapter 26

At the end of the winter, in the Sherbatsky's house, a medical examination was being held to pronounce the state of Kitty's health. She had been ill, and as spring came on, she had grown worse.

"Well, doctor, tell us our fate," said the princess. "Tell me everything.

Is there hope? she meant to say, but her lips quivered, and she could not utter the question. "Well, doctor?"

The family doctor began timidly explaining his opinion, that there were signs of tuberculosis trouble, but...and so on.

"The commencement of the tuberculosis process is not easily defined; until there are cavities, there is nothing definite. But we suspect it. And there are indications; malnutrition, nervous excitability, and so on."

"But, you know, there are often emotional, spiritual causes at the foundation of these cases," the doctor permitted himself to interject with a subtle smile.

It seemed as though some piece of good fortune had come to pass after the doctor left. The mother was much more cheerful, and Kitty pretended to be as well. She was often, almost always, pretending now.

"Really, I'm feeling pretty good, mamma. If you want to go on a trip, let's do it!" she said, and trying to appear interested, she started making preparations for the journey.

Soon after the doctor left, Dolly arrived. She knew that there was an examination that day. Though she had more than enough trouble and anxiety of her own, she had left her young baby and a sick child to come and hear Kitty's prognosis.

"Well, what did the doctor say?" she asked, coming into the drawing-room removing her hat. "You're all in good spirits. Good news, then?"

They tried to tell her what the doctor had said, but it was utterly impossible to understand him. The only point of interest was that she was allowed to go abroad.

Dolly sighed. Her closest friend, her sister, was going away. And her life was quite miserable. Her relationship with Stepan after their reconciliation was a sham. The reunion that Anna had cemented turned out to be fragile, and family harmony was breaking down again. Nothing definitive happened, but Stepan was hardly ever at home; money was tight, and Dolly was constantly tortured by suspicions of infidelity, which she tried to dismiss. She dreaded returning to the agony of jealousy that she had already experienced. The discovery of new infidelities could never affect her as much as it did the first time, and the care of her large family was a constant stress to her. The nursing of her young baby was not going well, the nanny left, and now one of her other children had fallen ill.

“Well, how are all of you?” asked her mother.

“Ah, Mamma, we have plenty of trouble of our own.”

The old prince, the father, had come in from his study after the doctor left, and after talking to Dolly, he turned to his wife:

“Well, have you settled it? Are you going? What should I do?”

“I suppose you had better stay here, Alexander,” his wife said.

“As you wish.”

“Mamma, Father should come with us,” said Kitty. “It would be far nicer for him and for us, too.”

The old prince got up and stroked Kitty’s hair. She lifted her head and looked at them with a smile. It always seemed to her that he understood her better than anyone in the family, though he did not say much. Being the youngest, she was her father’s favorite, and she felt that his love for her made him proud. When now her glance met his kindly blue eyes looking intently at her, it seemed to her that he saw right through her and understood all that was not well with her.

“Well, Dolly,” he turned to his eldest daughter, “what’s your young buck doing?”

“Nothing, Father,” answered Dolly, understanding that he was referring to her husband. “He’s always gone. I scarcely see him,” she could not resist adding.

“I’ll tell you what, Kitty,” her father began, turning now to his youngest, “you must wake up one fine day and say to yourself, ‘I’m fine and happy, and I’m going on a walk with my dad today.’”

What her father said seemed simple enough, yet at these words, Kitty was overcome with a sense of being revealed. *Yes, he sees it all, he understands me perfectly, and he’s trying to tell me that I need to get over my shame.* She could not raise her spirits enough to answer him. She tried to begin but all at once burst into tears and rushed out of the room.

“See what your jokes do!” the princess pounced on her husband. “You’re always...” she began her scolding.

The prince listened to the princess for a long time without speaking. “I can’t listen anymore!” said the prince gloomily, getting up from his chair and seeming anxious to get away, he left the room.

Dolly, with her motherly instincts, felt sorry for her father and embarrassed of her mother. But after he left, she knew that she needed to go to Kitty and console her.

“I have wanted to tell you something for a long time, mamma. Did you know that Levin meant to make Kitty an offer when he was here the last time? He told Stepan.”

“Well, what happened then, I don’t understand? Did Kitty refuse his offer?”

“I don’t know. She said nothing to me about it, and she’s too proud to talk about it.”

“Suppose she refused Levin, and she wouldn’t have refused him if it hadn’t been for Vronsky? If that’s true, he has deceived her horribly.”

The princess had a hard time thinking about how she had wronged her daughter by encouraging Vronsky, and she broke out into a fit of anger.

“I don’t understand this generation! Nowadays, they all do their own thing, and mothers don’t have any influence.”

“Mamma, I’ll go up and talk to her.”

When she went into Kitty’s pretty, little pink room, full of knick-knacks, fresh and happy as Kitty herself had been two months ago. Dolly remembered how they had decorated the room the year before with such love and joy. Her heart sunk when she saw Kitty sitting on a chair near the door, her eyes fixed immovably on a corner of the rug. Kitty glanced at her sister, and the cold expression of her face did not change.

“I want to talk to you,” said Dolly.

“About what?” Kitty asked swiftly, lifting her head as if in dismay.

“About what is bothering you?”

“Nothing is bothering me.”

“Nonsense, Kitty. I know all about it. And believe me, it’s not a big deal; we’ve all been through it.” Kitty did not speak, and her face retained its stern expression.

“He’s not worth your grieving over him,” continued Dolly, getting straight to the point.

“No, because he has treated me terribly,” said Kitty, in a breaking voice. “Don’t talk about it! Please, don’t talk about it.”

“How do you want me to feel, huh?” said Kitty quickly. “That I’ve been in love with a man who doesn’t care at all about me and that I’m dying of love for him? I don’t want your sympathy. Why are you tormenting me?”

“But I...quite the contrary....I see that you are in pain....”

But Kitty, in her fury, did not hear her.

“I have nothing to grieve over and nothing to be comforted about. I am too proud to allow myself to care for a man who does not love me.”

“Ok, I’ll leave it be. But please tell me one thing and tell me the truth,” said Dolly, taking her by the hand: “Tell me, did Levin speak to you?”

The mention of Levin’s name seemed to deprive Kitty of the last vestige of self-control. Leaping up from her chair and, motioning rapidly with her hands, she said, “Why bring Levin in this too? I can’t understand why you want to torment me. I’ve told you, and I will say it again, that I have some pride, and never, NEVER would I do as you’re doing, return to a man who has deceived you and has cared for another woman. I don’t get it! You may, but I don’t!”

Upon saying these words, she glanced at her sister and, seeing that Dolly sat silent, her head mournfully bowed, Kitty, sat down near the door, instead of running out of the room as she had meant to do, and hid her face in her handkerchief.

The silence lasted for two minutes: Dolly was thinking about her situation. The humiliation she was always aware of came back to the forefront with a particular sting when her sister reminded her of it. She had not sought cruelty from her sister and was angry with her for it. But, suddenly, she heard the rustle of a skirt, and with it, the sound of a heartbeat smothered sobbing and felt arms around her neck. Kitty was on her knees before her.

“Dolly, I am so, so wretched!” she whispered penitently. And the sweet face covered with tears hid in Dolly’s skirt.

As though tears were the indispensable oil, without which the machinery of mutual confidence could not run smoothly between the two sisters, the sisters, after their tears, talked and understood each other. Kitty knew that the words she uttered in anger about Stepan’s infidelity and Dolly’s humiliating position had cut her poor sister to the core, but she had forgiven her. Dolly, for her part, knew all she had wanted to know. She felt certain that Kitty’s misery and illness were due to the fact that Levin had made her an offer. She had refused him, and Vronsky had deceived her and that she was fully prepared to love Levin and reject Vronsky.

Chapter 27

Steps were heard at the door where Princess Betsy, the center figure of Anna's elite social circle, was sitting with Vronsky. Vronsky was looking towards the door, and on his face wore a strange new expression. Joyfully, intently and at the same time nervously, he gazed at the approaching figure and slowly rose to his feet. Anna walked into the drawing-room, moving with swift, resolute, and light steps. She shook hands with Princess Betsy, the hostess, and with the same smile looked around at Vronsky. Vronsky bowed and pushed a chair up for her.

She acknowledged this only by a slight nod, slightly blushing. Immediately, she addressed Princess Betsy.

"I have been at Countess Lidia's and meant to have come here earlier, but I stayed longer. Sir John was there. He's very interesting."

"Oh, that's the missionary?"

"Yes, he was telling us about his life in India, the most interesting stories."

"Sir John! Yes, Sir John. I've seen him. He speaks well," another guest chimed in. "I know the girl that is in love with him, too."

"And is it true they are to be married? I hear they are marrying because they are in love."

"Marrying for love? What in the devil has gotten into people!"

"It's a foolish tradition that's still alive. What can I say?" said Vronsky.

"So much worse off are those who marry for love. The only happy marriages I know were arranged. But by arranged marriages, I mean those in which both parties have sown their wild oats already. It's like smallpox. One has to go through it and get it over with."

"Then they ought to find a vaccine for love, like smallpox."

"I was in love when I was young, with a deacon," said Princess Myakaya, another guest at the party. "I don't know that it did me any good."

"No, I imagine, all joking aside, that to know love, one must make mistakes and then correct them," said Princess Betsy.

"Even after marriage?" added a guest playfully.

"It's never too late to mend."

"What do you think, Anna?" Who was listening in silence to the conversation.

“I think,” said Anna, playing with the glove she had taken off, “I think...there are different people with different minds and certainly different hearts, and there are many kinds of love.”

Vronsky was looking at Anna, with a nervous heart waiting for what she would say. He sighed when she said these words.

Anna suddenly turned to him. “I received a letter from Moscow. I hear that Kitty Sherbatsky is very ill.”

“Really?” Said Vronsky, raising his brows.

Anna looked sternly at him. “This doesn’t interest you?”

“On the contrary, it does, very much so. What was it exactly they told you?” he questioned.

“I often think that men have no understanding of what is immoral,” said Anna, without answering him. “I’ve wanted to tell you that for a long time,” she added, and moving a few steps away, she sat down at a corner table.

“I don’t quite understand what you are getting at,” he said, handing her a cup. She glanced towards the sofa beside her, and he instantly sat down.

“Yes, I’ve wanted to tell you,” she said, not looking at him, “You have behaved inappropriately, very much so.”

“You think I don’t know that? But who was the cause of me doing so?”

“Why do you talk like that?” She said, glancing penetratingly at him.

“You know why,” he answered boldly, meeting her glance and not dropping his eyes.

