

War and Peace, Simplified Names Edition

By Leo Tolstoy

Translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude.

Edited by Tomkin Coleman.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal license. This license allows re-users to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format. The license allows for commercial use.

Print ISBN: 979-8-218-11720-7

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-950255-15-3

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Reason #1 people don't read *War and Peace*: Too many names.

In past versions, one character may have a half-dozen names. Some characters even share the same name. In this edition, all characters have only one name.

Reason #2: Too many phrases in French and other languages.

In this edition, I translated all foreign words into English and marked them with italics. Readers no longer have to refer to footnotes or look up foreign phrases that past translators assumed readers knew the meaning of.

Reason #3: Too many awkwardly translated phrases.

In this edition, I corrected the most egregious mistranslations. Examples include "rudenesses," "scarriages," and "beshashed." I also adjusted many sentences that I felt were awkwardly translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude in their 1922 translation.

Reason #4: Too long.

With the above alterations in this edition of *War and Peace*, the novel is so clear and engaging that modern readers won't want it to end! After all, few people think the Downton Abbey series is too long. I hope that with the simplification of names and other edits in this new edition of *War and Peace*, readers will find this novel similarly enjoyable.

-Tomkin Coleman

December 2022

NOTES ON EDITING

I loved reading *War and Peace*. I loved, as Andrew D. Kaufman describes in his book, *Give War and Peace a Chance: Tolstoyan Wisdom for Troubled Times*, the novel's main theme of our "search to find meaning in a relentlessly unstable world." Reading *War and Peace* helped me cope with Covid, national politics, and deaths in my family. What I didn't love about *War and Peace* was how often I was distracted from appreciating the book's wonderful plot, themes, and characters. I spent considerable time looking up information such as foreign words, anachronisms, and yes, looking up characters to find out who was who. I tried to find a more

readable translation of the novel but there wasn't one. So I decided to do something about it. My goal was to create a faithful version of Louise and Aylmer Maudes' translation from 1922 but with small edits that make the text more readable. This edition eliminates many anachronisms, clarifies awkwardly translated passages, and simplifies character names. Now the reader can simply enjoy the text without puzzling over the author's intention. It's true that when names are simplified, something is lost. Tolstoy is playful in his use of nicknames and relationships to refer to characters. When he wrote *War and Peace*, readers of the original Russian understood his Russian references. Even English readers of his time understood the contemporary references. This edition attempts to re-create this kind of understanding. No longer do readers have to puzzle out the confusing elements of the text. Instead, they can simply enjoy the actions and passion of the characters. Plot and character are no longer hidden behind awkwardly translated and hard-to-follow wordplay.

I chose to edit Louise and Aylmer Maudes' translation from 1922 because I think it is the easiest version to read. However, one thing that diminishes their version's readability is the translation of foreign phrases. Although most of the French words are translated into English, those translations are down in the footnotes. I did not use footnotes. Instead, I placed the translated words directly in the text and italicized them. I also translated the German, Russian, Latin, and other foreign words and put them in italics. Maudes' version is public domain, so I am making this version available as public domain, as well. My hope is that this version will inspire readers to make short stories, plays, audiobooks, and other adaptations.

The primary focus of this translation is the simplification of names and titles. My favorite example of name confusion in modern translations of *War and Peace* centers around the use of the word "Tzar." Tolstoy used "Tzar" to refer to the sovereigns of several nations. Adding to the confusion, Tolstoy also used the words "Emperor" and "Tzar" interchangeably. In English, however, the word "Tzar" is usually used only for the leader of Russia. In this edition, the word "Tzar" is used in a clear and simple way—it's reserved only for the Russian leader. For the Austrian sovereign, I use the term "the Emperor of Austria." Likewise, Napoleon is referred to simply as Napoleon. He is not referred to as "Bonaparte," "Buonaparte," "Tzar," or "Emperor." Nor is he referred to by any other name unless the character is talking about what title or name they should use for him. In this edition, the Russian Tzar is the only "Tzar" in the book. The Tzar's relations in this edition are "the Tzar's mother," "the Tzar's son," etc. His relation's names, nicknames, and titles are not used.

Other names required many fewer changes. For instance, Tolstoy refers to Pierre and Natasha fairly consistently throughout the book. Only occasionally does Tolstoy use their titles or nicknames. Even with these two characters, though, I've changed every reference to them to only their first names. This prevents confusion and makes the text more readable.

I made a more dramatic change to the names of Natasha's parents. In this edition, they are now referred to as "Count Rostov" and "Countess Rostov." In Russian, the female version of "Rostov" is "Rostova." I simply use the English translation of the name, "Rostov," for both the Count and Countess. In Tolstoy's original, he rarely uses these characters' names at all. Instead, he refers to "Natasha's father," "the count," or uses other vague terms. It's quite easy for a new reader to mix up these important characters with other ones. For instance, the name "Count Rostov" refers to several different characters! This sort of wordplay might be easy to follow in the original Russian, but an English translation read a hundred years later is not as clear and simple. When the novel's names and plot points are puzzling to the reader, it can be impossible to

find humor in the confusion. In this new edition, the plots involving the Rostovs are quite clear, and both of these characters are always referred to in a consistent matter.

Tolstoy is not as straightforward with the characters of Andrei and Nicholas. In addition to their first names, they are often referred to by their titles or their last names. More confusion occurs because both characters share their titles with their fathers. In this edition, I refer to Andrei and Nicholas solely by their first names.

I made a bigger change to the names of Prince Vasili, Prince Bolkonski, and other princes in this edition. In the 1922 English translation by the Maudes, readers can become confused by the title of Prince. In the English tradition, "Prince" refers to a person who is in line to become the king. In Russia, this is not the case; the title of Prince was more like a Baron or a Duke. Such a title indicates that while they were powerful, that person is not in line to become king. In many ways, "Baron" is a more accurate translation than "Prince." Thus, this edition refers to the princes as barons.

Similarly, I refer to Princesses Lise, Marya, and others only by their first names. First of all, I do so because these characters are not in line to inherit the crown. Also, these characters aren't as powerful as their prince and princess parents. Not using a title helps differentiate them from their parents.

