

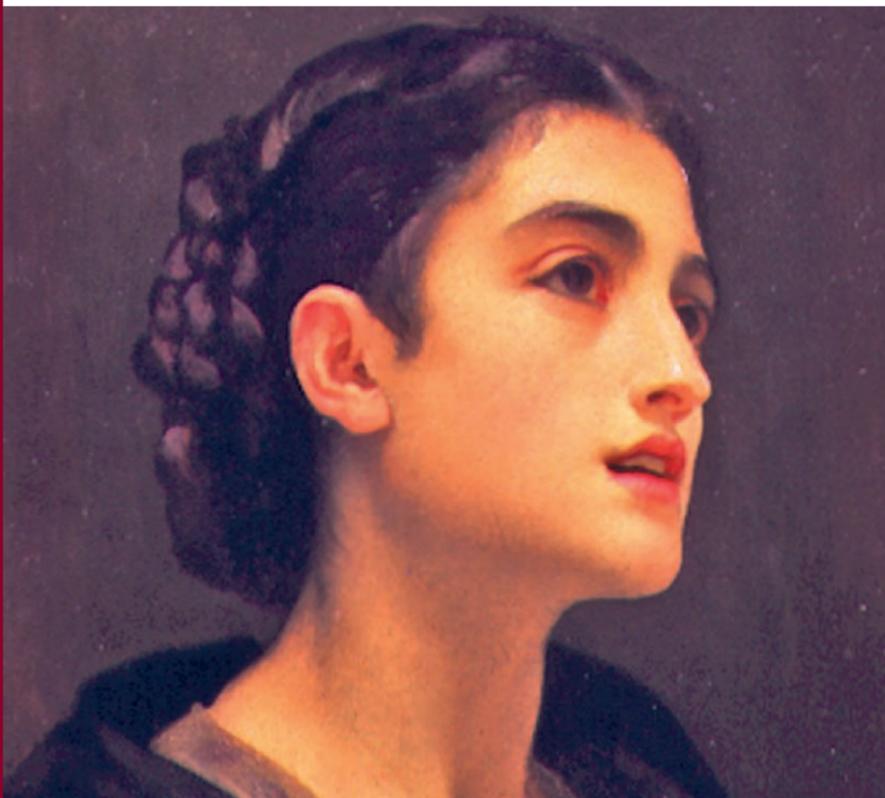
The logo features a stylized classical building facade with columns above the word "NAXOS" in a bold, serif font, with "AudioBooks" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it.

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Leo Tolstoy
Anna Karenina

Read by **Laura Paton**

CLASSIC
FICTION



NA408112D

1	Prince Stepan Arkadyevitch Oblonsky in trouble	6:01
2	Darya Alexandrovna – Dolly – wan and pale	5:29
3	Konstantin Dmitrich Levin – a suitor on the ice	5:32
4	A young man in love	3:25
5	The Princess Kitty Scherbatskaya	7:56
6	Count Alexei Kirillitch Vronsky	3:44
7	At the railway station – Madame Anna Arkadyevna Karenina	8:33
8	An accident on the rails	4:45
9	Dolly confides, Anna advises	6:09
10	Dolly addresses her husband as ‘thou’	3:38
11	The ball begins	7:47
12	A skeleton in the cupboard	7:07
13	An unexpected meeting on the platform	7:23
14	Anna, back at St Petersburg with her son, Serioja	7:30
15	Alexei Alexandrovitch Karenin warns	4:22
16	A passion consummated	5:23
17	At the races	17:04
18	Levin in the fields of Pokrovsky	13:02
19	Dolly on her country estate at Yergushov	6:58
20	A formal letter	3:21
21	Anna and Vronsky – an electric current	7:43
22	An uneasy separation	10:56

