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# THE KILLING OF ANNA KARENINA

Richard Freeborn



Anna Karenina, the heroine of Leo Tolstoy's masterpiece and the finest female portrayal in Russian fiction, became a social pariah through adultery.

In suicidal despair she threw herself under a train. This was her alleged death. The truth is much more complex.

When Prince Dmitry Rostov suffers an accident on a cycling holiday beside Wordsworth's 'sylvan Wye' he encounters a ghostly white figure, a strange black boat, a blood-red rose cast on the water, a train whistle and a gunshot. All of which makes him witness to a "gap in nature" that leads to a unique quest for the truth about a veiled, reclusive lady.

Clever detective work and some good luck then enable the Prince to reveal the specifically Russian reasons for The Killing of Anna Karenina.

Richard Freeborn's formal qualifications are principally academic. After service in the RAF and post-war work in Germany, where he also attended Goettingen University, he graduated from Oxford, did doctoral research and was posted by the FO to the British embassy in Moscow, joining what was called the Secretariat. Invited back to Oxford, he became a don and spent ten years there as tutor and lecturer before being offered a professorship at UCLA. This was followed by a professorship at Manchester University and finally appointment to the chair of Russian literature at London (SSEES). In the course of his career he gained an MA, a DPhil (Oxon), a DLitt (London), emeritus status and taught twice in California, interpreted for many major figures, including prime ministers and members of the Supreme Soviet, and travelled fairly widely in the Soviet Union in the immediate post-Stalin period, although in later decades he found he was persona non grata and not granted visas. He married his wife Anne, an embassy colleague while in Moscow, and they have four children and seven grandchildren.

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