

Leo Tolstoy's 20 Greatest Short Stories Annotated

By Leo Tolstoy

"Anna Karenina" and "War and Peace" branded Tolstoy as one of the greatest writers in modern history. Few, however, have read his wonderful short stories. Now, in one collection, are the 20 greatest short stories of Leo Tolstoy, which give a snapshot of Russia and its people in the late nineteenth century. A fine introduction is given by Andrew Barger. Annotations are included of difficult Russian terms. There is also a Tolstoy biography at the start of the book with photos of Tolstoy's relatives. The classic stories include:

A Candle
After the Dance
Albert
Alyosha the Pot
An Old Acquaintance
Does a Man Need Much Land?
If You Neglect the Fire You Don't Put It Out
Khodinka: An Incident of the Coronation of Nicholas II
Lucerne
Memoirs of a Lunatic
My Dream
Recollections of a Scorer
The Empty Drum
The Long Exile
The Posthumous Papers of the Hermit Fedor Kusmich
The Young Tsar
There Are No Guilty People
Three Deaths
Two Old Men
What Men Live By

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From the Author

Andrew Barger Interview

Q1: Tolstoy is known for writing long novels like "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina." He was obviously very good at it. Was he also good at writing short stories?

A1: Tolstoy had no problems with short stories either. The ones you will find in "Leo Tolstoy's 20 Greatest Short Stories" are proof of this. Great storytellers, like Tolstoy, can fit their material, their concepts, into any size package. After handwriting "War and Peace" seven times I think he needed a break from the long novel.

Q2: Do you think he could have fit it into a short story?

A2: That would require a really big shoehorn.

Q3: You titled your introduction to the book, "The Short Stories of Leo Tolstoy: Muzhík to My Ears." Who were the Russian muzhíks and why did Tolstoy write stories for them?

A3: The muzhíks were Russian peasants who did much of the manual labor on farms. Most lacked education as they were forced into the fields at a young age to make money for their families. Tolstoy had a deep Christian compassion for the muzhíks. He simplified a number of his stories for these less educated readers to ensure his moral point got through and a hard lesson was taught. He touched upon the evils of heavy drinking time and again.

Q4: On a lighter note, what are the greatest of the greatest of Tolstoy's short stories?

A4: You mean my favorites of the lot of twenty?

Q5: Don't be shy.

A5: That's a really tough question. They are all good.

Q6: Top five.

A6: Fair enough. I like "Does a Man Need Much Land?," "The Long Exile," "Lucerne," "The Empty Drum," and "Recollections of a Scorer."

Q7: On your blog you are counting down the top ghost stories from 1800-1849 that you will be publishing

in **The Best Ghost Stories 1800-1849**. Does Tolstoy have any supernatural stories?

A7: Tolstoy is no Poe and many people are thankful for that. "Does a Man Need Much Land?" is horrific in its ending. "Memoirs of a Lunatic" has a specter in it. "The Long Exile" is also frightening in parts.

Q8: Did you edit anything else by Tolstoy?

A8: Yes. **Leo Tolstoy's 5 Greatest Novellas Annotated** is out now. He is inescapable.

About the Author

Andrew Barger also the editor of *Leo Tolstoy's 5 Greatest Novellas Annotated* and is the award winning author of *Coffee with Poe: A Novel of Edgar Allan Poe's Life* and *The Divine Dantes* trilogy of novels. He is the editor of *Edgar Allan Poe Annotated and Illustrated Entire Stories and Poems*, and *The Best Werewolf Short Stories 1800-1849: A Classic Werewolf Anthology*. Andrew's first short story collection is *Mailboxes - Mansions - Memphistopheles: A Collection of Dark Tales*. He is a leading voice in the Gothic literature space. Please visit him at AndrewBarger.com and at his blog: AndrewBarger.Blogspot.com.

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