Now she was embarrassed and not him.

“That only shows you have no heart,” she said. But her eyes said that she knew he had a heart, and that is what scared her.

“What you are talking about is wrong and not love. I have long meant to tell you this,” Anna went on, looking resolutely into his eyes and warming by the burning flush in her cheeks. “I’ve come this evening with a purpose, knowing that you would be here. I have come to tell you that this must end. I have never felt shame like this before, and you make me feel guilty of something.”

He looked at her and was struck by a new spiritual beauty in her face.

“What do you want me to do?” he simply but thoughtfully asked.

“I want you to go to Moscow and ask for Kitty’s forgiveness,” she said.

“You don’t want that?” he said. He saw that Anna was saying what she forced herself to say and not what she wanted to say.

“If you love me, as you say,” she whispered, “do this so I can be at peace.”

His face grew radiant.

“Don’t you know that you are my whole life? I have no peace, and I can’t give any to you; but love, yes, love, I can give. I can’t think of us being apart. You and I are one to me. I see a chance for either despair or love between us.

With all of her power, she tried to say what needed to be said. But instead, she let her eyes rest on him, full of love, and said nothing.

“Then do this for me, never talk like this again, and let us be friends,” she said in words, but her eyes said something entirely different.

“Friends, we shall never be, you know that. Whether we shall be the happiest or the most wretched of people, that’s in your hands.”

She wanted to say something, but he interrupted her.

“I ask only one thing, I ask for the right to hope, to suffer as I do. But if that cannot be, command me to disappear, and I will be gone. You will not see me anymore.”

At that moment, Anna’s husband Alexey walked into the room with his calm, awkward walk. He went up to his wife and suggested that they go home together. But she answered, not looking at him, that she was staying for dinner. Alexey made his bows and withdrew.

Following dinner, Vronsky escorted Anna down to her carriage. “There’s only one happiness in life for me, that word you dislike so much...yes, love!”

“Love,” she repeated slowly, in an inner voice. She gave him her hand and vanished into the carriage.

Her glance, the touch of her hand, set him aflame. He kissed the palm of his hand where she had touched it and went home, happy in the sense that he was getting closer.

Chapter 28

Alexey had seen nothing striking or improper in the fact that his wife was sitting with Vronsky in an eager conversation with him about something. But realized that everyone else at the party saw it as unfitting, and for that reason, he too began to see it as inappropriate. He made up his mind that he must speak to his wife. He must talk to her; it seemed a simple matter. But now, as he was thinking about it, it became very complicated.

Alexey was not jealous. He had no lack of confidence in himself and told himself that he ought to also have faith in his wife. Now Alexey was standing face to face with reality, the possibility that his wife may love someone other than himself, and this seemed incomprehensible to him. He was horrified at this possibility.

He walked across the drawing-room and neared her bedroom door, and turned back. He halted and expressed to himself, *I must do this; I must put a stop to it.* And he turned back again. *But express what?* he asked himself, and he found no reply. *After all, what has occurred? Nothing. She was talking with him, but that doesn't mean anything. Surely women can talk to whom they please. I don't need to be jealous about that.* Yet, he continued to her bedroom.

Interlacing his fingers, Alexey stretched them, and the joints of his fingers cracked. This trick, a bad habit, the cracking of his fingers, always soothed him and focused his thoughts. *I must say and express the following points, first, the value attached to public opinion and decorum; secondly, the religious significance of marriage; thirdly, if need be, the calamity that would face our son; and fourthly, a reference to the unhappiness she will likely bring upon herself.*

There was the sound of a carriage driving up to the front door. A woman's step was heard mounting the stairs. Alexey, ready for his speech, stood and again tried to crack his fingers. Only one joint cracked. He felt uncharacteristically nervous about what was coming.

Anna came in with her head hanging. Her face was brilliant and glowing, but not with brightness; instead, the fearful glow of a fire in the midst of a dark night. On seeing her husband, Anna raised her head and smiled as though she had just woken up.

"Why aren't you in bed?" she asked and continued walking to her dressing room. "It's late, Alexey," she said.

"Anna, I need to talk to you."

"With me?" she asked curiously. She came out from behind the door of the dressing room and looked at him. "About what?" she asked, sitting down. "I'd prefer to just go to sleep."

"Anna, I must warn you," he began.

"Warn me?" she said. "Of what?"

“I want to warn you,” he said in a low voice, “through your lack of caution, you may cause people to gossip. You were too animated this evening in your conversation with Count Vronsky.”

As he talked, he looked at her laughing eyes, which scared him now with their impenetrable look, and, as he talked, he felt how useless his words were.

“You’re always like that,” she answered. “Sometimes you don’t like how boring I am, and other times you don’t like it when I’m too animated.”

Alexey shivered and bent his hands to make the joints crack.

“Oh, please don’t do that. I hate that,” she said.

“I am duty-bound to you, to myself, and to God, to point out to you the obligations to which you are bound. Our life has been joined, not by man, but by God. That union can only be severed by a crime, and a crime of that nature brings its own punishment.”

“I don’t understand a word you are saying, and I am tired,” she said.

“Anna, for God’s sake, don’t speak like that!” he said gently. “Perhaps I am mistaken, but believe me, I am your husband, and I love you.”

The word love threw her into a revolt again. She thought *Love? Can he love? If he hadn’t heard, there was such a thing as love, he would never have used that word. He doesn’t even know what love is.*

“I have nothing to say, and besides,” she said hurriedly, “it really is time to be in bed.”

Alexey sighed, and without saying more, went into the bedroom. When she came in, he was already in bed. He was turned, with his eyes looking away from her. Anna got into her bed and lay expecting every minute that he would begin speaking again. She feared it and wished for it. But he was silent. She waited for a long while without moving and then forgot about him. She thought of the other; she pictured him and felt how her heart was flooded with emotion and guilty pleasure.

From that time, a new life began for Alexey and his wife. Nothing special happened. Anna resumed her life and spent more time with Princess Betsy and Vronsky. Alexey saw this but could do nothing. All his efforts to draw her open were met with a barrier to which he could not penetrate. Outwardly, things seemed the same, but their inner relationship was changed entirely. Alexey, a man of power, felt helpless.

Chapter 29

That desire for which Vronsky had devoted almost a whole year to, absorbing his life to its consummation, and that for which Anna deemed impossible and terrible and for that reason more of an enchanting dream of bliss, that desire was satisfied. He stood before her, pale, his lower jaw quivering, and asked her to be calm.

“Anna! Anna!” he said in a trembling voice, “Anna, for God’s sake!”

But the louder he spoke, the lower she dropped her once proud, now shame-filled, head, and she bowed down and sank from the sofa where she was sitting. She would have fallen on the carpet if he had not held her.

“My God! Forgive me!” she said, sobbing. She felt so sinful, so guilty, that nothing was left but to welcome the humiliation and beg forgiveness. As now there was no one in her life but him, she addressed her prayer for forgiveness to him. Looking at him, she had a physical sense of her shame, and she could say nothing more.

He felt what a murderer must feel when he sees the body he has robbed of life. There was something awful and revolting in the memory of what had been bought at this fearful price of shame. Shame at their spiritual nakedness crushed her and infected him. He sank on his knees and tried to see her face, but she hid it and said nothing. At last, as though making an effort to compose herself, she got up and pushed him away. Her face was still as beautiful but all the sadder.

“My life is over,” she said; “I have nothing left but you. Remember that. I can never forget what my life was, for one moment of pleasure.”

She rose quickly and moved away from him.

“Not a word more,” she repeated, and with a look of chilled despair, incomprehensible to him, she parted from him. She at that moment felt she could not put into words the sense of shame, euphoria, and horror of stepping into this new life. She did not want to speak of it, to vulgarize this feeling by inadequate words. But later, the next day and even the third day, she still couldn’t find the words to express the complexity of her feelings; indeed, she could not even find thoughts to express what was in her soul.

She said to herself, *later, when I have calmed, I will be able to think clearly*. But this clarity never came; every time the thought rose of what she had done and what would happen to her, a horror came over her, and she drove the thoughts away.

Later, later, she would say, when things have settled.

Chapter 30

As he rode up to his house in the happiest frame of mind, Levin heard the bell ring at the principal entrance to his home. *Yes, that is someone from the railway station, he thought, Just in time to be here from the Moscow train.....But who could it be?*

“Hello,” cried Levin joyfully, flinging up both of his hands. “Here’s a delightful surprise! How glad I am to see you!” he shouted, recognizing Stepan Oblonsky.

I can find out whether she’s married or when she’s getting married, he thought. And on that delicious spring day, he felt that the thought of her did not hurt him at all.

“Well, you didn’t expect me, huh?” said Stepan. “I have some business in the area and really wanted to see you.”

“I’m very glad to see you,” said Levin, with a genuine smile of childlike delight.

“I am glad I managed to get away to see you! Now I can learn about your mysterious life in the country. I really am jealous of you. What a house, how beautiful it is here! So bright, open, and cheerful.” said Stepan.

Not one word did Stepan say about Kitty or the Sherbatskys. Levin was longing to learn about what had been tormenting him so much since he left Moscow. Yet, he did not have the courage to ask. “So, tell me how things are going for you,” he asked instead, deflecting the temptation to bring up selfish topics.

Stepan’s eyes sparkled. “I don’t count life as living without love,” he said, “What can I do? I’m built this way. And really, one does so little harm to anyone and receives so much pleasure. These are women that one sees only in dreams, yet I meet them in reality. The subject of women is such that no matter how much you study, it always seems perfectly new like I’m learning it for the first time, every time.”

“Well, then, it is better not to study it,” Levin interjected. Levin listened in silence, and despite all the efforts he made, he could not accept his friend's feelings or understand his sentiments.

They spent the next day trapping, hunting, and shooting. Very little was said between them. They listened to nature, and Stepan enjoyed the solitude.

“Stepan!” said Levin unexpectedly; “how is it that you haven’t brought up your sister-in-law Kitty? Whether she’s married or when she is expected to be?” Levin felt so resolute and at peace that no answer, he sensed, could affect him. But he never dreamed of how Stepan would reply.

“She has never thought of getting married and isn’t thinking about it, but she’s very ill, and the doctors have sent her abroad. They are positively afraid she may not live.”

“What!” cried Levin. “Very ill? What is wrong with her? How is she..?”

But at that moment, both suddenly heard a shrill whistle which struck on their ears, and both suddenly grabbed their guns and pointed them upwards. The snipe flying high above instantly folded its wings and fell into a bush, falling to the simultaneous shots.

“Splendid! We did it together!” cried Levin, and he ran with Stepan into the bush to look for the snipe.