23	A confrontation	7:50
24	Declaration of love at the Oblonsky home	7:45
25	At the Scherbatskys	7:59
26	A telegram from Anna	12:30
27	Desperation and despair	10:23
28	Married life at the Levins	5:39
29	Anna returns to St Petersburg to see Serioja	12:11
30	Vronsky and Anna – a new life	4:15
31	Kitty meets Vronsky	3:53
32	Heat, dust, irritation...	16:10
33	Reconciliation?	6:21
34	Quarrel, cruelty and indifference	8:45
35	'Gone! All is ended...'	6:07
36	At the Oblonskys	6:20
37	Home once more	2:36
38	Anna leaves for the station	6:32
39	The violent beating of her heart	4:16
40	Two months later, at Kursk railway station	9:26
41	Kitty, mother and wife	5:54
42	Levin, the stars and the Milky Way	7:05

Total time: 5:06:09

Leo Tolstoy

Anna Karenina

Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy was born in 1828 on his family's estate at Yasna Polyana in the province of Tula, some two hundred miles from Moscow. His family were Russian landed gentry, and Tolstoy grew up during the last phase of serfdom.

Both his parents had died by the time he was ten years old, and he was brought up by elderly women relatives and educated at home by tutors. He then attended Kazan University, but gave up his studies to farm and manage his estate, which he failed to do successfully.

He spent the years 1851 to 1857 in the army as a volunteer officer, and served with his regiment at the siege of Sevastopol. After his release from the army he travelled abroad, returning to live at Yasna Polyana. There he became a Magistrate and built a school for peasant children. In 1861 he married Sophie Behr, a young woman sixteen years his junior.

The following period of his life was calm and prosperous. His marriage was a happy one, and his wife bore him thirteen children. His farming was successful, and his writing began to bring him an income. But after some fifteen years, his theological doubts

and social concerns led to a severe spiritual crisis. In 1879 he wrote a complete account of his religious conversion in **A Confession**. He followed this with a series of pamphlets, and his personal view of the Christian doctrine became known as 'Tolstoyism'. Although his teachings attracted many followers in Russia and abroad, they alienated the Church, and in 1901 he was ex-communicated.

In adopting what he perceived as a godly and compassionate way of life, which involved dressing simply in peasant clothes, following a vegetarian and teetotal regime and doing manual work, Tolstoy became increasingly estranged from his wife and children. At the age of 82 he attempted to escape from these family tensions by leaving home secretly at night, accompanied by his daughter. He collapsed at a nearby railway station where he later died of pneumonia on November 8th, 1910.

It is generally accepted that **Anna Karenina** belongs among the world's greatest novels, and shares with **War and Peace** the reputation of being one of Tolstoy's two great masterpieces.

The subject of the novel suggested itself to Tolstoy in 1873 when, at a railway station near his home, a young woman threw herself under an approaching train. The central core of the novel is Anna and Vronsky's obsessive, doomed love affair, but their story is interwoven with other strands which, taken together, address all the major human experiences; sexual and spiritual love, birth and death. The action is set against the changing background of Russian life in the final years of the 19th century, and Tolstoy writes authentically about every aspect of society from the glittering drawing rooms of Petersburg and Moscow, to his beloved countryside, where landowners and peasants are attempting to adjust to the new order as serfdom comes to an end.

As a counterpoint to Anna and Vronsky's story, Tolstoy presents us with a view of other, different relationships. Levin and Kitty, after experiencing the pain of rejection and separation, are united in a union blessed by Church and State, while Dolly and Stiva's marriage manages to survive, though damaged, after Stiva's thoughtless philandering. Human nature, with all its failings, is the fabric of which this great and compassionate work is composed, in which its author shows us our imperfections, but does not judge our actions.

Many women of the time found themselves in similar situations to Anna's, arising from their innocence and ignorance of the world. Anna has married a man many years her senior whom she does not love. Their lack of compatibility is not surprising given the limited influence a young girl was able to exercise in the choice of her husband. As Dolly explains to Levin:

"You men become attracted to a girl; you call on her, get to know her, wait your chance, and if you find her to be what you thought her you propose ... But the girl is not asked. You want her to choose for herself, but she cannot choose; her function is merely to answer 'yes' or 'no'."

Dolly has married Stiva from the schoolroom, without any understanding of her husband's selfish, voluptuary character, and is rudely awakened by his affair with their governess.