With other characters, however, adding titles helps clarify their roles in the novel. For instance, I rename Bilibin as "Adjutant Bilibin" and "Kozlówski" as "Aide-de-camp Kozlovski." These added titles help the reader comprehend the characters' roles in the plot at a glance. Changing "Mademoiselle Bourienne" to "Lady-in-waiting Bourienne" makes her title much more descriptive. It's true that the character known as "Uncle" (with quotation marks) does have a descriptive name/title. Unfortunately, the quotation marks become distracting to the reader. (The distraction is especially acute when used with an apostrophe!) Tolstoy refers to "Uncle" almost a hundred times in the novel. I changed the name to the Russian word for "Uncle," which is "Dyadya." This change makes the character's name much easier to read. It's true that referring to the character as Dyadya isn't as immediately descriptive as "Uncle." But this tradeoff seems reasonable when one considers the improvement in readability.

Similarly, I altered military titles (and simplified them, when necessary). This way, the book's war scenes are much easier to read. Tolstoy refers to different generals by their noble titles of Baron, Prince, or Duke. This edition uses the title of General for all the Russian generals to simplify their roles in the plot. I differentiate French military leaders from Russian ones by using the title of "Général."

The character of Kutuzov has a couple different changes in this edition. These are necessary, in part, because of his military promotion in the middle of the book. First of all, I use the short title "Marshal" rather than the long title "Commander-in-Chief." In this edition, Kutuzov starts the book as simply "General Kutuzov." When he is promoted to Marshal, then I refer to him as "Marshal Kutuzov." Similarly, Barclay de Tolly is referred to as "Marshal Barclay" in the beginning of the book. When he is demoted, he becomes "General Barclay."

Place names are often changed in this edition by adding a word of clarity. For instance, I changed "Schlappanitz" to "village of Schlappanitz." Likewise, I changed "the Tverskáya" to "Tverskaya Street." It is possible for modern readers to figure out place names by context. However, adding this clarification can be helpful.

The other name changes are more subtle. The above examples give a good idea of my intentions in altering the names of the characters.

I did make some additional changes, as well, throughout the book. When I felt the translation by the Maudes was overly literal, I made minor edits to make the text more readable. For instance, I inserted commas for clarity. Likewise, I removed many commas that were cumbersome and unnecessary. It's true that such corrections make the text less faithful to the original translation. However, I think it is more faithful to Tolstoy's original story in that it is much clearer. This clarity was lost when the work was translated into English in an overly literal way.

One example of these changes is in the first sentence of the novel:

The Maudes' translation:

“Well, Prince, so Genoa and Lucca are now just family estates of the Buonapartes.”

This new translation:

“Well, Baron Vasili, so the Italian cities of Genoa and Lucca are now just Napoleon's family estates.”

I hope you will enjoy this edited version of the translation and find it clear and easy to understand. My goal is for the reader to thoroughly appreciate Tolstoy's clever writing, intricate plotting, and magnificent storylines.

LIST OF NAMES

- Pierre – The main male character. Starts out as an oaf but goes through profound changes.
 - Count Bezukhov – Pierre's father. Rich and old.
- Andrei – Pierre's best friend. Has unreasonably high ideals for achieving glory and having people love him.
 - Lise – Andrei's wife. Pregnant with their son, Nikolenka.
 - Baron Bolkonski – Andrei's father. Insufferably overbearing.
 - Marya – Andrei's sister. Religious. Devoted to their father, Baron Bolkonski.
 - Mademoiselle Bourienne – Marya's attendant.
 - Butler Tikhon, Overseer Alpatych, Dron – Andrei's servants.
- Natasha – The main female character. Very passionate. Always surprising.
 - Sonya – Natasha's best friend and cousin, an orphan who lives with the family.
 - Nicholas – Natasha's brother, who wants to be a hero. Learns the true meaning of courage.
 - Denisov – Nicholas's boss.
 - Petya – Natasha's young brother. Sweet and impetuous. Eventually goes to war.
 - Count and Countess Rostov – Natasha's lovely parents. The count may fritter away his wife's money, but he is good at being happy.
- Boris – The social climber. Smarmy and shallow.
 - Widow Drubetskoy – Boris's mother, who helps him in his social climbing.
- Baron Vasili – The bad guy.
 - Helene – Baron Vasili's naughty daughter. A femme fatale.
 - Anatole – Baron Vasili's naughty son. A seducing Casanova.
 - Hippolyte – Another son.
- Julie – Rich heiress. Pen pal of Marya (Andrei's religious sister).
- Dolokhov – The psycho. A terrible friend but a great soldier.
- Platón – The noble peasant. Understands the joy of simply being alive.
- Anna Palovna – Socialite hostess.

- Napoleon – The enemy.
 - Général Murat – One of Napoleon’s many generals.
- General (later promoted to Marshal) Kutuzov - The wise Russian military leader.
 - Marshal (later demoted to General) Barclay de Tolly – Kutuzov’s boss (later replaced by Kutuzov).
 - Major Bagraion – Kutuzov’s main general.
 - General Pfuel – Smart general with a lot of plans that never work out.
 - General Raevsky – Showy general willing to sacrifice his sons for glory.
 - Artillery Captain Tushin. Hardworking but under-valued.
- The Tzar – Head of Russia.
 - Secretary of State Speransky. A reformer of government with a cold and artificial manner.
 - Mayor Rastopchin. The foolish mayor/governor of Moscow.
 - Vereshchagin. Political prisoner.

CHAPTER 1

“Well, Baron Vasili, so the Italian cities of Genoa and Lucca are now just Napoleon’s family estates. But I warn you, if you don’t tell me that this means war, if you still try to defend the infamies and horrors perpetrated by that Antichrist named Napoleon—I really believe he is the Antichrist—then I will have nothing more to do with you and you are no longer my friend, no longer my ‘faithful slave,’ as you call yourself! But how do you do? I see I have frightened you—sit down and tell me all the news.”

