



# Dr Zhivago

*Nancy Stanley (Retold by) , Boris Pasternak*

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**Dr Zhivago** Nancy Stanley (Retold by) , Boris Pasternak  
[*Penguin Readers Level 5*]

Contemporary / British English The Russian Revolution -- four young people, Yury, Tonya, Lara and Pasha, find love and lose it in this extraordinary time. Their heart-breaking stories make Dr Zhivago one of the greatest romantic books, and films, of the century.

## Dr Zhivago Details

Date : Published February 1st 2010 by Pearson PTR Interactive

ISBN : 9781405882422

Author : Nancy Stanley (Retold by) , Boris Pasternak

Format : Paperback 77 pages

Genre : Classics, Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Literature, Cultural, Russia

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# From Reader Review Dr Zhivago for online ebook

## Katie Pavid says

\*Contains spoilers\*

This romantic Russian tome is a must-read for anyone interested in modern history. It tracks the cold and brutal course of the 20th century Russian revolution through the eyes of the confused but charming Dr Zhivago. Having just finished reading the epic, I checked out its reviews on [goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com). A common criticism of the novel is the huge wealth of characters who protrude into the lives of the protagonists and orbit them for the remainder of the novel, swirling about the narrative, causing confusion. The people of [goodreads](http://goodreads.com) declared there were just too many to keep track of. In the early stages of my plod through the epic, I was tending to agree. However, as the passion between Zhivago and Lara intensifies, so the importance of the peripheral characters dwindles. Their micro-narratives distracted me less and less as Zhivago's story progressed.

The sentiment of the whole work is, however, a confusing one. Zhivago's love for Lara is all-consuming for him, but not for the reader. I cannot be the only one is constantly aware of Tonya and the children lurking in the background. Is the reader meant to applaud Zhivago for his capacity to love two women so dearly? Does he love two women as dearly as he claims? His post-capture search for Tonya is not heartfelt enough to be convincing. As a romance, the love between the two protagonists is always diluted and qualified by Tonya's ghostly presence, which is why so many modern readers struggle to empathise with the doctor.

As an historical epic, this instability in the mind of the protagonist is more successful. Zhivago perhaps cannot be expected to lead, or even wish for, a settled life after the horrors he has encountered. His surroundings have never encouraged complacency, or satisfaction with the status quo. Zhivago MUST be, in literary terms, unstable, if he is to properly reflect the spirit of the revolution, which is, after all, what Pasternak's novel is aiming to project.

For the reader seeking to understand the revolutionary period, this is perhaps not the best place to start. Keeping track of the conflict in the novel is hard, because the writer assumes some knowledge on the reader's part, and does not bother to explain the twists and turns of historical events particularly clearly. Nor should he, for this is not a text book. However, I did find myself pinching my sister's A-Level history textbooks and doing some background reading. Pasternak is painting a picture of the essence of the war, it is the reader's prerogative to flesh out the facts for himself.

Ultimately, the novel is not for the faint-hearted. I also think it is a novel which asks to be re-visited over the course of a lifetime. The narrative is haunting, and all the better for asking the reader to puzzle out its mysteries, to go away and think and come back. It creates a dialogue about the big things, about love and war and human nature. It was never going to have all the answers, even after 600 pages of struggle.

Also published on my blog, [katiepavid.wordpress.com](http://katiepavid.wordpress.com)

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## Clem says

It is not the author's fault that a book written by a Russian about Russians is littered with so many Russians

that all have complex Russian names. Such is usually the main complaint about this classic. I even remember reading a “Peanuts” cartoon where Charlie Brown and company commented on such an unfortunate factor as it related to this book. Once one gets past this, many claim that there’s a beautiful story to be told, and many hail it as “The Novel of the Century”. Even the movie was supposedly outstanding (I haven’t seen it).

Maybe it’s because I read the book 60 years after it was published, or maybe it’s because I don’t read many Russian authors, but I found myself a bit empty after reading this. It certainly didn’t go in the direction that I was expecting, and the story really left me empty. Perhaps that was the point. When telling a story about Russians during the most turbulent point of Russian history, I’m sure there were an awful lot of people that found themselves uplifted from whatever normalcy they were accustomed to, and were never able to return to any sort of routine that they once knew.

