



Tolstoy: The Making of a Novelist (Bloomsbury Reader)

Edward Crankshaw

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Tolstoy was not always an old man-not always a bearded patriarch fixing the world with the eye of an angry ancient mariner. He started *War and Peace* when he was thirty five, and *Anna Karenina* was finished before he was fifty. By then he had fulfilled his genius and deployed all those elements of his titanic temperament which made him world famous.

In a richly detailed and sympathetic book on the most creative years of Russia's greatest writer, Edward Crankshaw explores the world of Count Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, the elements in it that contributed to his great art, and the nature of the creative processes involved. Accompanied by evocative illustrations of Tolstoy's life, Mr. Crankshaw's text presents a development of this extraordinary man-his idyllic country childhood and his painful schooling, the wild years of conscience-stricken dissipation, the sojourn among the Cossacks in the Caucasus, the army service in the Crimean War, his entry into Moscow and St. Petersburg literary circles, his fateful marriage. It is an absorbing account which helps us to a fuller understanding of Tolstoy's towering genius-and the limitations that went with it.

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