It was in July 1805, and the speaker was the well-known Anna Pavlovna, a favorite of the Mother of the Tzar. With these words, she greeted Baron Vasili, a man of high rank and importance, who was the first to arrive at her reception. Anna had had a cough for some days. She was, as she said, suffering from a flu she called the grippe; “grippe” being then a new word in St. Petersburg, used only by the elite.

All of Anna Pavlovna’s invitations, without exception, were written in French, and delivered by a scarlet-liveried footman that morning, ran as follows:

“If you have nothing better to do, Count (or Baron), and if the prospect of spending an evening with a poor invalid is not too terrible, I shall be very charmed to see you tonight between 7 and 10—Anna Pavlovna.”

“Heavens! what an intense attack!” replied Baron Vasili, not in the least disconcerted by this reception. He had just entered, wearing an embroidered court uniform, knee breeches, and shoes, and had stars on his breast and a serene expression on his flat face. Baron Vasili spoke in that refined French in which our grandfathers not only spoke but thought, and with the gentle, patronizing intonation natural to a man of importance who had grown old in society and at court. He went up to Anna Pavlovna, kissed her hand, presented to her his bald, scented, and shining head, and complacently seated himself on the sofa.

“First of all, dear Anna Pavlovna, tell me how you are. Set your friend’s mind at rest,” said Baron Vasili without altering his tone, beneath the politeness and affected sympathy of which indifference and even irony could be discerned.

“Can one be well while suffering morally? Can one be calm in times like these if one has any feelings?” said Anna Pavlovna. “You are staying the whole evening, I hope?”

“And the fete at the English ambassador’s? Today is Wednesday. I must put in an appearance there,” said Baron Vasili. “My daughter is coming for me to take me there.”

“I thought today’s fete had been canceled. I confess all these festivities and fireworks are becoming wearisome.”

“If they had known that you wished it, the entertainment would have been put off,” said Baron Vasili who, like a wound-up clock, by force of habit said things he did not even wish to be believed.

“Don’t tease! Well, what has been decided about General Novosiltsev’s dispatch? You know everything.”

“What can one say about it?” replied Baron Vasili in a cold, listless tone. “What has been decided? They have decided that Napoleon has “burnt his boats” as a commitment to the war and I believe that we are ready to burn ours.”

Baron Vasili always spoke languidly, like an actor repeating a stale part. Anna Pavlovna, on the contrary, despite her forty years, overflowed with animation and impulsiveness. To be an enthusiast had become her social vocation and, sometimes even when she did not feel like it, she

became enthusiastic in order not to disappoint the expectations of those who knew her. Anna Pavlovna's subdued smile which, though it did not suit her faded features, always played around her lips, and expressed, as in a spoiled child, a continual consciousness of her charming defect, which she neither wished, nor could, nor considered it necessary, to correct.

During a conversation on political matters Anna Pavlovna burst out:

"Oh, don't speak to me of Austria. Perhaps I don't understand things, but Austria never has wished, and does not wish, for war. She is betraying us! Russia alone must save Europe. Our gracious sovereign, the Tzar, recognizes his high vocation and will be true to it. That is the one thing I have faith in! Our good and wonderful sovereign has to perform the noblest role on earth, and he is so virtuous and noble that God will not forsake him. He will fulfill his vocation and crush the hydra of revolution, which has become more terrible than ever in the person of this murderer and villain! We alone must avenge the murder of the just one, Duc d'Enghien... Whom, I ask you, can we rely on?... England with her commercial spirit will not and cannot understand the Tzar's loftiness of soul. England has refused to evacuate Malta. She wanted to find, and still seeks, some secret motive for our actions. What answer did General Novosiltsev get? None. The English have not understood and cannot understand the self-abnegation of our Tzar who wants nothing for himself, but only desires the good of mankind. And what have the English promised? Nothing! And what little they have promised they will not perform! Prussia has always declared that Napoleon is invincible and that all of Europe is powerless before him... And I don't believe a word that the Prussian statesman Hardenburg says, or statesman Haugwitz either. This famous Prussian neutrality is just a trap. I have faith only in God and the lofty destiny of our adored monarch, the Tzar. He will save Europe!"

Anna Pavlovna suddenly paused, smiling at her own impetuosity.

"I think," said Baron Vasili with a smile, "that if you had been sent instead of our dear General Wintzingerode you would have captured the King of Prussia's consent by assault. You are so eloquent. Will you give me a cup of tea?"

"In a moment. About that," she added, becoming calm again, "I am expecting two very interesting men tonight, a viscount who is connected with the Montmorencys through the Rohans, one of the best French families. The viscount is one of the genuine emigres, the good ones. And also the Abbot Morio. Do you know that profound thinker? He has been received by the Tzar. Had you heard?"

"I shall be delighted to meet them," said Baron Vasili. "But tell me," he added with studied carelessness as if it had only just occurred to him, though the question he was about to ask was the chief motive of his visit, "is it true that the Mother of the Tzar wants Baron Funke to be appointed as first secretary at Vienna? Baron Funke by all accounts is a poor creature."

Baron Vasili wished to obtain this post for his son, Anatole, but others were trying through the Mother of the Tzar to secure it for Baron Funke.

Anna Pavlovna almost closed her eyes to indicate that neither she nor anyone else had a right to criticize what the Mother of the Tzar desired or was pleased with.

"Baron Funke has been recommended to the Mother of the Tzar by her sister," was all she said, in a dry and mournful tone.

As she named the Mother of the Tzar, Anna Pavlovna's face suddenly assumed an expression of profound and sincere devotion and respect mingled with sadness, and this occurred every time she mentioned her illustrious patroness. She added that the Mother of the Tzar had deigned to show Baron Funke much respect, and again her face clouded over with sadness.

Baron Vasili was silent and looked indifferent. But, with the womanly and courtier-like quickness and tact habitual to her, Anna Pavlovna wished both to rebuke him (for daring to speak as he had done of a man recommended to the Mother of the Tzar) and at the same time to console him, so she said:

“Now about your family. Do you know that since your daughter, Helene, came out everyone has been enraptured by her? They say she is amazingly beautiful.”

Baron Vasili bowed to signify his respect and gratitude.