The book succeeds in illustrating the bleak life of Russia during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Our protagonist is Yury Andreyevich Zhivago. He’s referred to as “Yury”, “Yury Andreyevich” and “Zhivago” as well as a couple of nicknames. Being the lead character, it’s not too daunting to keep up with all of these monikers. However, when EVERY character in this novel has several different names, it can be a bit too much.

Anyway, Yury marries childhood friend Tonia, yet fate pushes him in many different areas of Russia during the revolution, and he soon finds himself working side by side with another childhood friend, Larissa (or ‘Lara’). Lara is married as well, but due to her circumstances, Yury and Lara soon fall in love. Had they lived in some sort of normal existence, this infatuation could easily have been cooled over time, but 1917 Russia is anything but a normal existence.

You might be thinking at some point that this is essentially a “love-triangle” novel, but I’m not sure I would even classify it as such. In fact, it’s the personal lives of these characters that left me wanting more. I never really felt things moved as they should, and there too many things that were unresolved at the end of the story. As I mentioned, this may have been the point. Since lives during this tumultuous time were so chaotic, why paint a nice happy picture at the end where everything gets neatly folded and put away in its proper place?

I think that was my main problem. I expected more of a story and less of a history lesson. Speaking of “history lesson”, I also confess that there are many aspects of this novel that are confusing unless one has a fair knowledge of the times and place. Being that the author is Russian, and that the book was written in 1957, he probably felt this was unnecessary, and he was probably right. Since these events now took place 100 years prior to when I read the book (2017), I would bet many readers can’t adequately comprehend some of the situations and turmoil. I wish the author could have spent a bit more time explaining why things were the way they were. He also never lets his readers know how much time has passed between key events. True, one can figure this out – but maybe, again, only if one has knowledge of the history.

I’ve also read that the author is mainly a poet. Interesting because although Zhivago is a doctor, he’s also a poet as well. Poetry doesn’t pay many bills when your country is embedded in a revolution, so this hobby of Zhivago is usually only mentioned in passing. However, the end of the book does contain “Poems of Zhivago”. To be honest, I didn’t read them. I was too relieved to be done with, what I thought, was a fairly disappointing story. Perhaps some of these poems may have tied up a few loose ends that never seemed to get resolved? I don’t know, and sadly don’t really care.

I should also point out that I’m of the minority of the opinion here. Most people really loved this book (more, it seemed, loved the movie), so if you stumbled across this review and feel dissuaded to try the book, I

should point you to the many positive reviews as well. Give the book about 100 pages before you give up. Make sure you go through the pages slowly. And make sure that you give yourself enough time to digest all the complex vowel-less last names.

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### Christine says

I can see why this is a classic of Russian Literature. It is beautifully written. It is also a great picture of what Russia was like during the revolution. It is pretty accurate which is why I think it was banned in Russia in the fifties. There is some beautiful symbolism: Zhivago represents the Russian people and the women in his life are representative of the new and old Russia. The weather reflects Zhivago's inner emotional state. If you can stomach the grand sweeping generalizations about human nature, politics and art, you will probably enjoy this book. I am not saying it will keep you up nights, but it is a good read, and an interesting historical phenomenon.

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### Eslam Mohammed says

A one-shot temporarily rating, upon the controversy of the novel's theme "storyline", plot, writing style, and the elusive nature of love, it may deserve another reading, also a more stable, passionate mood we will see any way,...

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### Kimberly says

You read enough Russian novels and you start to wonder if the whole point of Russian writing is to share with the reader how utterly miserable it is to be Russian.

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### Taras Prokopyuk says

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## **Icíar says**

¡Que bien sintetizado!

