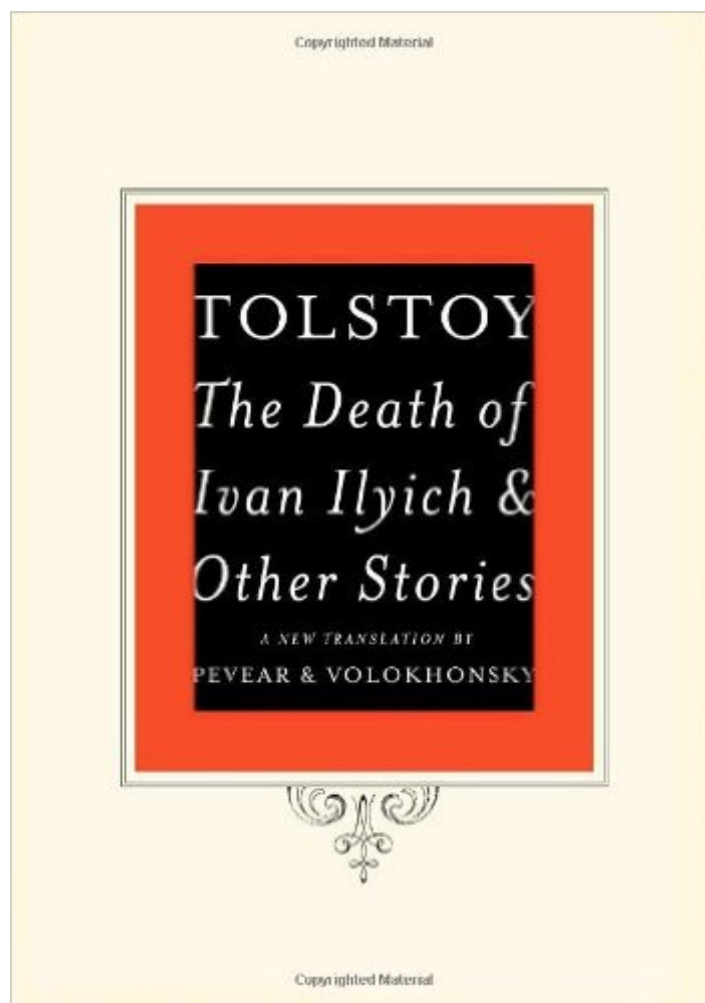


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The Death Of Ivan Ilyich And Other Stories



Synopsis

A vibrant translation of Tolstoy's most important short fiction by the award-winning translators of *War and Peace*. Here are eleven masterful stories from the mature author, some autobiographical, others moral parables, and all told with the evocative power that was Tolstoy's alone. They include "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," inspired by Tolstoy's own experiences as a soldier in the Chechen War, "Haji Murat," the novella Harold Bloom called "the best story in the world," "The Devil," a fascinating tale of sexual obsession, and the celebrated "The Death of Ivan Ilyich," an intense and moving examination of death and the possibilities of redemption. Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation captures the richness, immediacy, and multiplicity of Tolstoy's language, and reveals the author as a passionate moral guide, an unflinching seeker of truth, and ultimately, a creator of enduring and universal art. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Although Leo Tolstoy is primarily known for writing the juggernaut masterpieces *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*, readers venturing into the less formidable remainder of his canon will find within them the same incisive narrative clarity, that overarching symphonic structure, and those profound eternal questions that continue to immortalize him nearly a century after his death. His shorter fiction, while little resembling precise Chekhovian gems or pithy O. Henry exercises, encompasses a macrocosm of immense character and depth, highlighting more pronouncedly his work's finest qualities pared down to concision. While the market is abundant with myriad editions of Tolstoy's

stories, this new volume of his late fiction is particularly remarkable for the collaboration of translators Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, both of whom have rendered critically acclaimed translations of great Russian classics. Seasoned readers of Dostoevsky will invariably direct neophytes to their landmark *The Brothers Karamazov*, considered today as definitive for mirroring the author's ironic humor, tortured spirituality, and most importantly, his language's cadence and tonality. At the turn of the millennium, the couple released their *Anna Karenina*, which later garnered international attention upon Oprah's promotion of the title in her book club. Two years ago, Pevear and Volokhonsky also published their hefty, beautiful version of *War and Peace*, enthralled readers of serious literature and becoming the subject of a four-week online discussion presided by the New York Times.

NOTE: This review is of the Richard Pevear/Larissa Volokhonsky translation. One thing that Leo Tolstoy could never be accused of was being a minimalist. He is best known for the massive novel 'Anna Karenina' and the even more massive 'War and Peace'. Almost all of his fiction seems to be an attempt to pack in as much panoramic life as possible. This characteristic applies to his shorter pieces as well as his novels. This new translation (2009) assembles his best known stories as well as some lesser known ones as well and is presented chronologically, from the earliest, "The Prisoner of the Caucasus", written between the composition of 'War and Peace' and 'Anna Karenina', to his final novella, "Hadji Murat," written over the last two decades of his life and published posthumously a few years after his death. All of the stories deal with the themes familiar in his other works: "how can a man lead a moral life, what should his attitude be toward the pleasures of the flesh, honor in the midst of war and equality among the classes." "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" deals with a young soldier who has obtained leave from his regiment to visit his ailing mother and perhaps marry before she dies. On his way through the mountain passes he takes a wrong turn and is pursued by Tartars. His bafflement as to why these people would want to kill him is similar to young Nicolai Rostov in 'War and Peace', who had grown up in the bosom of family love and could not conceive that anyone would wish him harm. The naiveté quickly disappears as a steely resolve to survive takes its place. Tolstoy is a master at depicting wartime action and the campaigns of pursuit, capture or killing which are inherent in war.

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