“I often think,” Anna Pavlovna continued after a short pause, drawing nearer to the Baron and smiling amiably at him as if to show that political and social topics were ended and the time had come for intimate conversation—“I often think how unfairly sometimes the joys of life are distributed. Why has fate given you two such splendid children? I don’t speak of Anatole, your youngest son. I don’t like him,” she added in a tone admitting of no rejoinder and raising her eyebrows. “Two such charming children. And really you appreciate them less than anyone, and so you don’t deserve to have them.”

Anna Pavlovna smiled her ecstatic smile.

“I can’t help it,” said Baron Vasili. “The poet Lavater would have said I lack the bump of paternity.”

“Don’t joke; I mean to have a serious talk with you. Do you know I am dissatisfied with Anatole? Between ourselves” (and her face assumed its melancholy expression), “he was mentioned at the Mother of the Tzar’s and you were pitied...”

Baron Vasili answered nothing, but she looked at him significantly, awaiting a reply. He frowned.

“What would you have me do?” he said at last. “You know I did all a father could do for their education, and they have both turned out fools. My other son, Hippolyte is at least a quiet fool, but Anatole is an active one. That is the only difference between them.” He said this smiling in a way more natural and animated than usual so that the wrinkles around his mouth very clearly revealed something unexpectedly coarse and unpleasant.

“And why are children born to such men as you? If you were not a father there would be nothing I could reproach you with,” said Anna Pavlovna, looking up pensively.

“I am your faithful slave and to you alone I can confess that my children are the bane of my life. It is the cross I have to bear. That is how I explain it to myself. It can’t be helped!”

Baron Vasili said no more but expressed his resignation to cruel fate by a gesture. Anna Pavlovna meditated.

“Have you never thought of marrying off your prodigal son, Anatole?” she asked. “They say old maids have a mania for matchmaking, and though I don’t feel that weakness in myself as yet, I know a young woman who is very unhappy with her father. She is a relation of yours, Marya Bolkonski.”

Baron Vasili did not reply, though, with the quickness of memory and perception befitting a man of the world, he indicated by a movement of the head that he was considering this information.

“Do you know,” Baron Vasili said at last, evidently unable to check the sad current of his thoughts, “that Anatole is costing me forty thousand rubles a year? And,” he went on after a pause, “what will it be in five years if he goes on like this?” Presently he added: “That’s what we fathers have to put up with... Is this Marya of yours rich?”

“Marya’s father is very rich but stingy. He lives in the country. He is the well-known Baron Bolkonski who had to retire from the army under the late Tzar, and was nicknamed ‘the King of

Prussia.' Baron Bolkonski is very clever but eccentric, and a bore. The poor girl Marya is very unhappy. She has a brother named Andrei; I think you know him, he married his wife, Lise, lately. Andrei is an aide-de-camp of General Kutuzov's and will be here tonight."

"Listen, dear Anna Pavlovna," said Baron Vasili, suddenly taking Anna's hand and for some reason drawing it downwards. "Arrange a marriage between this rich heiress, Marya, and my son, Andrei, and I shall always be your most devoted slave ("slafe" with an "f", as a village elder of mine writes in his reports). Marya is rich and of a good family and that's all I want."

And with the familiarity and easy grace peculiar to him, Baron Vasili raised Anna Pavlovna's hand to his lips, kissed it, and swung it to and fro as he lay back in his armchair, looking in another direction.

"Wait," said Anna Pavlovna, reflecting, "I'll speak to Lise, Baron Bolkonski's daughter-in-law, this very evening, and perhaps the marriage can be arranged. It shall be on your family's behalf that I'll start my apprenticeship as a matchmaker."

CHAPTER 2

Anna Pavlovna's drawing room was gradually filling. The highest St. Petersburg society was assembled there: people differing widely in age and character but alike in the social circle to which they belonged. Baron Vasili's daughter, the beautiful Helene, came to take her father to the ambassador's entertainment; Helene wore a ball dress and her badge as maid of honor. The youthful little Lise Bolkonski, known as "the most fascinating woman in St. Petersburg", was also there. Lise had been married to her husband Andrei, during the previous winter, and being pregnant, Lise did not go to any large gatherings, but only to small receptions. Baron Vasili's second son, Hippolyte, had come with a viscount whom he introduced. The abbe and many others had also come.

To each new arrival Anna Pavlovna said, "You have not yet seen my aunt," or "You do not know my aunt?" and very gravely conducted him or her to a little old lady, wearing large bows of ribbon in her cap, who had come sailing in from another room as soon as the guests began to arrive; and slowly turning her eyes from the visitor to her aunt, Anna mentioned each one's name to her aunt and then left them.

Each visitor performed the ceremony of greeting this old aunt whom not one of them knew, not one of them wanted to know, and not one of them cared about; Anna Pavlovna observed these greetings with mournful and solemn interest and silent approval. The elderly aunt spoke to each of the visitors in the same words, about their health and her own, and the health of the Mother of the Tzar, "who, thank God, was better today." And each visitor, though politeness prevented his showing impatience, left the old woman with a sense of relief at having performed a vexatious duty and did not return to her the whole evening.

The young Lise had brought some needlework in a gold-embroidered velvet bag. Her pretty little upper lip, on which a delicate dark down was just perceptible, was too short for her teeth, but it lifted all the more sweetly and was especially charming when she occasionally drew it down to meet the lower lip. As is always the case with a thoroughly attractive woman, her defect—the shortness of her upper lip and her half-open mouth—seemed to be Lise's own special and peculiar form of beauty. Everyone brightened at the sight of this pretty young woman, so soon to become a mother, so full of life and health, and carrying her burden so lightly. Old men and dull dispirited young ones who looked at Lise, after being in her company and talking to her a little while, felt as if they too were becoming, like her, full of life and health. All who talked to her, and at each word saw her bright smile and the constant gleam of her white teeth, thought that they were in a specially amiable mood that day.

Lise went round the table with quick, short, swaying steps, her workbag on her arm, and gaily spreading out her dress sat down on a sofa near the silver samovar, as if all she was doing was a pleasure to herself and all around her. "I have brought my needlework," said she in French, displaying her bag and addressing all present. "Mind, Anna Pavlovna, I hope you have not played a wicked trick on me," she added, turning to her hostess. "You wrote that it was to be quite a small reception, and just see how badly I am dressed." And she spread out her arms to show her short-waisted, lace-trimmed, dainty gray dress, girdled with a broad ribbon just below the breast.