<http://www.losmilyunlibros.com/2013/0...>

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## **Elis Agustiana says**

Dr. Zhivago

I want to review this book. This book tell us some story about revolution. It is the beginning of the twentieth century, and the lives of four young people are interrupted by the extraordinary events of the Russian revolution. They are Yuri, Tonya, Lara, and Pasha-find love and lost it. The first part of Doctor Zhivago take place in 1901 and 1903, then the action moves to 1905. Doctor Zhivago's name is Yuri Andreyevich Zhivago, the boy who even though his father was still alive. 1901, his father had left Yuri and his mother a long time ago and had gone to Siberia. Now, his mother was died and he was leaving Moscow with her brother - his Uncle Kolya. Uncle Kolya was a serious and religious man. And Yuri loved and admired his uncle. At summer, 1903, Uncle Kolya sent Yuri to Moscow to live with some distant relation, the Gromeco family. He was very happy because there is their daughter, Tonya, became Yuri's closest friend. Almost immediately. In another part of Moscow, another young person was living a very different style of life from Yuri's. Larissa or Lara and her brother lived in three small rooms at the back of their mother's shop. Lara was natural beauty, she worked very hard at school and help her mother as much as she could. It was easy to love her because she was the purest, kindest girl in the world. Lara had a best friend named Pasha. Pasha was now living with some Lara's neighbours. He was a charming young man, and because of his father, he was involved with the politics of the day. But the center of Pasha's life was Lara. He loved her, and secretly, he had promised his life to her. 1906, there is some event about the violinist's friend who had tried to poison herself. And Mr. Gromeko was helped her. Suddenly, Misha was telling about the girl who maked his father died. She is Lara, the girl that have thinking by Yuri and their future. 1911, Yuri, Tonya, and Misha were in their last term at university. In the spring they would all graduate. Yuri in medicine, Misha in philosophy and Tonya in law.

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## **Farhan Khalid says**

(from movie)

The meaning of life - My favourite sort of conversation

Love, the idea that there's someone in the world who might hold the key to your whole existence

LARA: I'm tired of being a child

Change the world in that way. Small steps

Wake up! You've been fighting the wrong enemy!

You and your principles You don't deserve that lovely girl

Are we going very fast? I think we are.  
Or perhaps we're standing still,  
and it's the world that's whizzing past us

And if it's true...  
that our days are really numbered,  
then let us spend them together  
Let us spend them together in the best way  
Say goodbye to each other in the best way

I know it's utter madness...  
but let's be mad...

After all this, you still write poems?  
What about?  
The world  
Love  
Particular people

How extraordinary it all is  
What a gift it is to be alive in the world  
and to know you're alive

What was she like?  
Well, I try to say there, in the poems

These are yours  
His poems  
We are all in there  
All our lives, all these terrible times  
But most of all, you...

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## **Don Myer says**

q xf

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## **Dom says**

I enjoyed this book, with its setting and characters. The ending was heartfelt and made me like the book even more than before.

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## Brooke Tharp says

"His mind moved with freedom and welcomed the unfamiliar" p. 7

"he saw in his gloomy eyes as inside a window, something beyond, an idea that had taken firm hold of him" p.108

"his friends had become strangely dim and colorless. Not one of them had preserved his own outlook, his own world" p. 174

"Theirs was a meeting of two artists... the moment they began to speak of the things that really matter to creative minds... or stood in silence by the window drumming on the glass, deeply moved by how completely they understood each other" 178

"It is the presence of art in Crime and Punishment that moves us deeply rather than the story of Raskolnikov's crime... call it an idea, a statement about life." 282

"About dreams. It is usually taken for granted that you dream of something that made a particularly strong impression on you during the day, but it seems to me it's just the contrary. Often it's something you paid no attention to at the time- a vague thought that you didn't bother to think out to the end, words spoken w/o feeling and which passed unnoticed- these are the things that return at night, clothed in flesh and blood, and they become the subjects of dreams as if to make up for having been ignored during waking hours." 283

"Don't you think you'd have to be a hopeless nonentity to play only one role all your life, to have only one place in society, always to stand for the same thing?" 298

"the boy's handsome face bore the marks of innocence and of all-forgiving suffering- why did I kill him?" 335

"the whole human way of life has been destroyed and ruined. All that's left is the naked human soul stripped to the last shred, for which nothing has changed because it was always cold and shivering and reaching out to its nearest neighbor, as cold and lonely as itself." 402

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## ???? ??????? says

fuck

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## Judine Brey says

While I understand that Pasternak was showing the complexity and problems behind the Russian Revolution, I was confused by the names. Also, the morality of the storyline troubled me throughout.

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**Mercedé Khodadadi ????? ??????? says**

Well can't remember the story at all, but I remember I really loved the picture on the cover. Inside the book wasn't as romantic though.

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