

War and Peace

By Leo Tolstoy

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude

Leo Tolstoy

Born to an aristocratic Russian family in 1828,^[2] Tolstoy's notable works include the novels [*War and Peace*](#) (1869) and [*Anna Karenina*](#) (1878),^[3] often cited as pinnacles of [realist](#) fiction.^[2] He first achieved literary acclaim in his twenties with his semi-autobiographical trilogy, [*Childhood*](#), [*Boyhood*](#), and [*Youth*](#) (1852–1856), and [*Sevastopol Sketches*](#) (1855), based upon his experiences in the [Crimean War](#). His fiction includes dozens of short stories such as "[After the Ball](#)" (1911), and several [novellas](#) such as [*The Death of Ivan Ilyich*](#) (1886), [*Family Happiness*](#) (1859) and [*Hadji Murad*](#) (1912). He also wrote [plays](#) and essays concerning philosophical, moral and religious themes.

Tolstoy is considered one of the giants of Russian literature; his works include the novels [*War and Peace*](#) and [*Anna Karenina*](#) and novellas such as [*Hadji Murad*](#) and [*The Death of Ivan Ilyich*](#).

Tolstoy's earliest works, the autobiographical novels [*Childhood*](#), [*Boyhood*](#), and [*Youth*](#) (1852–1856), tell of a rich landowner's son and his slow realization of the chasm between himself and his peasants. Though he later rejected them as sentimental, a great deal of Tolstoy's own life is revealed. They retain their relevance as accounts of the universal story of growing up.

Tolstoy served as a [second lieutenant](#) in an artillery regiment during the [Crimean War](#), recounted in his [*Sevastopol Sketches*](#). His experiences in battle helped stir his subsequent [pacifism](#) and gave him material for realistic depiction of the horrors of war in his later work.

The main themes of War and Peace are the irrational nature of human behavior, family, and the search for a purpose. One of the main themes of War and Peace is the irrational nature of human behavior. The novel shows how people are often driven by their emotions and impulses rather than by reason. Another important theme is family. The novel explores the relationships between family members and how they are affected by war and other events. Finally, the novel is concerned with the search for a purpose in life.