On the way home, Levin asked for all of the details about Kitty’s illness and the Sherbatskys’ plans, and though he would have been ashamed to admit it, he was pleased with what he heard. He was glad that there was still hope. But when Stepan began to talk about the cause of Kitty’s illness and mentioned Vronsky’s name, Levin cut him short: “I have no right whatsoever to know their family’s business, and, to tell you the truth, no interest in them either.”

Stepan caught the instantaneous change he knew so well in Levin’s face, which had become as gloomy as it had been bright a minute before.

Chapter 31

To Vronsky, every one, his mother, his brother, everyone saw fit to interfere in the affairs of his heart. This aroused in him a feeling of angry hatred, a feeling he had rarely known before. *What business is it of theirs? Why do they worry about me so much? They think they need to teach us how to live. They haven't any idea of what happiness is; they don't know that without our love, for us, there is neither happiness nor unhappiness, no life at all,* he thought.

He was angry with all of them for their interference because he felt in his soul that they, all of them, were right. He felt that the love that bound him to Anna was not a momentary impulse, which would pass. He felt all of the torture of their position, concealing their love, lying, and deceiving. Still, the passion that united them was so intense that they were both oblivious to everything else but their love.

He recalled vividly the shame he had detected in her because of their lying and deceit. He loathed something, someone, whether it was Alexey or himself or the whole world, he could not say.

Yes, she was unhappy before, but proud and at peace, and now she cannot be at peace and feel confident in her dignity. We must put an end to this, he decided.

And for the first time, the idea clearly presented itself that it was essential to put an end to this confidential relationship. The sooner, the better. *Get it all out into the open, and then we can live somewhere together, alone with our love,* he said to himself.

The rain did not last long, and by the time Vronsky arrived, the sun had peeped out again. He was certain that he would find her at her home because of the rain, as he knew that Alexey was away on business.

Satisfied that she would be alone and wanting to surprise her, he took an alternative route through the garden. Vronsky had forgotten about the difficulties of their position. He thought of nothing but seeing her, not in imagination, but living, all of her, as she was in reality. He was just about to enter, stepping on his whole foot so as not to creak up the worn steps of the terrace, when he remembered what he always tried not to think about and what caused the most torturous feelings in his relationship with her, her son.

This boy was more than anyone else a check on their freedom. When he was present, both Vronsky and Anna did not merely avoid speaking of their relationship but also any hint of it. In his presence, they talked like acquaintances. The child's presence always called up in Vronsky that strange feeling of inexplicable loathing which he had been experiencing lately. With his innocent outlook upon life, this child was the compass that showed them the point at which they departed.

This time Sergey, the son, was not at home, and she was completely alone. Dressed in a heavily embroidered, white gown, she was sitting in the corner of the terrace behind some large rose bushes and did not hear Vronsky approaching. The beauty of her whole figure, her face, her neck, her hands, struck Vronsky every time as something new and beautiful.

He stood still, gazing at her in ecstasy. She felt his presence and turned her face towards his.

“What’s wrong? Are you not feeling well?” he asked her, walking up to her. He would have run to her but remembered that there might be spectators.

“No, I’m fine,” she said, getting up and firmly grabbing his hand. “I didn’t expect you, and you startled me. I’m alone, waiting for Sergey. He’s out for a walk and should be home soon.” In spite of her efforts to remain calm, her lips were quivering.

“Forgive me for coming, but I had to see you,” he went on.

“Forgive you? I’m so glad you are here!”

Should I tell him or not? She thought, looking into his quiet, affectionate eyes. *He’s so happy, so absorbed in his hobbies, he might not understand the gravity of the situation.*

“Please tell me what’s on your mind,” he said. “I sense there is something wrong. I need to know to be at peace. I know you are in trouble, please tell me?” He repeated imploringly.

“Shall I tell you?”

“Yes, yes, yes....”

“I am pregnant,” she said softly and deliberately. The leaf in her hand shook more violently, but she did not take her eyes off of him, watching how he would respond. He turned white, almost said something, but stopped; he dropped her hand, and his head sank. *Yes, he realizes the gravity of it,* she thought and gracefully took his hand.

But she was mistaken in thinking he realized the gravity, at least to the level that she did. On hearing the news, he felt that strange feeling of loathing, but with tenfold intensity. He also felt that this was the turning point he had been longing for; it was impossible to go on secretly concealing things from her husband, and it was inevitable that their relationship should come to light. Besides all of that, her emotion physically affected him. He looked at her with a new submissive tenderness, kissed her hand, got up, and in silence paced the terrace.

“Yes,” he said to her resolutely. “It is absolutely necessary to put an end to the deception we are living in.”

“Put an end? How?” she asked softly.

“Leave your husband, and we will be one.”

“We are one as it is,” she answered, scarcely audibly. “Is there any way out of this position I’m in? Am I not the wife of my husband?”

“Anything is better than the position we are currently in. I see how you torture yourself over everything, your social status, your son, and your husband.”

“Not over my husband,” she said, “I don’t know him, I don’t think of him. He doesn’t exist.”

“Then tell him everything, and leave him.” Vronsky could not understand how she, with her strong and truthful nature, could endure this state of deceit and not long to get out of it.

Anna could hear the sound of her son’s voice coming towards them, and glancing swiftly round the terrace, she got up impulsively. Her eyes glowed with the fire he knew so well; with a rapid movement, she took Vronsky’s head in her hands, looking longingly into his face, and swiftly kissed his mouth, and both eyes then pushed him away.

The external relationship of Alexey and his wife Anna remained unchanged. The sole difference lay in the fact that he was more busily occupied now than ever. Since the date of their conversation after the party, he had never spoken again to Anna of his suspicions and his jealousies. He was a little colder to his wife. ‘You are not open with me,’ he seemed to say with his eyes.

He did not want to see and did not see, that many people in society cast dubious glances on Anna, he did not want to understand, and did not understand, why his wife had insisted on staying late at the party with Vronsky. He did not allow himself to think about it, and he did not think about it. Still, all the same, he knew beyond all doubt that she was cheating on him, and he was profoundly miserable.

How often during the eight years of happy married life had he looked at other men’s faithless wives and cheated on husbands and asked *how can people descend to that? How do they live with themselves?* But now that the misfortune had come upon himself, he was so far from thinking of putting an end to it. It would be too awful, too unnatural.

On race day, a very busy day for Alexey, he made up his mind to go to the house to see his wife immediately after dinner and from there to the races. He would see his wife because he had determined to see her once a week to keep up appearances. And besides, on that day, as it was the fifteenth of the month, he had to give her some money for her expenses, as per their usual arrangement.

Chapter 32

Stepan Oblonsky had gone to Petersburg to perform the most essential of official duties, reminding the ministry of his existence. Having taken all of the cash from home and spending it at races and summer villas, Dolly and the six children had moved into the country to Ergushovo to cut down expenses as much as possible. The big, old house at Ergushovo was dilapidated and sorely in need of repairs. Dolly begged him to take inventory of the house and order what repairs might be needed. However, like all unfaithful husbands, Stepan was very concerned about his wife's comfort, and he had already looked over the house and given instructions about the repairs he considered necessary. He considered it necessary to reupholster the furniture, put up curtains, weed the garden, build a little bridge on the pond, and plant flowers. But, he neglected the essential repairs, which greatly distressed Dolly.

In spite of Stepan's efforts to be a present father and husband, he failed. He had bachelor tastes, and that is what formed his lifestyle. He persuaded his wife to move to the country, telling her it was a paradise. From his perspective, it reduced expenses, moved the family from the inner circles of society, and gave him more liberty. Dolly regarded staying in the country as essential for her children, especially the little girl who hadn't fully recovered from smallpox. Besides this, she was hopeful that she could persuade her sister Kitty to stay with her there. Kitty was to return from her trip later in the summer, and a move to the country would be good for her.

The first days of country life were very hard for Dolly. She lived in the country as a child, and she retained the impression that the country was a refuge from all the unpleasantness of city life. But now, moving to the country as the head of a family, her perceptions changed entirely. At first, she fell into despair. She exerted herself to her fullest capacity, felt the hopelessness of her position, and always suppressed the tears that formed in her eyes. The farmhand, whom Stepan appointed to help around the house, showed no sympathy for Dolly and did nothing to help her.

Had it not been for her children, she would have been left alone to brood over her husband, who did not love her and the misery of her newfound country life. The children themselves were slowly repaying her in small increments of joy commensurate to her suffering. These joyous moments and their memories were so small that they passed almost unnoticed, like gold flakes in sand, but were as gold to her.

Towards the end of May, when everything was more or less satisfactorily arranged, she received her husband's answer to her complaints of the state of things in the country. He wrote, begging her forgiveness for not fixing everything, and promised to come down the first chance he got. This chance did not present itself, and Dolly remained alone in the country until June.

Dolly, in her intimate, philosophical talks with her sister, her mother, and her friends, very often astonished them at her open views towards religion. She had a unique religion in her soul and troubled herself little with the dogmas of the Church. But in her family, she was strict in carrying out all that was required by the Church, not merely setting an example,

but with all of her heart in it. The fact that the children had not participated in sacrament for nearly a year worried her. She decided that this should take place now.

At church, there was no one but the peasants, the servants, and their spouses. But Dolly saw how the church affected her children and the sensations it produced. The children were not only beautiful to look at in their Sunday dresses, but they were charming in how they behaved. Aliosha, it is true, did not stand quite correctly, and he kept turning around in the pew; but all the same, he was wonderfully sweet. Tanya behaved like a grownup and looked after the little ones. And the smallest, Lily, was charming in her naive astonishment of everything. It was difficult not to smile when, after taking the sacrament, she said in English, "Please some more."

On the way home, the children felt that something solemn had happened and were tranquil. Dolly, with all of her children around her, was getting near the house when the coachman said, "There's a gentleman coming." Dolly peeped out in front and was delighted when she recognized the familiar figure of Levin walking to meet them. She was glad to see him at any time, but at this moment, she was especially glad he could see her in all her glory. No one was better able to appreciate her grandeur than Levin.

Seeing her, he found himself face to face with one of the pictures of family life he daydreamed of. "You are like a hen with your chicks, Dolly Oblonsky."

"How glad I am to see you!" she said, holding out her hand to him.

"I got a letter from Stepan who told me you were here and that he thinks I might be able to help you," said Levin. He was suddenly embarrassed by the sense that Dolly would be annoyed by receiving help from an outsider instead of her own husband, and Dolly certainly did not like Stepan passing his domestic responsibilities onto Levin.

