

Russian narrative non-fiction

# The True Anna Karenina

**Narrative non-fiction.** AST. Moscow 2022. 384 pages

Why was the fate of Anna and Vronsky decided during a mazurka, what does participating in horse races tell us about Vronsky, what a dinner about Oblonsky? If Anna was a seasoned socialite, why could the daughter she had by Vronsky only be given the one surname - Karenina?

Anna Karenina is probably Tolstoy's most mysterious work. Why is it still controversial? There's a lot we don't know about the harsh laws and paradoxical mores of the golden 19th century. Basinski explores the novel through the eyes of a curious and devoted reader. The facts laid out in the book surprise, discourage and explain many of the oddities of this tragic love story. In doing so, Basinski focuses on the darkest and most ambiguous turns of the novel's plot.

"I am aware that there is no true story of Anna Karenina. There are as many Anna Kareninas as there are readers of this novel. But I do hope that my book will help fanatics like myself, who are addicted to this novel, sort out their personal Annas more clearly. Admittedly without agreeing with me on everything."

Pavel Basinski



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
18 languages

**awards**  
2010 Big Book  
2010 Book of the Year  
(Tolstoy: Escape from Paradise)  
2008 Big Book shortlist  
1998 Anti-Booker Prize

"A true philosophical thriller. The novel is reconstructed from individual words, plot twists and other „evidence“ and its incomprehensible passages are explained."  
SOBAKA.RU

"In great detail and at the same time as far away from academic difficulty as possible."  
KOMMERSANT

"Like turning the pages of a familiar novel, but still full of mysteries and secrets."  
LITERATURNAYA GAZETA

Basinski was born in 1961 in Frolovo town (Volgograd region). He studied at the Saratov University and the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow. Basinski is one of the most influential and highly acclaimed literary critics in Russia. He publishes in Literaturnaya Gazeta, Novi Mir, Oktyabr, Znamya, Druzhba narodov and others. He was a jury member of several major Russian literary prizes, such as the Russian Booker, the Alexander Solzhenitsyn Prize and the Yasnaya Polyana Prize. His fascinating documentary books about the life and work of Leo Tolstoy aroused a new wave of interest in the phenomenon of the "Apostle of Yasnaya Polyana". Basinski lives in Moscow.

# Pavel Basinski