

# CREATING ANNA KARENINA

TOLSTOY AND THE BIRTH OF  
LITERATURE'S MOST ENIGMATIC HEROINE

BOB BLAISDELL

FOREWORD BY BORIS DRALYUK



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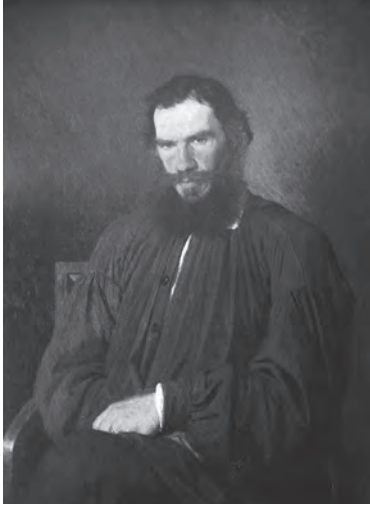


*Leo Tolstoy working at the round table, 1891, by Ilya Repin.\**



*Nikolay Nikolayevich Strakhov (1828–1896), Tolstoy's literary conscience and closest friend during the writing of Anna Karenina.\**

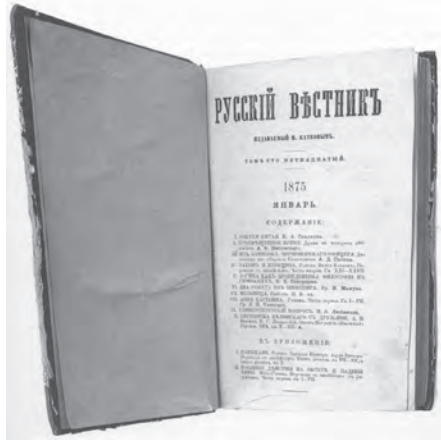
Even now I can see Kramskoj stuffing Lev Nikolaevich's grey shirt with some kind of white cotton rags and sitting this headless scarecrow on a chair, girded with a belt. If you examine the portrait carefully, it is quite apparent how unnatural the bulging chest appears, along with the gatherings in the shirt, and how small the head is in comparison to the body.\*



Offering us uninhibited reflections, Sofia has managed to get in digs at both her husband and Kramskoy: *Tolstoy wouldn't sit still and Kramskoy couldn't paint straight!*<sup>†</sup> Some of us (I, for example) have stood before both portraits, which hang on walls one hundred miles apart, and not for a moment realized that they were different. Sofia claimed if we could “examine the portrait carefully,” we would notice what she noticed. Let's look again then at the Yasnaya Polyana portrait: the chair back appears behind his right shoulder and his right elbow could be leaning on the chair's arm.



Two of Tolstoy's several illustrations for his children from Jules Verne's *La Tour du Monde* (Around the World in Eighty Days)



1875 cover of *Russkiy Vestnik*<sup>‡</sup>



Tolstoy in 1876<sup>‡</sup>



Cover of the first book edition of *Anna Karenina*.<sup>\*</sup>

When the novel *Anna Karenina* was completely finished and published, I asked Lev Nikolaevich for a small gift in return for all my zealous transcribing. And when he went to Moscow [she does not indicate the date], he bought me a very fine ring, with a ruby in the centre and two diamonds—one on either side. I always liked any kind of jewelry, finery and sparkling stones, and I am wearing this ring right now on my finger.<sup>†</sup>



Sofia's "Anna Karenina" ring.<sup>‡</sup>

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