"Anyways, I am happy to see you," said Levin, "and if there's anything I can help with, I'm at your disposal."

"Oh, no!" said Dolly. "At first, things were rather uncomfortable, but now we've settled into life in the country. Won't you get in, sir? We'll make room for you." She said to him from their carriage.

"No, I'll walk. Children, who'd like to race me home?" The children didn't know Levin very well and could not remember the last time they had seen him. Whatever faults Levin had, there was not a trace of hypocrisy or insincerity in him, and the children sensed this. On his invitation, the two oldest children jumped out to him and ran with him as comfortably as they would their mother.

Here, in the country, with the children, and with Dolly, Levin was in a childlike lighthearted mood that she particularly liked in him. He ran with the children, taught them gymnastic feats, made friends with the peasant helpers, and talked to Dolly of his pursuits in the country.

After dinner, Dolly, sitting alone with him on the balcony, began to speak of Kitty.

“You know, Kitty’s coming here and is going to spend the summer with me.”

“Really?” he asked, blushing and at once to change the subject, he said: “Then I will send you two cows.”

“No, thank you. We can manage very well now.”

“Kitty writes to me that there’s nothing she longs for more than quiet and solitude,” Dolly said, bringing the conversation back.

“And how is she feeling, better?” Levin asked anxiously.

“She’s quite well again,” answered Dolly.

“Oh, I’m delighted!” said Levin, and Dolly sensed something close to helplessness in his face.

“Let me ask you, Levin Dmitrievitch,” said Dolly, in her kindly and somewhat mocking tone, “Why are you angry with Kitty?”

“I? I’m not angry with her,” said Levin.

“Yes, you are angry. Why is it that you did not come to see us when you were in Moscow?”

“Dolly,” he said, blushing up to the roots of his hair, “I wonder with your kind heart how you don’t feel this. How is it that you feel no pity for me if nothing else when you learned?”

“What did I learn?”

“You know I made an offer of marriage to Kitty and that I was refused,” said Levin, and all of the tenderness he had been feeling for Kitty a minute before was replaced by a feeling of anger for the pain she had caused him. “You must excuse me,” he said, getting up.

“No, wait a minute,” she said, clutching him by the sleeve. “Sit down! she said, and tears came into her eyes. “I understand you now. You men are free to make your own choice, and it’s always clear to you whom you love. But a girl is in a weakened position of suspense. You men see a girl, come to her house, become friends, wait to see if you have found love, and then, when you are sure you love her, you make her an offer...”

“A girl is expected to make her choice immediately. She can only answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’.”

Yes, to choose between me and Vronsky, thought Levin.

“Dolly,” he said, “that’s how one chooses which dress to purchase or which shoes to wear, but not who to love. The choice has been made, and there’s no changing it now.”

“Pride, pride!” said Dolly. “When you proposed to Kitty, she was in a position where she could not answer. She had a choice between you and Vronsky. She was with him every day, and you, she had not seen in a long time. Supposing she had been older...I, in her place, would not have doubted. I always disliked him, and so it is.”

“Dolly, I appreciate your confidence in me, but I believe you are wrong. But whether right or wrong, that pride you so despise makes any thought of Kitty out of the question for me, please understand, entirely out of the question.”

“I will only say one more thing. She is my sister, whom I love as I love my own children. I’m not saying she loves you, just that her refusal at that moment proves nothing.”

“I can’t do this!” said Levin, jumping up. “If you only knew how much these words hurt me.”

“That’s absurd!” said Dolly, looking with tenderness at Levin. “So you won’t come to see us, then, when Kitty is here?”

“No, I won’t come. Of course, I won’t avoid Kitty, but as much as I can, I will try to save her the annoyance of my presence.”

“You are unbelievably absurd,” repeated Dolly. “Very well then, let’s pretend we never spoke of this.”

He said goodbye and drove away and returned to his estate, and she did not try to make him stay.

Early in the morning, on his estate, Levin got up from bed in the middle of July, and looking at the stars, he saw that the night was over. Often Levin admired his life, yet often he had a sense of envy of the men, the peasant men that lived with such delight. Ideas turned to questions about how he might change his own life. *Become a member of a peasant community, marry a peasant girl?* he asked but couldn’t answer. *I haven’t slept all night, and I can’t think it out clearly.*

Shrinking from the cold, Levin walked rapidly, looking at the ground. *What’s that? Someone is coming,* he thought, catching the tinkle of bells and lifting his head. In the coach sat a young girl holding the ribbons of a white cap in both hands, with a face full of light and thought, full of a subtle, complex inner life that was remote from Levin. She was gazing beyond him.

At the very moment when this vision was vanishing, her truthful eyes glanced at him. She recognized him, and her face lit up with wonder and delight. He could not be mistaken. There were no other eyes like those in the world. There was only one person that could radiate this much brightness and meaning. It was she. It was Kitty.

However good that life of simplicity and toil may be, he said to himself, *I cannot go back to it. I love HER.*

Chapter 33

While Alexey Oblonsky, Anna's husband, was on the surface the most reasonable and predictable of men, he had one weakness contrary to his character. He could not hear or see a child or woman cry without being distressed. The sight of tears threw him into a state of agitation, and he utterly lost all power to think.

Upon returning home, Anna informed him about her relations with Vronsky and immediately afterward burst into tears, hiding her face in her hands. For all of the fury aroused in himself against her, Alexey was also aware of the emotional disturbance produced in him by her tears. Conscious of it, he tried to suppress life itself, and so he neither stirred nor looked at her.

His wife's words, confirming his worst suspicions, sent a cruel stab to the heart of Alexey. But, when he was finally alone in the carriage, to his surprise and delight, he felt complete relief both from pity and the agony of jealousy.

No honor, no heart, no religion; a corrupt woman. I always knew and always saw it, though I tried to convince myself otherwise to spare her, he said to himself. I made a mistake in linking my life with hers, but she no longer exists to me. It is a misfortune which may befall anyone, and it has befallen me. The only thing I can do is make the best of the situation.

He began reviewing in his mind methods of how to proceed from here. A duel particularly fascinated the thoughts of Alexey. However, he could not, without horror, contemplate the idea of having a pistol aimed at himself. And furthermore, he'd never used a weapon in his life. An attempt at divorce could lead to nothing but a public scandal, which would be a perfect godsend to his business enemies and an attack on his position in society. Despite the complete contempt and indifference he now felt for his wife, he did not want to set her free to begin a life with Vronsky, thus benefiting from her crime.

Aside from formal divorce, we could separate, he went on thinking when he regained his composure. But this step too presented the same drawback of public scandal as divorce, and what was more, a separation flung his wife into the arms of Vronsky. No, it's out of the question, I cannot be unhappy, but I can't let her or him be happy.

The feeling of jealousy, which had tortured him during his period of uncertainty, had passed away. But, that feeling had been replaced by another, the desire that Anna should get due punishment for her crime. He did not acknowledge this feeling, but at the bottom of his heart, he longed for her to suffer for having destroyed his peace of mind, his honor. And going once more over the potential moves, a duel, a divorce, a separation, and once again rejecting them, Alexey felt convinced that there was only one solution, to keep her with him, concealing what had happened from the world. *I must inform her of my conclusion and agree to stay married on the strict condition that she cease all relations with her lover.*

By adopting such a course, I shall be acting in accordance with the dictates of religion. I am not casting off a guilty wife, but giving her a chance to amend her behavior; and,

indeed, difficult as the task will be to me, I shall devote part of my energies to her reformation and salvation.

Alexey was perfectly aware that he could not exert any moral influence over his wife and that such an attempt at reforming her was futile. In passing through these difficult experiences, he had not once sought guidance in religion. Yet now, when his conclusion corresponded, as it seemed to him, with the requirements of religion, this religious sanction of his decision gave him complete satisfaction, and to some extent, restored his peace of mind. He was pleased to think that even in such an important crisis in life, no one would be able to say that he had not acted in accordance with the principles of religion whose banner he had always held high.

Alexey did not see why his relations with his wife should not remain practically the same as before. No doubt she could never regain his trust or esteem, but there was no reason he should suffer because she was a bad and faithless wife. *Yes, time will pass which arranges all things, and our old relationship will be reestablished, Alexey told himself. She is bound to be unhappy, but I am not to blame.*

As he neared Petersburg, Alexey not only adhered entirely to his decision but was even composing in his head the letter he would write to his wife.

Having carefully considered everything, my decision is as follows. Whatever your conduct may have been, I do not consider myself justified in breaking the ties to which we are bound by a Higher Power. The family cannot be broken up by a whim or even by the sin of one of the partners in the marriage, and our life must go on as it has done in the past. This is essential for me, for you, and for our son. I am fully persuaded that you have repented and do repent and that you will cooperate with me in eradicating the cause of our estrangement and forgetting the past. Contrary to that, you can predict what awaits you and your son. All this I hope to discuss in more detail in a personal interview. I would beg you to return to Petersburg as quickly as possible.

A. Karenin

P.S. - I enclose the money which may be indeed for your expenses.

Chapter 34

When Anna thought of Vronsky, it seemed to her that he did not love her and that he was already growing tired of her. The recollection of her son suddenly roused Anna from the helpless condition in which she found herself. She thought of the role of a mother, living for her child, and she felt joy in that challenge. In whatever position she might be placed, she could not lose her son. Her husband might put her to shame and turn her away, Vronsky might grow cold and go on living without her, but she could not leave her son.

She dressed quickly, went downstairs, and saw her son Sergey, with an intense concentration which she knew well and in which he resembled her father. “Ah, mamma!” Sergey exclaimed. She felt the tears welling in her eyes. *I can't help but love him?* she said to herself, looking deeply into his scared and at the same time delighted eyes. *Will he, too, join his father in punishing me? Is it possible he will not have compassion for what I've done?* Tears were already flowing down her face, and to hide them, she got up abruptly and almost ran to the terrace. She felt her soul split in two.

I must go, but to where and with whom? Yes, to Moscow by the evening train, with Sergey and only essential things. But first, I must write to them both.

She quickly went to her bedroom, sat down at the table, and wrote to her husband,

After what has happened, I cannot remain any longer in your house. I am going away and taking my son with me. I don't know the law, so I don't know which of the parents the son should remain with, but I'm taking him with me because I cannot live without him. Be generous; leave him with me.

Up to this point, she wrote rapidly and naturally, but the appeal to his generosity, a quality she did not recognize in him, and the need to wind up the letter with something touching, caused her to pause.

Of my fault and my remorse, I cannot speak because...