"Stay calm, Lise, you will always be prettier than anyone else," replied Anna Pavlovna.

"Did you know," said Lise in the same tone of voice and still in French, turning to a general, "that my husband, Andrei, is deserting me by going to war? He is going to get himself killed. Tell me what this wretched war is for?" she added, addressing Baron Vasili, and without waiting for an answer she turned to speak to his daughter, the beautiful Helene.

"What a delightful woman this Lise is!" said Baron Vasili to Anna Pavlovna.

One of the next arrivals was Pierre, a stout, heavily built young man with close-cropped hair, spectacles, the light-colored breeches fashionable at that time, a very high ruffle, and a brown dress coat. Pierre was an illegitimate son of Count Bezukhov, a well-known grandee of Catherine the Great's time who now lay dying in Moscow. Pierre had not yet entered either the military or civil service, as he had only just returned from abroad where he had been educated, and this was his first appearance in society. Anna Pavlovna greeted him with the nod she accorded to the lowest hierarchy in her drawing room. But despite this lowest-grade greeting, a look of anxiety and fear, as at the sight of something too large and unsuited to the place, came over Anna Pavlovna's face when she saw him enter. Though Pierre was certainly rather bigger than the other men in the room, her anxiety could only have reference to the clever though shy, but observant and natural, expression that distinguished him from everyone else in that drawing room.

"It is very good of you, Pierre, to come and visit a poor invalid," said Anna Pavlovna, exchanging an alarmed glance with her aunt as she conducted Pierre to her.

Pierre murmured something unintelligible and continued to look around as if in search of something. On his way to the aunt, he bowed to Lise with a pleased smile, as to an intimate acquaintance.

Anna Pavlovna's alarm was justified, for Pierre turned away from the elderly aunt without waiting to hear her speech about the health of the Mother of the Tzar. Anna, in dismay, detained Pierre with the words: "Do you know the abbot? He is a most interesting man."

"Yes, I have heard of his scheme for perpetual peace, and while it is very interesting it is hardly feasible."

"You think so?" rejoined Anna Pavlovna in order to say something and get away to attend to her duties as hostess. But Pierre now committed a double act of impoliteness. First, he had left the elderly aunt before she had finished speaking to him, and now he continued to speak to another who wished to get away. With his head bent, and his big feet spread apart, Pierre began explaining his reasons for thinking the abbot's plan chimerical.

"We will talk of it later," said Anna Pavlovna with a smile.

And having gotten rid of this young man who did not know how to behave, Anna Pavlovna resumed her duties as hostess and continued to listen and watch, ready to help at any point where the conversation might happen to flag. Like the foreman of a spinning mill, when he has set the hands to work, goes round and notices here a spindle that has stopped or there one that creaks or

makes more noise than it should, and hastens to check the machine or set it in proper motion, so Anna Pavlovna moved about her drawing room, approaching now a silent, now a too-noisy group, and by a word or slight rearrangement kept the conversational machine in steady, proper, and regular motion. But amid these cares, her anxiety about Pierre was evident. Anna Pavlovna kept an anxious watch on him when he approached the group around the viscount to listen to what was being said there, and again when he passed to another group whose center was the abbot.

Pierre had been educated abroad, and this reception at Anna Pavlovna was the first he had attended in Russia. He knew that all the intellectual lights of St. Petersburg were gathered there and, like a child in a toyshop, did not know which way to look, afraid of missing any clever conversation that was to be heard. Seeing the self-confident and refined expression on the faces of those present, Pierre was always expecting to hear something very profound. At last, he came up to the abbot. Here the conversation seemed interesting and he stood waiting for an opportunity to express his own views, as young people are fond of doing.

CHAPTER 3

Anna Pavlovna's reception was in full swing. The spindles hummed steadily and ceaselessly on all sides. Except for the aunt, beside whom sat only one elderly lady, who with her thin careworn face was rather out of place in this brilliant society, the whole company had settled into three groups. One, chiefly masculine, had formed around the abbot. Another, of young people, was grouped around the beautiful Helene, Baron Vasili's daughter, and Lise, very pretty and rosy, though rather too plump for her age. The third group was gathered around the viscount and Anna Pavlovna.

The viscount was a nice-looking young man with soft features and polished manners, who evidently considered himself a celebrity but out of politeness modestly placed himself at the disposal of the circle in which he found himself. Anna Pavlovna was obviously serving him up as a treat to her guests. As a clever maître d'hôtel serves up as a specially choice delicacy a piece of meat that no one who had seen it in the kitchen would have cared to eat, so Anna Pavlovna served up to her guests, first the viscount and then the abbot, as peculiarly choice morsels. The group about the viscount immediately began discussing the murder of the Duc d'Enghien in France. The viscount said that the Duc d'Enghien had perished by his own magnanimity and that there were particular reasons for Napoleon's hatred of him.

"Ah, yes! Do tell us all about it, viscount," said Anna Pavlovna, with a pleasant feeling that there was something in the manner of Louis XV in the sound of that sentence: "Do tell us all about it, viscount."

The viscount bowed and smiled courteously in token of his willingness to comply. Anna Pavlovna arranged a group around him, inviting everyone to listen to his tale.

"The viscount knew the Duc d'Enghien personally," whispered Anna Pavlovna to one of the guests. "The viscount is a wonderful raconteur," said she to another. "How evidently he belongs to the best society," said she to a third; and the viscount was served up to the company in the choicest and most advantageous style, like a well-garnished joint of roast beef on a hot dish.

The viscount wished to begin his story and gave a subtle smile.

"Come over here, Helene, dear," said Anna Pavlovna to the beautiful young Helene who was sitting some way off, the center of another group.

