



# Great Short Works of Leo Tolstoy [with Biographical Introduction]

*Leo Tolstoy*

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"Great Short Works of Leo Tolstoy" collects nine stories by the Russian born author (1828-1910). Most known for "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina," considered two of the greatest novels in world literature, Tolstoy also penned numerous novellas and short stories which remain valuable classics in their own regards. "Family Happiness" explores the female identity within changing romantic relationships. Narrated in first person by the female protagonist Masha, the tale is a skilled and engrossing story of woman's difficult position in a shifting society. "The Cossacks," Tolstoy's first novella, follows 24 year old Olyenin and his struggle to win the heart of a young Cossack woman in pre-revolutionary Russia. "The Death of Ivan Ilyich," one of Tolstoy's short masterpieces, tells of the early death of a high-court judge in 19th century Russian. In "The Devil," two brothers struggle with a new inheritance riddled with debts when sudden romance and lust threaten to turn their world upside down. "The Kreutzer Sonata" is an intense tale of love, marriage, sex, and jealousy. Initially banned by the Russian censors, the novella has inspired many films, theater productions, and paintings. In "Master and Man," a landowner and his peasant journey to purchase a small forest only to get caught in a blizzard. The ethics of self-sacrifice resolve this moralizing tale. "Father Sergius" tells of a young aristocrat who, upon discovery of his fiancé's infidelity, retreats into the life of a monastic Orthodox Christian, though this radically new life proves to be difficult. Tolstoy's last work, "Hadji Murad," follows the Avar commander Hadji Murad as he forms an alliance with the Russians he had been fighting against for revenge's sake. Lastly "Alyosha the Pot" is a tragic tale of love and family pressure. Together, these nine stories form Tolstoy's greatest spread of shorter fiction.

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