She stopped again, finding a lack of connection in her ideas. *No*, she said to herself, *there's no need to say anything*, and tearing up the letter, she wrote it again, leaving out the allusion to generosity, and sealed it up.

Another letter had to be written to Vronsky. *I have told my husband*, she wrote, and she sat a long while unable to write more. It was so coarse, so unfeminine. *What else can I say?* she said to herself. She said to herself, *no need to say anything*, and putting her writing materials away, she told the servants that she was leaving for Moscow and asked that they get her things ready.

Chapter 35

Anna was standing at the table in her bedroom, packing her traveling bag, when attention was called to a carriage pulling up. Anna looked out the window and saw Alexey's courier on the steps, ringing the front doorbell.

"Run and find out what it is," she said, and with a calm sense of being prepared for anything, she sat down in a low chair and folded her hands on her knees. A footman brought in a thick packet written by Alexey.

"The courier had orders to wait for an answer," he said.

"Very well," she said, and as soon as he had left the room, she tore open the letter with trembling fingers. She opened the letter and began reading it from the end. "Preparations shall be made for your arrival here...I attach particular significance to compliance..." she read. She read on, then back, read it all through, and once more read the letter all through again from the beginning. When she had finished, she felt cold all over and that a dreaded calamity that she had not expected had burst upon her.

In the morning, she had regretted that she had spoken to her husband and wished for nothing more than that those words could be unspoken. This letter seemed to her more awful than anything she could conceive.

"He's right!" she said; "of course, he's always right; he's a Christian, so generous! Yes, the vile creature! And no one understands it except for me, and no one ever will; even I can't explain it. They say he's so religious, with high principles, so upright and clever, but they don't see what I see. They don't know how he has crushed my life for eight years and gutted everything living in me. He has never considered me a woman worthy of love. They don't know that at every step, he has humiliated me and remained so pleased with himself. I have struggled to love him, but I couldn't do it anymore. I was no longer alive. God made me to love and live."

She read further the words from the letter. "You can predict what awaits you and your son..." *That's a threat to take away my child, and most likely by their stupid laws, he can. But I know very well why he says it. He doesn't believe that I love my child, or he despises it.*

She read another sentence. "Our life must go on as it has done in the past... *That life was miserable enough during our marriage. How will it be now? And he knows all that; he knows that I can't breathe, he wants to continue the torture. I won't give him that happiness.*"

"No, I'll tear it apart, and I'll break through the pain!" she cried, jumping up and holding back her tears. And she went to the table to write him another letter. But from the bottom of her heart, she knew she was not strong enough to break through anything. She sat down to write, but instead of writing, she clasped her hands on the table, laid her head on top of them, and burst into tears.

Chapter 36

Vronsky got into a hired carriage and told the driver to drive as quickly as possible. Everything he saw from the carriage window in the pleasant brisk air and the pale light of the sun, with the roofs of the houses shining in the rays, was bright like a pretty landscape just finished and freshly varnished.

The whip cracked, and the carriage rolled rapidly along the smooth highway. He pictured to himself Anna just as he had seen her the last time. *And as I go on, I love her more and more. I wonder why she wanted so anxiously to meet me?* Wondering for the first time about their upcoming meeting. But there was no time to wonder.

He called to the driver to stop, and opening the door, jumped out of his carriage as it was moving and went into the avenue that led up to the house. There was no one in the street, but looking around to the right, he caught sight of her. Her face was hidden by a veil. Joining him, she grasped his hand tightly.

“You’re not upset that I sent for you? I absolutely had to see you,” she said. The serious look on her face, which he saw under the veil, transformed his mood at once.

He saw that something had happened and that this meeting would not be a joyous one. “What is it? What?” he asked her, squeezing her hand and trying to read the thoughts on her face.

“I have not told you yet,” she began, breathing heavily, “I told Alexey everything...told him that I could not be his wife, and that...told him everything...”

When she got her husband’s letter, she knew then from the bottom of her heart that everything would continue as they formerly had, that she would not have the willpower to forego her position, to abandon her son, and to join her lover. But, she hoped that this meeting would change her position and save her. If, on hearing this news, he were to say to her confidently, passionately, and without wavering, “Leave it all and come with me!” then she would leave.

But, the news did not produce the desired effect. Instead, Anna sensed resentment. “Who’s that coming?” said Vronsky suddenly, pointing to two ladies walking towards them. “Perhaps they know us!”

“Who cares!” she said, her lips quivering. “That’s not the point. Read the letter yourself, see what he has said to me. Read it.”

On reading the letter, Vronsky was carried away in a new sensation. Now that he held the letter in his hands, he could not help picturing the challenge, the duel, which would most likely find him today or tomorrow. Having read the letter, he raised his eyes to her, and there was no conviction in them. She saw at once that whatever he might say to her, it was not what she had hoped. He had failed her.

“You see the kind of man he is,” she said, with a shaking voice, “he...”

“Forgive me, but I’m elated,” Vronsky interrupted. “For God’s sake, let me finish!” imploring her to give him time to explain himself. “I am happy because I see that things cannot, cannot possibly remain as they are, and as he hopes they will.”

“Why can’t they?” Anna said, restraining her tears and dismissing what he said.

Vronsky meant that after the duel, inevitable, he thought, things could not go on as before, but he said something different.

“It can’t continue. I hope that now you will leave Alexey. I hope that you will let me arrange and plan our life together. Tomorrow...” he was beginning. She did not let him continue.

“But my child!” she cried. “You see what he wrote! I would have to leave my son, and I can’t, and I won’t.” Tears of shame and despair choked her. She stood still and sobbed.

“But, for God’s sake, which is better? Leave your child, or keep up this humiliating relationship?”

He, too, felt something swelling in his throat, and for the first time in his life, he was on the verge of weeping. He couldn’t say precisely what touched him so much. He felt sorry for her, and he felt like he couldn’t help her, and Vronsky knew that he was to blame for her wretchedness and that he had done something horribly wrong.

“Isn’t a divorce possible?” he asked feebly. “Can’t you leave him and still take your son?”

“I must go to him,” she said.

Anna arrived in Petersburg early in the morning. Alexey did not meet her. She knew that he must be at his office and she went directly to him. He was in his uniform. She saw him before he saw her, and she could tell he was thinking of her.

“Alexey,” she said, looking at him and not dropping her eyes, “I am a guilty woman and a bad woman. I cannot be your wife,” she began.

He laughed a cold and spiteful laugh. “The manner of life you have chosen is reflected in your ideas. I respect your past and despise your present. I want you to conduct yourself so that neither the world nor the servants have any idea what you have done. That’s not too much to ask, I think. You will enjoy all the privileges of a faithful wife without needing to perform your wifely duties. That’s all I have to say to you. Now it’s time for me to go; I will not be dining at home. He got up and moved towards the door.

Anna got up too. Bowing in silence, he let her pass before him.

Chapter 37

It was past five, and several guests had already arrived before the host did. Stepan immediately saw that things were not going well without him. Dolly, obviously worried about the children who were eating alone in the nursery, was not equal to the task of making the party mix by herself.

Kitty found herself blushing, constantly looking at the door for Levin to enter, but Levin was the last to arrive. Everyone took part in the general conversation, except for Kitty and Levin. They had a conversation of their own, yet not a conversation, but some sort of mysterious communication, which brought them every moment nearer and stirred in both a sense of anticipation as they entered into an unknown world together.

Levin told her how he saw her last year in the carriage. "It was very early in the morning. You probably had just woken up. Your mother was asleep in the corner. It was a glorious morning. In a second, you flashed by, and I saw you at the window. How I would like to know what you were thinking at that time!"

She blushed and laughed; "Really, I don't remember."

When they rose from the table, Levin would have liked to follow Kitty into the drawing-room; but he was afraid she might feel smothered by his paying too close of attention. He remained in the little group of men, taking part in their conversation. Even without looking directly at Kitty, he was aware of her movements, looks, and location.

Kitty moved to the card table, sat down, grabbed the chalk, and began drawing diverging circles over the new green tablecloth. Her eyes were shining with a soft light. Levin moved towards her, and under the influence of her mood, he felt a continually growing tension of happiness.

"Here," he said, taking the chalk and writing the letters, w, y, t, m, i, c, n, b, d, t, m, n, o, t. To him, these letters meant, "When you told me it could never be, did that mean never, or then?" There seemed no chance that she could figure this puzzle out, but he looked at her as though his life depended on her understanding the words.

"I understand," she said. She took the chalk and wrote the letters, "a, c, y, c, f, m," meaning, "any chance you can forgive me?"

He snatched the chalk with nervous, trembling fingers and responded: I, h, n, t, f, i, h, n, s, l, y."

"I have nothing to forgive. I have never stopped loving you."

Chapter 38

The streets were still empty. Levin was going to the Sherbatskys' house. The front doors were locked, and everyone appeared to be asleep. Levin found himself living perfectly in the present and lifted from the cares of material life. He hadn't eaten for a day or slept for two nights, yet he felt fresher and stronger than ever. He moved without effort and felt like he could do anything. He was convinced he could fly upwards or lift the corner of the house, if necessary.

Though a young man and new to his job, the footman was a very kind-hearted good fellow, and he understood why Levin was there.

"The princess...the young princess...." said Levin.

Soon he heard swift light steps on the wood floor above him, and what he had long sought for was quickly, so quickly approaching him. She did not walk but seemed, by some unseen force, to float to him.

She had done all she could. She ran up to him and gave herself up entirely, nervously but happy. He put his arms around her and pressed his lips to her mouth that sought his kiss.

She, too, had not slept all night and had been expecting him all morning. Her mother and father had consented without objection and were happy because of her happiness. "Let's go to mamma!" she said, taking him by the hand. For a long while, he couldn't say anything because he was afraid of spoiling the emotion of their embrace by a word. Instead of words, he felt that tears of happiness were welling up. He took her hand and kissed it.

"Can it be true?" He said at last in a choked voice. "I can't believe you love me, dear!"

"Yes!" she said confidently, deliberately. "I am so happy!" Not letting go of his hand, she ushered him into the drawing-room. Kitty's mother, the old princess, saw them and immediately started to cry. With a vigorous step, Levin had not expected, ran up to him, hugged him, kissed him, and wet his cheeks with her tears.

"I've long wished for this." said the father, the prince, taking Levin by the arm and drawing toward him. There came over Levin a new feeling of love for this man, so little known to him, when he saw how slowly and tenderly Kitty kissed his muscular hand.

The old princess sat in her armchair, silent and smiling; the prince sat down beside her. Kitty stood by her father's chair, still holding his hand. All were silent.

The princess was the first to put everything into words and translate their thoughts into practical questions. "When is the wedding to be?"