Helene smiled. She rose with the same unchanging smile with which she had first entered the room—the smile of a perfectly beautiful woman. With a slight rustle of her white dress trimmed with moss and ivy, with a gleam of white shoulders, glossy hair, and sparkling diamonds, she

passed between the men who made way for her, not looking at any of them but smiling on all, as if graciously allowing each the privilege of admiring her beautiful figure and shapely shoulders, back, and bosom—which in the fashion of those days were very much exposed—and she seemed to bring the glamour of a ballroom with her as she moved toward Anna Pavlovna. Helene was so lovely that not only did she not show any trace of coquetry, but on the contrary, she even appeared shy of her unquestionable and all too victorious beauty. She seemed to wish, but to be unable, to diminish its effect.

“How lovely!” said everyone who saw Helene; and the viscount lifted his shoulders and dropped his eyes as if startled by something extraordinary when she took her seat opposite and beamed upon him also with her unchanging smile.

“I doubt my ability before such an audience,” said the viscount, smilingly inclining his head.

Helene rested her bare round arm on a little table and considered a reply unnecessary. She smilingly waited. All the time the story was being told she sat upright, glancing now at her beautiful round arm, altered in shape by its pressure on the table, now at her still more beautiful bosom, on which she readjusted a diamond necklace. From time to time she smoothed the folds of her dress, and whenever the story produced an effect Helene glanced at Anna Pavlovna, at once adopted just the expression she saw on the maid of honor’s face, and again relapsed into her radiant smile.

Lise had also left the tea table and followed Helene.

“Wait a moment, I’ll get my needlework... Now then, what are you thinking of?” Lise went on, turning to Helene’s brother, Hippolyte. “Fetch me my workbag.”

There was a general movement as Lise, smiling and talking merrily to everyone at once, sat down and gaily arranged herself in her seat.

“Now I am all right,” Lise said, and asking the viscount to begin, she took up her work.

Hippolyte, having brought Lise’s workbag, joined the circle and moving a chair close to hers seated himself beside her.

The charmer Hippolyte was surprising by his extraordinary resemblance to his beautiful sister, Helene, but yet more by the fact that in spite of this resemblance he was exceedingly ugly. Hippolyte’s features were like Helene’s, but while in her case everything was lit up by a joyous, self-satisfied, youthful, and constant smile of animation, and by the wonderful classic beauty of her figure, his face on the contrary was dulled by imbecility and a constant expression of sullen self-confidence, while his body was thin and weak. His eyes, nose, and mouth all seemed puckered into a vacant, wearied grimace, and his arms and legs always fell into unnatural positions.

“It’s not going to be a ghost story?” Hippolyte said, sitting down beside Lise and hastily adjusting his opera glasses, as if without this instrument he could not begin to speak.

“Why no, my dear fellow,” said the astonished viscount, shrugging his shoulders.

“Because I hate ghost stories,” said Hippolyte in a tone that showed that he only understood the meaning of his words after he had uttered them.

Hippolyte spoke with such self-confidence that his hearers could not be sure whether what he said was very witty or very stupid. He was dressed in a dark-green dress coat, knee breeches of the color of the thigh of a frightened nymph, as he called it, shoes, and silk stockings.

The viscount told his tale very neatly. It was an anecdote, then current, to the effect that the Duc d’Enghien had gone secretly to Paris to visit the famous actress, Mademoiselle George; that at her house he came upon Napoleon, who also enjoyed the actress’s favors, and that in his presence Napoleon happened to fall into one of the fainting fits to which he was subject, and was

thus at the Duc d'Enghien's mercy. The Duc d'Enghien's spared Napoleon, however, and this magnanimity Napoleon subsequently repaid by death.

The story was very pretty and interesting, especially at the point where the rivals suddenly recognized one another; and the ladies looked agitated.

"Charming!" said Anna Pavlovna with an inquiring glance at Lise.

"Charming!" whispered Lise sticking the needle into her work as if to testify that the interest and fascination of the story prevented her from going on with it.

The viscount appreciated this silent praise and smiling gratefully prepared to continue, but just then Anna Pavlovna, who had kept a watchful eye on Pierre who so alarmed her, noticed that he was talking too loudly and vehemently with the abbot, so she hurried to the rescue. Pierre had managed to start a conversation with the abbot about the balance of power, and the abbot, evidently interested by the young man's simple-minded eagerness, was explaining his pet theory. Both were talking and listening too eagerly and too naturally, which was why Anna Pavlovna disapproved.

"The means are ... the balance of power in Europe and the rights of the people," the abbot was saying. "It is only necessary for one powerful nation like Russia—barbaric as she is said to be—to place herself disinterestedly at the head of an alliance having for its object the maintenance of the balance of power of Europe, and by heading the alliance, Russia would save the world!"

"But how are you to get that balance?" Pierre was beginning.

At that moment Anna Pavlovna came up and, looking severely at Pierre, asked the abbot how he stood the Russian climate. The abbot's face instantly changed and assumed an offensively affected, sugary expression, evidently habitual to him when conversing with women.

"I am so enchanted by the brilliancy of the wit and culture of the society, more especially of the feminine society, in which I have had the honor of being received, that I have not yet had time to think of the climate," said the abbot.

Not letting the abbot and Pierre escape, Anna Pavlovna, the more conveniently to keep them under observation, brought them into the larger circle.

CHAPTER 4

Just then another visitor entered the drawing room: Andrei, Lise's husband. Andrei was a very handsome young man, of medium height, with firm, clearcut features. Everything about him, from his weary, bored expression to his quiet, measured step, offered a most striking contrast to his quiet little wife, Lise. It was evident that Andrei not only knew everyone in the drawing room but had found them to be so tiresome that it wearied him to look at or listen to them. And among all these faces that he found so tedious, none seemed to bore him so much as that of his pretty wife, Lise. He turned away from her with a grimace that distorted his handsome face, kissed Anna Pavlovna's hand, and screwed up his eyes to scan the whole company.

"You are off to the war, Andrei?" said Anna Pavlovna.

"Yes. General Kutuzov," said Andrei, speaking French and stressing the last syllable of the general's name like a Frenchman, "has been pleased to take me as an aide-de-camp..."

"And Lise, your wife?"

"She will go to the country."

"Are you not ashamed to deprive us of your charming wife?"