Kitty mistakes Vronsky's attentions for love, and is heartbroken when she discovers he does not care for her. Before she and Levin can be united she has to go through a period of painful learning, before she can appreciate the qualities of the man she has rejected.

Anna, having married without love, is defenceless against the power of her passions once they are unleashed by Vronsky.

An affair such as theirs might have been

acceptable in their sophisticated circle had it been conducted discreetly. Even Anna's husband would have been prepared to turn a blind eye had his own reputation remained unaffected. But the depth of their passion leads them to flout society's rules, and society takes its revenge.

In experiencing that revenge it is Anna who suffers most. As a man with a mistress Vronsky is not markedly different from many others, and his position in society is practically unaffected. But Anna, as a 'fallen' woman finds the doors of respectable houses closed to her, and when Vronsky wishes to enter them, he is obliged to do so alone. The laws of marriage and divorce are heavily biased in favour of the husband, and Karenin has the power to separate Anna from her beloved son.

Thus the forces of society gradually bear down upon Anna with the same insensible and inexorable momentum as the iron monster which finally crushes the life out of her body on the railway line. The constant reminders of the extent to which she has transgressed society's laws finally lead her to destroy the love which is the source of her

shame and guilt, and with it her only reason for living.

But the novel does not end with Anna's death. Her tragic destiny is set within a wider framework, and contrasted with the happier outcome of Levin and Kitty's story. The path they have followed leads to their finding a deeper love and understanding within their marriage, while Levin's search for faith results in his spiritual enlightenment. There is much of the author in the character of Levin, whose experiences to a great extent reflect those of Tolstoy's own life. In the end Levin comes to believe, as did Tolstoy, that God is inside all of us, and that it is only by leading a life which reflects his goodness that we can be happy.

As the book ends with Levin gazing into the vastness of the night sky filled with joy at his newly-discovered faith, we feel we are in the presence of the author himself, as he affirms his belief in the power of our innate goodness to give meaning to the lives we lead, and to bring us happiness despite our human failings.

Notes by Neville Jason

**The music on this recording is taken from the
NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues**

RUBINSTEIN Symphony No. 5 George Enescu State Philharmonic Orchestra/Horia Andreescu	8.223320
RUBINSTEIN Symphony No. 2, Ocean Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra/Stephen Gunzenhauser	8.220449
BALAKIREV Symphony No. 2, Russia Russian State Symphony Orchestra/Igor Golovschin	8.220793
VITOLS Orchestral Works Latvian National Symphony Orchestra/Dmitry Yablonsky	8.223756
IVANOVICI Great Waltzes Donauwellen/Budapest Strauss Ensemble/István Bogár	8.553337
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 1, Hamlet Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra/Adrian Leaper	8.550517
RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No. 3 National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland/Bernd Glemser, Piano/ Jerzy Maksymiuk, Conductor	8.550666

Music programmed by Nicolas Soames

Cover picture: Study of a Lady by Frederic Leighton (1830–1896)
Courtesy of The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

Leo Tolstoy

Anna Karenina

Read by **Laura Paton**

Anna Karenina has been described as the perfect Russian novel. Trapped in a loveless marriage, Anna Karenina is defenceless against the power of her passions once they are unleashed by the adoration of Count Vronsky. Having defied the rules of 19th-century Russian society, Anna is forced to pay a heavy price. Human nature, with all its failings, is the fabric of which this great and passionate work is composed.



Laura Paton trained at LAMDA where she won the St Philip's Prize for Poetry and the Michael Warre Award. She has toured the UK extensively in productions as varied as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. Among her other recordings for Naxos AudioBooks are Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and both volumes of *Grimms' Fairy Tales*.

"Laura Paton makes an outstanding job of reading Tolstoy's epic saga of doomed love... there's some fine use of atmospheric music with Ms Paton bringing all the characters in Tolstoy's vast story to life."

SHEFFIELD STAR

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-081-3

View our catalogue online at

www.naxosaudiobooks.com



Abridged by Neville Jason. Produced by Nicola Soames.
Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording
Company
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.
© 1996 NAXOS AudioBooks Ltd. © 1996 NAXOS AudioBooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

Total time
5:06:09