Chapter 39

“A telegram,” said his manservant, coming into the room. Alexey Karenina took the telegram and opened it. It was from his wife. Her name, written in blue pencil, “Anna,” was the first thing that caught his eye. “I am dying; I beg you to come. I shall die easier with your forgiveness,” he read. He dropped the telegram with contempt. *This was a trick, a fraud, of that, there is no doubt.*

There is nothing she wouldn't stoop to. No deceit too cruel. But what is their motivation? To legitimize the child, to compromise me, and prevent a divorce... He picked up and re-read the telegram. What if it is true, he said to himself. If it is true that she is genuinely penitent in the moment of agony and nearness of death, and I, believing it to be a trick, refuse to go? That would not only be cruel but stupid on my part.

Alexey decided that he would go to Petersburg and see his wife. If her illness was a trick, he would say nothing and go away again. If she was truly in danger and wished to see him before her death, he would forgive her.

The butler opened the door before Alexey rang. “How is she?” Alexey stopped short and turned white. He felt distinct how intensely he longed for her death.

“Very ill,” he answered. “The doctor is here now along with the midwife and Count Vronsky.”

The midwife in a medical cap came into the drawing-room. She went up to Alexey and, with the familiarity given by the approach of death, took him by the arm and drew him towards the bedroom. “Thank God you have come! She asks about you and nothing but you,” she said.

Alexey went to the bedroom, where the doctor was ordering for ice to be brought immediately.

At the table, sitting in a low chair, was Vronsky, his face hidden in his hands, weeping. He jumped at the sound of the doctor's voice, took his hands from his face, and saw Alexey. Seeing her husband, he was so overwhelmed that he sat down again, dropping his head into his shoulders as if he wanted to disappear, but with an extreme effort, he got up and said,

“She is dying. The doctors say there is no hope. I am entirely at your disposal, but please let me remain here.”

Seeing Vronsky's tears, Alexey felt a rush of that nervous emotion always produced in him by the sight of other people's suffering, and turning away his face, he moved quickly to the door. From the bedroom came the sound of Anna's voice saying something. Her voice was lively, eager, with exceedingly distinct intonations. Alexey went into the bedroom and to her bed, where she was lying, turned with her face towards him. She was talking rapidly, in a delirious state, and didn't recognize him.

“Anna, he has come. Here he is.” said the midwife.

“Oh, what nonsense!” Anna went on, still not recognizing her husband.

Alexey’s wrinkled face wore an expression of agony; he took her by the hand and tried to say something, but he could not utter it; his lower lip quivered, his eyes gazing at hers with tenderness. He suddenly felt a blissful spiritual condition that gave rise to new happiness that he had not previously known. He did not think that the Christian law that he had been trying so hard to follow all of his life required him to forgive, not her, not him, and not now. Yet, a glad feeling of love and forgiveness filled his heart. He knelt down by her and laying his head on her arm. He sobbed like a child. Anna embraced his balding head and managed to say:

“I needed nothing but your forgiveness, and I wanted nothing more...”

Next, addressing Vronsky, Anna said, “Here he is, take his hand.”

Alexey took Vronsky’s hands and drew them away from his face, which was worn with agony and shame.

“Give him your hand. Forgive him,” said Anna.

Alexey gave him his hand, not attempting to restrain the tears that streamed from his eyes.

“Thank God, thank God!” she said, “Now everything is ready; I need to stretch my legs a little,” and she tossed about on the bed. “My God, when will it end? Doctor, give me some morphine, dear God.”

The doctors said it was delirium caused by fever from childbirth and that it was ninety-nine percent certain she would die. At midnight she lay without consciousness and with a faint pulse; the end was expected any minute.

Vronsky had gone home, but in the morning, he came back, and Alexey meeting him in the hall, said: “you’d better stay, she is asking for you,” and led him to his wife’s bedroom. Towards morning there was a return of excitement, hope.

That day Alexey went into the room where Vronsky was sitting, and closing the door, sat down beside him. “Alexey,” said Vronsky, “I don’t understand, spare me! However hard it is for you, believe me, it is more terrible for me.”

He would have risen, but instead, Alexey took him by the hand and said, “I will explain the feelings that have guided me and will continue to guide me so that you can understand where I am coming from. You know that I had resolved on getting a divorce and even began proceedings. I was in misery; I will confess that I was haunted by a desire to seek revenge on you and her. When I got the telegram, I came here with the same feelings; I longed for her death. But....” He paused, pondering whether to disclose or not to disclose his feelings. “But I saw her and forgave her. I have forgiven completely. I offer the other cheek and would give my cloak if my coat is taken.”

Tears stood in his eyes, and the serenity touched Vronsky deeply.

“This is my position; you can trample me in the mud, make me the laughing stock of the world, I will not abandon her, and I will never utter another harsh word against you.”

Chapter 40

From his perspective, Vronsky felt that Alexey's feelings came from something higher and even unattainable for him. After their conversation, Vronsky went outside onto the steps of Karenina's house and stood still, with difficulty remembering where he was and where he ought to go. He felt disgraced, humiliated, guilty, and deprived of any potential of washing away these feelings. The betrayed husband, who was up until this time a pitiful creature, had suddenly been summoned by her, elevated to an awe-inspiring pinnacle. And not a malignant, or haughty or false pinnacle, but a kind one, straightforward and good. Vronsky could not help but feel that the roles had suddenly been reversed; he felt his own abasement, his facility, and deceit. He felt unutterably wretched now, for his passion for Anna, which had seemed to him to be growing cooler, was now stronger than it had ever been. He had seen all of her illness, had come to know her very soul. And now, when he had learned to love her as she should be loved, he had been humiliated before her and had lost her forever, leaving with her nothing of himself but a shameful memory.

Upon getting home, after three sleepless nights, Vronsky, without undressing, lay down flat on the sofa, clasping his hands and laying his head on them. His head was heavy. Images, memories, and ideas of the strangest description followed one another with extraordinary rapidity and vividness.

To sleep! To forget! he repeated to himself. But with his eyes shut, he saw more distinctly than ever Anna's face.

He went to the door and closed it, then with fixed eyes and clenched teeth, he moved to the table, took a revolver, looked around him, turned it to a loaded barrel, and sank into thought. For two minutes, his head bent forward with an expression of an intense effort of thought; he stood with the revolver in his hand, motionless thinking.

When for the third time his thought passed again around the same circle of memories and images, he placed the revolver to the left side of his chest and clutching it vigorously with his whole hand; he pulled the trigger. He did not hear the sound of the shot, but a violent blow on his chest sent him reeling. He tried to clutch at the edge of the table, dropped the revolver, staggered, and sat down on the ground, looking about him in astonishment. He made an effort at thought and was aware that he was on the floor, and seeing blood on the tiger-skin rug and on his arm, he knew he had shot himself.

"Idiot! Missed!" he said, fumbling after the revolver. The revolver was close beside him. He stretched out for it, and not being strong enough to keep his balance, fell over, streaming with blood.

An hour later, Varya, his brother's wife, arrived. With the assistance of three doctors, whom she immediately sent for, she got the wounded man to bed and remained to nurse him.

Chapter 41

Levin continued in the same euphoric condition. It seemed to him that his happiness constituted the chief and sole aim of all existence. He need not now think or care about anything. Everything was being done and would be done satisfactorily by others. All he did was to agree entirely with everything suggested to him in regards to his upcoming wedding.

“Hey Levin,” Stepan asked him one day, “have you a certificate of having been at confession?”

“No, why does that matter?”

“You can’t be married without it?”

“What!” cried Levin. “I haven’t taken the sacrament for nine years. I haven’t even thought of it.” “There are only four days left until the wedding.”

Stepan arranged for Levin to go to confession. To Levin, as to any unbeliever who respects the beliefs of others, it was exceedingly unpleasant to be present at and take part in church ceremonies. At this moment, in his present softened state of feeling, sensitive to everything, this inevitable act of hypocrisy was not merely painful to Levin; it seemed to him utterly impossible.

He attempted to revive in himself his youthful recollections of the intense religious emotion he had passed through between the ages of sixteen and seventeen. Now, Levin found himself, like most of his contemporaries, in the vaguest position regarding religion. Believe, he could not, and at the same time, he had no firm conviction that it was all wrong.

There was no one in the church but a beggar, two old women, and the church officials. The priest, a little old man with a grizzled beard and weary, good-natured eyes, was standing at the altar, turning over the pages of the Bible. With a slight bow to Levin, he began immediately reading prayers in the official voice. When he had finished them, he bowed down to the ground and turned, facing Levin.

“Christ is present here, unseen, receiving your confession,” he said, pointing to the crucifix. “Do you believe in all the doctrines of the Holy Apostolic Church?”

“I have doubted, I doubt everything,” said Levin in a voice that shocked even himself, and he ceased speaking. The priest waited a few seconds to see if he would say more, and closing his eyes, he said quickly, with a broad accent,

“Doubt is natural to the weakness of mankind, but we must pray that God in his mercy will strengthen us. What are your sins?” He added, anxious not to waste time.

“My greatest sin is doubt. I have doubts about everything, and for the most part, I live in doubt. I sometimes even have doubts about the existence of God,” Levin could not help

saying, and he was horrified at the impropriety of what he was saying. But the priest didn't seem derailed.

"You are entering into a time of life," pursued the priest, "when you must choose your path and keep to it. Pray to God that He may, in His mercy, aid you and shower His grace over you!" He concluded. "Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, in the abundance and your loving kindness, forgive this child..." and, finishing the prayer of confession, the priest blessed him.

On the way home, Levin had a delightful sense of relief that this awkward part of the marriage was over and having gone through it without telling a lie. Yet, Levin felt more now than ever that there was something not clear or clean in his soul and that, someday, it must be made clearer.

On the day of the wedding, Levin saw nothing and knew no one; he did not take his eyes off of his bride.

"Kitty, remember you're the first to step on the carpet," said Countess Nordston.

"Are you nervous?" asked Marya Dmitreivna, an old aunt.

"Are you cold? You look pale," said Kitty's sister, Natalie.

Dolly came up, tried to say something, but could not speak, cried, and laughed.

Kitty looked at all of them with the same absent eyes as Levin.

"Take the bride's hand and lead her to the altar," the best man said to Levin. The priest was the same old man that Levin had confessed to. He looked at the bride and groom, and putting his right hand out, blessed them with solemn tenderness. Then he gave them the candles and moved slowly away from them.

The priest then turned to the bridal pair with a book, "Eternal God, that joins together in love..." the priest read after the exchange of rings.