"Andrei," said Lise, addressing her husband in the same coquettish manner in which she spoke to other men, "the viscount has been telling us such a tale about Mademoiselle George and Napoleon!"

Andrei screwed up his eyes and turned away. Pierre, who from the moment Andrei entered the room had watched him with glad, affectionate eyes, now came up and took his arm. Before he looked around Andrei frowned again, expressing his annoyance with whoever was touching his arm, but when he saw Pierre's beaming face he gave him an unexpectedly kind and pleasant smile.

"There now!... So you, too, are in the great world?" said Andrei to Pierre.

"I knew you would be here," replied Pierre. "I will come to supper with you. May I?" he added in a low voice so as not to disturb the viscount who was continuing his story.

"No, impossible!" said Andrei, laughing and pressing Pierre's hand to show that there was no need to ask the question. He wished to say something more, but at that moment Baron Vasili and his daughter got up to go and the two young men rose to let them pass.

"You must excuse me, dear viscount," said Baron Vasili, holding him down by the sleeve in a friendly way to prevent his rising. "This unfortunate fete at the ambassador's deprives me of a pleasure and obliges me to interrupt you. I am very sorry to leave your enchanting party," said Baron Vasili, turning to Anna Pavlovna.

Baron Vasili's daughter, Helene, passed between the chairs, lightly holding up the folds of her dress, and the smile shone still more radiantly on her beautiful face. Pierre gazed at her with rapturous, almost frightened, eyes as she passed him.

"Very lovely," said Andrei.

"Very," said Pierre.

In passing, Baron Vasili seized Pierre's hand and said to Anna Pavlovna: "Educate this bear for me! Pierre has been staying with me for a whole month and this is the first time I have seen him in society. Nothing is so necessary for a young man as the society of clever women."

Anna Pavlovna smiled and promised to take Pierre in hand. She knew Pierre's father, Count Bezukhov, to be a connection of Baron Vasili's. An elderly lady, Widow Drubetskoy, who had been sitting with the old aunt rose hurriedly and overtook Baron Vasili in the anteroom. All the affectation of interest she had assumed had left her kindly and tear-worn face and it now expressed only anxiety and fear.

"How about my son, Boris, Baron Vasili?" said Widow Drubetskoy, hurrying after him into the anteroom. "I can't remain any longer in St. Petersburg. Tell me what news I may take back to my poor boy."

Although Baron Vasili listened reluctantly and not very politely to Widow Drubetskoy, even betraying some impatience, she gave him an ingratiating and appealing smile and took his hand that he might not go away.

"What would it cost you to say a word to the Tzar, and then Boris would be transferred to the Guards at once?" said Widow Drubetskoy.

"Believe me, I am ready to do all I can," answered Baron Vasili, "but it is difficult for me to ask the Tzar. I should advise you to appeal to Chancellor Rumyantsev through Privy Councilor Golitsyn. That would be the best way."

The elderly lady, Widow Drubetskoy, belonged to one of the best families in Russia, but she was poor, and having long been out of society had lost her former influential connections. She had now come to St. Petersburg to procure an appointment in the Guards for her only son, Boris. It was, in fact, solely to meet Baron Vasili that she had obtained an invitation to Anna Pavlovna's reception and had sat listening to the viscount's story. Baron Vasili's words frightened her, an embittered look clouded her once beautiful face, but only for a moment; then she smiled again and clutched Baron Vasili's arm more tightly.

“Listen to me, Baron Vasili,” said Widow Drubetskoy. “I have never yet asked you for anything and I never will again, nor have I ever reminded you of my father’s friendship for you; but now I entreat you for God’s sake to do this for my son, Boris—and I shall always regard you as a benefactor,” she added hurriedly. “No, don’t be angry, but promise! I have already asked Privy Councilor Golítsyn and he has refused. Be the kindhearted man you always were,” she said, trying to smile though tears were in her eyes.

“Papa, we shall be late,” said Helene, turning her beautiful head and looking over her classically molded shoulder as she stood waiting by the door.

Influence in society, however, is a capital that has to be economized if it is to last. Baron Vasili knew this, and having once realized that if he asked on behalf of all who begged of him, he would soon be unable to ask for himself, he became chary of using his influence. But in Widow Drubetskoy’s case, he felt, after her second appeal, something like qualms of conscience. She had reminded him of what was quite true; Baron Vasili had been indebted to her father for the first steps in his career. Moreover, he could see by her manners that she was one of those women—mostly mothers—who, having once made up their minds, will not rest until they have gained their end, and are prepared if necessary to go on insisting day after day and hour after hour, and even to make scenes. This last consideration moved him.

“My dear Widow Drubetskoy,” said Baron Vasili with his usual familiarity and weariness of tone, “it is almost impossible for me to do what you ask; but to prove my devotion to you and how I respect your father’s memory, I will do the impossible—your son Boris shall be transferred to the Guards. Here is my hand on it. Are you satisfied?”

“My dear benefactor! This is what I expected from you—I knew your kindness!”

Baron Vasili turned to go.

“Wait—just a word! When he has been transferred to the Guards...” Widow Drubetskoy faltered. “You are on good terms with General Kutuzov ... recommend Boris to him as adjutant! Then I shall be at rest, and then...”

Baron Vasili smiled.

“No, I won’t promise that. You don’t know how General Kutuzov is pestered since his appointment. He told me himself that all the Moscow ladies have conspired to give him all their sons as adjutants.”

“No, but do promise! I won’t let you go! My dear benefactor...”

“Papa,” said his beautiful daughter, Helene, in the same tone as before, “we shall be late.”

“Well, *goodbye!* Goodbye! You hear her?”

“Then tomorrow you will speak to the Tzar?”

“Certainly; but about General Kutuzov, I don’t promise.”

“Do promise, do promise, Baron Vasili!” cried Widow Drubetskoy as he went, with the smile of a coquettish girl, which at one time probably came naturally to her, but was now very ill-suited to her careworn face.

Apparently, Widow Drubetskoy had forgotten her age and by force of habit employed all the old feminine arts. But as soon as Baron Vasili had gone, her face resumed its former cold, artificial expression. She returned to the group where the viscount was still talking and again pretended to listen while waiting till it would be time to leave. Her task was accomplished.