Looking around, Levin met her eyes. Kitty had not heard the words of the priest, so strong was the feeling that filled her breast and grew stronger. All her life, her desires and hopes were concentrated on this one man. Now the anticipation, and uncertainty, and remorse at the abandonment of her old life, all was ending, and the new was beginning. The priest continued, "Make their union fast in faith, join their hearts..."

The lump in Levin's throat rose higher, tears that would not be checked came into his eyes.

Dolly stood beside them; she listened and was deeply moved. The tears showed in her eyes. She was rejoicing over Kitty and Levin and remembering her own wedding. She glanced at the radiant figure of Stepan, forgot all the present, and remembered only their innocent love.

She thought too of her darling Anna, of whose proposed divorce she had heard gossip of. She thought of herself and Anna, on the day of their triumph, when they had stood like Kitty under the wedding crown, with love and hope in their hearts, leaving the innocent, adored past and stepping forward in their mysterious futures. She must go to see her.

Chapter 42

From the day she left for Italy, Anna felt liberated and returning to health, full of happiness and joy. The news of Vronsky's suicide attempt, his visit, the preparations for divorce, the departure from her husband's house, the parting from her son, all of that seemed like a delirious dream. The thought of the harm she caused to her husband, Alexey, aroused in her a sickening feeling. *I have made that man wretched*, she thought, *but I too am suffering and shall suffer; I don't want a divorce, and will suffer from my shame and separation from my son*. However sincerely Anna had meant to suffer, she was not suffering; shame there was none. Separation from the son she loved, even that did not cause her anguish in these early days. The baby girl, HIS child, was so sweet and had won Anna's heart so thoroughly that Anna rarely thought of her son.

The more she got to know Vronsky, the more she loved him. Having him to herself was a cause of continual joy to her. His presence was always sweet to her. In everything he said, thought, and did, she saw something particularly noble and elevated. He was more lovingly respectful to her than ever.

Meanwhile, Vronsky, despite his complete realization of what he had so long desired was now his, was not perfectly happy. For a time after joining his life to hers, he was content, but not for long. He was soon aware that there was springing up in his heart a desire for desires.

Just as the hungry stomach eagerly accepts any food it can get, hoping to find nourishment in it, Vronsky quite subconsciously clutched first to politics, then books, and then to art. He had from a child a taste for painting and began again to take an interest in it. After hesitating for some time as to which style of painting to select, religious, historical, or realistic, he set to work to paint. Inspiration came very quickly and easily.

Meanwhile, Alexey's despair was intensified by the consciousness that he was utterly alone in his sorrow. In all of Petersburg, there was no human being to whom he could express what he was feeling or who would feel for him. The attachment he continued to feel for Anna precluded him from intimate relations with anyone else. He had plenty of so-called connections but no friendships. All women were terrible and undesirable to him.

Chapter 43

While waiting for his father, Sergey sat at the table playing with his penknife and started daydreaming. Among Sergey's favorite hobbies was searching for his mother during his walks. He did not believe in death generally and in her death in particular. After being told that she was dead, he had begun looking for her whenever out for a walk. Every woman with a full, graceful figure with dark hair was his mother. At the sight of one of these women, such a feeling of tenderness was stirred within him that his breath failed him, and tears came to his eyes. He was at the tiptoe of hope and expectation that she would come up to him, would smile and hug him, and they would cry with happiness. Memories of their moments together came back to him. Later, when he accidentally learned from his old nanny that his mother was not dead, and his father and his new girlfriend Lidia explained to him that she was dead to him because she was wicked, which he did not believe because he loved her, he went on trying to find her.

Sergey's father and his teacher were disappointed in Sergey, and he certainly failed most of his lessons. But, he was not a stupid boy. On the contrary, he was far more clever than the other boys in his classes. In his father's opinion, he did not want to learn what he was taught. Sergey was nine years old; he was a child, but he knew his own soul, and it was precious to him.

On returning to Petersburg, Vronsky and Anna stayed at one of the best hotels, Vronsky in a lower story, and Anna above with their daughter, her nurse, and her maid. On the day of his arrival, Vronsky went to his brother's. There he found his mother, who had come from Moscow on business. His mother and sister-in-law greeted him as usual but did not say a word or ask any questions about Anna. His brother came the next morning and did ask about her. Vronsky told him that he still hoped to arrange a divorce, then marry her, and until then, he considered her as much a wife as any other marriage would, and he begged him to tell their mother so.

Anna's objective in coming back to Russia was to see her son. From the day she had left Italy, she unceasingly thought of Sergey. She did not know how to arrange it. When she arrived in Petersburg, she was suddenly made distinctly aware of her present position in society. She understood that arranging this meeting was no easy matter. She had now been two days in Petersburg, and the thought of her son never left her for a single instant.

The next day, at eight o'clock in the morning, Anna got out of her hired carriage and rang at the front entrance of her former home. Anna had not anticipated that the absolutely unchanged house she had lived for nine years would so deeply affect her. Memories sweet and painful rose one after another in her heart, and for a moment, she forgot what she was here for.

"Please walk in, your excellency," the butler said, recognizing her and welcoming her with a low bow in silence. She tried to say something, but her voice refused to utter any sound; with a guilty and imploring glance at him, she walked with light, swift steps up the stairs.

"Sergey!" she whispered. "My darling boy!" she said. Since being parted from him, she had pictured him as he was at four years old. Anna looked at him with great emotion; she

saw how he had grown and changed in her absence. She knew and did not know, the bare legs so long now that were hanging outside the edges of his quilt. She embraced him and could say nothing more, tears choking her.

Smiling sleepily with eyes half-closed, he flung his arms around her shoulders, rolled towards her, with the delicious sleepy warmth and fragrance that is only found in children, and began rubbing his face against hers.

“It’s my birthday today. I knew you’d come. Mother, why are you crying?”

“I won’t cry...I’m crying for joy. It’s been so long since I’ve seen you. Come, let’s get you dressed,” she said, gulping down her tears and turning away. “How did you dress without me?”

“Mom!” he shouted, flinging himself on her again and hugging her. It was as though only now, on seeing her smile, that he fully grasped what had happened. “I knew you would come, I knew it!” he repeated, and snatching her hand, he pressed her open palm to his mouth and kissed it.

Meanwhile, Vasily Lukitch, Sergey’s tutor, did not realize who this lady was. He didn’t know whether he should go into the room or not or whether to talk to Alexey about what he saw. Finally realizing that it was his duty to get Sergey up and ready for his lessons, and it was not his business to consider who was there, the mother or anyone else, but simply to do his duty, he went to the door and opened it. But the embraces of the mother and child, the sound of their voices, and what they were saying changed his mind. He shook his head, and with a sigh, he closed the door.

I’ll wait another ten minutes, he said to himself, clearing his throat and wiping away tears.

As intensely as Anna had longed to see her son, and as long as she had been thinking about it and preparing herself for it, she had not in the least expected that seeing him would affect her so profoundly. On getting back to her lonely room in the hotel, she could not for a long while understand why she was there. *It’s all over, and I am again alone,* she said to herself.

Chapter 44

Dolly carried out her intention and went to see Anna. She understood why her sister Kitty and Levin did not want her to have anything to do with Vronsky, but she felt she must go. At home, looking after her children, she had no time to think. Now, with this four-hour journey, all of the thoughts she had suppressed for so long started swarming in her brain. Dolly thought about her entire life as she had never done before, and from different points of view. Her thoughts seemed strange even to herself. At first, she worried about the children, although Kitty had promised to look after them. Next, she looked back on her fifteen years of married life, *pregnancy, sickness, mental problems, apathy, and most of all, ugliness. Kitty, young and pretty as she is, even Kitty has lost her looks; and when I was with child, I became enormous. The births, the agony, the nursing, the sleepless nights, the fearful pains.*

Dolly shuddered at these recollections. *Then the children's sicknesses, unholy propensities, trying to raise them and educate them, it's all so difficult. Not to mention death, cropping up in her mind the death of her last baby, her torn heart, and lonely anguish.*

And all of this, what is it for? What is to come of it all? Am I wasting my life, never having a moment's peace, barely managing to live. I'm trying to raise these children by myself and suppose that with the greatest of good luck, that the children live to adulthood. At the very best, they'll simply be decent people. That's all I can hope for. None of them are destined for greatness. And to gain simply that, what agony, what toil!

"Is it far now, Mikhail?" Dolly asked the carriage driver, turning her mind from these thoughts.

"From this village, they say it's five miles." The carriage drove along the street and onto a bridge. On the bridge was a crowd of peasant women, strolling and chatting. They stared inquisitively at Dolly, making her envious of their enjoyment of life. *They're all living and enjoying life, Dolly mused to herself. They all live, but not I.*

And people attack Anna. What for? Am I any better than she is? Anna never loved her husband. How is she to blame? She wanted to live. God has put that desire in our hearts, and I probably should have done the same as she. Even to this day, I feel that I made a mistake when she came to me for support in Moscow. I should have left my husband and started a new life, fresh. I might have loved and been loved. Now I put up with him. Is that any better?

She thought that it was not too late even now, and the most passionate and impossible romances rose in Dolly's imagination. *Anna did it quite right, and I will certainly never fault her for what she did. She is happy, she makes another person happy, and she's not broken down as I am.* Dolly smiled as she pondered Anna's love affair. Dolly constructed on parallel lines an almost identical scandal for herself, with an imaginary man, an ideal one who was in love with her. She, like Anna, would confess the whole affair to her husband. And Stepan's bewildered and despondent response to the imagined confession made her smile.

Chapter 45

Anna looked at Dolly's thin, careworn face, with its wrinkles filled from the dust from the road. Dolly looked back and wanted to express her thoughts of the morning, but for some reason, it seemed now out of place to do so.

Dolly, with a good housewife's eye, scanned her home. All she had seen in entering the house and walking through it gave her an impression of wealth and luxury. She had only read in English novels about that kind of luxury and had never seen it in Russia or the country.

"Now that you see me, see where I live, and see my position, what do you think?" Anna asked.

"I don't think anything," Dolly responded, "but I have always loved you, and if you love someone, you love their whole person, just as they are not as you would like them to be..."

Anna took her eyes off her friend's face and dropped her eyelids, pondered, and tried to process the full significance of these words. She looked back at Dolly.

"If you had any sins," Anna said, "they would all be forgiven for coming to me and saying this." And Dolly saw the tears that stood in her eyes. She held Anna's hand in silence.

Vronsky came in and asked Dolly if she would like to go with him to see the horses. "I know nothing about horses, but I'd love to go," answered Dolly, somewhat astonished. She saw by Vronsky's face that he wanted something from her, and she was not mistaken. As soon as they had passed through the little gate back into the garden, he looked in the direction Anna had taken, and having made sure she could neither hear nor see them, he began,

"I am not wrong in believing you to be a friend of Anna's." He took off his hat, and taking out his handkerchief, wiped his head, which was growing bald. Dolly did not answer and merely stared at him with dismay. When she was left alone with him, she suddenly felt afraid. "You have so much influence with Anna. She is so fond of you," he said, "Do help me."

Dolly sat down on a garden seat.

He stood up facing her. "I see that she is happy, but can it last? Whether we have acted impulsively is another question, but now we are bound together for life. We are united by all the times of love that we hold most sacred. We have a child and may have more. But the laws and conditions of our position are such that thousands of complications arise. Anna's husband agreed to a divorce, and now Anna needs to petition the Tsar for its completion. I know he would not refuse it. Please help me to persuade her to write to him and finalize their divorce."

"Yes, of course, I will talk to her," replied Dolly, and they got up and walked back to the house.

Chapter 46

Both Vronsky and Anna felt that life in Moscow was unupportable in the heat and dust, though they continued living there. They both loathed it, but they could not reach an agreement to leave. An inner irritation, grounded in Anna's mind that his love had decreased; and in his mind, a regret that he had put himself in such a difficult position for her sake. Neither of them gave full utterance to their grievances, but they considered each other in the wrong and tried with every step to prove this to one another.

In her eyes, Vronsky, with all his habits, ideas, desires, and his spiritual and physical temperament, had one goal, love for women, and that love, she felt, ought to be entirely concentrated on her alone. As she felt that love had decreased, she reasoned, he must have transferred part of his love to another woman, and she was jealous.

And being jealous of him, Anna began to resent him. For everything in her life that was difficult, she blamed him. She resented him for their solitude in Moscow, for Alexey's indecision, for her place in society that he had put her in, and most of all for forever being separated from her son.

I am to blame. I'm irritable. I'm insanely jealous, she thought to herself. While trying to regain peace of mind, circling thoughts that she had been around so often before, Anna became horrified at herself. *Can it be possible? Have I lost control of myself?*

Thinking now of Alexey, she recalled the time of her illness and the question which never left her at that time. *Why didn't I die?* and the feeling came back to her. All at once, she knew what was in her soul. *Yes, to die!* The shame and disgrace of Alexey and Sergey, and my awful guilt, will all be resolved by death. *To die! And he will feel remorse; will be sorry; will love me; will suffer with me.*

Never before had Anna and Vronsky argued for a full day. Today was the first time, and it wasn't just a quarrel; it was the open acknowledgment of complete coldness. He was not merely cold to her; he hated her because he loved another woman, that was clear.

I'm not going to stop you, he might say. *You can go where you want. Go back to your husband. If you want money, I'll give it to you. How much do you want?*

All the cruelest words that a brutal man could say, he said to her in her imagination, and she could not forgive him for them, as though he had actually said them. *But didn't he only yesterday swear that he loved me, he, a truthful and sincere man? Haven't I despaired enough already?* She said to herself.

That whole day Anna spent doubting whether there was any hope for reconciliation and whether she should go away now or see him once more. She was expecting him to come home the whole day, and in the evening, as she went to her room, she said to herself that if he loves me still, he will come to me to my room. If not, it means that it is all over, and I will leave.

In the evening, she heard the rumbling of his carriage stop at the entrance, his steps, and his conversation with the servant and went into his room. Everything was over.

Death rose clearly and vividly before her mind as the sole means of bringing back the love for her in his heart, of punishing him, and of gaining the victory in which the evil spirit that possessed her heart was waging with him. Now nothing mattered, leaving or staying, getting divorced or not, none of that mattered. The one thing that mattered was punishing him. Such horror came upon her that for a long time, she did not realize where she was.

But to live! I love him! He loves me! I've had these thoughts before, and they will pass, she said, feeling tears of joy at the return to life were trickling down her cheeks. And to escape return to her panic, she went hurriedly to his room.

He was asleep there and sleeping soundly. Anna went up to him, and holding the light above his face, she gazed a long while at him. Now when he was asleep, she loved him so much that at the sight of him, she could not keep back tears of tenderness. But she knew that if he woke up, he would look at her with cold eyes, and she would have to prove to him that he had been wrong in his treatment of her. Without waking him, she went back to her room. After a second dose of opium, she fell into a heavy but unsatisfying sleep, during which she never was fully unconscious.

When she got up, the previous day came back to her as though veiled in mist. The feelings of yesterday pierced her sick heart with fresh venom. "I must see him and get ready to leave," she said to herself. She went into his room to announce her intentions.

"How are you feeling, better?" He asked quietly, not wanting to see or feel the gloomy and solemn expression of her face. She looked silently and intently at him, standing in the middle of the room. He glanced at her, frowned for a moment, and went on reading a letter. She turned and went deliberately out of the room. He still might have called for her to come back, but she reached the door, and he was still silent.

"Oh, by the way," he said at the very moment she was in the doorway, "We're going tomorrow together, aren't we?"

"You but not I," she said, turning around to him.

"Anna, we can't go on like this..."

"You, but not I," she repeated.

"This is getting unbearable!"

"You...you will be sorry for this," she said and left.

Frightened by the desperate expression with which her words were uttered, he jumped up and would have run after her, but on second thought, he sat down and scowled. *I've tried everything,* he thought. *The only thing left to do is not pay attention to her,* and he started to get ready for his trip to town.

She heard the sound of his steps and the carriage being brought around for him, the door open and him entering. Then she heard the carriage brought back around, and he came out again. He went back to the front porch, and she heard someone running upstairs. It was the valet running up for his gloves that he had forgotten. She went to the window and saw him take the gloves, and touching the coachman on the back; he entered again. Then without looking up at the window, he settled himself in the carriage, with his legs crossed, and putting on his gloves, he vanished around the corner.

He has gone! It is over! Anna said to herself, standing at the window and filling with cold terror. *Can it be all over? No, it cannot be!* She thought, *he will come back. Why am I going out of my mind!* She went into her bedroom, where Annushka, her maid, was tidying the room.

“Annushka, dear, what am I to do?” asked Anna, sobbing and sinking helplessly into a chair. There was unmistakable sympathy in the maid’s good-natured little gray eyes.

“Why upset yourself so, Anna? Go for a little drive, and it will cheer you,” said the maid.

“Yes, I need to stop thinking, I must do something, drive somewhere, and most of all, get out of this house,” she answered. “I’ll go to the Oblonsky’s. Yes, I’ll go see Dolly before I go out of my mind. Before I leave, I’ll send a telegram to Vronsky, give him one more chance to return.”

When the train came into the station, Anna got out into the crowd of passengers, and moving away from them as if they were lepers, she stood on the platform, trying to think what she had come for, what she was supposed to do, and where she was going. Everything seemed difficult, her thoughts crowded by the noise of the people.

A coachman, cheerful and evidently proud of having so successfully performed his duty, came up to Anna and gave her a letter. She broke it open, and her heart ached before she read it.

“I am very sorry your note didn’t reach me until now. I will be home at ten,” Vronsky had written.

Yes, that is what I expected! she said to herself. *No, I won’t let you make me miserable,* she thought as she walked along the platform. Suddenly, she thought of the man crushed by the train the day she first met Vronsky, and Anna knew what she had to do. She crossed herself, and that familiar gesture brought back into her soul a whole series of girlish and childish memories. Suddenly the darkness that had consumed her was torn apart, and life rose up before her for an instant with all its bright joys in the past. But she did not take her eyes from the wheels of the carriage. And exactly at the moment when the space between the wheels came opposite her, she dropped the red bag, drew back her head and shoulders and fell on her hands under the train, and lightly, as though she may rise again, dropped on to her knees. At that instant, she was terror-stricken at what she was doing, she tried to get up, to fall back, but something huge and merciless struck her on the head and rolled her on her back. “Lord, forgive me!” she said, feeling it impossible to struggle.

And the light that had illuminated her story filled with trouble, deceit, sorry, and shame flared up more brightly than ever before, flooding with light all that had been in darkness, flickered, began to grow dim, and was extinguished forever.

EPILOGUE

Almost two months had passed. The hot summer was half over, and Stepan Oblonsky appeared suddenly in the middle of the station crowd. He heard the “notorious” Vronsky was on this train, having volunteered for war. Stepan had forgotten his own despairing sobs over the death of his sister, and he saw Vronsky only as a war hero and an old friend.

Stepan was approached by Countess Vronskaya, Vronsky’s mother, who was accompanying her son. “For six weeks, he did not speak to anyone and would not touch food except when I forced him to eat. Alexey has taken her daughter into his custody. He came to the funeral and seemed as though he had been set free. Vronsky hired a battalion to go with him to war, and now he says that he is glad that there is a cause worth fighting and dying for.”

The bell sounded, and everyone crowded to the doors. “Here he is!” said Countess Vronskaya, pointing at her son, who was wearing a long overcoat and a wide-brimmed black hat. He had a serious look on his face and was staring straight before him as though he could not hear any noise around him. At being pointed out, he looked around in the direction where Stepan was standing. Without speaking, he nodded respectfully and lifted his hat. His face, aged and worn by suffering. Getting onto his platform, Vronsky left his mother and disappeared into the train.

On the platform, the crowd chanted, “God save the Tsar,” and then emotional shouts of “Hurrah!”

EPILOGUE II

Going out of the nursery and being alone again, Levin went back at once to his thoughts. He looked at the triangle of stars he knew so well, and with each flash of lightning, the Milky Way, and even the bright stars, vanished and then reappeared in their places as though some hand had flung them back with careful aim.

“Oh, you haven’t gone in yet?” he heard Kitty’s voice. “What is it? Are you worried about something?” she asked, looking intently at his face in the starlight.

She understands. I’ll tell her what I’m thinking about, he thought, standing up and kissing her. *Or maybe it is for me alone to ponder and not to put into words.*

This new feeling has not changed me, has not made me happy or enlightened me all of a sudden, as I had dreamed. Faith, or not faith, I don’t know what it is, but this feeling has come just as imperceptibly through suffering and has taken firm root in my soul. I shall go on in the same way, losing my temper with my wife and children, expressing my opinion tactlessly, there will still be the same wall between the holiness of my soul and the reason of my intellect; I shall still be unable to understand with reason why I pray, yet I will still go on praying. But my life now, my whole life, distinct and separate from what may happen to me, every minute of it is no longer meaningless, as it was before, but it has the undeniable potential for good, which I have the power to put into it!