CHAPTER 5

“And what do you think of this latest comedy, the coronation at Milan?” asked Anna Pavlovna, “and of the comedy of the people of the cities of Genoa and Lucca laying their petitions before Napoleon, and Napoleon sitting on a throne and granting the petitions of the

nations? Adorable! It is enough to make one's head whirl! It is as if the whole world had gone crazy."

Andrei looked Anna Pavlovna straight in the face with a sarcastic smile.

"God has given the crown to me, let him who touches it beware!" They say Napoleon was very grand when he said that," Andrei remarked, repeating the words in Italian: "*God has given the crown to me, let him who touches it beware!*"

"I hope this will prove the last drop that will make the glass run over," Anna Pavlovna continued. "The sovereigns of Europe will not be able to endure this man Napoleon who is a menace to everything."

"The sovereigns of Europe? I do not speak of Russia," said the viscount, polite but hopeless: "The sovereigns of Europe, madame... What have they done for the French King Louis XVII, for the Queen, or for the famous actress Madame Elizabeth? Nothing!" and the viscount became more animated. "And believe me, these sovereigns are reaping the reward of their betrayal of the French cause. The sovereigns of Europe! Why, they are sending ambassadors to compliment the usurper Napoleon."

And sighing disdainfully, the viscount again changed his position.

Hippolyte, who had been gazing at the viscount for some time through his opera glasses, suddenly turned completely round toward Lise, and having asked for a needle, began tracing the Conde coat of arms on the table. He explained this to her with as much gravity as if she had asked him to do it.

"A bar of red running diagonally across three fleurs-de-lis on a background of blue—this is the Conde coat of arms," said the viscount.

Lise listened, smiling.

"If Napoleon remains on the throne of France a year longer," the viscount continued, with the air of a man who, in a matter with which he is better acquainted than anyone else, does not listen to others but follows the current of his own thoughts, "things will have gone too far. By intrigues, violence, exile, and executions, French society—I mean good French society—will have been forever destroyed, and then..."

The viscount shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands. Pierre wished to make a remark, for the conversation interested him, but Anna Pavlovna, who had him under observation, interrupted:

"The Tzar," said Anna Pavlovna, with the melancholy which always accompanied any reference of hers to the Imperial family, "has declared that he will leave it to the French people themselves to choose their own form of government; and I believe that once free from the usurper Napoleon, the whole nation will certainly throw itself into the arms of its rightful king," she concluded, trying to be amiable to the royalist emigrant, the viscount.

"That is doubtful," said Andrei. "The viscount quite rightly supposes that matters have already gone too far. I think it will be difficult for France to return to the old regime."

"From what I have heard," said Pierre, blushing and breaking into the conversation, "almost all the French aristocracy has already gone over to Napoleon's side."

"It is the pro-Napoleon faction who says that," replied the viscount without looking at Pierre. "At the present time, it is difficult to know the real state of French public opinion."

"Napoleon has said so," remarked Andrei with a sarcastic smile.

It was evident that Andrei did not like the viscount and was aiming his remarks at him, though without looking at him.

“I showed them the path to glory, but they did not follow it,” Andrei continued after a short silence, again quoting Napoleon’s words. “‘I opened my antechambers and they crowded in.’ I do not know, however, how far Napoleon was justified in saying so.”

“Not in the least,” replied the viscount. “After the murder of the Duc d’Enghien, even the most partial ceased to regard Napoleon as a hero. If to some people,” the viscount went on, turning to Anna Pavlovna, “Napoleon ever was a hero, after the murder of the Duc d’Enghien there was one martyr more in heaven and one hero less on earth.”

Before Anna Pavlovna and the others had time to smile their appreciation of the viscount’s epigram, Pierre again broke into the conversation, and though Anna Pavlovna felt sure he would say something inappropriate, she was unable to stop him.

“Napoleon’s execution of the Duc d’Enghien,” declared Pierre, “was a political necessity, and it seems to me that Napoleon showed greatness of soul by not fearing to take on himself the whole responsibility of that deed.”

“God! My God!” muttered Anna Pavlovna in a terrified whisper.

“What, Pierre... Do you consider that assassination shows greatness of soul?” said Lise, smiling and drawing her needlework nearer to her.

“Oh! Oh!” exclaimed several voices.

“Capital!” said Hippolyte in English, and began slapping his knee with the palm of his hand.

The viscount merely shrugged his shoulders. Pierre looked solemnly at his audience over his spectacles and continued.

“I say so,” Pierre continued desperately, “because the French nobility fled from the Revolution leaving the people to anarchy, and Napoleon alone understood the Revolution and quelled it, and so for the general good, Napoleon could not stop short for the sake of one man’s life.”

“Won’t you come over to the other table?” suggested Anna Pavlovna.

But Pierre continued his speech without heeding her.

“No,” cried he, becoming more and more eager, “Napoleon is great because he rose above to the Revolution, suppressed its abuses, preserved all that was good in it—equality of citizenship and freedom of speech and of the press—and only for that reason did he obtain power.”

“Yes, if having obtained power, without availing himself of it to commit murder, Napoleon had restored the power to the rightful king, I should have called him a great man,” remarked the viscount.

“Napoleon could not do that. The people only gave him power so that he might rid them of the Bourbon kings and because they saw that he was a great man. The Revolution was a grand thing!” continued Pierre, betraying by this desperate and provocative proposition his extreme youth and his wish to express all that was in his mind.

“What? Revolution and regicide a grand thing?... Well, after that... But won’t you come to this other table?” repeated Anna Pavlovna.

“Rousseau’s Social Contract,” said the viscount with a tolerant smile.

“I am not speaking of regicide, I am speaking about ideas.”

“Yes, ideas of robbery, murder, and regicide,” again interjected an ironical voice.

“Those were extremes, no doubt, but they are not what is most important. What is important are the rights of man, emancipation from prejudices, and equality of citizenship, and all these ideas Napoleon has retained in full force.”

“Liberty and equality,” said the viscount contemptuously, as if at last deciding seriously to prove to this youth how foolish Pierre’s words were, “high-sounding words which have long

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

